

HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP AT STONY BROOK

COVER PAGE "Our First Fifty Years"

We dedicate this history to the founding members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Three Villages whose vision, dedication, and perseverance created this organization in 1962. They are Madeleine and Gustav Blazek, Jr., Marion and Robert Conard, Joan and Richard Feyk, Natalie and Edward Fiess, Martha Irvine, Russell Kerr, Dolores and Richard Mould, Olive Oliver, Irma and Julius Peters, Margaret Townsend, Isabel and John Wenneis. You have brought joy and comfort to hundreds of fellow Unitarian Universalists in the Three Village area. Thank you for fifty wonderful years.

FOREWORD

The Fellowship is blessed with many souls who have contributed to this history. George and Milly Michos housed the Fellowship's papers in their home from 2009-2012. For untold hours, they scanned thousands of paper files including annual reports, committee and board minutes, newsletters and financial records into computer files to preserve them for the present and future historians. Our gratitude knows no bounds. Special thanks go to David Kirk, who shared his extensive technical knowledge to guide us through the processes we needed to produce this work.

CHAPTER I HOW WE BEGAN

Following the Second World War, there was a revival of interest in religion in the United States, with an increase in church membership, new churches and building programs among mainstream Protestant churches. With the growth of the suburbs, the American Unitarian Association in Boston voted in March 1945 to encourage the creation of lay-led Fellowships as a way of seeding new UU churches throughout the country. This concept, however, took on a life of its own, and by 1958, there were 315 Fellowships had been formed, attracting an estimated 10,000 members, of whom three-fourths were new to the denomination. Of that original 315, some 40 had already failed, while 26 had become churches (though not necessarily changing their names).

The Rev. Tom Chulak, who headed the UUA's New Congregations Program in the early 1980s, adds that Unitarianism had traditionally been both hierarchical and patriarchal. The new fellowships rejected both models, giving lay people an opportunity to discover their potential for leadership and often bringing women into leadership roles. At first, the rejection of historic patterns sometimes led to outright hostility toward professional clergy. When this anticlerical impulse died down, what developed was a power shift from clergy to laity, opening the possibility of today's concept of shared ministry.

The fellowships also changed our perception of where Unitarian Universalist worship could appropriately take place, as they met not in steepled churches but in fire houses, YMCAs, offices, and private homes. When they did build, they often strove for structures as un-churchlike as possible. (Many of our buildings were also tucked away in scenic but out-of-the-way spots, accessible only by care, without even a prominent sign—discouraging walk-ins and reinforcing the socioeconomic narrowness of our denomination.) They also introduced far greater informality into what's considered suitable for worship: dance, talkbacks after sermons, drama, and pop, folk and other nonreligious music. Today these practices have thoroughly saturated all but the most traditional of our churches, but the fellowships embraced them first. . . The ones that continued to thrive, Chulak describes as “vital, open to change, willing to accept ministers in partnership for growth, and eager to share their faith with others.”

In 1960, the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America consolidated their two denominations following a plebiscite vote of their congregations, to be renamed as the Unitarian Universalist Association. The official title was later amended to become the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

At the twentieth anniversary of our founding, the moderator of the Sunday service declared that:

“Those of you who are under thirty may recall 1962 somewhat hazily. Can you remember hearing the music of Peter, Paul and Mary, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and Chubby Checkers? Those of us who are older, recall the early sixties vividly. Headlines from The New York Times and Newsday which were only a nickel then, featured Francis Powers and the U-2 reconnaissance plane; John Glenn, the first astronaut to orbit the earth in space; James Meredith, the first black to enter the University of Mississippi under armed guard; Khrushchev and the Cuban missile crises; Pope John the 23rd, Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara. . .all these names were household

words to our charter members then. President John F. Kennedy, our first Catholic President greeted General Assembly delegates in the Rose Garden at the White House at the opening of the 1962 Unitarian General Assembly in Washington, D.C.

Revolution was in the air and all around us. Rachel Carson published a book that became a trumpet call to environmental awareness, "Silent Spring." A year later, Betty Friedan wrote "The Feminine Mystique", the Bible of the feminist movement in the sixties. Rosa Parks sat down in a white person's seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama and unintentionally started the greatest civil rights movement ever seen in this country. Still to come was our first defeat in the war in Vietnam, the assassinations of public figures and the rebellion of the young. We saw stereotypes broken, illusions shattered and pretensions fall away. 1962 was the onset of a turbulent time, which saw America undergo enormous change. . ."

What follows is a history of the founding of a the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Brookhaven Township where like-minded people could establish a spiritual home where we can be together in times of crisis and where we have an opportunity to develop and to share our own values to help us deal with daily living, to continue to work for positive change in an uncertain world.

Early in October, 1962, an exploratory meeting of three couples in the Stony Brook area was convened by Martha Irvine at her home. On October 23rd, 1962, Joan and Richard Feyk of Oakway Drive in Stony Brook, hosted a gathering of people interested in forming a Unitarian Fellowship in the Three Village area. (Joan continues to attend services even today). Among the attendees were Lang and Dorrie Prouty, Jack and Jane Stehn, Doris Wittschen and Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy and his wife, Grace. (Murphy Junior High is named after him.) One person chose not to be included but was sympathetic enough to our purposes to contribute the first donation to help us get started.

Richard Feyk writes in an early account of the Fellowship's founding that:

Nineteen people attended this first meeting, eighteen of whom became our founding and charter members representing 11 families. They were Madeleine and Gustav Blazek, Jr., Marion and Robert Conard, Joan and Richard Feyk, Natalie and Edward Fiess, Martha Irvine, Russell Kerr, Dolores and Richard Mould, Olive Oliver, Irma and Julius Peters, Margaret Townsend, whose husband, Tom, joined in the second wave of new members, and Isabel and John Wenneis.

One person chose not to be included but was sympathetic enough to our purposes to contribute the first donation to help us get started. The Rev. Dr. Dale DeWitt, a regional director for the Middle Atlantic States at the UUA was also present at this meeting. He helped us to focus on how we needed to accomplish our goal of starting a new Fellowship. The nearest Unitarian Fellowship and Religious Education program was located in Huntington which several of the founding members had attended. As the weeks went on, representatives of the Veatch Committee, Alan Doran and Pete Dalsimer as well as a religious educator from the UU Society in Plandome, L.I. met with us, sharing their expertise and lending their encouragement.

A slate of temporary officers was elected and a steering committee was elected at a business meeting. Irma Peters, Martha Irvine and Richard Feyk were chosen to be our Chair, Secretary and Treasurer respectively. A set of by-laws and an organizational charter were drawn up and approved by the founding members on November 27, 1962. The original By Laws stated that this Fellowship "shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and of the Unitarian Regional Conference of this area." And so, the Unitarian Fellowship of the Three Villages became official, one of the first eight UU congregations on Long Island. In June, 1990, the congregation voted to change the name of the Unitarian Fellowship of the Three Villages to The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook, NY. (UUFBS).

The story of the origin of Unitarianism is worth noting. Its birthplace was not in America, but in Transylvania in Eastern Europe. Four centuries ago, Europe was being torn apart by religious wars following the Reformation. In Transylvania, King John Sigismund brought together representatives of the major faiths to make the case for deciding the kingdom's official religion. The Protestants and Catholics argued for the respective beliefs, but Francis David, a Unitarian, pleaded for tolerance for all, saying, "We need not think alike to love alike." Persuaded that "no one shall be reviled for their religion by anyone," the king adopted Unitarianism and in 1568 issued an Act of Religious Tolerance and Freedom of Conscience, the first such document in recorded history.

CHAPTER II A HOME OF OUR OWN

On January 15, 1963, we were ready to hold our first public meeting at the old American Legion Hall on Main Street in Setauket. This successful event was a bonding experience and created new and lasting relationships within our group. Our first annual picnic was held on May 26 at the Crane Neck Beach. Our public meetings and early services (and later on Sunday evenings) were held on Tuesday evenings at the old Suffolk Museum.

During the year, our nation experienced history changing events such as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963; Lyndon B. Johnson was his successor. Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* which energized the women's movement.

(On August 28th, a civil rights march advanced on Washington, DC. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. made his "I Have A Dream" speech.

In the medical field, advances were made when Michael de Baakey implants an artificial heart in a human. 15,000 US military advisers in South Vietnam.)

Meanwhile, five sites on Nicolls Road were offered for sale to religious organizations at a bargain price, through the generous gesture of local philanthropist, Ward Melville. They were snapped up almost immediately. Poor as we were, we thought we would not be able to take advantage of this opportunity to insure our future in this area. However, through our charter members, Jack and Isabel Wenneis, a life-long Unitarian and former member of the Plandome congregation approached the Veatch Committee for help. Through their persistent efforts, we were able to secure financial assistance from the Veatch Committee. It advanced us the necessary funds of \$10,000 to purchase five acres on Nicolls Road in April, 1963.

It should be noted that the location of Nicolls Road was very much to our advantage. It is close to the Long Island Rail Road, to MacArthur, a regional airport in Islip, and to a major freeway. It is minutes from a large state research university and hospital in Stony Brook, and several miles from Brookhaven National Laboratory where several of the founding and later members were employed. Richard Feyk was an engineer with the Grumman Corporation, Edward Fiess was a professor of American Literature and had taught at Oberlin, Bard and Brooklyn Colleges. In 1957 he was one of the founding faculty members of the newly established State University of New York at Stony Brook and taught there for the next 27 years. His wife, Natalie, taught second grade in Setauket schools for many years and was involved in Fellowship life for many years as well.

A number of scientists who lived locally were attracted to the Fellowship's philosophy and joined our ranks, including 2003 Nobel Prize winner, Paul Lauterbur who developed Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI); Robert Cushman Murphy, ornithologist and former Lamont curator of birds for the American Museum of Natural History; Gilbert N. Hanson, professor of geology at the State University at Stony Brook, as was the American geneticist, Elov Axel Carlson and John Richard Stehn, physicist.

In November 1963, we rented a small six-room house on Cedar Street in Stony Brook, our home for the next three years. It was well-filled by 44 children and their teachers in the first Sunday morning; the adults met on Sunday evenings.

Within a year there was a Building Committee, and much discussion of needs, costs, and architectural styles. We engaged an architect to prepare plans for a two story building which we liked. Our deed required that we submit our plans to the Corporation from which we had purchased our land. The plans were not approved.

They were modified and submitted again and again, the seventh modification was finally approved. By this time, half the Fellowship was convinced that we had retreated too far toward non-Unitarian conventionality.

One of our active members, Max Mobley, volunteered to provide us with ministerial services. Max was an ordained Methodist minister who became a Unitarian. He guided our program committee and officiated at our weddings and memorial services. When he left, we had just moved into our new building. By 1980 we decided to make the commitment to calling a full time minister.

CHAPTER III THE CHILDREN'S FELLOWSHIP

*Go now in peace Go now in peace,
May the love of God surround you
Everywhere, everywhere you may go.*

In the spring of 1963, we were ready to hold our first public meeting at the old American Legion Hall on Main Street in Setauket. This drew many of the early members who were instrumental in strengthening and furthering our purposes. Our public meetings and early services were later held on Tuesday evenings at the old Suffolk Museum.

One of the important reasons people join a Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is to provide a religious education for their children. So often we attract couples who have different religious backgrounds. They leave the religion of their youth and although they may be in agreement on their faith positions, they want help to explain this to their children.

From the beginning of our Fellowship, religious education was an important part of our mission. When the Unitarian Fellowship of the Three Villages (our first name) organized in 1962, they offered religious education classes as soon as they could find a space to hold classes. The early years were difficult. Classes were held in the Suffolk Museum and the American Legion Hall, where there was only one room. But with 20 children, religious education was a priority.

Things got better when we moved to the house on Cedar Street. We had our own space. Still, there was not enough room to have services and classes for the children at the same time. Parents had to drive their children to class in the morning, wait an hour, take them home, then return that evening for Fellowship worship services.

We bought a two-story home on Bayview Ave. The Bayview house (which is still standing) was our home for nine years. Our numbers grew quickly. We used every room in the house plus the basement. We were growing too large for our space again. The living room of the Bayview house was inadequate for adult services so the theater of the Slavic Center in Port Jefferson was rented for worship services and the whole Fellowship house was given over to the Children's Fellowship program.

Irma Peters was the first Director of the Sunday School. The archives contain newsletters that Irma wrote about the Sunday School called "The Report Card." In this are listed the names of the teachers: Jim and Dolores Crane, Milly Michos, and Dorrie and Lang Prouty, all of whom were classroom teachers. (In addition were others who were engineers, housewives and immunologists... volunteers come in all types.)

Linda Volkert was hired as religious educator in 1973 to serve this congregation as a part-time religious education coordinator for 18 hours a week. She was an advisor, a leader, and a resource person, gradually increasing her hours and growing the program until in 2008 she was administering a Sunday School that served over 120 children and youth. In 1999, the UUFSSB received a LREDA grant of \$15,000 for Linda. At that time, her hours were increased from half-time to two-thirds time and she was given a pension.

Over the years, Linda initiated and led new parent and new member groups. She has also led children's programs such as Love and Help to help develop Unitarian Universalist identity. Linda was active in the Long Island Area Council's educational programs as well. She was on staff of the Sophia Fahs Religious Educational Camp for ten years and led the Coming of Age Program for fourteen years. She has twice been the chair of the LIAC Religious Education Committee and has taught workshops for other religious educators. She most recently served as liaison to the OWL program and the Coming of Age program for LIAC.

Linda Volkersz has a degree in Education and taught in public schools before taking the position at Stony Brook. She has earned a Renaissance Certificate and the Certificate of Continuing Education from the Department of Religious Education of the UUA. In 2009, she received the Award for Excellence in Religious Education from the Metro New York District at their annual meeting as well as an Associate Level Credential from the UUA.

Linda Volkersz retired as the Director of Religious Education of the children's program at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook on June 30, 2009, after 35 years of service. She was awarded the title of Director of Religious Education Emerita at the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship on Sunday, June 3, 2012 by a unanimous vote of the congregation.

Nancy Lynch served as her replacement from 2009-2010, but resigned for health reasons.

In February, 2011, the Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation of the RE Search Committee headed by Melissa Elliot to hire a Director of Religious Education, Gretta Johnson-Sally. Gretta's credentials included education and youth counseling, extensive leadership in UU youth-related programs in the Metro district as well as involvement in UUFSB's religious education program.

CHAPTER IV PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF TEENAGERS GROWING UP IN THE EARLY YEARS

Peggy Fiess, daughter of founding members, Ed and Natalie Fiess, recalls her growing up years at the Bayview house:

My earliest memories of the Fellowship are Sunday morning services, at the house on Bayview Ave. in Setauket, in about 1962. I was 12 or so, and deeply embarrassed by my grandfather's longwinded pompous "questions" after every Sunday speaker. My parents, Edward and Natalie Fiess, were founding members of the congregation, and my Russian grandparents (my mother's parents, James and Eugenia Zilboorg) had recently moved to Long Island and had joined the congregation. My grandfather had a dominating presence, a stentorian voice, and a lot of strong opinions, and his questions seemed to be designed to give him and his erudition the spotlight. In retrospect, I realize I probably wasn't the only uncomfortable person in the room.

A few years later that house was a very exciting place to be. I was in high school, the 60's were just taking off, and lots of fun and interesting things were happening there. A chapter of the UU youth group, Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) had been formed, I am not sure how, with a few members; I remember Lang and Dorrie Proutys' teenagers, Heather and Mark, a few of my best girl friends and I. I was elected LRY president at some point, perhaps in 1967. We decided we had too many girls in the group, so someone suggested that we should ask David Hull, Andy Hull's son, so I did. Amazingly, he agreed to come. I don't think it was the spiritual angle that appealed to him. Quickly he became my boyfriend and we were inseparable for the rest of our high school years.

At LRY meetings we discussed all the new & weighty topics of the day; politics, desegregation, the Vietnam conflict, peace and justice, birth control.... The Open Housing movement was very active then on Long Island, in support of the right of Negroes (ouch, it hurts to type that!) to buy houses in "white" neighborhoods, from which they'd long been systematically excluded by real estate agents and banks. We went to demonstrations and marched and shouted. We also talked about freedom of speech, and the ACLU. When David refused to say the daily Pledge of Allegiance in school, we called the ACLU and they advised him to stand up and say nothing. Several of us attended a big march in NYC against the war in 1967. When my mother saw it on the news the next day she was horrified that she had let me go, but of course by then it was too late.

Around this time we decided to start a Friday night coffee house to make money. I guess the Fellowship approved this; little did they know.... We took over the basement, got some tables and chairs, a few wine bottles with candles in them, called someone who played guitar, took money at the door, and the next thing you know the house was crowded with young people. Many were students at the university who had nothing better to do than go to a coffee house run by high school students, which gives you an idea of how dead that campus was at the time. The coffee house tended to occupy the whole house, and I remember making tea in the kitchen, hanging out with my friends in the attic, and generally having a great time. Andy Hull and Lang Prouty were often the designated chaperone (adult with a flashlight) at these events. For years afterwards, Lang often recalled (with a horrified shudder), "Oh, the things that were going on there...."

The LRY was responsible for providing a Sunday service once a year. One year we were working on a play about how rigid and repressive high school was, and were trying to think of a

way to make sure that we'd have good attendance. Someone suggested that we call the play "Who are you sleeping with tonight?" This was immediately accepted as the great idea that it was, and the Fellowship newsletter went out with that title. It was standing room only, as I stood up and introduced the play, saying that it had nothing to do with the title, but thank you all for coming. In fact the play was a dramatization of a real event in which a friend had been frisked by school authorities who were convinced that her aspirin was marijuana.

I became quite fond of the Bayview house during those years, as it was the venue for all sorts of nefarious teenage goings-on, and I knew every nook and cranny in it. The Fellowship was still a small congregation, and of course David and I were known to every adult, so it was a real community feeling. I was sorry to leave it when I went off to college in September, 1968, and I don't know what happened to the LRY after I left.

My grandfather died in 1968 and my grandmother in 1973; I believe their memorial services were held there. They'd come a long way from their beginnings in Kiev in the 1890's.

My next memories of the Fellowship are my wedding at the Bayview Avenue house on May 11, 1974. David and I were delighted to marry in a spot that held so many fine memories for both of us as well as our parents, and didn't consider getting married anywhere else. We were pronounced man and wife in the same room where my grandfather's questions had so humiliated me a decade earlier, and then a friend of ours played *Here Comes the Bride* on jazz saxophone. It was the height of the Nixon era, so our cake said *Peggy and David-- Now More Than Ever*. (That phrase was Nixon's 1972 campaign slogan.)

For many years David and I visited the Fellowship when we came back to Long Island to see our parents, and although we recognized few members, it was always fun to see the looks of recognition on people's faces when we said who our parents were. The Proutys, Hulls and Fiesses remained active in the congregation until they moved or died. I cherish all these memories of the congregation and the souls who nurtured me in those years, so many of whom are now memorialized in the Fellowship Memorial Garden.

Here is still another reminiscence from one of our Fellowship members, Kristen Foernsler, who went through the Religious Education program in the early years. She writes in part:

As a young child of three, my parents were seeking a new religious experience for themselves and me. We started attending the UU Fellowship before we had our own building. Services were held in the living room space of a Bayview Avenue house and the Religious Education class was held upstairs in what I remember as a converted attic. I remember one RE activity specifically in the attic classroom, tracing the outline of each child's body onto a huge sheet of paper and coloring them in. Coffee hour in the Bayview Avenue house was very crowded and all of the children would mingle amongst the tall adults looking for goodies. My children do this now in our much larger sanctuary.

Once the congregation moved to our newly constructed building, RE became more diversified because we had more room to spread out. Worship circles every week included the chalice lighting with special words that I will never forget; lots of stories, songs and discussions of outside activities. As I entered the fifth or sixth grade, RE class became a spiritual exploration class learning about all different faiths and visiting their religious homes on field trips. I remember sitting in a Catholic mass and asking Linda Volkersz, our Religious Education Director, 'Why do they stand, sit and kneel so much?'

My journey of UU exploration continued as a teenage UU. I started attending the UU summer camp on Shelter Island, Camp Quinipet. I met a number of close friends and got to know some of the kids that were already attending the Fellowship with me a little better. This was an amazing experience that cemented the seven principles into my brain through the application of them by Randy Becker and his wife Kate Lehman. I bonded with these two ministers and their children at camp.

To illustrate the importance and effectiveness of our religious education philosophy, here is a description of one family's experience as described by Shelly Psaris.

I arrived at the Fellowship with my husband Tony in September, 1978 with our then three year old son Nick. I was from an Orthodox Jewish background- Tony from a Roman Catholic one. We had been married by a UU minister in Garden City in 1971 and fell in love with the UU philosophy and what it stood for. On our third visit to the Fellowship, we asked to sign the membership book. Both our sons grew up in RE, went through Coming of Age and About Your Sexuality (now referred to as Our Whole Lives). After college they moved on with their lives, but we stayed.

The Fellowship is my religious home - a place where I gained confidence in speaking publicly as in leading a Sunday service, which transferred into other areas of my life. It's the place where I am able to sing to my heart's content in the choir even though I cannot read music. It's the place where when during crises, we were enveloped by the care and concern of Fellowship members.

CHAPTER V A HOME OF OUR OWN

The fall of 1973 was a crucial time. We had to make a decision. Our numbers had doubled to 106 members and 50 children. With our activities separated by two miles, having a service in one place and coffee hour in the Bayview Avenue house was too difficult. What were we to do?

We made two important decisions: one was to build on our land on Nicolls Road, and the other was to hire a religious education coordinator, Linda Volkersz, a member of the Fellowship, to oversee the Children's Fellowship.

After several years at our Cedar Street location, it was apparent that we needed more space for our expanding programs. In 1965, we dreamt of building our own edifice on our five acres on Nicolls Road. Within a year a Building Committee was formed, amid much discussion of needs, costs, and architectural styles. We engaged an architect to prepare plans for a two-story building which we liked. Our deed required that we submit our plans to the Corporation from which we had purchased our land. The plans were not approved. They were modified and submitted again and again. The seventh modification was finally approved. By this time, half the Fellowship was convinced that we had retreated too far toward non-Unitarian conventionality. The idea of building was laid aside, with feelings of frustration and disagreement.

Something had to be done about space. We had become 50 members from 30 families; the Cedar Street house could hold no more. Our numbers leveled off with no increase for the next two years. Unable to find a larger house to rent, we stretched our finances to the utmost and bought the eight room house on Bayview Avenue in East Setauket. We occupied it for nine years from 1967 through 1975. We numbered 106 members from 60 families at the end of this period. The Bayview Avenue house allowed us to perform a civic function; we made our quarters available for use by other groups, such as the Art Barn, Free University, National Organization of Women, Dieter's Community and others. We also took our turn at hosting Long Island UU affairs that weren't too large; notably some high school LRY week-end retreats.

In the fall and winter of 1973-74 we participated in the program called "Sharing in Growth", sponsored by the UUA. Half a dozen members of other Long Island UU societies joined a similar number of our own members in several week-end meetings, after an initial meeting led by the Rev. Joan Goodwin, on the staff of the UUA in Boston. They analyzed how we could function better and grow as a Fellowship. Three of our members have gone out in subsequent years to work with other Fellowships in the "Sharing in Growth" program.

Meantime, our own growth had become so striking that we began in the fall of 1973 to rent the theater of the Slavic Center in Port Jefferson for our adult services on Sunday mornings. This was the simplest way for us to acquire unencumbered space for the growing Children's Fellowship. To carry on our activities separated by two miles, and then to reassemble for coffee hour in our Bayview Avenue house, was a severe test of our will to keep our Fellowship booming. After two years of this, we decided to find roomier quarters.

In March of 1974 we tried to purchase the former Catholic Church in Setauket. We were outbid. It was deemed impracticable to add to the Bayview Avenue house on its small lot. The solution: build on our land on Nicolls Road. Two of our members, George and Millie Michos, learned of Stanmar Associates, who keep costs down by use of prefabrication techniques. Stanmar made a bid to build a structure from a design already in use. Realtors found a buyer for the Bayview house. We found a bank willing to make us a substantial mortgage loan. The Veatch Committee agreed to lend us the remainder of what we needed. In February, 1975, we decided to explore possibilities to build; in April, we voted to sign contracts and to

go ahead. Construction began in August and was completed in December; in January 1976 we moved in and held our first Fellowship meeting with children and adults joining together in a service of songs and smiles.

Milly Michos wrote the following article in our newsletter to describe in more detail the evolution of our current building.

The UUs had been at the American Legion Hall, the Stony Brook Museum, the Cedar Street house, the Bayview Avenue house in Setauket, the Slavic Center in Port Jefferson, and they had outgrown each and every one of their homes. They desperately needed a place to be. They had early on acquired land on Nicolls Road and had made plan after plan to build, but alas, all were too expensive.

In 1970, the Michos family had been in a similar quandary. They had land in Port Jefferson and had designed an A-frame house for the property, but when put out to bid, it was much too expensive for their budget. While still living in Texas, where George Michos was working on the space program for Grumman, they found Stanmar, a company in Massachusetts that made pre-fab houses. One was an A-frame very similar to the house the family had designed, and Stanmar did provide the house that has been the Michos home since 1970. Did they have something the Fellowship could afford? Indeed they did! In April 1975, the Fellowship signed a contract with Stanmar. The Fellowship asked George Michos to oversee the construction of the building. As President of the Fellowship, he willingly did so. With infinite patience, after attending countless meetings with the Veatch Committee, Brookhaven Town, and members of the Fellowship; getting building permits; working with construction crews, building inspectors, fire departments, telephone company representatives, gas companies, electric companies, and insurance representatives; and, not least of all, making promises to the Unicorn, George and the Fellowship managed the completion of the building by January 1976.

We enjoyed having the space, and, as a consequence, became more out-going, participated in LIAC and Metropolitan New York District affairs, and allowed outside groups to use the building. Because of our increased activities, we became more widely known as a fast-growing group. In Dorrie's original play, a promise was made to the Unicorn that it would not have to leave its home, as magical creatures and humans could live together in this magical place. The UUs were true to their word. They pooled their resources and found a leader named George to oversee the building project. They built their home, but left a part of the woods in the back undisturbed. And so the Unicorn did not have to leave. To this day, it lives far back in the wood.

'George' was George Michos. He and other Fellowship members have tried very hard to keep their promise. Was the building an architect's pride and joy? No. Was it an architectural masterpiece? No. Was it written up in House and Garden? No. It was simple, useable, and most importantly, almost affordable. And it provided the UU Fellowship with a home, a place to be.

A formal service of dedication was held on a unique date - February 29, 1976 – with representatives from other local churches, other Unitarian churches and fellowships, LIAC (Long Island Area Council), and the UUA, attending. A play, "A Dream in the Woods" written by member Dorrie Prouty, was part of the service. The closing responsive reading is worth recalling.

Let us make of it a refuge, but not an escape –
a place wherein to stand
that we may move the world and shape its course.
Let us make of it a seeking place, knowing

That in new questions alone can answers be found.
Let us make it an opening-of-doors place
That we may not shut ourselves up within our human finitude,
Male or female, living unto ourselves alone
for there is no peace of mind in such isolation.
Lastly, a listening-place
Let us listen in the stillness of our beings
To the deepest regions of our heart
Listening for that which can be heard
If one has the courage of silence and the strength to hear.

Another of our members played the role of a unicorn, which represented the fulfillment of our building dreams. Since that time the Unicorn has been used as a symbol for the Fellowship in many ways. Margaret Townsend, who later earned a Master's degree in Fine Arts, specializing in quilting, designed and sewed a Unicorn tapestry which still hangs in the Fellowship building. A replica of the unicorn was donated by a former member, Barbara Malley, before she moved to New York City. It now lives in our woods. As part of the dedication of its new building, the Fellowship presented a series of public lectures dealing with significant social issues on Sundays in March, April and May, 1976. Speakers included Elof Carlson, Norman Goodman, Lee Koppelman, Thomas Altizer, Ruth Cowan and Abraham Krikorian.

Enrollment continued to increase in the Religious Education Program. In order to acquire extra classroom space for Sunday morning classes, a two-room trailer was rented and placed behind the main building in the late fall of 1986. In the fall of 1989 a three-room trailer was rented. For eighteen months, a building committee studied how we could expand and enlarge our building to accommodate the increased needs of both adults and children. As a result, an architect was hired to develop expansion plans. We continued to grow in numbers along with a need for additional funds. In January of 1990, a feasibility study concluded that we did not have the required number of pledges to start a building program. The Board and the Religious Education Committee then recommended that we go to double sessions, meaning two services and two sessions of RE classes on Sunday which began in the fall of 1990.

In June, 1990, the congregation voted to change the name of the Unitarian Fellowship of the Three Villages to The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook, NY.

Board President Joanne Hammer wrote in the April 24, 1998 newsletter to report on plans to expand the building:

Almost two years ago, in the spring of 1996, our minister, the Rev. Kate Lehman, thought that it would be a good idea to survey our fellowship and try to find out what we like about our community and what we want to see improved. By an overwhelming majority, respondents to this survey felt that the state of the building needed to be improved, to be expanded, to give our religious education classes more room, to give us more room in the sanctuary for our services, to bring us into compliance with building codes, and to enhance our overall safety and accessibility to the handicapped. Not to mention to improve and enhance the overall aesthetics of the place!

We talked about this for a while, we had "neighborhood meetings" in the summer and fall of 1996 and, yes, we did reiterate to ourselves that there was a lot of work to be done to make our building needs become a reality. Then, in October 1996, we board members had our annual retreat, led by the Rev. Howell Lind, District Executive, where we reviewed the general contents of this survey and charged a Building Task Force to make a thorough report to the board, and then to the congregation, as to the specifics of what was needed. They worked faster than any UU entity I have ever seen!

In December of that year, they presented a preliminary report to the congregation, outlining four scenarios regarding our building improvement needs, which ran from the absolute necessities in terms of what needed to be accomplished for overall safety, to the notion of an expanded building. In January of 1997, by a resounding vote of the congregation, it was determined that the congregation supported the expansion of our building.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) was created to assess space needs. Their recommendation was to explore further expansion. In 1998 we called on Wayne Clark, a UUA development consultant, to spend a weekend leading our members through the steps necessary to have a successful building expansion fund drive, from writing our own mission statement to assessing our financial resources, to raising the capital. CPC was superseded by the Dream Team, whose members focused on the financial, capital campaign, building, exterior and interior components. The architectural firm of Chaleff & Rogers of Water Mill, LI was chosen. They designed a handsome, functional building with a price tag of \$1.3 million. We launched the capital campaign in 1999 but fell short of our goal. We had to go back to the drawing board to scale back the expansion, maintaining a significant addition to the R.E. Wing, but leaving off the sanctuary and instead, expanding our current hall to seat 200 people. More obstacles developed as we had difficulty obtaining a mortgage. Because of our deed restriction, banks would not be able to use our property as collateral, and therefore could not grant us a mortgage. Finally, the UUA loaned us the needed \$700,000 and we finally started construction in April, 2004. It was completed in December, 2005.

CHAPTER VI MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

The Fellowship continued to grow and to be lay-led. A Sunday service committee would invite speakers from the community, the university and local UU ministers.

During the late 70s, the Rev. Ralph Stutzman of the Huntington Fellowship came on three weekends as part of a UUA-sponsored program at our expense. Later, we contracted with the Rev. Lynn Partridge to be a quarter time minister who provided ministerial services when needed until we ran out of funds.

Linda Volkersz, our retired DRE, recalls the steps we took toward acquiring professional religious leadership:

For a while, one of our active members, Max Mobley, provided ministerial services. Max was an ordained Methodist minister who left the ministry to become a Unitarian. . .He guided our program committee and officiated at our weddings and memorial services. When he left, we had just moved into our new building. By 1980 we decided to make the commitment to calling a full time minister.

What led us to call a minister? We became painfully aware that we couldn't care for our needy members as well as we wished. One of our very active families experienced the illness and death of - first, the wife and mother, then the father of two young girls. Trying to care for them in their final illnesses strained our resources. Their two young girls were left to live with a cousin they barely knew. Our members felt that we really needed a professional to help us in times like these.

Our next step was to "try on" a minister from another congregation for six weeks. The other congregation paid his salary and he visited us from his Maine church and we really loved having the Rev. Fred Muir. So, at a congregational meeting, we debated the issue and came to a decision to have a full-time minister.

To help with this transition, the UUA offered us a subsidized program called the Extension Ministry program. They would choose a minister, and pay part of his salary (in decreasing amounts) for three years so we could increase our pledges to pay for him. We also received a subsidy from the Long Island Area Council. They chose the Rev. Steve Edington (also from Maine). We were very pleased with Steve and at the end of the three years, we extended his contract for another year. At year four, Steve asked us to allow him to preach more than two Sundays a month but we had grown accustomed to splitting lay and ministerial services on an even basis. Steve decided to accept a call from the UU Church in Nashua, New Hampshire (which he served until he retired.).

Members of the congregation would often present programs written and participated in by members and friends. But it was felt that we needed to call a full-time professional. In preparation for this step, we participated in the Minister-On-Loan program as initiated and promoted by the UUA. The Rev. Fred Muir and his wife were with us for a period of six weeks in January and February of 1982, thanks to the willingness of his home congregation in Sanford, Maine to lend them to us and to continue providing their salary. We provided living expenses. In the following months, committees were formed, discussions were held, plans were made, and at the annual business meeting of March 1984, the congregation decided to call a full-time minister. As part of the Extension Minister Program of the UUA, the Rev. Steve D. Edington, his wife and baby boy arrived in September, 1984 from Rockland, Maine. Our growth continued during Steve Edington's ministry and he remained with us for four years until he was called to the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua, N. H. During his final year, a Search Committee was at

work screening possible candidates. The Rev. Kate Lehman-Becker of Hollis, Queens was called to be our first full-time minister on September 1, 1988.

Under Kate's enthusiastic leadership, Fellowship activities and programs increased by leaps and bounds: gourmet dinners; Dinners for Nine; Sunday morning Forums; Wednesday evening pot-luck suppers; many committees and an active Board of Trustees kept things humming at the Fellowship. Among the programs that Kate developed in cooperation with the congregation, was a shared ministry which trained Welcoming Assistants, Worship Associates and Pastoral Assistants. These groups continue to work with the congregation.

In January, 2006, Kate announced her coming retirement in June. At that year's Annual Meeting in May, the congregation voted to confer on her the title of Minister Emerita in gratitude for her nineteen years of service. The text of the recommendation of the Board of Trustees read as follows:

In recognition of the nineteen years of devoted spiritual guidance to the congregation at Stony Brook, your Board has the honor to recommend the status of Minister Emerita to Kate Lehman upon her departure from our Fellowship ministry. We recognize the vital role that Kate has played in our development as a congregation and as individuals. She has given of her time, talent and supported UUFSB with her assets. She has been our mentor and our minister, caring for us in good times and difficult times with an even caring hand and has led us down a path that has proven meaningful in our development as a congregation. We wish her well and want it known that she will always have a special place in our hearts.

Subsequently, seven members were elected to the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC). It invited Douglas Rhodes, District Ministerial Search Liaison, to lead it in an orientation. The MSC decided to reserve the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month for meetings, with the proviso that it would add additional Mondays when necessary.

The Board decided to have a two year interim minister and recruited the Rev. Dr. James Macomber who started in September, 2006. At the end of his first year, he announced to the congregation that he had been called to the Northwest UU Congregation in Atlanta, GA. The Rev. Barbara Coeyman was our second year interim minister beginning August, 2007-08. The Rev. Carol Wolff was our third interim minister for 2008-2010.

The Board entered into a three year contract with the Rev. Margaret Allen as a consulting minister in the fall of 2010. On Sunday, February 12, 2012, she and her partner, the Rev. Dr. Linda Anderson were officially married during the annual "Standing on the Side of Love" service according to New York State law by the Rev. Donald McKinney, minister emeritus of the First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn before a delighted congregation.

At the annual meeting of the congregation in June, 2011, the Board President, Dixie Comeau, and board member and former vice president, Linda Pfeiffer cooperated with the Rev. Margaret Allen to summarize the congregational milestones of her first year.

We hired our new Consulting Minister on a three year contract and have in place a process to consider a call to ministry together.

We hired Gretta Johnson-Sally as our new Director of Religious Education and have already seen a significant increase in RE attendance and new families.

We were one of nine “threshold congregations” chosen for a special program of the Central East Regional Group, a cooperative group of four Districts of our Association of Congregations.

We started a Shawl Ministry, a circle of members who knit and crochet to create beautiful shawls as a spiritual practice and give them to people who are going through hard times or celebrating good times.

We started a Buddhist meditation community, called a “sangha,” which meets here weekly on Saturday mornings. In the wider Buddhist world, our group is known as “Stony Brook Sangha.”

In retirement news, we celebrated the last Passover Seder under the auspices of Shelly Psaris, who has been organizing the Seder for twenty-five years, and we enjoyed the last Goods and Services Auction Ed and Linda Mikell will manage. Next year new leaders will be in charge of both programs.

Our Small Group Ministry Program, called “Sharing Circles,” completed the first cycle as a new ministry here. Thanks to Gil Hanson who brought the idea back from General Assembly and to the Rev. Carol Wolff for partnering with Gil to create it here.

Margie reported to the congregation in a Sunday Service on June 3, 2012 looking back at our accomplishments for the two years of her ministry:

In September, we gathered on the lawn behind me for our Homecoming service and before we came inside, Bill Steedle took panoramic pictures of our congregation.

Eight more UUFSB leaders attended the Long Island Leadership Institute’s Healthy Congregations workshop series—six eight-hour Saturday workshops—where they learned the principles of supportive, non-anxious leadership in congregations experiencing change. Thanks to Donna Demian, Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Jean Cipriano, Joanne Hammer, Shelly Psaris, Ed and Linda Mikell and Jeff Kochnow for investing in our congregation’s health.

Fifty-four people this year experienced at least one session of the orientation to UUFSB and Unitarian Universalism we call *Belonging*, and at the annual New Member Sunday service on April 1st we gave 16 new members a chalice button, a mug imprinted with the Homecoming Sunday photo, a rose and a membership certificate.

The Threshold Project Team articulated a set of four ambitious congregational goals and began to elaborate a strategic plan to meet them:

- Create a culture of welcoming, engagement and belonging that permeates the entire congregation.
- Achieve sustainable financial health to support and expand our ministries and to ensure our future as a congregation.
- See the needs of the world as our own; make responding to those needs a central part of the life of our Fellowship.
- Create a pathway to congregational leadership; identify, motivate, and nurture leaders and provide support for their continued development.

The Committee on Ministries of the Congregation ran a series of “Conversation Cafes,” using new technologies of creative conversation, in which a total of 70 people considered core questions about our purpose, welcome and our partnership in ministry.

At the Annual Meeting on June 3rd, our Consulting Minister announced to us that she would like to stand for a vote next January to be called as our settled minister.

Linda Volkersz was granted by a vote of the congregation the status of Director of Religious Education Emerita and we increased the number of work hours for Gretta Johnson-Sally, our current Director of Religious Education, to ¾ time. Our children are beloved and their religious education a perennial priority.

And, finally, on March 31st the symbol of the Unicorn won another round in its own search for truth and meaning. To the unicorn statue, the unicorn hanging, the Unicorn Singers, the *Unicorn* newsletter, the unicorn banner, we added the "UUFSB Fighting Unicorns." We lost the volleyball games, but we have the T-shirts forever! Go Fighting Unicorns!

CHAPTER VII SUPPORT STAFF

As we grew in numbers and used more of our space, we hired member, Ellen Lubin as our housekeeper in 1976. She carried out her duties of keeping the building clean until she broke her ankle in November of 1996. Since then, we have hired a professional cleaning service.

In 1980, we added an additional salaried employee to the staff, Parish Assistant, Sue Serie, whose duties were varied and who helped greatly in the details of operating the Fellowship. In June, 1990, Sue left for another job, but continued her and her husband, Michael's involvement as members of the Fellowship. Her replacement was another member of the congregation, Laura Puchalski, who was hired in November of 1990. She died in 1995. Donna Kirdahy served in the office for a year. Someone who Janet Hanson is our Volunteer Office Consultant who assists with organization of the office, software training and the bookkeeping.

In September, 1997, we hired Susan Catanzaro, our first non-member to be our part-time Administrative Assistant. As our congregation grew, her position expanded to Congregational Administrator, and she required additional staff. The position of Office Assistant was created and approved by the Board of Trustees in the fall of 1999. Lori Lockwood, Debra Hoffman, and Cathy Sydlo were the first three assistants to serve in the office for short periods of time. On November 17, 2007, Pat Kaminski joined the staff to assist Susan on Thursdays and Fridays, the busiest days of the week.

CHAPTER VIII FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS

Our first fundraiser, a rummage sale, was held in the Bayview Avenue house in 1963. As it still does, working together on fund raising projects is a bonding experience and creates new and lasting relationships within our group.

A singles discussion group, which was open to the community on Friday evenings, and run by many volunteers including married couples in the Fellowship, was our first long running outreach program. The brainstorm of Mae Tierney, Lang and Dorrie Prouty, Evert Volkersz and Al LaPlaca, it was first known as "Person to Person." Later, the name was changed to "In Other Words" (IOW). This income not only added to our operating expenses but to the Endowment Fund as well.

A Goods and Services Auction was instituted in 1997 and was held annually until 2009.

The 1890's Fair was inaugurated on July 4 and 5, 1989 and continued every year on every Fourth of July weekend until 2009. Ed Mikell recorded Fair activities on videotape over several years, which are stored in the archives. The Fair was the brainchild of member, Nick Romanelli, along with many others of the congregation, among them, Mae Tierney, Edith Gordon, Andy Collver and Dorothy Beal. Dorothy initiated the famed "Melodrama." Our Fair was a great success, bringing in over \$10,000 and drawing in many local residents from the community. We cleared the land in the back of the Fellowship Building to expand our Fair activities in subsequent years; built a shed, "Victoria Station" which the Jr. High class painted as a service project. The overflow lot was paved in the fall of 1994.

In March 2006, a Ways and Means Committee was established to replace an ad hoc feasibility committee that had been appointed by the Board. It is responsible for the coordination of all fundraising activities in the Fellowship. Its goal is to support fundraising projects to meet needs as specified by the Board; to investigate and recommend new sources of revenue for the Fellowship. Among the committees and groups that are currently concerned with raising revenues are the art gallery, concerts, goods and services auction, merchants certificates and food debit cards, shopping on line through Amazon. Com or Give Back America, gift programs, Granny's Attic, Victorian Ladies and the 1890s Fair. A brochure, "How to Plan an Event" was created by the committee and made available as a guide for new fund raising projects.

In September, 2011, we successfully launched a new major annual fundraiser, the Woodlands Folk Festival, which replaces the 1890's Fair, a summer festival for which this congregation was long well known on Long Island. The Woodlands Folk Festival completes its transition this year from a weekend in the fall to the last weekend in June. Woodlands is a powerful expression of a core gift and ministry of this congregation, our deep bench in the musical arts.

We also began to offer regular classical concerts, Le Petit Salon de Musique, in an intimate parlor-like setting on Sunday afternoons, brainchild of Linda and Ed Mikell.

THE ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:

The Endowment Committee is a standing committee which is responsible for stewardship of the UUFSB Endowment Fund. The purpose of the Fund is to provide a financial basis to promote the mission of the Fellowship; support activities which enrich the Fellowship experience; and perpetuate the legacy of the Fellowship. The endowment fund is held in a special account, separate from the operating funds of the Fellowship. The principal of the account cannot be used except in cases of extreme and dire emergency, and then only with the approval of the Congregation and the Endowment Committee. Income generated by the fund will be used for longer-term projects that benefit the Fellowship and advance our seven principles.

There are two common types of gifts to the Endowment. . . Immediate Gifts such as cash, the value of an insurance policy, or appreciated stock and/or Deferred Gifts such as naming the UUFSB Endowment in your will as a beneficiary. These gifts may be in your name or the name of someone you wish to memorialize through your gift to the Endowment.

Its members are elected by the congregation; the treasurer and minister are ex officio members

CHAPTER IX LANDSCAPING AND GROUNDS

Landscaping and grounds maintenance has been done almost entirely by volunteers. In 1993, Natalie Fiess, a charter member, designed and established a memorial garden on the property with the help of the North Shore Tree and Landscaping Company. She also created policies and fees for its use with the concurrence of a small committee. Donations of plants and money were generously given by Fellowship members and friends for its support. In anticipation of the new sanctuary construction, it was dismantled, but re-instituted after the revised plan allowed it to remain in place.

On April 18, 1995, the Board passed a resolution to approve a children's garden called Julia's Garden. The garden helps keep Julia's memory and her presence alive and vital here at the Fellowship. Julia was born on October 25, 1988 and grew up in our Fellowship. Her mother, Laura, was our administrative assistant and her father, Gerry, served on the finance committee. Her brother, Eric was three years older. In late January of 1995, Julia was diagnosed with a glioblastoma, an almost always fatal form of brain cancer. As she went through the various forms of treatment, the congregation marveled at and was inspired by her courage and quiet strength. In December, when it became evident that nothing more could be done, her parents brought her home from the hospital to die.

Inspired by a garden in which he had played in kindergarten, Gerry proposed to the Board that a garden be built in Julia's memory.

Gerry recalls:

One of my own fondest childhood memories was of my year in Kindergarten. I went to school in Glen Cove, and the district had just bought a 'Gold Coast' estate upon which to build its new High School. The mansion itself was to be converted into administration offices. Because the district was so overcrowded, they used some of the rooms in this mansion as classrooms. Behind the house there were acres of amazing gardens with huge (old) rhododendrons, stepping stone paths and benches, a gazebo, statues and so forth. For a five year old, this place was truly magical. It was that basic idea that led me to think of doing something at the Fellowship specifically for the younger kids and which would be a fitting memorial as well.

Members of the congregation, eager to do something positive in the face of grief, contributed about half of the funds needed for the garden, and joined with the Puchalski family in creating the garden. People they didn't even know helped to turn the ground, install railroad ties, plant flowers, and haul stone for the paths.

Today, as Gerry intended, this is garden is not a mournful place; rather, it is a place where children can play and celebrate the joy and beauty of life. We realize again that the dead are not gone if we love them truly and keep them in our memories. This is Julia's legacy to our Fellowship.

CHAPTER X SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

In the early years of the organization of the fledgling Fellowship, priority was given to the formation of a workable structure for administration, the development of a religious education program for children and adults, and communication both within and without the congregation. It was not until the late '60s that more attention was paid to the formation of a social responsibility committee. While many members of the Fellowship were involved in community organizations and concerned with many of the political issues of the day, there was much discussion about how to implement the need for the Fellowship to make an impact on our society as an organization. During the 60s, racial integration in the United States was very much on the minds of Fellowship members and how to approach this issue in a democratic fashion took up much discussion at Fellowship Board meetings in 1967. In 1969, the Board minutes recorded the following statement at the January 26th meeting:

The Fellowship shall adopt the following means of taking stands on issues for which it would be advisable to have full membership backing. A statement shall be drawn up and, along with a background of information and opinion, sent to members of the Fellowship. Within 7 days following the mailing, anyone who opposes adoption of the statement will so inform the individual(s) designated by the persons making the statement. If 10% of the membership opposes, the Board must schedule a business meeting to discuss the matter within 30 days, or no action may be taken in the name of the Fellowship. If there is not opposition from 10% of the membership as defined in Article III, Section 2, the statement will be adopted. Moved: James Crane; Seconded: Roy MacDougal; voted unanimously
In 1969, Ruth Scheier was appointed Social Action chair for the year 1969-70. In her report, she cites the installation of a bulletin board in the hall to keep members informed. The committee encouraged the congregation to write letters to all the Villages to pass the Open Housing Ordinances. Along with Ruth Cusack, some members were active in repealing the New York State abortion laws. In December, 1971, the Fellowship Board approved sending Ruth as a representative to the Advisory Council of the Smith Haven Ministries.

ivities, programs of an educational nature

Social Action wishes to sponsor,

present or organize.

Keep the congregation informed of current issues and programs through regular notices in the Newsletter.

Bring to a congregational meeting for a vote any area of concern in which the Social Action Committee wishes to speak publicly on behalf of the Fellowship. Social Action issues require membership action at a congregational meeting.

Act as liaison with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and other appropriate District and Area Council bodies.

Reports: Report plans and progress to the Board on request. Summary report on activities at the Warnings* Annual Meeting including recommendations for the following year.

No Social Responsibility Committee Reports 1979-1981

During the 80s, the committee coasted along with various representatives attending meetings sponsored by the UU Service Committee and the UU-UNO office. It also encouraged participation with local organizations and churches on such issues as world peace, poverty and homelessness. In his 1991 Annual Report for the committee, Jerry Reinhold-Shor, Chair, summed up the committee's activities as follows:

“This was a very active and involved year for the Social Action Committee, and one in which the Committee made important moves in the direction of cooperating and networking with Ministries and paid \$75.00 in membership fees.”

It is clear from comments that Ruth made in her report that the Fellowship was still struggling with defining what its role should be in the areas of social action. She says: “. . .most of our members are individually involved in many worthwhile efforts. The point was made too that when a cooperative force is needed to support a cause of worth, the Fellowship unites and gives not only financial support but also active human support.”

1972-74 gap in reports.

It is interesting to note that President Oscar Haac noted in his Annual Report to the congregation in 1970, that the LRY has raised far more money (\$340) for social and humanitarian purposes than the Fellowship and has supported the Center for Migrant Workers in Riverhead among others.

In 1975, Lang Prouty reported in his Social Responsibilities Annual Report that his philosophy “has been to provide a forum whereby members of the Fellowship could be active in social responsibilities on many levels of involvement.” The committee arranged for the showing of the film, Attica for a Sunday service, to heighten awareness of the need for prison reform. The Bail Commission was sponsored by the North Shore UU Church in Plandome through funds from the Veatch Committee. Other Long Island UU congregations contributed to the Commission, which hired Camille Smith as its executive director. Lang served on the Commission’s board of trustees.

The Fellowship actively supported the Eastern Farm Workers by collecting food monthly and delivering it to the Farm Workers headquarters. A Sunday service was presented to the congregation describing the work of the Farm Workers’ activities in Suffolk County. Support for the UUSC Hunger Relief Fund was emphasized this year, and the Fellowship continued to contribute to the Smith Haven Ministries with a donation of \$75.00. The committee also expended much energy to support the World Peace Tax Fund Act before Congress. This bill provides for diversion to peaceful purposes of the taxes of conscientious objectors. A Sunday service was devoted to this topic; a booth was staffed by Fellowship members at the Suffolk Spring Festival on May 3 at the Stony Brook campus of the State University of New York. 500 pamphlets were distributed at the Festival, and petitions in favor of the bill were completed and mailed to Congressman Pike. In addition, the Fellowship sent a letter to Pike favoring the bill. Finally, an additional petition was circulated within the Fellowship and mailed to the UUA, requesting that it be placed on the agenda of the UU’s annual meeting.

The emphasis on world hunger and the criminal justice system continued in 1976, with the support of the UU Service Committee’s priorities. A potluck supper following the Fellowship’s Annual Meeting that year, featured a menu from Diet for a Small Planet to heighten awareness of the world food crisis. Several members attended a meeting of the UU Service Committee in Boston, MA and found their objectives and activities a very helpful resource to the Fellowship’s involvement and goals in the local community.

A definition of the committee’s role was described in an Annual Report in 1978 as follows:

Keep before the congregation those social concerns with which the committee feels the congregation should be dealing with and should be aware of.

Coordinate with other committees and other social and peace action organizations both within and outside of the UU denomination. The Social Action Committee created and presented five Sunday services this year dealing with a wide range of topics such as the UU “Prophetic Imperative” for social action, the current situation in Central America, the problem of poverty and homelessness in Suffolk County, the

need for action to combat racism and homelessness in Suffolk County, the need for action to combat racism and discrimination in our society, and the present status of the struggle to save the environment.

All the programs were warmly and enthusiastically received by the congregation.

Some of the SAC's outreach efforts included a Salvadorian Festival in February, a LIAC-wide social action conference in May, and regular participation in the North Shore Interfaith Peace Action Coalition with representatives of local Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Quaker, Congregationalist, and other churches.

In the nineties, many Fellowship members, including the youth group, participated in providing drivers and servers for the "Daily Bread" a Sunday evening dinner for needy families run by the St. James parish of the Roman Catholic Church in Setauket.

We also became active in the Community Programs Center of Long Island (CPC), an organization that provides services and advocacy for low income children and families. Several Fellowship members volunteered to participate in a family-to-family support program. The Committee in partnership with the CPC, formed the Helping Network Program to encourage friendship, practical help, and social advocacy between volunteer Fellowship families and low income Head Start families. We also met with Rep. George Hochbrueckner in 1993 along with seven other housing advocacy groups to address the unmet needs of low income families.

No report in 1994

In 1995 and 1996, the committee continued the Helping Network program, continued our participation in the "Our Daily Bread" program, presented a moving "Childrens' Sabbath" service, organized a Christmas gift drive for a needy family and teenage mothers, and sponsored letter writing campaigns to alert members of Congress about issues affecting needy children. Even the children in our Fellowship got involved in making desserts on "Kids Baking Day" for the Daily Bread dinners.

Our Sunday services with the encouragement of the Social Action Committee included such topics as fair labor practices, the economic welfare of African-Americans, Standing for Children and the juvenile justice system. Letter writing campaigns to our president and representatives included such topics as educational opportunities for welfare recipients, food stamps for immigrants, the signing of the landmines treaty and the pardoning of Bill McNulty for his peaceful act of civil disobedience at the School of the Americas.

By the year 2000, the Social Action Committee thrived under the leadership of John Morris and Lem Coley. In his report to the Annual Meeting, John outlined its activities as follows:

The Social Action Committee continued several successful programs from past years. The generous donations that we collect each month in the First Sunday of the Month Food Drive are divided between the Port Jefferson Food Pantry and the Food Pantry at Our Daily Bread in Setauket. We participated for the second time in the annual 'gleaning' event at a farm in Melville. Produce was harvested donated to LI Cares. Our support for the Our Daily Bread dinners at the St. James Roman Catholic Church in Setauket continues to be strong. On the fourth Sunday of each month a team of volunteers helps out by driving needy community members to the meal, by serving and cleaning up, and by providing baked goods. Janet Kagel investigated the need for volunteers at other soup kitchens in the area. She will be taking a team of volunteers from our senior high classes to Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN) dinners in Port Jefferson beginning this summer.

We coordinated two Sunday services during the year. The first . . . focused on the growing economic inequality in our nation . . . the spring service, “Toward a More Accepting Society”, was devoted to issues of bias against gays and lesbians. . .

Ted (Goldfarb) and Lem (Coley) share an interest in environmental justice issues. They assisted the Brentwood Council of Parent Teacher Student Associations in preparing a proposal for an EPA grant. The proposed project will investigate a suspected correlation of the high incidence of childhood asthma and cancer in the Brentwood School District with the proximity of numerous toxic waste and superfund sites.

Committee member, Phil Leesha coordinated our participation in the Declaration of Life program. This program offered congregation members a powerful way to make a personal statement of opposition to capital punishment. . . We raised money for UUSC by selling holiday cards in the winter. Committee member John Robillard keeps us in touch with United Nations issues. We have conducted letter writing campaigns on issues including a request for a fair retrial for Pennsylvania death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal. Shelly Psaris has independently organized participation in Habitat for Humanity. Our committee offered financial support to the Shalom Interfaith Project. . . to provide social work services to needy community members with the support of local churches and synagogues. We have continued to support the Long Island UU Social Justice Coalition. This organization, in existence since 1997, keeps UUs from congregations around Long Island in touch about Social Action issues. (John is co-chair of the LIUUSJC).

The following year, Lem Coley, co-chair, reported to the Annual Meeting its current goals:

- " Keeping the Fellowship informed of Social Action activities going on the Fellowship, the larger denomination, and the wider community
- " Presenting two services a year
- " Supporting those in the Fellowship who have specific interests in various social justice issues
- "

In his report, Lem continues to describe the committee’s activities...did a service on Third World debt forgiveness in fall, and in spring, a service on repealing the Rockefeller drug laws.

Fellowship members attended a meeting at Shelter Rock UU society to discuss drug laws and prison reform. . . gave ongoing support for PJ Food Pantry and other activities related to hardship in the community. . . John Morris set up a computer network by which LIUUs can communicate and organize on social justice issues. . . committee members attended anti-sweatshop demonstrations in Manhattan and at department stores in LI malls.

In his report to the Annual Meeting, Phil Leesha, a member of the Social Action Committee reported the more prominent activities of the group, now growing and increasingly active. Included facilitating the ongoing “Bounty Basket” of donated non-perishables to those in need; sponsoring two services on the history of UU social action. . . became part of a “Resource Data Base” which makes us available to the press, other religious and social organizations for information and service. . . joined the UUDPR, an organization that advocates examination of the fairness of current drug laws. . . proposed to purchase the Fellowship’s coffee needs through a cooperative that guarantees a fair wage to the coffee farmers. . . became a member of the UU Service Committee. . . explored ways to become active in the anti-land mine movement. . . and sought additional ways to participate in meeting childrens’ needs on Long Island.

In the 2002-03 Annual Report, Lem Coley, once again chair of the Social Action Committee, further refined its vision and mission statement as follows:

“Our long-range goal for the Social Action Committee is that we become a platform and a clearinghouse for energy directed towards social action in the Fellowship. As a platform, we should supply material assistance, supportive planning, and discussion to Committee members and others who want to participate in action for social justice. As a clearinghouse, we should keep the Fellowship informed of trends and events outside the Fellowship directed towards social justice, link the Fellowship to networks and organizations within the denomination, and inform the Fellowship of what its own members are doing and thinking about social justice. Its goals and objectives are:

- " To present two services each year which will be in line with our Vision Statement.
- " Support programs which respond to immediate needs of the poor within our own area
- " Support the Farmingville day workers
- " Work with the Long Island Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Coalition (LIUUSJC) in its ongoing projects.
- " Build Fellowship support for alternatives to incarceration and anti-drug laws.”

The committee carried out activities consistent with these stated goals. In addition, Lem represented the committee at an organizational meeting of the Unitarians for a Just Economic Coalition (UUJEC). The committee also participated in the drive to keep county support for the visiting nurse program, and supported the Assembly position on drug laws through our membership in Unitarians for Drug Policy Reform (UUDPR) and our membership in UUSJC.

For the latter part of the decade, John Morris and Barbara Coley continued to chair the committee, continuing its ongoing goals with letter writing campaigns and collecting monies to support social betterment causes such as Bethel AME’s Hobbs Farm, Workplace Project, Christmas Magic project, Shalom Interfaith Network, ProPapa, Long Island Cares, UUSC Water Projects, LI Walk to Fight Breast Cancer and the Ministries in Coram. Members of the Senior High class traveled to New Orleans on a UUSC Just Works trip in March to help renovate homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

While the Social Action Committee has coordinated monthly social betterment collections throughout the year, it was decided in November of 2008 to shift to a “Share the Plate” model, whereby each Sunday, cash donations in the collection plate are shared equally between the Fellowship operating budget and the social betterment cause of the month. Donations by check were allocated as designated by the donor.

The result was a significant increase in the size of donations to social betterment causes. Among these were Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Workplace Project, UUSC/Guest at Your Table, Bethel AME’s Hobbs Farm, The Ministries, Long Island Housing services, LI GLBT Network, National Transplant Assistance Fund for member, Deborah Wolf. The afterschool tutoring program for immigrant children in Farmingville under the Workplace Project is ongoing with the help of Fellowship volunteers. The Green Sanctuary group has become a Social Action sub-committee.

It was noted in the 2009 Social Action Committee Annual Report of May 31, 2009 that: membership in the Social Action Committee is a fluid thing. Members come and go based on changing interests and schedules. All members of the congregation are welcome to attend Social Action meetings and participation in Social Action activities.

In addition, the committee’s mission statement was re-visited in the summer of 2008 and re-stated as follows:

Grounded in our Unitarian-Universalist Principles, the Social Action Committee of the UUFBSB supports and encourages our congregation to act for positive change at local, national, and global levels through service, education, witness and advocacy.

Our faith requires that we act to heal our world by

Advocating non-violence and peace over war

Sustaining and respecting the Earth

Eliminating racism

Promoting economic and social justice

Working for universal human rights

Reaching out to others in times of crisis

The major focus areas for the year were defined as environment, social equality and peace.

As John Morris describes in his Annual Report, May 31, 2009, these three areas involve many of our members. Under Environment, Historic Hobbs Farm, property of the Setauket Bethel AME Church, is being restored as a community farm and education center. Pat Killian and Stefani Scott have coordinated the Share the Plate collections are donated to the Hobbs Farm project. Eating locally grown produce fits in nicely with ethical eating, another environmental focus issue. Stefani Scott has promoted our involvement in the UUA ethical eating initiative, which asks us to be mindful of the environmental and humanitarian consequences of the eating choices we make.

Under Social Equality, UUFSB volunteers continue to tutor immigrant children in Farmingville, coordinated by Janet Kagel and Ginger Williams. The November 2008 slaying of an immigrant in Patchogue reinforced our desire to focus on the broader issue of immigrant rights on Long Island. Our support of Fair Trade programs continues with sales of coffee and other Fair Trade products during Sunday coffee hour. We established a UUFSB connection with the Global Goods Partnership which supports Fair Trade products and microloans to individuals in developing countries (link for Global Goods shopping is available on the Fellowship website.) Share the Plate collections during the year were donated to the following social equality causes – the Workplace Project, the UU Service Committee (UUSC), the Central American Refugee Center (CARACEN), and the Long Island LGBT Network. Under Peace, our sixth principle calls us to strive for world community with peace, liberty and justice for all. We are focusing on building support for campaigns to ban the use of landmines and cluster bombs and for the National Religious Coalition Against Torture. In September, we participated in the UN Day of Peace with a silent demonstration along Nicolls Road. Our May Share the Plate was donated to the Veterans for Peace organization.

The third area of concern was Reaching Out to Those in Need. Our support for Our Daily Bread dinners continues at the St. James Roman Catholic Church in Setauket. Donations from our Food Pantry Basket go there as well. Fellowship youth participated in a Midnight Run for the homeless. They also joined youth from the Freeport congregation in the collection and distribution of clothes, toiletries, and food to homeless people in Manhattan. Several Share the Plate collections during the year were donated to organizations helping those in need – Long Island Cares, The Retreat shelter for abused women, the Interfaith Ministries in Coram, and UU organizations in Knoxville and New Orleans.

In 2010, the Social Action Committee voted to change its name to the Social Justice Committee to better reflect the Committee's current activities and outreach work.

Environment: The purpose of "The Seventh Principle Projects" is to encourage the commitment to live in harmony with the Earth by practicing environmental-social justice and sustainable life styles. Our faith actions this year have included joining with 350 organizations in an international campaign dedicated to building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis and joining with 150 other UU congregations in the UUA's 40/40/40 campaign to change our lifestyles by acting in little ways for 40 days for the Earth. We have encouraged members and others to write and call their elected officials at the federal level in support of legislation that reduces oil dependency and prohibits expansion of dangerous practices such as off-shore drilling and mountaintop mining and to demand accountability for environmental disasters.

We celebrated our respect for the interdependent web of life with our annual Earth Day service and a special 40th anniversary of Earth Day with a children's rainbow ribbon labyrinth dance, tree meditation walk and a UUA Ethical-Eating dinner. The film, Acid Test, by NRDC was shown to raise awareness about the little known problem of ocean acidification which poses a fundamental challenge to life in the seas and the health of the entire planet. A power point presentation on UUFSB's Green Sanctuary Project, Hobbs Farm, was given by Elizabeth Takakjian of the UU Ministry for Earth (UUMFE). Hobbs Farm also has educational program about agriculture and gardening with Oxhead Elementary School. Stefani Scott helped develop a booklet entitled "Adventures at Hobbs Farm" for the educational program. This year Elizabeth Takakjian has, through a special grant, developed a "Neighborhood Roots Community Garden" where UUFSB has its own plot to help the "Welcome Inn" Soup Kitchen in Port Jefferson.

Under Social Equality, the Committee held a forum on the history of immigration, immigration law and extended invitations to leaders of local churches and synagogues to attend the program. The Committee also partnered with LI Jobs with Justice (JWJ) to host a program at UUFSB entitled "Preaching and Teaching about Immigration." We participated in petition and letter writing on issues of immigration at multiple points during the year. Peggy Cohee is a member of the NYCLU Suffolk County Task Force on Immigration. Deborah Little has been working with Witness for Peace and was a member of their LI Delegation to Mexico in January, 2010. John Morris and his daughter Juliana Morris have been working on issues particularly concerning Mexico and Central America. Juliana worked in Mexico for a year with agencies assisting migrants and currently lives in Washington, DC, where she is actively involved in advocating for immigration reform.

A Social Justice service presented in March, 2010, focused broadly on the topic of economic justice. In anticipation of that service, the Committee researched the issues of a just minimum wage and a fair interest rate. We collected letters from members to our congressional representatives asking them to enact legislation that would raise the minimum wage to a living wage and set interest rates at non-usurious levels. The combined campaigns were called "10 in 2010" to reflect the call for a \$10 minimum wage and a 10% interest rate on consumer loans.

LGBT Rights: The Committee was active in supporting Interweave in their petitions and letter writing campaigns, and in district lobbying local state senators to support two major gay rights bills which were pending a vote in the state senate.

As part of our partnership with JWJ, we met with representatives from the Research Assistants Union at SUNY Stony Brook and voted to support them in their efforts to obtain a contract with the University.

Reaching Out to Those in Need – Share the Plate: Our congregation has continued to make a real impact on the world with our Sunday Share the Plate Social Justice Initiative donations. The most difficult part of managing these donations is choosing among the many deserving organizations. Suggestions from members are always welcome. We try to choose organizations that are putting Unitarian-Universalist principles into action with missions that are well matched to the mission of our Committee and our Fellowship. Our concern for immigration issues is reflected in our continued support of Long Island's Workplace Project.

We've supported environmental initiatives with collections for our own Green Sanctuary project at the local Hobbs Farm, for Solar Cookers International and for the UU Ministry of the Earth. We've support other UU denominational projects with collections for the Student Activity Fund, the UU Service Committee (UUSC) and the UUA Standing on the Side of Love Campaign. Collections last summer for Partners in Health, the Alpha-1 Foundation and the Long Island 2 Day Walk to Fight Breast Cancer were motivated by our concern for issues of health and health care access. Our interest in peace issues led us to support some of the unfortunate victims of recent wars with collections for the Wounded Warrior Project. We've supported outreach at the local level with collections for the Three Village Shalom Interfaith Network, innovative international self-help projects of Heifer International. When Haiti was tragically struck by an earthquake in January, our congregation responded by donating generously to the UUSC Haiti Relief Fund and the Partners in Health organization.

Alexis Grasso continues to coordinate volunteer members for The Farmingville Literacy Program such as Ginger Williams and Linda Volkersz who tutor Spanish speaking children with their homework.

We began a new local program by joining with the Port Jefferson branch of the Interfaith Nutrition Network (the Welcome Inn) last December to provide lunches for those in need on the second Sunday of each month. Meals are prepared and served at St. Paul's Lutheran Church by a team of 5 or 6 volunteers from our Fellowship. We also continue to support local food pantries with collections of nonperishable food or toiletry items in the basket in our Fellowship lobby. Donations are delivered to the Our Daily Bread pantry in Setauket or the Ministries Emergency Food Pantry in Coram.

Shelly Psaris, a member since 1978, was awarded the Unsung UU Award in 1997 at the Metro District Annual Meeting. She writes:

From my affiliation with UUism and the Fellowship, I learned what it meant to have an attitude of gratitude for my life and to assist others in achieving that, whether through volunteering for Habitat For Humanity for five years one Saturday a month, walking the Avon 3-Day Breast Cancer Walk in 2000, or volunteering on a medical mission in Honduras twice. The Seven Principles (especially the 4th) help guide me through my daily life in dealing with differences of opinion in so many arenas - politics or religion. Edward Everett Hale's words help to guide me:

I am only one

But still I am one.

I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.

And because I cannot do everything

I will not refuse to do the something I can do

---Edward Everett Hale.

EARTHKEEPERS

The Earthkeepers team emerged spontaneously and informally as several people agreed to begin meeting together in the fall of 2011 to talk about putting the UU Seventh Principle into action. Structurally, Earthkeepers fits among the social action groups including Social Justice, Racial Concerns, Interweave and perhaps Denominational Affairs. These groups are related in important ways as they endeavor to give concrete reality to the high-minded aims of the Unitarian Universalist Seven Principles and the UUFSB mission statement,

The mission of Earthkeepers is to educate, engage and empower each other, the congregation and the wider community in an effort to restore balance and health to the Earth and all of her inhabitants.

Earthkeepers started in October, 2011 when Rosie Wiesner, John Casper and Andy Collver, put up a canopy at the Woodlands Folk Festival with some signs, a petition for people's signatures and an invitation to drop in and chat about greenhouse gases. Global warming is arguably the most urgent threat to life on Earth because accumulated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere would be extremely difficult if not impossible to remove within a human lifetime. Whole generations the world over would live out their lives under oppressive heat, coastal flooding and extreme weather events.

Clearly, the mission is to live in accordance with the Seventh Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Within this general mission, we identify four main themes or foci of our attention.

The first is food.

The focus of the Earth Day service that the Earthkeepers produced with Rev. Margie on April 22, 2012 was on mindful eating. We will continue to educate ourselves on this topic, share what we learn with the congregation and join forces with others in the local region, the state, the nation and the larger world to promote fair, healthful and sustainable practices in the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food products. To emphasize the global level at which we must operate, we joined the Picnic for the Planet following the service, which was one of many picnics held that day all around the world at the invitation of Nature Conservancy.

The second is energy.

The most visible social movement to halt global warming is 350.org. Its name comes from its goal of holding CO₂ at or below 350 parts per million. One solution that has been effectively promoted is to switch from coal and oil to natural gas because it releases less CO₂ into the atmosphere per unit of energy. On January 6, 2012 we hosted a public event on the hydraulic fracturing (fracking) technology for extracting natural gas. The message of the film and speakers was that fracking has much more destructive impacts than the gas companies would have us believe, that much more study and caution is needed and that it may turn out that natural gas is not a safe bridge from here to the green energy future.

There has been a rush to obtain permits, lease land and begin drilling before we even know what the consequences will be.

The third is Green Sanctuary.

The Earthkeepers accept responsibility for carrying on the work that was begun in 2008 under Stefani Scott's leadership. This means that we will need to submit an annual report to the UUA and to carry out the other steps necessary to maintain the Fellowship's accreditation as a Green Sanctuary.

The fourth focus is on collaboration with the other groups in the social action circle through networking. At the UUA level there is the UU Ministry for Earth, which produces very informative reports and guidance and has recently introduced a curriculum for religious environmental education. There are two major organizations working at the interfaith level: GreenFaith and Interfaith Power and Light, which offer websites, publications, conferences etc. Locally, we would like to reach out to cooperate with the other faiths in the local area, but we have not yet tried this yet. All religions, in their written doctrines, place high importance on mankind's stewardship of the Earth. We take it as a given that all UUs are Earthkeepers and it is expected that along with their spiritual growth will come parallel growth in awareness of the impacts that their own choices and actions have on the web of life.

The Earthkeepers team, a kind of steering committee for the congregation consists of Andrew Collver, Rosie Wiesner and John Casper. They meet periodically to decide on policies and plan activities with interested members.

The UUMFE reflects our congregational support for broad environmental justice initiatives. Several of our members, Stefani Scott, Elizabeth Takakjian and Pat Killian among them, have taken up the torch to partner with the UUA in the annual celebration of Earth Day each April and to encourage the Fellowship to obtain Green Sanctuary status with the denomination as well as to educate us and the world about climate change. In addition, the Earth Keepers support the Hobbs Community Farm to raise vegetables and other foods to feed the hungry on a local level.

UUFSB was given the Hobbs Neighborhood Gardens 2010 "Helping Hand Award" at the Bethel Hobbs celebration at Bethel AME church in March. We were recognized for our volunteer activity in organizing and in the fields.

RACIAL CONCERNS

In May, 1986, the Social Concerns Committee invited Professor Reginald Wells to present a Sunday program on racism. As a result of his talk, the committee decided to form a Black Concerns sub-committee. A group of concerned members met during the summer to consider ways to break down color barriers, initiate dialogue and broaden the ethnic base of the UU membership. The first event offered was an essay contest for local high school students with cash prizes to be awarded on the Sunday morning service celebrating Martin Luther King's birthday.

It is worth noting here, that one of our members, Janet Hanson, executive director of Suffolk Housing Services in Port Jefferson, was honored by the Social Action Coalition (SAC) for her fight against housing discrimination against minorities and the poor. In her position as director, she won a suit for punitive and actual damages in a discrimination case in Suffolk County. The award she received, the Ed Ross Award, is named for the late Ed Ross, former chairman of the Suffolk Action coalition and executive director of the Suffolk Community Council.

In March, 1987, Lloyd Sargeant, then Chair of the Racial Concerns Committee, announced the winners of the first essay contest, students from Bellport, Longwood and Ward Melville high schools. Dr. Bruce Kare, a black professor from Stony Brook University presented the cash awards to the winners at the service on Martin Luther King Sunday. He stirred the congregation with an impressive lecture on the relevance of King and his movement. The Racial Concerns Committee hoped to make the essay contest an annual event.. The second contest on the historical and personal significance of Martin Luther King in 1988 awarded prizes of \$200, \$100 and \$50 to the three winners.

The committee worked with our minister, Steve Edington, to show the videotape, "A Black Pioneer in a White Denomination" based on the book by the Rev. Mark Morrison Reed, a black Unitarian minister. The committee also circulated a survey questionnaire on racism on television, the results of which can be used to influence the networks to be more aware of their slanting along racial lines in their daily telecasting.

The Racial Concerns Committee developed momentum in 1989-90. Among their projects were: An annual celebration of the life of Martin Luther King Jr.; a focus on Black African-American History Month; a worship service on equal voting rights; a fundraising concert for the Lloyd Sargeant Scholarship fund for black and Hispanic freshmen entering SUNY Stony Brook co-sponsored with the Brookhaven Branch of the NAACP, which raised \$2,010; and on Martin Luther King, Jr's Sunday service, honored the awardees of the fourth annual essay contest for high school students in grade as ten, eleven and twelve. The entries were judged by a committee of Fellowship members.

In the late '90s, under the leadership of Paul Glatzer, Chair, the Martin Luther King Service and Black History Month observances continued as they have to this day. Some of the special events over the years, included an art exhibit featuring the works of William Johnson and a collection for the Whitney Young Urban Ministry Fund yielded \$503. Many members participated in the Paul Robeson Memorial concert by Ken Anderson performed at the UU congregation at Shelter Rock, under the direction of our own Janet Hanson.

In March of 1998, the committee offered an urban ministries Sunday service focused on the life and work of Whitney M. Young, Jr., a man who devoted much of his life to improving the economic welfare of African-Americans. Deborah Little gave statistics exposing the persistent poverty of the majority of African-Americans, while Paul Glatzer described the glaring absence of African-Americans on the

teaching staffs in the school district surrounding the Stony Brook Fellowship. A special collection was taken up at this service to help fund special urban UU ministries (BOODA).

In 2001, the speaker at the annual MLK service was Gary Williams, president of the Brookhaven branch of the NAACP. During Black History Month, the committee organized and presented a service, "The Difficulty We Have Talking About Race". Many members of the Bethel AME Church in Setauket, including their minister, were in attendance and enjoyed a welcoming breakfast hosted by our high school students.

Committee member Barbara Coley presented an informative service during Black History Month, describing and sharing with us her recent experience as a Black American visiting Nigeria. The third annual African American Art exhibit was also part of the Month.

Janet Hanson, former chair of the committee, was honored this year as one of two persons given the *Andrew Hull* award for meritorious service by the Long Island Housing Services.

Under Paul Glatzer's leadership in 2002, seven Fellowship members continued to present ongoing programs such as the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday service with guest speaker, Frederick Brewington, Esq., the noted Civil Rights attorney. Twelve Fellowship members also joined with the First Baptist Church of Riverhead to share in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King breakfast at the Wyndham Wind Watch Hotel. During February, the committee organized and presented the fourth annual African-American Art Exhibition at the Fellowship gallery. A service for Black History Month commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Langston Hughes, attended by members of the AME Church in Setauket, preceded by welcome breakfast prepared and served by Fellowship youth. Observances such as these became a tradition for the Fellowship through the nineties and on.

Committee members attended UUA, Metro District and LIAC conferences such as "Institutional Racism on Long Island." In 2006, the Social Action Committee voted to sponsor Fellowship participation in the UUA's Journey Toward Wholeness (JTW) Anti-Racism program with Board approval. Barbara Coley and Deborah Little were appointed field test co-facilitators for a program initiated by participation as follows:

The Task Force wrote a formal proposal to the UUA asking that our congregation be selected as a field test site for "Building the World We Dream About", (BOODA), a curriculum designed for adult UUs that complements our goals. In response to our proposal, the UUA selected our congregation to participate in this project. The UUA wants to know how the curriculum works in congregations of various sizes, demographics and geographic locations. Feedback from the curriculum field test will be used to amend the Building the World We Dream About (BOODA) curriculum for general distribution in 2009. The JTW Task Force is proud that our congregation was selected to participate in this extremely important one year project and invited the congregation to participate in seminars and other activities during 2007-2008.

During the year, 2007-08, the Journey Toward Wholeness Task Force, co-facilitators, Barbara Coley and Deborah Little, along with members Peggy Cohee, Janet Hanson and Harriet HaSidi, conducted twice monthly BOODA seminars as well as informal gatherings to explore and give voice to the impact of racism on ourselves and the larger community; that we learn how to struggle effectively against racism; that we understand and appreciate the fact of diversity; and that we seek, welcome and encourage it in our congregation.

In addition to the involvement with the curriculum study, the Racial Concerns Committee continued to carry out its mission and goals with the annual participation in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., breakfast with the First Baptist Church of Riverhead on the official Dr. King holiday. In 2008, we were able to fill three tables of twelve members each, the largest number we have had in more than ten years of attendance at this event, which supports a comprehensive service center for children and adults in need in the Riverhead area.

On the Sunday preceding the official holiday, members participated in the service honoring Dr. King, a tradition going back decades at the Fellowship. After the service, the Committee sponsored a showing of the program “At the River I Stand”, a moving chronicle of the last year in the life of Dr. King.

The Committee also helped incorporate the recognition and focus on the Kwanza celebration during the Christmas holiday season services. During the January-February period, we sponsored the annual African-American Art exhibit with a showing of items from our members’ collections.

Paul Glatzer, then current chair of the Committee presented his program titled, “The Little Rock Nine – Then and Now, 1957-2007”. Invited by the Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee of the NY Metro District, Paul showed the program at its annual conference at the Community Church in May, 2008. Committee member, Janet Hanson, presented a program on the various aspects of the John White case. As Paul put it, “Janet’s help in educating all of us about the legal, social, political and of course the racial aspects of this disturbing and often misunderstood case is something we all can be thankful for and are grateful to her for all her efforts on this behalf.”

In his 2008 report, Paul continued to bring issues of race and ethnicity to our attention through our newsletter “The Unicorn.” It included information on both the *Loving vs. Virginia* case and the significance of *The Little Rock Nine* on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of the first Black student, Ernest Green, from Little Rock Central High. He noted that during February, Black History Month, the Committee has, for the past ten years, presented a service on Black History. Through an unfortunate oversight, the schedule eliminated our traditional service this year but we will certainly work to assure that this omission does not occur again. As racial issues, both local and national, come into play, the Racial Concerns Committee will continue to work towards a better understanding of the facts, of the emotions, of *the history* that are so necessary to understand in order to work towards a solution to our problems.

In his 2009 report, Paul cites our assistance in collecting textbooks for a library in a small village in Ethiopia. Sponsored by the Huntington Fellowship, UUFBSB members contributed close to six hundred books. Again, we took part in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., breakfast; the annual African-American Art exhibit had as its focus, the election of the first African-American president of the USA and both photos and cartoons from the election period were utilized. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., January service, coming two days before the inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States had as its focus, the “the impact of this monumental event, the election of the first African-American president and what does it mean to you as a person of color?” Three members of the Fellowship participated in the service sharing their views. At the end of the service, a booklet, designed and produced by member Tam Scott, titled “Reactions to the election of the first African-American president” containing the responses of the Fellowship (including youth in the RE program) was distributed towards the end of the service for all to share. The annual Black History Month service in February celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Barbara Coley, the Racial Concerns Committee chair gave her lengthy annual report in 2010, citing the mission, vision and activities of the committee in glowing terms. The committee re-stated its purpose and mission as follows:

The Racial Concerns Committee (RCC) of the UUFBSB, provides the congregation with information and opportunities that allow us to live out the seven principles of our faith as we identify, unmask, and eradicate institutional and personal expressions of racism. Our vision is that the members of UUFBSB appreciate and celebrate African American history –its emblematic struggles and its cultural richness situated among a diverse American people. We understand that the persistence of racism in institutions and in personal practice requires that we become

informed agents in the struggle to end discrimination toward people of color. The RCC celebrates the history and culture of African Americans even as we continue to struggle against institutional racism and personal racist practice.

In an effort to foster individual spiritual growth, we encourage members of the congregation to participate in programs to do the following:

" Increase understanding of how institutional racism impacts communities and the individual, and prepare individuals to act as allies in the struggle against racist practice.

" We join with the minister and with members of the congregation to craft services that celebrate Black History Month and honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his evolving concepts of social justice.

" We participate in the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English read-in of African American writers.

" We provide opportunities to view, read, and discuss media related directly to the experience of African American people

" We participate in field trips to important sites of African American history and culture.

" We honor our continued and mutually nourishing relationship expressed in events and programs with Bethel A.M.E. of Setauket, our sister church.

" We monitor events related to the mission and vision of the RCC as they unfold at the local, national, international and global levels, to inform our congregation and to allow opportunities for effective responses to the events importance and significance.

" We join with other UU congregations and committed persons in anti-racism efforts within the Metro District and beyond.

" We welcome new members to RCC and volunteers for special events.

In 2010, the Racial Concerns Committee celebrated its 25 years in operation, The Rev. James A. Forbes, Jr., Senior Minister Emeritus of the Riverside Church of Manhattan was the keynote speaker at the annual MLK breakfast. Our annual service for Black History Month featured Dr. Beryl Satter, author of "Family Properties: Race, Real Estate and the Exploitation of Black Urban America", and for a second year, the RCC hosted the NEA/Black Caucus read-in. The event began Saturday morning at 11 am and lasted until 4 pm. Children, youth and adults read from works by African American writers, read them aloud to a rapt audience and were applauded enthusiastically.

INTERWEAVE COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:

Interweave is a membership organization affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association, dedicated to the spiritual, political, and social well-being of Unitarian Universalists who are confronting oppression as lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender UUFSB members and friends and their heterosexual allies; and facilitates the celebration of the culture and lives of its members.

Goals of the Committee:

- " To provide a safe space for LGBT persons to meet with each other and their straight allies.
- " To lead the congregation in making the UU Fellowship at Stony Brook a place that is welcoming to all persons regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression and to communicate that to the community at large.
- " To educate the congregation and the larger community about LGBT people and issues.
- " To participate in social action activities that support civil rights and protections for LGBT persons.

Members of the Committee:

The UUFSB chapter of Interweave was formed in November, 2008 by Joan Rubinstein and Denise Schnittman. Membership is open to all UUFSB members and friends who agree with the mission and goals of the committee.

In the larger UU denomination, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has enacted more than twenty resolutions in support of bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender persons and their lives since 1970. Beginning with resolutions calling for educational efforts and non-discriminatory hiring practices within the UUA, the Association has struggled to become more congruent with its own Principles and Purposes. In 1996, the UUA made history by being the first mainline denomination in the U.S. to support legally recognized marriage between members of the same sex. Another resolution in 1989 funded the development of a program by which a church or fellowship could become a "Welcoming Congregation", one that is proactive about affirming the presence of bisexual, gay, and lesbian persons.

In 2012, our members Stood on the Side of Love: rallied on Nicolls Rd., for an end to bullying, for peace in our world. We engaged in a Common Read about people caught in our nation's immigration dilemma. We spoke out about civil discourse. Thirty of us took the UUFSB bus to the state capital in Albany in early May to lobby for Marriage Equality. We became newsmakers as we walked our social justice talk.

CHAPTER XI THE BEGINNING OF THE MEDITATIVE ARTS MINISTRY AT UUFSB

Linda Mikell describes the development of the Fellowship's Meditative Arts program:

In the years 2000 and 2001, Ed and I were working with the Dream Team on the plans for our new sanctuary and classrooms. At each meeting the architect would hand me brochures on lighting fixtures, and floor coverings, etc. I spent a lot of time looking through these booklets and dreaming of what might be for our Fellowship. One such booklet on flooring showed a beautiful design on the floor of a hospital in Canada. All it said in the caption was, "labyrinth." The design captivated me and I immediately did some research to find out more about it. I felt it had a deep and important meaning. Within a few months Ed and I were travelling to France to study the 800 year old labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral. We spent a wonderful week learning about the history and building of the labyrinth and the cathedral.

I thought it would be wonderful to have a labyrinth at our Fellowship. . .it is a spiritual tool that is open to all religions, all beliefs and all cultures, just right for welcoming Unitarian Universalists. I had to wait until 2003 to retire and then go on for certification as a facilitator. At that point I purchased a canvas labyrinth so that could start having walks in our original sanctuary. We had uninterrupted walks the whole time the new part of the sanctuary was being built right on the other side of the wall. The workers would stop for lunch while we walked so we could have quiet. Plans were made for a labyrinth to be inscribed permanently on the new sanctuary floor and donations were made to accomplish this dream.

Since that time we have had labyrinth walks EVERY Thursday afternoon and once a month on the second Tuesday in the evening. Members of our congregation and people from every religion have come to our Fellowship for the peace and clarity to be found on the labyrinth. We also made plans for an outdoor woodland labyrinth which was built in subsequent years. This labyrinth is open to all, even when the Fellowship is closed.

While I was in San Francisco at the Grace Cathedral studying to become a facilitator, I would notice Chinese elders coming to the labyrinth outside the cathedral to Tai Chi. As I watched their slow graceful movements I promised myself that I would study this skill in the future. I eventually studied Tai Chi for two years on Commack under Judi Hason. I asked if she would be interested in teaching in Stony Brook at our Fellowship. So began our TaiChi/Chi Gong/Yoga "school." This meditative arts school has grown to over one hundred students over the years. We have three Tai Chi teachers (Judi Hason, Diane Greenberg, Gwen DeVercelly) and one Kripalu Yoga instructor, Jean Cipriano.

When our consulting minister, the Rev. Margaret Allen, came to Stony Brook and started our Shawl Ministry, many members enjoy knitting quietly together and making beautiful works of spirit and art for others that may need the warmth of the wool and the love that went into the work.

Stony Brook Sangha, a Buddhist community in the tradition of Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, began in December, 2010. It was started by the Rev. Linda Anderson and Fellowship member, Ginger Williams. Linda had moved to Stony Brook in August and was looking for a sangha close by, whose gatherings she could attend. She found two sanghas, but one met on Sunday mornings and the other is in Manhasset, so Ginger and she started one at the Fellowship. Linda is a member of the core community of Thich Nhat Hanh, called the Order of Interbeing and has been part of a sangha since the year 2000. She was a meditator for many years before that, and even knew who Thich Nhat Hanh was, but didn't join a sangha until after she came back from a sabbatical in Plum Village, his monastery in France. Buddhism, like Unitarian Universalism, holds the interconnectedness, or interbeing, of all life to be paramount. Buddhism complements Unitarian Universalism, and vice versa. The sangha has a number of Fellowship members in it, as well as people not acquainted with the Fellowship. Stony Brook Sangha meets on Saturday mornings.

This rounded out our Meditative Arts Ministry –through walking meditations, sitting meditations, moving meditations and knitting meditations. It has been an honor and privilege to watch this grow.

CHAPTER XII OUR DENOMINATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

[Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (UUA) is our larger religious family – more than 1,000 congregations nationwide – sharing resources, strengthening congregations, starting new ones, and promoting our Principles. In 1962, the UUA created geographic areas, or districts, to support the health and vitality of congregations through direct service delivery. The UU District of Metropolitan New York – or the Metro NY District, as it is more commonly called – is one of 19 such districts and comprises [51 congregations](#) in portions of the states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. Congregations in the Metro NY District [referred to as “the District”] range in size from 9 to 1,489 reported adult members.

The District is further divided in four geographic areas: the Long Island Area (12 congregations on Long Island and Queens), the New Jersey Area (18 congregations in New Jersey and 1 congregation in Pennsylvania), the New York City Area (6 congregations in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Staten Island), and the Northern Area (14 congregations in the northern metropolitan area including 3 in Connecticut and 1 in Pennsylvania). There was an attempt to form a closer relationship and to develop a purpose in each of these areas, known as a Council, modeled after the Long Island Area Council, the first to attempt such a coalition. The New Jersey Area Council was organized by Edith Hull, then a member of the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, whose representatives met regularly for a number of years. Following the racial disturbances in Newark in the summer of 1967, the UU congregations in New Jersey supported the hiring of a community activist, John Young, to address the problems of minorities in the Newark area. Currently, only the [Long Island Area Council](#) remains as an active organization. The Rev. Dr. Randolph Becker was hired by the Council to create and administer programs for young people in Long Island societies. In 1981, he organized a sleep away summer camp for children up to 12th grade. Sophia Fahs Camp was named after a pioneer in religious education who became editor of religious education materials for the American Unitarian Association. Among her books that have been used in our religious education library are *Jesus, the Carpenter’s Son*, 1945; *From Long Ago and Many Lands*, 1948; and *Today’s Children and Yesterday’s Heritage*, 1952. Children in grades 3 to 12 spend a week during August at Shelter Island. Other programs Dr. Becker developed were Coming of Age for teenagers and Our Whole Lives, an age appropriate curricula in sexuality education. Fellowship members who have been active in the work of these programs and council administration included **Linda Volkorsz**, and **Joanne Hammer**.

Empowered by District [bylaws](#), the governing body of the District is the [Board of Trustees](#), responsible for the mission, policies, and operational integrity of the District. **Andrew P. Hull** served as its President from 1980-1983. With the UUA, the District co-employs a [District Executive](#), who bears primary responsibility for District operations. The District also employs a full-time [Administrator](#). **Edith Hull** served as District Administrator from 1976-2002.

In a cooperative arrangement with three other districts – Joseph Priestley, Ohio-Meadville, and St. Lawrence – known as the [Central East Regional Group](#) (CERG), the District shares four additional staff persons: Director for Lifespan Faith Development, Director for Growth, Director for Leadership Development, and Communications Consultant. Providing services to the District on a freelance basis are the [Young Adult and Campus Ministry Consultant](#), [Youth Ministry Consultant](#), [Right Relations Consultant](#), [Webmaster](#), and Bookkeeper. Staff members work from home offices. The District Executive has established a number of [committees](#) to help fulfill the District’s [mission](#).

Each UUA district is represented on the UUA Board of Trustees by a [District UUA Trustee](#). The District

UUA Trustee keeps the District Board, staff, and congregations apprised of UUA Board plans, actions, and programs, and represents the UUA at District Board meetings and major District gatherings.

Board of Trustees and Staff

The District [Board of Trustees](#) includes a President and 8 trustees at-large. The President and trustees at-large are elected by delegates to the District Annual Meeting. The President may be elected for no more than two consecutive two-year terms. Trustees at-large may be elected for no more than three consecutive two-year terms. From among the trustees at-large, the Board elects a Secretary.

District President

[The President](#) chairs the Board and reinforces communication and interchange among congregations in the District. The President also represents the interests of congregations and the Board through the UUA District Presidents Association.

District Executive

Under the District's policy governance structure, the [District Executive](#) is responsible to the Board for carrying out the Ends policies as defined by the Board. The District Executive serves as the point of connection and relationship between the staff of the UUA and congregations as well as facilitating inter-congregation cooperation. The District Executive is also a source of support and care for lay and professional leaders and oversees the provision of services to congregations.

Administrator

The primary responsibility of the [Administrator](#) is to help congregations stay informed and connected. The Administrator manages the Contact Information System, a database of District-level and congregational leaders; prepares and distributes the [Metro NY Minute](#), the District's monthly e-newsletter; and promotes, prepares for, and serves as registrar for each District Annual Meeting. The Administrator also works closely with the District's bookkeeper in managing financial activities, and serves the [District Board](#), [staff](#), and [committees](#) in carrying out a variety of other activities, including, among others, [Chalice Lighters](#), [annual awards](#), District Full Share contributions, and the website.

The Work of the District

The Metro NY District organization – its Board, staff, and committees – exist solely to benefit its member congregations and are committed to supporting existing as well as new congregations. Five principles guide the work of the District:

- " Fairly provide services to all congregations large and small.
- " Encourage and support ties between and among congregations (geographic or size based).
- " Effectively communicate with congregational leadership.
- " Support a basic structure of service delivery that is “fat, flat, and flexible”: “fat” meaning rich in resources, “flat” meaning available at the lowest level possible, beginning with congregations helping each other, and “flexible” meaning available in a variety of contexts and a variety of ways, depending on the needs of individual congregations.
- " Extend direct service by training knowledgeable volunteers in all aspects of helping smaller congregations, including modules on worship, conflict management, congregational dynamics by size, personality types, District and UUA resources, mechanics of running a church, and so on.

We believe it is important to spread Unitarian Universalism in our District. Many more people than those who are members of our congregations would benefit from our faith’s perspective and would welcome our values framework if they knew how to find us. Just as we have been informed and, in some cases, deeply touched by our connection with a Unitarian Universalist congregation, so there are others who live within driving distance of our meeting places who would be, too. This is the work of the District. Some of the activities undertaken to make this happen include:

- Provide lay leadership training and workshops on mission, strategic planning, membership, volunteer recruitment and retention, conflict resolution, and help with annual canvass, and capital campaigns.
- Maintain a database of contact information for congregation and District-level leadership, and make this information available.
- Keep congregations informed about District [events](#).

Financial responsibilities include:

- Help raise funds for services that support and promote healthy, growing, congregations and raise the visibility of Unitarian Universalism.
- Administer the District Full Share assessment and collection, and provide oversight of the District budget.
- Encourage Annual Program Fund giving.

Management responsibilities include:

- Plan, set goals, and establish priorities for District activities.
 - Select individuals and groups charged with the planning, training leaders, and conducting District activities.

Responsibilities to the UUA include:

- Advance the programs, purposes, and principles of the UUA.
- Participate as a co-employer with the UUA Office of District Services in selecting and evaluating of District field staff.
- Participate with the UUA in selecting, supporting and encouraging, and evaluating the District [Annual Program Fund District Chair](#), [Compensation Consultant](#), and [Ministerial Settlement Representative](#).
- Participate with the UUA in nominating persons to serve on various UUA committees and commissions.
- Assist in informing congregations about UUA programs, services, materials and consultants.
- Promote and extend liberal religion.

How We Communicate

Communication among District leadership and congregations takes many forms – from personal phone calls and emails, to the District website, to the District Annual Meeting.

Presidents Roundtables

Twice a year, in the fall and again in the spring, the District sponsors a Presidents Roundtable hosted by the District President. This one day event provides a great opportunity for networking and building relationships across the District.

Annual Meeting

In late April or early May, the District sponsors the Annual Meeting. For many, the meeting is a time to be in community, share knowledge, reaffirm relationships, network as a religious community, and to applaud the presentation of awards are a few of the highlights which take place each year and of course, to have fun together.

*Spirit of Life, come unto me,
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion,
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea,
Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.
Roots hold me close, wings set me free;
Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.*

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