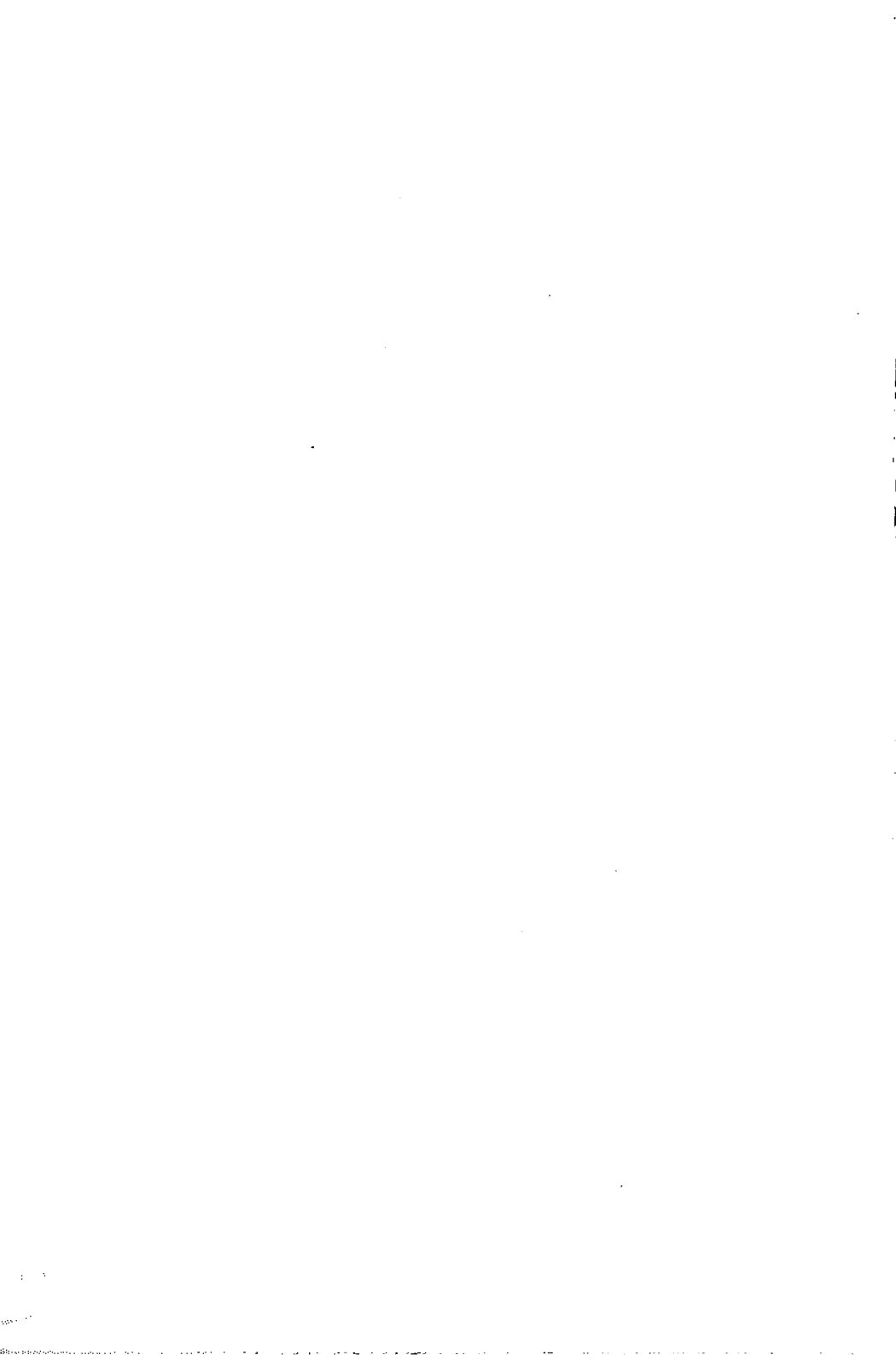


**First Unitarian
Society of Albany**

1842-1992



**First Unitarian Society of Albany
1842-1992**



**Written by ten members of the Society's History Committee
Committee Chair and Editor, Eva H. Gemmill**

Published by First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

Albany, New York 1994

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 94-72298

Many artists have sketched, painted, and photographed our handsome building. FUSA artist Frank Reed created the sketch of the First Unitarian Society of Albany printed on the reverse side of this page. After its first use in January 1957, it appeared for the next thirty years on church newsletters. It continues to be featured on our letterhead. FUSA artists were also responsible for the cover of this book: Lois Webb designed the cover, inspired by a photograph taken in 1991 by Peter Meixner.

First Unitarian Society of Albany 1842-1992

Table of Contents

Introduction		Page iiv
1. A Case for Tenacity	<i>Eva H. Gemmill</i>	1
2. Denominational Affairs	<i>Maryellen Wells</i>	23
3. Social Responsibilities	<i>Helen S. Sharpe</i>	45
4. Religious Education	<i>Eva H. Gemmill</i>	67
5. FUSA Men and Women	<i>Israel Rapoport</i> <i>Arlene Gilbert</i>	89
6. Celebrations	<i>Mary C. Stierer</i>	115
7. Music	<i>Robert A. Stierer</i>	139
8. Our First One Hundred Years	<i>Mildred F. Guffin</i>	159
9. Universalism in Albany	<i>Margaret G. Foster</i>	177
10. Sesquicentennial 1992	<i>Ursula H. Poland</i>	183
Appendix		199
Index		213

Dedication

"Long haul people," UU minister Rudy Nemser calls those folks "...upon whose shoulders a church is built and -- more important -- maintained."

We want to say "thank you" to generations of these generous, talented, dedicated Long Haul People, whether or not their names are published here. As Rudy Nemser says, they "...bless a church with a very special blessing."

INTRODUCTION

WITH CREDITS

The First Unitarian Society of Albany celebrated its 150th birthday on November 19, 1992 as a relatively large, relatively prosperous congregation, planning confidently for its future.

Well before the Sesquicentennial fanfare, however, certain persons looked ahead to that day, as one might sense the approach of a family anniversary. Our trustees' minutes record a 1988 suggestion by then-Historian **Dr. Charles Semowich** that funds be set aside for a Sesquicentennial celebration, and his later suggestion that a history of the church be written. When active planning for the event began in 1991, the trustees asked that a history be one feature of the celebration.

By then **Eva Gemmill** chaired the History and Archives Committee, and she took on the overall editing and coordination of this volume. Nine other Society members, experienced in research and writing, volunteered or accepted her invitation to write a chapter about a specific topic for the new history.

Writers were encouraged by reading *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, the excellent history of our Society which **John Guffin** wrote in 1942 -- it seemed that only 50 years of our church life remained to be documented. But as research progressed, writers found that they required a broader understanding of the Society's first century as a foundation for the half century just past.

John Guffin's daughter, **Mildred Guffin**, summarized her father's history in Chapter 8. A retired librarian, Mildred has been associated with the church all her life. She cherishes a letter from the Rev. William Morgan, our minister from 1907-10, congratulating her parents "on the birth of a new Unitarian." Other authors, alphabetically:

Margaret Foster reviewed 19th Century Albany Universalist minutes from our archives in Chapter 9. An artist/teacher whose professional

career includes 30 years in higher education, Marge shares her talents through exhibits, posters and the Society's literary and art publication, *The Oriel*. Eva Gemmill, History and Archives Committee chair, is the author and co-author of several local histories, and a retired technical writer and editor. Arlene Gilbert holds a master's degree in American History and conducts research and demonstration projects in education, health and human services. Ursula Poland was co-chair of the Sesquicentennial Committee. She brought to the job her recent experience with another sesquicentennial, that of Albany Medical College, where she was a medical librarian. Israel Rapoport is a retired high school history teacher. He chairs our Book Sales, and is a member of the Library Committee. He wrote the men's portion of Chapter 5 and, in addition, his research appears in Chapter 1 and the Appendix. Helen Sharpe is an erstwhile commercial writer and editor. She is an ardent supporter of the Society's social concerns, and is a long-time writer and staff member for *The Oriel*. Mary Stierer has been an active member of the League of Women Voters for more than twenty-five years, and is a Literacy Volunteers tutor. She regularly writes public service publications for the League and other civic groups. Robert Stierer, retired from careers as a city manager and administrator and adjunct faculty member at the State University at Albany, is also an *Oriel* writer and editor. Maryellen Wells, a municipal historian for eight years, wrote and edited a local history and genealogy quarterly, and holds a degree in history and social studies.

While the principal goal of this volume is still to update John Guffin's history, his Centennial volume will be supplemented with new material that has become of interest in the ensuing 50 years. Ten chapters, each exploring a different facet of our church life, present in essence ten histories. A time-line may be found in the Appendix, page 200.

With each chapter in the hands of experienced writers, a maximum amount of independent judgment was encouraged. The resulting differences in style and point of view are characteristic, we believe, of the diversity within our congregation. An example is the decision to use, or not to use, names. Our 1911-18 minister, Charles Graves, wrote in the preface to one of his histories, "It is clearly impossible to 'notice' all who have labored faithfully to make the church a living force in the community...." Too bad, because, as he also wrote, "The history of the church is of course dependent upon the lives and experiences of the

people who made it...." Regarding references, some authors listed them at the end of their chapters; some used endnotes; others noted references within the text. Individual styles and practices of our writers, we believe, are logical if not always consistent.

Following the Sesquicentennial we writers completed our chapters and tended to publishing details. But remarkable happenings at the First Unitarian Society of Albany (FUSA) did not cease. Here are a few examples. In September 1993 the congregation took a well planned step to two Sunday morning services. The Long Range Planning Committee II continues to add to its portfolio of workable ideas for creating space. The Social Responsibilities Council (SRC) carries out its annual Neighborhood Summer Children's Program. Our Church School is a continuing source of pride. High-schoolers and SRC cooperate to furnish meals for homeless men and women. Events such as the Soup Contest and Spontaneous Melodrama fill FUSAns of all ages with delight. And in May 1994 the congregation voted to change its name to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany.

RESOURCES: Our own church archives were, of course, our most important resource. Almost-weekly *Newsletters* exist from September 1956 to the present, as well as a few earlier issues. Trustees' minutes exist from 1842 to the present, with occasional gaps of months and years. File drawers full of correspondence, minutes, sermons, photos, account books, and newspaper clippings offer diligent researchers a century and a half of history both complete and episodic.



Mildred Guffin, Margaret (Sanford) Hout, and Dora Reed, three of many long-time FUSAns whose vivid memories were helpful. Mildred and Peg are birthright FUSAns.

Blank spaces have been filled where possible by interviewing members of the congregation. In their chapters, writers have noted the

assistance of these long-time members; but we thank them again for providing the glue and the grace that kept Albany Unitarians together. Should we unwittingly have distorted any of their information, we hope that the informant will bring it to our attention.

We appreciate the assistance of former FUSA Historian Dr. Charles Semowich. An art and music historian and archivist, Semowich was appointed by the trustees in 1984. During the five years of his tenure he organized existing records, and retrieved the church's original records, dating from 1842, from the New York State Archives in order to have this material microfilmed. Nine reels of microfilm are in our archives, with copies at the Iron Mountain, New York, storage facility.

One of those valuable resources now on microfilm is the trustees' minutes of Albany's First Universalist Society, from 1830 to 1879, reviewed here in Chapter 9. Very little other information on early Albany Universalists is known, except for occasional references to them in the Unitarian Society's minutes and in Guffin's history, and a list of Albany Universalist ministers kindly furnished by the New York State Convention of Universalists. We regret not having parallel data. While we honor 150 years of Unitarianism in Albany, we honor 172 years of Universalism in Albany. We commend our readers to publications of the 1993 Universalist Bicentennial Celebration.

Writers about any phase of Albany history are fortunate to have our City's excellent resources. We appreciate assistance from the Albany County Hall of Records, the Albany Public Library, the McKinney Library at the Albany Institute of History and Art, the Library of the State University of New York at Albany, and the New York State Library. FUSA's own Joy Library was also a fine resource.

The staff at Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters in Boston was helpful in finding Albany records, and we also appreciate very much the cheerful support and expertise of Alan Seaburg, curator of the Andover Harvard Theological Library.

ABBREVIATIONS: We naturally intend to explain each acronym or abbreviation before it is used. Only a few occur repeatedly:

FUSA, of course, is the First Unitarian Society of Albany. AUA is the American Unitarian Association. In 1961, after the Unitarians and Universalists merged, FUSA became a congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the UUA. "The Society" is always the First Unitarian Society of Albany; "the denomination" is the UUA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The presence of family members in acknowledgments sometimes suggests a preoccupied spouse, skimpy meals – an apology rather than a thank-you. Here, we offer unqualified, enthusiastic gratitude to the editor's husband, Hughes Gemmill, for encouragement, good humor, and countless hours of computer assistance.

John Cutro's professional counsel and advice as a specialist in computer programming was extremely helpful, and his generosity is appreciated.

Another FUSAn, Jay Gallagher, also gave generously of his professional advice. His editorial suggestions were valuable, as was his tolerance for authors' opinions.

Joyce Jack's comments, too, are acknowledged with gratitude.

Administrative Assistant Dave Stone's willingness and ability to help were so constant that we were in danger of taking them for granted. May his wonderful Annual Reports be perpetuated, to assist future historians!

Harvey Brockley, Joella Vreeland, and Karen Dau of the New York State Convention of Universalists shared available information about Albany Universalists, for which we are grateful.

Each chapter was reviewed and commented on by one or more persons who were especially familiar with the material covered. Among those who performed this valuable service: Ann Brandon, Ann D'Attilio, Ann Eberle, Charles and Ruth Estey, Mary Freeman, Eileen Hoffman, Joan Kahn-Schneider, Ethel Morrison, Reese Satin, Charles Semowich, Fred and Martha Schroeder and Al and Ramona Weissbard, from FUSA. And UU Historians C. Conrad Wright and Alan Seaburg, Harvard University, read Chapter 2, Denominational Affairs.

The encouragement of our minister, the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider, was vital. Her support never faltered.



1.

A CASE FOR TENACITY

By Eva H. Gemmill

The West beckoned Boston missionaries, including Unitarians, in 1825. That year, and in that city, religious liberals formed the American Unitarian Association (AUA). Their first "mission of inquiry" focused on thriving communities on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, where a substantial number of New England businessmen had settled. Just as predicted, Unitarian churches were soon established: in Louisville and Cincinnati in 1830, and in St. Louis in 1835.

New York State's rapid growth also inspired the AUA. An emissary urged Boston Unitarians to establish new churches in flourishing cities such as Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Troy, and Albany.

Again, the AUA was right on target.

But how different Albany was from those other New York State cities. While they were relatively new, Albany was as ancient as Boston, and certainly as aristocratic. Moreover, New York's capital city had become New England's gateway to the West. In 1825, the same year the AUA was born in Boston, the barge *Seneca Chief* left Buffalo via the brand new Erie Canal, passing through Albany en route to New York City where it dumped a symbolic barrel of Lake Erie water into the Atlantic Ocean. Traffic on the Erie Canal generated a burst of energy

that helped to create the Empire State. New York soon led the nation in population, transportation, manufacturing, commerce, and agriculture.

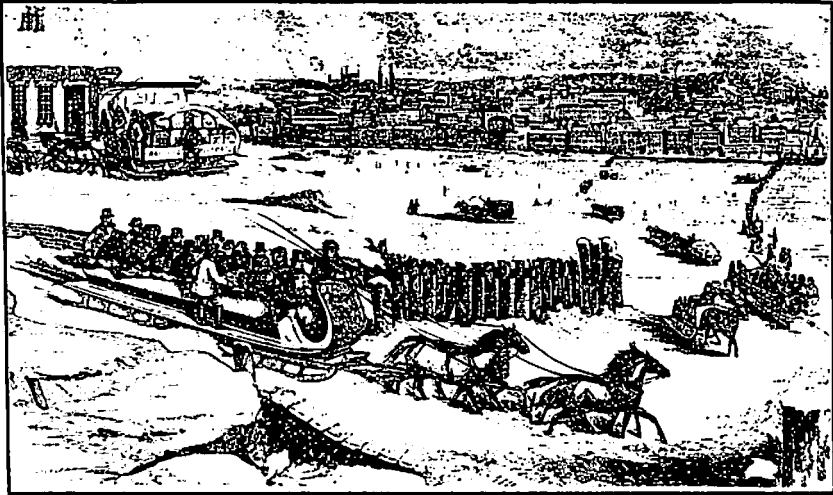
Even before the Erie Canal opened, so many New England farmers and merchants "discovered" the state that historians write of the "Yankee invasion" of New York. David Ellis, New York Historian, traces the word "Yankee" to *Jan kee*, the Dutch word for "pirate." The Dutch, who settled the area in the early 1600s, had become a small component of Albany's mushrooming population two centuries later, when New England Unitarians and Universalists established churches in New York's capital city.

But religious liberals, then as now, were a minority: migrant Yankees were far more likely to bring evangelistic fervor to New York. In fact, the State was the scene of astonishing religious diversity by mid-19th Century. Some earnest men and women assembled ascension garments, others repented at revivals led by itinerant preachers, many sought ideal societies on earth. Clergy of all denominations, including Unitarians and Universalists, declared war on the Demon Rum. Established denominations continued to save souls and perform significant social services. A few men and women discussed the liberal Christian views of the Unitarian and Universalist pioneers, Channing and Ballou.

Correspondence of Harmanus Bleecker, Albany aristocrat and early member of the First Unitarian Society of Albany, clearly shows that the concept of liberal Christianity was alive in Albany in the 1830s. Dr. William Ellery Channing and the Rev. Jared Sparks exchanged friendly letters with Bleecker, for example, and other Bleecker correspondence discussed the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Bellows, and Margaret Fuller. In 1840 Bleecker, then envoy to The Hague, requested copies of Channing lectures for his Dutch friends.

Another subject of the Bleecker correspondence was Albany's development as a transportation center. One friend wrote to him:

In 18 months we shall pass from Boston to Albany in 10-12 hours. The New Yorkers are alarmed and have [started] their road. Think of a country whose business requires a Hudson River, and a railroad alongside of it!! Albany will be at the head of two markets, it will command both, and must become the depot for the Great West...New York and Boston commission houses will be here contending for the produce from our Canal. Property must rise and our population approximate to that of Boston.



The Boston to Albany rail connection stopped at East Greenbush; thus passengers still crossed the Hudson River by ferry, or on the ice as shown in this 1856 illustration, until the first railroad bridge at Albany was built in 1866. (Courtesy of Shirley Dunn)

The railroad enhanced interaction between Albany and Boston, and our archives contain a great many references to trips between the two cities. Both Unitarians and Universalists believed that Albany's intellectual and business climate would support the growth of liberal religious views. But tenacity became more important than optimism.

In this book two chapters deal with the 1842 formation of the First Unitarian Society of Albany (FUSA): in Chapter 2 it is a denominational event; while Chapter 8, a review of John Guffin's *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, records the determined efforts of a small group to hold fast. The early days of Albany's First Universalist Society are reviewed in Chapter 9, about which also see the Appendix.

As for the founders themselves, names of some early Unitarians are found in our archives and in histories of Albany, and John Guffin has left us additional research that did not appear in his Centennial history. Among FUSA's early pew-holders and/or trustees (in alphabetical order):

Harmanus Bleeker, honored citizen of Albany, attorney, congressman, U.S. envoy to The Hague, FUSA trustee at his death in 1849, and "a most zealous well-informed and hearty disciple of Liberal Christianity.";

Ami N. Burton, M.D., a "Thomsonian" physician whose son, R.J. Burton,

was also a physician and FUSA member;

Samuel Cheever, first judge of the Court of Common Pleas and of the County Court, 1833-38;

William Durant, a prosperous merchant of the firm Pratt & Durant, who left FUSA \$5,000 at his death in 1844;

Millard Fillmore, Buffalo Unitarian until he came to Albany to be state comptroller. He left Albany for Washington in 1849 as Zachary Taylor's Vice President, and became U.S. President upon Taylor's death in 1850;

James A. Gray, in 1825 the first manufacturer of pianos in Albany, firm of Boardman and Gray, a prominent businessman;

George T. Hill, one of the original trustees, shortly left Albany to attend Meadville Theological School, and was ordained in 1847;

Orville L. Holley, editor of the *Albany Daily Advertiser*, author and scholar, and New York State surveyor general in 1838. (Dr. Horace Holley, Unitarian minister and president of Transylvania University, and the Hon. Myron Holley, philanthropist and pillar of the Rochester Unitarian Society, were his brothers.);

Joseph M. Lovett, treasurer of the Albany Exchange Savings Bank in 1860;

Lansing Merchant, member of Albany Board of Trade since its organization, a director and trustee of National Exchange and Exchange Savings Banks;

Solomon M. Parke, whose obituary calls him "a well-known Auctioneer...in active business in Albany from his early manhood...respected and trusted";

William B. Pierce, prominent local merchant;

John Van Buren, M.D., a physician who "enjoyed a favorable reputation with Albany's Dutch population" -- Dutch was his mother-tongue;

Stephen Van Schaack, well known merchant whose advertisements appear prominently in contemporary newspapers.

True, the U.S. President and the ambassador are unique in FUSA's history. The remainder of the occupations, however, could typify today's membership if we added teachers and government workers. Studies show that Unitarian Universalism, one of the nation's smallest denominations, contains a disproportionate number of professionals. That appears to have been the case at FUSA in the 19th Century, as well as today. (See Appendix for Israel Rapoport's "Notes on FUSA Demography.")

Yet for reasons about which we can only guess, these relatively prosperous Albany Unitarians remained dependent upon funds from the AUA for more than a century. Today, self-sufficient and sending respectable sums to Boston in support of the denomination, we find the mystery of our early poverty as intriguing as our perseverance.

Indeed, tenacity appears to characterize the longevity of both

Unitarians and Universalists in Albany. Struggles of the First Universalist Society, documented in Chapter 9, often paralleled those of Albany Unitarians. Men and women with strongly-held convictions formed small congregations here; like-minded denominations helped to sustain them; and 22 Universalist and 28 Unitarian ministers each brought his or her own unique style of steadfastness.

MINISTERIAL DIVERSITY AND INNOVATIONS AT FUSA

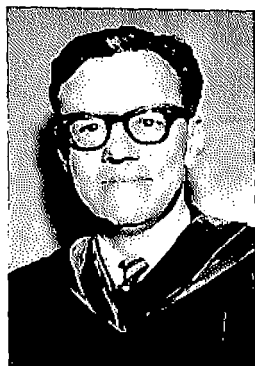
The following section begins to update FUSA's Centennial history, *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*. We concentrate on the nine ministers, pictured on the following page, who served FUSA from the 1942 Centennial to the 1992 Sesquicentennial. Many events that began during their tenures have become FUSA traditions.

John Guffin's history ends during the ministry of the Rev. Kenneth C. Walker, who came to the pulpit in 1935. Although records for the next two decades are sparse, many present members who were active during that time agree: a handful of loyal and enthusiastic Unitarians held the church together through the Depression to post-World War II years.

Ken Walker resigned in 1945 to become minister of the Unitarian Church of Bloomington, Illinois. He became Bloomington's minister emeritus in 1960, a position he held until his death in 1992. Ken and Nan Walker's friends remember their personal warmth and their social concerns. Ken's sermons are often described as "intellectual." His efforts to spread liberal religion through radio talks, advertising, and public meetings are documented in archives at FUSA and the UUA. Included is Walker's observation, "The plain truth is you can't operate successfully here on a budget of \$4,200."

Converts to Unitarianism from Albany's expanding world of bureaucracy and academia, as well as many Turn-of-the-Century members and their descendants, were among the close-knit group who welcomed the Rev. Marius McKarl Nielsen to the Unitarian church in January 1946.

"Karl was an exciting change," one person says, recalling his red hair, red convertible, and red Irish setter. A news article noted Nielsen's earlier education and experience in engineering, study at Harvard Divinity School, and graduation from Union Theological Seminary; and that he



From 1942 to the present FUSA ministers have been the Reverends Kenneth C. Walker, M. McKarl Nielsen, Ernest D. Pipes, Jr., James M. Barr, Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr., Donald H. Wheat, John Corrado, George A. Williams, and Joan Kahn-Schneider.

"toured 28 countries to study comparative religion and meet progressive leaders." He came to Albany from Charleston, South Carolina.

Karl's incisive sermons were delivered with his unique flair. One Sunday he donned a monk's robe and sandals, looking rather like a red-bearded Nazarene. His outspoken support for liberal issues of the day engendered strong loyalties, as well as some reservations.

Homo sum. humani nihil a me alienum puto. (Translation: I am a person. I think that nothing human is alien to me.) This quotation from the Roman playwright, Terence (c.184 B.C.), was painted at Karl's request on the lintel above the bay window in Channing Hall. Designating Channing Hall as "One World Hall," a reflection of post-World War II idealism, was also Karl's idea. It is still identified as such by a plaque at the Washington Avenue entrance -- but alas, Frank Reed's splendid map of the world, which covered the west wall of One World Hall, was a casualty of the 1962 building construction.

Nielsen resigned in 1951, quite ill. Following his recovery he and his wife, Lucienne, lived in Sarasota, Florida where he was minister of the Unitarian Fellowship until his death in 1969.

Albany's Unitarian Society was the first parish for the Rev. Ernest D. Pipes, Jr., in 1952, after his graduation from Harvard Divinity School. He inherited a small congregation of loyal men and women, most of whom belonged to the Laymen's League or Women's Alliance. These two organizations still performed most of the functions which are now overseen by more than 20 committees and councils. Here are three examples that, today, would involve the Director of Religious Education, Religious Education Council, Social Responsibilities Council, Buildings and Grounds, the Volunteer Coordinator, and the Hospitality Committee:

- Pipes asked the Alliance to send two members to meet with LRY leaders who were visiting from Boston, to learn effective ways of working with young people.
- Alliance member Maggie Pipes represented FUSA at the Albany Council of Churches' Committee on Social Action; and in 1956 an NAACP director spoke to the Alliance about local discrimination in employment and housing, urging Alliance members to join NAACP. (The meeting was of particular interest since Maggie and Ernie Pipes had just sold their house to an Afro-American family.)

- While members of the Laymen's League painted Channing Hall, ladies of the Women's Alliance prepared their lunch.

Although active membership was less than 100, real growth had begun. Ernie issued what was probably our first regular newsletter. And committees began to concentrate on areas such as membership and hospitality. Both FUSA and the denomination had begun to feel the effects of the post-World War II population explosion.

One member recalls a film series on mental hygiene at that time. Speakers were engaged as well, such as Child Psychologist Dr. Lenore Sportsman. Others who were then, like the Pipeses, young parents, are still grateful to Ernie and his wife, Maggie, for providing intellectual and social sustenance when toddler-talk seemed to fill their lives.



FUSA President William L. Holt has just presented a farewell gift to Ernie Pipes. Maggie is on his right, with their boys, Bruce and Gordon. It's June 1956, at Standing's farm in East Nassau.

Since many of the new members were young families with modest incomes, however, a low budget continued to characterize our church finances during the Pipes ministry. Thus this thoughtful, well trained and highly respected professional, who carried out his ministerial duties with competence and also trimmed the hedge and became an expert at maintaining a coal fire in our cranky furnace, received an annual salary of about \$4,500. In 1956 Ernie resigned from the Albany pastorate to become minister of the Santa Monica Unitarian Community Church, from which he retired in 1991 after a 35-

year tenure. He and Maggie continue to live in Santa Monica.

The Rev. James Madison Barr arrived in Albany in August, 1956. Just a month into his new post, Jim reported this enviable concern: our collection plates were not deep enough! Two months later he noted in his *Newsletter* column that FUSA membership rose from 97 in 1953 to 133 in 1955, and stood at 162 in December 1956. He added, "I hope to be able to carry forward the work which you, and my immediate predecessor, the Rev. Ernest Pipes, have advanced so well." And he did.

Jim Barr was (still is!) a gifted preacher. He fiercely defended freedom in those post-McCarthy days. A graduate of the University of Virginia, Jim taught and practiced law and served on the Charlottesville City Council before he decided to become a Unitarian minister. He studied for the ministry at Starr King Seminary and served the Winchendon, Massachusetts church before coming to Albany.

Social life at FUSA in the early Barr years was still often divided into events for Women's Alliance or Laymen's League. But the spring and fall Rummage Sales, on which both organizations collaborated, brought men, women, and children together. On the Friday night then reserved for the congregation, Channing Hall was packed with eager shoppers seeking discarded treasures, as noisy and crowded and colorful as an oriental bazaar, with Walter Underwood presiding. The origin of this event is beyond recall. In 1964 Mary Reich began her remarkable regime, heading spring and fall sales for the next twenty-one years. Rummage Sale proceeds, about \$2,000 each year, are distributed only after the traditional allocations to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and Planned Parenthood. June Hall chaired the Rummage Sale in 1986. Since then Mike and Ann D'Attilio have been Mary Reich's worthy successors.

Another fundraiser/social event on which we still depend is the Book Sale, started in 1959 by Al Weissbard. Among many faithful workers in this labor-intensive and remunerative enterprise: Charlie Estey, Alf Davies, Dan Sekellick, Chuck Manning, Bill Batt, Don Odell, Seth Edelman and Is Rapoport. Since 1985 Rapoport has been in charge of



One of a dozen busy tables at a June Booksale, with Is Rapoport in the dark shirt.

acquiring countless boxes of books that he and his committee transport to Delaware Plaza early on the first Saturday morning in June. Proceeds

from the Book Sales, which now include an autumn sale at the Empire State Plaza, subsidize the annual Fellowship Dinner.

Our first records of the Humanist Club are also found in the Barr years. FUSA trustees acknowledged the club in 1959 as the Albany Chapter of the American Humanist Association. Several FUSA members now attend the Capital District Humanist Society, which meets elsewhere in Albany.

A 1961 *Newsletter* records this impression: Jim Barr, and other Albany ministers, were invited to participate in a television program, "Should the Pulpit Be Used as a Political Rostrum?" Cameramen and producers who came to interview Barr were so impressed with our handsome building that they introduced the series with an exterior shot of the church, and filmed the interview in our sanctuary. Jim expressed gratitude to "persons like Win Oliphant and Mary Irish who have fought to keep our building pure and beautiful."

Margot Barr was an essential part of her husband's ministry. An extraordinary Director of Religious Education for FUSA, she guided the Church School's remarkable growth with intelligence and grace.

In February, 1962, Jim accepted a call from the Memphis Unitarian Church. Following Margot's death in 1980, he resigned from the Memphis Church in 1982 after a twenty-year tenure.

The Barrs had worked hard on preliminary commitment to an expansion program, although when they left, the church building still consisted of the sanctuary and Channing Hall.

By September 1962, when the Rev. Nicholas C. Cardell preached his first sermon at FUSA, the Religious Education Wing was a reality -- new classrooms, foyer, offices and lounge. Great credit goes to the trustees and the Building Committee, headed by Dr. T. Lewis Rider, for their commitment to this complex project throughout six minister-less months. The congregation, although deeply in debt, was united by its endeavor. The handsome new wing, associated building changes, and furnishings had cost a total of \$197,980, of which \$146,500 remained to be paid. The mortgage kept us poor, but the times kept us busy.

Undaunted, Nick began what would be the longest ministerial tenure in our history. Unprecedented civil unrest in 1962 and protracted peace talks in 1974 bracketed his ministry, which covered one of the most turbulent periods in U.S. history. Nick had been in Albany only a year when he faced a congregation come together in shock and grief over the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Ensuing years saw riots on campuses

and in cities, and in 1968 the violent deaths of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Nick led Albany Unitarians in well-publicized marches and verbal skirmishes, most notably over alleged local voting irregularities. (See Chapter 3.) And the agony of Vietnam continued.

Several organizations and institutions that are part of our church life today originated in the Cardell era. Some of them are described here.

"Many years of discussion...have finally resulted in the formation of the Albany Area Memorial Society, Inc.," announced a March 1964 *Newsletter*, referring to efforts as early as 1957. Original officers of the Memorial Society were Albany Unitarians Wayne Davis, Morris Gordon, Arnold Gelbin, Nick Cardell, Mary Leue, George Kleinberger, Doug Marshall, Gustave Schwamm and Ted Standing. By 1977 membership in the Memorial Society stood at 1,000, of which only a small minority were Albany Unitarians. Presently FUSAns constitute approximately ten percent of 1,500 members of the Memorial Society of the Hudson-Mohawk Region, Inc. The Society makes an annual contribution to FUSA for use of duplicating equipment, meeting and storage/office space.

Another FUSA affiliate group, Solo Spirits, emerged in 1974. They requested support from the trustees for a singles group which would affiliate with the church, but not be restricted to church members. By 1978 some 250 Solo Spirits were meeting at FUSA. Although they no longer meet, the group is credited with attracting several non-FUSAns to Unitarian Universalism.

In 1962 an Art Committee was formed, chaired by Ruth Flanders, with a mandate to beautify the newly refurbished Channing Hall. Frank Reed, Margaret Cunningham and her daughter, Miki, Jacqueline Imai, Sharon Villines, Stan Reich, Dan Sekellick, Kathy Gordon, Brita and Vincent Walker, Marge Foster, Lois Webb, Arlene Gilbert, Susan Campbell, and Terry Way are some of the FUSA artists who have worked with the Art Committee since then. In about 1967 Art Committee Chair Max Feinbloom constructed large panels in the exhibit area. Filled with paintings, drawings, and photography, often by members of the congregation, the panels continue to beautify Channing Hall. Exhibits are changed several times during the church year.

Plans were announced in March 1972 for a little magazine of poetry, essays, and short stories, and in March 1974 the first issue of our familiar *Oriel* was introduced. Most years since then the magazine's editors, long headed by Helena English, selected and published original work of FUSA poets, writers and artists. Kelly Amerson Lopez is the present editor.

Chances are that our church has always had a library. Our present

library dates from the Cardell years when Religious Education Council Chair Ann Eberle and Director of Religious Education Diane Edgington requested the board of trustees to turn the room off of Channing Hall (the old kitchen) into a Church Library. "Good idea," said the trustees, and moved to find proper storage for the tables and chairs that filled the room. Dan Sekellick and Steve Shapiro constructed library shelves where sink and stove once stood. Librarian Ursula Poland, with Marilyn Niles and Peg Hout, prepared the books we then owned. By the time it was dedicated, in December 1968, the collection was augmented by a gift of books from our new member, Dr. Charles R. Joy. It was named Joy Library in his honor. See Chapters 2 and 6 for more on Dr. Joy.

Soon afterward Dorothy Shelford (Fischer) became librarian, and systematized the expanded collection. In recent years Charles Semowich, Bernie Kennedy, Karl Horstmann, Jess Little, and Cassie Hamm have served as librarians. Bill Webb created improvements to Joy Library, funded in memory of Elinor Keeler who had been an enthusiastic worker in both Joy Library and the Channing Bookstore.

Of course some ideas, born in the Cardell years, reached fruition in later ministries. An example is the Church Council of committee chairs, which met briefly in 1973; 11 years later the trustees created the Program Coordinating Council (PCC), a monthly forum for committee chairs with an exemplary record of usefulness. The board vice president conducts PCC and is the trustees' liaison with this group as it coordinates meetings, airs concerns, and keeps abreast of multiple activities.

Some groups have waned. In 1971 "Unitarian Conversations," or Regional Fellowship Groups, started in Albany, Delmar, Voorheesville, and East of the Hudson. Only the latter group claims an unbroken series of enthusiastic meetings in members' homes -- due, we believe, to Dell Schwamm's dynamite idea to spark conversation with a pot-luck supper. Barbara Sekellick succeeded Mary Standing and Roland Hummel as meeting coordinator for East-of-the-Hudson.

In March 1974 Nick announced that he was seeking another post. He resigned in May to assume the ministry of May Memorial Unitarian Society in Syracuse. Nick and Cathy Seeger, an Albany Unitarian, were married in 1975. In 1994 he celebrates two decades at May Memorial.

From September 1974 until March 1975 Albany Unitarians were a congregation without a minister -- about the same length of time between the Barr and Cardell ministries. For most of one church year the trustees met, the office functioned efficiently, committees and councils performed their functions, and services were held. Thus in March 1975, when the

Rev. Donald H. Wheat arrived at FUSA from Chicago's Third Unitarian Church, he found a self-sufficient congregation.

Wheat missed his former parishioners, however, and they missed him. In August 1975 he decided to return to Third Unitarian in Chicago, where he continues his ministry. (Incidentally, the Rev. Thomas Robjent, successor to our charismatic Turn-of-the-Century minister, Dr. William Brundage, also served this congregation from March to August – but the year was 1906.)

The new Search Committee started its work in September 1975, and at that time the trustees called an interim minister, the Rev. John K. Hammon. He began his ministry in Albany in November 1975. Jack and his wife, Oressa, served us well, and they left many warm friends.



UUA's concept of interim ministry was new to us when the Rev. John and Oressa Hammon came to FUSA in 1975-76. They quickly learned our names and our needs. Thus it was, also, with the Rev. Eileen Karpeles in 1984-85 (saying farewell to Frank Cole), and the Rev. Stanley Aronson in 1988-89.

Warmth, in fact, became a major concern in the 1970s. From the purchase of our first church in 1844 to the present, the cost of heat has always plagued us. A 1948 FUSA letter complains: "We burnt up all the dough we raised to fix the ceiling. Coke bill 40% higher than normal -- a dilly of a winter."

The 1974 energy crisis, however, forced the entire nation to face its dependence on oil. FUSA, too, entered a new era, reexamining for the next decade its use and waste of energy resources. Storm windows and weather-proofing were installed, the heating system was updated, and we lowered the thermostat to 65 when occupied and 55 when unoccupied. One frosty morning when the furnace couldn't cope, a member quipped, "Many are cold but few are frozen." Bob Thomson, Building and Grounds chair and "Energy Czar," reported in 1978 a 28 percent decrease in fuel use and a 10 percent decrease in heating costs.

Attention was also directed to another form of combustion. As early

as 1972 our trustees had considered effects of smoking on non-smokers, and attempted to clear the coffee hour smoke from Channing Hall through educational reform. In the ensuing years numerous policy statements designated smoking areas, but it was not until September 1990 that the board finally declared the entire church to be smoke-free. One aggrieved smoker mistakenly believed that the Latin quotation in Channing Hall was FUSA's motto, "Here let no one be a stranger," and she proposed this addition, "...except smokers!"

At a special meeting in May 1976 the congregation called the Rev. John Corrado to its pulpit. A graduate of John Carroll University and Starr King School for the Ministry, he had been minister of UU churches in Camp Springs, Maryland, and Charleston, West Virginia.

John's arrival in Albany coincided with a nationwide drop in UU membership. Following the dramatic surge of the '60s, membership declined at FUSA as well as at churches across the country. Some marginal churches, in fact, were closing. Statisticians pointed to demographic causes, but the effect on John was to get into high gear.

"Shall we watch passively or lend a hand?" he asked. Before his first year was out he brought plans to the trustees for expanding our membership and our influence, with suggestions for "Church Building," as he called it. Supporting this concept, trustees and committee chairs worked with John to develop realistic goals for the church.

John is also a gifted musician, and he occasionally shared this talent during services. Chapter 7 describes some of the special musical treats the Corrado years brought us.

In October 1977 Hospitality Chair Judy Weissbard (Hanson) brought to the trustees her committee's idea for an all-church auction. The plan worked. Volunteers solicited all sorts of goods and services to be auctioned. Then, on the appointed evening, Channing Hall became a bistro with customers sipping and snacking, and bidding on Charlie's Lake George cruise, Helen's backgammon lessons, Fred and Martha's hike, and Al's famous cheesecake. With straw-hatted auctioneers and efficient clerks, this admirable custom continues. Auction V raised \$2,700 toward a new roof in 1982; and 1992's proceeds were \$6,000.

Throughout John's ministry the Down-to-Earth Food Co-op existed in various forms. Begun in December 1975, the group sold cheese and organically grown grains, nuts, and other staples, with members sharing the work and the fun. One chore sticks in everyone's memory: parceling out orders of peanut butter and honey. Another bright memory: a

beaming Mimi Boyd driving up to the front door, her pickup truck loaded with produce fresh from a dawn excursion to the Farmers' Market. Potluck dinners and programs, even a baking contest, were held, according to co-chairs of membership, Mary Stierer and Anita Ramundo. Roger Hall edited the newsletter *Down-to-Earth DIRT*; at one time Ellie and Wes Keeler were treasurers and Ellie Heron was president; and Tom Nattell, also once president, raised and sold vegetable seedlings. It is believed that the Social Responsibilities Council sponsored the group. A great many members came from the community, as well as from the church. Down-to-Earth's date of demise is unrecorded.

(Mildred Guffin reminds us of a food co-op "much earlier." Her mother, Flora Guffin, and Mary Vosburg were involved in the co-op as members of the Alliance. They hired an unemployed grocer, probably during the Depression, to run a store at the corner of Lake and Hudson.)

In June 1981, looking ahead to the final mortgage payment on the RE Wing that December, FUSA's board of trustees formed a Futures Committee and hired a facilitator to help elicit ideas on long-range planning. "What do we want our church to look like in the year 2000?" was one question presented at Forum and asked of committees. After a number of efforts the Futures Committee, headed by Martha Schroeder and Al Lierheimer, reported "...many people believe that there is no compelling reason to look 20 years ahead." The April 1982 Fellowship Dinner featured a symbolic burning of the mortgage, celebrating the end of 20 years of monthly payments and relative privation. Celebrants at the dinner could hardly remember our church *without* an RE Wing!

A less well known facet of the mortgage burning was that we had also liquidated our long-standing debt to the denomination, part of which was incurred for construction of our church in 1925. In 1960, two years before FUSA approached the denomination for assistance in expanding our building, Trustee John Hayes Bailey had calculated the total of this old debt and urged us to whittle down the account. UUA's \$20,000 loan to FUSA for the RE Wing, in 1962, included the remainder of that old loan, \$7,500. Finally, in 1982, the account was closed.

Corrado accepted the call of the Grosse Pointe, Michigan church in 1983, and he continues to serve them. As he prepared for his departure from Albany in December, the board invited the Rev. Eileen Karpeles to be our interim minister. (See Chapter 5.)

All too soon another church required Eileen's services as interim minister. Responding to invitations to return, Eileen noted in her newsletter column, "I'm sure you can see the reasoning behind the

ministers' code of ethics when it urges departing ministers to stay far away, leaving a clear field to their successor."

The Rev. Dr. George Williams conducted his first service at FUSA in March 1985. Surely the unusual success of the canvass that spring -- \$2,500 more than the goal -- was a good omen! Early in his ministry George proposed formation of a Long Range Goals Committee. He also suggested a chalice for the sanctuary, for which Billie Stott donated funds. Thus began one of our few rituals: lighting the chalice on Sunday mornings, by a church school student.

With a Ph.D. from Edinburgh (he had also earned a B.A. from Gettysburg and a B.D. from Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary) George had spent the past year at the Riverside, California church and the previous eight years at the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania UU church.

George gave his enthusiastic support to the Caring Network, then run by Lois and Bill Webb. Of course comfort and aid had always been exchanged between members of the congregation, informally, as needs arose or were discovered. At an earlier time the caring folks were called "People Helping People." Having a sensitive and systematic method of discovering and delivering those services through the Caring Network has become increasingly important to our church family.

At an August 1986 Board Retreat George Williams introduced the concept of an area residence development for retired UUs. A group of interested FUSAnS started meeting, and by December they were joined by UUs from Schenectady and Glens Falls, all interested in a Project for Unitarian Universalist Senior Housing -- PUUSH, they called themselves.

Trustees of the member churches approved the PUUSH concept and appointed representatives. PUUSH members incorporated, elected officers, visited sites, employed consultants, viewed properties, and sought options, always with due regard for their comprehensive planning surveys. Their August 1991 survey drew a remarkable 55 percent return. It indicated an encouraging demand for units such as PUUSH planned.

Sadly, however, by 1993 the lending and building climate had changed. PUUSH acknowledged that "current economic problems...were too much to overcome," and curtailed its activity. The PUUSH board of directors deserves much credit for endless hours of dedicated work in complex professional areas. Headed by Fred Schroeder, with special assistance from Joe Richardson, other 1993 board members from the Albany church were Charles Estey, Ursula Poland, and Bill Webb.

Completion of the concrete ramp at the West Street entrance in

November 1986 culminated discussions begun three years before when the Albany League of Arts requested increased accessibility for the handicapped because of the public functions held at FUSA. Finally everyone concerned had agreed on the design, materials, and location. Bathroom facilities for the "differently abled," as contract talks described handicapped persons, were installed in 1990.

Bill Batt's first Forum on the Hemlock Society was given in 1983, when that group was newly formed in U.S. In June 1987 Batt again described the Hemlock Society and urged interested persons to start a chapter which, indeed, began during the next church year. The Hemlock Society expresses its mission as "Supporting the option of voluntary active euthanasia with physician assistance for the terminally ill who request it." As with the Memorial Society of the Hudson Mohawk Region, Hemlock's board of directors and membership includes FUSAs among men and women from a wide area.

George Williams notified the board in April 1988 that he had decided to start a new career as supervisor of chaplains at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown, Pennsylvania. His resignation was effective September 1. At that time the Rev. Stanley Aronson became our interim minister.

Stan's year with us began with a great sadness for the congregation, when Board President John Cross became ill with AIDS and found that he must curtail all activities. He died the following April. Vice President Barbara Sekellick competently served as acting president.

In May 1989 the congregation called the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider to its pulpit. In June we said farewell to Stan, and Joan and Charlie Kahn-Schneider arrived in Albany later that summer. At her first service in September, Joan made the welcome announcement that FUSAs had again exceeded the canvass goal, this time by \$3,000.

Joan's background might once have been unusual. In 1989, however, a large proportion of UU ministers were women, and many, like Joan, raised families and had careers before entering ministerial training. Joan owned a bookstore, then earned her academic credentials at Antioch and United Theological Seminary. Before coming to Albany she served churches in Farmington Hills, Michigan and Mentor, Ohio, with a two-year stint at UUA headquarters.

Among our new experiences was the Social Responsibilities Council's Stone Soup Sunday. One cold November morning our Master Chef Jack Bellick accepted offerings of all kinds of soup ingredients from individuals on their way to the service. During that hour Jack magically

turned the carrots and turnips and leeks, herbs and hamburger and what-not, into "stone soup." After church, steaming bowlsful were served with crusty bread, and families donated the cost of a lunch toward alleviating hunger in the community.

Oriel XIV was gearing up for publication in spring 1990. For the first time, chapters were included of books written by members of the congregation: Richard Matturo, from his novel *Troy*, and James Nehring, from *Why Do We Gotta Do This Stuff, Mr. Nehring?* Both books had been published in the past year.

Following John Cross's generous bequest to the Society of about \$120,000, the ad hoc Trust Committee proposed in September 1990 a permanent endowment trust and, at the request of the trustees, drafted changes to the existing trust document. In February 1991 FUSA members voted to empower a permanent trust committee to invest and manage gifts and bequests made to the Society. They elected as the first Endowment Trust trustees Sam Freeman, Chuck Manning, Deborah Richards, Fred Schroeder and Ann Brandon.

In 1992 the Endowment Trust Committee allocated \$6,397 to the following: a dishwasher, fireproof file, new hymnals, the Channing Lecture, Sister Church Project, and Neighborhood Summer Children's Project. Their annual Investment Planning seminars are well attended.

FUSA's routine in the church year 1990-91 was overlaid by three concerns so compelling that, in retrospect, it seems a wonder that the church's normal business was conducted. First there was Desert Storm: simmering, erupting, involving everyone. By contrast, FUSA's upcoming Sesquicentennial required a gala celebration (reported in Chapter 10 by Sesquicentennial Co-chair, Ursula Poland). The third major concern of 1990-91 was LRPC (pronounced "lerpec"), the Long Range Planning Committee set up by the board.

Despite FUSA's esthetically appealing site and architecture, trustees were beset by issues involving crowding in the sanctuary and Channing Hall, and they welcomed the UUA's keen interest in long-range planning in 1990. The board named Richard Onken Long Range Planning Coordinator, and the LRPC task force was co-chaired by Al DeSalvo and Barbara Sekellick. It included Mark Butt, Ann Eberle, Chuck Manning, Tina Raggio, Reese Satin, and Susan Taylor. The board also engaged a consultant, Fred Shilling, and specified that a report was due one year hence.

Accordingly, by June 1991 LRPC had surveyed 181 persons by questionnaire and 170 in small groups, and produced a detailed computer

analysis of the data they collected.

In November 1991 the trustees established LRPC II, naming Peter Brown, Al DeSalvo, Joan Kahn-Schneider, Peter Meixner, Deborah Richards, Martha Schroeder, Nancy Willie-Schiff and FUSA President Richard Onken, ex officio, to carry forward the first stage of planning to another level. Their statement of purpose:



We exist, first, to respond to the questions: Does the congregation want to grow or remain stable? What are the implications of this answer as far as physical facilities and programs are concerned? and then to recommend a plan of action.

May 1990 Board Retreat, where FUSA trustees formed the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC). Front row: Barbara Sekellick, Facilitator Fred Shilling, the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider. Middle: George Kleinberger, Abby Jones, Lois Thomson, Ruth Stephenson, Kelly Lopez, Susan Taylor, Ann D'Attilio, Mike D'Attilio. Top: Bob Thomson, Bobbi Place, Walter Lifton, Edward Harper, FUSA President Richard Onken, and Mark Butt.

One year later LRPC II

Facilities Subcommittee had surveyed the congregation, analyzed opinions, and engaged in extensive dialog with other societies experiencing a similar process of reassessment. The Two Services Subcommittee had contacted 20 UU churches which hold two services, evaluating the possibility of two services at FUSA in September 1993. The Mission Statement Subcommittee, meanwhile, sought simple, elegant words for "things commonly believed among us." (See Appendix.)

Many of FUSA's ministers have urged their congregations to plan ahead. But LRPC and LRPC II, created by the board of trustees, have involved an unprecedented number of the congregation in their efforts. Chair Peter Brown attributed the "outpouring of support" for long-range planning to the Sesquicentennial's resounding success.

In this climate of change and growth and celebration, Dave Stone became Church Administrator in September 1991, bringing calm efficiency and friendliness to the very busy church office.

Publicity has always been a vital aspect of our church life. Our first account book in 1842 records routine expenditures for newspaper ads, and since then countless committees have discussed the effectiveness and proper focus of messages to the public. More recently our publicity committees have issued weekly notices to local newspapers, placed occasional ads, and prepared comprehensive press releases for special events such as FUSA's Sesquicentennial. Thirty years ago Publicity Chair Louise Tweedie reported that Elfrieda Hartt was responsible for this "appealing, provocative message which ran...four weeks in the Knickerbocker News."

AN INVITATION TO BRING YOUR MIND ALONG...

If you prefer STIMULUS to "Peace of Mind," if you are an incorrigible SEEKER, doubter, questioner -- even upon occasion an unapologetic THINKER...If you are distrustful of systems (religious, political, philosophical) which claim POSSESSION OF FINAL answers...

If you nevertheless believe that LIMITED ANSWERS, subject to change by new evidence can be found and usefully acted upon...

Why not find out what this religious society of hospitable individualists has to offer?

In addition to Elfrieda Hartt and Louise Tweedie, FUSA publicists include Victor Tooley, Illiana Hastings, Alice Philips, Jean Brady, Bob Day, Mark Yolles, and Dorothy Bellick.

We have a long history of getting FUSA news out to our congregation, as well as to the public at large. For example, in 1853 a ferocious blizzard delayed installation of a new minister. Trustees rushed the news to an Albany newspaper, and likely passed the word from one member to another -- in those days FUSAns were few in number and they all lived downtown.

A century later our fast growing flock was scattered many miles in all directions from 405 Washington Avenue. Ernie Pipes and Jim Barr communicated with them through weekly newsletters. In the '60s and '70s Administrative Assistant Martha Schroeder produced superior newsletters. The growing complexity of our church life, however, eventually required a person dedicated to producing the Newsletter. Through the '80s June Hall filled this volunteer post faithfully and expertly. More recently Tammis Donovan, and presently Norma Hatcher, have served as editor. An experienced and much-appreciated crew of volunteers assists with posting the newsletter, now named *Windows*.



Some members of the Newsletter crew celebrate the last issue of the 1989-90 church year: Ruth Stephenson, Elizabeth Klein, Mim Rider (also listed as a 1964 Newsletter volunteer!), Irene Murdock, Joan Kahn-Schneider, Charlie Kahn-Schneider, Betty Dietz, Len Dietz, Mildred Guffin (not visible), Mary Reich, Ursula Poland, Editor June Hall, Roger Hall. Other faithful workers on the Newsletter crew include Bud and Renee Howard, Dave and Alice Philips, Charles and Ruth Estey, and Paul and Abby Jones.

Thus our files contain a record of current events at FUSA from the 1950s to today. This wondrous repository of newsletters offers us a picture of change and celebration, action and reflection. Each of the following chapters views this experience with a different emphasis.

.....

REFERENCES

- Albany City Directories* 1840 to present, Albany County Hall of Records.
 Albany County Land Records, Grantor/Grantee, City Clerk's Office.
 Alexander, R.S., *Albany's First Church and Its Role in the Growth of the City*, 1988
American Pamphleteering, UUA, 1975
 Ellis, D.M., et al, *A History of New York State*, Cornell University Press, 1967.
 First Unitarian Society of Albany Archives: Newsletters, 1953 to present; Trustees' Minutes 1842 to present; Assorted letters, programs, and files.
 Guffin, J.C., *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, 1942.
 Hackett, D.G., *The Rude Hand of Innovation: Religion and Social Order in Albany, New York, 1652-1836*, Oxford, 1990.
 Hooenboom, O., *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn: One Hundred Fifty Years*, 1987.

- Howell, G.R., *Bi-Centennial History of Albany*, W.W. Munsell and Co., 1886.
- Kendris, Christopher, Historian, St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church, Albany, NY.
Letter Files, UUA Headquarters, Boston, and Andover Harvard Theological Library, Cambridge.
- Lyttle, C.H., *Freedom Moves West*, Beacon Press, 1952.
- Morison, S.E., *The Oxford History of the American People*, Oxford, 1965.
- Munsell, Joel, *The Annals of Albany, 1850-1859*.
- "Pastors & People," *Times Union*, March 23, 1895.
- Pruyn, H.L., *Harmanus Bleecker: An Albany Dutchman*, 1924.
- Robinson, D., *The Unitarians and the Universalists*, Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Rowley, W.E., *Albany: A Tale of Two Cities*, PhD Thesis, Harvard U., 1967.
- Semowich, C.J., "Unitarianism in Albany," in *Historic Albany: Its Churches and Synagogues*, Library Community Services, 1986.
- Tapp, R.B., *Religion among the Unitarian Universalists*, Seminar Press, 1973.
Unitarian Universalist Association Directory, 1992 Edition.
- Urtz, M.S. (Wells), "Unitarianism in Troy, New York, 1845-1935," 1989.
- Wallace, R. "A History of Universalist Societies in New York State."
- West, M., "Unitarianism Had Slow and Financially Troubled Start," in *Knickerbocker News*. October 8, 1949.
- Wright, C. Conrad, Ed., *Stream of Light*, Unitarian Universalist Assoc., 1975.
- Wright, C. Conrad, *Walking Together*, Skinner House, 1989

2.

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

Rather like supportive and generous parents, the denomination has always been there when we needed them. At certain stages of our Society's life, that need was fairly constant. And always there have been those among us who understood the denominational connection, and who were eager to participate in "family" decisions.

A daunting concept? Then let us personalize some aspects of Denominational Affairs:

- *Betsy Miller's joyous report of carrying FUSA's banner in the Grand Opening of her first UU General Assembly;*
- *FUSA Sanctuary workers' pride when the UUSC contributed \$10,000 toward the 1985 trial of their fellow Sanctuary workers in Arizona;*
- *Denominational Affairs Chair Don Cavanaugh flying to Hungary and India to represent FUSA at world conferences of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF);*
- *Fred Boreali, St. Lawrence District Secretary (and fellow FUSAn), serving supper to 50 interested folks in Channing Hall while delegates imparted exciting ideas from their latest district workshop;*
- *Ruth and Charlie Estey winning the St. Lawrence District's "Unsung UU" award, a well earned prize for decades of commitment to FUSA,*

the district, and the denomination;

- *Our board of trustees, shocked and outraged, voting a generous contribution to the denomination's Memorial Fund honoring James Reeb, UU minister killed in a Civil Rights demonstration in 1965;*
- *Director of Religious Education Ann D'Attilio, and all of her predecessors, having instant access to excellent contemporary UUA Religious Education materials for our children;*
- *FUSA folks of all ages interacting with other UUs, at Rowe Camp, Star Island, Ferry Beach, Unirondack, and other denominational facilities; and the list goes on.*

Denominational Affairs is also the personal delight that each of us feels as we discover how our Society connects with other congregations, and how we individual FUSAns relate to other UUs.

.....

WHO WE ARE

By Maryellen Wells

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), with headquarters at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, recognizes just over a thousand congregations in North America. They report a combined adult membership and church school enrollment of 200,599.¹ Adult membership and church school enrollment are charted separately, for both the denomination and for FUSA, for more than half a century, on page 26.

Since Unitarian Universalists are non-creedal and do not make personal or denominational decisions on the basis of Biblical authority, what holds them together? Throughout their history UUs have attempted to protect responsible free thought while seeking a bond of commonality. At present, UU societies affirm and promote these seven basic principles:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process

within our congregations and in society at large;

- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

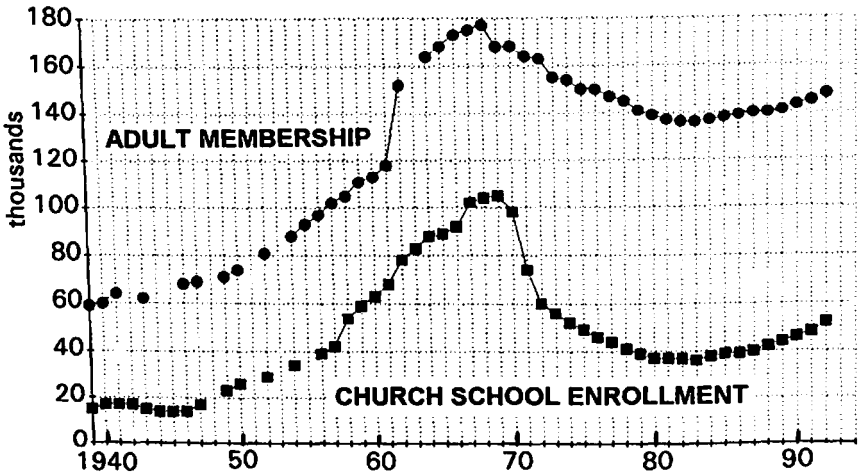
Beliefs within our denomination -- and within our congregation -- range from Christian theology to agnosticism, atheism and humanism. One appeal of Unitarian Universalism is the support and freedom that it offers all persons in their search for truth and meaning. Such individualism, on the other hand, makes organization and governance of the denomination especially challenging.

One comparison of values of UUs to those of some traditional religions follows:

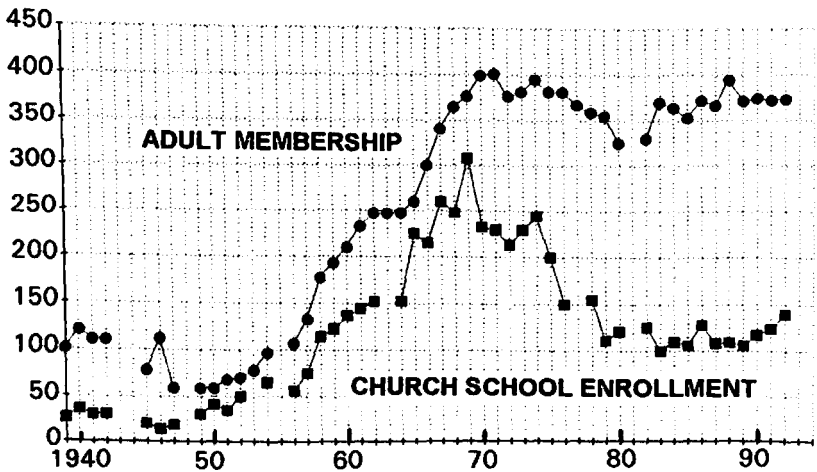
UUs tend to value	as contrasted with
Freedom and independence	Obedience and authority of Orthodox
Self-fulfillment, affirmation	Self-denial, surrender of Fundamentalists
Life and beauty	Death and salvation of Witnesses
Risk and excitement	Security and prosperity of Mormons ²

The same study indicates that, because most UUs do not believe in the extension of consciousness after death, they tend to shift emphasis to the quality and significance of life; further, that although the denomination does not require a specific moral code, UUs tend to commit themselves to a high standard of ethical behavior. They may view the Ten Commandments as acceptable rules to live by, for example, but reject their divine origin. A unique characteristic of the denomination, and certainly of FUSA, is that approximately 90 percent of its members³ come either from another religion or from none at all.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION



FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF ALBANY



These graphs show adult membership and church school enrollment for both the AUA/UUA, and for FUSA. (Note that the scale for AUA/UUA is in thousands.) Data from AUA and UUA Yearbooks.

TWO DENOMINATIONS ARE BORN

Unitarian Universalism was formed by a merger of the two denominations in 1961, culminating more than a century of discussions. Both locally and nationally, consolidation offered a means of strengthening two similar entities. In Albany this happened informally years ago as a practical matter. The First Unitarian Society of Albany affiliated with the New York State Universalist Convention in 1928 (See Chapter 8). Previously FUSA had welcomed Albany's Universalist congregation when that group sold its church in 1912. Other instances of near-merger or temporary merger of the two Albany churches had occurred in the 1800s.⁴

Both nationally and locally, we were able to unite because the strength of our similarities overcame the differences, sometimes keenly felt, between us. The review that follows focuses on the similarities.

The term "Universalist" originated with the idea that a loving God intended salvation for all -- a rejection of the predominant Calvinist theology that a heavenly reward awaited only the predestined "elect." The uniqueness of Unitarians, on the other hand, was their denial of a Biblical base for the Doctrine of the Trinity, and their positive view of the unity of religion and advancing scholarship. Both groups subsequently moved well beyond these simplistic ideas which generated their names.

Unitarian and Universalist concepts spread, even though many outspoken UU predecessors were executed, jailed, or banished for heresy. Some of our "heretical" antecedents were known as Socinians, Anabaptists, and Arminians.

C. Conrad Wright, eminent Unitarian historian, explains the formalization of liberal thought as follows:

In the U.S. the revivalistic excesses of the Great Awakening (1740-43) were sharply criticized by ministers like Charles Chauncy, and soon a liberal reaction against the Calvinist doctrine of original sin and election developed, especially in eastern Massachusetts. In the early decades of the 19th Century the liberals found themselves excluded from Christian fellowship by the Calvinist or evangelical party within the Congregational churches. Forced to be a community by themselves, the liberals, or Unitarians, began to create organizations for the publication of tracts and missionary activity, of which the American Unitarian Association was the most important. But there was no structured relationship, equivalent to a denomination as we now understand it, until after the Civil War.⁵

Independent of the Congregationalists, however, the English are credited with founding the first formal societies of both Universalism and Unitarianism in the United States. The Englishman John Murray landed in New Jersey in 1770 and later founded the First Universalist Church in Gloucester, Massachusetts in 1779. George de Benneville, an English Universalist evangelist, escaped decapitation in France by fleeing to Pennsylvania, where he began preaching Universalism in the 1740s. Joseph Priestley, noted English scientist, also sought refuge in Pennsylvania after being banished from his homeland in 1794. Reforming the Christian church through Unitarianism became his passion, and Priestley founded the First Unitarian Society in Philadelphia in 1796 – the first church in America to bear the name "Unitarian."⁶ In 1785 King's Chapel in Boston, then Episcopalian, approved the use of Unitarian concepts in its prayerbook.

Coincidentally, both Universalists and Unitarians formed their first New York congregation in 1803, both in the central part of the state. From Fly Creek in Otsego County Universalism spread rapidly, and by mid-century the Empire State was dotted with scores of rural Universalist societies. All of the state's major cities, including Albany and Troy, also claimed at least one Universalist Church. The General Convention of Universalists had been formed in Oxford, Massachusetts in 1793, and the stronger New York State Convention of Universalists in 1825.⁷

The oldest Unitarian church in New York, the non-creedal United Protestant Religious Society, was founded in 1803 in Barneveld by two businessmen who had been exiled from Holland because of their liberal views in politics and religion. This little congregation in Oneida County corresponded with Unitarians in England, and did not connect with Boston anti-Trinitarians until 1814. Even after the American Unitarian Association formed in 1825, Unitarian missionary efforts tended to focus not on rural areas such as Barneveld, but on urban centers springing up as a result of the Westward Movement.⁸

A second Great Awakening of religious fervor erupted in Central New York in the 1820s, fueled by the great evangelist Charles Grandison Finney. Although his message was somewhat more forgiving than that of the first Great Awakening, Finney and his followers sought for many years to eradicate Unitarianism and Universalism by harassment, propaganda, and economic boycott.⁹

Universalist minister George Rogers wrote that Utica was "one of the most perfect hot-beds of Calvinist superstition and Orthodox dogmatism that could be found on the continent of America."¹⁰ And Unitarian

minister Charles Graves, who later served FUSA, described harassment of Unitarians in nearby Barneveld:

Not infrequently Unitarians were stopped on the street, upbraided for their heresy; and in many cases a band of religious zealots went to the homes of Unitarians, and poured out their phial of foul abuse. It was common for these 'soldiers of the Lord,' when they met a person, to ask him, 'Where are you going?' Upon being courteously told whither he was bound they would reply, 'No, you are not going there: you are going to hell.'¹¹

Lyttle, in *Freedom Moves West*, credits Finney's revival excesses with instigating the formation of Unitarian churches. Even some Calvinist ministers, meeting with the evangelist in New Lebanon, New York, asked Finney to moderate his tactics lest he create interest in and support for liberal views.

Archival records indicate that Albany Unitarians, too, felt hemmed in by orthodoxy and evangelism at that time. Although we have no data that links FUSA's fortunes to Finney's Albany visits, a visiting Unitarian minister described the local religious climate for the April 15, 1843 issue of the *Christian Register and Observer*:

...a most unprecedented religious excitement prevailed in all the churches, which were thronged day and night for months, by anxious and curious multitudes to hear the most noisy and popular preachers that could be procured from far and near.

The beliefs of Unitarians were spelled out by William Ellery Channing in 1819, but still there was no national organization. Unitarian historian George W. Cooke writes that 30 or 40 ministers and influential laymen, all Unitarians, met in Boston in 1824 as the Anonymous Association, to promote the growth of liberal Christianity. As their name implies, many among them believed their goal could best be achieved by keeping a low profile. So self-evident were their "truths," they believed, that all thinking men would see the light.

In January 1825 the Anonymous Association met at Dr. Channing's Federal Street Church to discuss forming "a national Unitarian society." A vigorous exchange of opinion produced no consensus. Would Unitarians gain "a majority of the people in the country [and thus] become as intolerant as the other sects?" Should Unitarians "come forward in support of their views of truth?" The Rev. John Pierpont

argued, "We have, and we must have, the name Unitarian." (More later on the local significance of this early Unitarian leader.)

And so it was individual Unitarians and liberal Christians of differing opinions who met again, on May 25, 1825. But this time they voted that

...it is expedient to form a new Society to be called the American Unitarian Association [the object of which is] to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity....

They proposed to stimulate liberal religious inquiry by supporting missionaries and publishing tracts. Thus the American Unitarian Association (AUA) was born of divergent views and a common purpose.

AUA missionaries probably targeted Troy and Albany because they were major commercial and transportation centers and their populations then included large numbers of New Englanders.

THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF ALBANY

The Rev. Thompson of Charlestown, Massachusetts, sent by the AUA to preach in Albany in 1830, found limited receptivity to Unitarian ideas. Perhaps conservative Albany felt it had absorbed sufficient liberal institutions. There was a new Universalist church on Herkimer Street (later on Green Street), as well as a Society of Friends on Plain Street and a Jewish congregation on Herkimer Street. In addition, by 1833 many Albany intellectuals belonged to the new Young Men's Association for Mutual Improvement.¹² This vigorous group maintained a library and reading room; and their speakers, who included Unitarians Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Bellows, offered an impressive range of contemporary thought.

There was a twelve-year interim between Rev. Thompson's sermons and the formal organization, on November 29, 1842, of the First Unitarian Society of Albany.

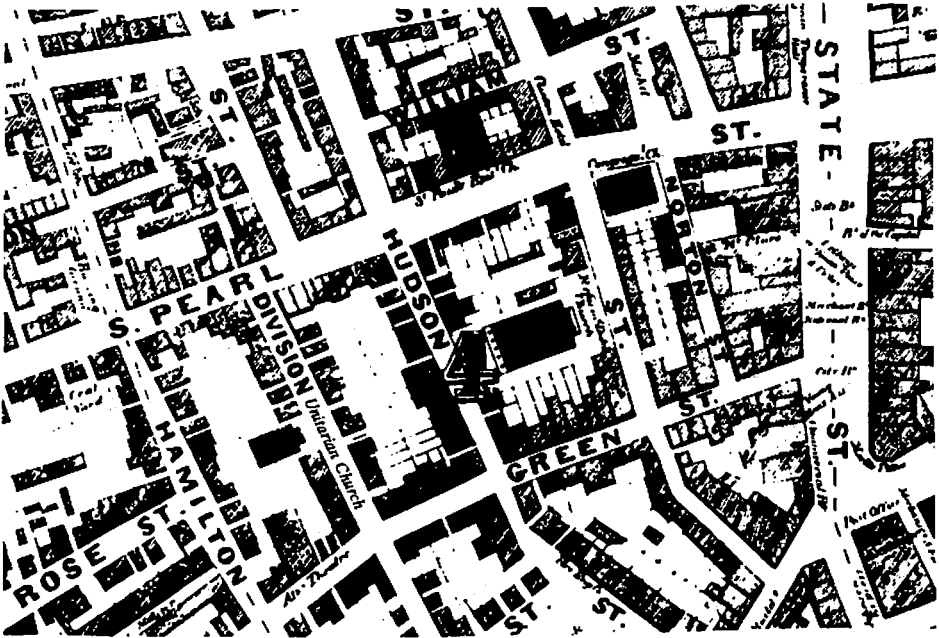
At denominational headquarters in Boston, the Albany file contains an anonymous, handwritten manuscript that tells us that "The real initiator of the Albany church was F.W. Holland, then of Rochester." UU historians note the Rev. Frederick West Holland's vital work in establishing and/or maintaining churches in Brooklyn, Rochester, and other places, but do not mention an essential role he may have played in Albany.¹³ According to the manuscript:

For full sixty years he [Holland] has been actively and continuously engaged

in the gospel ministry...rescuing from destruction about a dozen churches and planting as many more...the most remarkable spirit known to American Unitarian history.

It is likely that Holland both planted *and* rescued FUSA. Our first account book notes payments to him in 1843. Trustees' minutes record that he preached in Albany on October 31, 1852, and afterward an informal meeting of FUSAs decided "to revive the Society which had been scattered for nearly two years." In January 1853 they invited Holland to be their minister, but he apparently declined.

On October 15, 1844, after two years of AUA missionaries, FUSA installed its first minister, the Rev. Henry F. Harrington.



Although no photograph is known to exist of FUSA's 1844-1869 church, this portion of an 1857 map of Albany clearly shows its location on Division Street at lower left. (Map, published by Sprague and Co. in 1857, from McKinney Library Map Collection, Albany Institute of History and Art.)

And what a propitious date the trustees selected for the event! The American Unitarian Association had chosen Albany as the site for its Annual Convention on October 16 and 17. Thus a good attendance could be counted on from the 35 Unitarian churches that its trustees invited. During the summer of 1844, architect Julius Ames had directed masons

and carpenters in refurbishing the 1813 building on Division Street that FUSA had just purchased. Even an upholsterer was employed to cushion the pews.¹⁴ Accounts of that grand occasion, the three-day dedication-installation-convention, appeared in 1843 and 1844 in the Unitarian magazine, *The Christian Register*. Surely such an auspicious beginning allowed the new minister and his flock a measure of pride as they extended their hospitality to the visiting denominational dignitaries.

The Rev. Harrington, imbued with the contemporary Unitarian missionary spirit, looked beyond his pulpit and saw other opportunities in the area -- or was he directed to them by the AUA? The year following his installation he preached at the courthouse in nearby Troy, inspiring the immediate formation of a Unitarian Society in that city.¹⁵ One of the denomination's pioneers, the Rev. John Pierpont, agreed to serve the Troy congregation. He had recently resigned from Boston's Hollis Street Church after a 25-year tenure, due to a political controversy. Pierpont was well known for his support of abolition and temperance.¹⁶

In spite of constant AUA subsidies and the support of some outstanding local citizens, "onward and upward forever" did not characterize FUSA's early period. Discouraging intervals of lay leadership, sparse attendance, and financial distress led to many requests for financial aid. And again and again, with AUA assistance, FUSA appeared to recover.

By 1855 it seemed certain that Albany Unitarians and Universalists, both small and struggling, were about to consolidate as The Independent Congregational Society. This is the information that Trustee Orville Holley conveyed to Universalist A.D. Mayo, then minister of Cleveland's Independent Christian Church.¹⁷ (See Appendix.) Although the formal plan of union between Albany Unitarians and Universalists was unaccountably dropped, Mayo did accept the Society's call in 1856.

Mayo, who called himself a Liberal Christian as well as a Universalist, expanded his ministry to the region around Albany in an effort to gain converts. In a printed sermon, delivered to a convention of Liberal Christians in Greene County during his tenure in Albany, neither the word Unitarian nor Universalist appears in the sermon or to identify Mayo.

Additional research is needed to define and date the shades of theological meaning ascribed by Unitarians to the words "liberal" and "free." We know, for example, that the Albany Liberal Association, organized in 1877 when FUSA was dormant, held afternoon Sunday School and evening lectures.¹⁸ Was that different from Albany's

Freethought Liberal Association? And could the latter have been related to the Free Religious Association that splintered from Unitarianism at the National Conference in 1865? Perhaps we shall find out.

Early in the Civil War Mayo returned to Ohio. He was replaced by Charles Gordon Ames, who was to become one of the denomination's important ministers. Guffin refers to Ames in that period as "an ardent Northerner."

In Chapter 3 the point is made that, as individuals, Unitarians were often abolitionists, but entire churches seldom came out strongly for the cause. John McKivigan, in *The War against Proslavery Religion*, explores the absence of abolitionist commitment in liberal churches:

Evaluation of the Unitarian position toward slavery in the years 1845-1860 is complicated by the denomination's traditional deference to the rights of individual conscience...In addition most Unitarians stayed aloof from reform societies because they believed that membership in such bodies diminished the moral influence of the individual reformer.

Universalist historian Russell E. Miller, in *The Larger Hope*, cites similar reasons for avoiding institutional stands even though individual members of the societies and conventions abhorred slavery. He writes as well of the Universalist belief in the power of gentle persuasion, and the fear of divisive consequences for their Southern churches. Although the Universalists became the first major Protestant denomination to take a public stand for abolishing slavery, at their 1843 General Convention, the decision did not receive unanimous support at that time. After the "outrages" of Fugitive Slave Law enforcement and the Dred Scott decision in the late 1850s, however, Universalist state conventions and churches in the North declared forthrightly their goal to abolish slavery.

Patterns of Antislavery among American Unitarians, 1831-1860, explains the complexities of liberal attitudes. Its author, Douglas C. Stange, describes these three categories:

- Antislavery as Religion, as it was to radicals such as Garrisonian abolitionists;
- Antislavery as Philosophy, as it was to many clerics and moderates;
- Political Antislavery, as it was to such groups as the National Convention of Friends of Immediate Emancipation which met in Albany in April 1840.

Once the War was over, Unitarians and Universalists provided countless teachers and educators who were active in the era of Reconstruction. Among them was A.D. Mayo, FUSA minister 1856-61. Unitarian historian George W. Cooke wrote that "...any history of what Unitarians have done [toward free and universal education in the South] should make grateful recognition of Mayo's valuable services."¹⁹ Mayo also was a prolific writer in the fields of history and public education.²⁰

After the Civil War the Rev. Henry Bellows, minister of All Souls' Church in Manhattan, formed the National Conference of Unitarian Churches. Bellows' 1865 Conference brought together a large number of Unitarian and other liberal churchmen, but his intention to strengthen liberal religion was delayed by theological controversy. Factions ranged from Midwest ethical-basis Unitarians on the left, to far-right Channing-style Traditionalists from Boston. Nevertheless, the National Conference of Unitarian Churches was to become a vital administrative contribution to the denomination.

Possibly this strife within the National Conference affected the Albany Unitarian church adversely, or possibly post-Civil War economic depressions were partly responsible for the failure of the little Society that was still heavily dependent upon the AUA. In any case FUSA's church at 64 Division Street was sold in 1869 and a dwindling number of members met irregularly.

Bellows noted in 1869 that Unitarianism came "to a stand and spread no more."²¹

A NEW SPIRIT -- AND A RECESSION

Meanwhile, a new kind of Unitarianism gained strength in the Midwest under the energetic leadership of the Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones. "A free America must have a free church," he wrote. As the tireless missionary secretary of the Chicago-based Western Unitarian Conference, Jones enthusiastically planted new churches, started Unity Clubs, and edited the widely read periodical, *The Sunday School*. Jones also organized the World Parliament of Churches for the Chicago World's Fair, and the very successful American Conference of Liberal Religion. Many a Unitarian migrant from the East threw off his cloak of conservatism and joined native Midwesterners like Jones in establishing liberal churches. Their new spirit expressed the denomination's desire to move forward, and to overcome the divisiveness of the past.

The Rev. William Channing Gannett, with Dr. Edward Everett Hale

and other prominent Unitarians including FUSA's 1863-65 minister, Charles Gordon Ames, labored earnestly to achieve accord within the denomination. Gannett's proposed preamble to the Conference's new constitution²² was presented in September 1894 to the Unitarian General Conference in Saratoga, where more than 600 Unitarians unanimously accepted the proposals.

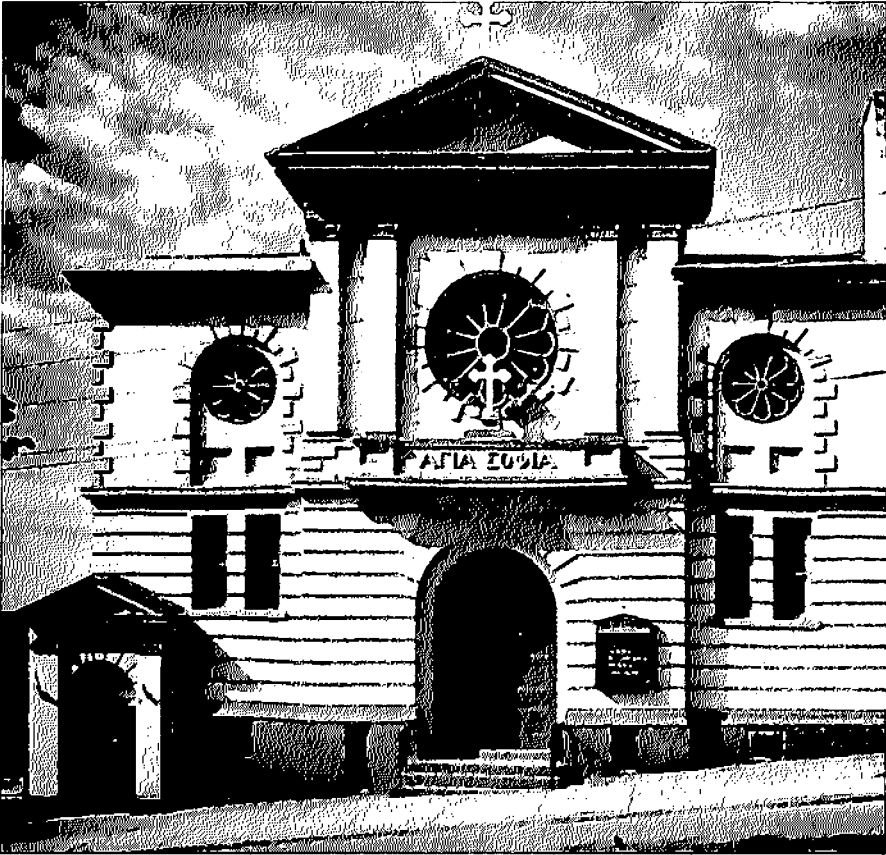
One witness to this reconciliation of radical Midwestern and conservative Eastern Unitarians was a Methodist minister from Albany, Dr. William Brundage. Questioning traditional Christian doctrine at the time, he was inspired by a rejuvenated Unitarian denomination that offered a place to share his changing religious views. When Brundage was chosen in 1895 to revive the Albany Unitarian congregation he reflected this new spirit, inspiring members with an enthusiasm not previously recorded.

The AUA was instrumental in FUSA's reorganization and subsidies were routinely given. When the congregation voted to purchase the church at 8 Lancaster Street in 1899 the Association assisted with a \$5000 mortgage. Individual Unitarians outside of Albany, principally in the Boston and New York areas, contributed an additional \$7000 -- apparently the denomination's missionary spirit still lived. Further, non-Unitarians in the Albany area donated a surprising total of more than \$3000 to FUSA's building fund.

It may have been Dr. Brundage's 1904 move to Unity Church in Brooklyn that halted FUSA's numerical growth; it may also have been that FUSA reflected the denomination's steady decline in membership in the early 1900s.

In those early years of the 20th Century, however, financial problems seemed to coalesce in dissatisfaction with the Lancaster Street site. As early as 1910 the minister suggested the desirability of Lark Street, or Willett; that same year AUA President Eliot proposed "to purchase a lot for the Society in a more central location and hold it until the Society is able to build a church on it." Seven years later, in January 1917, AUA Secretary Louis C. Cornish presented a memorandum of agreement to the board of trustees: AUA would purchase the site of our present church, binding FUSA to certain conditions with respect to sale of the Lancaster Street building and construction of a new church. The trustees approved the agreement. The cost of the lot at Washington and Robin was \$9,500.

The cost of the new church was about \$65,000. At the 1925 Annual Meeting our minister, the Rev. Malcolm Harris, reported:



No exterior photo is known of FUSA's church at 8 Lancaster Street during our 1899 - 1922 occupancy. This photo was made after St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church purchased it in 1923. The building was razed in the 1960's for construction of the Empire State Plaza. (Photo courtesy of Christopher Kendris, St. Sophia's Church)

Our building is now an accomplished fact, made possible by the cooperation of the AUA in allowing us the privilege of mortgaging the property for \$10,000 if necessary, and by underwriting our pledges and advancing us money to meet the payments due the contractors.

He also mentioned contributions from "our sister churches in Buffalo, Syracuse, New York City, Brooklyn etc.," even "people not of our fellowship in this city."

The Challenge of a New Century, the denomination's 1925 Centennial brochure, described AUA history and goals, and listed expenditures for the past year. Of the \$447,657 budget, 86 percent was spent on domestic assistance to churches. Albany is twice mentioned as a recipient of that assistance; other needy churches extend from Presque Isle, Maine to Hollywood, California. The brochure suggests the difficult decisions that the AUA was called upon to make in a period of limited funds, when membership continued to decline nationally.

By 1930 the Great Depression had begun to take its toll among all churches. A nearby example was the Troy Unitarian Church. In 1935 the 90-year-old congregation could no longer pay its minister; they sold their neat brick building at Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street, and several Troy Unitarians transferred to FUSA. (Rochester native James Southgate, the great-grandson of Troy's last minister, Henry Godwin Smith, recently signed our membership book.)

Fortunately President Samuel Eliot's conservative financial policies in the Roaring Twenties maintained the AUA's stability, for we continued to be dependent upon them.

A DENOMINATION REVITALIZED, CONVERGING ON MERGER

In 1936 the AUA appointed a Commission of Appraisal "to formulate...recommendations for revitalizing the Unitarian Church," a self-appraisal which identified Unitarians' commonalities and differences. When Frederick May Eliot began his twenty-one year presidency of the AUA in 1937, he led a methodical program of growth based on creating a sense of community through shared beliefs, memories, and practices. (The Commission of Appraisal, by the way, became a permanent body of the denomination.) Results of the 1936 self-appraisal gave AUA President Frederick May Eliot insight into the character of his "constituency" and helped Unitarians identify their shared beliefs.²³

A strong administrator, Eliot authorized the New Beacon Series of religious education materials, led the way toward social action, and resurrected the Fellowship movement, whose lay-led Unitarian groups accounted for substantial post-World War II growth in the denomination. Eliot also re-opened merger discussions with the Universalists, and guided Unitarians through several preparatory steps toward consolidation.

In 1900 -- and several times before and since -- both denominations had agreed that Unitarians and Universalists would explore ways in which

they could work together. It was then premature for a UU merger, but a National Federation of Religious Liberals emerged from that gathering. The Free Church Fellowship was organized in 1933 with similar hopes. Then, in 1947, new merger discussions started, leading to the 1953 formation of the Council of Liberal Churches. This group served the common needs of the educational programs for the two denominations. And talks continued.²⁴

FUSA files show that merger discussions and reports to the General Assembly were part of our agenda from at least 1953. Our minister at that time, the Rev. Ernest Pipes, reported when he returned from May Meetings in Boston that the Albany church "cast its vote in favor of the proposed Unitarian Universalist federation...." While the issue elicited vigorous discussions, sentiment favored consolidation.

When Frederick May Eliot died in 1958, Dana McLean Greeley succeeded him as AUA president, serving throughout the merger period. In his book, *25 Beacon Street and Other Recollections*, Greeley insists that merger occurred "...for fraternity's sake, and not for the sake of size or economy or efficiency or growth...." He chronicles the countless hurdles that stood between the AUA and the UUA.

A Merger Commission had worked long and hard to formulate recommendations to present to the Joint General Conference in Syracuse in 1959. While the administrative and personnel decisions at the Conference may have been similar to a corporate merger, the method differed considerably. For example, Greeley says that the count at merger was approximately 30,000 Universalists to 120,000 Unitarians, yet each denomination had ten trustees on the new board. He speaks of the earnest effort to preserve both traditions, and notes that "The word *consolidation* was used by the Merger Commission and the lawyers more than the word *merger*, largely because consolidation implied the joining of two identifiable bodies in a way that technically meant neither would lose its identity or go out of existence." The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) was born at the Boston Joint Assembly in May 1961. Dana Greeley was both the last AUA president and, until 1969, the first UUA president.

Greeley's assistant, Irene Murdock, became a member of FUSA in January 1974. She had worked with him for the eleven years of his presidency, as well as during his ministry at the Arlington Street Church, a period of great national turbulence. Excerpts from Murdock's remarks at FUSA's memorial service for Greeley are printed in the Appendix.

WARS AND PEACE

Actions taken during wartime by Unitarian Universalists, and by members of each denomination before they merged, have varied greatly. These actions are usually taken as individuals rather than as a denomination or a church. The UU commitment to individual liberty, to responsible dissent, and to freedom of the pulpit are sometimes sorely tested in wartime.

For example, a *FUSA Newsletter* in November 1965 contained an exhortation to march on Washington for Peace in Vietnam. The next issue noted, however, that the march "...does not have the sponsorship nor does it necessarily represent the position of either the...Trustees, the church, or the UUA."

One of the denomination's most enduring Pacifists was the Rev. John Haynes Holmes. His congregation in Manhattan supported his right to speak out for Pacifism and conscientious objector status during World War I. He continued his crusade during World War II. And in the early '60s Holmes, at age 89, joined other religious leaders in protesting our involvement in Vietnam.

Ranking world peace as his first priority, Dr. Dana McLean Greeley worked to assure that conscientious objection to military service was available to those who sincerely sought it. As UUA president, Greeley maintained high visibility nationally and internationally during the Vietnam years, urging U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia.²⁵

Dr. William Schulz, UUA president during the brief Gulf War in 1991, urged UU congregations to discuss and vote on a Gulf War Denominational Resolution. There was no question as to Schulz's stand, and he felt free to speak out against military action. Chapter 3 describes FUSA's actions at that time.

ST. LAWRENCE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST DISTRICT

After merger in 1961 FUSA became part of the new St. Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District, which replaced the Mohawk Valley Unitarian Conference. The district's purpose is to cultivate cooperative relationships among the member societies, to promote the religious life of those societies and establishment of new societies, to assist member societies in carrying out active and effective programs within their respective communities, and to cooperate with the Unitarian Universalist

Association for the promotion and fulfillment of its purposes.

One of those purposes is election of a trustee to represent the district's interests at the UUA in Boston. Another liaison between the district and the denomination is its representative to the Annual Program Fund (APF). Charged with funding the denomination through annual contributions from member churches, APF has representatives in each UUA district.

FUSA member Paul Jones is the St. Lawrence District's Annual Program Fund representative. Paul was recently recognized by the denomination for his distinguished service to the APF. His fine article in the district quarterly, *Lines*, excerpted in the Appendix, describes services that our annual APF contribution provides.

UUA's 23 districts, based on population, vary greatly in size: for example, although Albany is only 165 miles from Boston, two other districts lie between the two cities because of the high concentration of UUs in New England.

The district meets annually, and in 1992 FUSA hosted that meeting. (See Chapter 9.) Dividing the district into five Clusters has allowed churches in the same area to meet more frequently. At the annual meeting two persons from each cluster are elected to the district's board of trustees. FUSA's Fred Boreali is secretary of that board, an office previously held by our former president, George Allen.

Our district office is located in Buffalo, and the Rev. Wendy L. Colby has been our district consultant since 1988.

RACE RELATIONS

In the late 1960s and early '70s, race relations generated the most emotional response in recent memory.

Many Unitarians blush when confronted with evidence of 19th Century Unitarian equivocation on the subject of abolition. By contrast, in the 1960s and '70s the denomination forthrightly and outspokenly supported the Civil Rights Movement. Dana McLean Greeley pointed to a number of official actions taken in support of equality: the 1963 UUA Commission on Religion and Race; the 1964 Department of Social Responsibility; the enormous contributions of Homer Jack, former director of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination; Greeley's own personal commitment to "every form of persuasion" toward congregational policies of integration, and subsequent efforts to "eradicate any vestige of exclusiveness" in UU churches. And, later, the major role that UUA President Greeley, and countless other

UUs on all levels, took in Selma, Birmingham, and Atlanta.

In his book *The Unitarians and the Universalists*, David Robinson describes the "wrenching struggle over black empowerment," the "emotional meeting at Cleveland" where the 1968 General Assembly voted to fund the Black Affairs Council (BAC), and the subsequent issues still "far from being resolved."

Ramona Weissbard, recalling the financial commitment to BAC at the Cleveland General Assembly to which she and Al were FUSA delegates, stressed that "a great many of us came undecided or opposed, and ended up favoring the appropriation. Homer Jack was very persuasive."



Candidates for UUA presidency, John Buehrens and Carolyn Owen-Towle, gave keynote addresses when FUSA hosted the St. Lawrence UU District Conference in 1992.



Al and Ramona Weissbard represented FUSA at General Assemblies, among their many other services to our church and our denomination.

Today the denomination's continuing strong efforts toward racial and cultural diversity were stated in a resolution approved unanimously at the 1992 General Assembly. The resolution, says the September/October 1992 issue of the *World*, "affirmed and supported a vision of a racially diverse and multicultural Unitarian Universalism and urged the Board of Trustees to develop and implement a process to realize that vision, with a report of research and planning for that effort to be presented to the 1993 General Assembly."

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE

In 1939 a group of Unitarians began refugee relief work in Europe, initially in Prague because of their concern for Czechoslovakian

Unitarians. Refugee work became more diverse as Nazi occupation spread, and the base of operations centered in Lisbon. Waitsill and Martha Sharp were the first of the courageous group who organized as the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) in 1940.

One of FUSA's former members, Dr. Charles R. Joy, was a key figure in the USC and a close associate of the Sharps. A World War I pacifist, friend of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, much-published author and photographer, Joy came to Albany in 1964.

Today the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) calls itself "an independent, non-sectarian organization...that promotes justice throughout the world." It is currently active in the U.S. and fifteen foreign countries.

During the past decade FUSA's support for the UUSC has averaged \$838 per year, well over the suggested contribution. Our gifts come from the fall rummage sale, Guest-at-Your-Table boxes, and holiday cards, as well as from individuals.

THE UUA TODAY

Due to term limitations William Schulz stepped down from his office as president of the UUA in June 1993. At that time approximately 2,500 delegates to the General Assembly (GA) elected the Rev. John Buehrens as our new president. They also elected twenty other denominational officials.

For many months Buehrens and his fellow presidential candidate, the Rev. Carolyn Owen-Towle, visited UU congregations and campaigned to win support for their visions of the denomination's future. The willingness of candidates to participate in this demanding democratic process introduces them to the characteristics and concerns of UU congregations throughout the U.S. and Canada, and is essential to their effectiveness and accountability.

Our church is allocated five voting members (which equates to one vote per 75 members) at GA, plus a ministerial delegate. FUSA Denominational Affairs Chair Don Cavanaugh, Fred Boreali, Priscilla Crago, Joe Norton, and Linda Way, as well as Joan and Charlie Kahn-Schneider, attended the 1993 GA in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Although many UUs are reluctant to give powers to a central authority, they recognize that the UUA is crucial to the identity and continuity of the denomination. The operation of the UUA is funded by contributions from each UU congregation, \$29 per member in 1992.

Included in this amount is a complimentary subscription to the UU magazine, the *World*, which helps to connect individuals to the denomination.

Former UU President Schulz left us with the charge to increase minority representation within our congregations. With respect to racism and intolerance, Schulz summarized the causes of prejudice as follows:

...to me, it's more helpful to understand it as rising out of fear; fear of the complexity and ambiguities of life, and the need to see life in simplistic terms, to categorize and classify people. The result is, people are kept in stereotypical boxes.²⁶

The key to a better world may be to have the courage to admit the fear that we all share. While our Unitarian Universalist principles begin with affirming and promoting the inherent worth and dignity of each person, our membership is still embarrassingly lacking in diversity. As we try to draw more of our neighbors into FUSA, we may have to become more articulate in describing who we are and what we hope to achieve in the future -- both as individuals and as a denomination.

.....

The author acknowledges special assistance from the Concord (MA) Public Library, Boston Public Library, Library of the State University of New York in Albany, Albany Public Library, the McKinney Library at the Albany Institute of History and Art, the Andover Harvard Theological Library -- specifically Alan Seaburg and Conrad C. Wright -- and the staff at the Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters.

ENDNOTES

1. *Unitarian Universalist Association Directory*, 1993.
2. R. L'H, Miller In Scholefield, Harry B. (ED.) (1988). *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*. Boston: Skinner House Books.
3. Robinson, David. (1985). *The Unitarians and the Universalists*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. p.176.
4. Guffin, John C. (1943). *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, Albany, NY: First Unitarian Society of Albany. p.30, 52, 76-77, 86-87. And FUSA Trustees' Minutes.
5. The author acknowledges with gratitude Prof. C. Conrad Wright's communication explaining this transitional period.
6. Robinson. David. (1985). *Ibid*. p. 21, 22, 50, 53.
7. Seaburg, Carl, ed. (1993). *Universalist bicentennial celebration newsletter # 2*; and Wallace, Ruth. (1975). *A history of Universalist societies in New York State, 1803-*

1975. New York State Convention of Universalists; and Walker, G. Delbert. (1925). (in) *Souvenir booklet of the one-hundredth annual session*, New York State Convention of Universalists, Little Falls, NY.
- For a thorough study of Universalist institutional evolution, see chapters 4 and 5 (in) Miller, Russell E. (1979). *The larger hope: The first century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870*. UUA, Boston.
8. Lyttle, Charles H. (1953). *Freedom moves west: A history of the Western Unitarian Conference, 1852-1952*. Boston: Beacon Press. p.8.
9. Finney Charles G. (1876). *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney, written by himself*. New York: A.S.Barnes & Co.. p.18.
10. Cross, Whitney R. (1950). *The burned-over district: The social and intellectual history of enthusiastic religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*. Ithaca: Cornell U. Press. p. 44.
11. Graves, Charles. (1904). *A century of village Unitarianism: Being a history of the Reformed Christian (Unitarian) Church of Trenton, Oneida County, NY*. Boston: George H. Ellis Co. p. 64.
12. Munsell, Joel. (1850-1859). *The annals of Albany*, Vol.9, p.204; Vol.10, p.229.
13. Hoogenboom, Olive. (1987). *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn: One hundred fifty years*. Brooklyn, NY: The First Unitarian Church. Hoogenboom notes that Frederick Holland, First Church minister 1837-42, later became "the denomination's highly successful minister-at-large to areas where new churches were being started or old ones resuscitated."
14. FUSA archives.
15. Weise, Arthur James. (1886). *Troy and its vicinity*. Troy, Edward Green.
16. Pease, Jane H. & William H. Whose right hand of fellowship? (in) Wright, Conrad Edick, ed. (1989). *American Unitarianism 1805-1865*. Boston: Mass. Historical Society. NEU Press.
17. Letter in FUSA archives, November 19, 1855.
18. Howell, G. R. (1886). *Bicentennial history of Albany: 1609-1886*. W.W.Munsell, NY
19. Cooke, George W. (1902). *Unitarianism in America*.
20. Publications list in FUSA archives.
21. Yacavone, Donald. (1991). *Samuel Joseph May and the dilemmas of the liberal persuasion: 1797-1871*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. p. 78.
22. William Channing Gannett's preamble to the constitution of the National Conference: The Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches was formed in the year 1865, with the purpose of strengthening the churches and societies which should unite in it for more and better work for the kingdom of God. These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man. The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.
23. Robinson, David. Ibid. p. 162-168.
24. Greeley, Dana McLean. (1971). *25 Beacon Street and other recollections*. Boston: Beacon Press. p. 80-92.
25. Greeley, Dana McLean. Ibid. p.32, 178.
26. *The World*. May-June, 1993. From interview with Beth English for the *Boston Globe*.

3.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

By Helen S. Sharpe

Social responsibility is the philosophical heart of our Society. Defined as the active concern for peace and justice, for civil and human rights, for the moral and ethical values of our Unitarian heritage, social responsibility both identifies and nurtures us in subtle and far-reaching ways. Newcomers cite our social activism as an initial attraction; long-time members speak of the personal rewards they experience from commitment to social goals. As members strive together to attain those goals, the Society itself is strengthened and enriched.

The moral imperative, however, did not spring full-blown with the birth of our church, attractive as that myth may be. The truth is that the overriding concern of the Society in its early years was survival, and with good reason. The congregation was small, beset by constant debt and clinging precariously to existence in a theologically hostile environment. Survival may well have depended upon acceptance of prevailing community values. In any event, those values were reflected in the Society's response to the two compelling social issues it addressed in the mid-nineteenth century.

The paramount issue, of course, was abolition. Where did the Society stand on this most pressing and troubling question? Apparently first on

one foot and then the other, although only two references to abolition were found in surviving church records.

In a letter dated February 2, 1863, in response to a request by the State Anti-Slavery Committee for use of the Society's building for its annual meeting, the board of trustees declined permission because of "...objections to giving the church for other than a church purpose, and especially for the promiscuous gathering of a public convention." Yet in the Society's first account book, a credit is listed on February 4, 1844 of "\$6 from abolitionists for use of chapel."

The Society was not alone in what seems an ambivalent, even contradictory, position on the anti-slavery movement. The division within the denomination was extensive, as recounted by Jane and William Pease, writing in *American Unitarianism*:

If promoting simple benevolence betrayed ambivalence within Unitarianism's social ethic, what of those reform activities that challenged the status quo and often the special vested interests of church members? Here, even more clearly than with philanthropy, we see how the socioeconomic values of entrepreneurially oriented and powerfully elite congregations generated responses at odds with those of a denomination understood to be socially progressive and theologically innovative. Indeed, Channing's own church was a case in point...it denied the young Unitarian cleric Samuel May, Jr., permission to 'preach a sermon [in the church] in behalf of the colored population of the United States.'

Yet many individual Unitarians, both cleric and lay, spoke fervently and acted courageously in support of abolition. Daniel Walker Howe, in *The Unitarian Conscience*, states: "Like many other American religious groups in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Unitarian moralists shattered themselves upon the rock of slavery."

Considering the equivocation and irresolution within the denomination on abolition and the Society's tentative existence, renting its chapel to a militant anti-slavery group may well have been an act of uncommon courage. Or it may have been that six dollars, a very substantial sum in those days, was an offer the board of trustees couldn't refuse. We'll never know; of such are myths made.

Then there was the Rev. George F. Simmons (FUSA minister 1853-55), whose first church was the Unitarian Society of Mobile, Alabama, where he "charmed the Society with his quiet and gentlemanly manner and splendid discourses." Donald C. Stange in *Patterns of Antislavery* tells a sad result of those discourses:

On the night of May 19, 1840, four Negro slaves rowed Simmons out into Mobile Bay and placed him on the brig *Emily* for passage to New England. He had been forced to flee for his life. His crime had been to try to change Southern feeling on slavery.

Although Simmons was "not an abolitionist and in fact had even opposed them...he declared that if laws prevented emancipation, a slaveholder should hold his slaves as freemen, pay them, secure their domestic rights, protect them from wrong, and provide them with religious instruction." Stange writes that Simmons's views also "cost him his pulpit" in Springfield, Massachusetts, and that he "spent his last years serving a tiny, isolated congregation in Albany, New York. Contracting typhus, he died at the age of 41, and exchanged, his necrologist said, an 'earthly hope for heavenly fruition.'"

Since most social issues are political and economic as well, it is not surprising that the other burning issue that the early church addressed, the Anti-Rent War, was one of vested interests versus human and civil rights. At issue was the semi-feudal patroon system under which, wrote Henry Christman in *Tin Horns and Calico*, ("The Thrilling Unsung Story of an American Revolt against Serfdom"), "...a few families, intricately intermarried, controlled the destinies of three hundred thousand people and ruled in almost kingly splendor over nearly two million acres of land." After years of peaceful protest, many farmers along the Hudson Valley, notably those in the Albany area of Rensselaerwyck, rebelled against the system by refusing to pay rents demanded by the patroons. When sheriffs were sent to serve writs, they were on several occasions tarred and feathered by tenants crudely dressed as Indians. Shots were fired, a prominent leader of the Anti-Renters was imprisoned, Governor Seward called out the militia and passions were inflamed on both sides.

It was at the height of this conflict that the Rev. Henry Harrington, our Society's first settled minister (1844-47) preached a sermon on December 22, 1844 in which he vehemently denounced the Anti-Rent factions. Taking his text from James 1:20, "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," Harrington argued that because the land leases were voluntarily assumed they were therefore just, his words ringing with moral fervor:

Nothing stands forth in the whole matter in clearer aspect than that every instance of resistance to the law has been perfectly gratuitous and uncalled for. The whole program of events is prejudicial to the exculpation of the

conduct of the malcontents from censure of every thinking man. Censure, do I say? Nay, rather detestation and abhorrence.

Since the sermon was published and widely distributed, the congregation was presumably in agreement, although it is not unknown for congregations and ministers to be at odds on fundamental principles. Was Harrington on the "wrong" side in defending the patrol system? We might think so now, but it is well to heed Stephen Jay Gould's admonition not to "...commit the worst historical error of wrenching a person from his own time and judging him by modern standards."

Following the departure of Harrington, the Society experienced fluctuations in membership and resources, becoming essentially dormant for many years. Ministers came and went, some of them outstanding, but there is no other record of any response to social conditions until 1895. Then the Society was dramatically revitalized by the "charismatic" Rev. William M. Brundage. In Brundage's eloquent sermons we find the first ministerial exhortation to social conscience:

The old orthodox religious appeal was voiced in the cry, 'What must I do to save my own soul?' The old liberal appeal was voiced in the cry, 'What must I do to make the most of myself, to develop myself to the utmost, to attain the highest and rarest self-culture?' The latest and most modern religious appeal is voiced in the cry, 'What can I do to help my brother man, my sister woman, to introduce justice and love into all human relations, to hasten the coming of the kingdom of God on earth among men?'

The next recorded expression of a growing sense of social responsibility came in 1925 with the initiation of public forums. The first of three surviving meeting announcements reads: "This forum is organized in response to a wide-spread desire for discussion of questions of public interest from a popular platform." Forum topics strike a familiar note:

Is the Single Tax a Remedy for Economic Wrongs?
 Let's Stop Tinkering with the Federal Constitution
 Is Welfare Work Weakening the Race?
 What Do We Educate For?
 Politics, Religion and Peace
 Prevention of Mental Illness
 Prevention of Crime

In one of the many undated, anonymous pieces of paper in our archives, we came across an apparently early use of the term "liberal" in defining a fundamental aspect of Unitarianism in Albany.

To the clear-thinking, enterprising men and women who established the First Unitarian Society of Albany in 1842; to the courageous group who, under the leadership of Reverend William Milton Brundage, reorganized the Society in 1895; and to the faithful, devoted liberals who have since carried forward the torch lighted by their predecessors.

It sounds like a toast; we could drink to that.

• • •

The church archives contain scant records of events from 1925 to 1953. One occasion of singular importance, however, is recorded in a speech given by Harold P. Winchester at the Silver Anniversary Dinner of the Albany Inter-Racial Council in 1953. Winchester, chairman of the Unity Forum Committee of the Society in 1928, recalled the formation of the Inter-Racial Council.

Looking back from the vantage point of a quarter of a century, it would seem as if the conception of the Albany Inter-Racial Council, like many others, was spontaneous and unplanned. Yet all the material and psychological conditions were at hand to furnish flaming tinder for that first spark to ignite. That first spark flashed on Sunday, March 28, 1928 at the First Unitarian Church in Albany where at its Unity Forum the principal speaker was James Weldon Johnson, the noted Negro poet, author and composer who had as his topic, 'The Negro Problem in America'.

Winchester's history continues with a detailed account of the Forum meetings that led to the enlistment of interested and influential members of the community, a study of the housing and segregation conditions in Albany, the organization of the Council and the election of Winchester as its first president. His concluding remarks are sadly prescient:

It was grand to work together in inter-racial co-operation and with mutual respect and tolerance. We learned much from our joint endeavor in trying essentially to realize the brotherhood of man....It is altogether too bad that

the world situation of the past fifteen years has put a premium on requiring us to forget the lessons of brotherhood learned in such activities on the Inter-Racial Council and instead to learn to hate our fellow men in certain parts of the world for a few years and then require us as public policy to reverse ourselves and love our enemies and hate our allies. A few of us have tried to stand firm on the brotherhood lesson during these trying years.

One other account of social action during those years comes from a paper, *Glimpses from Our Past*, written by long-time FUSA members Ted and Mary Standing:

The years of the Second World War and the early post-war years proved to be a difficult period for the Albany Society. Gasoline was rationed, restricting unnecessary travel, and the mood of the community during the McCarthy era was not favorable to the cause of liberal religion. Many of the Society's members were active in liberal organizations such as the Soviet-American Friendship Society, Planned Parenthood, the N.A.A.C.P. and the Progressive Party movement led by Henry Wallace. In the eyes of many conservatives, these activities reflected discredit on the church. During a meeting in Channing Hall, sponsored by the local branch



In December 1947 former Vice President Henry Wallace (at left) spoke to 1200 persons in Albany. With Wallace are Dr. Theodore Standing (center), chairman of the Progressive Citizens of America, Albany Chapter, which sponsored the address; and FUSA minister, the Rev. Karl Nielsen, chairman of the meeting.

of the Progressive Party, a brick was thrown through the window, accompanied by verbal threats from a group in the street. The current minister, the Rev. Karl Nielson, was widely criticized for publicly supporting a concert by Paul Robeson.

During this period the women of the church were especially active in response to welfare needs in the community, about which please see Chapter 5. Another indication of a prevailing atmosphere of social consciousness appeared on the church stationery in 1940 when Kenneth Walker was the Society's minister, and also president of the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice: "Our aim: the direction of spiritual enthusiasm toward the enrichment of the individual and the perfection of the social order."

• • •

After about 1953, periodic newsletters and other archival materials attest to a Society in which social issues were of growing concern.

In 1956 the Rev. James Madison Barr arrived and it wasn't long before the Society's social ethic took the form of political action, as John C. Guffin, author of *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, might have predicted when he wrote of changing views during the 1930s:

Not many years ago, if a minister ventured to discuss current topics in his pulpit, straightaway critics would protest over 'politics in the pulpit.' There was a jealous insistence that the minister should confine his sermons to a limited theological field and avoid introducing so-called worldly matters. The common problems of daily life and man's concepts and behavior in relation to these were a part of secular life to be avoided or treated very lightly in the minister's sermons. It was consistent, however, with the general attitude of Unitarianism that such came within its purview. Nevertheless, even liberals have prejudices.

Barr not only put politics in the pulpit, he put the Society in the news as well.

ON-CAMPUS RELIGIOUS AID BLASTED

Knickerbocker News, 6/9/58

The Rev. James Madison Barr, minister of the First Unitarian Church, maintains religious counseling on the State College for Teachers campus would amount to public aid to religion. Mr. Barr declared that "free men need a public school system free of any one or all of the many religious

faiths in America." He emphasized that he and his church were not opposed to religious counseling of students as such, but did oppose giving office space and legal status to religious representatives at a college supported by tax money. The Unitarian Church...has offered space without cost in one of two buildings it owns for counseling by Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish counselors. Mr. Barr said, "I must stand upon the principle which supports the wall of separation of church and state, for I tremble whenever I read in history the fate of free men and free minds when the two -- church and state -- become intertwined."

SERMON ON "LADY CHATTERLEY"

Knickerbocker News 10/26/59

The minister of Albany's First Unitarian Church took the long-banned and controversial novel, "Lady Chatterley's Lover," as the text of the sermon he preached yesterday on the need for honesty and tenderness in sex. The Rev. James Madison Barr urged his parishioners to read the novel by D.H.Lawrence...praising the book as a "plea for sexual authenticity."

MINISTER ASSAILS HEALD PLAN FOR AID TO PRIVATE COLLEGES

Times Union 1/6/61

The Heald Committee's proposal for aid to private colleges threatens both freedom and the principle of church-state separation, an Albany minister told his congregation. The Rev. James Madison Barr of the First Unitarian Church said the proposals seemed to him to subvert the very core of cherished American liberty...aid means control. "We believe that when the state takes over the financial responsibilities of private institutions, those institutions thereby lose their ability to maintain themselves as self-supporting and self-determining institutions."

It was also during Barr's ministry that the Society welcomed the arrival of the Imrehs, a Unitarian family -- husband, wife and two daughters aged 3 and 12 -- who had fled Hungary during the 1956 revolution and had since been living in Switzerland. According to a letter addressed to the congregation, dated January 6, 1959 and signed "George Woolfe, Chairman, Unitarian Service Committee," the congregation had voted in 1956 to bring a Hungarian refugee family to Albany. Woolfe wrote:

However, by the time we were able to contact the necessary authorities, we found that all the refugees had been placed. Then, this summer, a letter requesting help in emigrating to this country was received from Mr. Laszlo

Imreh by the Reverend Donald Harrington in New York, who, knowing of our interest in such a matter, forwarded the letter to us...the Church World Service and the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief have signed the necessary Affidavit of Support for the family and in turn have asked us to undertake to find the Imrehs employment and a place to live.

Members of the Society responded with characteristic enthusiasm and generosity; a large flat was found near the church and the first month's rent paid, basic furnishings were donated, employment for Mr. Imreh was assured and moral support was given in abundance.

• • •

The Rev. Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr. followed Barr in the pulpit and in the headlines. Headline stories tell us three things of historical interest: what social and political issues were newsworthy during particular periods of our history; how the Society responded to those issues; and what occasioned the growing presence of our small denomination in the community.

UNITARIAN PASTOR CRITICIZES "MACHINE CONTROL" IN ALBANY

Times Union 10/22/65

A vigorous, outspoken sermon denouncing the "primitive, tribal patriarchy" which "controls and runs" Albany was delivered Sunday in the pulpit of the First Unitarian Church by the pastor, the Rev. Nicholas C. Cardell. "Political irresponsibility is cultivated by a system of rewards and punishments. Those who are politically docile, those who eschew any political involvement which is critical of the administration can always count on a reasonable degree of cooperation with their needs and projects. Thus we have in Albany the phenomenon of an informal and unofficial loyalty oath..." "I am not and never have been involved in, or interested in, anything political."

LOTTERY PROPOSAL DENOUNCED BY CLERIC

Times Union 2/7/66

An Albany clergyman declared Sunday that proposed legislation to establish a state-wide lottery "is an irresponsible way of solving the state's financial problems." In a sermon entitled "Government by Chance," the Rev. Nicholas Cardell said at the Unitarian Church that the lottery effort is a "device" with which the Legislature "hopes to get funds for needed programs

without facing the problem of...new taxes. It's deceptive and self-deceiving...it's pragmatically no good and morally impossible."

CHALLENGING CITY HALL

Knickerbocker News 11/7/67

The Rev. Nicholas C. Cardell of the First Unitarian Church led an Albany protest demonstration against alleged vote buying in front of City Hall today....This year's peaceful demonstration contrasted sharply with last year's affair in which pickets [The Brothers, a group of Black activists carrying "Don't sell your soul for \$5" signs] were unceremoniously dumped into paddy wagons and hauled up before a judge. Mr. Cardell's demonstration in front of City Hall was, said the minister, a challenge to Democratic mayor Erastus Corning to arrest him [and about thirty members of his congregation carrying like signs]. He recalled that the mayor said last year that "even the threat of picketing...is in itself a violation of the Penal Law," and the minister added that he "didn't believe that interpretation for one minute....Any public official who has an aura of authority and informs the



On Election Day 1967 the Rev. Nicholas and Barbara Cardell led a march of some 30 Unitarians in a challenge to "City Hall." (See text.)

public that there will be no free speech is intimidating the people. The failure to challenge that is the way to let freedom leak away, and the point of this demonstration is to indicate to everybody in Albany that this picketing is a proper and right thing to do."

There were many other headlines: CARDELL RAPS BETHLEHEM CHIEF (for attacking the Society's program on sex education); REV. CARDELL RAPS HATE AND BIGOTRY (a plea for intolerance of "vicious, unjust or irresponsible behavior which disregards the dignity and rights of others"); and one article, headlined WHY MR. GOLDWATER WAS DEFEATED, received national publicity. For these and many other challenges to the power structure in Albany at that time, *Knickerbocker News* editor Duane La Fleche in a series of articles entitled "Who Runs Albany?" wrote:

The Rev. Nicholas Cardell, pastor of the First Unitarian Church, has been outspoken in political-social matters. He has dared the power of the Democratic organization with outspoken criticism of it. His influence spreads far beyond his congregation. *Knickerbocker News*, 4/8/68

• • •

The next memorable headlines reflect the Society's concern for peace and justice on the national and international levels:

UNITARIAN CHURCH SOCIETY VOTES
TO WITHHOLD PHONE "WAR TAX"

Times Union, 11/74

The First Unitarian Society of Albany has voted to refuse to pay the 10 per cent federal excise tax on its church telephone bill, on grounds that payment constitutes "voluntary complicity" in the war in Southeast Asia. A resolution... "deems the war undeclared, immoral and genocidal," and says the excise tax on phone service is "levied specifically for the purpose of funding the war" and calls for contribution of the tax amount to the church's Social Responsibility Council "to be used for life-giving purpose."

Recipients of the withheld tax included Beacon Press, publishing house of the Unitarian Universalist Association, "in recognition of its vital service to open democratic government as shown by the courageous publication of the Pentagon Papers;" and the Sam McDowell Criminal Rehabilitation Center.

The Society's opposition to the Vietnam War was outspoken and steadfast. Many members journeyed to Washington, D.C. to participate in national peace marches; many more joined a candlelight march to the State Capital where Cardell, along with other prominent speakers, made an impassioned plea for peace. A petition signed by a large majority of the congregation and sent to President Johnson, cabinet members and legislators read in part:

Whereas, the continuation of the war in Vietnam is resulting in the death of increasing numbers of American and Vietnamese and soldiers of many other countries; and Whereas, it has been the inalienable right of Americans throughout our history to dissent from government policies when such dissent becomes necessary....Be it resolved that the undersigned members of the First Unitarian Society of Albany, New York, do hereby protest the continuation of the war in Vietnam, and do call upon President Johnson, Secretary Rusk, Secretary McNamara and all other responsible officers and officials in the United States Government to exert all their efforts to bring the conflict to an end as soon as possible...

Also in the area of national politics, Cardell led the congregation to express its reaction to President Nixon's alleged "high crimes and misdemeanors."

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH VOTES FOR IMPEACHMENT

Times Union 1/20/74

The First Unitarian Society of Albany has voted to support the impeachment of President Richard M. Nixon. Capital area congressmen and House Judiciary Committee members will be notified that the congregation vote...was overwhelmingly in favor of impeachment...Nick Cardell, Jr...in his sermon last Sunday, as in several previous sermons, espoused the concept that if religious organizations do not take stands on political-moral issues, then society lacks the leadership it needs.

The '60s and '70s were marked by a surge of social as well as political action, although the two are inevitably intertwined. Many members recall those years as an especially exciting and challenging time, partly due to Cardell's creative leadership, partly to official recognition of the growing contribution of the then-called Social Action Committee to the life of the Society. The committee dates at least as far back as 1957, when a letter expressing opposition to "...use of a public facility by sectarian religious organizations" is addressed to the President of the State University of New York and signed "Randall L. Thompson, Chairman for

the Social Action Committee, First Unitarian Church, Albany." The next recorded mention of the committee appears in a 1960 church newsletter:

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Dr. Ted Standing, Chairman of the Social Action Committee, makes the following report to the membership: The Social Action Committee conceives its overall function to be that of helping to translate the values of liberal religion into the practical affairs of the larger community. Some of the more critical areas with which the Committee has been especially concerned in the past include problems of church-state relations, the welfare of minority groups, and the protection of the dignity and freedom of individuals against unwarranted attack....At a meeting on October 7th, it was voted that we call the attention of our members and friends to the fact that we *have* a Social Action Committee.

Apparently Social Action Committees had been ad hoc over the years, for the next mention is in the form of a resolution: "The members of the First Unitarian Society of Albany at their annual meeting in 1966 do hereby instruct their Board of Trustees to establish a standing committee which shall be called the Social Responsibilities Committee." Then in 1969 the congregation further recognized the contribution of social responsibility to the life of the Society by voting to change the Committee to a Council, thereby giving it the status of having an elected rather than an appointed slate of officers. "The Council," states the bylaws, "shall be maintained for the purpose of education and action in the realm of social matters of moral and ethical significance."

There were many programs and projects of moral and ethical significance undertaken during this period, and indeed throughout this history, but space limitations allow mention of but a few and those all too briefly. It is hoped, however, that the following highlights, usually initiated and/or supported by the Social Responsibilities Council (SRC) will serve to remind current readers and inform future church historians of the degree and scope of the Society's commitment to social action:

- There was much activity during the early '60s to provide personal, public and financial support to The Brothers, an Albany African-American group striving for political and social justice in employment, housing and community services.

- A tutorial program, started in 1968 in cooperation with Clinton Square

Neighborhood House in downtown Albany, involved several FUSA volunteers over a number of years.

- In 1968, a group of Society members formed the Committee for Progressive Legislation (CPL), about which please see Chapter 5.
- A child-care service provided by FUSA volunteers in 1969 enabled more than 20 mothers to attend job-training classes at Albany's Urban Center.
- SRC joined and supported a Focus Churches Task Force on Prison Reform in 1972.
- In 1977 the Society became a co-sponsor with the Albany Focus Churches Food Pantry, which FUSA continues to support with food, money and dedicated workers.
- A World Hunger Task Force, formed in 1979, conducted a study of the causes of, and possible solutions to, world hunger; one result was the active support of a successful boycott of Nestle products in protest of the marketing practices used by the company to promote the sale of baby formula, practices believed to contribute to infant mortality in the Third World.
- Generous contributions of time and money were given to the Sam McDowell Criminal Rehabilitation Center.
- There were also many worthwhile proposals that fell by the wayside: Head Start is a well remembered example. Many months of prolonged study and heated debate (1968-69) resulted in a congregational vote to offer FUSA's building and facilities for the Head Start program. All in vain: Head Start officials decided not to make a move at that time, expressing appreciation of the Society's "unselfish willingness to help." Some programs met short-term goals, others withered from lack of sustained support. All attested to the Society's concern for and response to problems of the larger community.
- Two notable resolutions were passed by a vote of Society members in 1979. A resolution on abortion affirmed support of the 1973

determination by the Supreme Court on abortion, support of Medicaid funding for abortions, sex education in schools, elimination of restrictions on availability of contraceptives and opposition to attempts to require parental consent for abortions. A resolution on homosexual rights stated that the Society "will continue to encourage dialogue on the subject of homosexuality both within and outside the church, will stimulate the participation of lesbians and gay men in all aspects of the church life, and work to secure equality for gay people in society at large."

• • •

SRC continued to expand its areas of concern -- and its influence -- in the '80s, forging new partnerships with religious organizations and social service agencies in the community.

- In response to a request for help from Albany County Economic Opportunity, Inc., SRC recruited volunteer drivers to provide monthly transportation for two children to visit their mother at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in Westchester County. Visits spanned a five-year period, starting in 1984, and resettlement help was given upon the mother's release.
- In 1984 FUSA joined other area churches in an Interfaith Shelter for the Homeless project, providing volunteers to staff the center at night during its initial stage and contributing goods and financial support. SRC members periodically serve on the board or chair committees of the shelter, and Society members annually contribute substantial sums to the shelter during a "Pennies for Haven" appeal conducted by SRC.
- A Domestic Violence Project, initiated by SRC following a Sunday Forum in 1985, resulted in a self-help group meeting at FUSA and active participation in the Albany Domestic Violence Task Force by SRC members. SRC also recruited volunteers to drive battered women and their children to safe houses, and held a public forum featuring the executive director of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- The early years of the decade were marked by sustained protest of U.S. involvement in El Salvador; rallies were held, literature distributed and the Rev. John Corrado spoke forcefully against it from the pulpit.

- SRC sponsored many fund-raising events in support of special groups such as American-South American Peoples' Friendship Association and Community Advocates for Education, an after-school tutorial project started by a FUSA member in Albany's South End.
- Many Forums addressed environmental issues and various conservation steps were taken, such as reducing the use of plastic cups, recycling office paper, and increasing the use of recycled paper.
- FUSA's representation in the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee came under the aegis of SRC as a result of a 1987 congregational vote.

The '80s also saw FUSA back in the headlines:

CHURCHES OFFER SANCTUARY, OPENLY RISKING JAIL

Times Union 5/21/84

Willing to go to jail, officials of two Albany churches have made plans to provide an illegal sanctuary for refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. The First Unitarian Society of Albany and the Albany Friends Meeting expect to house... refugees fleeing persecution, torture or death in their homelands...the group announced at a news conference at the Unitarian Church.



Representing two Albany churches that offered sanctuary to Central American refugees are (from left) Carl Valentine, FUSA's Social Responsibilities Council chair; FUSA President Vic Walker; Ellen Flanders, clerk of the Sanctuary Committee and member of Albany Friends Meeting; and the Rev. Eileen Karpeles, FUSA minister.

A resolution prepared by the Social Responsibilities Council and passed by the congregation read in part:

The congregation of the First Unitarian Society, fully cognizant that this resolution may propose an act of civil disobedience, does this day declare the First Unitarian Church of Albany a sanctuary. In solidarity with many faiths throughout the United States, and as a symbolic act, the First Unitarian Society of Albany will invite refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala to accept temporary sanctuary with us.

The Albany Sanctuary Committee, established by the two churches, has provided sanctuary for more than 30 undocumented Central American refugees. Many were housed, provided with food, clothing, money and friendship and assisted on their way to other safe havens. The committee also helped some refugees in finding housing, employment, legal and medical aid and English-language classes. Currently the committee keeps the congregation and the community informed of conditions in, and United States involvement in, Central American countries and promotes letter-writing campaigns and other actions protesting violations of human rights.

Another resolution, passed on May 19, 1985, was occasioned by a pending court decision on the availability of out-of-hospital abortion facilities. In an article on the congregational vote that supported the work of Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood, the *Times Union* quoted the executive director of that organization: "This is a church that speaks to pluralism in society and to the ethic of gracefully co-existing between different moral beliefs."

Years of active support of a nuclear freeze, also an SRC project, led eventually to the placing of a bronze plaque at FUSA's Washington Avenue entrance:

AREA CHURCH DECLARES ITS PREMISES NUCLEAR-FREE

Times Union 11/19/88

It's no larger than a brick on the church facade, but what it symbolizes has worldwide significance. Parishioners from across the Capital District assembled at the Unitarian Church Sunday for the dedication of a bronze plaque declaring the worship house a nuclear-weapons-free zone. "It is a symbolic act, but I think there is a lot of power in symbolic acts," said Stan Aronson, the interim minister. "I'm very much in favor of a voice crying in the wilderness."

• • •

The '90s brought new concerns and new rewards. Dominating the first year was the threat of war in the Persian Gulf, an issue about which members held diverse views. Some opposed any United States involvement, others favored giving sanctions a chance before taking military action, still others supported President Bush's call for immediate bombing of Iraq. SRC took a firm position:

**CITIZENS FOR PEACE HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE
TO LAUNCH "NEVER AGAIN" AD CAMPAIGN**

SRC News Release 1/2/91

Citizens for Peace will hold a press conference to launch its "Never Again" ad campaign at noon on Monday, January 7, 1991 at Channing Hall, 405 Washington Avenue in Albany. The campaign features a television spot with Vietnam Veteran Ron Kovic, author of the popular "Born on the Fourth of July".... Speaking at the press conference will be Brian Austin, former president of the local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America, and representatives of Citizens for Peace. Citizens for Peace is a project of the Social Responsibilities Council of the First Unitarian Society of Albany. It initiated a march of over 700 Albanians in opposition to war in the Persian Gulf. Several hundred people have participated in its forums and other activities.



Members of FUSA's Social Responsibilities Council carry a banner made by the church's Senior High students at Albany's Veteran's Day Parade in November 1990, two months before Desert Storm.

Among the "other activities" of SRC were a "Citizens for Peace" teach-in, which attracted more than 80 people, a public forum at which several religious leaders from the Capital Area Council of Churches joined FUSA minister, the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider, to "speak of their concerns about war and peace in the Persian Gulf regardless of their divergent views," and a public meeting in Channing Hall featuring a speaker from the Albany Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. On December 30, 1990 a resolution was passed by congregational vote stating: "...the First Unitarian Society of Albany adds its voice to others in our denomination in support of U.N.-mediated negotiations and a peaceful resolution of the Middle East crisis."

A more heartening outcome of SRC activity in 1990 was the development of a Neighborhood Summer Children's Program with nearby Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. For three years the program has provided lunch and recreation for about 25 neighborhood children, ages six to thirteen, on two afternoons a week for eight weeks. Two-thirds of the children return year after year. The program is staffed entirely by volunteers from the two churches, and the children enjoy programmed activities in a safe and caring environment. Activities include table tennis in Channing Hall, ball games in Washington Park, introduction to soccer, tennis and bowling as well as picnics, games, arts and crafts and swimming in Thacher Park. It's a toss-up as to who gets the most joy from the program, the kids or the volunteers.

When UUA announced a Hungarian Sister Church program in 1990, a subcommittee of SRC studied the program and presented its findings to various committees and the board of trustees, with the result that the congregation voted in the spring of 1991 to ask UUA for a sister church. No one pronounced *Parohia Unitariana Szokefalva-kukkuloszetiak* (except the translator), but an exchange of letters and photos soon followed. Gifts, too, were exchanged and about \$1,200 was sent to our Sister Church in 1992, part from a Christmas Eve service collection and part from FUSA's trust fund. Later, perhaps prompted by the current wave of political correctness, UUA renamed the Sister Church the Partner Church, but the familial tie continues.

In the fall of 1991 SRC became a member of the New York State Interfaith IMPACT, an organization representing constituencies of the New York State Council of Churches, the New York Federation of Reformed Synagogues and the Unitarian Universalist congregations of New York State. IMPACT addresses such public policy issues as human

rights, personal privacy, domestic violence, environmental protection, substance abuse, pornography and health care, striving to "have a greater faith impact upon the ethical and public dialogue in the governmental and public spheres of the State." In June 1992 the congregation voted to join IMPACT as a "Covenanting Congregation," allowing for a voice in the issues to be addressed.

In December 1991 SRC introduced *The Interdependent Web*, a monthly newsletter designed to keep the Society informed of Council activities, proposed projects or resolutions, and current social issues in general. The Council also maintains an information table in Channing Hall during the Sunday morning coffee hour, where petition-signing and letter-writing in support of, or opposition to, proposed political or social action takes place.

In celebration of our Sesquicentennial, the Forum Committee of SRC presented the first Channing Lecture in April 1992, about which please see Chapter 9.

SRC's Sunday morning Forums continue to present eminent speakers on a broad range of subjects, with discussion following. Many address recurring themes -- poverty, discrimination, criminal justice, world peace, corruption, environmental conservation. But new issues have arisen of late: political correctness, sexual harassment, alcohol and drug abuse, universal health care, and AIDS. The Forums, as always, are free and open to the public.

FUSA fosters many study groups of social concerns, some of which lead to social action in one form or another. The following sequence is a notable example: In 1988-89 a group of 26 FUSAns participated in the Unitarian Universalist course, *Black Pioneers - A Denominational Response*, and in May, 1989 presented a Sunday service entitled "UUs Look at Racism." The group developed two goals: 1) to contribute to racial justice and equality; 2) to make FUSA more open and appealing to people of all races. So FUSA members and SRC were ready and willing to respond to a request by the Hunger Action Network, Inc. to provide a site for the federally funded Summer Food Service Program targeted for predominately non-Caucasian neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Summer Children's Program is the happy result.

SRC is apportioned a varying amount of money in FUSA's annual budget and distributes it primarily to local community causes. The Council's budget for the 1992-93 church year was \$1,500, \$725 of which was set aside for the Neighborhood Summer Children's Program. Other recipients were 20/20 Vision, Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid

and Racism, Hunger Action Network, Family Planning Advocates, Channing Lecture, Albany Peace and Energy Council, Northeast Parent and Child Society, Social Justice Center, Homeless Action Committee, Save the Baby Network, and Sane Freeze.

The Society's expression of social responsibility is by no means limited to SRC activities. Other established committees as well as ad hoc groups give monetary and material support to many worthy causes. Part of the proceeds from rummage sales, for example, goes to such community organizations as Planned Parenthood, AIDS Council, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, Capital Area Speech Center, and the Neighborhood Summer Children's Program (1992-93 church year). The congregation as a whole generously responds to special appeals for money, whether to help a local family in distress, political prisoners in Central America or victims of natural disasters the world over. Opening our doors to groups that have been denied other meeting places because of ignorance or prejudice is another example of the Society's concern for social justice; rental fees for use of the building and its facilities are often waived or reduced for groups deserving of special consideration.

To mention all of the individuals who have given generously of their time and talents over the years to further the goals of social responsibility would fill a small volume. To mention a selected few would be folly.

THE COUNCIL

ARTICLE VI, Section 4 of FUSA's 11/8/1992 bylaws states:

Social Responsibilities Council: This Council shall guide and coordinate education and action in the realm of social matters of moral and ethical significance. It may issue statements of public support and endorsement consistent with the positions and policies of this Society, the St. Lawrence District, or the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Council may initiate and promote activities consistent with these statements.

This Council shall consist of a chair and six at-large members, elected and serving in accordance with Articles VIII and IX of these bylaws; and also up to five additional members appointed annually by a majority of the elected individuals on the Council.

FUSA's archives abound in undated, unsigned communications. One such, apparently written sometime in the '70s, titled "Oral Report to Congregation (SRC Steering Committee)," contains a paragraph that cogently describes the process and purpose of SRC:

In any social activities area, there are basically three levels of involvement. One level might be called "social concern," where we want to educate, or find out more about, certain issues. The Sunday morning Forum is a good example of this level. There is interesting talk, but little action or commitment. Another level is generally referred to as "social responsibility," where we, either individually or as a group, attempt to remedy, to repair, to improve some existing conditions. Our participation in the Focus Food Pantry is an example of this. Individual commitment is called for, but not spectacular promotion or confrontation. A third level is called "social action," usually requiring group action, because here we're trying to reverse the order of things -- change people's minds -- "change the world," as our national UUSC puts it, and usually numbers count. I refer, of course, to actions such as letter-writing, lobbying, demonstrations, picketing, etc. The joint action of this congregation during the Vietnam war in withholding the special telephone surtax is an example. And our Committee [SRC] working closely with CPL [Committee for Progressive Legislation] and Planned Parenthood is another...There is a certain progression which any individual or group must go through if he/she/they are to really "change the world."

To change the world -- that's the moral imperative at the heart of social responsibility.

4.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

By Eva H. Gemmill

Our Society chooses women and men to plan and carry out educational programs that can nurture our minds and spirits from infancy to old age. Separate from the ministry of our pastor, or our ministry of social responsibility, separate from the ministry of our artists and philosophers, religious education nevertheless encompasses them all. This chapter looks first at facets of our religious education in the past half century. Then we visit the FUSA church school's earlier ancestors, discovering remarkably consistent goals.

THE PAST HALF-CENTURY

"Very small." These are usually the first words used to describe the Albany Unitarian church school in the era of our 1942 Centennial. Records are scarce, but recollections are still plentiful, and they jibe. "Perhaps twenty children," several participants guess, "...more or less." Statistics are not the issue, however, for they do not measure spirit; and that is what emanates from those memories of the '40s.

Here is one example: a family, new to the church in those years, inquired about FUSA's church school. The recommendation was, "Take the children to Trinity Methodist." Instead, those parents joined others who were putting commitment to work in our church school. They used dynamic new teaching materials being produced by the American Unitarian Association (AUA), for the denomination also had a fresh commitment to Religious Education (RE). AUA field workers helped. And our staff was inspired by meeting topnotch educators as well as other lay teachers at RE seminars on Star Island or in the Poconos. Throughout the 1940s and early '50s Albany Unitarians strengthened a church school that was poised for a giant step. Small it was, sometimes a bit hectic, but joyous and forward-looking.

The names of RE leaders June Olson, Nina Flierl, and Helen Lugg appear among our few records of those times. In 1956 our weekly *Newsletter* file commences and, with only occasional gaps, the paper trail continues. The Rev. Ernest Pipes was our minister in January 1956 when AUA field worker Frances Wood reported that Albany's church school was "...small in numbers, space problems are very serious...." But, Wood concluded, "The last two years have seen a great change."

At that time our physical plant ended at the west wall of Channing Hall, and accommodated all activities including church school. On Channing's north wall, where art exhibits are now hung, there was a stage, routinely used for a class; one or two classes met in Channing Hall, and two upstairs. The second-floor classroom was above the Library, a room now used for storage. And in the attic space above Channing Hall Jack Garvin had built, in 1953, a room called the Jr. High Room, Garvin Room, Board Room, or The Eyrie. It is not presently accessible.

By the spring of 1956 the church school's rapid growth had created urgent space problems. FUSA trustees responded by authorizing purchase of 379 Washington Avenue, a row house about half a block away "with five usable rooms." Also in spring 1956 Ernie Pipes accepted a call to the Santa Monica Unitarian Church.

Many recollections indicate that Margot Barr, probably our first paid, professional Director of Religious Education (DRE), was the major catalyst for change during the years 1956-61. The wife of our new minister, the Rev. James Madison Barr, Margot arrived in August 1956 and was immediately offered the job of DRE. In the next five years church school enrollment skyrocketed from 48 to 166; and with that great stride we moved into a new era.

Dramatic increases in enrollment at FUSA paralleled those in the

denomination, and in public schools, as this table shows:

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
FUSA Church School Enrollment	41	137 (1968 peak - 308)	233	121	124
AUA/UUA Church School Totals	25,500	63,000 (1968 peak - 104,876)	97,583	37,300	48,161
Albany County Public Schools	27,350	38,837	47,537	38,421	35,907

Throughout the nation post-World War II Baby-boomers crowded public schools, reading about Dick and Jane. Unitarian Baby-boomers also read the adventures of Martin and Judy at church school on Sundays.

With church school classes filling Channing Hall in September 1956, the new after-church coffee hours offered a logistical challenge: how to clear the children in time for Coffee Hour? Good practice for the new DRE, for far more complex space-puzzles awaited her.

By the spring of that 1956-57 year church school enrollment had risen to 102. Crowding was acute. The recently acquired house at 379 Washington had become the parsonage for the Barrs, and they generously made emergency classroom space available there. FUSA trustees discovered that the adjacent house, 381 Washington, was for sale and anonymous gifts made its purchase possible. In September 1957 most classes met in our "new" building at 381 -- and enrollment continued to soar.

"We have literally outgrown our skin," wrote Jim Barr in a 1959 *Newsletter*. "We now push at every nook-and-cranny of the two houses we own on Washington Avenue. What will we do next year?" he asked. A popular question, indeed!

One temporary answer was headlined in a February 1960 *Newsletter*: "Expansion to Cerebral Palsy Center [classrooms at Albany Medical Center] Halts Possibility of Restricting Enrollment." As one teacher recalls, "That space was so welcome that we kind of ignored the fact that it was a mile and a half from church." Certainly the two houses we owned half a block east of the church were temporary solutions. "Building and Grounds's job is to keep 381 from falling down during the stretch run toward new and better facilities," noted a 1961 *Newsletter*.

While parents picked up their children at four separate addresses in the fall of 1961, a solution to church school space problems was taking shape. The following actions of the trustees and the congregation gave courage to everyone involved in the religious education program:

- Members voted 69-14 to engage an architect and raise funds for a Religious Education Building;
- By December 1961 members had pledged \$75,000 toward a fund drive;
- With assistance from anonymous donors the Board purchased and demolished three houses adjacent to Channing Hall;
- The Building Committee, headed by Lew Rider and President Don Peckham, began a year of extraordinary dedication;
- The firm of Hartheimer and Estey was chosen to design new space extending westward from Channing Hall; and
- Mortgages were negotiated.

Architectural plans showed a Religious Education Wing with two full floors of classrooms. The addition also contained a new kitchen twice the size of the old facility, a minister's study, administrative and DRE offices, a spacious entry hall, and a large double class or meeting room.

Construction continued throughout the summer. Finally, in September 1962 the plans had become a reality. All classes met under one roof at 405 Washington Avenue. The new RE Wing seemed spacious beyond imagining.

True, odds and ends remained to be finished -- especially in the new kitchen. A *Newsletter* reported that, even as the Alliance served a supper in Channing Hall, a carpenter was installing the countertop and a plumber was connecting the sink!

September 1962 also marked the beginning of the tenure of the Rev. Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr., for Barr had accepted a call to the First Unitarian Church of Memphis. And under Nick's ministry, FUSA's church school population explosion continued.

RE Council Chair Ann Eberle and DRE Diane Edgington reported to the board in 1964-65 an average attendance of 125, with an enrollment that had topped 200. The following year, in the RE Wing that had seemed so spacious just three years before, crowding was acute. Finances were tight, and became more pinched when the State University's contract to rent classrooms ended in September 1966.



Lawrie Lierheimer led this mid-'60s worship service for primary grades.

"Full-time DRE sought for 250 students," advertised the RE Council in January 1968. When Ruth Gordon accepted that position in March, enrollment was more than 300 -- it must have been some comfort that attendance was always substantially less than enrollment! Ruth's most vivid memory is not of extreme crowding, however, but of an eminently successful Earth Day. Children were given bags and asked to pick up trash in the blocks immediately surrounding the church. When they proudly returned to church with their collections the Washington Avenue vestibule was filled, wall-to-wall, with bulging black plastic bags. Ruth says that subsequent classes added ethical and technical content to FUSA's First Earth Day celebration.

Again in 1970 the DRE position was open but the proposed budget had been reduced drastically. In 1971-72 the DRE salary item was deleted. At the end of that year the trustees and RE Council sought help from the minister. The June 4, 1972 *Newsletter* carried a column titled "High Hope," in which President-elect Ann Eberle announced: "This year we cannot possibly afford a professional DRE.... We have asked Nick, our

one professional, to divide his time equally between our church school and the pulpit." Although our ministers have always had some involvement in the RE program, this was probably the maximum commitment -- a crisis resolved with grace and resourcefulness.



Nick Cardell's audience seems to be visualizing their own kites soaring high above the treetops. (c. 1972)

Church school enrollment and attendance had begun to show a marked decrease. Again, as in the case of FUSA's 1950s population explosion, we point to demographic trends. As Baby-boomers reached young adulthood public school enrollments, too, diminished locally and nationally. Now colleges were feeling the pinch. Our crowded Unitarian kindergartners of the '50s were adults in the '70s. They joined their peers of all religions or none, to focus on a host of social injustices.

The early '70s were also a time for exploring alternatives: high-schoolers discussed "Alternative Lifestyles;" adults discussed alternatives to marriage, church, public school, vocabularies; and the Channing Bookstore carried *The Alternatives Journal*. FUSA's alternative to church school was KoKoro, defined at the time as "general headquarters for the heart and mind." Abby Sugarman was superintendent of KoKoro classes in 1972-73.

Nick Cardell accepted a call to Syracuse's May Memorial Unitarian Society in 1974. Each succeeding minister makes his or her unique contributions to FUSA's children, just as Nick did. John Corrado gave them music, for example; George Williams used the puppet Edward T.

Bear in regular children's sermons; and Joan Kahn-Schneider's parables delight the children.

Back in 1976 the RE Council distributed a comprehensive questionnaire that ranked the congregation's opinions on 17 proposals. Possibilities ranged from "no arrangements of any kind for instruction or care of children" to "continuation of the current program." The 103 responses, though wide-ranging, indicated that members definitely wanted a Sunday morning RE program emphasizing Unitarian Universalist history, philosophy and values. They asked, in addition, for exposure to other religious groups; development of both individual and social responsibility; and creative activities. The majority also believed that church school parents should serve the program as volunteers.

And volunteer they do! Each year about 50 volunteers staff our



Teachers and RE Council members meet regularly to exchange ideas and discuss new curricula. Shown at a 1990 RE Council Workshop: Pat Gerou, Sr. High Representative Brian Manning, Don Odell, Sandy Stone; right, from top: John Sherman, DRE Ann D'Autillo, John Milliren, Kathy Prokorym, Fred Boreali, Sally Downes, Mark Butt.

church school. They enrich beyond measure the programs, the pupils, and themselves in the process. Teacher training has always had a high priority for the RE Council and the DRE. An example is the annual sessions held in the '50s and '60s at Doug and Ellen Marshall's camp at Warner's Lake. Today's training sessions continue the tradition of

bolstering the spirits and honing the skills of our fine volunteer staff.

In addition, experts from the congregation volunteer as ad hoc leaders of such memorable events as assembling amazing kites and flying them in Washington Park, creating awesome artwork to complement a curriculum, and demonstrating astounding scientific phenomena.

In December 1981 we celebrated the last \$672 monthly payment on our RE Wing mortgage. In retrospect, and quite possibly coincidentally, during the 20-year term of the mortgage the tenures of our DREs tended to be short and their pay was less than we would have liked. In 1968, when Sue McLaren was DRE, Council Chair Marge Gelbin reported : "...although we have the best in 1/4 time direction, we urgently need to expand to 4/4 time and march forward to a superior program." It is our great good fortune that a series of enthusiastic, innovative church school directors, in concert with outstanding RE Councils, brought us just that: a superior program, studded with memorable events. (See Appendix.)

In the decade from 1982-92 FUSA's church school has been directed by only two persons: Susan Rak Meisterman from 1981-88, and Ann D'Attilio from 1988 to the present. According to Don Odell, longtime church school teacher and member of the RE Council, the reasons co-exist within the church and the denomination. During those years, he says, the DRE pay scale has risen sharply, interaction on a national and regional level has increased, and DREs' opportunities for professional development have grown markedly. UUA's long-time Religious Education Director Eugene Navias agrees. He cites an upgrading of DRE professionalism nationwide, certainly due in part to the denomination's Renaissance program and Independent Study Program for Ministers of RE. Apparently FUSA's experience in this regard parallels that of other UU churches.

WHAT DID (DO) WE TEACH?

The great end in religious education...is not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own....

For many years our church school brochures have used this quotation from William Ellery Channing's 1837 speech to the Boston (Unitarian) Sunday School Society. Today, more than 155 years later, Channing's words still guide our curriculum choices.

The earliest curriculum material in our archives is a bound copy of weekly leaflets titled *Mother Nature's Children*. Charlotte Brundage, the

minister's wife, used the series in her Sunday School class in 1898. Albany Unitarians ordered the *Mother Nature* leaflet series from the Western Unitarian Sunday School Society in Chicago, considered to be rather more radical than its Boston counterpart, the Unitarian Sunday School Society, with which we were also associated.

The rebirth of the First Unitarian Society of Albany in 1895 coincided with the denomination's introduction of a new Unitarian Sunday School curriculum. UU Historian David Parke says that at that time the denomination commissioned for the first time non-ministers and women authors to write its new classroom materials. It is also significant, Parke says, that the new curriculum reflected "a reorientation of church school philosophy away from Biblical and theological themes toward public school content and methods." The secular nature of the *Mother Nature* series supports Parke's observation.

Albany Unitarians also reflected the denomination's new approach in 1901, in the following promotional piece for their "Sunday School of Ethics and Religion:"

This school seeks seriously to apply the spirit and methods of the new education to the study of ethics and religion....All Bibles, ancient and modern, are drawn upon....No dogmatic system of theology is impressed upon the mind of the child. On the other hand, the practical aim of every teacher is to encourage and help the pupils to think for themselves, in order that they may naturally grow into free men and women, just, truth-loving, loyal to noble ideas, devoted to the service of their fellow men.

The principles of FUSA's 1901 statement adapted themselves to the gentle '40s and '50s, through the tumultuous '60s and '70s. And still, in the '90s, our goal is to "help the pupils to think for themselves."

In spite of noble aspirations, we seem to have followed the denomination in the early decades of the 1900s as it drifted into a slump. Then, in 1937, Frederick May Eliot became president of the American Unitarian Association. His vigorous sense of purpose breathed new life into every branch of the AUA. Eliot named Ernest Kuebler to head Religious Education. He enthusiastically supported Kuebler's choice of Sophia Fahs, Angus MacLean and other educators to write new curriculum materials. These pioneer professionals produced the New Beacon Series of some 30 fresh, interesting, scientifically accurate volumes.

It seems certain that the Albany Unitarian church school began to use the New Beacon Series soon after it was introduced. Agnes Underwood,

one of our master teachers from the 1930s to the '70s, recalls that the Rev. Kenneth Walker "encouraged teachers to go to Star Island...where I had model classes with the sainted Sophia Fahs." And in the 1940s and '50s Ramona Weissbard, Dora Reed, Miriam Rider, and many other teachers used *Martin and Judy*, *How Miracles Abound*, *Joseph and His Brothers*, and other New Beacon Series texts.

Suddenly, in the contentious '60s, it was time for a change. (In jest, a FUSA RE alumnus suggested a sequel, *Martin and Judy at Berkeley*.) In that era of heightened social awareness our RE Department reflected a great many congregational concerns. The RE Council, for example, proposed weekday use of the new classrooms for an enrichment program for Albany's culturally deprived; State College students met at Channing



Martin and Judy was the curriculum for these kindergartners in 1958.

Hall to form the Albany chapter of CORE (Congress on Racial Equality); more than 50 of our young people attended workshops on minority problems and participated in a giant Interfaith Youth Rally for Civil Rights; Peter Jones of The Brothers, a civil rights group, spoke to church school classes on drug addiction; and Junior and Senior High classes spent Saturdays helping The Brothers refurbish their new headquarters.

Denominational RE writers quickly produced new materials. The titles below suggest increasingly practical and issue-oriented approaches to religious education. This feeling of immediacy, of direct and thoughtful application of liberal religious principles to daily life, continues in new Beacon Press offerings. Our kindergarten through high school schedule for 1969-73 used these Beacon Press kits: *Hello People*, *Human Heritage I and II*, *Man the Meaning Maker*, *Decision Making*, *Freedom and Responsibility*, and *Human Sexuality*. These materials were supplemented by contemporary activities such as *Games People Play*,

folk dancing, Yoga, hootenannies, chess, ethnic cooking, and ecology.

The '60s and '70s brought concerns for effective methods of teaching human sexuality to UU church school classes. Our RE Council's Subcommittee on Sex Education encouraged parents in February 1967 to contribute their views. By April the REC announced a series of sex-education programs for junior and senior high students, following church school. These workshops and discussions continued until 1971, when the UUA's Beacon Press introduced *About Your Sexuality*. This curriculum was revised in 1983, and was updated again in the early '90s with information on AIDS. A totally new program is now being created. Parents were required (sometimes "asked") to attend orientation before their children were enrolled in the class; and "About Your Sexuality" workshops for adults were and are available.

New Beacon Press materials are constantly in production. Some texts that we used in the '80s were *Haunting House, Images for Our Lives* (Judeo-Christian and World Religions), *Circles in Time, Decision Making, Stepping Stones to Unitarian Universalism, and Life Choices*.



Ed Hancock and Mark Butt led this junior high class about 1980.

Our 1992-93 curriculum offers these courses for kindergarten through senior high: *Growing Times, Born to Be You and Me, Timeless Themes, God Images, Why Do Bad Things Happen?, About Your Sexuality, and Life Issues for Teenagers*. For the traditional spring Mini-Session the prospectus notes that "...many of our classes will do a program called *Honoring Our Mother Earth*. Using myths and stories, song and dance,

arts and crafts, this curriculum provides an opportunity to...feel the spirit of enduring values of Native American peoples."

DRE Ann D'Attilio noted, in 1992, renewed interest of church school parents in exploring spirituality, and particularly our Christian heritage. The Curriculum Committee of FUSA's RE Council recommended use of Beacon Press's new course based on Bible stories.

Converts, not birthright UUs, make up by far the majority of our denomination's and our church's membership. We know, too, that many of these converts join us as unchurched young parents seeking liberal religious education for their children, and that these parents often volunteer to assist in the classrooms. Thus our church school frequently offers, quite innocently, intergenerational religious education. Writing of this concurrent awakening of parents and children on different levels, one veteran Beacon curriculum author reflects that the texts "began to work a quiet revolution in the minds and hearts of...parents and teachers, many of whom had started on this new way quite unsure of themselves."

Continuity emerges clearly as one reads through several years of RE brochures of our Society's church school. Here are some of the points that recur consistently:

- It matters what we believe;
- Parents are partners in the RE program;
- Teaching is appropriate to the age of the class;
- The staff cheerfully invites questioning;
- Religious education is a creative, life-long process;
- We expect that process to produce diverse views; but
- The Unitarian Universalist Principles unite us.

FUSA'S "BOARD OF EDUCATION"

We know from FUSA's archives that various decision-making bodies have carried out the congregation's religious education goals during the last century and a half. In earlier days such decisions were made by a superintendent and his staff at teachers' meetings. In any case, denominational assistance has been available.

Certainly AUA outreach became evident in Albany in June 1958. That is when DRE Margot Barr and RE Committee members Ramona Weissbard and Margaret Cunningham attended a conference in the Poconos named "The Functioning of a Religious Education Committee." Action taken as a result of their comprehensive reports on those sessions

probably marked the birth of our current Religious Education Council. Certainly the form and functions established as a result of that 1958 conference have been perpetuated by unbroken ranks of committee and council members to this day.

Some months after that momentous Poconos conference the following interpretation of RE Committee concerns appeared as a *Newsletter* enclosure:

DID YOU KNOW? WE HAVE TWO CHURCHES EACH SUNDAY;

- One worships and learns with one leader.
The other worships and learns with 17 leaders.
- The first group of about 130 meets together.
The second group of about 80 divides into 11 units.
- The first calls for one trained person.
The second calls for about 12 trained persons.
- The first leader is trained outside the church.
The second leaders need to be trained here -- plus another 12 at the turn of the semester each year.

This broadside, addressed to the "first" church, goes on to describe typical responsibilities of the "second" church. Concerns of that long-ago RE Committee, as cogent today, include curricula, prospectus, equipment, space, teacher recruitment and training, children's parties, parents' meetings, youth programs, adult programs, budgets, "...and the constant cry... 'What shall we teach about God?'"

Recently Jim Barr recalled the expert guidance that our RE program had in the late '50s. He spoke particularly of Al Lierheimer, Betty Reichert, and Irene Tobias, "who gave unstintingly of their professional expertise." Educators, an important component of FUSA's membership, have routinely been well represented among those who plan our religious education program.

The role of our Religious Education Council has remained relatively constant since it was established in 1958, with the exception that it now has the status of a council, elected by the congregation, rather than an appointed committee. Our 1993 bylaws charge the 12-member Council and its chair with fostering and maintaining a religious education program for the children and youth of the Society, having direct supervision and control over the program. The term of office of the chair is one year,

while council members are elected for three-year terms.

Certainly no group in the Society has a larger, more constant responsibility than does the Religious Education Council. Names of Council chairpersons are listed in the Appendix.

YOUTH GROUPS

Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) came to FUSA with the Barrs in 1956, although it was born on the denominational level three years earlier as the merger of Unitarian and Universalist high-school-age youth groups. Jim Barr was LRY advisor, while Margot headed the junior high school group -- called Jr. LRY -- which started in 1959.

A small file in our archives offers records of this group, glimpses as delightful as a childhood memory. Among a few copies of the LRY's newsletter, *Un Mot*, the December 1957 issue lists holiday events:

Their own Christmas dance, the "Snowflake Swirl;"
 An invitation to join Trinity Methodist youth on New Year's Eve;
 Caroling, with hot chocolate afterward, at Dave Weissbard's;
 Ice skating at Carol Peckham's with an Averill Park youth group;
 An R.P.I. Glee Club performance, with dessert at Lelia Foa's.

The newsletter included a thoughtful editorial on a "smut drive" being conducted in Albany. "Censorship of any sort is in my opinion dangerous," wrote *Un Mot* Editor Ted Standing, Jr. Later in that year Dave Weissbard preached the sermon on LRY Sunday, and Dave made a bee-line from FUSA's pulpit to a distinguished career in the Unitarian Universalist ministry. Another treasure in that file is the 1957 LRY mailing list -- 29 names that make us smile in happy remembrance.



LRY Sunday, 1963, with Sue Estey, Linda and Debbie Alexander, and Dick Katz

In 1957 we also find that Martha Bailey was LRY's liaison to FUSA's RE Committee. During college she was an AUA national LRY representative. She married Peter Brown, whom she met at an LRY conference, and their children attended FUSA's church school. Both Martha Debbie and Peter continue to serve FUSA in countless capacities.

LRY President Beverly Alexander's report to the congregation in 1964 mentioned social activities, plus "meetings ranging from auto safety to existentialism." She also reported on fund-raisers for donations to the family of the Rev. James Reeb (UU civil rights martyr), to the widow of our former sexton, and a projector for the church.

Bob and Dee Carroll led the Jr. LRY in 1962-63 after Margot Barr left. Their year-end report lists mercy killing, segregation, and teen-age problems as some of the successful meetings that resulted from an "interest inventory." A board of Jr. LRY members planned programs and activities, with occasional assistance from AUA materials. At their Sunday evening monthly meetings this was the agenda: pot-luck dinner, business, recreation (favorite game was "streets and alleys"), the program, and worship. The year seems to have been enjoyable for all concerned, but the report concludes prophetically that "the boys and girls were probably already doing too much."

LRY, and sometimes Jr. LRY, continued meeting throughout the '60s and into the '70s. Morris Gordon and Rosemary Cooke were LRY leaders until about 1969. An important agenda item, recalls one parent, was attending and hosting regional conferences, and fundraising for attendance at national conferences. The group met less and less regularly in the '70s.

Again we find that FUSA's experience parallels that of the denomination: as LRY waxed and waned locally, it all but disappeared nationally.

"Whatever happened to LRY?" we asked the Rev. Wayne Amason, an ex-LRYer who is now minister of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial UU Church in Charlottesville, Virginia. Amason emphasized the dramatic changes in North American youth culture between 1965 and 1975. These changes included "...desiring greater autonomy in their decision-making, being more assertive with adult advisors and wanting to spend more of their group time in less-structured contexts." In 1979 Amason was asked to reorganize the UUA's youth program, renamed Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. YRUU saw some revitalization on the district and local level during the '80s.

One young FUSAn, Mark Phillips, represented the St. Lawrence

District in two national conferences that attempted to join UU youth groups in an umbrella organization called "Common Ground." Youth groups emerge occasionally at FUSA, such as the enthusiastic senior high group that hosted a successful District Youth Conference in 1988.

A successful effort was made during the Barr years ('56-'62) to involve college students from R.P.I., Russell Sage, and State College in Sunday evening dinner-and-discussion sessions. For about three years Dr. and Mrs. Harry Herbrandson coordinated the R.P.I./Sage Channing Club in Troy; Jim Barr met with the State College Channing Club; and occasionally Troy and Albany groups met together.

Almost a century ago, according to Unitarian historian George Cooke, various young people's groups merged to form the Young Peoples' Religious Union (YPRU), generally for fellowship and education. FUSA had such a group. YPRU's 1922 minutes indicate that they studied Unitarianism, ushered, sang in the choir, and sent delegates to Star Island. During the 1923-24 interim between selling our Lancaster Street church and building our present church, YPRU met in members' homes, and the Laymen's League paid half of expenses to send two members to Star Island. Mildred Guffin recalls being at Star Island during YPRU Week in 1926. Among YPRU members who joined earnest discussions of pacifism, she says, was fellow teen-ager Dana MacLean Greeley. Indeed, according to his book, *25 Beacon Street*, such discussions at Star Island contributed to Greeley's lifetime of service to the denomination.

FUSA's RE Council and DRE Ann D'Attilio have brought to vigorous life an idea that has surfaced several times in the past as a suggestion: a Rite-of-Passage program for young people. When it was activated in 1992, Rite-of-Passage's stated goals were to help junior and senior high school students to focus their own beliefs and draw the young people more into the adult congregation. Each student is paired with a mentor -- an adult member of the congregation. All program members meet regularly, interact with leaders of the congregation, and carry out programs that enhance their knowledge of and interest in the church.

ADULT EDUCATION AT FUSA

Long before our trustees designated a committee for adult education, Albany UUs demonstrated their dedication to learning as a life-long process. In earlier days our ministers shared the leadership of adult education with men's and women's groups. Classes in Old and New

Testament, contemporary Biblical scholarship, and denominational affairs were offered on weekday evenings or in adult Sunday school classes. One minister wrote of the "heavy responsibility of adult courses including...race relations, and bi-monthly 'Unitarian Conversations.'" And both Women's Alliance and Laymen's League have a distinguished history of engaging experts to speak on current issues for their meetings.



FUSA adults who seek a broader understanding of issues have always had forums available, such as this c. 1970 event.

FUSA's list of adult education offerings, just for the past two decades, is dazzling. Each year new or recurring social issues energize our adult education planners: racism and feminism, anxieties about aging, atomic fallout, public education, and environmental degradation, to name a few.

In addition to such current issues, members often share their own specialties. Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, auto mechanics, sculpture, Esperanto, Shakespeare, astrology, financial planning, comparative religion, chemistry and contemporary life, and meditation, to name a few. These courses are normally held on week-nights.

For many years adult education was a subcommittee of the Religious Education Council (earlier, the RE Committee). In 1988 a separate Adult Religious Program Committee, authorized by the board and included in FUSA bylaws, began to perform that function. They began with courses on the Bible, Exploring Spirituality, Black Pioneers, and Building Your Own Spirituality. By 1992-93 they offered 23 wide-ranging courses: Conflict and Resolution, Tai Chi, Woody Allen and the Meaning of Life, and Concepts of Gods and Goddesses, for example. The Committee's

goal was to "appeal to the congregation's intellectual, practical and spiritual needs."

Assuming a continuing supply of curious minds, available experts, and enthusiastic teachers in our congregation, these remarkable offerings of the Adult Program Committee will continue to be a vital, ever-changing component of our church life.

THE FIRST CENTURY

"By cash rec'd for Sabbath School, \$9.54," recorded on the credit side and, opposite, "Sabbath School books, \$10."

Just entries by a long-ago FUSA treasurer? Yes, and also the earliest words about church school found to date in our archives. Dated December 1843 and February 1844, the entries were made when FUSA was just over a year old.

Somewhat earlier, a "Correspondence" from Albany appeared in the April 15, 1843 *Christian Register*, AUA's denominational periodical published in Boston. After describing the new Albany congregation, the writer added:

...a Sabbath School is to be commenced immediately. If any Sunday School have any class books, or other books suitable for a Library which they can spare, they will do a deed of charity in sending them...for the use of the Sabbath School in Albany.

These early Sabbath School notations are surprising because the Albany Society was so recently organized. It had no settled minister and, despite constant help from Boston, it struggled to stay alive. In addition, those early Albany Unitarians did not occupy their first church, at 64 Division Street, until October 1844. Until that time, did the rented quarters where they met accommodate Sabbath School as well as church services, or was Sabbath School held in a member's home? What does that early existence of a Sabbath School say about the hopes of those long-ago FUSAns for the religious education of their children? Having no clues, we can only guess.

Several sources verify that Sunday school was still a new idea little more than two decades before FUSA's birth. UU historian David B. Parke says that the first Sunday schools

...dealt primarily with secular subjects and only secondarily with religious, since their basic aim was to increase literacy among children; the reason

they were held on Sunday was not because it was holy but because the children worked the other six days of the week.

Although various religious groups in Boston are reported to have begun some of the earliest Sunday schools in this country, Albany, too, was a notable pioneer in the Sunday school movement. The *Albany Daily Advertiser* of December 3, 1822 reported that by 1816 the Methodists had enrolled 272 children in Sunday schools and, further, that Albany's Baptist African Church held a Sunday school in 1820. In 1822 Albany's 10 Sunday schools were run and supported by churches and schools, as well as by concerned and literate women, and private philanthropists such as Stephen Van Rensselaer. The *Albany Daily Advertiser* concluded:

Wherever Sunday schools have been some time in operation the state of the community has sensibly improved; public taxes and expenses have lessened; and crimes, misery, mendicants, and poverty have diminished.

Gradually Sunday schools became religious rather than secular. Certainly by 1842, when FUSA was formed, Sabbath School had become the agency for propagating the faith among a church's young people. And Unitarians fostered literacy and independent thought among their children then, as now.

The next reference in our archives to Sabbath School is 1850, when they boasted a library of 123 volumes. Apparently they were keeping pace with Unitarians in other cities, for one writer, commenting on the denomination's emphasis on libraries, puts the total number of volumes in U.S. Unitarian Sunday Schools in 1850 at 64,150.

The Sabbath School's momentum existed for a time even after our Division Street building was sold in 1869. Although regular church services were not held then, 15 to 20 Unitarian students and teachers met for a time at the Friends' Meeting House. Perhaps some of those pupils were among the staunch supporters of liberal religion who, twenty-six years later, gathered to waken the slumbering First Unitarian Society of Albany.

Dr. William Brundage revived the congregation in 1895. A strong supporter of Sunday Schools, Brundage turned his attention at once to this aspect of church life. Guffin writes that by 1896, 96 pupils were enrolled. In those days Sunday School followed church, from 11:30 to 12:30, thus allowing for a flourishing adult class.

Reports of Secretary-Treasurer George T. Waterman suggest a well organized Sunday School, highly regarded by church members. Although the newly revived Society still met in rented quarters at the time of his first report, the Sunday School owned a piano and sustained an enrollment of about 100 pupils. Moreover, it was self-supporting. In 1898, for example, their income of \$190.82 included \$107.32 from Sunday School collections, \$30.25 from a collection at their Christmas entertainment, and \$39 from rental of their piano.

Two years later, now ensconced in FUSA's new church at 8 Lancaster Street, the Sunday School purchased library books for \$45.28, says Waterman's report for 1900. The light and lofty ground floor of the Lancaster Street church contained "The Hall," where a stage, dressing room, entry, and the Hall itself provided classrooms. Present FUSA members and friends Agnes Underwood, Mildred Guffin, Peg Hout and Phoebe Ziehm attended Sunday School and participated in Christmas pageants there.

Waterman's reports tell us far more than income and disbursements. He lists texts being studied, and he tallies enrollment and attendance. "Too many stay away when it rains," he scolds, "and then when it is a nice clear day, because it is a nice clear day."

Dr. Brundage's acceptance of a call to Unity Church in Brooklyn coincided with a sharp drop in attendance at FUSA. The fortunes of the Albany church school, however, also reflected those of Unitarian Sunday Schools nationwide. Enrollments in U.S. diminished in the early decades of this century from 27,138 in 1900 to 17,629 in 1935.

We must add that many of our ministers vigorously supported the Sunday School, if we may judge from such statements as FUSA's Dr. William S. Morgan made at the 1910 annual meeting:

It is absolutely necessary for us to teach our children the principles of our liberal faith...There is no greater menace to the cause of liberalism than an ignorant liberal....

Diminishing numbers seemed not to daunt those who remained. In fact, enrollments fluctuated considerably, reflecting such influences as mobility of members, movement to suburbs, transportation technology, and the shrinking size of families. Several Albany Unitarians who attended Sunday School in the early decades of this century have shared memories of an active, happy time, with close, long-term family friendships. As a teen-ager in the '30s, Peg Hout (then Sanford) recalls

a vital church school experience with perhaps 35 other pupils.

Nationwide, enrollment of Unitarian children in church school (a term that came into use about 1925) skyrocketed from 17,629 in 1935 to 89,496 in 1965. This is roughly the proportion by which the Albany Unitarian church school increased in the same time period. It was the mid-'50s when FUSA's church school population exploded, as described in the first section of this chapter, and shown graphically in Chapter 2.

Religious education for all ages of Albany Unitarian Universalists has embraced growth and change. This chapter cited prophetic words of William Ellery Channing spoken in 1837 ("...not to stamp our minds on the young, but to stir up their own..."); and it excerpted *Sunday School of Ethics and Religion*, FUSA's 1901 prospectus ("...the practical aim of every teacher is to help the pupils to think for themselves..."). Today's religious education goals continue to stress this basic UU principle: "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning." This expectation of personal growth and change connects yesterday to today.

.....

REFERENCES

Conversations and correspondence with the Rev. J.M.Barr, Ruth Anker Bashaw, Ann D'Attilio, Jane Dean, Ruth Estey, Eleanor Garvin, Ruth Gordon, Mildred Guffin, Margaret Hout, Lucia (Tweedie) Kowaluk, Helen Lugg, Don Odell, Barbara Manning, Susan Meisterman, Dora Reed, Miriam Rider, Mary Standing, Agnes Underwood, Phoebe Ziehm.

FUSA *Newsletter* File and Enclosures, 1953-92.

Field Reports of EWK [Ernest Kuebler?] 11/50, and Frances W. Wood 1/56.

"Teaching Assignments," the Rev. Ernest Pipes 1955/56.

Architectural Plans, "Unitarian Church Addition," Hartheimer & Estey 3/62.

Architectural Plans, "Unitarian Church, Albany," J.W.Ames, Boston 1924.

FUSA Trustees' Minutes, 1842-present, as available.

"A Summary of Five Years Service in Albany, N.Y., April 1, 1935-40," The Rev. Kenneth Walker.

Minister's Report at Annual Meeting, 1963, The Rev. N.C.Cardell.

"Report of Building & Grounds Committee to the Annual Meeting," 5/63, D.S. Morton.

Un Mot, T.G.Standing, Jr., Editor, 12/13/57.

Report to the Annual Meeting, The Jr. LRY, R. & D. Carroll, 62/63.

Report to the Annual Meeting, The LRY, Beverly Alexander, 63/64.

Letter from the Rev. Wayne Arnason, 4/29/93.

Greeley, D.M., *25 Beacon Street*, Beacon Press, 1972.

Cooke, G. W., *Unitarianism in America*, Chapter XI, Boston, 1910.

Reports on RE Committee Functions from Poconos Conference: "RE Committee Functions," M. Barr; "Helping Teachers to Grow," M. Cunningham; "Helping Parents to Grow," R. Weissbard, 6/58.

Hunter, E.F., *Sophia Lyon Fahs*, Beacon Press, 1966.

FUSA RE Brochures, 1982-92

Letter from and conversation with UUA Director of Religious Education Eugene Navias *Mother Nature's Children*, Western Unitarian Sunday School Society, Chicago, 1895
Liberal Religious Education, Spring 1990, "Fulfilling Channing's Challenge"; "Fahs and MacLean: A Living Heritage."

"Sunday School of Ethics and Religion," FUSA 1901/02.

Guffin, J.C., *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, 1942.

Reports to Congregation, Sunday School Sec.-Treas. G.T. Waterman, 1896-1922.

Albany Daily Advertiser, 12/3/1822, "Report of Albany Sunday School Society."

Graves, C., *A Century of Village Unitarianism: 1803-1903*, 1904.

Parke, D.B., *The Historical and Religious Antecedents of the New Beacon Series in Religious Education (1937)*, Ph.D., Boston University 1965.

Richardson, R.D., *125 Years of Unitarian Sunday Schools*, Unitarian Sunday School Society, 1952.

5.

FUSA MEN AND WOMEN

A Unitarian paper published in Boston in 1844 reported on the Albany church's "unquestionable elements of progress...and in both sexes energy and Christian devotedness." This early reference to women in our church is reassuring, for our own records of that era could convey the impression that the First Unitarian Society of Albany was a men's club. Our trustees' minutes tell us that, when the Society was formed in 1842, New York State law limited voting rights in societies and churches to male members.

That law had changed by the time FUSA was reorganized in 1895. Attitudes changed, too -- although slowly and unevenly. Our trustees offered meeting space to a New York State Woman Suffrage group in March 1901, for instance, yet half a century later we still assigned our members "men's work" and "women's work." Well into the 1960s this church's separate organizations for men and women performed prodigious feats of building maintenance and fund-raising; their work also included social action, education, hospitality, and public relations.

Today FUSA men and women work together to maintain a vital church. This chapter describes the transition from separateness to shared responsibility.

MEN'S GROUPS

By Israel Rapoport

Whether they were inventions of Albany Unitarian men, or branches of denominational groups, FUSA men's clubs seem to have had similar life cycles. Instituted for a purpose, they prospered for a time, then went into decline. Because the decline was gradual, records are incomplete or nonexistent as to when and why they ceased to exist. Only the Unity Club documents a clear-cut ending.

Societal changes accounted for the demise of gender-specific organizations. But another reason for the decline of men's clubs may be the concept we now call "burnout." FUSA's membership had diminished early in this century, and the Society was kept alive by a small number of families who gave inordinate amounts of time, energy, and financial support. Among this small band Dr. Horatio M. Pollock stands out. For four decades Pollock was an ardent worker in nearly every activity of the church, from Sunday School superintendent to president of the congregation. Among other names that recur most often in the early 1900s are Dr. Charles W. Wheelock, T. Howard Stott, Wallace C. Beebe, Frederick A. Gaylord, Eugene B. Sanford, and John C. Guffin.

Without doubt the excellent quality of the programs that these men and their colleagues arranged, and the good publicity they received, promoted a favorable public image of FUSA.

UNITARIAN MEN'S CLUB

After its golden age at the turn of the century, FUSA experienced a period of stagnation. Frederick Gaylord sought permission from the board to organize a men's club in hopes of revitalizing the Society. Thus, at a "smoker and graphophone [sic] concert" in November 1907, the Unitarian Men's Club was formed. (The treasurer listed an expenditure for cigars.) Close to a hundred men had joined the Unitarian Club by 1908, paying \$1 per year to hear "lectures of a very high order... which were expected to be a marked factor in the Society's growth.

Programs of the Unitarian Men's Club note that "the club is not designed to exploit anything, but conceived in the spirit of helpfulness

UNITARIAN CLUB		
Albany, N. Y.,		190
Mr. _____		
To dues from May, 190	, to May, 19	\$ _____
Received Payment,		
		_____ Treasurer.

and dedicated to the pursuit of truth." This pursuit knew no bounds. A Horatio Alger flavor flows from some of the newspaper reports of the presentations, found among the minutes. Two examples follow:

- The State Commissioner of Charities spoke of New York's penitentiaries as "no longer places of punishment...but schools where the criminal is taught to help himself..to remove the necessity of preying on his fellow man."
- Another notable program concerned the George Junior Republic. The State Public Service Commissioner told the Unitarian Men's Club how William R. George began a community of youthful offenders in Tompkins County. It functioned as a successful democracy (thus the George Junior Republic) in which young criminals and incorrigibles formed and maintained their own legislature, school, bank, court, and industries. According to the Commissioner, many inhabitants of the George Junior Republic went on to distinguished careers.

Throughout the five years of Unitarian Men's Club programs, the breadth of their interest in science and technology is remarkable. Lecture topics include New York's new Barge Canal; an "exhaustive treatise on water purification;" the modern way of driving machinery with electric motors; paleontology; the new x-ray diagnosis; sewage disposal; properties of iron and steel; and treatment of tuberculosis; in addition to a long list of social science subjects.

There is no record of the Unitarian Men's Club after a 1913 list of

members, even though the Rev. Dr. Morgan had called it, in 1910, "one of the Society's splendid organizations."

In 1934 a number of men attempted to form a Unity Men's Club, open to all males over eighteen. Rules were drawn up but no other mention of this men's club was found.

THE UNITY CLUB

An earlier Unity Club was formed in 1896 for men and women. Its focus was on "Truth, Worship, and Service." It emphasized young people, but membership in the Unity Club was not dependent upon age or religious faith. The club was divided into four sections: Ethical and Religious, Sociological, Literary, and Social. Membership rose to 126, then fell to 102 in 1901. In that year it donated \$100 to the Society from dues (\$1 per year) and profits from socials.

Unity Club Secretary Antoinette J. Waldbillig reported in January 1901 that the Social section was doing nicely, but that the other sections had low attendance. In the same year Dr. Pollock was elected president of the Literary section. In 1907 they ran extra socials to help the Unity Club "out of its financial condition." In 1909 they replaced bands with a piano at their dances to save money. In 1910 Dr. Morgan reported that the Unity Club had no president and he and Dr. Pollock were carrying out that responsibility.

In 1919, with only 54 members on the books, some members sought to reorganize. In January 1921, however, the Unity Club merged with the Laymen's League. Records do not mention that both men and women belonged to the Unity Club, while the Laymen's League was a men's group.

THE SUNDAY EVENING CLUB

In 1938 the Rev. Kenneth Walker, A.M. Woodhead, William Greeley, B.K. Boyce, and Horatio Pollock created the framework of the Sunday Evening Club. Their hope was to bring nationally known speakers to present topics from the liberal point of view. Among proposed speakers were the renowned Unitarian minister John Haynes Holmes, American Unitarian Association President Samuel Eliot, the presidents of Russell Sage College, Union College, and Cornell University, Cleveland's reform Mayor Burton and, surprisingly, J. Edgar Hoover. Tentative dates were suggested and letters sent to prospective speakers, but no further record

of the Sunday Evening Club was found.

LAYMEN'S LEAGUE - ALBANY CHAPTER

The Unitarian Laymen's League, launched on a national level on April 11, 1919, was one of the denomination's most important lay-led groups. National newsletters in our file indicate strong support of the denomination, as well as active interest in the United Nations, Civil Rights, memorial societies, Planned Parenthood, and other social movements that upheld Unitarian principles. The League's Information Program was a model public relations effort -- instrumental, perhaps, in maintaining the momentum of Unitarian development in the 1950s. Their ads produced inquiries from around the globe. The League's national newsletter reported that a member contributed \$2,500 for its Information Program; another bequest was received in gratitude for the discovery of Unitarianism through that program.

An independent, self-governing organization for men, the League was affiliated with the American Unitarian Association (AUA). National bylaws specified that ministers could be members but could not hold office. (Earlier, in 1907, the Universalists had formed a similar organization. Just prior to UU merger, in 1961, the National Association of Universalist Men voted to consolidate with the Unitarian Laymen's League.)

The national Laymen's League suggested that each chapter concentrate on one major activity, perhaps devoting attention to two or three minor areas. They listed these possibilities: community affairs, lecture courses, youth groups, and an annual Laymen's Sunday program. Suggested church support activities included music, finances, publicity, hospitality, church services, church plant, membership, and the church school.

Rather than focusing on a few areas as suggested, the Albany Chapter burst on the scene in 1920 with a flurry of activity. Its first annual report listed these achievements:

- Installed a sign on Washington Avenue;
- Guaranteed publication costs of the church newsletter;
- Purchased unsold hymnals for the benefit of the Society;
- Arranged a supper with cooperation of Women's Alliance;
- Joined Federated Men's Clubs of Protestant Churches of Albany;
- Contributed to that group's "Go-to-Church" advertising campaign.

In addition, eight members of FUSA's Laymen's League pledged \$1900, almost all of Albany's quota for a special "Unitarian Campaign."

Secretaries' minutes from years immediately following suggest that they maintained this momentum. The Laymen's League also conducted forums for discussion of religion and current events. In September 1922, when FUSA was about to sell its Lancaster Street church and had no settled minister, the League was instrumental in employing Miss Annie Filoon as parish assistant. Chief among her duties was "to procure new members." In December 1922 they discussed employing "...a Miss Fleur or somebody else..." to organize a Sunday School and a local chapter of the Young People's Religious Union. (FUSA had both Sunday School and YPRU a short time before; if they were not then extant, or needed a boost, perhaps the reason was that the congregation was then meeting at the Albany Institute of History and Art.)

The League's "Committee for Keeping Church Records" reported in April 1922 that 228 persons were connected with the Society, of whom 106 to 112 were active. February's average attendance was 52 (20 men, 32 women) and in March, 48 (20 men, 28 women). Forty children and adults were registered in Sunday School with five officers and teachers.

Church ads had paid dividends whenever tried by either the local or national Laymen's League. In composing ads, the Albany League recommended avoiding "the controversial method." One League member proposed teaching ethical and moral traits and canvassing the immediate territory around the church, which suggests a belief that improvement was needed in that vicinity.

And what of the motion, recorded in the minutes, to send two delegates from Albany to a conference in Schenectady on October 20, 1922, to determine the advisability of the affiliation of Unitarian churches in "nearby cities"? Presumably the cities were Albany, Schenectady and Troy. But we shall never know, for the Troy church closed in 1935; nothing further is known to exist in our records; and inquiries to the Schenectady Society yield no information about such a conference.

Another mystery concerns the years from 1926-35 when the Albany Chapter of the Laymen's League did not exist. FUSA's *Board Minutes* contain a two-page typed report of League activities, given at the January 1926 Annual Meeting: Two Forums had dealt with "evolution and the coal situation;" they had offered a lecture on the "white Indians of Panama," and a card party in Channing Hall. In addition they supplied ushers for Sunday services, financed weekly calendar mailings, and presented the Laymen's Sunday service.

Impressive? Yet in December 1926 FUSA's board of trustees voted to dissolve the Albany Chapter of the Laymen's League. Although that was the year after the congregation dedicated its new church, FUSA had not had a settled minister from 1921-23, and had met in temporary quarters from 1922 until it occupied the present church in 1925. Possibly this unsettled time took a toll, and Laymen's League was one casualty.

In a report to the American Unitarian Association in Boston, "A Summary of 5 Years in Albany, N.Y., April 1935-40," the Rev. Kenneth Walker wrote of a strong Albany Chapter of the Laymen's League in 1940, although none had existed when he arrived at FUSA in 1935. After its rebirth in 1937 the League again supported the Society in a variety of ways. It sponsored social events such as dinners, party nights, and square dances. Regular forums featured speakers on social and ethical problems of the day. Members raised money by holding rummage sales and book sales, and ushered at Sunday services. And they funded or performed all manner of maintenance on the building and grounds.

Furthermore, interaction with a strong national Laymen's League must have furnished inspiration. Mailings received from Boston in the late '50s include copy for advertisements that the national headquarters had run, and results of the campaign: for example, 20,786 inquiries from 1956-60. "YOUR church should have a plan for reaching these 'Unitarians Without Knowing It,'" says the flyer accompanying the ad shown here.

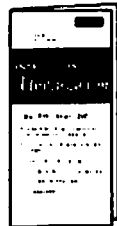
Another example is a five-page report in the mid-'50s, from the League's national Committee on Ministers' Salaries. It contains copious data for a campaign to upgrade ministers' wages, asking members to "consider whether your minister is paid as much as your barber."

are you a unitarian without knowing it?

Do you believe that religious truth cannot be contrary to truth from any other source?

Do you believe man is capable of self-improvement and is not condemned by "original sin?"

Do you believe that striving to live a wholesome life is more important than accepting religious creeds?



Do you believe in the practical application of universal brotherhood?

Then you are professing Unitarian beliefs.

Send for 32-page illustrated booklet, "Introducing Unitarianism."

Mail this Coupon with 25¢ to

FUSA's Laymen's League offered the usual timely topics during 1959-60. But one program, "Whither the Laymen's League?" sounds ominous. By then, increasingly, committees of men and women assumed responsibilities that were once the province of "gender groups."

Even before the 1961 Unitarian-Universalist merger men's groups, on the national level and in both denominations, were wrestling with the possibility of obsolescence. Responses to a 1960 FUSA questionnaire reflected the feeling that the Laymen's League competed with other activities of the Society. The Albany Chapter questioned whether they should attempt to continue in their present role. At a May 1962 meeting, members addressed this problem, considering merger with the Women's Alliance -- under a new name, we assume.

What was perhaps FUSA's last communication from the UU Laymen's League arrived in August 1963. The UUA's newly formed Commission on Religion and Race, having voted to support the August 28 civil rights demonstration in Washington, urged the Laymen's League "to participate in this witness for human rights and human freedom." It is not known whether FUSA responded.

FUSA *Newsletters* carry but two items concerning the League after 1962. In 1966 and again in 1968 futile efforts were made to activate the organization. Nationally an effort, also futile, was made at 1974 General Assembly to revive the Laymen's League. The national organization ceased to exist in 1980, and at that time Wayne M. Davis, the Albany Chapter's last president, turned over the Chapter's funds to the FUSA board of trustees.

The value of the Laymen's League to the church, and to the denomination, cannot be overestimated. It was inevitable, however, that a "men-only" organization that attempted to cover so many activities of the church would become obsolete as the Society changed and grew. Nor do we find many organizations in society at large that are now devoted to "gender" roles.

CONTEMPORARY MEN'S GROUPS

Responding to broad changes in personal, business, and family relationships, Albany Unitarian Universalists have formed support groups for both men and women. In 1973 a Retired Men's Club emerged, soon to become the Get Together Luncheon. Two *Newsletters* in 1975-76 mention a Men's Consciousness-raising Group, but nothing more is known of it.

In 1986, with encouragement from the Rev. George Williams, a Men's Support Group began. Planned from the outset to remain small to facilitate interaction among members, the group has a closed membership. When it faltered in 1989 FUSA member Walter Lifton, a consultant in organizational dynamics, met with the members. With this help, and the



The Men's Group, about 1991: back row, Charlie Estey, Charlie Kahn-Schneider, Don Odell; middle row, Stan Reich, Harvey Frankel, John Bassett, Jess Little; front row, Ed Hancock, Fred Boreali, Mark Butt, Seth Edehman.

addition of new members, the Men's Group continues to be active. Their discussions are enriched by new attitudes and redefinitions of men's roles in society, in the family, and as they relate to each other. A distinct "men's movement" has emerged in society, according to a 1992 Sunday morning Forum led by members of the Men's Group.

A group with a quite different focus, called A Gathering of Men, was organized in 1992. Its format is casual and friendly, and its members explore a broad range of topics at their meetings. The first summer's agenda included a baseball game at Heritage Park. This group has a denominational aspect, too: the first Gathering of Men from St. Lawrence District churches met at Unicamp in Ontario in June 1992. This meeting is now an annual occurrence.

Throughout its history the First Unitarian Society of Albany has seen a great many gender groups organized, with a variety of purposes. Their longevity, too, has varied. Today our strength is still found in our

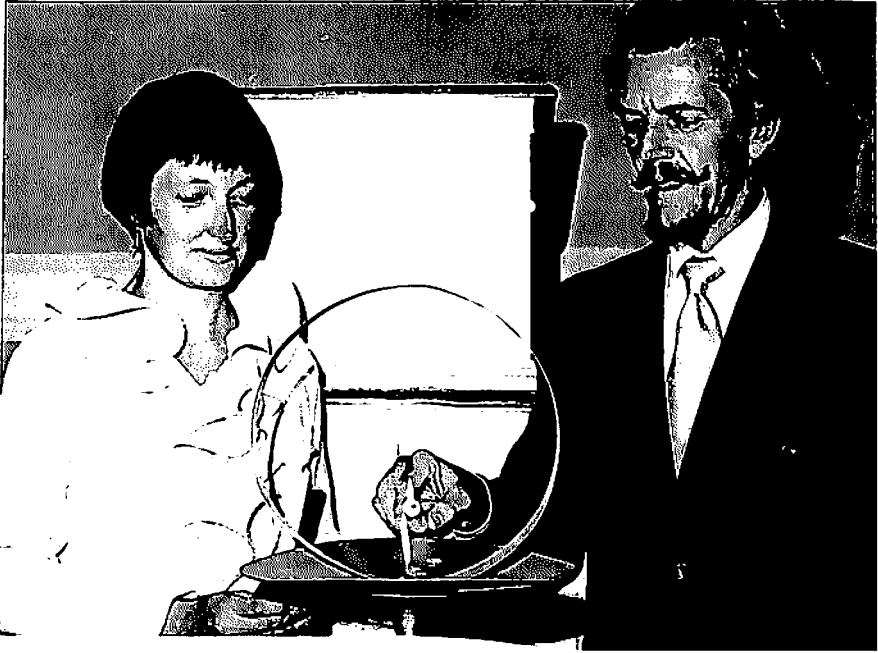
members' dedication; but they tend to belong to committees and councils of men and women, working together for the good of the Society.

THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

by Arlene Gilbert

John Guffin's history, *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, written for the 1942 FUSA Centennial, tells us how the men founded, supported, and led the church community. Very few women are mentioned. Didn't they support the church as they do now? The answer is "Yes, but...." From the very beginning women were members and at least by 1895 they were voting members.¹ In June 1895 the membership stood at 53 women and 63 men and the 1942 membership list includes 56 women out of a total of 106. Unitarianism in Albany clearly had a "better half." But women did not hold leadership positions and they did not write the minutes and reports which inform most church histories.

History is most often written by the scholars of the dominant class. In the 19th Century there were few dominant women and even fewer female scholars. None of these were members of the board of trustees of the First Unitarian Society of Albany or chaired any of its committees. A careful search of the existing documents yields no evidence that women held any church office, except in their own women's groups, from 1842 when FUSA began until Amelia Lucy Owen Sullivan was elected to the board of trustees in 1918. Despite some spectacular gains for American women in the following years, FUSA still had no women ministers, very few women trustees, and no women presidents before 1972 when Ann Eberle was elected president of the congregation. Things have moved comparatively swiftly since then.



FUSA's first woman president, Ann Eberle, assists the Rev. Nicholas Cardell, Jr. as he lights the sanctuary chalice in 1972.

The past 20 years have seen four women elected president of FUSA: Ms. Eberle, Mary Freeman, Lawrie Lierheimer, and Barbara Sekellick. In 1983 we called our first woman interim minister, Eileen Karpeles, and in 1989 Joan Kahn-Schneider was called and continues to serve as our minister. The gains in women's right to full participation in American society are mirrored by their FUSA experience during the second half of the 20th Century.

In the 19th Century women seldom had a public identity separate from their husbands. They were thought to be included when the patriarch of the family received honorable mention. Respectable married women were addressed by their husband's names. Unmarried women were at least identified by their own names but as "maiden ladies" they had less status than their married sisters. No sensible woman would even think of putting her name forward for church office in the 19th Century. Change came very slowly in the 20th Century despite the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the winning of educational opportunities for females, and the obvious leadership qualities of many women in our church.

But wasn't this a liberal church? Again the answer is "Yes, but...."

Yes, the First Unitarian Society of Albany was a liberal religious group, but liberal in the context of a very conservative community. Our forebears were not radical, they were simply following the tenets of 18th Century rationalism to their logical conclusion. They were not interested in revolutions whether in politics or in life styles and they were certainly not ready to embrace the equality of women, although the subject sometimes came up. In a sermon delivered in March 1898 on the ethical teachings of Jesus, the Rev. William Brundage explained, "It means that the status of woman shall be exactly equal to the status of man, in order that woman as well as man may be perfectly free to realize her own ideals."² An interesting hypothesis but there is no evidence that the congregation understood this to be a call to action.

Nevertheless, women did participate in and support the church. Here at least they had a vote in congregational matters and their aspirations to national suffrage were championed by some of their ministers. The Rev. A.D. Mayo (FUSA minister 1856-63) was a supporter of woman suffrage and a frequent contributor to the *Una*, the first woman suffrage periodical in the country. In the February 1853 issue, Rev. Mayo discussed the need for women to take control in changing their status. "It is one thing to prove the absurdity of social customs," he argued, "and another to change them. Associations are stronger than arguments; and women will be recognized in new positions, not so much by proving that she belongs there, as by making herself strong enough to take them."³ The building of this strength would take over a hundred years but the hard work had already begun.

From FUSA's earliest days, women gathered together in sewing circles and prepared church suppers to raise funds for the cause of liberal religion in Albany. These activities offered a rare opportunity to socialize and participate in a larger world than the home and hearth they were tethered to by the cultural dogma of the day. John Guffin tells us that by 1855 the women of the church had organized themselves into a sewing circle which was cited as an example of church gatherings which foster friendliness and "a corporate spirit" in the sense of a common purpose so necessary to the life of the church.⁴

Other evidence of FUSA women's activities in the 19th Century include a letter dated September 27, 1844 from Mrs. John Childe, who presented a pulpit Bible to the Society as a "slight token of her deep interest in the prosperity, the permanent and extensive usefulness of the church."⁵ Such gifts were accepted ways that women could contribute. More than one half of the memorials listed in the Centennial history were

gifts of individual women or women's groups. Equally acceptable were the church suppers, rummage sales, bazaars, teas, charitable works, book reviews, and various fund raisers that were considered within the feminine sphere in those days.

By 1896 a chapter of the National Alliance of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women was organized in Albany. The Women's Alliance became the focus for the organizational talents, social life, and church work of Albany Unitarian women for much of the next 70 years. Its membership waxed and waned with the fortunes of the church and other cultural influences but, overall, the Women's Alliance was the umbrella for women's activities in and for the church.⁶ Along with church suppers, sewing circles, and book reviews, the Women's Alliance



Alliance suppers were a major source of income for the women's substantial pledge to the church. Just before the guests arrived the workers posed, with the Rev. Charles Graves, for this 1913 photo.

raised funds and made regular contributions to the Albany church treasury⁷ and the work of the National Alliance. The denominational tie was very important to them and they often entertained speakers from this "wider world." They also worked to raise funds for repairs to the Lancaster Street church and to construct the new building on Washington Avenue. The Organ Fund was strongly supported by Women's Alliance members who sold raffle tickets, canvassed donors, and produced a variety of special events to purchase the organ and other furnishings for the new church building.

An interesting phenomenon occurred in 1896 when the Unity Club was formed as a social club open to members and friends of the Society,

both men and women. Perhaps the social nature of the club explains the fact that women initially held office and participated in the formal governance of the club. The innovative nature of this group is indicated by a quote from the minutes of the meeting on April 22, 1904: "Mr. Gretser made a motion that no announcement of dancing be publicly made but if there should be time left, that dancing be indulged in."⁸ The Unity Club provided many social activities for "younger" Unitarians and included married as well as single members. For a number of years it sponsored discussion groups, parties, lectures, sleigh rides, hay rides, and banquets. Annual financial contributions were made to the church.

Then in 1904 Miss Elizabeth Rushmore resigned as secretary. After this there were no more women officers of the Unity Club despite the fact that they were in the majority and had a keen interest in the club's social purpose. A clue to why may be found in the 1919 membership list. Twenty-three of the 39 women members were married and the club officers were mostly their husbands. In addition, many of the single women members have the same surnames as the officers. The leadership of the Unity Club reflected the patriarchal family structure of most of the congregation. When the club disbanded in 1921, its assets, male members, and purpose were merged with the Laymen's League. The minutes of the last meeting of the Unity Club fail to mention where the female majority would go.

Many focused their energies on the one organization that was truly theirs, the Women's Alliance. The Alliance gave them opportunities to practice their organizational and leadership skills. Constitutions were written and amended, officers elected, committees and chairwomen appointed, and carefully ordered meetings were recorded. Equally important, the Alliance offered entry to a wider world. As the Albany Chapter of the National Alliance, the local organization was affiliated with hundreds of sister groups throughout the country. Albany Unitarian women joined their sisters at conferences and retreats and shared concerns about the religious, social, economic, and education issues of the day. Our Women's Alliance also faithfully supported the Post Office Mission, a forerunner of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, and contributed to such denominational efforts as the Southern Circuit Work and Indian Missions. Of course, the greatest share of support went to the Albany church but the Alliance gave the women a national if not a world perspective.



In April 1914 Mrs. Bell entertained these Alliance ladies: Mesdames Graves (the minister's wife), Brown, Knapp, Bell, Pollack, Schwartz, Waterman, Jones, Knapp-LaFleur, Hanson, Thomas, Hoar, Adams, Vosburgh, and Beebe.

Even so, the traditional Women's Alliance, with its afternoon teas and emphasis on fund raising, did not meet the needs of all of the Unitarian women of the Albany Society. The younger women were restless, believing that they could better use their energies to do welfare work in the community. Accordingly, the Louise Barnard Horton Guild was formed in 1932 with the blessings of the Alliance, as recorded in the minutes in fall 1932, and described recently by one of the founders, Billie Stott. Whether this was a recognition of the inevitable or a wish to foster the independence of a younger generation that marched to a different drummer is not clear. In any case, the Guild would often cooperate with the Alliance and eventually the two organizations were officially reunited in 1948 under the Women's Alliance umbrella.

But for 16 years the Guild pursued its purpose as stated in Article II of its constitution: "The purpose of this Club shall be to stimulate an interest in welfare work and social activities among the members."⁹ The word "social" here refers to societal good, not recreation. While tea was served at their meetings, the early Guild left most of the party organizing to the Alliance and the Laymen's League. During its active years the Guild's membership was between 35 and 40 church women and friends who did their best to respond to the needs of the poor and the disabled during the Depression and World War II. These were exceptional times and many women who benefited from the gains of the suffrage movement

and increased access to education wanted to take a more active role in public life. The Guild worked with the Red Cross, public health agencies, and other local charitable organizations to alleviate suffering and provide essential services at a time when the "social safety net" had even more holes than today. Food and clothing as well as cash were collected for needy families. In addition, layettes were sewn, a prenatal care training course was conducted in Channing Hall with the Visiting Nurse Association, book reviews and speakers were sponsored, and food



This 1939 clinic in Channing Hall, sponsored by the Louise Barnard Horton Guild, allowed many West End mothers to have pre-natal and post-natal care, according to Hazel Reed (far right), head of the Visiting Nurse Association. Also shown, Mesdames Puels, Gordon, Ryan, and Canaday.

sales were held. Despite their earlier protestations against fund raising, money was raised both for welfare work and the support of the church. The Guild's 1940 Budget Report shows that of a \$245.33 total budget, \$175 went to the Church.¹⁰

By 1938 many Alliance members were working on the Guild's Welfare Committee. Gradually the commonality of purpose of the two organizations brought about their merger in 1948. By that time many of the "young turks" of 1932 had become middle-aged matrons. The spirit of the Louise Barnard Horton Guild lives on in the FUSA tradition of

social concern and community service.

During the postwar era America's women were caught up in a revival of domesticity that centered their attention on home and family. Nevertheless the women of FUSA continued to be concerned with the wider world. These are women like:

Mary Anna Muntz, who served on the FUSA board of trustees, was our first woman canvass chair (1958-60), and led a myriad of church activities for many decades. She also worked tirelessly on behalf of the United Nations and international understanding while teaching high school and raising a family.

Agnes Underwood, author and college professor, took her turn as president of the Women's Alliance, served on the board of trustees, and was a consistent volunteer in the church school, as well as other church programs.



Dr. Frances E. Vosburgh (1898 - 1989)

Dr. Frances Vosburgh served on the board of trustees and was elected vice-president of FUSA in the early 1950s. She established the first birth control clinic in Albany in 1934 and was one of the founders of the Albany Planned Parenthood Association. In 1959 she was the first woman to be elected president of the Albany County Medical Society. An outspoken advocate for women and children, Dr. Vosburgh delivered more than 2700 babies in a medical practice that spanned half a century.

Numerous other talented and energetic FUSA women served the community in the private and public sectors while also contributing time and talent to the work of the church.¹¹

The Women's Alliance continued to present programs on social concerns, politics, and education. Topics included race relations, housing, the United Nations, public schools, and the proper content of Unitarian



The United Nations offered hope for world peace in 1948 when the Rev. Karl Nielsen, Alliance President Mary Standing, and dinner speaker Vera Forsstrom were photographed at the Women's Alliance UN Dinner. (Knickerbocker News, Nov. 19, 1948)

religious education. In addition, they conducted rummage sales and church suppers, enjoyed book reviews and discussions, and organized talent shows, coffee hours, and other social activities.

The church women were also the backbone of the Religious Education program. Many volunteer women-hours were devoted to curriculum planning and teaching. They rolled up their sleeves and helped clean and paint the classrooms too. Religious Education fit neatly with the commonly approved concerns of women, children, and education, and provided additional rewards. R.E. conferences, retreats, and other special meetings brought new ideas about society, human development, and the world. For many this was an introduction to a world of talented and capable women. Here was an arena for the intellectual energy and social consciousness of those women who had been assigned a back seat on the nation's bus. When the new feminism of the 1960s arrived, some of our women had been prepared by their participation in Religious Education. To be sure, many Unitarian women first discussed feminist issues and participated in "consciousness-raising" at R.E. retreats.

In 1965 FUSA's Women's Alliance changed its name to the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF) in response to the adoption of this new name by the national organization. With the new name came



UUWF's 1966 Craft Fair involved dozens of FUSAns in a social, fiscal, and artistic success. Ruth Estey and Mim Rider sold flowers; Billie Stott was baked goods chair (Ann Brandon and Judy Overaker in background); at the tea table, Betty Kenney, Jo Keers, and Marion Armstrong; and workers Agnes Underwood, Ellie Heron, Jo Spahr, Pearl Drislane (seated), and Vivian Moomaw, current UUWF president.

a new energy which jumps from the pages of the local and denominational newsletters.¹² They offered a wide variety of new program ideas, encouragement to explore the new feminine consciousness, and options for participation in the world. For more than ten years, with encouragement and guidance from the national organization, the Albany UUWF studied and discussed reforms for the problems of poverty, mental health, aging, day care, racism, war, and women's rights. But they were also concerned with personal growth and sponsored workshops and book discussions on values clarification, peer counseling, and empowerment issues. Elaborating on the tradition of the

sewing circle, members and friends were invited to arts and crafts sessions for fund raisers and for self-expression.

Again, new leaders among the younger women emerged including Vivian Moomaw, Ann Eberle, Dee Carroll, Dorothy Bellick, Mary Reich, Abby Sugarman, Pola Yolles, and Dot Shelford to mention just a few. Youthful enthusiasm and capability combined with the talent and commitment of older members produced a vital organization that served the FUSA congregation and the community. Times had changed: women were rapidly gaining equality in church governance and teas gave way to wine tastings, but coffee and conversation endured and the rummage sales, chaired by the Underwoods and Mary Reich, continued to be a major church event. Innovation and continuity found a creative balance during the '60s and '70s.

Some of the UUWF women sought action to implement their study and discussion of social problems and public policy. In the spring of 1969 the Committee for Progressive Legislation (CPL) was created, drawing upon a volunteer force of well educated and committed Unitarian women, the lobbying experience of a few, and easy access to the State Capitol. The CPL purpose was to lobby the State Legislature on issues that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) had taken a stand on. They were funded with \$300 from the Albany UUWF and a \$50 donation from the Schenectady Women's Alliance. A modest beginning, but since they were not wining and dining legislators or making large campaign contributions the funding was adequate for the paper and postage expenses necessary to launch CPL.

The founding group,¹³ led by Kay Dingle, focused on three areas: abortion rights, family planning, and social welfare. In 1969 abortion was still illegal in New York State. An attempt to pass legislation to repeal the abortion laws had been defeated the year before. CPL's stated goal on family planning was: "... to promote legislation that would provide for the establishment of birth control clinics as a public service available to all residents of the state."¹⁴ In social welfare they would concentrate on separate detention centers for juveniles, extension of homemaker services, and the establishment of multi-service neighborhood centers for the poor.

From this ambitious start CPL organized its members into study groups to master the intricacies of reading and tracking bills and to practice lobbying skills. They also reached out to Unitarian congregations across the state, offering them lobbying services, and subscriptions to the *CPL Newsletter* and *Legislative Alerts*. By April

1970 they had signed up 29 group subscribers at an annual fee of \$15 and six individuals at \$7.50 each.¹⁵ In November 1969 the first of a series of Practical Politics Workshops was held at the Schenectady Church. Workshop leaders for this and subsequent conferences included state legislators, physicians, educators, and local community leaders who provided information on the issues, encouraged the CPL volunteers, and advised them on successful lobbying strategies. Successive statewide meetings were held through 1975 at the Albany and Schenectady Unitarian Churches to increase participation and to give subscribers an opportunity to meet with their legislators at the Capitol. CPL women and a few men from the Albany and Schenectady congregations did most of the lobbying, meeting at the Albany church where babysitting was provided, and driving down to the Capitol. Their efforts paid off in fellowship and satisfaction. The CPL women found that "It's more fun than playing bridge;" and "...how few people like us are in the Capitol;" and "I never knew how easy it is to harass legislators."¹⁶

The success of the 1970 Abortion Law which enabled women to terminate unwanted pregnancies by legal abortion under proper medical care gave a real boost to CPL. They had lobbied hard for this outcome and were especially proud to be mentioned in the *New York Times*. The quote from the April 11, 1970 issue was: "Some members said privately that some of the Catholic pressure was set-off by the lobbying efforts of local women's and Protestant groups. One member said the Committee for Progressive Legislation, a local Protestant group here, was instrumental in changing the mind of at least one law maker."¹⁷ The momentum continued through the next five years as CPL addressed its priority issues and also lobbied for other legislation of interest to Unitarian Universalists. Abortion rights, once won, had to be constantly defended against the strong efforts to repeal which were mounted by the "right to life" faction. CPL worked with other lobbying groups whenever possible and helped to form coalitions for family planning, criminal justice, environmental protection, and legislative and welfare reform. When CPL disbanded in 1978 it was able to refer those members who wished to continue their work to three organizations which CPL had helped to found: Family Planning Advocates, the Environmental Planning Lobby, and the New York State Coalition for Criminal Justice.¹⁸

At a reunion of CPL members in May 1993 the reasons for the demise of CPL were discussed. Many of the active members had gone back to school or to work. Many had learned skills and acquired understandings in CPL that helped to prepare them for professional

careers. The homemaker who had time to spare for volunteering was being replaced by the woman who would have it all, career and home and family, with not enough hours in her day. Fifteen years later some were nostalgic for those years when there was more time to volunteer.

UUFW and CPL were not the only vehicles for FUSA women's contribution to church life. Our Albany congregation responded to the egalitarianism and renascent feminism of the '60s and '70s as women gradually became accepted in leadership roles previously denied them. This was both the culmination of a process that had begun long before and the product of the "consciousness raising" of the era. Ramona Weissbard, for example, following service as church school teacher and R.E. Committee chair in the '50s, became co-treasurer of FUSA and, later, secretary of the board. Along with her husband, Al, she represented FUSA at General Assemblies and regional conferences for many years. During the 1960s more women were elected to the board of trustees. Many served as co-treasurer and participated in what had previously been an all-male Finance Committee. Mary Anna Muntz, Janet Oliphant and Ann Eberle were elected vice president of the congregation in the '60s. This was followed by Ann Eberle's election as president in 1972 and '73. Later Mary Freeman served as president of the congregation from 1978 through 1980. Lawrie Lierheimer and Barbara Sekellick were elected to the office in the '80s. All of these women have long and impressive records of service and creative leadership in the church. Their experience and commitment to FUSA was evident in their leadership of the congregation and they received warm support and cooperation from the men and women who worked with them. These were good growth years for the church and church school as well as exciting times as our people dealt with Vietnam, civil rights, women's liberation, and the human potential movement.

In addition to the more traditional responsibilities, some of our women found creative impetus in this transitional era. From 1974 to 1978 they operated an arts and crafts center in two rooms of the R.E. building appropriately called The Basement. Instruction and work groups were offered in ceramics, spinning, quilting, drawing, photography, and rug-making to all members of the congregation and others on a space-available basis. Many happy and productive hours with good fellowship were spent in The Basement. Kathy Gordon, Jackie Imai, and Sharon Villines provided most of the organization and instruction. Their efforts were complemented by arts and crafts fairs at the church that brought area artists and artisans together to celebrate the creative process and

make money for themselves and the church.

Other women found opportunity for service when Jean Walker organized a babysitting service for mothers attending classes at the Urban Center. FUSA volunteers provided child care in Stott Lounge during the 1968-69 school year. This was in addition to UUWF providing volunteer teacher aides and equipment for the Trinity Institution Headstart program which started in 1966 and ran well into the '70s.

No discussion of FUSA women's contributions in the '60s and '70s is complete without mention of Martha Schroeder. She was hired in 1965 as a part-time secretary and later was upgraded to administrative assistant. Her organizational talents, commitment to the church and its people, and total reliability were the mainstay of church operation as ministers and interim ministers came and went over the next fifteen years. Her successor, Ruth Stephenson, continued this high level of service to our congregation, eventually receiving the title of church administrator in 1988. She left to attend graduate school in 1991. These women combined the best of service as employees and as members of FUSA. Both have continued to make important contributions to the church community.

Women's liberation activities existed side by side with more traditional activities in our church community during the 1970s. It was not unusual for the same woman to be involved in consciousness raising, UUWF, and church beautification, and join marches for peace and to preserve abortion reform. There were a few radical feminists, but most FUSA women were comfortable with a more gradual approach. Typically, a *Newsletter* of September 1973 announced dates for a Gals in Retirement Get Together organized by Helen Lugg and Billie Stott, a CPL meeting, a feminist Women's Awareness Group, and a UUWF Women's Day Out. By 1974 there was a second Women's Awareness Group, and a program on "Lesbians for Liberation." In the same year The Basement and CPL flourished, and UUWF presented a Sunday service on "Women's Liberation: A Biblical Perspective." By 1975 the church community's consciousness had been raised to the point that FUSA's motto was changed to "Here Let No *One* Be A Stranger." President Charles Estey appointed a committee to correct gender discrimination in the bylaws.¹⁹ Also in that year, Sharon Villines organized a Radical Feminist Caucus at FUSA and by 1977 a group was formed to explore "The Changing Institution of Marriage."

By the end of the '70s UUWF and CPL were gone, the Get Together Luncheons were co-ed, and the women and men of FUSA began to

address issues and plan activities with little or no thought to traditional sex roles. Men often cooked and served dinners and pitched in to clean up the kitchen. Women took over Building and Grounds responsibilities and fully participated in church governance. Perhaps the traditional women's groups disappeared because all endeavors were open to either sex. Certainly the new non-sexist approach brought an increased level of activity. These years saw an impressive number and variety of programs, dinners, parties, book discussions, and involvement in community projects and social issues.

The final barrier to the full equality of FUSA women and men was broken in the 1980s. In December 1983 the board called the Rev. Eileen Karpeles as interim minister. She was the first woman minister of this congregation. Initially hired for six months, she was asked to extend her stay and served the congregation for the whole of 1984. Her short ministry was very successful and many in the congregation were frustrated by the denominational rules prohibiting her from continuing. Clearly FUSA was ready for a woman minister, although we would wait until April 1989 to call the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider to be our minister. With her arrival the long wait for recognition and full participation of women came to an end. Joan was welcomed by FUSA President Barbara Sekellick, and the men and women of the church embarked on a new chapter of non-sexist cooperation.



Ministerial Selection Committee, 1984: FUSA women and men sharing responsibility. Joe Norton, Ethel Morrison, Abby Jones, George Allen, Judy Zacek; seated: Al Lierheimer, Ann Eberle, Ed Hancock, Martha Schroeder. Absent for picture: Marge Collins, Frank Cole, John Simon, Cathy Moylan.

The 1980s continued the diverse programming that could be characterized as "something for everyone," and everyone was encouraged to participate according to her or his interest and capability. This environment allowed a wide variety of activities and programs to flourish. New programs such as the Tuesday Supper Symposium, Cakes for the Queen of Heaven (a UU feminist theology curriculum), the Project for Unitarian Universalist Senior Housing (PUUSH), and the Men's Group joined established programs like Circle Dinners, Get Together Luncheons, Women Together, and the *Oriel*, to enrich the lives of FUSA members.

As the 1990s opened with plans to celebrate our Sesquicentennial in 1992, women and men enjoyed equal opportunity at FUSA to provide leadership and support for the continuing effort to build a caring religious community. The all-church celebration drew the best from all of its members while affirming their ability to change and grow.

ENDNOTES:

1. Guffin, p38, "The old Society was formally resurrected on Sunday, April 21, 1895....Mr. Chamberlain provided a list of nineteen women and twenty-six men who attended services and contributed to the support of the old Society for at least one year and were therefore legally qualified voters."
2. "Is the Ethical Teaching of Jesus Practicable?" Brundage, 1898, FUSA Archives.
3. *A Voice of Their Own: The Woman Suffrage Press, 1840-1910*, Martha M. Solomon, Ed., Univ. of Alabama Press, 1991, p58.
4. Guffin, p29.
5. FUSA Archives.
6. See list of presidents of Women's Alliance in the Appendix.
7. The Women's Alliance Account Books in the Archives show that most of the funds raised went to FUSA. For example, \$650 of the \$675.21 raised in the 1903-04 church year was donated to FUSA.
8. Minutes of the Unity Club, FUSA Archives.
9. Louise Barnard Horton Guild File, FUSA Archives.
10. Ibid.
11. Names of some of these women appear in lists in the Appendix.
12. See UUWF File in FUSA Archives.
13. Ann Brandon, Dee Carroll, Kay Dingle, Ann Eberle, Mary Freeman, Vivian Moomaw, Janet Oliphant, Martha Schroeder, and Pola Yolles.
14. CPL Bulletin, June 1970.
15. *CPL First Annual Report*, Ann Eberle and Mary Freeman, Ed.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. CPL letter to subscribers, December 11, 1978.
19. FUSA Newsletter.

6.

CELEBRATIONS

By Mary C. Stierer

Unitarian Universalists celebrate life: from the dedication of children to our memorial services, we celebrate our members' rites of passage. We honor new ministers, new members, and new buildings. We celebrate traditional holidays and some that our forebears would not recognize. In worship and in fellowship we celebrate our diversity and the common values that unite us.

The Rev. George Simmons, an early FUSA minister, wrote to this congregation in the 1850s of the need for a society to be "brought together on occasions distinct from the Sunday service...[with] an opportunity for free communication and for cultivating a mutual understanding and corporate spirit." Later in that century the Rev. William Brundage drew on his Methodist background to encourage social activities and other opportunities for members of his new church to assemble.

Since our church's second century began in 1942, the number and variety of celebrations by Albany UUs have increased. The RE Wing, added in 1962, provides more space for meetings and social activities, and we also meet in members' homes and vacation retreats. New ministers have introduced celebrations or challenged members to create their own. Some of these have been short-lived; others are now part of our tradition.

INSTALLATION OF MINISTERS

When a new minister arrives at FUSA, excitement is palpable. The Search Committee has worked diligently, and suspense mounts as the candidating sermon is presented and the congregation is polled. Within a short time after the ministry begins, and after considerable planning, the formal installation service is held. Personal preferences of the minister influence the program, but common elements have been part of all of the installation services for which records are preserved in FUSA archives.

From FUSA's first installation service in 1844 to our most recent installation in 1989, denominational representatives have participated as well as area UU clergy and friends of the new minister. Thirty-five "Churches of the Faith" were invited to attend Rev. Harrington's installation in 1844. Chapter Two describes that momentous double celebration.

Nine years later the Rev. George Simmons came to FUSA, after the pulpit had been vacant for three years. Trustee Orville Holley described the congregation's anticipation of Simmons' arrival as a "morning of joy breaking over us after a long night of privation and gloom." Imagine their disappointment when a blizzard delayed the new minister's arrival! An addendum to the board minutes described the event in unusual detail:

[Rev. Simmons] started from Boston on the Express Mail Train on the Great Western Railroad on Thursday morning, and but for the storm, would have been here on the same evening. But a northeast storm and heavy gale commenced on the coast. The snow fell so fast, and drifted along the railroad to such depths, and the weather became so intensely cold that the train, after laboring hard that day, got only to the neighborhood of Framingham, about twenty-five miles from Boston, where it was blocked up by snow for more than twenty hours, and...did not reach Albany until about ten o'clock on Friday night.

Providentially, the Rev. Henry Bellows from Manhattan's First Unitarian Church, who was to have taken part in Simmons' installation, had brought along two or three sermons and was able to preach to the assembled audience. The proposed installation was held two days later without benefit of visiting clergy, but "all that was essential to the occasion was, in fact, done." Trustee Holley installed Rev. Simmons, reading from scriptures, and the latter gave some general views of the

essential elements of Christianity from the teachings of Jesus.

In 1895, when the Rev. William Brundage was invited to lead the newly reorganized Unitarian Society, we find no record of an installation service. Considerable press coverage, however, was given to his leadership of the new FUSA.

Albany's religious community and clergy extended a generous welcome to FUSA's new Unity Church (our present building) when it was dedicated in 1925, a spirit that carried over to the installation of the Rev. Kenneth Walker ten years later. The *Albany Knickerbocker* described in detail Walker's installation on Sunday afternoon, May 13, 1935. Guest speakers included the General Secretary of the Universalist General Convention, Rev. Roger Etz; Unitarian ministers from Schenectady and Troy; and representatives from the Albany Ministerial Association, Temple Beth Emeth, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, and the First Reformed Church. In addition, there were greetings from "Allies of the Church:" Dr. Arthur Wright, Dr. Lloyd Zeigler, and Benton S. Holt, representing Ministers to the Human Body, the Human Mind, and the Social Welfare, respectively. No succeeding installation has had such an assemblage of community leaders.

Lay participation in installation services and the involvement of previous FUSA ministers have increased during the last fifty years. Common elements in these services have included a charge to the new minister and to the Society's members, often given by one of our former ministers; an exchange of commitments between the minister and the congregation; and the installation by the Society's president. In 1956, when the congregation installed the Rev. James Madison Barr, Board President Dr. William Holt led the congregation in the charge to:

...voice your sincere convictions to us from this free pulpit [and] inspire and lead the activities of this church so that, young and old, we may better fulfill the aspirations for all that ennoble a free people.

To the Rev. Nicholas Cardell, in 1962, FUSA President Donald Peckham said:

...we offer a free pulpit [to] uphold the prophetic tradition of the free church: its concern for social and ethical progress; its hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man; its fearless championing of justice, righteousness and peace.

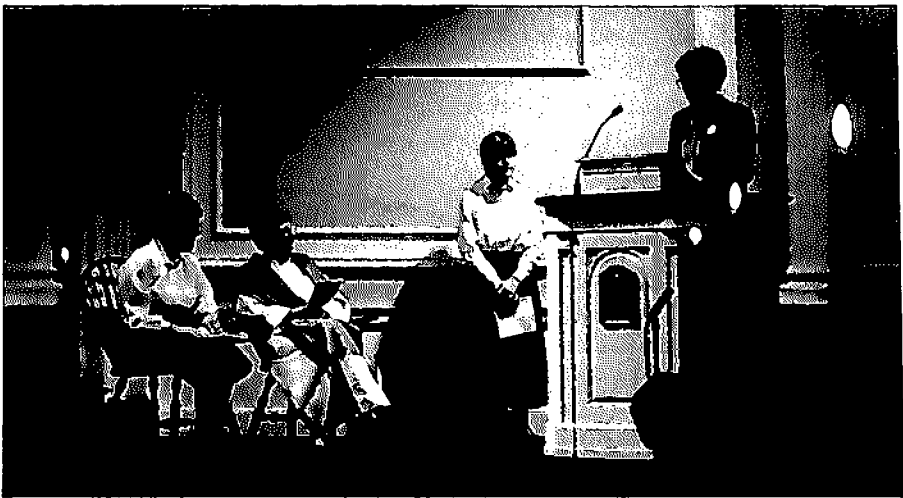
At the Rev. John Corrado's installation in 1976 the congregational

response, written by Helen Sharpe, had the cadence of a traditional prayer, ending with:

Lead us, with your gentle humor, from the paths of self-righteousness, and preserve us from the perils of platitude. Abide with us, dear John. We ask this in the name of the First Unitarian Society of Albany -- and in the spirit of love.

In 1989 young people of the Society prepared their own charge to the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider, with a separate covenant written by pre-kindergarten to twelfth-grade students. A list of requests was followed by ten promises including this one: "[we do] not expect you to be perfect." Rev. Kahn-Schneider's response promised, among other things:

...to work together, to listen to each other and to hear each other...understanding that we cannot achieve perfection, but that we can try our hardest.



Interaction with the church school was a unique feature of the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider's installation. From left: President Barbara Sekellick, Joan, and Ann Peruzzi and Director of Religious Education Ann D'Atillio representing the church school.

The service often reflects the tastes of ministers being installed. The choral benediction used in John Corrado's installation was his own composition. Handel and Bach, a Trumpet Fanfare, and the Madrigal Singers were part of the installation service for the Rev. George Williams,

John Corrado's successor and another musician-minister. A song was commissioned for Joan Kahn-Schneider's service, and composed by her son. (See Chapter 7.)

Other unique features have been Sam Freeman's homemade bread at John Corrado's installation accompanied by John's remarks about "Bread and Ministry;" George Williams lighting the brand new chalice, signing the membership book, and receiving the Church School's welcome from RE Coordinator Sue Meisterman; and the presentation of a gift, a ministerial stole created by Beryl Drobeck, to Joan Kahn-Schneider.

ANNIVERSARIES AND NEW SPACES FOR FUSA

Our congregation has observed many significant anniversaries and dedications of new spaces since the week-long celebration in 1925 that marked the completion of our present church at Washington Avenue and Robin Street. This occasion, held in the Centennial year of the American Unitarian Association, brought AUA President Samuel Eliot to preach a dedication sermon on William Ellery Channing. Charles Graves, Unitarian historian and a former FUSA minister, returned to deliver a sermon, "One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in America." Many local clergymen participated in the services. A drama and a banquet completed the week's festivities.

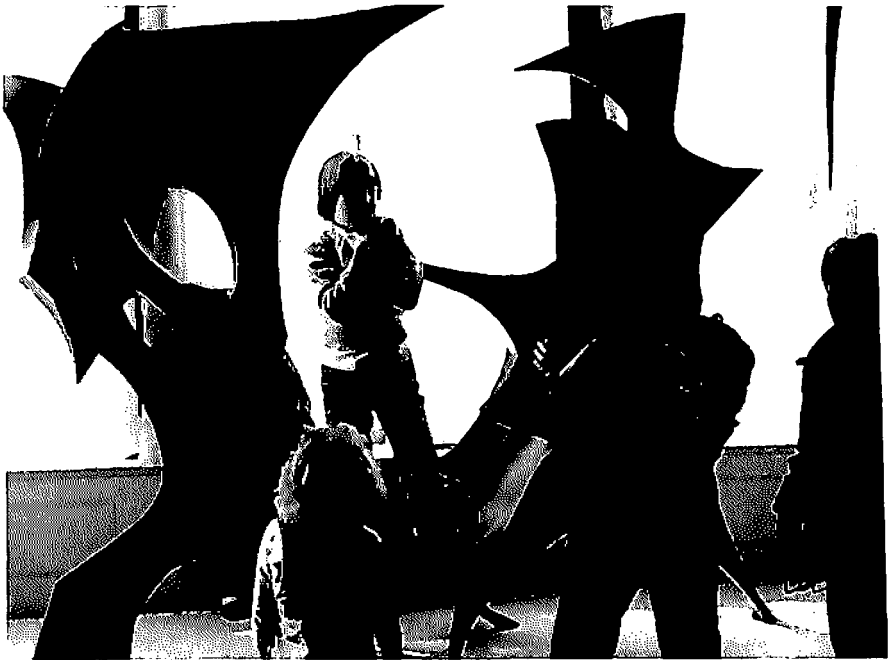
Seventeen years later, in 1942, FUSA celebrated its own Centennial. And celebrate we did! The intervening years between the dedication of our new building and our Centennial had been difficult, both for FUSA and for the denomination. We were a small congregation, to be sure, but with strong convictions and a tradition of celebrating. The publication of John Guffin's book, *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, also gave special recognition to the occasion. (See Chapter 8.)

In 1967 the 125th anniversary of the Society was marked by a banquet in Channing Hall, prepared by FUSA member Jack Bellick (Jack also prepared the reception for our Sesquicentennial). In addition, FUSA President Alvin Lierheimer wrote a commemorative booklet updating our history. In that anniversary year the denominational publication, then called the *Register-Leader*, printed an interview with our minister, Nick Cardell, titled "Albany Minister Collides with the Political Machine."

To celebrate the addition of the new RE Wing in 1962 the Building Committee joined forces with the Art Committee and the minister to commission an art piece for the large entrance window of the foyer. Lew

Rider, chairman of the Building Committee, described the "caged figure of welded steel," by sculptor Robert Blood of Schenectady, as "unquestionably provocative." Nick Cardell, in his sermon marking the sculpture's dedication, explained its relation to liberal religion:

Abstract art, like liberal religion, avoids the literal and traditional forms of expression in order to better express and provide the larger meanings...[they] are both concerned for wider participation in the creative act...the viewer must be more than simply spectator. There are many ways to enjoy this sculpture, but they all depend upon our participation, on our bringing something to it.



"Two Shapes Related," a sculpture by Robert Blood, was commissioned by the Art and Building Committees to celebrate the new RE Wing. The children seem undaunted by its significance.

Dr. Rider's prediction rang true. The sculpture has remained controversial.

It was used as a symbol on the *Oriel* cover in 1986 and in a square on the Sesquicentennial quilt in 1992. But the "caged figure" has been moved from place to place and is now mounted on a movable platform in the Washington Avenue foyer.

Three "new spaces" at FUSA celebrate the contributions of past members T. Howard Stott, Charles R. Joy, and Eleanor and James Heron. In 1967, in honor of her husband, Billie Stott furnished the large meeting room we now call Stott Lounge, and she has generously refurbished it several times since. Howard Stott was a life-long member and vital contributor to many areas in the life of FUSA. In 1968 the Charles R. Joy Library was dedicated, occupying the space once used as the church kitchen. In Dr. Joy's memorial service in 1978 John Corrado commented on his outstanding professional career. Joy's work with the Unitarian Service Committee is discussed in Chapter 2. The courtyard on Washington Avenue, with its flowering shrubs and raised flower bed, was dedicated in 1990 to the memory of Eleanor and James Heron, each of whom made extensive contributions to the life of FUSA throughout three decades. Seth Edelman chaired the committee that built and planted the Heron Memorial Garden and continues to care for it.

TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS

FUSA members cherish their celebration of the traditional holidays, and they have not hesitated to broaden these seasonal festivities to include Jewish Holy Days, and to introduce earth-centered ceremonies at the change of seasons by CUUPS (Covenant of UU Pagans).¹

The idea of a community Thanksgiving Service dates from 1901 during the Brundage era, when FUSA trustees formally invited Temple Beth Emeth, All Souls Universalist Church, and Trinity Methodist to observe the holiday together. John Guffin describes the invitation as an "olive branch to the Community." Only Trinity Methodist declined, perhaps still smarting from the defection of Rev. Brundage, their former pastor, in 1895.

Our present Union Thanksgiving Service began in 1927. Temple Beth Emeth's generous offer of meeting space to FUSA in 1905, after a serious fire in our Lancaster Street Church, was followed by a similar offer to Westminster Presbyterian in 1927, and to Trinity Methodist in 1931. A sense of mutual respect and affection among these congregations, as well as appreciation of Beth Emeth's generosity, has sustained the services to the present. Responsibility for hosting and

planning the service rotates among the congregations. In 1969 the service was switched from Thanksgiving morning to Thanksgiving Eve. That year FUSA's minister, Nick Cardell, gave the sermon, "The Effluent (sic) Society," and the Union Missionary Baptist Church also participated. Trinity Methodist became a regular participant in 1986. Offerings, both money and food, are given to the Focus Food Pantry and Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood. OXFAM and NAACP also benefited in earlier years.

FUSAns have often celebrated Thanksgiving by sharing dinner at the church or at a Circle Dinner in a member's home. A 1972 *Newsletter* reported that 83 members met for a "Bountiful Turkey Dinner" with a profit of \$70 for church printing equipment. In 1975 the Social Responsibilities Council sponsored a 24-hour fast before Thanksgiving "to experience symbolically the plight of some 10 million whom the U.N. estimate will starve in 1975." Since 1969 we have been urged to volunteer for the REFER Switchboard/Equinox Community Thanksgiving Dinner which serves thousands of Albany's needy persons. FUSA member Vic Walker assisted in organizing that effort.

Certainly early Unitarians would not have recognized all of our December holidays. Under the leadership of Meredith and Tom Mercer and Betsy Miller, CUUPS celebrates the Winter Solstice; from our Judeo-Christian heritage come Hanukkah as well as Christmas festivities; most recently the Afro-American Kwanzaa holiday was part of one December service.

By far the most traditional and extensive attention is given to Christmas -- decorating the sanctuary and a large Christmas tree in Channing Hall, the Candlelight Service, holiday parties and fairs, the RE Mitten Tree, UUSC holiday cards, caroling by the choir -- all celebrate the season. In a December 1954 *Newsletter* Rev. Ernest Pipes noted that the newly painted Sanctuary was ready for the Candlelight Service, with sky-blue ceiling, wedgewood walls, and off-white trim. Mary Reich remembers decorating the sanctuary some twenty years later:

We cut down lots of small trees and branches, sprayed them white in the Stewart's rented garage -- what a mess! But it was beautiful. The kids loved it -- a white fairy wonderland....After two years we ran out of places to spray paint in the winter!



Scaling our highest ladder, Fred Schroeder guards the safety of a young FUSAn as she adds her handmade ornament to the giant spruce in Channing Hall. Fred also cut and installed the tree.

Dora Reed and Rosemary Cooke, RE teachers under Margot Barr, recall that "we always had a Christmas tree," and that the "Children's pageants were quite elaborate." It was when the new RE Wing allowed expanded use of Channing Hall that the custom of the fifteen-foot Christmas tree began. Cutting that FUSA tree became a family tradition for Fred and Martha Schroeder in the 1960s, with help from Dave Brandon as the tree became heavier each year. For two decades they searched out and cut a beautiful spruce, despite Fred's getting a severe case of poison ivy while removing vines from the chosen tree one year! Now Don Odell and Larry Snyder cut the tree on the Snyder farm in Broome County.

Families gather in Channing Hall the week before Christmas to create their own ornaments for the tree, from popcorn and cranberries and paper chains to fancy styrofoam and sequin balls. Stan Reich wrote, in a 1976 *Newsletter*, that the decorating party was one of the Society's most meaningful activities for families, providing "the freedom to socialize while producing craft objects or to become totally involved in one or the other (for) participants in age from four to eighty." Through the years Stan Reich, RE Directors Sue Meisterman and Ann D'Attilio, Don Odell

and many volunteers have made Tree Decorating a great tradition.

Early Candlelight Services, held the Sunday before Christmas, were considered the most important lay-led event of the year. A 1956 program in FUSA archives lists Keith Stott, Charles Estey and William Holt as leaders, and a performance by FUSA member and Albany Symphony violinist, Samuel Eringer. In the early '60s Nick Cardell created the Worship Committee, forerunner of the Religious Services Committee, to encourage lay planning and participation in Thanksgiving and Christmas services. During John Corrado's ministry the Candlelight Service was moved to Christmas Eve and the minister became a regular participant in the service. Stories by the RE Director, singing by the congregation and by the junior and senior choirs precede the candle lighting, creating a truly memorable experience. In 1992 two services were held to accommodate the large number of people who want to attend an evening Christmas program: a family service at 5:00 P.M., and an adult service at 7:30 with a Wassail Party following.

FUSA ministers frequently bring a UU perspective to the holiday hype, and perhaps allay some members' discomfort with the literal meaning of the Christmas carols we sing. In response to many new members' questions, Jim Barr preached four sermons in 1956 asking "What would our land be like if the emotional forces regarding Christmas were put to positive, outgoing, creative use?" A 1962 open forum, "Unitarians Look at Christmas," had Rev. Cardell's sermon, "A One World Peace Festival," as required reading. Ten years later, Cardell's sermon was "'Twas the Day after Christmas," and he wished for all "a little time off from the celebrating to find out who and what we celebrate." In a December 1986 *Newsletter*, George Williams wrote about the larger meaning of the season:

The meaning of the winter solstice...far more ancient than either Hanukkah or Christmas celebrations, is that the light will come again to our earth, the days will lengthen and become warmer, and the earth will bloom again in springtime colors.

And so it is that CUUPS now brings to FUSA a celebration of nature at the Vernal Equinox ("come dressed in bright colors, with a leaf from last summer"); we celebrate the Passover with a Seder; and Easter as the renewal of life. In the late 1940s, Rev. Karl Nielsen gave sermons on immortality at Easter time, "Why Are We Immortal," and "The Main Reasons for Immortality." He read from St. Luke and quoted Corliss

Lamont's *This Life Is All and Enough*. In 1958, Easter still had a traditional flavor with James Barr's sermon "Requiem or Resurrection?" combined with the christening and dedication of children. In 1970 Nick Cardell called the dedication of children on Easter Sunday simply "A Celebration of Birth." Children are also dedicated at other times during the year in a service that may include parents, grandparents, and godparents, and a welcome by the congregation. Eight years later, John Corrado addressed the "calendar-seasonal-UU-philosophical confusion about exactly what to celebrate" by opening and closing Easter Sunday service with references to spring:

If the world won't bring Spring to us, let us bring Spring to the World!
 Let's bring sunshine...Let's celebrate! The world *will* once again bring
 suntans and harvests and snowballs and robin's song...If the world won't
 bring Spring by the numbers to us, let us, human wizards all, bring Spring
 to the world -- and TO EACH OTHER.

Once, John Calka's annual plant sale brought spring to our hearts (and raised funds for FUSA); and for many years Ethel Morrison has shared with us the bounty from her prolific rhubarb bed on Sunday mornings in May.

In 1992 Joan Kahn-Schneider chose Easter Sunday to dedicate the beautiful Sesquicentennial quilt, created by men and women of the Society, with a series of statements by the twelve women whose skilled needlework had fashioned the important symbols of FUSA's life into quilt squares.

The Seder was introduced to FUSA by Margot Barr in her 1950s RE program. (Mim Rider remembers shopping for lamb bones and preparing roasted eggs.) Al Weissbard planned the first family Seder in 1967, assisted by the rabbi from Beth Emeth. In 1976 three congregations, Temple Beth Emeth, Westminster Presbyterian, and FUSA joined in a Seder celebration "to further our mutual friendship and desire to help people," sending donations to the Focus Food Pantry. During the 1990s FUSA has joined Schenectady UUs for a service and meal coordinated by George Kleinberger and Jack Bellick. The traditional meal includes everything from gefilte fish to honey cake. The Haggadah (order of service) used was compiled by the Rev. David Weissbard, UU minister in Rockford, Illinois (son of Ramona and Al Weissbard and brother of Judy Hanson). In a 1990 Introduction to the Haggadah, David wrote:

The Seder has become symbolic in the Judaeo-Christian tradition of the need of peoples to move toward freedom...Our Seder will be a real success if we complete it, not with a sense of having celebrated an interesting tradition of *another* religious group, but more importantly with a feeling that this festival is a living part of OUR future.

FELLOWSHIP

Our Society has celebrated with parties and good food for many years. Fellowship is implicit in John Guffin's reference to early 20th Century suppers served by the Women's Alliance, noted for their quality and large attendance. *Newsletters* of the late 1950s and early '60s tell of the regular church suppers organized by long-time Hospitality Chair Louise Tweedie. These included the traditional dinner before the Annual Meeting, which later became the Annual Fellowship Dinner.

When the Society hired a professional fund-raiser in 1961, to raise money for the new RE Wing, a free, all-church dinner in a restaurant was recommended to promote fellowship and good feeling, and to stimulate financial contributions. Today, while there are many small get-togethers, our largest non-holiday social event is still this Annual Fellowship Dinner.

That first free dinner in 1961, held at the Petite Paris restaurant on Madison Avenue, started a tradition that has continued at The Ambassador, Holiday Inn, The Golden Fox, Vallee's, Raphael's, Crossroads, St. Sophia's Community Center, Cordial Greens, and, most often, at the Century House in Latham. The Sesquicentennial Fellowship Dinner in 1992 was held at Mario's Theatre Restaurant in Troy. In 1992 we also enjoyed a pot-luck supper in Channing Hall before the Annual Meeting, reviving the pre-1961 tradition.

The concept of a free dinner to help raise money has occasionally been controversial. In his "President's Column" in a March 1968 *Newsletter*, Al Weissbard explained the rationale:

...Channing Hall just isn't big enough to accommodate all of us -- and even if it were, we still want one evening in which we can all celebrate and not be burdened with cooking, serving and clean-up assignments...It's a "free" dinner because we don't want anybody to stay away....

The controversy was resolved by charging a modest admission (\$2.50 in 1972, \$12 in 1992), and allocating funds from the annual June Book Sale, first held in 1959 to benefit FUSA programs.

The first Fellowship Dinners focused on the Canvass, and featured guest speakers including Dr. William Rice, associated with the UU merger in 1961, and the Rev. Dr. Paul Carnes, UU minister from Buffalo who became UUA president. Later dinners have been M.C.'d by Jack Overacker and highlighted by Al Weissbard's special recognition of members according to length of membership (won in recent years by Agnes Underwood, Mildred Guffin, and Al and Ramona Weissbard), and by the eagerly anticipated "Entertainment," first produced in 1969.

Hidden talents of members as writers of songs and scripts, comedians, singers and dancers, and directors/producers are often revealed -- of the ministers, too! The shows are good-natured spoofs of events during the church year. For example: Search for a Minister; Burning the Mortgage; Coffee Hour; The \$5 Vote; The Rummage Sale; George Williams and "Edward T. (Teddy) Bear;" and "Leader of the Pack" (Stan Aronson and his motorcycle).

Mary Reich, Judy Hanson, and Jack Overacker produced a rollicking reprise of earlier shows for the Sesquicentennial Annual Dinner, persuading many members to perform their original roles. The Entertainment always closes with the entire cast and the audience giving a rousing rendition of the FUSA theme song, "We Are U-ni-ta-ri-an!" (see Appendix) written by Selig Katz in the 1960s and sung to a Gilbert and Sullivan tune from *Pinafore*.



Could this be the first rendition of Selig Katz' own "We Are U-ni-ta-ri-an!"? Katz is at the piano and, singing: Charlie Estey, Frank Bogedain, unknown, Jonnie Hastings, June Hall, Alf Davies, unknown, and Bruce Loveys.

Drama has long played an important role in our church life. Our archives contain newspaper accounts of a play presented by the Louise Barnard Horton Guild in 1933, and a Women's Alliance play by Kate Douglas Wiggin to celebrate our 1942 Centennial. Dora Reed recalls that in the '40s and '50s she and other FUSA members Elfrieda Hartt and Maggie Pipes were involved in the Albany Dramatic Group which presented plays in Channing Hall. In that era some Candlelight Services included serious drama: one year Dora directed Benet's *A Child Is Born*, and Doug Marshall played the lead superbly. Roger Hall's original play, *Everyman and the Seven Deadly Virtues*, was performed in 1974; Peter Brown, Dave Metz, Jack Overacker and Bobbi Place presented *Miss Uni Uni* in 1982; and Roger says that a 1985 drama, Rev. Richard Gilbert's *If You Were Arrested for Being a Unitarian Universalist, Would There Be Enough Evidence to Convict You?*, played first at FUSA and then was repeated for the Schenectady and Glens Falls congregations. Such productions provide fun for both audience and cast.

During the year numerous pot-lucks, circle dinners and special parties may feature the gourmet specialties of FUSA men and women, often working under Jack Bellick's direction in the FUSA kitchen: an all-church Spaghetti Supper, Mexican Fiesta, Indoor Beach Party or Picnic, St. Patrick's Day jigging, or a Triskaidecaphobia (from the Greek: fear of the number 13) Bash on Friday the 13th. Our Change-of-Time Breakfasts were started in 1964 as a USC fund-raiser and featured Al Aliberti's pancakes. Later, special scrambled eggs (recipe from Joe's Restaurant adds baco-bits, sour cream, and Worcestershire sauce) have been prepared by Al Weissbard, Sam Freeman, and a changing crew of mostly men cooks.

In the late '60s Nick Cardell encouraged neighborhood groups to meet for conversation and fellowship. In 1967 Patsy Patrick organized an all-church supper club that brought small groups of FUSAns together for dinner in each others' homes. Later, a group met for special dinners in various ethnic restaurants in the Albany area. Circle Dinners have been organized in recent years by a number of dedicated Hospitality Committee members, and the East of the Hudson (EOH) group still meets for monthly pot-lucks in members' homes across the River. (Tickets to these legendary EOH feasts were quickly bid for at the 1992 FUSA Auction.) Jeanne and Bob Blank organized Tuesday Supper Symposia in 1989, to dine and discuss a different topic each month. An Intergenerational activity, started in the early 1970s and still popular, is the All-Church Birthday Party in the spring. On a Sunday after church

FUSAns enjoy cake and conversation with others of all ages who share their birthday month. Each table competes for the highest number of years represented by their group.

Perhaps the oldest eating group at FUSA is the "lunch bunch." It was begun in 1967 by the Membership Committee as lunch at the YWCA, to bring together members working or shopping in downtown Albany. It later became a women's group, then a senior's group, then for retired men and women. By 1975 all men and women, retired and working, were invited to monthly Get Together Luncheons at the church for fellowship and a variety of programs, travel experiences, parties and picnics. In recent years the principal organizers have been Jane Dean, Joe Norton, Ruth Estey, Bunni Vaughn, and Kathy Gordon.

Less enduring have been efforts to establish regular social events on Friday nights. In 1966 there were Fridays for Fellowship, and Friday Happenings; in 1973, Frankly Free Fourth Friday Frolics; 1981, Friday Night Live at Channing Hall; 1985-86, Parlor Pot Pourri; and in 1989, First Friday Movies. In the '70s and '80s the Castoffs, FUSA's square dancing group, met once a month for pot-luck supper and square dancing. Jim Heron suggested the name. Square dances were also held in the '50s and '60s by the Laymen's League and Young People's groups.



A 1939 Women's Alliance picnic: front row, Florence Varley, Mildred Guffin, Marion Puels, guest; back row, Rachel Anderson, guest, Olga Horle, Louise Tweedie, Agnes Underwood, Katherine Strough, Phoebe Linné (Ziehm), Mary Schwem.

And what about outdoor activities? The favorite in the early 1900s was floating down the Hudson on a tug-propelled barge for an island

picnic at Baerena Park, with dancing and refreshments provided on the way. For a few years this popular event was a fund-raiser, but was abandoned in 1908 because of the expense involved. Later picnics -- the annual Alliance picnics, for example -- appear to have been just for fun.

FUSA records show that Ted and Mary Standing hosted many of the June Church Picnics at their East Nassau home in the 1950s. (See photo on page 8.) By the late '50s Thacher Park and Saratoga State Park were being used for this end-of-the-year celebration, where Schenectady or Glens Falls UUs sometimes joined us for picnics, with cook-outs and dishes-to-share accompanying athletic events and informal music.



At one Thacher Park picnic table we find Stierers, Freemans, Schroeders, Philippses, and Joneses. Unidentified FUSA youngsters beyond.

For a year or so in the '70s, Paul Thomas organized fall family camping weekends at Emerald Lake in Vermont. Innumerable hiking expeditions have been led by Jim Heron, Fred Schroeder, and Jim Lane, sometimes sponsored as family events by the RE Council. Fred remembers when 65 people showed up for a Sunday morning hike in Thacher Park, and the minister had to explain to visitors and less athletic FUSAns in the sanctuary that many of the congregation had gone hiking!

The weekly Coffee Hour is a significant part of Sunday Morning for many FUSAns. First, it is for fellowship; but Coffee Hour is also Contact Time for the Social Responsibilities Council, the UU Service Committee, Rummage Sale Sign-up, for *Oriel*, Adult Education Programs,

Membership Committee, and all of the various groups that want FUSA members to know about them and participate in their activities. Of course Contact Time does not preclude time to meet and greet each other, to enjoy a cup of coffee and a bagel or doughnut -- sometimes soup made by Robin Stapley or Jack Bellick if there is a special congregational meeting or activity after the service. We view our latest Art Exhibit during Coffee Hour, and sometimes meet the artist. In the '70s we shopped at the Channing Bookstore, run by Ellie Keeler and Helena English, or looked over the Magazine Exchange.

A 1956 *Newsletter* carried the first invitation to after-church coffee, bi-weekly at first, with Mrs. Harold Maxwell in charge. These became weekly events the next year when some RE classes were moved from Channing Hall to FUSA's "new" building at 381 Washington Avenue. In a 1974 *Newsletter* there is a note that "herb tea will be available on Sunday mornings"; by 1982 Al Weissbard was providing bagels and cream cheese. For many years during the 1970s and '80s Wes Keeler was the faithful coffee maker, arriving early each Sunday morning to start the essential brew. Although many people enjoy Coffee Hour, volunteers have been difficult to find in recent years -- perhaps because there are so many other things to do at that time -- and threats to have no coffee occasionally appear in the *Newsletter*. FUSAns were grateful to Nancy and Malcolm Bell when they saved the Coffee Hour in 1992.

SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER WITH CEREMONIES AND CELEBRATIONS

Our Society also honors individuals on special occasions. We celebrated the 90th birthday of Mary Irish in 1978, and Billie Stott's 90th in 1992. There was Susan Thompson's 40th milestone, Bill Batt's party for Mary Van Eich's 80th birthday, and Bob Stierer's surprise party for Mary's 65th. Channing Hall was the site of 50th Wedding Anniversary parties for Abby and Paul Jones and for June and Roger Hall. And Ruth Stephenson and Richard Onken celebrated their marriage with FUSA friends and family, in Washington Park and Channing Hall. Farewell parties have honored departing ministers over the years, and recent staff members as well.

When death comes to FUSA members, families and friends often honor their loved ones with memorial services in our sanctuary. These celebrations of life are planned by family members and the minister or, not infrequently, according to the requests of the person whose life is

being celebrated. Favorite music, readings, and a biographical sketch are customary. The individual tributes from those attending the services are unique, revealing or recalling the very special qualities of the family member or friend being honored. The celebration continues at a reception in Channing Hall, hosted by the Caring Network. Among many active, long-time members for whom such services were held: John Muntz, Lew Rider, Elinor Keeler, Frank Reed, Britta and Vincent Walker, Ellie and Jim Heron, Frances Vosburgh, Ted Standing, Mary Van Eich, and John Cross.

OTHER CELEBRATIONS AT FUSA

New Members

Welcoming future members to FUSA often begins at the Membership Table in Channing Hall where visitors are invited to sign the Guest Book on Sunday morning. Curiosity, the urging of a friend, or meeting our minister may have brought these future UUs to a FUSA service or program. Early in this century the trustees sometimes urged the minister to seek new members. In recent decades, we have had the Membership Committee.



Two memorable committee chairs, Membership's Walter Underwood and "Flower Lady" Mary Irish, strike a pose at a FUSA picnic.

Many FUSAns recall the genial and courtly Walter Underwood greeting the new and the shy, and Walter's careful year-end Membership Committee reports. Now the committee offers informal luncheons or evening meetings to encourage discussion and to introduce the minister and leaders of the Society. An Adult Education course, The New U, is given each year and newcomers are urged to participate in the Society's activities.

Signing the Membership Book has always been the principal requirement for joining FUSA. Today, new members are also given special recognition at a Sunday service. At this ceremony, held several times a year, there are statements by the minister, the congregation, the new members, and the president of the

Society. In a May 1992 "Ceremony of Celebration for New Members," when 27 people signed the Membership Book before the congregation, Joan Kahn-Schneider offered them this challenge:

Membership here is both simple and difficult. It means that...(you) join a community that is searching for truth, struggling for justice, and whose members work to live in loving relationship with one another...Truth is often unwelcome, justice can be slow and painful, and love is the ultimate challenge to every human life.

President Richard Onken closed with this welcome: "May your days among us be long and full; may we prove worthy of your trust as we travel together."

Flowers, and the Flower Communion

A FUSA celebration without flowers would be unimaginable. Beautiful bouquets and handsome plants have added beauty and significance to our Sunday services and our social occasions in Channing Hall for as long as we can remember. What would the sanctuary windows be without the majestic jade plants given by Mary Irish and tended by her for many years? The Hummels, the Armstrongs, the Mannings, and Julie Panke have continued to give "the jades" the same tender, loving care. Arlen Westbrook replaced two ailing jade plants in 1991, in memory of her parents.

Mary Irish was our "Flower Lady" for many years. Alice Hotchkiss has served as chair of the Flower Committee from 1981 to the present, assisted recently by Dorie Godfrey and Lois Webb. The Committee is responsible for purchasing and arranging the flowers, scheduling donations to honor an anniversary or memory of a loved one, and sending the arrangements along to FUSA shut-ins with the congregation's best wishes. Other memorable Flower Committee chairs have been Ruth Estey, Louise Tweedie, Irene Tobias, and Charles and Marian Armstrong. In season, lovely arrangements have also come from such outstanding gardeners as Mimi Boyd and Ann Eberle.

Our enjoyment and appreciation of flowers continues in the Flower Communion we celebrate each spring. Introduced to FUSA by Nick Cardell, this Unitarian service was the inspiration of Dr. Norbert Capek, a Czechoslovakian minister, in 1923. Dr. Capek discovered Unitarianism on a visit to America in the early 1900s and took his new-found religion back to Prague after World War I. During World War II he was imprisoned by the Nazis for his liberal views and, at age 72, was killed

in the Dachau death camp.

In the Flower Communion we honor the diversity within our denomination and those who were martyred for freedom, by exchanging flowers placed in a common container at the beginning of the service. When leaving, each person takes a flower different from the one she or he brought, symbolizing "our acceptance of one another, our remembrance of all those who share our world." Sometimes FUSA's celebration has been on Mothers' Day; in 1980 it was part of a Children's Worship Service.

Milestones/Joys and Concerns

The sharing of important events in the lives of FUSA members during Sunday services was introduced by John Corrado soon after his ministry began. "Sharing," "Remembering One Another," and "Milestones in Our Community" are mentioned in orders of service in 1976 and '77. In 1979 Milestones was a regular part of the service and the Milestones song was printed in the program:

May all times shared together here
inspire the love that we can give,
Remind us of the faith we share,
and celebrate the life we live.

John defined Milestones as any "significant happening in our lives or any news about a member of this community who is in need of the love and support we can give." Milestones was renamed "Joys and Concerns" about 1985 and continues to be a regular part of the Sunday service.

Day of the Dead and Wheel of Life

John Corrado also introduced the annual Day of the Dead to FUSA in 1976. On this Sunday we remember those who have died during the past year, on the world scene and within the FUSA family. The name was changed to Day of Remembrance, but the tradition of reading the names of persons remembered, as part of the church service, remains the same. The Wheel of Life, a service at the end of the church year begun by Joan Kahn-Schneider, combines elements of Joys and Concerns and the Day of Remembrance with other Rites of Passage, into one celebration. The service also recognizes the contribution of members who have volunteered their time and work to the life of FUSA during the past year. On a separate Sunday the contributions of members to the

Religious Education program -- as teachers, members of the RE Council and parent volunteers -- are honored.

Short-Lived Events

In 1977 John Corrado and RE Director Bobbi Place created a new kind of celebration: the Valentine Love-out. Members of the congregation were asked to recognize someone outside the Society who had done something special for that person or for the community. Valentines were made in church school classes, the Valentine messages read in church, then personally delivered to the honorees "to recognize their quality of love and that we UUs have been touched by their caring." The *Times Union* (February 14, 1977) featured the event with an editorial, a picture and description of some of the love-notes.

In 1988 Stan Aronson devoted one service to the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Nazi's infamous night of murder of Jews and destruction of their property, and urged everyone to join other churches and synagogues in leaving on their outside lights all night.

City of Albany Celebrations

In 1986 FUSA participated in the City of Albany's Tricentennial Salute with a special Sunday afternoon service on October 5, and a celebration of the Year of Peace. Helium-filled Balloons for Peace, carrying messages of hope for the future, were released from the Robin Street lawn of the church. (Photo on page 137.) The Society joined the city again in the celebration of First Night, a New Years Eve music and theatre festival throughout the downtown area, by hosting music performances in 1990, '91, and '92. Members held their own FUSA New Years Eve party later in the evening. (Also, see Chapter 7, Music.)

Order of the Red Vest

The Order of the Red Vest was introduced by Charlie Kahn-Schneider in 1992 to recognize and celebrate FUSA members who reach the age of 60 and are thus accorded the privilege of wearing a red vest, and the respect such maturity deserves!

Brought from their Farmington, Michigan church, Charlie explains that the ceremony is based on a Chinese tradition of the Red Kimono, described by James Michener. When Chinese men reach the age of maturity and sagacity (60), they gain the privilege of wearing a red kimono.

Canvass Fair

In spring 1992 Abby Jones (*right*) brought an idea to the trustees which they heartily endorsed: on the official opening Sunday of our annual canvass, a festive Fair would fill Channing Hall, featuring displays by committees and councils, with banners, balloons, and refreshments. The Fair would also offer a convenient spot for committee members to meet those whom they had been assigned to canvass. The idea worked. Already the Canvass Fair appears to be a tradition.

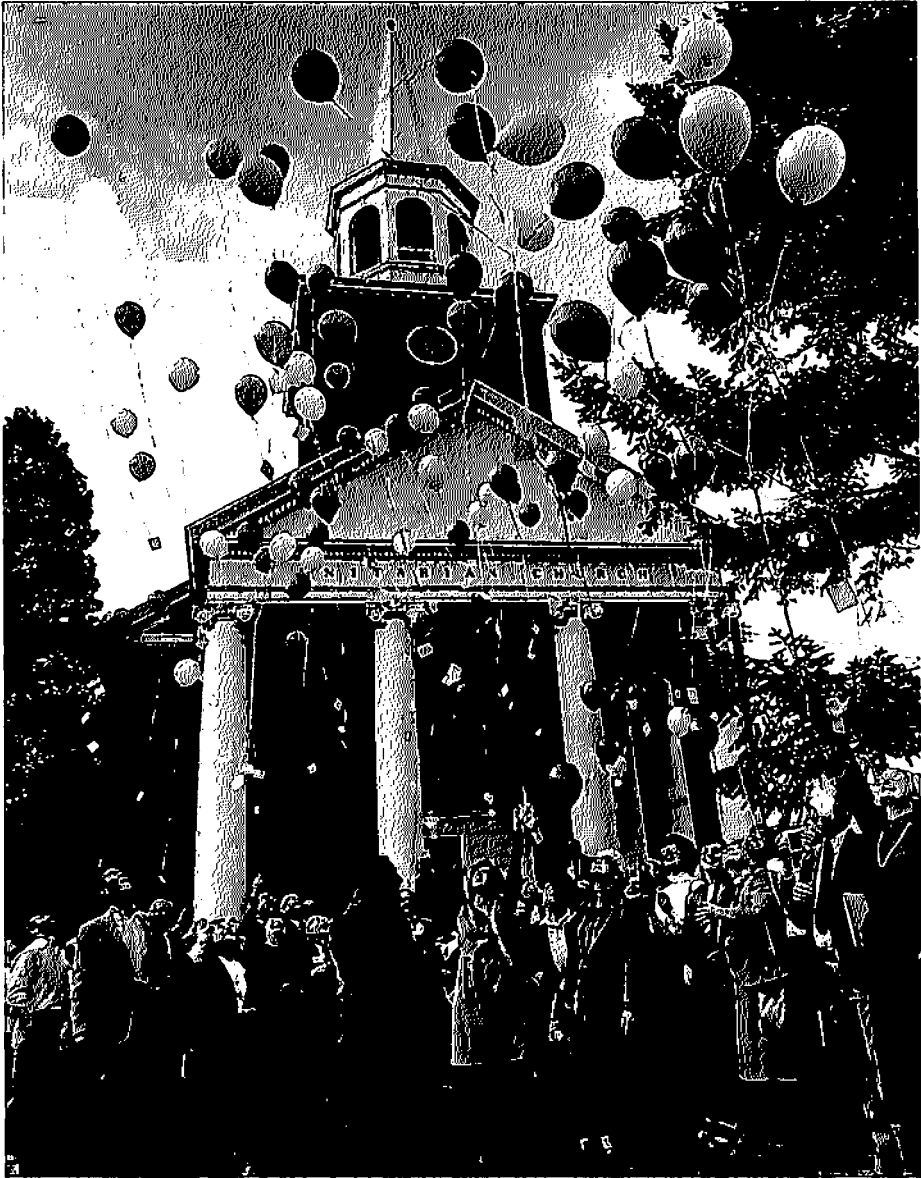


Lectures Honoring Two Distinguished Members

FUSAns join other interested professionals and lay persons who attend annual lectures that honor two remarkable and much-loved Albany Unitarians. John Muntz was chairman of the Department of Biochemistry at Albany Medical College from 1955-74. He died in 1979. From the first John A. Muntz Memorial Lecture in 1981, illustrious biochemists have distinguished this annual forum. Similarly, the Sociology Department of the State University of New York at Albany honors its first emeritus professor with the Theodore G. Standing Lectures on the Human Community. Ted retired in 1970, and each year since then the Standing Lecture has attracted eminent sociologists -- and many Albany UUs -- to SUNYA.

The Sesquicentennial

Perhaps our grandest party of all occurred throughout the year 1992. From January to June, and from September to December, a series of memorable events marked the founding of the First Unitarian Society of Albany. Chapter 10 describes that magnificent celebration, a fitting culmination to 150 years.



FUSA members joyously celebrate the "Year of Peace." following an October 1986 Sunday service. (Photo courtesy of Knickerbocker News.)

RESOURCES

The history of our Society's celebrations is recorded in many places: *Newsletters*, Orders of Service, the programs prepared for special events, and newspaper stories, as well as references in board of trustees' minutes -- even treasurers' reports! These sources are in the FUSA archives and are identified in the text of this chapter.

Many members have contributed anecdotes and background information through conversations and correspondence. Among these valuable contributors are Charles and Ruth Estey, Sam Freeman, Eva Gemmill, Roger Hall, Charles Kahn-Schneider, George Kleinberger, Tom and Meredith Mercer, Sigrin Newell, Patricia Patrick, Dora Reed, Mary Reich, Miriam Rider, Fred and Martha Schroeder, Dan Sekellick, and Al and Ramona Weissbard.

John Guffin's history, *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, also provided background on early FUSA celebrations.

ENDNOTE

1. CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans) was founded in the 1980s when a spontaneous ritual at General Assembly '85 in Atlanta sparked interest in developing an ongoing organization. A statement of purpose was adopted and a board of directors confirmed at GA '87 in Little Rock. CUUPS was recognized as an independent affiliate organization of UUA in October 1987 by the UUA board of trustees. Our regional chapter was established in April 1992 at the Schenectady UU Society. The chapter includes members of FUSA.

Paganism generally refers to an earth-centered religion. In its contemporary form it shares many principles and practices of Unitarian Universalism, with its emphasis on "experience over doctrine, immanence over transcendence, and multiple pathways to the divine." It also reflects an interest in feminist religious thought and goddess religion.

7.

MUSIC

By Robert A. Stierer

"Nothing does more to improve the aesthetic and spiritual side of our Sunday services than does a good choir," wrote the Rev. James Madison Barr as he began his ministry at the First Unitarian Society of Albany (FUSA) in the autumn of 1956.

Since the earliest days of our Society music has played a significant role in the life of the congregation. Guffin's Centennial history of FUSA offers several musical episodes in our first 100 years. We are also indebted to Dr. Charles Semowich, FUSA historian from 1984 to 1989, and other scholars, as well as trustees' minutes and *Newsletters*, for uncovering the fascinating and somewhat erratic story of musical events in our church in the century and a half since 1842.

BEFORE 1942

Soon after the Society bought the Division Street church building and dedicated it in October 1844, the purchase of an organ formerly used in Boston's Federal Street Church -- William Ellery Channing's church -- was proposed. The organ was offered at a price of \$1000, a considerable sum at that time. Society members undertook a subscription campaign, beginning in January 1845, for 100 shares at \$10 each. Church financial records indicate, however, that they obtained only \$150 in paid subscriptions.

Bought of George Jardine

Organ Builder - New York

April 3rd 1845

The Organ erected in the Unitarian Church. Albany	}	\$ 550 . 00
Packing of Cases		5 . 00

555 . 00

By
Buy Old Organ

75 . 00

\$ 480 - 00

Rec ^d Payment Cash	133 . 00	
Note at 6 Mos -	} 275 . 00	"
from April 3 rd 1845		
Draw Bill for Balance	72 . 00	

480 . 00

George Jardine

George Jardine's invoice for our first church organ indicates a price of \$550, plus \$5 for packing and cases, with a \$75 allowance for an existing instrument.

Another organ at a more affordable price was located and purchased in April 1845 for \$550. It was made by George Jardine, who came to America from England about 1836, and in 1837 built his first organ for a church in Jersey City, New Jersey.¹ Jardine soon enjoyed a reputation

as a maker of fine organs. The price of the organ selected by FUSA trustees indicates that it had one manual, or set of keys, and about six stops [tuned sets of pipes].² A copy in our archives of a one-and-a-half-page memorandum, entitled "Directions," gives detailed instructions on how to set up and play the organ. Hand-written, probably by Jardine, it begins: "The instrument is fastened in the box by two bolts passed up through the bottom board, the bolts being the same which are used for fastening the legs to the case...."

In addition to its cost, transportation of the organ to the Division Street church cost \$11.81, and a lamp, \$4.00. For a boy "blowing [the] organ" the treasurer paid \$2.50 in June 1845, and \$8.00 in February 1846. An organist (unnamed) was paid \$17.00 on March 4, 1846.

The Albany Unitarian church organ is listed in the 1869 *Descriptive Circular and Price List* of the firm of George Jardine and Son, Organ Builders, of New York City. The circular lists 158 other "principal organs" in New York State (of which 46 were in New York City) for a total of 375 in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Latin America; also "over three hundred smaller...organs." The text of the circular extols "the Organ...the grandest, the most perfect and comprehensive, the very 'king of all musical instruments'...The science of organ building may rightfully be called a sublime art...no other instrument is capable of producing such a wonderful effect on the human mind."

FUSA's first church organ served more than a musical function. In 1847, when FUSA was going through a financial crisis due to other debts owed for the new church, the trustees mortgaged the organ to Moses H. Grinnell, a New York City merchant and philanthropist, for \$870, with half of this amount plus interest payable in three years. The agreement authorized Grinnell to remove the organ in the event of non-payment. We have no evidence of a default. FUSA records show that the organ was sold, dismantled, and removed to a music store, from whence it was sold to a church in Schenevus, New York -- probably at the same time that the Division Street church was sold, in 1869.

We should note here that the name Jardine returned to FUSA in 1967. During the rebuilding of the Hall organ into a "new" organ, Leonard Carlson, the contractor-organ builder, installed two sets of sixty-one pipes. These pipes are stamped "1035," which is a Jardine identification, Mr. Carlson advises. He had found the pipes at the Chase Organ Company in Worcester, New York. Thus we have

a "Jardine Connection" between our first organ in 1845 and our present organ. It is likely that the pipes from Worcester were made at the Jardine factory in New York City about 1892-3. George Jardine died in 1882, and the firm went out of business in 1899.

Hymns and the singing of hymns by the congregation were another facet of the music program in the early years of the Society. A hymn composed by the Rev. John Pierpont, minister of the Troy Unitarian Church, was sung at the ordination and installation of Charles M. Taggart at the Division Street church in July, 1849. (See illustration; also Chapter 2 regarding Rev. Pierpont.) Guffin notes that the Rev. George F. Simmons, FUSA minister from December 1853 to June 1855, recommended to the Albany congregation "meetings for exercise in psalmody [singing of hymns]...affording the only mode in which many voices can unite without discord in the same act of praise."

The Rev. Charles Gordon Ames, FUSA

ORDINATION SERVICES.

of the Rev. Charles M. Taggart in Albany, July, 21, 1849

VOLUNTARY,By the Choir.
 INTRODUCTORY PRAYER,.....By Rev. JOHN PIERPONT,
 Of Troy.
 READING OF THE SCRIPTURES,.....By Rev. J. F. BAKER,
 of Albany.
 SERMON,.....By Rev. ORVILLE DEWEY, D. D.

ORDINATION HYMN.
By Rev. JOHN PIERPONT.

O Thou, who art above all height,
 Our God, our Father, and our Friend,
 Beneath thy throne of love and Light,
 We, thine adoring children, bend.

We kneel in praise, that here is set
 A vine, that by thy culture grew;
 We kneel in prayer, that thou would'st set
 Thy blessing leaves with heavenly dew.

Since thy young servant here hath given
 Himself, his powers, his hopes, his youth,
 To the great cause of truth and heaven,
 Be thou his guide, O God of truth.

Here may his doctrine drop like rain,
 His speech like Hermon's dew distil,
 Till green fields smile, and golden grain,
 Ripen for the harvest, wait thy will.

And when he sinks in death—by care,
 Or pain, or toil, or years oppress—
 O God, remember this our prayer,
 And take his spirit to thy rest.

ORDAINING PRAYER,.....*Rev. Charles M. Taggart*
By Rev. J. F. Baker
Upon Cause of AMEN
 CHARGE,.....By Rev. PROFESSOR STEDDINS,
 Of Mcadville.
 RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,
 By Rev. J. H. Herwood, of Louisville, Ky.
 VOLUNTARY,.....By the Choir.
 ADDRESS TO CONGREGATION,
Written By Rev. H. W. BELLOW, of New-York.
 CONCLUDING PRAYER,By Rev. J. F. Baker,
By Charles M. Taggart
 BENEDICTION,.....By the PASTOR.

U. S. VAN NOCK, PRINTER, ATLAS OFFICE, ALBANY.

This 1849 program, for the installation and ordination of the Rev. Charles M. Taggart, is one of the earliest in our archives. Note the importance of music, and eminent denominational clergy who participated: Pierpont, Dewey, May, Bellows. Taggart resigned eight months later.

minister from 1864-65, also appreciated the role of hymns in the church service. He wrote "Dedication Hymn" in 1905 while he was minister of the Church of the Disciples in Boston. The FUSA congregation sang Ames's hymn (from the 1914 AUA *New Hymn and Tune Book*) at the dedication of our church in 1925. We sang it again at our 150th Anniversary service in November 1992. The hymn begins:

*"With loving hearts and hands we rear
This house of praise and prayer
Assured that He will meet us here
Who meets us everywhere..."*

Dr. William Brundage's dynamic ministry at FUSA, which began in 1895, sparked a revival of all aspects of congregational life, including music. Robertson's Orchestra was engaged in 1898 to play at the Sunday evening services being held in Odd Fellows Hall. Large congregations attended these services -- frequently there was standing room only in the 1000-seat-capacity hall, as Dr. Brundage's sermons and the orchestra's classical music acted as magnets. But the expense of the orchestra was too great for the Society, and the arrangement was cancelled. The board and congregation wanted instrumental music, however, and the Ehricke String Quintet was engaged for a short time.

Meanwhile, the Society purchased the United Presbyterian Church on Lancaster Street in 1899. No less than six board and special congregational meetings were held in 1900 and 1901 to deal with "the music question." At a special meeting in June 1900 the Trustees were given the "power to act on the question of music," with expenditure limited to \$15 a night. In the spring of 1901 the congregation voted 34 for organ music and 8 for an orchestra, and the Society purchased an organ for the Lancaster Street church, probably a Hutchings-Votey organ.³

Among the hymns being sung around 1900 by Unitarians, in Albany and elsewhere, were these three from the AUA hymnal, which began:

*"Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore him;
Praise Him angels, in the heights;..."* and:

*"Call Jehovah thy salvation;
Rest beneath the Almighty's shade;..."* also:

*"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;..."*

Our Society has purchased four organs since its founding: in 1845, for the Division Street church; in 1901 for the Lancaster Street church; in 1931 for the new church at Robin and Washington; and, in 1967, a newly reconstructed organ for that same church. Inevitably, of course, numerous minor and major repairs were necessary to keep the organs in operating condition. Our present church did not have an organ when the building was dedicated in April 1925. Long-time church member John J. Jansen gave FUSA a new piano in December 1925. (Jansen also gave the plaque on the front of the pulpit dedicated to Dr. Brundage.) An organ fund committee recommended, in March 1928, the purchase of an Austin organ for an estimated \$3,450. The board of trustees approved the purchase when the fund reached \$1,000. The committee, chaired by Mrs. Abiel Smith, persisted in fund-raising efforts, and reported a total of \$2,526 in April 1931. Meanwhile, the Hall Organ Company of Hartford offered an organ for \$3,500, or \$3,000 "if order were placed at once." Probably that saving of \$500 was a factor in the board of trustees' approval of the Hall organ over the Austin. In any case, installation of the Hall organ was completed in August. Guffin records: "Much credit is due Mrs. Smith...for her untiring activity in obtaining the funds...and to Mrs. William R. Bleecker who so ably assisted."

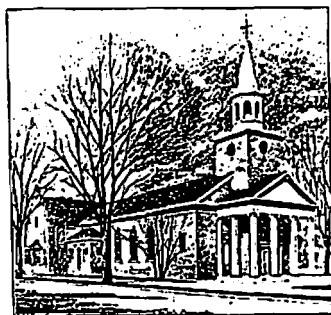
The dedication of the organ, on November 15, 1931, was impressive. Mrs. Joseph P. Pierce, the church organist, was assisted by Miss Lydia Stevens, who played the *Andante Cantabile* from Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony as a prelude. The Rev. William W. Peck, the minister, formally presented the new organ to the congregation. Dr. Arthur Wright, tenor (our late member, Janette Wright, was the widow of Dr. Wright), and Miss Eleanor Foote,



Unitarian-Universalist Church

ALBANY

WILLIAM W. PECK, Minister



DEDICATION OF ORGAN

Sunday, November 15, 1931

Four-thirty P. M.



Heavy indebtedness for a new church building, the Great Depression -- still funds were raised for a new organ and the congregation celebrated. (Note use of "Unitarian-Universalist Church" on Dedication Program.)

the violin solo.

Chimes were added in 1938, a gift of Mrs. James Sullivan in memory of her husband.

FROM 1942 TO 1976

FUSA records are incomplete for the 1940s and early '50s, but personal recollections and surviving orders of service offer information.



About 1942 this children's choir sang for special occasions. Possibly their accompanist was Helen Maxwell, one of our active musicians. Front row: Katherine Broughton, Lucia Tweedie, Catherine Lake, unknown, Ann Underwood. Back row: Lois Maxwell, Arlene Maxwell, unknown, Marion Miller, unknown, David Maxwell, unknown.

Special music for FUSA's Centennial service in 1942 was performed by the choir and organist Leah Minders Murphy, whom Phoebe Ziehm described as a "fine musician." (See list of organists in Appendix.) Phoebe sang in the choir under Leah Murphy's direction, with soprano Billie Stott, tenor Russell Freeman, and many others. Mrs. Byron Smith became organist in 1944, and the choir's fine quality continued into the ministry of the Rev. Karl Nielsen. Phoebe recalls that Karl Nielsen loved the Scots and their music, and once arranged for a bagpiper to play, "...starting in Channing Hall and piping all the way into the church." A unique guest musician!

After nine years as organist, Mrs. Byron Smith resigned. With appreciation for her service, the Rev. Ernest Pipes wrote in a 1953 *Newsletter*, "For all too many of those years she valiantly and skillfully played an organ in poor repair."

The Rev. James Madison Barr became our minister in the fall of 1956. Later he wrote, "When I came to this church...there was no choir in existence, and there had been none for some time." Barr cared passionately about music in our church, and he used his energy and persuasive skills to bring his love of music to a revitalized program. Those who attended the Sunday morning service in October 1992, when Barr preached as a special Sesquicentennial event, saw and heard him enjoy the hymns, head thrown back, singing in full voice.

When Barr began his FUSA ministry Keith Stott, the new organist, and Dr. John Muntz, a choir member and chairman of the Music Committee, shared a desire to re-establish a choir and embark on a rejuvenated music program. In the first *Newsletter* of the year Barr reported: "[Crosby Greene and Keith Stott] are working during this vacation period to organize a choir for the coming year...You can give your services to no better cause than this. So if you sing at all, please let us know before the beginning of our services in September."

And indeed a choir was recruited. Keith also played a fifteen-minute organ recital before the Sunday service, beginning in November 1956. He wrote in the *Newsletter*: "We request that all who come into the church before eleven o'clock...do so quietly, and keep conversation at a minimum...[to] make it possible for all who enjoy this kind of worship experience to do so." A familiar request over the years.

During those years FUSA member Bob Thorstensen wrote new words to many hymns "to fit liberal theology." In February 1957, Keith's new hymn to honor the Hungarian Freedom Fighters, "Magyar, Magyar," was performed by the choir at the Sunday service, and it was repeated at a service in November 1957.

At the beginning of the 1958-59 year the music program faced a crisis. After valiant but unsuccessful efforts to strengthen the choir, Keith and John Muntz asked Rev. Barr to write a letter requesting support for the music program, especially the choir which had "dwindled in number to about four persons" from some eight or ten.

Barr's eloquent letter on September 22 noted that Keith, an excellent organist, would continue in that position, directing the overall musical program and arranging for vocal and instrumental soloists, while a choir director would be employed. Barr was unable to reconcile himself to the possibility of not having a choir. "Finally," he wrote, "let me say that for the Unitarian Church in Albany not to have one of the best choirs in our area is something we should not tolerate...." In fact, the peaks and valleys of demand for and willingness to participate in a choir are often

impossible to explain.

Now a Rochester Universalist, Stott says that one event impressed on him the importance of liaison between the minister and music director: it was Lincoln's birthday, and he had led the choir in a rousing rendition of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* -- only to learn minutes later that James Madison Barr's sermon was "The South's Perspective on the Civil War." He says that "a satisfying memory is when violinist Sam Eringer and I played the first movement of a Handel sonata. Just pure music!"

Stott resigned as music director at the end of the 1958-59 church year, succeeded the following year by Paul Schaefer; and then by Ralph Ware in September 1960. Ware, an Albany State College student who had been a choir member the previous year, recruited a choir for 1960-61. George Kleinberger first joined the choir in that year and, with the exception of an absence in the '70s, he continues to sing in 1994. This span of more than 30 years makes George the current choir member with the longest service, with Barbara Sekellick a close runner-up.

In August 1961, Ware wrote to Rev. Barr from his home in Watertown in an optimistic vein, expressing hope for the coming year:

I am looking forward to a pleasant and fruitful year; a considerable amount of new music has been ordered. I have been working on many new organ (pieces), and I shall try to see that First Unitarian Church gets the best music possible...you might place in your newsletter an announcement that the first choir rehearsal will be held on Sept. 8 and all interested are welcome to attend, conveying the idea that they need not be a great singer, but willing to work with the group for the added beauty of the service....

A *Newsletter* item in October 1961 invited "anyone interested in informal folk singing to come to Channing Hall on the first Friday of every month. If you play an instrument, bring it at 7:30 to tune up." This announcement seems to herald a new era in acceptable church music at FUSA, when we were no longer limited to hymns or classics with organ or piano accompaniment.

Interest in the Civil Rights Movement first found expression in the music program in 1963, early in the Rev. Nicholas Cardell's ministry. The CORE Singers of Albany, New York, and the Freedom Singers of Albany, Georgia, gave a benefit concert at FUSA in April, singing to a capacity audience. Sponsored by the men's clubs of Westminster Presbyterian, Temple Beth Emeth, and FUSA, the concert raised \$1,100 which was donated to CORE and SNCC for registration and voting work in the South. On another occasion, in 1965, FUSA member and SUNYA

Professor Richard Wilkie and a colleague presented "Jim Crow in Perspective," a program of song and comment accompanied by banjo and guitar. Throughout the 1960s and '70s Richard Wilkie and his wife, Lee, presented an enchanting Sunday service of folk music each year.

A fund was started in the spring of 1963 to place in our hymnal racks the new UUA hymnal, *Hymns for the Celebration of Life*, at \$4 per copy. Al Weissbard was the sparkplug in fund raising, including proceeds from his annual FUSA Book Sale at Delaware Plaza. One hundred twenty-five hymnals were ordered in April 1964.

Ralph Ware graduated from SUNYA in June 1964, and was succeeded as organist and choir director by Lois Wetzel of the Music Department at Emma Willard School in Troy for the 1964-65 year. The organ needed major repairs or replacement, the Music Committee reported. "Repairs carried out this summer will keep the organ fit for our fine organist although little guarantee can be given for its performance beyond two or three years," wrote Board President Al Lierheimer, in a November 1964 *Newsletter*. The Music Committee and Lois Wetzel consulted with the Worship Committee and the trustees, visited organs in the Capital District built by Leonard Carlson, (who had FUSA's service contract), also the Allen Organ Studios in Schenectady, builders of electronic organs. In a preliminary report to the board in November, Music Committee Chairman Paul Schaefer (a former FUSA organist) advised that the organ should be replaced within two or three years. Meanwhile, Lois Wetzel played organ concerts before church services while the assembling congregation talked, and the *Newsletter* again contained a plea for a quiet time for enjoyment of organ music before the service.

Dr. Robert Alexander became chair of the Music Committee in 1965-66. It was clear that action was required if FUSA was to continue to enjoy organ music. He launched a detailed study of alternatives and cost estimates, and an organ fund was started in September for rebuilding or replacement of the instrument. An experiment with recorded music was not received with enthusiasm, nor was the tonal quality of an electronic organ.

Bob Alexander and the Music Committee submitted their report to the trustees in February 1966. The report outlined the problem: the Hall organ "shows ominous signs of age," is facing a breakdown, is musically and mechanically obsolete, has limited tonal resources and would not be satisfactory even if repaired. The Committee solicited quotations from eight pipe organ builders, specifying a "\$10,000 price range" as a realistic

goal. The Committee was particularly interested in the L.A. Carlson Co. of East Greenbush for three reasons: Carlson's reputation was impressive and he held the maintenance agreement for our Hall organ; the Committee liked both the tonal qualities and mechanical engineering of a Carlson organ that they heard demonstrated; and the price range was satisfactory. The Committee recommended that "our Church commit itself to the acquisition of a new organ costing in the range of \$9,000 to \$11,000." They asked the trustees to direct completion of their study looking toward a formal contract proposal, and to minimize further maintenance expenses on the Hall organ. The report noted that "Capital funds are already available to secure a contract" with the balance to be raised over two or three years.

In March 1966 the congregation approved a two-year campaign to raise funds, and the trustees approved a new quotation of \$9,000. The Music Committee set out to draw up a contract with Mr. Carlson, and to raise the money. By mid-May, just two months later, half of the \$9,000 had been paid or pledged.

Garland Butts, a local school music teacher, became organist in September 1965, after Lois Wetzel became ill from hepatitis in California. Butts, our first African American organist, was an enthusiastic and exciting player of the ailing organ. People remained in the sanctuary Sunday after Sunday to hear thrilling postludes. Joe Norton recalls that he made a contribution to the organ fund "although not yet a member, because Garland's playing was so joyous."

Organ fund-raisers brought a flurry of activity from the spring of 1966 to the spring of '67: a gourmet dinner and concert; a card party; an evening of contemporary music with our choir and a guest soloist. Findlay Cockrell, a new member of FUSA, faculty member of SUNYA's music department, and well-known area pianist, gave a piano recital in the fall. This was the first of many such acts of generosity by Cockrell. Cash and pledges totaled \$5,000 by October, and fund-raisers continued. Richard and Lee Wilkie gave a folk music concert for the benefit of the organ fund in March 1967.

Work on the new organ began during that summer, and by September rebuilding was well advanced. Mr. Carlson installed a total of 588 pipes in ten ranks, replacing 362 pipes in six ranks. The new organ had an unusual chirp-like sound, however, which caused some concern. It turned out to be a "chiff," the authentic sound of a flute pipe in modern organs, not a defect. Carlson recalled the 1967 restoration in a January 1993 telephone interview⁴.

Both the rebuilding of the organ and the organ fund drive were completed in December 1967, our 125th Anniversary year. Bob Alexander was commended by the trustees for "the magnificent job done." FUSA President Al Weissbard wrote a note to our former minister, Kenneth C. Walker (1935-44) in the *Newsletter*: "Read your letter in the November issue of *The Register Leader* re ersatz organs. You'll be glad to learn that your old church just rebuilt the old organ and resisted the substitution of electronic instruments."

Ralph Ware returned to FUSA (and to SUNYA as a graduate student), replacing Garland Butts, who was leaving the community. Music programs flourished throughout the 1968-69 year. The annual report of Music Committee co-chairs, Stan Davis and Alf Davies, told of several soloists, including Samuel Eringer, violinist in the Albany Symphony Orchestra and a FUSA member; Margaret and Arnold Foster, recorders; and organ solos by Ralph Ware. The choir had a healthy nucleus of seventeen members, and enjoyed monthly dinner rehearsals.

A survey of the church membership in the spring of 1969 showed strong support (71 votes) for music as a "meaningful part of the service." However, 74 wanted a "varied format," and 12, more folk music.

Ware resigned in June 1969, and Linda Clawson became organist in September. Interest in the choir lagged, and the choir disbanded in November after repeated appeals for singers were not successful.

A new organist and music coordinator, Stylianos (Stan) Scordilis was welcomed in the fall of 1970. A graduate student in biology at SUNYA, he had studied music composition at Princeton. He would "offer a broad program of organ, instrumental and vocal selections," coordinated with the Music Committee. Stan's tenure was a high point in the music program at FUSA. June Hall remembers the choir performing Vivaldi's "Gloria" as "quite an undertaking," under Stan's direction.

Not limiting his performances to our church, Stan also played a concert at Albany's Cathedral of All Saints in December 1971 and, at the Troy Music Hall, he played a Handel Organ Concerto with the Albany Symphony Orchestra in March 1972, on the huge 19th Century Wurlitzer organ which had been repaired especially for the concert. Stan completed his studies at SUNYA, and played his farewell service at FUSA in April 1974.

During the 1973-74 year the Music Committee, chaired by Mary Reich, helped to start a recorder group and supported adult and children's choirs. They also presented a special Sunday service in March entitled "Is the Minstrel Really Back?" The program combined selections from

"Godspell" and "Jesus Christ Superstar" with dancing, songs by choir members, and instrumental music. By invitation, the performance was also given at the UU Church in North Adams, Massachusetts.

The Music Committee developed "Suggested Roles of Music Director and Music Committee" in April 1974. These were periodically updated.

Ann Brandon, a FUSA member, became our music director and organist in May 1974. Her impressive background in music includes a Bachelor of Music from Oberlin, a Master of Sacred Music from Union Theological Seminary, and posts as church organist and choir director in Knoxville, the Bronx, Ithaca, and Utica.



Choir members George Kleinberger, Jack Hotchkiss, Richard Dana, Frank Bogedain, Arline Sumner, Julie Panke, June Hall, two unknowns, and Barbara Sekellick rehearse about 1983.

Another survey by the Music Committee asked for reactions to the "current use of the organ" in Sunday services. A large majority of the 227 respondents wanted to increase or continue organ music: 54 ranked it "excellent (and I'd like more);" 102 marked "I enjoy it (by all means continue);" 30 "didn't especially care for it;" 12 wanted to see a change; and 29 had no reaction.

Folk music, as alternative church music, still had great support at that time, and a folk song hymnal was assembled. (Of course there was diversity of opinion, expressed once in a plaintive note in the *Newsletter*, "Whatever happened to Beethoven and Bach?") A folk-singing group started in fall 1974; and two evening "hootenannys" were held in 1975 with all ages participating.

Also in 1975 June Hall directed a children's choir of nine at the Christmas services; and job descriptions were prepared for the position of music director and for the music committee.

FROM 1976 TO 1993

During the 1976-77 church year the Music Committee initiated plans for a new grand piano in the sanctuary, and accepted with appreciation Professor Findlay Cockrell's offer to be consultant to the Committee. By October 1976 the fund totaled \$300, including an allocation from the rummage sale and proceeds from an organ program by Ann Brandon. Only four months later the Piano Fund had grown to nearly \$3,000, and the search for a piano intensified. After testing eleven pianos and on the recommendation of Cockrell, the Music Committee decided in June 1977 to buy a rebuilt, six-foot, 1899 Steinway grand piano from Jay Whitcomb of Glens Falls for \$4,350. The Music Committee, headed by June Hall, raised some money at the June Book Sale by selling sheet music and music books. A series of six benefit concerts raised most of the remaining deficit: Richard and Lee Wilkie presented a concert of folk songs, humor and social comment, for example, and a performance by Cockrell and SUNYA biology professor and cellist Robert Allen netted \$500. The campaign also offered individuals a unique opportunity to donate money -- "keys for \$15, pedals for \$50, and legs for \$100."

With the new piano in place in the sanctuary (two rows of seats were relocated to accommodate the large instrument), Cockrell played at the first 1977-78 service in September.

Two public concerts during that church year made good use of our new Steinway. The first was sponsored by the Albany City Arts Office, featuring Carole Friedman, pianist; another was a jazz concert, featuring FUSAns Dean Hey on Trombone and John Corrado on the Steinway. Indeed, the fine new instrument gave impetus to future Music Committees to present public concerts routinely, featuring outstanding local performers such as Professor Cockrell.

The Rev. John Corrado's arrival in fall 1976 brought a new impetus

to FUSA's music programs. John was an accomplished pianist of jazz and folk music, a composer, and former member of jazz combos. "J.C.," as he signed his *Newsletter* columns, was an enthusiastic supporter, innovator, and leader in a variety of musical endeavors. In his candidating service on April 25, 1976, John played a medley of several of his compositions and noted: "Music has always been an important part of my being...I'm sharing [today] a little of who I am and how I feel which can't be shared with words."

Ann Brandon played at the American Guild of Organists concert at the Cathedral of All Saints in January 1977. Another major music event of the year was the publication by Brandon and the Music Committee of the folk hymnal, *Songs of the Spirit*, in March 1977. Songs by Brandon, Corrado, and FUSAn Lynn Miller were included in the original book. When Brandon became music coordinator for the Arts Center on the Holy Names Campus her resignation, effective in June 1978, was accepted with regret. We welcomed Judith Williams as our new music director and organist, with a choir at full strength.

The Music Committee, now increased to nine, reflected unusual variety in its annual report in March 1979: instruments, solos, and choir produced a "broad spectrum" of spirituals, folk, traditional church music, modern pieces, show tunes, and original works by Corrado. Betty Barber's Sharp Quartet, soon expanded to a quintet -- Lew Rider, George Hastings, Willa Lane, Jack Hotchkiss, and Betty -- will be long remembered for its music at church social functions. In addition, two public concerts were presented at FUSA by the Music Committee in cooperation with the Karen Ranung Studio of Albany; and Findlay Cockrell arranged two concerts -- a trio, and a Baroque group.

The 1979-80 Music Committee chair, Jean Brady, reported that the Christmas music concert was "a highlight of the year." She also noted that the choir membership was "strong on men (a rarity!)." Again the Karen Ranung Studio sponsored a concert. During that church year FUSA was the grateful recipient of a baby grand piano for Channing Hall, the gift of Music Committee member Margaret Frisch, who was moving away.

The organ needed minor repairs and Frank Cole of the Music Committee negotiated for the work with Mr. Carlson. A mobilier (dolly) was purchased for the grand piano, and the Carey Organ Co. of Troy was awarded the organ-maintenance contract.

John Corrado advised the board in September that he had been appointed to the UUA Commission for Common Worship which

produced the new paperback hymnal in 1979 -- the familiar green booklet, *Hymns in New Form for Common Worship*. Observing that "The history of hymnody is a history of amending and altering words and music to fit current needs," the ten-member commission strove for gender neutrality in the 57 hymns included in the book. New material was added in 1982 and 1992, for a total of 119 hymns.

The Dr. Thomas L. Rider Memorial Fund for special musical events was established by Mim Rider and her family in memory of Lew in April 1980, with an advisory board of John Corrado, Charles Semowich, and Ann Brandon. A gift from the fund brought the Brass Quintet from Union College for a fine performance at the Union Thanksgiving Service.

With the fall of 1981 repairs to the organ were again required. The Music Committee, chaired by Barbara Youngberg, obtained estimates ranging from \$420 for minor repairs, to \$50,000 to \$100,000 for complete replacement with a new organ. After much discussion in the committee, as well as study of a consultant's report and review of organ company proposals and recommendations, the committee recommended to the board the low bid by the L.A. Carlson Co. The Board voted to proceed with Carlson's proposal in June 1982 and work was completed in January 1983. Well known area organist Keith Williams played a special Sunday noon concert on the newly refurbished instrument.



A joyful intergenerational musical moment, in about 1971.

At Christmastime 1981 both adult and children's choirs sang on Sunday and at the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

The Music Committee, chaired by Dick Dana and then David Ford, continued to sponsor several concerts a year. They were held in the sanctuary, taking advantage of the fine piano and acoustics. One 1983

concert honored the 150th anniversary of Brahms's birth with Professor Cockrell and Ann Brandon at the piano, performing the "Liebeslieder Waltzes" with a vocal quartet. Other performers during the 1980s included the Adirondack Saxophone Quartet; Findlay Cockrell and Matthew Herskowitz; soloists from the Empire State Youth Orchestra; the Helderberg Madrigals; Lee Shaw, jazz pianist; Allan Alexander, guitarist; Jill Panitch and Rebecca Squire, flute and harp ensemble; and L'Ensemble (chamber music group). Many people from the community were introduced to the church through these programs.

Guest musicians often performed at the Sunday-morning services also. In the spring of 1987 Carolyn McDade, who has several songs in the new UU hymnal, was a guest at our Sunday service. Also, in the same spring, choirs from the Albany and Schenectady churches combined forces for services at both churches. They sang Daniel Pinkham's "Wedding Cantata" and Randall Thompson's "Alleluia" directed by Ann Brandon and accompanied by Marjorie Voytko, music director of the Schenectady church. This combining of choirs has been done a few times since then, and has been an enjoyable experience for both the choirs and the congregations.

John Corrado resigned in June 1983, leaving a fine musical legacy to FUSA. Music Director Judith Williams also resigned in spring 1983, and Ann Brandon was persuaded to return for the fall.

A new, six-person vocal group, the Helderberg Madrigal Singers, appeared on the Albany scene in the fall of 1984. This first-class ensemble performed at FUSA and throughout the Capital District, with free rehearsal time given at FUSA in return for singing periodically at Sunday services. FUSA members Richard Dana and Ruth Stephenson were original members, with Dave Metz joining the group in 1992.

When the Rev. Dr. George Williams gave his candidating sermon in March 1985, he surprised us by singing in his beautiful baritone voice the humorous ditty, "The Vicar of Bray." This parody on the flexible religious beliefs of a 17th Century English vicar delighted his audience. George earned his doctorate in theology and sacred music from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He occasionally sang for us during his ministry at FUSA from 1985-88.

The highlight of the 1985-86 year was the participation of our choir under Ann's direction, with George as soloist, in the City of Albany's Tricentennial celebration. Choirs from the city's historic churches -- including the First Unitarian Society -- assembled in the Immaculate Conception Cathedral on Eagle Street and filled that great cathedral with

classical and sacred music to delight the ear. Our choir performed an encore of their selections at FUSA in the fall of 1986.

The year 1985-86 also saw a Youth Choir formed, and special Christmas caroling by the choir for FUSA shut-ins which was much appreciated.

It was in the fall of 1987 that Ann Brandon invited our choir and congregation to field-test proposed selections for the UUA's forthcoming hymnal. The new hymnal would replace the hard-cover *Hymns for the Celebration of Life*, first published in 1964. Publication of the new hymnal was projected for fall 1992. So we sang and rated various new and revised hymns throughout the 1987-88 year. Ann duly reported the results in an October *Newsletter*: "We are trying to create a hymn book that is both conservative and radical...conservative in preserving the best hymns of our tradition, radical in providing a wide range of new worship material, giving fresh expression to our religious faith..." Of the songs tested in 1987-88, Ann reported that we liked "Amazing Grace," "How Can I Keep from Singing," "The Sun that Shines," "Song of Thanksgiving." A fund for purchasing new hymnals, titled *Singing the Living Tradition*, was established in 1992, and donations of \$25 per copy were sought.

At our first service in September 1993 Music Director Meg Bassinson introduced representative songs from the shiny new hymnal, with maximum participation from an enthusiastic congregation. Former FUSA minister John Corrado wrote the words and music for "Voice Still and Small" (#391) and music for "The Leaf Unfurling" (#7) in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

The *Newsletter* reported in December 1987 that FUSA member Dr. Charles Semowich had recently won first place in the Regina Bell Ringers' Handbell composition competition for his piece, "Intrada." Also during the 1987-88 year the Music Committee, Julie Panke and David Ford, co-chairs, worked with the Religious Education Council and RE staff on music and music programs for the church school.

Jack Hotchkiss, FUSA's own encyclopedia of jazz, M.C.'ed a retrospective Duke Ellington concert in Channing Hall in observance of Black History Month in February 1989. And for the entertainment at the Annual Dinner in May the choir wrote, directed, and produced the show, which featured a take-off on the search for a new minister.

The Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider began her ministry at FUSA in the fall of 1989. The festive occasion of Joan's installation service is covered in the "Celebrations" chapter. It featured a new song written and played

by Joan's son, David Friedman, especially for the occasion. Dave's composition, "We Are the Key," was added to our *Songs of the Spirit* folk hymnal.

In June 1990 Ann Brandon retired after a total of eleven years (two tenures) as music director and organist. She was honored for her exemplary service at a reception in Channing Hall following the last service in June. A poem in her honor by Bob Stierer was published in the 1991 *Oriel*. It begins:



Ann Brandon had been our organist for eleven years in June 1990, when Ursula Poland snapped this photo. Through the dors of Channing Hall, a surprise farewell reception awaited Ann.

When in the quiet summer the
 memories come
 Of music played by Ann to lift our
 souls
 I think of moments, nay of hours
 When we sat here in thoughtful
 silence
 And heard the chords that
 brightened dreams...

A well known area musician, Angela Fitzpatrick, succeeded Ann as music director. She was a WMHT music commentator and had directed several other Capital District choruses and church choirs. Choir member Bill Webb built a small portable platform for the diminutive Angela. Meg Bassinson became piano accompanist at the same time. Angela resigned in mid-year and was succeeded by Julie Panke, who had been a choir member for several years.

As FUSA's Sesquicentennial year began in the fall of 1991, plans were developed for several special musical events as part of the celebration. Pianist Sonya Peacock

succeeded Meg, who was on maternity leave. Barbara Phelps was elected chair of the Music Committee and Julie continued as music director.

In February 1993 another concert was held -- this one again to raise money for the new hymnal -- with performers Ann Brandon, Meme Pittman, and the Helderberg Madrigals.

Albany Unitarians recently marked a century and a half of commitment to music as one facet of their church experience. In retrospect, the peaks and valleys of our music program were astonishing. As the fifty-year period, 1942 to 1992, drew to a close, however, we can fairly say that the music program, choir, and instruments were in good health and voice for the Sesquicentennial musical events. And perhaps we can share the vision of Tennyson and the "Ode to Joy" music of Beethoven (*Singing the Living Tradition*, #143):

Yea, we dip into the future
 far as human eye can see
 See the vision of the world
 and all the wonder that shall be,
 Hear the war-drum throb no longer,
 see the battle flags all furled,
 In the parliament of all,
 the federation of the world.

.....

ENDNOTES

1. Letter of Stephen L. Pinel, Archivist of Organ Historical Society, Inc., to Dr. Charles Semowich, dated August 31, 1987.
2. Ibid.
3. Telephone interview with Mr. Pinel, September 11, 1993 by Robert Stierer.
4. Telephone interviews with Mr. Carlson by Robert Stierer, January 22 and August 22, 1993.

Organists and Music Directors from 1942 to the present are listed in the Appendix of this volume.

8.

OUR FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS**A Summary of John Guffin's History*****One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany***

By Mildred Guffin

In celebration of the 1942 Centennial of the First Unitarian Society of Albany (FUSA), Dr. Horatio M. Pollock, president of the Society's board of trustees from 1924 to 1937, commissioned a "historical sketch of the Unitarian movement in Albany." Joseph R. Brown, Jr., a FUSA member since 1924, collected valuable data and began working on the history. When Brown could not continue, Dr. Pollock persuaded his "esteemed friend," John Guffin, to take over the job.

John Calvin Guffin joined the Society in 1895, soon after it was revived. He believed that he had renounced his Scottish Presbyterian background. Clinging as part of his heritage, however, was his intense sense of duty. Retiring at age 70 from careers in clerical and statistical work, he continued as secretary-treasurer of the Voorheesville Savings and Loan Association until age 85 -- his "real contribution," he believed.

A careful researcher, Guffin began the FUSA history by borrowing board minutes that began at the Society's founding in 1842, and other such material that had been given to the New York State Library for safekeeping. He also consulted other sources to supply historical

background on Albany during the Dutch and English colonial period.

The final volume of 114 pages, *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, was issued in April 1943, almost six months after the Centennial celebration. It contained many pictures of ministers and officers of the Society. The printing cost was approximately \$290 for 250 copies, 100 of which were hard-bound and the remainder assembled but paper-bound. After an initial distribution to church members, two copies were given to the Albany Public Library, and John Guffin received four copies. The paper-bound copies were stored in the attic above Channing Hall, and disappeared when Channing Hall was remodeled in 1962. Now, only four privately owned volumes are known to exist, although a few photo-copies are available.



John C. Guffin (1871 - 1963) at age 85.

The scarcity of copies of *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*, and the demand for them, is the reason for including in FUSA's Sesquicentennial history this chapter, which is a summary of FUSA's first 100 years. In the 50 years since John Guffin wrote his book, society has changed. The role of women, for example, is more fully recognized. (Until about 1960 FUSA trustees felt that women were not suitable ushers.) Several other such aspects of church life, not of paramount interest in Guffin's day, are included in the Sesquicentennial history. What follows, however, is a summary of the Centennial story.

FUSA's EARLIEST YEARS: 1842 to 1895

The first known effort to arouse local interest in the Unitarian movement was a series of advertisements appearing in *The Albany Argus* early in 1830. The issue of February 13, 1830, contained the following advertisement:

Unitarianism - The Rev. Mr. Thompson, late one of the ministers of Charlestown, Mass., will preach in the Court room of the Capitol, tomorrow, at ten o'clock in the morning, and half past six in the evening. The friends of Liberal Christianity, and the citizens in general, are respectfully invited to attend.

Similar advertisements were repeated at weekly intervals, but apparently the response was disappointing, since none appeared after April 25, 1830.

Twelve years later, on November 29, 1842, an Albany Unitarian Society was organized pursuant to law and a board of nine trustees elected: Ami N. Burton, M.D., Samuel Cheever, William Durant, George T. Hill, Orville L. Holley, Joseph M. Lovett, Solomon M. Parke, William B. Pierce, and John Van Buren, M.D. Guffin says "These legal formalities were necessary because each Unitarian society is an independent body, self-governing and owning its own property."

Meetings were held in rented quarters, for which the Society paid \$250 a year. The American Unitarian Association (AUA) provided "missionary services" of 11 ministers during the next few months, for \$234. This appeared in *The Albany Argus* for December 31, 1842:

Unitarian worship every Sunday morning, afternoon and evening at Blunt's Buildings, corner of State and South Pearl Streets. The public are invited to attend. Subject, evening of January 1st - The Death of Christ.

In March 1844 the fledgling society, in a burst of what proved to be unjustified optimism, purchased from the Methodists a church building at 64 Division Street which had been constructed in 1813. The purchase price was \$4,500. The building was in bad repair and required extensive renovations, which were financed through a \$3,000 mortgage. Trustee William Pierce in 1845 reported a total cost of "upwards of \$10,000."

Rev. Henry F. Harrington, of Providence, Rhode Island, became the first regular minister at a salary of \$1,000 per year. He was installed on October 15, 1844, when the church building was dedicated, and he resigned in 1847. The Rev. Orville Dewey, a notable Unitarian clergyman, served as "preacher but not pastor" for only a few months in 1848-49. Charles M. Taggart was ordained and installed on July 31, 1849, and resigned in April, 1850.

The Albany Society maintained a precarious balance between periods of optimism and pessimism concerning its future in a somewhat hostile community. Finances were the major problem. A serious fire in 1848

ravaged six blocks in the most densely populated section of Albany, resulting in property losses for many previous supporters. The rental of pews provided the principal source of income, but in early 1849 only 46

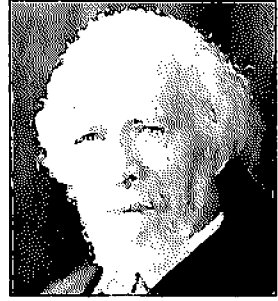
		<i>Pew No.</i>	
<i>Mr.</i>	To THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF ALBANY, Tr.		
	<i>For</i>	<i>months rent from</i>	<i>186</i> . to <i>186</i> . \$
	<i>Received Payment,</i>		
	<i>Albany,</i>	<i>186</i>	<i>Erros.</i>

A pew-rental form once used by FUSA. Income for church maintenance was commonly derived from pew rentals in the 19th century.

of the 74 pews were rented, and there were difficulties in collection from some of these. The death in 1849 of Harmanus Bleecker, who at the time was president of the board of trustees, was a serious blow. A noted descendant of early Dutch settlers, he served as U.S. Minister to the Hague under President Van Buren. The main branch of the previous Albany Public Library was named for him, as well as Harmanus Bleecker Hall on Washington Avenue. Another blow was the departure of Millard Fillmore, a prominent early FUSA member. Fillmore left his position as New York State comptroller to be elected Vice President of the United States in the Zachary Taylor administration. On the death of Taylor in July 1850, Fillmore became President and served the rest of Taylor's term.

Differences of opinion and belief arose. FUSA's first minister, the Rev. Henry Harrington, acknowledged criticism from certain members concerning his arrangement of the Sunday service: "The objectionable parts are the recital of the Lord's Prayer...and the pause for silent prayer or contemplation after the sermon." There was, however, general acceptance of the rite of communion, and the treasurer's accounts for several years show a quarterly expenditure ranging from 30 to 75 cents for "Communion wine."

After the Rev. Taggart's resignation short-term ministers were engaged for a time, whom Trustee Holley called, "Such very worthy but



From 1844 to 1942 FUSA ministers included (from top left) Henry F. Harrington, Amory D. Mayo, Charles G. Ames, Henry C. Leonard, William Mellen, William M. Brundage, Thomas S. Rohjent, William S. Morgan, Charles Graves, Louis C. Carson, B. Malcolm Harris, William W. Peck, and Kenneth C. Walker (shown in Chapter 1).

very prosy men...well-intentioned but...not very way-wise youth...."

The Rev. George F. Simmons was installed on December 30, 1853. Ill health caused him to resign in June 1855, and he died shortly thereafter. (Aspects of Simmons' career and ministry have been discussed in Chapters 3 and 6.)

At this period both Unitarians and Universalists were struggling to survive in Albany. A proposal was made in October 1855 to unite the two congregations but, although both congregations voted in favor, in December the proposal was dropped.

Early in 1856 the Rev. A.D. Mayo, then minister of the Cleveland church, was engaged at an annual salary of \$1,200. (Additional information about this outstanding Universalist minister may be found in Chapters 2 and 5.) Under his leadership the Albany church experienced a modest revival, and FUSA trustees invited such Universalists as felt inclined to enjoy the preaching of Mr. Mayo. The *Monthly Journal* of the AUA referred to Albany in 1861 as "the missionary station of liberal Christianity in New York," where the congregation was composed about equally of Unitarians and Universalists. Mayo's five-year tenure was the longest of any minister to the Albany Church before 1895. Following his resignation to accept a position in Cincinnati the fortunes of the Society again plummeted, and it was three years before the Society called the Rev. Charles Gordon Ames in July 1864. Ames resigned in 1865 to serve the AUA on the West Coast, and later became minister of Boston's Church of the Disciples. He was an active and honored member of the denomination. (See Chapters 2 and 6.)

The Rev. Henry C. Leonard was the next minister to be called, but by July 1868 the Society could no longer pay him. Then, in February 1869, the Division Street church was sold for \$8,000 to retire the Society's debt. No regular church services were held for several years thereafter; but for at least part of the time until 1871 a Sunday School was maintained, which met at the Quaker Meeting House. The board of trustees continued to meet periodically to explore possibilities of revival and obtaining a new church building. John Guffin suggested that the disruptions of the Civil War may have been partly responsible for the ebbing fortunes of the Society at that time.

In May 1871 a hall was leased for one year, and the Rev. S.R. Priest of Cambridge, Massachusetts, preached mornings and evenings for two months to 30 to 50 persons. The lease of the hall, on the fourth floor of an unidentified building, was not renewed. During 1874 and 1875 the Society held services in Geological Hall. The AUA, hoping to keep the

church going, engaged the Rev. William Mellen as minister in 1875. He remained in Albany for only one year, but managed to raise subscriptions of \$27,600 toward a new building.

Over the years there had been frequent negotiations with the Universalists concerning a merger of the two groups. In 1875 this proposal was revived. The Universalists, who were also experiencing financial difficulties, offered to sell their church to the Unitarians for \$30,000. It is not known whether the smaller amount subscribed and offered by the Society under Mr. Mellen was declined by the Universalists, but, unaccountably, the project was not consummated.

Apparently the congregation gave up its hope of owning a church. Five years later, on May 7, 1880, five members of the board of trustees met: Henry Smith, Lansing Merchant, Frank Chamberlain, William Barnes, and George Luther, the treasurer. They voted to invest the Society's funds, some \$1,960, in the name of and for the benefit of the Society, and adjourned the meeting. There are no records of any organized Unitarian services in Albany for the next 15 years.

Even the AUA's help in providing money and ministers had been insufficient to keep services going. John Guffin characterized our early ministers as "unusually able...some outstanding." He attributed the apparent failure of Unitarianism in Albany, therefore, not to lack of leadership but to the religious orthodoxy of most Albany citizens and their condemnation of any departure from strict Trinitarian beliefs. Guffin felt that Albany Unitarians in the revived church of the 1900s owed a large debt to those pioneers who lighted the flame of liberal religion and managed to keep it burning, though fitfully, through a difficult period. As a matter of fact, it was never totally extinguished, merely awaiting a more favorable time.

THE REORGANIZED SOCIETY, 1895-1942

An extraordinary coincidence occurred in 1895. The AUA was sympathetically aware of the Albany situation, and as it had done many times before, came to the rescue. The Rev. Dr. Morehouse, representing the AUA, devoted time in the winter of 1894-95 to reawaken interest in the Albany Society. At the same time the Rev. Dr. William Milton Brundage, one of Methodism's noteworthy preachers, resigned his pastorate at Albany's Trinity Methodist Church, "yielding to the dictates of reason," he said. On March 25, 1895, Brundage began a series of Unitarian sermons at the Leland Opera House which attracted wide-spread

attention. On March 29 the surviving members of the board of trustees, Frank Chamberlain and William Barnes, called Dr. Brundage as minister to a revived Unitarian Society. At a meeting in the Leland Opera House on April 21 a new board of trustees was elected: Willard Bellows, Charles T. Shepard, Fred F. Wheeler, Henry T. Sanford, and William Barnes and Frank Chamberlain from the old board. The reorganized Society offered Dr. Brundage a salary of \$2,500, which included a housing allowance.

Dr. Brundage was apparently a most charismatic figure, and his conversion to Unitarianism attracted much attention in the city, bringing many new members to the reorganized Society. The last service at the Leland Opera House was held on April 28, after which meetings were held in the auditorium of Odd Fellows Hall on Lodge Street. In 1899 the United Presbyterian Church on Lancaster Street, near Eagle, was purchased. Although membership had by then reached 282, purchase of the church building created a serious financial burden. Largely through the efforts of Dr. Brundage a total of \$10,694 was raised, and the AUA again came to the rescue by accepting a mortgage of \$5,000 for money they advanced for the purchase. It is interesting to note that the congregation in 1899 approved "free seats" in the new church, apparently



The sanctuary of the First Unitarian Society's church on Lancaster Street, some time between 1899 and 1922.

depending upon members' pledges of financial support rather than on pew rentals as was previously the custom.

For a time Dr. Brundage's sermons were published monthly under the title *Liberal Sermons from an Albany Pulpit*, at a subscription price of 50 cents a year. The first sermon was "Why We Cannot Believe in an Eternal Hell." Please see Chapter 5 for another pioneering sermon, and Chapters 5, 6, and 7 regarding contemporary activities. Brundage understood the importance to the church of social functions, and fostered them. The Society extended the idea of fellowship to other churches when, in October 1901, the trustees formally voted to invite Temple Beth Emeth, Universalist, and Trinity Methodist congregations to join in a Union Thanksgiving Service. Beth Emeth and All Souls Universalist congregations accepted. This was the origin of joint services which have been held ever since.

Unfortunately it was impossible to keep Dr. Brundage as minister for as long as the Albany Unitarians would have wished. He resigned in December 1904, and the congregation sadly accepted his resignation at the annual meeting in January 1905.

Guffin reported that "the congregation hoped to obtain a worthy successor who might increase the membership and...improve the financial situation." They voted to set the next minister's salary at a maximum of \$2,000. Officers of the AUA, as well as two New York City ministers, recommended the Rev. Thomas S. Robjent of Lawrence, Massachusetts. A further meeting on January 22, 1906, "extended a unanimous call to Mr. Robjent who became the pastor in March." Six months later he had resigned, perhaps because he did not satisfy those accustomed to Dr. Brundage.

Before this, on May 29, 1905, the Society suffered another blow when a fire started in an adjoining building to the west and seriously damaged the church building. Rabbi Schlesinger of Temple Beth Emeth generously offered the use of the Temple "for the remainder of the season's services," and the Society accepted. The Congregationalists, Universalists, and Friends Meeting also offered their facilities.

There was a question whether the Albany Unitarians should return to the Lancaster Street building after repairs, or should try to sell the building and move elsewhere. In the absence of any prospect of a sale, the trustees decided to keep the church after repairs. Insurance amounted to about \$10,500. Repairs were estimated to cost about \$8,000; thus when the congregation moved back to their building it was in better condition than before, and they had enough money left to make a

payment on their church debt.

Any encouragement from this did not last long, for financial difficulties continued through 1906, and the church treasurer asked the AUA to accept a reduction in payments on their loan from \$500 to \$250 a year.

The Society voted unanimously in November 1906 to call the Rev. Dr. William S. Morgan of Derby, Connecticut. Dr. Morgan accepted in December, and "The year 1907 opened brighter." The Albany congregation seemed to like Dr. Morgan and his wife. The trustees adopted the following application for membership suggested by the minister:

Basis of Unitarian Fellowship. These churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man, and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and practical aims. The First Unitarian Society, Albany, N. Y. is a voluntary, liberal religious organization for the promotion of all truth and for the service of man. We recognize in each other absolute freedom of mind, impose no theological condition of membership, respect differences of opinion in one another, and welcome to our membership all who in any degree love the truth and seek to do good.

By April, nevertheless, income was down, and the trustees applied for a grant of \$1,000 from the AUA. In June the Membership Committee reported an active membership of 157. In November the AUA offered to cancel the \$1,750 debt remaining for the church building "and also grant \$450 to the Society upon condition that it become self-supporting and ask no further financial assistance." Guffin noted that every year since 1895 the AUA had contributed to the Albany church. Taking the AUA's warning seriously, the church held several fund-raisers and the board created a Permanent Sustenance Fund Committee to "solicit contributions, encourage bequests, collect Building Fund pledges and sponsor other events." One of these events was the last riverboat excursion on August 1, 1908.

Activities increased at the Albany Unitarian Church and Dr. Morgan's ministry seemed successful. His report for the annual meeting on January 17, 1910 noted many improvements since he became minister in 1907. The Church had progressed without seeking financial aid from the AUA, and owned its building without a mortgage. It still owed \$500 each to a bank and a member, however. Although 500 persons were listed as

members, active membership stood at 180. Dr. Morgan expressed pleasure over increased church attendance, saying, "The minister has a very strong prejudice in favor of live Unitarians occupying the seats during the service." At a trustees' meeting during the previous year, renting pews had been proposed to raise funds, but was turned down.

Dr. Morgan may have felt he had exerted himself to the utmost to reverse "the ebbing tide" in the church's condition that he had observed when he became its minister. At any rate, he submitted his resignation in September 1910, to accept the chair of systematic theology in the Unitarian Divinity School at Berkeley. Dismayed at the loss of Dr. Morgan after only four years, the board considered whether to invite the Troy Unitarian Church to join Albany, thus having only one minister to serve both churches, but decided against it.

In January 1911 the members voted to call the Rev. Charles Graves as minister, with a salary of \$1,500 a year. Graves remained minister for nearly eight years, until September 1918, working valiantly to keep the church going. Crises occurred, of course, such as increased debts of \$2,100 by January 1913, replacement of the heating equipment later in that year, and the resignation of the treasurer, Frederick Gaylord, who had served in that office for eighteen years.

During Mr. Graves's first year the church's poor financial condition resulted in the congregation voting to mortgage the building for \$2,500 to the AUA. They also appealed for additional aid, and the AUA responded with quarterly grants of \$300. At the annual meeting in January 1916 Mr. Graves reported that the active membership of the Church was only 85.

AUA President Samuel Eliot had proposed in 1912 "to purchase a lot for the Society in a more central location and hold it until the Society is able to build a church on it." The congregation had long wished for a better location than Lancaster Street. Finally, on January 15, 1917, the board of trustees voted to purchase the site for a new building which they had been considering for many years. At that meeting a representative of the AUA presented an agreement to buy the lot on the corner of Washington Avenue and Robin Street, where the present church is located, subject to the following conditions:

1. Assuming that the Lancaster Street church be sold for \$30,000 net and that not less than \$10,000 of the sale money should be placed with the Association as a permanent endowment fund for the Albany Society which would receive only the income semi-annually.
2. That the Albany Society binds itself to build upon the lot a brick colonial

church with parish rooms and living apartments for the minister as well as the auditorium; the whole property to stand in the name of the Association as trustee.

3. The Society to pay off all its indebtedness to the Church Loan Fund...and to contribute as much as possible for the church building above the balance available from the sale of the present lot and church.

4. The architect's plans for the new church to be approved by the Association.

During this time the Society was feeling the effects of World War I. For example, the AUA recommended "that the Society combine with other churches for holding services as a conservation measure..." The resignation of Rev. Graves in the summer of 1918 was a great disappointment to the congregation. While at FUSA Graves had served as chaplain of the New York State Assembly, and as literary editor for the *Albany Knickerbocker Press*. He returned to Albany for two special services in 1925 and 1942.

Upon recommendation by a pulpit committee the Rev. Dr. Louis C. Carson was called, to begin his ministry on August 1, 1919. He was installed on January 4, 1920.

Financial difficulties continued, however, and the Society had to borrow \$1,000 to pay for repairs to the old building. Dr. Carson's salary was \$2,400, of which the Society paid \$1,250 and the AUA paid \$1,150. Worried over the need for more members, the board of trustees, in December 1920, requested its president, Dr. Charles F. Wheelock, to ask Dr. Carson "in future to devote as much time as possible to doing missionary work, with a view to getting in new members..." And at its January 1921 meeting the board decided to request the minister to report monthly on "marriages, funerals, new members, calls made, etc..." In February only 44 subscribing members, including 17 new ones, were reported. In March 1921 a special congregational meeting approved giving a mortgage on the church property to the AUA for \$1,400. Dr. Carson resigned in September 1921, claiming that his two-year ministry had shown "steady growth" and that he would "leave the parish in good condition...."

Rather than obtaining a replacement for Dr. Carson the board, in January 1922, engaged Dr. Kirsopp Lake of Harvard Divinity School to fill the pulpit on Sundays. Dr. Lake had a distinguished background, and was one of our most outstanding preachers.

The Rev. B. Malcolm Harris became the next minister, in September 1923. In the meantime, the board was occupied with trying to sell the

Lancaster Street church, and making a decision about a new building. While they considered other sites than the Washington Avenue lot, they first denied an offer to rent that lot for a gas station, then accepted it, at \$40 a month. This caused trouble later, when the lessee wished to purchase the lot. In February 1923 the Lancaster Street church was sold to St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church for \$27,500.

Sunday services, no longer held in the old church, were held either at the City Club or the Institute of History and Art. Surprisingly, FUSA Historian George Waterman recorded in April 1922 a total membership of 228, of which 106 to 112 were active members. Expenses for the preceding fiscal year had been \$3,500.

Discouraged by the high costs of building, the congregation still hesitated, and considered selling the Washington Avenue lot and buying an already existing structure elsewhere. Since the AUA held title to the lot, and refused to approve selling it, the board finally decided in March 1924 to "proceed with new building project at a cost of not more than \$65,000." They authorized the president of the Society to sign the building contract, and construction of the new church began.

At a special meeting in November 1924 members named the new building Unity Church. By the time of the January 1925 annual meeting the church building had not been completed, but the parish hall had. The meeting was held in the new parish hall, named Channing Hall after the noted Boston Unitarian minister, William Ellery Channing.

At the annual meeting Dr. Harris acknowledged the generous pledges and cash from "people not of our fellowship in this city, and our sister churches in Buffalo, Syracuse, New York City, Brooklyn, etc." Dr. Harris also pointed out that, since the congregation now owned valuable property, it should be formally organized with a constitution and by-laws. He continued with a suggestion for a membership ritual, "We are in utter confusion regarding what signing the church book means..." This, he said, made it difficult to explain to outsiders "what membership in a Unitarian Church means and just who are members and what privileges they enjoy." It took another year before Dr. Harris's recommendations were followed: at the January 1926 annual meeting the new constitution and bylaws were submitted and adopted.

Meanwhile, the congregation dedicated their church and parish hall on April 26 and 27, 1925, a celebration that is described in Chapter 6.

The new church building still required many finishing touches, and finances were still difficult. In addition to welcome gifts from members, the Society borrowed \$10,000 from the AUA at five and one-half percent

interest, converted later into a mortgage on the new building. The AUA also continued its annual contribution, though at a lowered rate of \$750. "The Society was just becoming settled in its new church," Guffin reported, "when Dr. Harris under date of April 24, 1926, presented a letter of resignation in order to take up the study of law at...Yale...." At its May meeting the board accepted the inevitable, with praise for Dr. Harris's church work and cooperation.

In September 1926 the pulpit committee recommended calling the Rev. William W. Peck of Youngstown, Ohio, as minister. He served for eight years, until the autumn of 1934. A great many important changes, as well as continuing struggles with finances, occurred during these years. In 1926, for the first time since 1908, the trustees considered merger with the Universalists, when they learned that the State Universalist Convention held a \$6,000 fund for the old Albany Universalist Society. Two years later, in 1928, the Albany Church was granted fellowship in the New York State Convention of Universalists, and amended its constitution as follows:

This Church shall be affiliated in friendly and fraternal relations with

1. The American Unitarian Association.
2. The Mohawk Valley Conference.
3. The Unitarian Sunday School Society.
4. The International Council of Religious Liberals.
5. The New York State Convention of Universalists.

For a few years after the 1928 affiliation with the New York State Convention of Universalists, the board gratefully received financial assistance, but of course the Convention requested that Albany pay an annual "quota." In 1929 the board decided to use the name Unitarian-Universalist in its publicity.

Dr. Theodore Standing and his wife, Mary, summarized the situation as follows:

It appears that by this time a separate Universalist congregation had virtually ceased to exist, most of its former members having already been absorbed into the Unitarians. It is interesting to note, however, that the official name of the merged organization became the Albany Unitarian-Universalist Church and that this local merger antedated by several years that of the two national bodies. Several years later some of the lettering over the front door ("Unitarian-Universalist Church") became dislodged and it was necessary to restore them. Mr. Herman Herrlich, who was then chairman of the Building

and Grounds Committee, made the repairs and "forgot" to replace the word "Universalist." The building has been designated "The Unitarian Church" ever since.

Finances continued to be of utmost importance. The AUA transferred its April 1925 loan of \$10,000 to its Building Loan Fund, "upon condition that it would be repaid without interest in annual installments of not less than \$550 each." During all of Mr. Peck's ministry, nevertheless, the AUA continued to make yearly grants of \$400 to \$800. The Albany Society tried many ways of raising funds locally. For more than one year, they rented Channing Hall for \$100 a month to the New York State College (now part of the State University). At meeting after meeting in 1933, the church treasurer forecast a deficit of \$500 by the end of the year.

In 1928 the Albany church accepted an invitation to join with other churches in a city-wide canvass to learn the church affiliations or preferences of the city's population, a recognition of FUSA by other city churches which Guffin considered very significant. Another instance of cooperation, this time with state-wide Unitarian organizations, took place in 1928, when the Unitarian Sunday School Society and the Mohawk Valley Conference of Liberal Christians met jointly in the Albany church.

Since moving into its new building, the church had lacked an organ. Chapter 7 reports on this important purchase, and the maintenance of that organ to the present.

During Mr. Peck's ministry, several old and valued members of the congregation died, including Dr. Wheelock, who had served as president of the board from 1913-23, John Jansen, and Frederick Gaylord, who had been treasurer during the Brundage regime. The Society was most fortunate to have Dr. Horatio M. Pollock succeed to Dr. Wheelock's position in 1924, and continue in that office until 1937. Frederick D. Colson, who followed Mr. Gaylord as treasurer in 1914, resigned in 1931. T. Howard Stott took his place and served for seventeen years more. Three other outstanding members who died in 1932 were former trustee Fred Lange, George Waterman who was historian and faithful recorder of the size of each Sunday's congregation, and Louise Barnard Horton (see Chapter 5), praised by the trustees as a leader in the Society's work.

In the fall of 1934 Mr. Peck ended his tenure. In January 1935 the congregation voted to call the Rev. Kenneth C. Walker, of Holyoke, Massachusetts. Early in his first year Walker received a suggestion from the Rev. Robert Weston, minister of the Schenectady Unitarian Church,

that they hold services on alternate Sunday afternoons in the Troy church, which had been in difficulty for some time. By September 1935 the Troy church was sold, though the corporation had not gone out of existence, and its Women's Alliance carried on.

In March 1938 the Albany Society held an Institute of Liberal Religion for the Capital District. Speakers were a Harvard Divinity School professor and religion editor of the *Boston Transcript*. In October, at the request of the AUA, the board voted to take up a special collection to aid New England churches damaged by the September hurricane. In 1939 Hazel Reed of the Visiting Nurse Association was granted use of Channing Hall for a pre-natal clinic without charge. The board contracted for six Sunday radio broadcasts, as a result of which Walker noted that he had received some fan mail. The board also created a Promotional Committee to welcome strangers to the church, and to get in touch with members who were no longer active. At the January 1940 Annual Meeting, Walker reported a total membership of 132 -- 74 of them active. These included former members of eleven denominations, and twenty-four occupations.

The following year the Albany Federation of Churches offered the Society affiliation. With sentiments still divided after many discussions, the congregation accepted the offer, prompting Guffin to remark that it had taken 98 years for FUSA to be formally recognized as a church.

John Guffin offered his view on the reasons for FUSA's early difficulties, simplified earlier as Trinitarian hostility to more liberal views. Unitarianism, he said, is confronted by the problem that its basis of fellowship is devoid of theological metaphysics: "It has not the potent appeal...of material advantage in this life and eternal gain in a future life."

Contrasting the Society's early struggles to survive and its comparatively flourishing condition at that time, Guffin wrote of "certain outstanding persons [who] merit recognition." He gave special credit to the Rev. Kenneth Walker and Mrs. Walker, and also mentioned T. Howard Stott, Rose Foll, and Joseph T. Freeman. Guffin added praise for Dr. Horatio M. Pollock "...because of his years of generosity to the always impoverished treasury, and even more because of his guiding hand in every branch of the Society's activities."

Though Guffin did not refer to details, Dr. Pollock's achievements should be mentioned here because they show the qualities that kept our church alive.

Pollock grew up in a log cabin in the mountains west of Albany, yet managed to graduate from Union College. He then studied for his

doctorate in Germany, considered at that time to be paramount in scholarship. He became interested in treatment of the insane, and was appointed director of statistics in the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene. He gained an international reputation by writing several books and by presenting papers at mental hygiene conferences, and he received several honorary degrees. Pollock was an early advocate of family rather than institutional care of the insane. His enthusiasm for liberal religion was of long standing, from service as Sunday School superintendent at the turn of the century, continuing well beyond his years of service as president of the board.

In addition to Dr. Pollock's arrangements for a history of the Society's first 100 years, the Society planned an entire week of commemoration. Described here in Chapter 6, these events were a lively celebration of our first century, for the community as well as for our Society.

As Guffin summarized the situation in 1942, "Now, the Society has a mission which, supported by the efforts and services of the past one hundred years, holds promise of a very different future."

9.

UNIVERSALISM IN ALBANY

Two decades before the First Unitarian Society of Albany (FUSA) was formed, Universalists had brought their message of God's universal love and forgiveness to Albany. W.S. Balch heads the list of "Albany Pastors" in the New York State Convention of Universalists Roll Book, beginning his ministry in 1820. No date is shown for the end of his pastorate, but his successor, I. D. Williamson, came to Albany in 1830. Both Balch and Williamson were later very active in the denomination.

*Albany Universalists built their first meeting house on Herkimer Street in 1829. In their new building on Green Street they hosted the 1834 General Convention, which featured sermons by the most famous Universalist of the day, Hosea Ballou. Universalist Historian Russell Miller offers another early reference: in *The Larger Hope* he notes that independent-minded congregations frequently formulated their own Articles of Faith, citing "the First Universalist Society of Albany, New York...in 1822." Universalist records in FUSA's archives begin eight years later, written in an impressive, leather-bound volume. Those records are summarized here.*

SUMMARY OF MINUTES AND TREASURY REPORTS
OF ANNUAL AND SPECIAL MEETINGS OF
THE UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY BETWEEN 1830 AND 1879

By Margaret G. Foster

On the first day of March in 1830 a meeting was held in the Universalist Meeting House on Herkimer Street for the purpose of organizing the First Universalist Society of the City of Albany. A committee of nine was appointed to draft a constitution. Three weeks later a constitution was adopted -- a clerk, a treasurer, and five trustees were elected, and a delegate was appointed to represent the Society at "conventions and associations with which the Society may be in fellowship."

The constitution required that elections be held at annual meetings in March and that a quorum consist of ten members including three trustees. Membership was open to any person who applied to any trustee, received the approval of a majority of the trustees, and subscribed in writing to the constitution.

Members could withdraw by informing the clerk of their intentions. They could also be "excluded." Persons not attending meetings for six months while living in Albany were not to be considered members. The names of several members were erased or obliterated because they had absented themselves for a considerable time and neglected to pay pew rents.¹ In one case a man was excluded because he had also "...left his family and violated the marriage contract...which is contrary to the religion of our Redeemer and calculated to retard the progress of our Society."

While women were accepted as members, there is no evidence that they ever served as officers or trustees. Nearly one-third of 110 members listed in 1830, and nearly one-half of 123 members on an 1841-60 list, were women. In 1853 there is a note that hire of the church for a lecture on "Women's Rights" brought in the sum of \$4.² The Ladies Society is occasionally mentioned in connection with fund-raising fairs and excursions, furnishing the church and donating money to meet church expenses. On one occasion the trustees borrowed \$1,000 from them.

After 1852 members were required to assent to a "Confession of Faith" and a "Covenant of Duty." Included in the Confession were such statements of belief as the following:

There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...The Father hath given all things into his hand that he should give eternal life..., and ...all scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.

Chief among the duties listed were to keep the Sabbath, to endeavor to fulfill the commandment, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them," and to "remember the Commandments, the Statutes, the Judgments and the Promises of the Lord our Father and teach them diligently to our children." In compliance with the last duty the Albany Universalists maintained a Sunday School. It is mentioned in the *Minutes* only on rare occasions when supplies and instructional materials were needed. The superintendent is never referred to by name. Over the years the Universalists also employed a "chorister" and engaged a choir at an annual expense of from \$200 to \$800.

By 1835 they had sold the Meeting House on Herkimer Street for \$10,000 and built and furnished a new Meeting House on Green Street at a cost of \$12,922. In 1841 their delegate reported to the Hudson River Association that the Albany Church had a "congregation who generally attend of between 5 and 600," that the number of members is about 80, the Sunday School numbers about 100 pupils with an average attendance of 70, and that it has a library of about 168 volumes.

There is a list of 59 marriages performed between 1838 and 1842. Lots in the burying ground could be had for \$15 with the approval of any trustee. Some sixteen pastors are named as serving the Society over the fifty-year period. Their salaries ranged from \$500 to \$4,000 a year, and \$25 a Sunday was the usual fee for occasional preaching.

All, however, was not smooth sailing. In 1851 a trustee, citing inharmonious feeling and difference of opinion among the members, resigned his office and withdrew from the Society. In 1866 six consecutive meetings were adjourned for lack of a quorum. And there were serious financial problems.

In November 1855 a special meeting was called to consider uniting with the Unitarians. The reasons given in support of the merger were compelling and, after a lengthy debate, members voted on December 15 to sell their church and unite with the Unitarians in forming a new religious society. Two days later they met with the Unitarians. At the annual meeting in March 1856, however, we find the Universalists still located on Green Street and the resolutions of the previous December apparently rescinded without explanation.³

There is one further mention of the Unitarians. In 1871 the Universalists appointed a committee to "...work with any Unitarian Committee to bring harmonious and united action by both societies in sustaining public worship in this city." The committee reported that a copy of the resolution was sent to the Unitarians but that no reply had been received.⁴

Through the late 1850s and '60s Universalists were preoccupied with securing pastoral services, raising funds, and deciding what was to be done with the church. The basement was rented for several years, the church mortgaged for \$1,000, and rented out for a time to the Methodists who had offered to buy it. The church was finally sold in 1866, enabling the Society to pay off some debts including a claim brought by a former member of \$3,000. Members planned to buy a church in a more desirable location at some future date.

For several years they met in various offices, halls, and private homes. In 1872 they arranged to sell lots that they owned on the south side of State Street between Swan and Dove, and to purchase the German Lutheran Church on the north side of State Street for \$30,000. For this property they had paid \$5,000 and taken on a mortgage of \$15,000. Title would be obtained when they raised the remainder. The building was renamed "The Church of the Redeemer," and the dedication set for November 1872.

In 1875 they were still heavily in debt. They applied to both the New York State and the General Universalist Assemblies, and were promised help on condition that the title could be secured. But this was not to be. Debts increased and, under foreclosure proceedings, sale of the property was set for April 14, 1879. At the annual meeting of Albany Universalists in March, members, still hopeful, resolved to raise \$3,000 so they could take title to the property at the foreclosure sale. A committee volunteered to seek subscriptions.

The final entry in the ledger notes that, at the called meeting on April 1, 1879, no quorum was present, no business conducted, and no date named for a future meeting.

.....

The only primary data in FUSA's archives that records Universalist activity ends on this sad note. Fortunately it was not the end of Universalism in Albany. Sporadic contact between Unitarian and Universalist groups continued, and is recorded in FUSA board minutes. The same NYS General Convention of Universalists archival

records that listed "Albany Pastors" also notes that "The Albany property was sold in 1912." And the state governing body's last notation regarding Albany was "1928 - Unitarian church granted fellowship in N.Y. State Convention." This early acceptance of the Albany Unitarians by the New York State Universalists predated denominational merger in 1961 by 33 years.

.....

UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS IN ALBANY

(Copied from the New York State Convention of Universalists' Roll Book.)

W.S. Balch	1820	Arthur G. Rogers	1885-88
I.D. Williamson	1830-37	Thos. O. Marvin	1884-92
S.R. Smith	1837-42	Chas. H. Vail	1893-94
S.B. Britton	1842-43	Isa Saxe, D.D.	1896-98
L.B. Mason	1843-45	Chas. Segal	1898
S.B. Britton	1846-47	Lewis E. Case	1899
R.R. Ambler	1847-48	L.D. Case	1900-05
A.A. Thayer	1852-54	F.A. Line	1906-07
Jas. E. Pomfret	1858-60	U.S. Milburn	
Dr. Forest Porter	1861-62	(1928 Unitarian Church granted	
Chas. Fluhrer	1865-66	fellowship in NYS Convention)	
J.Hazard Hartzell	1870-73	W. W. Peck	1926-35
Chas.P.McCarthy	1874-76	K. C. Walker	1935

.....

ENDNOTES:

1. It was customary at that time to support churches through pew rents, rather than pledges.
2. *The History of Woman Suffrage* contains an account of the second Woman's Rights Convention, held at Albany in the Green Street Universalist Church, February 13 and 14, 1855. Speakers were Samuel J. May, Ernestine Rose, Antoinette Brown, Carrie Filkins, Lydia Jenkins, Aaron Powell, Hon. William Hay, and Susan B. Anthony. Rose, Brown, and Anthony then appeared before the Legislature with petitions for the Right of Suffrage, and for the just and equal civil rights of women. "A Woman's Rights meeting and a hearing were of annual occurrence as regular as the convening of the Legislature," according to the account.
3. This situation is noted from the Unitarian point of view in Chapters 1 and 2, also

without explanation. Please refer also to two letters dated October 27 and November 19, 1855, excerpted in the Appendix. They show a strong desire for the two denominations to unite in Albany.

4. Similar difficulties plagued Albany Unitarians at that time. See Chapter 8.

10.

THE SESQUICENTENNIAL YEAR

By Ursula H. Poland

In this chapter we describe how we celebrated the Society's 150th anniversary with a variety of programs, projects and proclamations throughout the year 1992.

At our first church service of the Sesquicentennial year, on January 5th, we looked back to the year 1842 and attempted to recreate the thoughts and feelings of those who preceded us. "With spirit and imagination, holding fast to the vision;" thus the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider surmised that our founders created the First Unitarian Society of Albany, as she described briefly the history of the past 150 years.

Reese Satin and Ursula Poland, appointed by the board of trustees to coordinate sesquicentennial events, participated in this service. Reese invited the congregation "to personally engage in FUSA's Sesquicentennial. Examine what you know of the Society's history. Learn more about what the leaders and followers of this Society thought during the past century and a half. Consider how their efforts to foster free religious and social thought impact your life today and how you can use their experiences to guide your own search for meaning. Most of all celebrate and enjoy the legacy of 150 years of Unitarianism in Albany."

Portraits of 21 of our 24 installed ministers, collected and matted by the History and Art Committees, were displayed next to the pulpit on this occasion. After being exhibited in Channing Hall and used at a children's chapel in February, the framed composite was permanently mounted in the passage between Channing Hall and the sanctuary.

Another joint venture of the History and Art Committees is a photographic copy of the document that attests to the formation of the First Unitarian Society of Albany on November 19, 1842, signed by our original trustees. The document is handsomely framed and hangs in the Robin Street foyer.

So began a year of celebrations. "Visions" became a sub-text throughout 1992 as we articulated goals for the sesquicentennial year and invited individual members to tell us their vision of the Society, particularly as they would wish it to be shaped in the future. "Hold fast the vision" became the slogan for the 1992 canvass.

.....

But the 1992 celebrations did not happen spontaneously. Upon recommendation of the then-historian, Dr. Charles Semowich, FUSA's Finance Committee had proposed that some money be set aside each year, beginning in 1989, to fund the sesquicentennial events. Then in May 1990 a pot-luck dinner was organized for the purpose of eliciting ideas for celebrating our 150th anniversary. The event was well attended and generated a long list of possibilities. Suggestions ranged from mounting a banner across Washington Avenue to commissioning works of art and music. Service projects were proposed, as were seminars, parties for all age groups, and more.

In the summer of 1990 the two coordinators, Poland and Satin, were formally charged by FUSA's president, Richard Onken, "to coordinate the multi-faceted celebrations in 1992 of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the church with an updated history, musical events and special projects."

Members were invited to join the coordinators to form a Sesquicentennial Committee in October; the first meeting of the Committee took place on November 6, 1990. From that date until the final meeting on January 6, 1993, the committee met regularly to encourage, stimulate, plan, coordinate, publicize, audiovisually record, organize, support, and execute events, projects, and specific tasks in honor of the Sesquicentennial.

Throughout this period Sesquicentennial columns were published in the FUSA Newsletter inviting members of the Society to participate in many ways. In January 1992 another pot-luck supper focussing on the Sesquicentennial brought further fine-tuning to the events and celebrations yet to come. Our intention was to actively involve a broad section of FUSA's membership in the year's events.

The first task the Committee set itself was to create goals for the sesquicentennial year, as follows:

- To recognize and strengthen our Unitarian Universalist ties
- To enhance community recognition and develop ties to other churches in the community
- To define our future through examination of the past
- To provide a gift of service to the community
- To provide a gift to FUSA
- To organize a series of celebratory events

These sesquicentennial visions were shared with the membership at large through the Newsletter, and with committee chairpersons at several sessions of the Program Coordinating Council (PCC). For the last group, the Sesquicentennial Committee had listed the good suggestions garnered at the May 1990 brain-storming session, under specific goals. It was the Committee's hope that committee chairs, or individual members, would pick up the suggestions and bring back proposals for carrying them out. To a great extent this methodology proved successful; in fact several projects and events fulfill more than one of the announced goals.

Goal #1: To recognize and strengthen our Unitarian Universalist ties.

We devoted four Sundays in 1992 to aspects of our UU heritage. The first of these, the January 5th service, has already been described. On October 18th we invited former FUSA minister James Madison Barr to preach from our pulpit. Recalling his ministry with us from 1956-62, and his spiritual journey since leaving us, Jim's odyssey illustrated the diversity of Unitarian Universalism and our acknowledgment of the variety of beliefs within our association.

Joan Kahn-Schneider's November 22nd sermon, "It All Matters," brought us back to a vital aspect of our heritage: it matters what choices we make. "In the 150 years of the life of our congregation, choices have



"Has it really been 30 years?!" delighted friends exclaimed with the Rev. James Madison Barr when he preached at FUSA in October 1992. He is shown here with Charles, Ruth and Sue Estey.

been made, losses have been suffered, there has been growth and decay, there have been commitments and betrayals. And none of that can be undone," she said. "We, in this congregation, face the consequences of



November 29, 1992: we looked simply wonderful on that Sesquicentennial day! UUA President Dr. William F. Schultz and the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider lead the procession, followed by the Rev. Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr., the Rev. John Corrado, the Rev. Wendy Colby of the St. Lawrence District, and a number of other dignitaries.

structural, institutional choices made by 15 decades of Albany Unitarian Universalists who went before us. We face the consequences of choices made by our denominational family as well as choices made by the larger community; and most assuredly, we face the consequences of choices we, ourselves, have made and continue to make. Special occasions [the Sesquicentennial], give us time and space to look back, to retell our story, to learn from our history, to consider our influence on the story of the future."

The culmination of our celebrations took place on November 29th with the president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), Dr. William F. Schulz in the pulpit. Two of FUSA's former ministers also participated: Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr. and John Corrado. The Rev. Wendy Colby represented the St. Lawrence UU District on this occasion.

Personal invitations to this service had been sent to clergy and civic leaders in the Capital District, and a special notice in the *Times Union* invited the community to attend. The church was filled to capacity, with a large overflow audience listening in Channing Hall. The service was formally begun with a procession led by Joan Kahn-Schneider and Dr. Schulz. The chalice was lit by 84-year old Mildred Guffin, whose parents became FUSA members in 1895. She was accompanied by 14-year old church school member Kathy Hanson, another birthright FUSAn. Especially outstanding were the musical offerings on this day, with Ann Brandon at the organ and the choir in excellent voice, ably led by music director Julie Panke.

A sobering note had to intrude on our festivities when the Rev. Kahn-Schneider informed us that our good friend Dr. Charles Slap, minister of our neighbor church in Schenectady, had died on the previous evening. We paused for a moment of silent remembering. The meditations and prayers led by Nick and John, our two former ministers, helped us to mourn and to celebrate. The celebratory mood was reinforced by the greetings brought to us by Dr. Robert C. Lamar, Executive Director of the Albany Council of Churches and by Molly Maloney, representing Albany's Mayor Whalen. FUSA President Michael D'Attilio brought to our attention the proclamations received: from Mayor Whalen, from County Executive Hoblock and from three members of the State Assembly. These, and two others received later, were matted and framed, and are displayed in Channing Hall. They provide a good resumé of FUSA's history in the long listings of "whereas.." that each proclamation contains.



Some of the past presidents of the congregation who served as ushers on November 29: George Allen, Ann Eberle, Richard Onken, Mary Freeman, Charles Estey, and Alfred Weissbard.

Bill Schulz's sermon began with some amusing snippets gleaned from the files at UUA headquarters in Boston, and then invited us to ask ourselves, "Why have people supported this institution for 150 years? What's kept them coming?" In a moving address, referring first to a personal examination of his feelings following his own father's recent



Full of pride in the feast and the festival, here is Chef Jack Bellick with Sam Freeman, Marjorie Nieh, Don Odell, Arthur Bellick, Betty Dietz, Matt Odell and Jan Satin.

death, he concluded that "the significance of this death comes from the imperative it bestows upon me that I now reimagine the world [without him]." He acknowledged that that was "the task of all those who mourn but, in fact, it is the task of all religious people, to try to see the world in a new way." Dr. Schulz concluded, "Fundamental to the human condition is the obligation to re-envision creation over and over again. What helps us meet that obligation is the companionship of a beloved community. That is why people have met under your banner for 150 years. For you and I are engaged in the noblest experiment of the human imagination, the attempt to create an institution within which human beings can wrest meaning from oblivion and faith from the shallows."

Members and friends attending this service were noticeably moved by the sermon. Before leaving the sanctuary, they listened appreciatively to the postlude, Bach's *Toccata in D Minor*, played magnificently by Ann Brandon. For this occasion the sanctuary was decorated very simply with two wheat sheaves, each tied with a deep blue bow, hung at each side of the chancel. The pulpit was moved to one side, allowing a full view of the Sesquicentennial quilt.

The classic simplicity of FUSA's sanctuary was soon contrasted when members, friends, and guests entered Channing Hall where buffet tables were set with colorful platters of food and beautifully arranged fresh flowers. After being greeted by all who had participated in the service everyone enjoyed the luncheon prepared and provided by members of the congregation under the guidance of Jack Bellick.

While the adults celebrated, the children had a party also, followed by a pizza lunch. Chad Currin, a young magician who happened to be a life long Unitarian Universalist, sprinkled his magic liberally with good UU concepts on this occasion. The children prepared a time capsule, placing into it the objects they deemed to represent important aspects of their lives in FUSA's Sesquicentennial year.

Sesquicentennial Committee Co-chair Reese Satin led a children's chapel earlier in the year, at which the children were invited to imagine themselves at a time when their grandparents' grandparents had been as young as they were, and what kind of a world it had been then. Reese and the children talked about the founding of the church so long ago and there was a "show and tell" using the composite portrait of the former ministers.

As a special Sesquicentennial event, FUSA invited the annual St. Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District (SLUUD) Conference to meet in Albany in 1992. The theme of the conference was "Ethics for a

Challenging Decade" and the keynote address was given by the two candidates for UUA President, the Rev. John Buehrens and the Rev. Carolyn Owen-Towle. The well attended conference, arranged by Martha Deborah Brown and Kate Skelton, gave FUSA members an opportunity to "strengthen their ties" with Unitarians and Universalists from our large district; FUSA received many compliments on the spiritual and physical hospitality so generously provided.

In fall 1992 a photographic exhibit of UU churches was mounted by the History and Art committees in Stott Lounge. The title was "What Does a Unitarian Universalist Church Look Like?" "Unitarian Universalists occupy many architectural treasures." wrote FUSA Historian Eva Gemmill in the introduction to the exhibit, "We show in this exhibit twenty-eight churches representative of nearly a thousand UU churches and fellowships worldwide. Some of these buildings are stunningly modern. Some UU meetinghouses are gems of 19th century design and many are listed on the National Register of Historic Places." An accompanying booklet provided a paragraph about the history and architecture of the churches portrayed. FUSA artist Dan Sekellick matted the photos and hung them in Stott Lounge. Once the exhibit was mounted, members of the congregation brought additional photos of UU churches from other parts of the country and these were added to the exhibit. Pictures of a 1742 Unitarian chapel in Stannington, Yorkshire, and of Unitarian churches in Dublin, Edinburgh and London gave the show an international aspect.

An article describing 150 years of Unitarianism, written by Paul Jones, a member of the Sesquicentennial and Publicity committees, appeared in the March 1993 issue of the *UU World*. A photo of the Sesquicentennial quilt illustrated the article.

Goal #2: To enhance community recognition and develop ties to other churches in the community

We reached out to the community in many ways. Throughout the year, and especially as the actual anniversary date in November approached, we sought to make ourselves known through articles in the Capital District newspapers. FUSA's publicity committee, under the leadership of Dorothy Bellick and ably assisted by Paul Jones, Mark Yolles and others, were successful in achieving this. Articles describing our activities and our beliefs appeared in the major papers in Albany, Troy and Schenectady. The resulting publicity brought a number of new

members to our midst.

A project begun as a Sesquicentennial event to reach out to the public, and to be continued in subsequent years, was sponsored by the Forum Committee of FUSA's Social Responsibilities Council. It was the creative idea of Kate Skelton, who proposed that there be a Channing Lecture each year to illustrate our UU principles. Kate organized the first of these for April 6, 1992, to illustrate our first principle: "We covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person."

The topic Kate chose was "Hate Speech and Freedom of Expression on Campus: Redefining Protection of Individual Rights." She introduced the program thus: "A debate rages among educators, politicians and citizens: does the constitution protect the rights of individuals or the rights of individuals as members of social groups? Freedom of expression, specifically the right to engage in offensive or "hate speech," stretches the interpretation and understanding of constitutional rights and protection. Our nation is witnessing ever-increasing occurrences of hate speech. The debate over our constitutional rights in this context is one which stirs our national conscience."

The event was publicized widely, especially to members of the academic community, and was well attended. The panelists dealt capably with this very difficult issue. All of them re-affirmed the first amendment, yet two of the three could see that campus policymakers should create an environment where "hate speech" would be considered unwelcome on campus. This excellent beginning for an annual event, begun in our Sesquicentennial year, was followed by a reception.

Another Social Responsibilities Council project, the Neighborhood Summer Children's Program, was particularly successful during the Sesquicentennial year. Begun in 1990, the program is jointly sponsored and supported by FUSA and the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, our neighbor in the same block on Washington Avenue. In 1992 the program was capably organized by Malcolm Bell and Eileen Hoffman from FUSA and Mary Williams from Mt. Pleasant. Much credit must also be given to FUSA's Susan Taylor, who first organized it and continues to participate in it. Special Sesquicentennial year activities for the children included a magician, an African drummer, as well as a science demonstration and luncheon guests who talked to the children about their educational and vocational experiences. (Please see also Chapter 3.)



Peter Johnson, Randy Walker, and Isaiah Johnson, participants in the 1992 Neighborhood Summer Children's Program.

Just as we made sure that the UU District Conference would take place in Albany during our sesquicentennial year, so we also urged that the traditional Thanksgiving Union Service be held at FUSA in 1992. Thus on the eve of Thanksgiving 1992, members from the congregations of Temple Beth Emeth, Westminster Presbyterian Church and Trinity United Methodist Church joined us at 405 Washington Avenue for the service and a reception.

Goal #3: To define our future through examination of the past

Central to defining our future by an examination of our past is the book to which this chapter is added. There was no doubt in our minds that we needed to capture FUSA's history from 1942 onwards, to continue what John Guffin had so well begun in his *One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany*. History and Archives chair Eva Gemmill undertook this all-important task and found a group of dedicated researcher/writers among FUSA's membership to assist her. The group soon decided that the work should not be limited to only the most recent 50 years, but should also include a good part of our past history in context with events occurring at particular time periods. How else could we explain the changes that have taken place over the years and the differing responses to political, social and spiritual conditions? Work on

this project began in 1991 with publication planned for 1994.

On many occasions throughout 1992, and for different audiences, historian Eva Gemmill gave presentations, wrote articles, and furnished information on FUSA's history. This included programs for the "The New U" and an Adult Education FUSA History evening.

To capture our immediate history we also embarked on the creation of a photo-directory of the entire FUSA membership. This project, ably carried out under Jan Satin and Donna Meixner, was undertaken in summer 1991 so that the product would be ready for our sesquicentennial year. Scheduling appointments with the professional photographers, for each family unit in the congregation, was a time-consuming task, followed by much checking and proof-reading. The resulting directory was most satisfactory with a beautiful photograph of the church, taken by Peter Meixner, on the cover, additional photos portraying church activities, and a short history preceding the photo and address pages. But, of course, it is already out of date for current use and becomes a snapshot of how we looked in 1992 for future historians.

The time capsule filled by the children in Church School on November 29th, 1992 will become a means for future FUSA members to define their future by examining a particular point in time of their past.

Goal #4: To provide a gift of service to the community

Two gifts provided by FUSA to the community have already been described under other goals: the Channing Lecture in April 1992 and the Neighborhood Summer Children's Program in July and August 1992.

In October, FUSA's music committee sponsored a concert in the church sanctuary to which the general public was invited. Findlay Cockrell, a well-known concert pianist, SUNY professor, and FUSA member, gave a piano recital that delighted the audience. It was a musical feast in which Mr. Cockrell juxtaposed excerpts from 12 preludes of Bach with excerpts from 12 preludes composed in the same key by Chopin. The program also included preludes by Debussy and music of Bartok and Grieg. The introductions and explanations provided by Findlay Cockrell, between numbers, added to the enjoyment of the evening. The size of the audience was pleasing and would undoubtedly have been larger if we had not had three other classical music events occurring on the same date within the Capital District. A reception followed the concert.



Professor Findlay Cockrell's Sesquicentennial Concert was a high point in our "gifts to the community."

The Sesquicentennial Committee was well aware that FUSA members provide service to the community, as well as to FUSA, on an ongoing basis. Committee members were at a loss as to how to record this information publicly, until one member, Priscilla Crago, proposed that we create a poster with a multi-branched, but bare jade tree and then invite FUSA members to provide the leaves (light green pieces of ribbon for community service, dark green for service to FUSA). Service was to consist of 150 minutes or more. Members were asked to fill in cards on which they stated where or for what agency they provided volunteer services; service for FUSA was to record such tasks as teaching, newsletter folding, kitchen, groundskeeping, or clean-up chores, ushering, coffee-serving on Sundays etc. Of course, some members "hid their light under a bushel" and did not let us know their volunteer contributions, but the jade tree soon grew as full of "leaves" as our handsome jade trees in the sanctuary. A surprising variety of volunteer work was recorded by FUSA members, for thirty or more different community organizations.

Goal #5: To provide a gift for FUSA

The greatest gift we gave to ourselves, without a doubt, is the quilt! It is beautiful, it describes us and our beliefs, it is esthetically pleasing and it fits so well into our classic New England style sanctuary. It gives us joy now and it will continue to do so for many generations. But perhaps the greatest joy was felt by those who created this quilt. Alice Hotchkiss was the courageous member who came forward to organize the quilt project. She was soon joined by a group of dedicated women who sat down together to pool their ideas on how this quilt should look. Lois Webb took the ideas and translated them into a design and when the group



The Sesquicentennial quilt

was satisfied that it portrayed what they wished to convey, Terry Way helped to enlarge Lois Webb's design to the desired size of 7' by 10'. Decisions on colors and fabrics to be used were made and soon each member of the group took responsibility for sewing a section of the quilt from the templates Terry had created. After assistance from Jacqueline Imai, the task of putting the quilt together fell to Jan Satin. Then the quilting began, continuing every Tuesday from Fall 1991 until Spring 1992. Members of the congregation were invited to participate, too, and several added their stitches to the quilt.

"You feel so close and connected with people with whom you have created something like this," said one of the quilters to Joan Kahn-Schneider. Indeed "every piece was a shared act of creation" as became evident to us all on Easter Sunday, April 19, 1992, when the quilt was unveiled and "Quilting a Vision" was the sermon delivered by Joan Kahn-Schneider and the quilters.

Let me describe the quilt briefly. At its center is the church itself framed in one of the church windows with its rounded top. The oblong foundation is made of silhouettes of the people of our church. "We felt that the people block should be at the bottom of the quilt, a foundation block in the overall design -- after all, the people, the tall, the short, the young, the old -- are the reason for the church," said Lois Webb. The dates 1842 and 1992 flank the people. The other blocks surrounding the church depict the jade tree (we have had one in each of our windows for the last forty years), music, hands, symbols of other religions, doves, the flaming chalice, the world, books, and our statue of yin and yang, commissioned by FUSA from Robert Blood when the Religious Education building was completed in 1962.

The quilters and the blocks they created were:

Dorothy Bross - books

Marge Collins - religious symbols

Priscilla Crago - world

Beryl Drobeck - church

Ruth Estey - jade tree

June Hall - music

Alice Hotchkiss - hands

Tina Raggio - sculpture

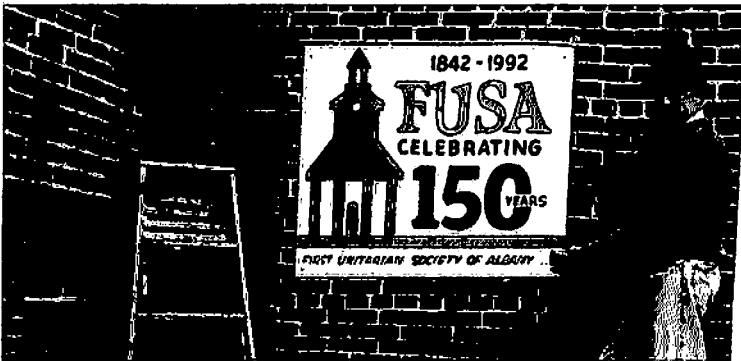
Jan Satin - dates

Bunni Vaughn - chalice

Lois Webb - people

Pola Yolles - doves

We gave ourselves three other gifts during our sesquicentennial year: a special edition of FUSA's literary magazine, the *Oriel*, edited by Kelly Lopez, in which FUSA members' best poetry and art of the past fifteen years was republished; a special sign on the outer wall by the Washington Avenue entrance to the church proclaiming FUSA's Sesquicentennial



Dan Sekellick's Sesquicentennial logo told passersby the good news of our celebration.

with a smaller version of the same sign on the wall on West Street. The design on both signs was the logo especially created for the Sesquicentennial by Dan Sekellick. The logo was used throughout the year on programs and many commemoratives. A two volume scrapbook depicting and documenting the year's events was another gift to FUSA.

Goal #6: To organize a series of celebratory events

In addition to all the celebrating already described, we made the annual dinner, held each Spring, an especially festive and nostalgic occasion. Past FUSA presidents were invited, recognized and honored. The Entertainment Committee selected reprises of the most popular skits from past annual dinners, and wherever possible the past actors were invited back to repeat their roles. Selig Katz, who had written many of our best songs in past years, came from Baltimore with his wife Sydney; former FUSA member Marjorie Gelbin, now in Winston-Salem, sent a song she had composed for the Sesquicentennial. It was sensitively sung by Mary Reich and Linda Kleinberger. Helen Sharpe wrote a poem for the occasion that we sang happily to the tune of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." It was a good evening.

On the eve of the November 29th celebration we gathered for a dinner-dance at the Student Center of the College of St. Rose. Because the students were away for the Thanksgiving holiday we had the entire comfortable space for our FUSA celebration. It was another memorable evening with happy sharing of reminiscences with the former ministers who were able to be with us.

Ann and Michael D'Attilio researched sources for obtaining a variety of commemoratives, ranging from marble tiles depicting the church to note cards, decals, aprons and other wearable items, and tote bags. The logo appeared on many of these. We also ordered postcards of the quilt in large numbers. Members of the Sesquicentennial Committee took their turns at selling the items on Sundays in 1992 until our November finale.

Thus we celebrated.



Some celebration workers: Pat Bailey, Vice President Judy Hanson, President Mike D'Attilio; also Sesquicentennial Co-chair Ursula Poland, and Art Chair Peter Meixner.

AFTERTHOUGHTS:

Some of the good suggestions that came out of the Spring 1990 brain-storming session could not be carried out. We were unable to commission either a special musical composition or an art object. We attempted to organize a Writers Forum to which we wanted to invite Unitarian Universalist authors. And we had hoped to have a panel discussion involving representatives of several faiths to debate a current community issue. Another suggestion was to revive sermons of our more prominent past ministers.

It was an incredibly satisfying year. Our objective of involving many members was realized. Each event or project had a valiant leader, supported by others, who entered into the spirit of each occasion and created a climate of good feelings. The minister, the board of trustees and the staff provided consistent support throughout this period. FUSA members Bill Batt, Fred Barker, John Garden, Peter Meixner, Ann D'Attilio, Julian Belin, Ursula Poland, and others recorded events with still photography and video tapes so that an audiovisual record of the celebrations exists.

APPENDIX

CONTENTS

Some Important Dates for FUSA	200
Ministers from 1942 to Present	201
FUSA Presidents since 1942	202
Directors of Religious Education	202
Council Chairs	
Religious Education Council Chairs	203
Social Responsibilities Council Chairs	203
Program Coordinating Council (PCC) Chairs	203
Presidents of Women's Alliance and UUWF	204
Organists and Music Directors	204
Some Gifts to the First Unitarian Society of Albany since 1957	204
Notes on FUSA Demographics --	
by Israel Rapoport	205
An 1855 Merger Attempt	207
I Remember Dana -- by Irene Murdock	208
Why Should We Pledge to the UUA's Annual Program Fund? -- by Paul Jones	210
Who Uses Our Wonderful Space During the Week? by Ruth Stephenson	211
We Are U-NI-TA-RI-AN -- by Selig Katz	211
FUSA Mission Statement, 1993	212

SOME IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF ALBANY

- 1793 General Convention of Universalists organized.
- 1803 Both Unitarians and Universalists form their first congregation in New York State.
- 1825 American Unitarian Association organized in Boston.
- 1820 First Universalist Society of Albany gathered. (Reorganized 1830.)
- 1825 New York State Convention of Universalists formed.
- 1825 American Unitarian Association organized for missionary efforts throughout U.S.
- 1830 First Universalist Society of Albany again organized. (See also 1820.)
- 1842 First Unitarian Society of Albany organized.
- 1844 FUSA bought first church, called first minister, Henry F. Harrington.
- 1845 Troy Unitarian Church organized.
- 1847 Rev. Harrington resigned; Dr. Orville Dewey engaged 1848 as interim preacher.
- 1849 Charles M. Taggart installed, resigned in 6 months. Also 1849, loss of two important members: Harmanus Bleecker died; and Millard Fillmore became Vice President, then U.S. President.
- 1853 George F. Simmons installed, resigned 1855 due to ill health.
- 1855 "Proposal for Union of Albany Unitarians and Universalists" passed, then unaccountably dropped.
- 1856 A.D. Mayo engaged by FUSA with expectation of Albany UU merger.
- 1861 Rev. Mayo resigned.
- 1864 FUSA called Charles Gordon Ames, who resigned in 1865.
- 1866 Henry C. Leonard engaged but FUSA could no longer pay him in 1868.
- 1869 FUSA sold church. Sunday School met at Friends' Meeting House; Society met sporadically in public halls.
- 1875-76 William Mellen engaged for FUSA by AUA. Another plan for union with Universalists unaccountably dropped.
- 1880 FUSA trustees met, directed treasurer to invest remaining funds (\$1,960), and adjourned meeting. Thus began 15-year slumber.

THE REORGANIZED SOCIETY

- 1895 AUA worked to revive FUSA, and trustees called William M. Brundage to the pulpit. The congregation grew rapidly.
- 1899 303-member congregation purchased church on Lancaster Street.
- 1901 FUSA, Universalists, and Beth Emeth celebrated first Union Thanksgiving Service.
- 1901 Schenectady Unitarian Society organized.
- 1904 Brundage accepted call of Brooklyn's Unity Church. Membership declining.
- 1905 FUSA gratefully accepted Temple Beth Emeth's invitation to share its facilities after fire damaged its Lancaster Street church.
- 1906 Thomas Robjent became minister in March, resigned in August.
- 1907 William S. Morgan installed. Membership up, mortgage paid.
- 1908 FUSA and Albany Universalists again conferred about merger.
- 1910 Morgan resigned, Troy Unitarians declined invitation to share minister
- 1911 Charles Graves called to pulpit, continued period of stability, served until 1918.
- 1912 Albany Universalists sold church, urged to attend FUSA.
- 1917 AUA purchased lot at Washington & Robin for FUSA.
- 1918 Dr. Louis C. Carson called, served until 1920.

- 1922 Lancaster Street Church sold for \$27,500.
 1922-23 Harvard's Dr. Kirsopp Lake was brilliant supply preacher.
 1923 Dr. Malcolm Harris called, resigned 1926.
 1924 Congregation voted to build church at Washington & Robin, held January 1925 Annual Meeting in the new Channing Hall.
 1926 William W. Peck succeeded Dr. Harris.
 1928 FUSA applied for and was granted fellowship in the New York State Convention of Universalists.
 1935 Kenneth C. Walker succeeded Rev. Peck.
 1935 Troy Unitarian Society discontinued, church sold.
 1942 FUSA Centennial celebration livened World War II years.
 1945 McKarl Nielsen replaced Rev. Walker; post-war growth began.
 1952 Ernest C. Pipes succeeded Nielsen and growth accelerated.
 1956 James Madison Barr called to pulpit; escalation of membership and church school enrollment resulted in expansion plans.
 1961 MERGER: American Unitarian Association and General Convention of Universalists voted to consolidate.
 1962 Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr. called, and new RE Wing quickly filled. During Vietnam years membership peaked and social action increased.
 1974 Cardell accepted call to May Memorial UU Society, Syracuse.
 1975 Donald H. Wheat called, resigned; then interim ministry of John Hammon.
 1976 FUSA members called John Corrado; Sanctuary program began.
 1984 Corrado resigned; Eileen Karpeles interim minister 1984-85.
 1985 Followed by Dr. George Williams, who resigned 1988 to become hospital chaplain;
 1988-89 Dr. Stanley Aronson interim minister.
 1989 FUSA called the Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider. Trustees embark on comprehensive Long Range Planning Program.
 1992 Congregation celebrated FUSA's 150th anniversary.
 1994 Congregation changed name to First Unitarian Universalist Association of Albany.

.....

MINISTERS from 1942 to 1994 (arrival and departure dates.)

Kenneth C. Walker	February 1936-March 1945
M. McKarl Nielsen	April 1947-November 1951
Ernest D. Pipes, Jr.	November 1952-June 1956
James Madison Barr	September 1956-January 1962
Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr.	September 1962-June 1974
Donald H. Wheat	March to August 1975
John Hammon, Interim	December 1975-May 1976
John Corrado	May 1976-February 1984
Eileen B. Karpeles, Interim	February 1984-December 1984
Dr. George A. Williams	March 1985-June 1988
Dr. Stanley Aronson, Interim	September 1988-June 1989
Joan Kahn-Schneider	September 1989-

PRESIDENTS SINCE 1942 (Blank where no record could be found.)

1942-43	Charles J. Grace	1970-72	Robert Carroll
1943-44		1972-74	Ann Eberle
1944-45	T. Howard Stott	1974-76	Charles G. Estey
1945-46		1976-78	James M. Stewart
1946-47	Lyman Brandon	1978-80	Mary Freeman
1947-48		1980-82	Frank Abbott
1948-50	Theodore G. Standing	1982-85	F. Victor Walker
1950-52	Watt Stewart	1985-86	Lawrie Lierheimer, George Allen
1952-54		1986-88	George Allen
1954-57	William L. Holt	1988-89	John Cross, Barbara Sekellick
1957-59	Douglas Marshall	1989-90	Barbara Sekellick
1959-61	Randall Thompson	1990-92	Richard Onken
1961-63	Donald Peckham	1992-94	Michael D'Attilio
1963-66	Alvin Lierheimer	1994-	Abby Jones
1966-67	Joseph Sanders		
1967-70	Alfred H. Weissbard		

From 1940-70 UUA Yearbooks may list the clerk of the board rather than (occasionally in addition to) the board president. FUSA clerks in those years included Helen Lugg, Vera Forsstrom, Emma Hanke, Mary Pollock, Elfrieda Hartt, Florence Miller, Ramona Weissbard, Marion Armstrong, Doris Ferguson, and Elinor Keeler.

.....

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

About 1948-55	Nina Fleirl, June Olson, Helen Lugg	1972-73	Rev. Cardell (1/2 time)
1956-61	Margot Barr	1973-74	Abby Sugarman
1961-62	Yolanda Brower, Eva Gemmill	1974-75	Sara Birn
1962-63	Ruth Gordon	1975-77	Bobbi Place
1964-66	Diane Edgington	1977-78	Chris Chase
Mar-Jun '66	Carol Dunn	1978-81	Susan Richardson
1966-68	Sue McLaren	1981-88	Susan Meisterman
1968-70	Ruth Gordon	1988-	Ann D'Attilio

COUNCIL CHAIRS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIRS 1955-64

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL CHAIRS 1964-94

1955-56 Robert Thorstensen	1972-73 James Stewart
1956-57 Irene Tobias	1973-74 Eleanor Heron
1960-62 Alvin Lierheimer	1974-76 Linda Daybell
1962-64 Eleanor Heron, Wm Haddon, Sydney Katz, Ann Eberle	1976-78 Judith Overacker
1964-66 Ann Eberle	1978-81 Martha Deborah Brown
1966-67 Grey Austin, Marjorie Gelbin	1981-84 Barbara Manning
1967-68 Marjorie Gelbin	1984-86 Don Odell
1968-69 Barbara Skellick	1986-88 Michael D'Attilio
1969-70 Eleanor Heron	1988-91 Mark Butt
1970-72 Carol Dunn	1991-94 Meredith Mercer
	1994- Aosta Edelman

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL CHAIRS

(In 1957 Randall Thompson chaired a Social Action Committee. In 1961-62 Theodore Standing chaired the following Social Action Committee: Joseph Harris, Elfrieda Hartt, Janet Oliphant, Ethel Morrison, William Brower, and Irene Tobias. The committee achieved the status of a council in 1969, but the names of SRC chairs are not available until 1978.)

1978-79 Roger Hall	1987-88 Edna Allen-Overacker
1979-80 Ethel Morrison	1988-91 Heidi Siegfried
1980-81 John Cross	1991-92 Susan Taylor
1981-83 George Allen	1992-93 Joseph Norton
1983-85 Carl Valentine	1993-94 Eileen Hoffman
1986-87 Kate Skelton	1994- Charles Kahn-Schneider

PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL CHAIRS

1984-85 Lawrie Lierheimer	1989-90 Richard Onken
1985-86 Susan Richardson	1990-92 Michael D'Attilio
1986-88 Eleanor Heron	1992-94 Judith Hanson
1988-89 Barbara Skellick	1994- Albert DeSalvo

**PRESIDENTS OF THE WOMEN'S ALLIANCE and the
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION (UUWF)**

1941-43 Mary Bleecker	1960 FUSA member Lois Thompson
1948-50 Mary Standing	elected National Alliance president
1950-52 M. E. Grenander	1960-62 Helen Davies
1952-54 Eleanor Garvin	UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
1954-56 Florence Miller	WOMEN'S FEDERATION (UUWF)
1956-58 Mildred Guffin	1965-67 Vivian Moomaw
1958-60 Irene Harris	1967-68 Dee Carroll

ORGANISTS AND MUSIC DIRECTORS, 1942 TO 1994

(The titles of "organist" and "music director" tend to be used interchangeably in FUSA records. Except where indicated, the persons listed below filled both positions.)

1942-44 Leah Minders Murphy	1970-74 Stylianos Scordilis
1944-53 Mrs. Byron Smith	1974-78 Ann Brandon
1956-59 Keith Stott	1978-83 Judith Williams
1959-60 Paul Schaefer	1983-90 Ann Brandon
1960-64 Ralph Ware	1990-91 Angela Fitzpatrick, Music Dir. (Meg Bassinson, accompanist)
1964-65 Lois Wetzel	1991-93 Julie Panke, Music Director (Sonya Peacock, accompanist)
1965-67 Garland Butts	1993- Meg Bassinson
1967-69 Ralph Ware	
1969-70 Linda Clawson	

SOME GIFTS TO THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF ALBANY

(Records are missing that would have recorded gifts to the Society from 1942 to 1956.)

- 1957 Herman Herrlich Memorial Fund (Building Fund) \$2,000.
 Waldbillig Estate (Building Fund) \$500.
 Douglas Marshall - Gas Burner, Refrigerator.
- 1961 Mary Irish, Mildred Guffin, John Bailey, David Morton, Randall Thompson,
 assisted in purchase of real estate necessary to build RE Wing.
- 1962 Billie Stott, silver tea service in memory of Howard and Josephine Stott.
- 1962 Mildred Guffin, coffee urn in memory of Mary Vosburgh and table in memory of
 Margaret Waldbillig.
- 1964 Estate of Mary Bleecker, \$4,847 (Building Fund)
- 1964 Al and Lawrie Lierheimer, 25 hymnals in memory of Amy.
- 1966 Donald Eberle, gift of stock.
- 1968 Mary Irish, gift of stock to be used for exterior painting. (The date is unknown of
 Mary Irish's gift of the jade plants in FUSA's sanctuary. See page 133.)

- 1968 A FUSA Benefactor, paid for extensive painting.
- 1969 Billie Stott, \$1,000 to furnish Stott Lounge, in memory of Howard Stott. (Refurbished 1979, 1986, 1991).
- 1970 Dan Sekellick, the painting Chroma II (Stott Lounge).
- 1972 Mimi Sternberg, Schnabel painting in memory of her mother.
- 1974 Joseph and Dorothy Bursik, gift to Library in memory of Tom.
- 1975 New brochure (by Helen Sharpe) led to anonymous gift of \$2,149.
- 1978 Dorothy Fischer, embroidered hanging (sanctuary).
- 1979 Mary Irish, \$2,000 for kitchen equipment, building repairs.
- 1980 Lew Rider Memorial Fund for special music.
- 1981 Mary Van Eich, sound system for sanctuary and Channing Hall.
- 1982 Lew Rider Memorial Fund, new furniture for Channing Hall;
Estate of Martha Shepard, \$500 bequest;
Elinor Keeler Memorial funds renovation, expansion of Joy Library;
Stanley Reich, large felt hanging for sanctuary.
- 1985 Mary Irish, 480 shares AT&T stock, approx. \$10,000: board recommends gift be deposited in Permanent Endowment Fund.
- 1988 Billie Stott, new phone system;
- About 1990 Tom Knoblach, gift of a chime to signal the beginning of the service.
James and Eleanor Heron Memorial Courtyard at Washington Ave. entrance.
- 1991 to present: The Endowment Trust acknowledges the following donors: Donald Eberle, and Charles and Ruth Estey, and lists, in addition, gifts in memory of Richard Dingle, Sylvia Durban, Walter Underwood, Mary Bleecker, Dr. T. Lewis Rider, Elizabeth Mullenneaux, John Cross, Mary VanEich, Theodore Standing, Robert Grinnell, Jr., James Coon, and Donald Peckham.
- 1991 to present: Gifts to the History Fund, to subsidize printing of the Sesquicentennial volume, *First Unitarian Society of Albany 1842-1992*, were made by Billie Stott (the Stott family also contributed to the Centennial history in 1942); Mildred Guffin, whose father wrote the Centennial history; Helen Sharpe; the Endowment Trust; and the Book Sale Committee.

NOTES ON FUSA DEMOGRAPHICS by Israel Rapoport

Unitarian Universalism is one of the nation's smallest religious denominations. Data show that its members, however, have higher educational and professional levels than any other denomination.

Is this true of today's Albany UUs? Was it true for our members 150 years ago? The answer is yes: the proportion of professionals in our congregation is and always has been very high -- with the exception described below.

These questions were researched using the following: a recent survey of Capital District UUs for the Project for Unitarian Universalist Senior Housing (PUUSH); an informal survey of Albany Unitarians; and *Albany City Directories*, from 1840 to

Continued on page 206

contemporary volumes.

City Directories present a gender problem for researchers. In the early years our female members' names did not appear unless they were widows or, as rarely happened, had a specific occupation -- otherwise females were invisible appendages to their spouses. Another difference between then and now: a large proportion of our present members no longer appear in *Albany City Directories* because they live in communities that extend some 20 miles in all directions from the church.

Unitarian Universalists, in common with other religions, aim to embrace all social classes. But most churches and most denominations, including UUs, fall far short of that noble goal. UUs, as well as FUSAs, if they are aware of the denomination's homogeneity, view it with a range of attitudes, from quiet pride, to embarrassment, to a call to action. Should attempts be made to broaden the denomination's socio-economic mix? How might change be effected? These questions continue to be discussed nationally and locally.

"It was clear...that blue-collar workers among the First Church parishioners could be counted on the fingers of one hand..." writes Olive Hoogenboom in her sesquicentennial history of the Brooklyn UU church. Our investigation into 150 years of FUSA demographics indicates a similar situation in Albany -- except for one brief period.

This unique deviation occurred during the ministry of the Rev. William Brundage, from 1895-1904. Brundage, a dynamic and charismatic speaker, apparently appealed to all ages and all classes. It is believed that many of his admirers from Trinity Methodist, his pastorate prior to his conversion to Unitarianism, followed him. At FUSA Brundage ministered to bookbinders, electricians, painters, moulders, patternmakers; to a train dispatcher, a buttonhole-maker, a cigar-maker, and a great many clerks. And still the church membership maintained a substantial professional group, including teachers, doctors, lawyers, the State Commissioner in Lunacy, examiners for the State Board of Regents, and the publisher of *Ice World*. Brundage moved on, membership dwindled, and professionals again became the dominant group.

Other demographic shifts are well known, and we see them develop in our congregation: the great increase of women in the work force, for example, and changing occupations related to changing technology. The 1950s-70s saw government and education jobs increase dramatically, whereas a great many FUSAs had been employed by business and industry at the turn of the century. Since FUSA is located in the state capital, in the midst of many colleges and universities, our membership is probably skewed toward public sector employment, but in occupation level it is very similar to the data reported by Robert B. Tapp in his statistical study, *Religion among the Unitarian Universalists*.

Tapp's data also show that UUs are unique among other denominations in the proportion of members who are converts from other religions. (His figure of 89 percent is usually exceeded at FUSA.) The converts who continually join the denomination support the high percentage of well-educated professionals -- they do not dilute it. This suggests an intrinsic appeal of Unitarian Universalism to a limited population.

AN 1855 MERGER ATTEMPT

Periodically, Albany Unitarians and Universalists contemplated uniting their two small congregations. The following letters, excerpted here, set forth compelling reasons for forming one strong church from two faltering entities. The first is from the Rev. James Richardson, Jr., Unitarian Minister from Providence, R. I., apparently concerned with the fate of liberal religion in Albany.

Albany, October 27, 1855.

To the Members of the Unitarian and Universalist Societies, Albany:

DEAR FRIENDS:

The request of several prominent individuals of your number, as well as the earnest interest I have for many years taken in the progress of liberal Gospel Christianity in your city...must be my apology for what might otherwise seem forward and intrusive...

Called upon, continually, during the earlier years of my ministry, to aid in the work of building up new and feeble churches [this] experience may, perhaps, give some additional weight to these humble suggestions.

First, I would suggest the expediency of uniting, if possible, the liberalists of all parties and modes of thought...I can see no reason...why on this grand and glorious platform of freedom of thought and freedom of inquiry, they can not all come together....

Secondly - ... you should then, if possible, secure a pastor who should be a powerful representative of great, free, liberal principles and of the spirit of the age [e.g. May of Syracuse]; and who should gather around him...the liberal, progressive minds...

Thirdly - I would have the pastor...immediately proceed to lift the burden of debt from your church property...and this could be done by application to liberal friends in New York and other cities.

Fourthly - I would then suggest that both the buildings... be sold...in contemplation of the speedy erection of a temple of worship in a more convenient and eligible spot... [He justifies this move, suggesting that some "*come in for fashion and stay for truth.*"]

[Five and Six: description of his proposed "commodious" facilities.]

Seventhly and finally, allow me to suggest the expediency, as well as Christian duty of opening wide *your hearts as well as your homes* to the liberalists....Trusting that these suggestions may be received in the spirit of love, in which they have originated...I remain your friend and fellow laborer.

JAMES RICHARDSON, Jr.

Three weeks later FUSA Trustee Orville L. Holley drafted this letter:

November 19, 1855

Rev. Mayo at Cleaveland [as it was than spelled], Ohio

Dear Sir-

There are in this city, as you may be aware, a Universalist & a Unitarian Society. Each is now without a settled minister, & neither is strong enough in numbers & means to do as it would like to do.... Thus situated the members of the two Societies have been for some time meditating a union....We shall probably disband the two existing societies & organize a new one out of the members of the two. To aid the endeavor & save any

Continued on page 208

sensitivity as to names, we shall probably lay aside both the old designations, viz. "Universalist" & "Unitarian", each of which is, I think, narrow because derived from only one point of doctrine among many, & each of which is not only narrow, but does, moreover, give a needless preliminary alarm to prejudice in a community so preoccupied as this is by a pseudo-orthodoxy, & by which therefore, many are prevented from listening to our preaching, when we have any.... To avoid the kind of prejudice referred to, & save the point of honor that some might fancy to be involved in yielding one of the named to the other, we shall probably [name] the new Society The Independent Congregational Society. This will truly indicate our principles of organization & administration & will at the same time leave a little wider freedom to individual opinion & be likely to prove favorable to peace....if we effect the contemplated union, we shall, we think, make one strong society out of two feeble ones & place the cause of liberal Christianity in this community on a stable foundation. "...may we be allowed to cherish the hope of being able to induce you to come & take charge of our new Society when it shall be organized."

Your friend & servant
O.L. Holley

The Rev. A.D. Mayo did come to Albany -- not to the "new society," which did not materialize, but to minister to the Unitarians. Chapters 2 and 8 mention this episode from the Unitarian view, and Chapter 10 as recorded by the Universalists.

In 1928 the Albany Unitarian Society applied for and was granted fellowship in the New York State Convention of Universalists. (See Chapter 9.)

I REMEMBER DANA

By Irene Murdock

Irene K. Murdock, former assistant to AUA/UUA President Dana McLean Greeley, was a FUSA member from 1974 to 1990. Following his death Irene presented the following tribute to Dana Greeley at a service in his honor on September 14, 1986.

I first met Dana Greeley when I worked for the Laymen's League at 25 Beacon Street. One day after a Laymen's League meeting Dana asked if I would consider joining his staff at Arlington Street Church. After several talks I agreed to come, and somehow the reservations I had felt had very little validity as I grew to understand the nature of the work and learned to juggle the many facets of the busy schedule. Dana was involved in a million things -- in the church, the denomination and the community. He was President of the Unitarian Service Committee and Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, among other things.

Just when things seemed to be slipping into a more or less predictable pattern, he was nominated by petition to run for president of the AUA to fill the vacancy left by the death of Frederick Eliot. This was the first of three contested elections.

Several of you attended the General Assembly recently, and... our minister referred to it as a "peak experience." I had seventeen consecutive years of those "peak

Continued on page 209

experiences" as a staff member. Work days were long, sometimes beginning at six in the morning and lasting until long after midnight, always exhilarating and exciting and wonderful, but arduous.

Dana was a tireless worker. We would return from intensive sessions at General Assembly or other Conferences or meetings, here or abroad, keyed up with excitement, weary with fatigue, and full of jet-lag, and he would say cheerfully: "See you in the morning." I remember one snowy day -- it was a real blizzard and the snow was almost up to the third floor window; no trains or buses were running -- everything was shut down -- but Dana came trudging in with high boots and a large muffler. He looked around with a puzzled expression and said: "Where IS everybody?"

We used to say that working with Dana was not a job -- it was a way of life. But there was a joy to it all that was contagious; it fostered an "esprit de corps" within the staff.

He drew large circles that included everybody in -- even his critics. His magnanimity was boundless. He maintained an open-door policy that made him easily accessible. "Well, for the land's sakes, come in!" he would exclaim, as an unexpected visitor appeared in the doorway.

Dana moved with the times, and his timing was almost always perfect. He was in the forefront of every major effort for social progress or denominational advance: merger, civil liberties, peace, conscientious objection, study commissions, women's rights, black-white affairs, or whatever else was part and parcel of human endeavors. As he said, "One of my prime concerns in office was the religious depth and renewal in the denomination and likewise for moral and social relevance, and withal for institutional imaginativeness."

In March of 1965, one of our ministers, James Reeb, was attacked and brutally beaten in Selma, Alabama....[He] did not survive. The Board was scheduled to meet that week, and under a cloud of both sadness and indignation transacted business the first day, but on the second day voted to adjourn to Selma for a Memorial Service for Jim Reeb...We flew to Birmingham...and proceeded to Selma the next morning. The Board reconvened briefly in a small Catholic Church, and heard a report from Homer Jack, Director of the newly-formed Department of Social Responsibility.

It became my task to work with C.T. Vivian, one of Martin Luther King's aides, and together we arranged the seating on the chapel platform for the Memorial Service. As dignitaries arrived from all over the country, it seemed as if there would be almost as many on the platform as there were in the over-flowing congregation. The service was stirring as well as sad, with Martin Luther King giving the main address, and Dana the main prayer. It was only a few days later that President Lyndon Johnson delivered to Congress his message which led to the passage of the civil rights legislation.

In the spring of 1962 a brief item appeared in the newspaper quoting Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, President of the American Hebrew Congregations, who appealed for a World Congress of Religious Leaders for Peace. Because I knew that this was precisely what Dana had been saying, I called it to his attention. Dana lost no time in contacting Rabbi Eisendrath, and together they assembled a group of religious leaders of all faiths... to lay the groundwork for a World Congress....There gradually emerged the movement for World Peace to which Dana has devoted so much energy and for which the Greeley Foundation for Peace and Justice has been formed to carry on his aspirations and his vision.

WHY SHOULD WE PLEDGE TO THE UUA ANNUAL PROGRAM FUND?

By Paul Jones

(FUSA member Paul F. Jones represents the St. Lawrence UU District, of which FUSA is a part, in the UUA's Annual Program Fund. Paul presented the following information in the January 1992 issue of LINES, our District newsletter. It is slightly shortened here.)

Why should we pledge to UUA's Annual Program Fund? I am going to supply information that should lead to an even more relevant question, "How does the UUA do it?"

By far the most important [service which the UUA provides] is the District Office and the District Consultant, the Rev. Wendy Colby, because they give us a much closer relationship with [Boston headquarters of the UUA].

The second most valuable service provided to us is [the Denomination's publication,] the *WORLD*, which each member family or individual receives six times a year.

Seven District congregations are seeking settled ministers. Each settlement, including interims, costs an average \$3,000.

Five District men and women are preparing for the parish ministry. Supervision and scholarships cost more than \$1,000 for each one. In addition, three students are pursuing minister of religious education degrees through the Independent Study Program.

Religious education materials for both children and adults are [continuously being] developed, produced and maintained by the UUA. Some 600 different curricula, books and pamphlets are distributed through the UUA Bookstore.

A new District congregation has been established, in Lockport. Three sets of people from this group have received UUA training.

The UUA has responded to requests for one extension minister, one ministerial intern, and a capital campaign consultant. In addition, eight St. Lawrence District congregations have applied to UUA for building loans during the last year.

The UUA pays travel expenses and salaries of workshop leaders and speakers, for training conferences and meetings.

Our UUA president and moderator represent and speak for us frequently, helping us to articulate our beliefs and concerns.

In addition to all of these services, the UUA makes an annual grant *back* to the District based on Annual Program Fund (APF) giving. The grant to the St. Lawrence District was approximately \$8,000 in 1992, when the APF FAIR SHARE pledge request was \$29 per member. We should be aware, however, that this source provides only 40% of the UUA's total income.

When we consider all of the above, the question "How does the UUA do it?" seems even more difficult to answer.

"WHO USES OUR WONDERFUL SPACE DURING THE WEEK?"

Beekeepers, Spiritualists, an association for the blind, and a women's gymnastics club were among the non-church groups who used our facilities about 1900. In 1949 we rented our space to the Assembly of God, Mormons, American Labor Party, B'nai B'rith, NAACP, and Socialist Club of State College for Teachers.

In 1990, when Ruth Stephenson was FUSA's administrative assistant and thus responsible for building use arrangements, she wrote in a FUSA Newsletter:

Have you ever wondered who uses our wonderful space during the week?

This list begins with outside groups meeting here within the past month: Alcoholics Anonymous, a support group for former mental patients, Prison Families Support Group, the Men's Project (AIDS prevention research), Scottish Country Dancers, the Adult Learning Center (English as a Second Language), Clozaril Patient Management for schizophrenics, a phobia group, Sri Chin Moy Meditation Center, Re-evaluation Counseling, Albany Numismatic Society, Food Co-op, Citizens of Albany for Responsible Education, Equinox, Inc. (Community Social Service Agency), and non-member weddings. Also the Board of the Project for UU Senior Housing (Albany, Schenectady and Glens Falls UUs), and Save the Pine Bush (sponsored by our Social Responsibilities Council) met here as well as the Memorial Society and the Hemlock Society, both of which are led by FUSA members.

For these folks we provide a central location, the space they seek and a willingness to share it with them. They enrich us in many ways: financially, by some \$5,500 in fees in the last fiscal year and, at least as important, an interaction with the community and the opportunity to continue a long tradition of support based on our UU principles.

We are not isolated in our building -- we are a part of the larger community.

Contemporary concerns are reflected in this list, as they were in the late '60s and '70s when the following organizations were among those who used our space: Women's Political Caucus, Independents for McGovern, Albany Community School, Albany Open School, IndoChina Peace Committee, Pentagon Papers film, fundraiser for Ellsberg defense, Black students boycotting Albany High classes, meeting to form the Albany chapter of the National Organization for Women, Girl Scouts, Spiritualists, Solo Spirits, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

WE ARE U-NI-TA-RI-AN

In the early '60s Selig Katz wrote the following words, to be sung to a Pinafore tune, for a Fellowship Dinner -- at which a rousing rendition has become an annual tradition.

We are U-ni-ta-ri-an:

For we ourselves have chosen it,
And this time each year our dough's in it,
We are U-ni-ta-ri-an,
We are U-ni-ta-ri-an.

Or E-pis-co-pa-li-an,
Or E-pis-co-pa-li-an.

Oh, we might have been a Huguenot,
A Methodist or what-a-not,

But in spite of all temptation
To join another denomination,
We remain Unitarian,
We re-ma-a-a-in U-ni-ta-ri-an.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE
FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF ALBANY
A Unitarian-Universalist Congregation founded in 1842

We welcome all men, women and children who seek a religion based on the inherent sanctity of every person's free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

In keeping with our distinctive, noncreedal religion, we strive to excite the human spirit and inspire its development; to respond to moral and ethical issues in our local, national and world communities; and to sustain a vital and nurturing congregational life.

(The statement was written by a subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee II, and approved by the Society's trustees and congregation in 1993.)

INDEX

- 125th Anniversary 119, 150
 Abbott, Frank 202
 abolition 32, 40, 45, 46
 abortion 59, 61, 108, 109, 111
 Adult Education 82-84, 130, 193
 AIDS Council 65
 Albany County Hall of Records viii
 Albany Federation of Churches 174
 Albany Public Library viii, 43
 Alexander, Beverly 81, 87; Linda, Debbie 80; Robert 21, 148, 150
 Allen, George 40, 112, 188, 202, 203
 Allen-Overacker, Edna 203
 American Civil Liberties Union 63
 Ames, Rev. Charles G. 33, 35, 142, 163, 164, 200
 Ames, J.W. (Architect) 87
 Ames, Julius (Architect) 31
 Andover Harvard Theological Library x, 21, 43
 Anonymous Association 29
 Anti-Rent War 47
 Anti-Slavery Committee 46
 Armstrong, Charles, Marion 107, 133, 202
 Amason, Rev. Wayne 81, 87
 Aronson, Dr. Stanley 13, 17, 61, 201
 Art Committee 11, 120
 art exhibits 131
 AUA 1, 4, 26, 30-32, 34-38, 68, 69, 75, 78, 81, 93, 119, 143, 161, 164-174
 Auction 14, 128
 Austin, Grey 203
 Baby-boomers 69, 72
 Bailey, John 15, 204; Martha 81; Pat 198
 Balch, Rev. W.S. 177, 181
 Ballou, Hosea 2, 177
 Barber, Betty 96
 Barker, Fred 198
 Barnes, William 165, 166
 Bameveld 28, 29
 Barr, Rev. James Madison 6, 8-10, 13, 21, 51-53, 69, 70, 79-82, 87, 117, 124, 125, 139, 146, 147, 185, 186, 201; Margot 10, 68, 78, 80, 81, 123, 202
 Basement, The 110, 111
 Bashaw, Ruth Anker 87
 Bassett, John 97
 Bassinson, Meg 156, 157, 204 (2)
 Batt, William 9, 17, 131, 198
 Beacon Press 22, 44, 55, 76, 77, 88
 Beacon Series 37, 75, 76, 88
 Bedford Hills Correctional Facility 59
 Beebe, Mr. and Mrs. Wallace 90, 103
 beliefs 25, 29, 37, 61, 82, 165, 185, 190, 195, 212
 Belin, Julian 198
 Bell, Malcolm 191; Nancy & Malcolm 131
 Bellick, Dorothy 20, 108, 190; Jack 17, 119, 125, 131, 188, 189
 Bellows, Rev. Henry 2, 30, 34, 116, 142
 Bellows, Willard 166
 Beth Emeth, Temple 117, 121, 125, 147, 167, 192, 200
 Birn, Sara 202
 Black Affairs Council 41
 Black Pioneers 64, 83
 Blank, Jeanne and Robert 128
 Bleecker, Harmanus 2, 3, 22, 162
 Bleecker, Mary 144, 200, 204 (2), 205
 Blood, Robert 120, 196
 Bogedain, Frank 128, 151
 Book Sale 9, 126, 148, 152
 Boreali, Fred 23, 40, 42, 73, 97
 Boston 1-4, 24, 28-30, 34, 35, 40, 43, 85, 95, 116, 143, 174, 188
 Boyd, Mimi 15, 133
 Brady, Jean 20, 153
 Brandon, Ann ix, 18, 107, 113, 151-158, 187, 189, 204 (2); Dave 123
 Brandon, Lyman 202
 Brockley, Harvey ix
 Bross, Dorothy 196
 Brothers, The 57, 76
 Broughton, Katherine 145
 Brower, William 203; Yolanda 202
 Brown, Antoinette 181
 Brown, Joseph 159
 Brown, Martha Deborah 81, 190, 203; Peter 19 (2), 81, 128
 Brundage, Charlotte 74; Dr. William 13, 35, 48, 49, 86, 100, 113, 115, 117, 121, 144, 163, 165-167, 173, 200, 206
 Buehrens, Rev. John 42, 190
 Buffalo 1, 4, 36, 40, 127, 171
 Building and Grounds 13, 95, 112, 173
 Building Committee 10, 70, 120
 Bursik, Dorothy and Joseph 205
 Burton, Dr. Ami 3, 161

- Butt, Mark 18, 19, 73, 77, 97, 203
 Butts, Garland 149, 150, 204
 bylaws 57, 65, 79, 84, 93, 111, 171
 Calka, John 9, 125
 Calvinist 27-29
 Campbell, Susan 11
 Canaday, Florence 104
 Candlelight Service 122, 124, 154
 Canvass 16, 18, 105, 127, 184
 Cardell, Rev. Nicholas C. Jr. 6, 10-13,
 53-56, 70, 72, 87, 99, 117, 119,
 120, 122, 124, 125, 128, 133,
 186, 187, 201, 202
 Caring Network 16, 132
 Carlson, Leonard 141, 148, 149, 153, 154,
 158
 Carroll, Dee 108, 113, 204; Dee and Robert
 81, 87; Robert 202
 Carson, Dr. Louis 163, 170, 200
 Castoffs 129
 Cavanaugh, Don 23, 42
 Centennial v, 3, 5, 36, 67, 98, 100, 119,
 128, 139, 145, 159, 160
 Cerebral Palsy Center 69
 chalice 16, 99, 119, 187, 196
 Chamberlain, Frank 113, 165, 166
 Change-of-Time Breakfasts 128
 Channing, Dr. William Ellery 2, 29, 34 74,
 87, 119, 171
 Channing Bookstore 12, 72, 131
 Channing Club 82
 Channing Hall (origin) 171, 173, 174
 Channing Lecture 18, 64, 191, 193
 Chase, Chris 202
 Cheever, Samuel 4, 161
 Chicago 13, 34, 40, 75, 88
 Childe, Mrs. John 100
 children's choir 145, 150, 152, 154
 Christian Register 29, 32, 84
 Christianity, Liberal 2, 3, 29, 30, 117, 161,
 164
 Christmas 63, 80, 86, 122-124, 152-154, 156
 Church Picnics 130
 Church School vii, 16, 24, 26, 67-70, 72-78,
 81, 84, 86, 87, 93, 105, 110, 118,
 135, 156, 187, 193
 Church suppers 100, 101, 106, 126
 Circle Dinners 113, 128
 Citizens for Peace 62, 63
 City Hall 54
 civil rights 24, 40, 47, 76, 81, 93, 96, 110,
 147, 181
 Civil War 27, 33, 34, 147, 164
 Clawson, Linda 150, 204
 Clusters (St. Lawrence Region) 40
 Cockrell, Findlay 149, 152, 153, 155, 193
 Coffee Hour 14, 64, 69, 127, 130, 131
 Colby, Rev. Wendy 40, 187
 Cole, Frank 13, 112, 153
 Collins, Marge 112, 196
 Colson, Frederick 173
 Commission of Appraisal 37
 Commission on Religion and Race 40, 96
 Committee for Progressive Legislation 58,
 108, 109
 Congregational church 27
 converts 5, 32, 78, 206
 Cooke, George W. 29, 34, 44, 82, 87
 Cooke, Rosemary 81, 123
 Coon, James 205
 Co-op (Down-to-Earth) 14, 15
 CORE 52, 76, 147
 Corrado, Rev. John 6, 14-16, 60, 72, 121,
 125, 134-5, 152-56, 186-7, 201
 Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPS) 121, 122,
 124, 138
 Crago, Priscilla 42, 194, 196
 Cross, John 17, 18, 132, 202, 203, 205
 curriculum 74-78, 106, 113
 Cunningham, Margaret 78; Margaret and
 Miki 11
 Cutro, John ix
 CUUPS (See Covenant of UU Pagans)
 Dana, Richard 151, 154, 155
 D'Attilio, Ann xi, 9, 19, 24, 74, 78, 82, 87,
 123, 197, 202; Michael 9, 19,
 187, 197, 198, 202, 203(2)
 Dau, Karen ix
 Davies, Alf 9, 127, 150; Helen 204
 Davis, Stan 150
 Davis, Wayne 11, 96
 Day, Bob 20
 Daybell, Linda 203
 de Benneville, George 28
 Dean, Jane 87, 129
 dedication of children 115, 125
 demography 5, 205
 Denominational Affairs 23, 24, 42, 82
 Depression 5, 15, 37, 103, 144
 DeSalvo, Albert 18, 19, 203
 Desert Storm 18, 62
 Dewey, Dr. Orville 142, 161, 200
 Dietz, Betty 188; Betty and Len 21
 Dingle, Kay 108; Richard 205

- Director of Religious Education (DRE) 7,
 10, 12, 24, 68-71, 73, 74, 78, 82,
 88, 118
 diversity vi, 2, 5, 41, 43, 115, 134, 152,
 185
 Division Street 31, 32, 34, 84, 85, 139, 141,
 142, 144, 161, 164
 Domestic Violence Project 59
 Donovan, Tammis 20
 Down-to-Earth Food Co-op 14, 15
 Drama 119, 128
 Drislane, Pearl 107
 Drobeck, Beryl 119, 196
 Dunn, Carol 202, 203
 Durant, William 4, 161
 Durban, Sylvia 205
 Dutch 2, 4, 160, 162
 East of the Hudson 13, 128
 Easter 124, 125, 195
 Eberle, Ann ix, 12, 18, 19, 70, 71, 98, 99,
 108, 110, 112, 113, 133, 188,
 202, 203; Donald 205 (2)
 Edelman, Aosta 203; Seth 9, 97, 121
 Edgington, Diane 12, 70, 202
 El Salvador 60, 61
 Eliot, Dr. Frederick May 37, 38, 75
 Eliot, Dr. Samuel 35, 92, 119, 169
 Ellis, David 2, 21
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo 2, 30
 Endowment Trust Committee 18, 205
 English, Helena 12, 131
 enrollment 24, 26, 68-72, 86, 87
 Environmental Planning Lobby 109
 Erie Canal 1, 2
 Eringer, Sam 124, 147, 150
 Estey, Charles 9, 16, 70, 97, 111, 124, 127,
 188, 202; Charles & Ruth ix, 21,
 23, 87, 138, 186, 205; Ruth 107,
 129, 133, 196; Sue 80, 186
 Etz, Rev. Roger 117
 euthanasia 17
 Fahs, Rev. Sophia 75, 76, 88
 family planning 108, 109
 Family Planning Advocates 64, 109
 Feinbloom, Max 11
 Fellowship Dinner 10, 16, 126
 Fellowship for Social Justice 31
 Ferguson, Doris 202
 Ferry Beach 24
 Fillmore, President Millard 4, 162, 200
 Filoon, Annie 94
 Finney, Rev. Charles Grandison 28, 29, 44
 First Reformed Church 117
 First Unitarian Universalist Society of
 Albany vii
 Fischer, Dorothy (See also Shelford) 12, 205
 Fitzpatrick, Angela 157, 204
 Flanders, Ellen 60
 Flierl, Nina 68, 202
 Flower Communion 133, 134
 Foa, Lelia 80
 Focus Churches 58, 125 (Food Pantry)
 Foll, Rose 174
 Ford, David 154, 156
 Forsstrom, Vera 106, 202
 Forums 15, 17, 48, 49, 59, 64, 65, 95, 97,
 124, 136, 191
 Foster, Arnold and Margaret 150; Margaret
 v, 11, 178
 Frankel, Harvey 97
 Freeman, Joseph 174
 Freeman, Mary ix, 99, 110, 113, 188, 202;
 Sam 18, 128, 138
 Freeman, Russell 145
 Friedman, David 157
 Friends Meeting 60, 61, 85, 167
 Frisch, Margaret 153
 Fuller, Margaret 2
 Futures Committee 15, 16
 Gallagher, Jay ix
 Gannett, Rev. William Channing 34
 Garden, John 198
 Garvin, Eleanor 87, 204; Jack 68
 Gathering of Men 89, 97
 Gaylord, Frederick 90, 169, 173
 Gelbin, Arnold 11; Marjorie 74, 197, 203
 Gemmill, Eva v, vi, 1, 67, 138, 190, 192,
 193, 202; Hughes ix
 General Assembly 23, 38, 41, 42, 96, 138
 General Convention (Universalist) 28, 33,
 117, 177, 180
 Get Together Luncheons 96, 111, 129
 Gilbert, Arlene vi, 11, 98
 Glens Falls 16, 128, 130
Glimpses from Our Past (Standing) 50, 172
 Godfrey, Dorie 133
 Goldwater, Sen. Barry 55
 Gordon, Kathy 11, 110, 129
 Gordon, Morris 11, 81
 Gordon, Ruth 71, 87, 202
 Grace, Charles 202
 Graves, Rev. Charles vi, 29, 44, 88, 101,
 103, 119, 163, 169, 170, 200
 Gray, James 4

- Great Awakening 27, 28
 Greeley, Dr. Dana M. 38-40, 44, 82, 87, 208
 Greeley, William 92
 Grenander, M. E. 204
 Grinnell, Robert, Jr. 205
 Guatemala 60, 61
 Guffin, John v, vii, 3, 22, 33, 43, 51, 88, 90,
 100, 113, 121,, 144, 159-175, 192
 Mildred v, vii, 15, 21, 82, 86,
 204
 Haddon, William 203
 Hall, June 9, 20, 21, 131, 150, 151, 196;
 Roger 15, 21, 128, 131, 138, 203
 Hall organ 141, 144, 148, 149
 Hamm, Cassie 12
 Hammon, Rev. John and Oressa 13, 201
 Hancock, Edward 77, 97, 112
 handicapped, facilities for 17
 Hanke, Emma 202
 Hanson, Judy (Weissbard) 14, 125, 127,
 198, 203; Kathy 187
 Hanukkah 122, 124
 Harper, Edward 19
 Harrington, Rev. Donald 53; Rev. Henry
 31, 32, 47, 48, 161-163, 200
 Harris, Dr. Malcolm 36, 163, 171, 172, 201
 Harris, Irene 204; Joseph 203
 Hart, Elfrieda 20, 128, 202, 203
 Harvard Divinity School 7, 170, 174
 Hastings, Illiana 20, 127; George 153
 Hatcher, Norma 20
 Head Start 58
 Helderberg Madrigal Singers 155
 Hemlock Society 17
 Herbrandson, Dec and Harry 82
 Heron, Eleanor 15, 107, 203 (3); Eleanor
 and James 121, 132, 205; James
 129, 130
 Herrlich, Herman 172, 204
 Hey, Dean 152
 Hill, George 4, 161
 History and Archives Committee v, 192
History of Woman Suffrage 181
 Hoblock, Michael 187
 Hoffman, Eileen ix, 203
 Holland, Rev. Frederick 30, 31, 44
 Holley, Orville 4, 32, 116, 161, 162, 207-8
 Holt, William 8, 117, 124, 202
 homosexual rights 59
 Horstmann, Karl 12
 Horton, Louise Barnard (See also Louise
 Barnard Horton League) 173
 Hospitality Committee 7, 15, 32, 93, 126,
 128
 Hotchkiss, Alice 133, 195, 196; Jack 151,
 153, 156
 Hout, Margaret (Sanford) vii, 12, 86
 Howard, Bud and Renee 21
 Howe, Daniel Walker 46
 Humanists, humanism 10, 25
 Hummel, Betty, Roland 12, 133
Hymns for the Celebration of Life 148, 156
 Imai, Jacqueline 11, 110, 195
 Imreh, Laszlo and family 52, 53
 Installation of ministers 21, 116-119, 142,
 156
 Inter-Racial Council 49, 50
Interdependent Web 25, 63
 Interfaith IMPACT 63
 Interfaith Shelter for the Homeless 59
 Irish, Mary 10, 131-133, 204, 205 (3)
 Jack, Joyce ix
 Jade plants 133, 205
 Jansen, John 144, 173
 Jardine organ 140-142
 Jewish Holy Days 121
 Johnson, Isaiah and Peter 192
 Johnson, James Weldon 49
 Johnson, President Lyndon 56
 Jones, Abby 19, 112, 136, 202; Abby and
 Paul 21, 130, 131; Paul 40, 190,
 209
 Jones, Rev. Jenkin Lloyd 34
 Joy, Dr. Charles 12, 42, 121
 Joy Library viii, 12, 121
 Joys and Concerns 134
 Jr. LRY 80, 81, 87
 Judeo-Christian 77, 122, 126
 Kahn-Schneider, Rev. Joan ix, 6, 17-19, 21,
 42, 62, 99, 112, 118, 119, 125,
 133, 134, 156, 183, 186, 187,
 195, 201; Charles 17, 21, 42, 97,
 135, 138, 203
 Karpeles, Rev. Eileen 13, 15, 60, 99, 112,
 201
 Katz, Dick 80; Selig 127, 203, 211; Selig
 and Sydney 197
 Keeler, Elinor 12, 132, 202, 205; Elinor
 and Wes 15, 132; Wes 131
 Keers, Jo 107
 Kendris, Christopher (St. Sophia's) 21
 Kennedy, Bernie 12
 Kenney, Betty 107
 King's Chapel 28

- Klein, Elizabeth 21
 Kleinberger, George 11, 19, 125, 138, 147, 151
 Kleinberger, Linda 197
 KoKoro 72
 Kristalnacht 135
 Kuebler, Dr. Ernest 75
 Ladies Society 178
 Lake, Catherine 145; Dr. Kirsopp 170, 201
 Lamar, Dr. Robert 187
 Lancaster St. 35, 36, 82, 86, 94, 101, 121, 143, 144, 166, 167, 169, 171
 Lane, James 130; Willa 153
 Laymen's League 7-9, 82, 83, 92-96, 102, 103, 129
 Leonard, Rev. Henry 163, 164, 200
 Leue, Mary 11
 Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) 80, 81
 Library (See also Joy Library) 11, 12, 84, 85
 Lierheimer, Al 15, 79, 112, 119, 148, 202, 203; Lawrie 71, 99, 110, 202, 203; Al and Lawrie 205
 Lifton, Walter 19, 97
 Little, Jess 12, 97
 Lobbying 66, 108, 109
 Long Range Goals Committee 16
 Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) 19
 Long Range Planning Committee II vii, 20
 Lopez, Kelly Amerson 12, 19, 196
 Louise Barnard Horton Guild 103, 104, 113, 128
 Lovett, Joseph 4, 161
 Loveys, Bruce 128
 LRPC (Long Range Planning Comm.) 18
 LRPC II (Long Range Planning Comm. II) 19
 LRY (Liberal Religious Youth) 80, 81
 Lugg, Helen 68, 87, 111, 202 (2)
 Luther, George 165
 Lyttle, Charles 22, 29, 44
 MacLean, Dr. Angus 75, 88
 Manning, Brian 73; Charles 18; Barbara 87, 203
 Marshall, Douglas 11, 128, 202, 204; Ellen 73
 Matturo, Richard 18
 Maxwell, Helen 131; and Lois, Arlene and David 145
 May, Rev. Samuel, Jr. 46
 May Memorial 13, 72
 Mayo, Rev. Amory D. 32-34, 100, 163, 164, 200, 207, 208
 McCarthy era 50
 McKinney Library (AIHA) viii
 McKivigan, John 33
 McLaren Sue 74, 202
 Meisterman, Susan 74, 87, 119, 123, 202
 Meixner, Donna 193; Peter ii, 19, 193, 198
 Mellen, Rev. William 163, 165, 200
 Membership Committee 129, 131, 132; in 1907, 168
 Memorial services 115, 131
 Memorial Society 11, 17
 Men's Groups 90, 96
 Men's Support Group 97
 Mercer, Meredith 203; Meredith and Tom 122, 138, 203
 Merchant, Lansing 4, 165
 Merger 27, 37-39, 80, 93, 96, 127, 165, 172, 179, 181, 201, 207
 Methodist 35, 53, 68, 80, 115, 121, 122, 165, 167, 192
 Metz, David 128, 155
 Miller, Betsy 23, 122
 Miller, Florence 202, 204
 Miller, Lynn 153
 Miller, R.L.H. 43
 Miller, Russell 33, 44, 177
 Mitten Tree 122
 Mohawk Valley Conference 172, 173
 Moomaw, Vivian 39, 107, 108, 113, 204
 Morehouse, Dr. 165
 Morgan, Dr. William v, 86, 92, 163, 168, 169, 200
 Morrison, Ethel ix, 112, 125, 203 (2)
 Morton, David 204
 motto 14, 111
 Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church 63, 191
 Mullenneaux, Elizabeth 205
 Muntz, John 132, 136, 146; Mary Anna 105, 110
 Muntz Memorial Lecture 136
 Murdock, Irene 21, 38, 208
 Murphy, Leah M. 145, 204
 Murray, Rev. John 28
 music 72, 93, 132, 139-158, 184, 187, 193, 196
 NAACP 7, 122
 National Alliance of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women 101
 National Association of Universalist Men 93
 National Conference of Unitarian Churches 33, 34, 44

- National Federation of Religious Liberals (1900) 37
- Nattell, Tom 15
- Navias, Rev. Eugene 74, 88
- Nehring, James 18
- Neighborhood Summer Children's Program vii, 18, 63-64, 191-193
- New Beacon Series 37, 75, 76, 88
- New York State Convention of Universalists ix, 27, 43, 44, 177, 180, 181
- New York State Library viii, 159
- New York State University at Albany viii
- New York State Coalition for Criminal Justice 109
- newsletters (FUSA) ix, 8-11, 16, 20, 21
- Nieh, Marjorie 188
- Nielsen, Rev. McKarl 5-7, 50, 106, 124, 145, 201
- Niles, Marilyn 12
- Norton, Joseph 149, 203
- Nuclear-Free Zone 61
- Odell, Don 9, 73, 74, 87, 97, 123, 124, 188, 203; Matt 188
- Oliphant, Win 10; Janet 110, 113, 203
- Olson, June 68, 202
- One Hundred Years of Unitarianism in Albany* v, 3, 5, 22, 43, 51, 88, 98, 119, 138, 159, 160, 192
- Onken, Richard 18, 19, 131, 133, 184, 188, 202, 203
- Order of the Red Vest 135
- organ 101, 139-154, 158, 173, 187
- Organ Fund 101, 144, 148-150
- Oriel* vi, 11, 18, 113, 121, 130, 157, 196
- Overaker, Jack 127
- Overaker, Judy 107, 203
- Owen-Towle, Rev. Carolyn 41, 42, 190
- OXFAM 122
- Pacifists 39
- Panke, Julie 133, 151, 156, 157, 187, 204
- Parke, Dr. David 75, 84, 88
- Parke, Solomon 4, 161
- Partner Church 63
- Passover 124
- Patrick, Patsy 128, 138
- Peacock, Sonya 157, 204
- Pease, Jane and William 44, 46
- Peck, Rev. William 144, 163, 172, 173, 181, 201
- Peckham, Carol 80; Donald 70, 117, 202, 205
- Pennsylvania 16, 18, 28
- Pentagon Papers 56
- Permanent Sustenance Fund 168
- Peruzzi, Ann 118
- pew rental 162, 178, 181
- Phelps, Barbara 158
- Phillips, Alice 20; Alice and Dave 21, 130
- Phillips, Mark 82
- photo-directory 193
- Pierce, Mrs. Joseph 144
- Pierce, William 4, 161
- Pierpont, Rev. John 29, 32, 142
- Pipes, Rev. Ernest 6-8, 21, 38, 68, 87, 122, 145, 201; Maggie 7, 128
- Pittman, Meme 158
- Place, Bobbi 19, 128, 135, 202
- Planned Parenthood 9, 51, 61, 65, 66, 93, 105, 122
- Poconos 68, 79, 88
- Poland, Ursula vi, 12, 16, 18, 21, 157, 183, 184, 198
- Pollock, Dr. Horatio 90, 92, 159, 173-175; Mary 202
- Presbyterian, Westminster 121, 125, 147, 192
- Priestley, Dr. Joseph 28
- principles (UU) 24, 43, 75, 76, 78, 86, 93, 138, 191
- Program Coordinating Council (PCC) 12, 185
- Progressive Citizens of America 50
- Publicity Committee 20, 55, 90, 93, 190
- Puels, Marion 104, 129
- PUUSH (Project for Unitarian Universalist Senior Housing) 16, 113
- Quaker 164
- quilt 121, 125, 189, 190, 195-197
- Radical Feminist Caucus 111
- Raggio, Tina 18, 196
- Ramundo, Anita 15
- Rapoport, Israel vi, 4, 9, 10, 90, 205
- RE Wing 10, 15, 70, 74, 115, 120, 123, 126
- Red Cross 104
- Reeb, Rev. James 24, 81, 209
- Reed, Dora vii, 76, 87, 123, 128, 138; Frank ii, 7, 11, 132
- Reed, Hazel 104, 174
- REFER 122
- Register-Leader* 119
- Reich, Mary 9, 21, 108, 122, 127, 138, 150, 197; Stanley 11, 97, 123, 205
- Reichert, Betty 79
- Religious Services Committee 124

- Reorganized Society (1895-1942) 165
 resources vii, 13, 48, 138, 148
 Retired Men's Club 97
 Richards, Deborah 18, 19
 Richardson, Rev. James 206
 Richardson, Joseph 16
 Richardson, R.D. 88
 Richardson, Susan 202, 203
 Rider, T. Lewis 10, 70, 120, 132, 153, 154,
 205 (3); Miriam 21, 76, 87, 107,
 125, 138, 154
 Robertson's Orchestra 143
 Robjent, Rev. Thomas 13, 163, 167, 200
 Rochester 1, 4, 30, 37, 147
 Rowe Camp 24
 Rummage Sales 9, 65, 95, 101, 106, 108
 Rushmore, Elizabeth 102
 Ryan, Edna 104
 St. Andrews Episcopal Church 117
 St. Lawrence District (SLUUD) 23, 39, 40,
 65, 82, 98, 187, 189
 St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church 22, 36,
 126, 171
 Sanctuary 60, 61
 Sanders, Joseph 202
 Sanford, Eugene 90; Henry 166; Margaret
 (See also Hout) 87
 Satin, Jan 188, 193, 195, 196; Reese ix,
 18, 183, 184, 189
 Schaefer, Paul 147, 148, 204
 Schenectady 16, 94, 108, 109, 117, 120,
 125, 128, 130, 138, 155, 173,
 187, 190, 200
 Schroeder, Fred 16, 18, 123, 130; Martha
 15, 19, 20, 21, 111-113, 123;
 Fred and Martha ix, 138
 Schulz, Dr. William 39, 42, 43, 187, 189
 Schwamm, Dell 11, 12; Gustave 11
 Scordilis, Stylianos 150, 204
 Seaburg, Alan viii, ix, 43
 Seaburg, Carl 43
 Seder 124-126
 Seeger, Cathy 12
 Sekellick, Barbara 12, 17-19, 99, 110, 112,
 118, 147, 151, 202, 203(2); Dan
 9, 11, 138, 190, 197, 205
 Semowich, Charles v, ix, 12, 22, 139, 154,
 156, 158, 184
 separation of church and state 52
 Sesquicentennial v, 18, 113, 136, 184, 185,
 189, 194, 197
 Sesquicentennial Committee vi, 184, 185,
 189, 194, 197
 sewing circle 100, 108
 sex education 55, 58, 77
 sexuality 76, 77
 Shapiro, Steve 12
 Sharpe, Helen vi, 45, 118, 197, 205
 Shelford, Dorothy (Fischer) 12, 108
 Shepard, Charles 166
 Shepard, Martha 205
 Shilling, Rev. Fred 18, 19
 Siegfried, Heidi 203
 Simmons, Rev. George 46, 47, 115-117,
 142, 164, 200
 Sister Church (Partner Church) 18, 63
 Skelton, Kate 190, 191, 203
 Slap, Dr. Charles 187
 slavery 33, 46, 47
 Smith, Mrs. Abiel 144
 Smith, Mrs. Byron 145, 204
 Smith, Henry 165
 Smith, Rev. Henry Godwin 37
 Smith, Rev. S.R. 181
 Snyder, Larry 123
 Social Action Committee 56, 57, 203
 social conscience 48
 Social Responsibilities Committee 57
 Social Responsibilities Council vii, 15, 17,
 57-66
 Social Responsibility, Dept. of (UUA) 40
 social welfare 108, 117
 Solo Spirits 11
 solstice 122, 124
 Songs of the Spirit 153, 157
 Spahr, Jo 107
 Sparks, Rev. Jared 2
 Sportsman, Dr. Lenore 8
 SRC (See Social Responsibilities Council)
 Standing, Mary 12, 87, 204; Mary and Ted
 50, 130, 172; Ted 11, 57, 132,
 136, 202, 203, 205; Ted, Jr. 80
 Standing Lectures 136
 Stange, Donald 33, 46, 47
 Stapley, Robin 131
 Star Island 24, 68, 76, 82
 Starr King 9, 14
 State capital 1
 State Capitol 108
 State Legislature 108
 Stephenson, Ruth 19, 21, 111, 131, 155, 211
 Sternberg, Mimi 205
 Stewart, James 202
 Stewart, Watt 202

- Stierer, Mary vi, 15, 115; Robert vi, 139, 157, 158; Mary and Robert 131
- Stone, Dave ix, 19; Sandy 73
- Stott, Billie 16, 103, 107, 111, 121, 131, 145, 205(3); Howard 90, 121, 173, 174, 202; Keith 124, 146, 147, 204
- Sugarman, Abby 72, 108, 202
- Sullivan, Amelia Lucy Owen 98, 127, 145
- Sumner, Arline 151
- Sunday Evening Club 92, 93
- Sunday School 74, 75, 84-88, 90, 94, 164, 172, 173, 175, 179
- Sunday School of Ethics and Religion 75, 87, 88
- Syracuse 1, 13, 36, 38, 171
- Taggart, Rev. Charles 142, 161, 200
- Tapp, Robert B. 206
- Taylor, Susan 18, 19, 191, 203
- Taylor, President Zachary 162
- Teacher training 73
- Thomas, Paul 130
- Thompson, Lois 204; Randall 57, 202-204
- Thompson, Rev. 30, 161
- Thompson, Susan 131
- Thomson, Lois 19; Robert 13, 19
- Thorstensen, Robert 146, 203
- Tobias, Irene 79, 133, 203 (2)
- Tooley, Victor 20
- Tricentennial, Albany 135, 155
- Trinity, doctrine of 27
- Trinity Methodist Church 68, 80, 121, 122, 165, 167, 192
- Troy 1, 22, 28, 30, 32, 37, 44, 82, 94, 117, 126, 142, 150, 169, 174
- Trustees viii, 3, 11-20, 24, 31, 35, 36, 38-41, 46, 57, 63, 68-71, 83, 89, 95, 96, 98, 105, 110, 121, 132, 138, 141, 143-4, 148-150, 159-162, 164-170, 172, 173, 178, 183, 184, 198
- Tuesday Supper Symposia 128
- Tweedie, Louise 20, 126, 129, 133; Lucia (Tweedie) Kowaluk 87, 145
- Two Services Sub-comm (LRPC II) 19
- Una* 100
- Underwood, Agnes 76, 86, 87, 105, 107, 127, 129; Ann 145; Walter 9, 132, 205
- Union Missionary Baptist 122
- Union Thanksgiving Service 121, 154, 167, 200
- Unirondack 24
- Unitarian Men's Club 90-92
- Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) viii, 24, 38-43
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) 9, 23, 42, 66, 122
- Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF) 106-108, 110, 111, 113
- United Nations 93, 105, 106
- Unity Church 35, 86, 117, 171
- Unity Club 90, 92, 102, 113
- Unity Men's Club 92
- Universalists viii, 2, 3, 5, 24, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 38, 43, 44, 73, 80, 93, 106, 117, 121, 147, 164, 167, 172-73, 177-182, 200, 201, 207
- "Universalism in Albany" 177-182
- Urtz, M.S. 22 (See also Wells, Maryellen)
- Utica 1, 28
- Valentine, Carl 60, 203
- Valentine Love-out 135
- Van Buren, John, MD 4, 161, 162
- Van Eich, Mary 131, 132, 205 (2)
- Van Schaack, Stephen 4
- Vaughn, Bunni 129, 196
- Vietnam 11, 39, 56, 62, 66, 110
- Villines, Sharon 11, 110, 111
- "Visions" 184
- Visiting Nurse Association 104, 174
- Vosburgh, Frances 103, 105, 132
- Vreeland, Joella ix
- Waldbillig, Antoinette 92; Estate 204
- Walker, Brita and Vincent 11, 132
- Walker, G. Delbert 44
- Walker, Jean 111
- Walker, Rev. Kenneth 5, 6, 51, 76, 87, 92, 117, 150, 163, 173, 174, 181, 201
- Walker, Randy 192
- Walker, Victor 60, 122, 202
- Wallace, Vice President Henry 50, 51
- Wallace, Ruth 22, 43
- Ware, Ralph 147, 148, 150, 204 (2)
- Washington Avenue 7, 61, 62, 68-71, 131, 169, 171, 191
- Waterman, George 86, 88, 103, 171, 173
- Way, Linda 42; Terry 11, 195
- Webb, Lois ii, 11, 133, 195, 196; Lois and Bill 16; Bill 12, 16, 157
- Weissbard, Al 9, 125-128, 131, 148, 150, 188, 202; Al and Ramona ix, 41, 138; David 80; Judy (Hanson) 14; (Cont'd next page)

- Ramona 41, 76, 78, 88, 110, 202
 Wells, Maryellen vi, 22, 24 (See also Urtz)
 Westbrook, Arlen 133
 Western Unitarian Conference 34, 44, 75
 Westminster Presbyterian 121, 125, 147, 192
 Weston, Rev. Robert 174
 Westward Movement 28
 Wetzell, Lois 148, 149, 204
 Whalen, Mayor Thomas 187
 "What Does a UU Church Look Like?" 190
 Wheat, Rev. Donald 6, 13, 201
 Wheel of Life 134
 Wheeler, Fred 166
 Wheelock, Charles 90, 170, 173
 Wilkie, Lee and Richard 148, 149, 152
 Williams, Dr. George A. 6, 16, 17, 72, 97,
 119, 124, 127, 153-155, 201
 Williams, Judith 153, 204
 Williams, Mary 191
 Williamson, Rev. I.D. 177, 181
 Willie-Schiff, Nancy 19
 Winchester, Harold 49
Windows (Newsletter) 21
 women ministers 98, 112
 women of the church 51, 100, 112
 women presidents 98, 99
 Women's Alliance 7-9, 83, 93, 96, 101-106,
 113, 126, 128, 129, 174
 Women's Awareness Group 111
 women's liberation 110, 111
 "Women's Rights" (1853 lecture) 178
 Wood, Frances 68, 87
World (UU) 41, 44, 190
 World Hunger Task Force 58
 World War I 39, 42, 134, 170
 World War II 5, 7, 8, 37, 39, 69, 103, 134
 Wright, Arthur, Janette 117, 144
 Wright, C. Conrad ix, 22, 27, 43
 Wright, Conrad Edick 44
 Yolles, Mark 20, 190; Pola 108, 113, 196
 Young Men's Association 30
 Young People's Religious Union 82, 94
 Youngberg, Barbara 154
 Zeigler, Dr. Lloyd 117
 Ziehm, Phoebe 86, 87, 129, 145

**To obtain copies of
First Unitarian Society of Albany 1842-1992
contact the History and Archives Committee,
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany,
405 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12206
Phone 518/463-7135**