

June 2009 - Newsletter

Massachusetts Bay District of Unitarian Universalist Congregations



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MBD Reignites



An Interesting Journey

by [Pat Manley](#)

MBD President

Several years ago, as a new member of the Board of Directors of First Parish in Sherborn, my dear friend Kab asked if I would like to go with her to the District meeting. She explained that it was sure to be interesting and that I would have the opportunity to meet UUs from around the area. Since I didn't know any UUs who weren't from the Sherborn church, I agreed to accompany her to the meeting. She was right. I met other UUs and heard about things that were going on in their congregations.

That began an interesting journey and over several years, I attended other District meetings, Northeast Leadership School (NELS) and General Assemblies. At the same time, I moved into the Presidency of my congregation and found that it was when I went *outside* my own church that I learned how to function *inside* my church. I learned the importance of welcoming strangers. I learned about stewardship, about worship and music, about UU history and theology. I learned why we light a chalice and why we "check in" at meetings. I learned the *vital* importance of lay leadership in congregations and what it takes to be an effective lay leader. And I learned that there are amazing resources available to learn about being a vibrant church.

At a Mass Bay District meeting, I heard that some congregations received "[Woburn Grants](#)" and what they were able to do as a result of receiving "free money." In January 2005, we, in Sherborn, realized that with all of our efforts, strategies, and plans for growth, it wasn't likely to work if we didn't "fix" our membership process. We decided to apply for a Woburn Grant to fund a Membership Coordinator. We were awarded a grant to fund a part time position for one year starting in July 2005.

Chalice Lighter Program

MBD Chalice Lighters are UUs who support a lot of faithful work in District

congregations by contributing small gifts once or twice a year. If you are not already a Chalice Lighter in the MBD, we invite you to [sign up today](#). Help congregations amplify our faith's impact in the world!

Woburn Fund

Go to [2009 Grant Awards](#) to learn which District congregations received grants this year.

By October, we knew that we had hit a home run. I called Barbara Bates, the then President of the Mass Bay District, and asked if we could make a presentation at the spring District Meeting about the change having a Membership Coordinator was making: 70% of people who walked through the doors were becoming members.

You'll guess the rest of the story... a presentation at a District meeting, attendance at "Learning Congregation" workshops meant I was "visible" and two years ago, I was invited to serve on the Mass Bay District Board. I was no longer on the Sherborn Board of Directors and was ready to work for the growth of Unitarian Universalism more broadly.

The Mass Bay District [Board of Directors](#) is a seven member "Policy Governance" board focused on insuring that the District "assist in the development of spiritually healthy and coventally based Unitarian Universalist congregations." We meet quarterly, and generally, some of us are present at Mass Bay District workshops, convocations, and other [programs and events](#).

I, and I believe I speak for the entire Mass Bay District board, love being part of the District board, meeting terrific people from lots of congregations, sharing thoughts and ideas on what it means to be spiritually healthy. I enjoy going to services in other UU churches, inside and outside the district and experiencing our varied paths, our many sources of inspiration, our "theme and variations" worship model.

For me, being a Unitarian Universalist is enriching and I want to see Unitarian Universalism thriving and open and inviting to all of those who need us.

If you see yourself in any of this, please consider yourself invited to join me on the journey. And if you want to be in touch with me, please [email](#) me.

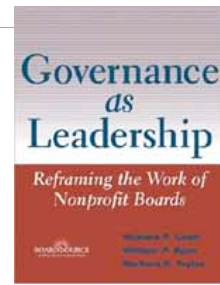
Peace!

Resources for Policy Governance

**Governance as Leadership:
Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards**



by Ricahrd P. Chait, William P. Ryan and
Barbara E. Taylor
John Wiley & Sons, 2005



"This book redefines nonprofit governance. It provides a powerful framework for anew covenant between trustees and executives: more *macrogovernance* and less *micormanagement*." (From dust jacket)

[Available through the District Library](#)



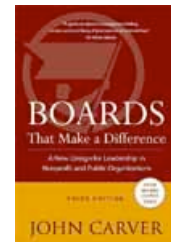
Governance in Ministry

by Dan Hotchkiss
Alban Institute, 2009

A roadmap and tools for changing the way boards and clergy work together to lead congregations. Hotchkiss demonstrates that the right governance model is the one that best enables a congregation to fulfill its mission-to achieve both the outward results and the inward quality of life to which it is called.

Boards That Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations

by John Carver
Jossey-Bass, 3rd edition, 2006



The "flagship" explanation of the Policy Governance model as it relates to nonprofit and governmental boards. It is the single most inclusive text on the model.

[MBD News Editor](#)

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