

MaleCall



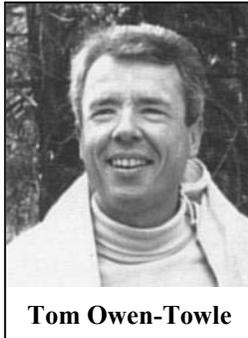
Journal of the Unitarian Universalist Men's Network
 UUMeN, P.O. Box 3070, Madison, Wisconsin 53704-0070
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Volume 10, Number 2

Winter 2003-2004

**Brother-Spirit Fund:
 Honoring the Legacy of
 Tom Owen-Towle
 a Founder of UUMeN**

Ten years ago, the Rev. Tom Owen-Towle (San Diego, CA) conceived the idea of a new Unitarian Universalist organization. It would be a group like none other—dedicated to the spiritual health and growth of UU men. Tom envisioned men reaching out to other men, both within their congregations and across the continent.



Tom Owen-Towle

Thus, the UU Men's Network was formed. And in the decade since, Tom's vision has been realized. Today, the UUMeN is a thriving network of hundreds of men. And now that Tom has stepped down from his hands-on leadership at UUMeN, it's time to honor him.

Last year, as he ended his last term on the UUMeN Steering Council, I told Tom that I'd like to create a fund in his name. My idea was to amass some cash to continue his legacy at UUMeN. Tom is a modest fellow, and at first, he didn't want to call attention to himself.

But assured that the money would help men grow in spirit and action, Tom eventually relented. Then he and his wife, Carolyn, launched the fund with a \$2,500 contribution. The **Brother-Spirit Fund in Honor of Tom Owen-Towle** was born.

(Continued on page 2)

Make a **tax-deductible** contribution to the

BROTHER-SPIRIT FUND

Yes! I want to assure the future of a strong UUMeN organization:

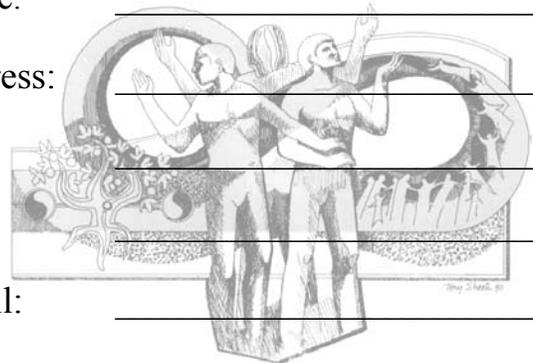
Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Congregation: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____



**Make checks payable UUMeN.
 Please write "Brother-Spirit Fund" in the
 memo line. Send to:**

**UUMeN,
 P.O. Box 3070
 Madison, WI 53704-0070**

UUMeN is a Sec. 501(c)(3) organization

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About UUMeN

The Unitarian Universalist Men's Network is a continental membership organization for UU men (which also welcomes other gender allies). Our purpose is to build and sustain a mature, liberal religious masculinity. Our primary objectives are to: develop a continental resource network; support the personal and spiritual growth of men at the local, district and continental levels; and collaborate with other UU groups who share our interests and commitments. Members receive a quarterly newsletter, may vote at our Annual Meeting held in June at General Assembly, and are eligible for discounts on materials.

2003-2004 Steering Council

Neil Chethik (KY), president, 2004
Jim Jaeger (WI), treasurer, 2005
Bob Hospadaruk (MI), 2004
Kenneth Beldon (FL), 2005
Frank Robertson (MA), 2005
Dave Woods (IL), 2005
Drew Johnston (WA), 2006
Todd Strickland (CO), 2006
Dick Whitaker (IL), 2006

Tom Owen-Towle, President Emeritus

*UUMeN is a Sec. 501(c)(3)
organization.*

MaleCall

MaleCall is published quarterly by UUMeN, P.O. Box 3070, Madison, Wisconsin 53704-0070. It is printed in the United States of America. Submissions for publication are welcome, but are subject to editing for length and clarity. The views expressed in MaleCall are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of UUMeN.

Please send all submissions and concerns via e-mail (uumen@usa.net) to:

Editor: Jaco B. ten Hove

Layout: Bob Hospadaruk

Address Changes: Jim Jaeger

(Brother-Spirit Continued from page 1)

In the months since, a dozen members of current and past UUMeN Steering Councils have personally pledged a total of \$5,000. Today, including some contributions from friends and colleagues of Tom's, the *Brother-Spirit Fund* has nearly \$10,000 in cash and pledges.

Now YOU have an opportunity to be a part of our fund drive, and honor Tom in the process. Many of you know Tom, have attended his workshops at UUA General Assemblies, or have read one of his many books, such as *New Men*, *Deeper Hunger* or *The Friendship Chronicles*.

Our goal is to raise a total of \$15,000 by the next General Assembly in June 2004. To make that goal, *we'll need your help*. I ask you to consider making a tax-deductible donation of \$25, \$50, \$100, or even more if you are able.

We at UUMeN pledge to use the money wisely to continue Tom's work. Primarily, as Tom has requested, it will go to :

- Help create and enhance men's groups at UU congregations;
- Support stronger connections between gay and straight men;
- Support bridge-building between women and men.

You'll find a contribution form on page one of this issue of *MaleCall*. Please fill it out. Then send it and a check to our Madison, WI, headquarters with "Brother-Spirit Fund" on the memo line.

Tom knew the importance of a vital, vibrant UU men's network. You know it too. Let's continue the work of fulfilling—and expanding—Tom's vision. Help ensure a vibrant future for UUMeN.

Thank you!

Neil Chethik of Lexington, Ky., is president of UUMeN. Reach him at nchet@aol.com.



In every brother resides untold miracles.
The challenge is for us to share
our magic while alive,
To open our pockets, our hearts,
And let our wonders shine forth...

- Tom Owen-Towle, *Brother-Spirit*

THE ODYSSEY RETREAT: A Model for Elder Men

by Webster Kitchell
Minister Emeritus
UU Congregation of Santa Fe, NM

A few years back, several retired men gave voice to a perception that the majority of their male peers in the UU Congregation of Santa Fe seemed emotionally isolated. So a few of us imagined that if we created a safe place for senior men to tell their stories, it might help overcome that sense of isolation.

That was based on an assumption that every human has a unique story. It could be a story of success as our culture defines success. It could be a story of getting to the emotional heart of life. It could be a story of overcoming addiction, a story of faith and courage and determination. It could be a story of tilting at windmills and coming to a Judgment about the pleasures of combating windmills.

Whatever, we thought everyone had an odyssey to tell but perhaps no one to tell it to; no safe confessor. It used to be expected that you got to explain yourself at the Pearly Gates; your record was there await-



ing you. We don't believe in Pearly Gates. We believe in doing the God-work ourselves.

So we concocted an experiment. We reserved a retreat center for three days. We sent a letter to the retired men of the congregation inviting them to share their odysseys in a safe environment. We thought twelve men would be a manageable number. We got twelve. We took it as a sign of divine approval.

What is an odyssey retreat experience? Since we insist on confidentiality, I can only tell you of my

The UU Congregation of Santa Fe, NM, has held six Odyssey Retreats since the program's inception in March, 2000.

From an Odyssey Retreat brochure:

WHAT IS AN ODYSSEY? **It could be a tale:**

- Of success—or of failures—and what he learned
- Of bitterness—or of how he found what he needed
- Of discovery and love and deepening joy
- Of difficulties overcome and manhood redefined
- Of quiet and unsung heroism
- Of struggling for intellectual and emotional freedom
- Of letting go and finding peace
- Of spiritual struggle
- Of home and children
- Worth telling to a circle of friends

Questions?

Contact Pete Myers, email: peatmyers@aol.com

own experiences. I have been to four of these retreats. We settled on a format of 12 men, with each man allotted an hour to present his odyssey in any manner or form he wished. This also meant we'd be listening to 11 other presentations, which is quite a commitment; to sit in a hard chair listening for 11 hours.

We meet on a Tuesday in time for supper, after which we have three presentations. Wednesday morning we have three more presentations. That afternoon is unstructured

time, featuring hikes, strolls into the village, hot-tubs and massages, private time for reading and snoozing, etc. After supper there are another three presentations and then Thursday morning there are three more. We leave after lunch on Thursday. That means four sessions of three presentations each, with time for participants to interact at meals and sitting around in the lounge. We found there was a powerful bonding. Many of the participants have returned several times.

Each session has a time keeper, and we open by lighting the chalice to symbolize that this is a special sacred time. There is a pledge of confidentiality, so I

(Continued on page 5)

Boys and Their Dads On Vacation

By Frank Robertson

During last summer, I tried to notice how boys and dads enjoyed their summer vacations together. I asked some others to share their observations, too. The stories below are illustrative...

Among my summer adventures was a ride up New Hampshire's Mt. Washington on the old Cog Railway—one of the most boy-friendly activities that I have ever seen. (Built in 1869, it was the world's first mountain-climbing railroad, using a spoked cog wheel that fits into holes in the track to keep the train steady on severe inclines.)

There they were: boys with their dads climbing around in the train's car as its steam engine pushed them up the mountainside, jerking forward cog-by-cog at about a forty degree angle. Many of them wore engineer's hats that they had purchased at the Gift Shop. They grabbed the iron poles in the car, leaned out the windows, moved up and down the isle, gripping the seat backs to steady themselves, enjoying the physical and mechanical aspects of it all.

Back home in Plymouth, I shared my observations with a young UU couple from the church and they resolved to bring their two very active boys up the Cog Railway some day soon. The mother said: "At first, when my sons were born, I believed that all male-type stuff was conditioned; but, as they grew and naturally preferred trains, trucks, tools, mechanical things, etc., I began to change my view. Many boys have an in-born propensity for such things."

The father said he had recently observed another dad at the airport watching a plane dock with his young son. That boy's dad said: "Do you know how they make a plane?" The boy replied: "No. How?" The dad went on to say: "Well, they start with a pile of dirt..." The UU dad reflected that it was typical of men and

boys to be interested in how things are built.

Neil Chethik, our current UUMeN president, tells this story of how one can affirm a son's boyhood while offering some value-centered guidance.

"My son Evan (age 9) and I, along with two members of my men's group, went canoeing and fishing on Elkhorn Creek here in Kentucky. We were having a good day fishing; we'd caught about 2 dozen, with about 6 'keepers.' We connected them on a thin chain, and attached it to the side of our canoe so that the fish would remain alive in the water. In the last half-mile of a 6-mile trip, we hit some rapids, got bounced around a bit, and discovered a few minutes later that the chain had been broken. All the fish were gone.

"Evan was distraught, first at the suffering the fish would have to endure, attached together as they were to what remained of the chain. Also, he had been so excited about taking the fish home, showing them to his mom, catching his own meal. Now all of that was gone, too.

"He fought to hold back tears as we started baiting our hooks for one last try at bringing home some fish. As we dipped our lines in the water again, the four of us told stories about disappointing things that had happened in our lives: people who had failed to come through for us, sports teams that had lost in the championship game, etc. We also said a brief prayer for the fish, and hoped another predator would come by and finish them off quickly.

"Then, suddenly, we started catching fish again—lots of them! In a half-hour, we caught 30+ fish, including about a dozen that were big enough to take home. As we paddled the final stream, I asked Evan what he had learned from the experience. He said, 'Never give up.' "

MaleCall welcomes stories from our readers like those above that help us affirm the lives of men and boys, exploring the world, themselves and each other.

(Odyssey Retreat Continued from page 3)

can't reveal what men said. Some of the participants did a "name, rank and serial number" sort of presentation (born, survived childhood, school, marriage, children, work). I thought I didn't want to do that. I don't find those to be the most interesting facets of my life.

At the first odyssey retreat, I opted to tell of my search for God. It is a little embarrassing for a minister of 40 years service to admit that he has never found God. But I manfully told the story and nobody thought it strange. In a sense, the acceptance by my age-mates let me accept my own personal truth. It was a strong bonding experience, accompanied by the equally strong bonding experience of hearing 11 other stories intimately told. My second odyssey tale was of my search for love.

For my third odyssey, I identified a rage I did not understand, under my rational character. But in the telling of this part of my odyssey, with a little help from Dylan Thomas, I recognized my situation in his poem: "Do not go gentle into that good night. Old age should burn and rave at close of day: rage, rage against the dying of the light." Several of the men shared the rage; several seemed perplexed at our rage.

On my fourth odyssey, I was scraping the bottom of my emotional barrel. But in preparing for my hour, I found a joy welling up in me. In the words of Albert Camus, "In the midst of winter I found in myself an invincible summer." I affirmed the goodness of my whole life, my life as a whole! There are moments when I feel oppressed by life, by fate, by the gulf between people, but my life as a whole has been an affirmation of human goodness.

So in four installments I spoke of my loss of God, of my eventually finding love, my anger at the dying of the light, and my joy in being alive. It would be enough to know all that privately and secretly. It is another order of emotional magnitude to share it in a secure environment with my peers. And, in the words of one participant, I was healed as much by listening as by telling.

Now we meet monthly, back in our everyday lives

in Santa Fe, to keep the bonds of brotherhood fresh. Sometimes we meet for lunch, sometimes we meet in the evening. We continue our stories.

Telling our story is a luxury that we should not deny ourselves. The great majority of humans don't have that privilege and pleasure—to relax near the end of life and reflect on what it all has meant. We have found a way to celebrate elder-hood, and we are enthusiastic.

It can also be a boon for our congregations. To turn a bunch of depressed and isolated men on to some intimate sharing and fun is to discover a source of spirit for the life of the local congregation. It is to inspire loyalty to a congregation that takes seriously its mission to minister to those in a prison of the spirit, to those hungry for closeness, to those who thirst for meaning and wisdom.

UUMeN Web Site Can Be Linked!

Come visit our regularly updated UUMeN web site. You'll find lots of information about UUMeN, plus materials that can support men's groups and other men's programming. Lots of items about **Boy-Friendly Religious Education** are now up. The web address is: www.uumen.org. Explore it! Point it out to other men (and RE professionals)!

Add a link to it from your group's web site!

Men's Worship Service Materials Now on the Web!

The first edition of *Design a Men's Worship Service: Resources & Ideas* is now available on our UUMeN web site. Check it out! And then send us some more of whatever you've done or experienced at services centered on men's themes. We're looking for rituals, music, readings, opening/closing words, images, skits, testimonials, sharing topics, and all other manner of resources related to men's themes. Important: Include all authors' names and sources (if they've been previously published). Direct material to UUMeN@usa.net. *Thanks!*

Growing List of UU Men's Group Locations

At a couple of recent UUA General Assemblies, the UU Men's Network exhibit booth has featured a map of North America, on which booth visitors were invited to locate a men's group they know about. These 171 are either associated with or near the UU groups identified.

Add yours by e-mailing us at
UUMeN@usa.net!

ALASKA

Seward UU

Kodiak UU Fellowship

ARIZONA

Valley UU Church, Chandler

ARKANSAS

UU Church of Little Rock

CALIFORNIA

UU Fellowship of Santa Cruz County, Aptos

UU Fellowship of Kern County, Bakersfield

Humboldt UU Fellowship, Bayside

Orange Coast UU Church, Costa Mesa

Unitarian Church of Davis

UU Community of the Mountains, Grass Valley

First Unitarian Church of Oakland

UU Church of Palo Alto

UU Fellowship of Redwood City

UU Community Church, Sacramento

First UU Church, San Diego

First UU Society of San Francisco

First UU Church, San Jose

UU Fellowship of San Luis Obispo

UU Fellowship of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa

UU Fellowship of Sunnyvale

UU Church of Ventura

Mt. Diablo UU Church, Walnut Creek

COLORADO

UU Fellowship of Boulder

UU Church of Boulder

All Souls UU Church, Colorado Springs

Foothills Unitarian Church, Ft. Collins

Jefferson Unitarian Church, Golden

CONNECTICUT

Unitarian Society of New Haven, Hamden

Unitarian Society, Hartford

First Universalist Society, New Haven

All Souls UU Congregation, New London

UU Society of Northern Fairfield County,

West Redding

DELAWARE

UU Fellowship of Newark

First Unitarian Society of Wilmington

FLORIDA

UU Fellowship of Boca Raton

UU Church of Ft. Lauderdale

First Unitarian Church of Orlando

UU Church, Tallahassee

UU Church of Tampa

GEORGIA

UU Church of Augusta

UU Metro Atlanta North Congregation,

Roswell

HAWAII

First Unitarian, Honolulu

ILLINOIS

UU Church of Bloomington

Second Unitarian Church, Chicago

North Shore UU Church, Deerfield

UU Fellowship of De Kalb

Unitarian Church of Evanston

Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet

DuPage UU Church, Naperville

Unity Temple UU Congregation, Oak Park

Universalist Unitarian Church, Peoria

INDIANA

UU Church of Indianapolis

First Unitarian Church of South Bend

KANSAS

Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence

Shawnee Mission UU Church, Overland Park

KENTUCKY

First Unitarian Church, Louisville

LOUISIANA

Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge

MAINE

UU Church, Ellsworth

First Parish UU Church, Kennebunk

First Universalist Church, Yarmouth

MARYLAND

Paint Branch UU Church, Adelphi

Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda

River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda

Towson UU Church, Lutherville

UU Church of Silver Spring

MASSACHUSETTS

UU Congregation in Andover

First Parish UU, Arlington

Unitarian Church of Barnstable

First Church in Belmont

First Parish Church in Beverly

First Parish UU, Bridgewater

First and Second Church, Boston

First Religious Society, Carlisle

First Parish Church in Concord

First Parish Church UU, Duxbury

UU Society of Fairhaven

UU Fellowship of Falmouth

First Universalist Society, Franklin

First Parish in Hingham

First Congregational Parish in Kingston

First Parish in Lexington

First Church Unitarian, Littleton

First Church UU, Leominster

Melrose UU Church

First UU Church of Milford

North Parish of North Andover

Unity Church of North Easton

First Unitarian Church, Worcester

MICHIGAN

First UU Church, Ann Arbor

Birmingham Unitarian Church,

Bloomfield Hills

First UU Church, Detroit

UU Church of Greater Lansing, East Lansing

People's Church, Kalamazoo

Paint Creek UU Congregation, Rochester

UU Congregation of Grand Traverse,

Traverse City

MINNESOTA

First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis

MISSOURI

All Souls UU Church, Kansas City

MONTANA

UU Fellowship of Bozeman

NEBRASKA

First Unitarian Church, Omaha

Second Unitarian Church, Omaha

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Congregational Society (Unitarian),

Peterborough

NEW JERSEY

First UU Fellowship of Hunterdon, Baptistown

Morristown Unitarian Fellowship

First Unitarian Society of Plainfield

Unitarian Church in Summit

UU Church at Washington Crossing, Titusville

NEW MEXICO

UU Congregation of Santa Fe

NEW YORK

First UU Society of Albany

First Unitarian Congregational Society,

Brooklyn

UU Fellowship, Croton-on-Hudson

UU Fellowship of Huntington

UU Congregation of the Catskills, Kingston

Unirondack Camp & Conf. Center, Lowville

UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset

Fourth Universalist Society, New York City

UU Fellowship at Stony Brook

UU Church of Amherst, Williamsville

NORTH CAROLINA

Community Church of Chapel Hill, UU

Piedmont UU Church, Charlotte

Eno River UU Fellowship, Durham

UU Congregation of Greenville

UU Fellowship of New Bern

UU Fellowship of Raleigh

OHIO

UU Church of Akron

Maumee Valley UU Congregation,

Bowling Green

St. Johns UU Church, Cincinnati

First Unitarian Church of Cleveland

West Shore UU Church, Cleveland

First UU Church of Columbus

Miami Valley UU Fellowship, Dayton

UU Church of Kent

First UU Society, Marietta

First UU Church of Youngstown

OREGON

UU Church in Eugene

UU Community Church, Hillsboro

(Continued on page 7)

PENNSYLVANIA

Thomas Paine UU Fellowship, Collegeville
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon
UU Congregation of Erie
First Unitarian Church, Philadelphia

RHODE ISLAND

UU Congregation of South County, Peace Dale
First Unitarian Church of Providence

TENNESSEE

First UU Church, Nashville
Oak Ridge UU Church, Oak Ridge

TEXAS

Bay Area UU Church, Houston
Emerson Unitarian Church, Houston
Comal County UU Society, New Braunfels
Community UU Church, Plano
Community UU Church, San Antonio

VERMONT

First UU Society of Burlington

VIRGINIA

UU Church of Arlington

WASHINGTON

East Shore Unitarian Church, Bellevue
Free Church Unitarian, Blaine
Woodinville UU Church

WISCONSIN

First Unitarian Society, Madison
Unitarian Church North, Mequon

CANADA

Unitarian Church of Vancouver, BC
First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, ON
Neighborhood UU Church, Toronto, ON
First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, ON
Unitarian Congregation of South Peel, Missis-
sauga, ON

ROMANIA

Bagyon Unitarian Church, Transylvania

THREE GREAT BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM UUMeN

Here are three strong resources to start or help sustain UU men's groups:

A Community of Men: A Guide to Men's Programming in UU Congregations is available for \$5—free to members—and offers basic information on how to organize new men's groups and keep them vibrantly alive over time. *For your copy, contact us at UUMeN@usa.net, or at our mailing address on the front page of this newsletter. There is no shipping or handling charge.*

For a book with dozens of conversation-starters related to men, you can order *New Men, Deeper Hungers*, by Tom Owen-Towle. Owen-Towle is a founder of UUMeN, and author of many books. *New Men, Deeper Hungers* is available from UUMeN for \$15 (only \$10 for UUMeN members). *Shipping and handling is \$2 per book. Make checks payable to UUMeN, and send to our address.*

A third book, *FatherLoss*, focuses on the father-son relationship. It comes with a study guide for men's groups. Chethik is a founding UMeN steering council member, and currently president. *To order FatherLoss, make your check for \$14 to Neil Chethik, and then send to UUMeN/FatherLoss, PO Box 8071, Lexington, Ky. 40533. Proceeds from sales will be donated to UUMeN. There is no shipping or handling charge.*



If every man would mend a man, then all the world would be mended

- Anonymous

2004 Sermon Award Now Open!

Ministers and laypersons of all genders are invited to submit sermons for the next annual UUMeN sermon contest. (Two of the last three winners have been female ministers.) The sermon should explore a men's issue related to the purposes and objectives of UUMeN. (See page 2.) It must be delivered in a UU congregation between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004. The submitted text should be single-spaced and less than 2,500 words.

Mail two copies (with a cover letter but no identifying mentions in the sermon copies) to **UUMeN, PO Box 3070, Madison, WI 53704-0070**, by the deadline of April 15, 2004. Rotating men's groups (supervised by a UUMeN Steering Council member) provide the judging process. The award winner will receive **\$500** and recognition at the UUA General Assembly in Long Beach, CA (need not be present).

MaleCall

Unitarian Universalist Men's Network
P.O. Box 3070
Madison, Wisconsin 53704-0070

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UUMeN Membership Application and Renewal Form

Membership is valid for twelve months following the date of dues donation. Please also consider making an additional tax-deductible gift.

Annual Dues:

- () Individual Member, \$25
- () MaleCall Only or Student, \$15
- () Supporter, \$100
- () Sustainer, \$150
- () Other, \$ _____

Please check each category above that applies to your tax-deductible financial contribution to UUMeN, and then complete the information requested to the right.

Members receive *MaleCall*, a quarterly newsletter, may vote at the UUMeN Annual Meeting and are eligible for discounts on UUMeN materials and event registrations.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____

Name and Address of Congregation: _____

() I support the purpose and objectives of the UUMeN and hereby apply for UUMeN membership.

() Please renew my UUMeN membership.

Make checks payable in US funds to UUMeN. Send this form together with your tax-deductible dues remittance and any supporting gift to UUMeN, P.O. Box 3070, Madison, Wisconsin 53704-0070.