

## The Well-Grounded CUUPS Chapter

David R. Burwasser

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### Introduction

This document rests on specific premises here made explicit. Each section that follows is keyed to one premise.

1. A distinct, unique UU Paganism is possible, is being born, and is in existence. UU Paganism can be seen from two directions:
  - It is the Pagan expression of Unitarian Universalism.
  - It is the Unitarian Universalist version of Paganism.
2. UU Paganism has a history. Necessarily, it shares history with the neo-Pagan movement in North America. It also shares in the history of the UUA. Indeed, it is an expression of the history of the UUA and cannot be understood apart from that history.
3. It is not part of UU Paganism to designate certain ritual formats as the only proper formats, nor is it, within broad limits, the business of UU Paganism to rule particular ritual formats out of bounds. Some prudence and diplomacy are appropriate in introducing potentially misunderstood ritual elements into a UU church.
4. UU Paganism respects the roots of traditions, but does not acknowledge any exclusive claim of a particular tradition to particular ritual or spiritual practices, or any claim that there is only one "right way" to perform them.
5. Notwithstanding the three foregoing points, indeed in part because of them, not every Pagan is going to be comfortable with UU Paganism or with its organizational manifestation, CUUPS.
6. A CUUPS chapter is expected to maintain ties to the UU congregation within whose framework it is organized, and to function as a spiritual resource for that home congregation.

Some UUs may be surprised that quite a bit of the following is about limits and boundaries, specifically the limits and boundaries that define "UU". They should not be. Despite a certain folk romanticism to the contrary, UU congregations do have boundaries and occasionally impose new ones. Among the latter recently have been barriers against clergy sexual misconduct and the requirement that UU social events that serve alcohol also provide alternative beverages. When the need for these constraints became clear, appeals to the "no-limits" romanticism were completely unavailing and indeed in the latter instance they were not even raised.

Most UU congregational limits are produced by consensus, unstated while in effect, and require no enforcement mechanism. Thus UU Sunday services generally start at the scheduled hour, UU congregations do not cry out in Pentecostal fashion and UU clergy generally do not harangue for financial support in the manner of broadcast evangelists. Note that in each instance, the contrary is technically permissible in terms of formally enforceable restrictions. That is seldom occurs is due to the fact that enforcement by custom and practice is far more effective than enforcement by rules.

Perhaps unfairly but unavoidably it falls to UU Pagans to ponder consciously the limits and boundaries of which many UUs are usually unconscious, even though they do live constantly within them. UU Pagans have deliberately introduced elements into UU thea/ology and liturgy that dissolve some established boundaries and flow over some former limits. It therefore is the lot of UU Pagans to examine which of the implicit, unstated boundaries that exist within any UU congregation are to be given such treatment, and which are to be respected and defended, even at the price of controversy with CUUPS chapter members from the larger Pagan community. Reluctance to pay this price exacts a higher toll, one of controversy at some later time with the home congregation, but of a different sort. It is one thing to accept controversy as the cost of dissolving the limitation that the expression of God must always be male or that the sacred and the earthly must always be opposed. It is quite another to find oneself in controversy because a subgroup supposedly ganged with a congregation is making use of congregational resources while showing no respect for or interest in learning about the core values of that congregation. When latter kind of controversy arises, somewhere along the line a boundary was violated that should have been respected, and if necessary, defended. The purpose of this document is to help the CUUPS chapter prevent or repair that kind of damage. Some CUUPS chapters have already found themselves in the midst of such conflict and have been wounded thereby and they may properly wonder where this resource was when they could have used it. It may be of some consolation that descriptions of problems and solutions herein are based on those unhappy experiences, with the hope of forestalling repetition.

This document has been prepared exclusively from experiences of UU Pagans and CUUPS chapters with other UUs and with other Pagans. If you find some topic that is not covered here on which you could use suggestions, or on which you have experience that could be shared with other chapters, or if anything strikes a wrong note for you, PLEASE COMMUNICATE! Contact the CUUPS board at PO Box 3128 , Durham, NC 27715-3128. [Or via e-mail [info@cuups.org](mailto:info@cuups.org)]

### **I. A Distinct Paganism**

Unitarian Universalist Paganism is an odd breed among Paganism. It is not an initiation system, but is part of a tradition. It is a community imbued with specific UU values that include celebration of diversity and respect for each seeker's unique path. CUUPS, as the primary institutional manifestation of UU Paganism, expects that its affiliated chapters will continue to reflect faithfully those UU values.

Each CUUPS chapter is expected to have a primary working relationship with a UU congregation. The major contribution of a CUUPS chapter to its home congregation is to provide a window for members of the congregation onto Pagan and Earth-

centered spirituality. One chapter has fostered an annual UU Samhain service, casting the core of this holiday into UU liturgical forms. Another has set up a permanent ritual circle on the church grounds for seasonal observations. Other ways to meet this expectation are discussed in the section titled The Home Congregation below.

The major contribution of a CUUPS chapter to the larger Pagan community is very parallel to the contribution made by a UU church to the general religious community. We are blessed with a society harboring diverse spiritual options, but an institution forms that restrain that diversity. A seeker may choose among a wide variety of diverse religious institutions, less seldom is there as diverse a choice of elements within one of those institutions. It would be very nice to find an institution that offered a comparable range of options internally, while offering enough focus to avoid the aimlessness of "pantheon-of-the-month" eclecticism.

We have just described the historical role of the UU denomination among North American churches. It can stand just as well as a description of the role of CUUPS within North American Neo-Paganism.

One of the things that UU Churches have to accept within this role is that they often will be way stations for seekers who life paths will take them from somewhere else, through UU involvement, to yet another place. This is an important and honorable role, both implied and validated by UU Core values.

Within a UU congregation, a CUUPS chapter is highly likely to serve in the same fashion, if anything maybe more so because opens a path to a broader range of options in both directions.

As promised earlier, this document will be more concerned than usual among UUs with limits and boundaries. Here is the first: *A CUUPS chapter cannot fulfill these functions if it becomes and outpost of any particular Pagan initiation system.*

Members of a CUUPS chapter who find themselves drawn in such a direction are welcome to remain in CUUPS while they develop other institutional means to take that next step in their common spiritual journey, but must remain particularly vigilant that this common bond does not subvert the mission of the chapter.

A CUUPS chapter finding its recruitment in the larger Pagan community drawing it toward such a condition already has a problem and is counseled to contact the Continental office promptly for a discussion of resolutions. Dearly won experience shows that ignoring such a problem leads to problems that cannot be ignored, for which the Continental organization cannot offer the same range of resolutions as it could with a timely consultation. Much the same can be said of the CUUPS chapter that closes itself off, permanently or periodically, to new members in order to deepen the spiritual experience of current members. Even if that spiritual experience flows directly out of UU Paganism and is a nurturing step in the lives of the participants, the chapter is not performing its function if it excludes members of the home congregation for any length of time. FYI, this is not a new problem. UU sensitivity training groups in the sixties, extended family programs in the seventies and men's groups in the eighties confronted comparable situations.

## **II. A Distinct History**

In the context of the broad Neo-Pagan community, UU Paganism is very much of a piece with the Pagan culture that has evolved with the development of sizable

festivals and Pagan-ecumenical organizations. These institutions have brought many Pagans of different traditions into contact with one another, evoking an understanding that Paganism is more the sum of traditions, that it is a movement. They have provided a gateway into this movement to many newcomers who would not have found a comfortable fit, or even an accessible fit at all in the traditions that could have contacted with their own resources. <sup>(1)</sup> The high prestige that the Pagan with the most venerable tradition had is now shared with the Pagan who is most creative in devising a compelling new liturgy.

UU Paganism harbors the same flavor, respecting many traditions but beholden to none. It is a gateway to the diversity of this movement and the many pathways available to the Pagan spirit.

Within the UUA, UU Paganism arose as a once-removed result of the *Women and Religion Resolution* of the 1977 General Assembly. This resolution began a massive review of gender stereotypes within UU liturgy. That review in turn prepared the ground for a more general discussion of patriarchy and its implications in religion and society. Into this fertile soil was seeded in 1985 the UU adult religious education course *Cakes For the Queen of Heaven*, which dealt with the antiquity of Goddess worship and its all but complete effacement from conventional, and highly patriarchal, Western religion. There followed a wave of "declarations for the Goddess" throughout the UUA. This led to the founding and phenomenal growth of the Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPS), and ultimately to the Sixth Source Amendment that added Earth-centered spirituality to the formally acknowledged roots of UU spirituality.

The specific historical context of UU paganism, therefore, was a deliberate expansion of religious imagery away from the patriarchal monopoly that has obtained in the West for the past 2,000 years. Unsurprisingly UU Paganism has therefore drawn much of its imagery and vitality from the Women's Spirituality branch of the larger Pagan movement.

Some criticism has been directed at CUUPS from time to time for a perceived narrowness of theological breadth. This largely ignores history: the theological texture of UU Paganism was not imposed from above but arose from the grass roots in response to a specific thirst that is still a primary motivator.

CUUPS chapters seeking to explore other portions of the North American Pagan spectrum are welcome to do so. If some measure of balance is needed in CUUPS thea/ological offerings that cannot be imposed from the top down either; it must also arise from the grass roots. In faithful reflection of the UUA, UU Paganism determines the theological priorities of CUUPS, and not the other way around.

### **III. Proper Formats**

In keeping with the value accorded to creativity, UU Paganism will never settle on one set of ritual formats as its only proper manifestation. UU Pagans are open to new experiences of ritual formats and spiritual disciplines.

The question of what practices and ritual elements are to be brought into a UU church must necessarily take another factor into account: the unstated boundaries and limits that help define "UU."

An excellent illustration of this is found in the mass of Earth-Centered liturgy formally sanctioned by the UUA and CUUPS. The items under the "Goddess" and "Pagan" index headings of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the context of *Pagan NUUS* and the tapes and brochures available from CUUPS. There is a great deal of Goddess content, but scarcely any mention - none whatsoever in the new hymnal - of the Horned God, ritual use of athames, or skyclad rites.

This was an exercise in prudence and diplomacy that began at the initial moments of CUUPS and the UU Pagan movement. Elements that were introduced into the extended Pagan conversation within the UUA were selected so as to open the awareness of UUs having no previous contact with Paganism, not to scare them away.

Not all CUUPS chapters initially realized the merits of prudence and diplomacy. At least one made the tactical error of showing a UU congregation athames and talking about the Horned One, without adequate preparation. They discovered that to some unprepared UUs, the representation with an athame and a chalice of sexual union does not symbolize sacred creation, but violence against women.

The disaster was not only in the realm of political symbols. Many UUs who have come out of Christian traditions sincerely believe they have left their heritage theologies behind, or have chosen with deliberation what elements thereof they retain. This is not always the whole truth. The come-outer UUs may have done a fine job of consciously editing what might be called the visible surface of their heritage theologies. But often they have not done so with what might be called the underside of that theology - the part more cultural than doctrinal, and holding among other contents whatever their birth church retains of the two-millennium disinformation campaign against Paganism, so while they may have done a careful excision of their heritage churches' attitudes towards heretics, they may not have done so on their attitudes toward witches; and continue to carry the latter among their unconscious baggage.

This scarcely mattered until about 1987. Then, suddenly, there were new UUs or people visiting UU churches saying: "I'm a Witch"; "I worship with a knife"; "Hail Hoof and Horn!" Oops.

Tension between the preferred symbols of the CUUPS chapter and the issues of prudence and diplomacy with the home congregation may never arise, or may exist from Day One. Where it exists one possible resolution is simple discretion. Content of ritual will depend on who has been invited.

That resolution might be controversial within the CUUPS chapter, on grounds of being true to oneself. If such is taken to be an issue, it may be posited that an equally important issue is respect for the home congregation - not only respecting its values but having compassion for its sensitivities and choosing a path of righteous self-disclosure that treads thereupon as lightly as possible. A CUUPS chapter that cannot engage that issue may have a more serious problem already; see section titled Not All Happy Campers, below.

#### **IV. Ritual Elements**

Ritual Elements are the common heritage of humanity. Particular orchestrations of elements comprise ritual portions of cultures. There may be an "only right way" to

cast a circle within a particular tradition, however that is not the "only right way" generically.

UU Pagans need patient understanding of non-UU Pagans who say, "you're doing that wrong." When someone has for years had specific ritual elements constellated in a particular fashion and performed in a particular way, and only that experience, it can be disorienting to see the same elements done differently or in a different context. Sometimes all that person can think of to say is "you're doing it wrong." This need not be so much a clash of belief as a disorientations similar to hearing a different interpretation of a favorite dramatic character, and not liking the result - as much an aesthetic as a theological disagreement.

With that kind of understanding, it still must be communicated as clearly as is needed that UU Paganism does not recognize any "only right way" to do any piece of ritual, and indeed puts a high valuation on creativity and - where socially appropriate - improvisation. This communication can be firm without being unkind. It may be that one orchestration of particular ritual elements "works best" or produces fewer unsought side effects. If so, experience will reconfirm it. Dogma to the same effect is unnecessary.

A distinction must be made between the foregoing and certain points of conflict concerning Native American spirituality. There is a difference between offering a sweatlodge ceremony based on Native formats and clearly designated as such, and offering the same derivative ceremony for profit under a fraudulent claim of authenticity to Native tradition. There is a difference between sharing a ritual pipe based on native designs, and stealing a Native pipe for such purposes. CUUPS both supports the freedom of UU Pagans to explore any ritual format and stands firmly with the Native activists who protest the theft of their artifacts and the marketing of false replicas of their culture.

When Native activists are animated by concern that having stolen everything else, whites are now stealing what appeared impossible to steal - Native Culture - these distinctions become blurred. It is essential for CUUPS chapters that find themselves in such a dialogue to proceed prudently. In the event an immediate consultation with the Continental office is highly prudent.

#### **V. Not All Happy Campers**

It is inconceivable that every Christian would approve of a specifically UU Christian ceremony, or would be at ease with the UU Christian Fellowship. Likewise, no one would expect militantly Secular Humanists to find comfort with the Fellowship of Religious Humanists, or approve of UU Humanist services that find religious significance in evolution or cosmology.

In the same manner, it cannot be expected that every Pagan will be comfortable in CUUPS, or approve of UU Pagan practices. In parallel with fundamentalist Christians and militant secularists, there are Pagans in the larger Pagan community - they might reasonably be called sectarian Pagans - who are not only quite satisfied with the Pagan particulars with which they are familiar, but also protest any deviation from those particulars.

Sectarian Paganism manifests itself along a spectrum of responses to UU Paganism. The most aggressive sectarian Pagans are prepared to explain to UU Pagans once

and for all what Paganism is really all about. A more passive-aggressive style is to raise objections to particular UU Pagan or Women's Spirituality rituals that do not comport with the favored particulars of the sectarian Pagan, but make no other effort to proselytize. The most passive style is simply to take over a CUUPS chapter and convert it into an outpost of their tradition, accepting the resources (office space, parking lots, etc.) of a UU church while having minimum interaction with the UU congregation.

The attitude in common underneath these differences in style is an indifference to UU values, indeed a lack of acknowledgement that there is meaningful content to Unitarian Universalism and a disinterest in finding out anything more than whatever misinformation they already possess. This attitude can be spotted early on, particularly if all UU Pagans in the chapter are respectfully attentive to the most sensitive among their own number.

This entire discussion concerns the sectarian Paganism mindset, not any particular element of a tradition as sectarian Pagan in and of itself. Obviously, UU Pagans would be put off immediately by a tradition of homophobia or exploitative initiation practices. What is addressed here is the Pagan with a tradition, no element of which raises any problems for a UU Pagan, but which is embedded in a mindset that tolerates no differences. This can be subtle.

What the members of a CUUPS chapter must realize in this context is that they have opened a gateway between two communities that lack much practice in civil contact. From the Pagan direction, the chapter will attract two different kinds of seekers: those who wish to expand their religious horizons, and those who seek no such expansion - indeed will resist it - but wish to avail themselves of resources in service to their tradition exactly as it now exists.

Fundamentalist Christians have generally followed one of two paths: they were born into fundamentalism, or they embraced it later in life because it met their needs. The latter seldom sets foot in a UU church, apart from a motive of disruption. The former often arrive in UU churches, in the process of leaving behind the theology of their upbringing.

Generally, almost all Pagans today have chosen Paganism. Thus we may expect that sectarian Pagans have in general chosen, rather than have been born into sectarian Paganism, and their likelihood of being reoriented is not significantly greater than that of reorienting Christian fundamentalists who have chosen that path. UU Pagans and indeed UUs in general, need to understand that people choose such a system because it fills their needs and that to be true to our principles, we must respect that choice. This does not mean that we need to surrender to that choice in preference to our own.

In particular, it does not excuse a CUUPS chapter from defending that particular UU boundary on behalf of their home congregation if it is threatened with violation. Unlike the believing fundamentalist, the sectarian Pagan who shows up in a UU church is not motivated by disruption, but will be disruptive nonetheless.

Sectarian Pagans are not "bad" or "wrong". It is completely inappropriate to think of them as being in a "cult" while we have a "religion". The sectarian Pagans who are such a pain in the neck for a CUUPS chapter may be delightful people if one meets them at a festival or public ritual, or may be valuable partners in political action to

protect Pagan religious freedoms, as long as no organizational merger is attempted. They are no more to blame for having a mindset that violates UU boundaries than UUs are to blame for having boundaries. But, if the violation is real, then it must be resisted. This can however be consistent with civility if both parties make that effort.

## **VI. The Home Congregation**

A CUUPS chapter provides, in no particular order:

- A spiritual association.
- A liturgical option for the home congregation.
- A gateway between UUs and the larger Pagan community.
- A potential center of social action on behalf of the larger Pagan community or of individual Pagans.
- An institutional presence of UU Paganism within the UUA.
- An expression of respect for the choice of individual path taken by each member of a UU Congregation.

Note that some of these items refer to the home UU congregation and some to the larger Pagan community. The chapter should remain capable of looking in both directions.

No one chapter is expected to fulfill all these functions, but every chapter should be ready to fulfill any of them as needed. Every chapter should review the direction it is taking from time to time, to be sure it is not cutting itself off from the possibility of performing on one of these areas should the need arise.

Every CUUPS chapter member who is not a current or past member of a UU congregation should be required to sit through whatever standard UU orientation program is provided by the congregation for potential or intended members. This is a relatively painless attitude filtration mechanism. Potential CUUPS chapter members who are not willing to take that much time or effort to find out anything about Unitarian Universalism can very reliably be expected to create estrangement later between the chapter and the congregation.

In the event that the congregation does not have an orientation program, the CUUPS chapter should promptly become an internal advocate for development of such a program, providing staffing and leadership if necessary. This not only helps fulfill this requirement, but also gives the congregation a salutary example of UU Pagans reinforcing UU institutions.

This requirement should be regarded as binding, not optional, and retroactive as regards to both chapters and individuals.

Chapter membership should have a substantial representation of members of the home UU congregation. The minimum of three required by CUUPS is set deliberately low so small groups can get started.

It is particularly healthy for chapter leadership to be members of the congregation. If a chapter is growing vigorously, but exclusively from outside the congregation, or is maintaining size but losing members of the congregation, this is a sign of an incipient problem. Consultation with CUUPS continental is strongly urged under such circumstances and the chapter should not wait for development of a problem anyone can recognize before so consulting.



The requirement that a chapter have at least three Continental CUUPS members is likewise intentionally modest. Membership in Continental CUUPS for all members of a CUUPS chapter is encouraged.

Each chapter should do at least one of the following annually:

- A seasonal Pagan observance on or near church grounds, inviting members of the congregation to participate.
- A Pagan service. Either Pagan liturgy or an expository service on Earth-centered spirituality, whichever is more appropriate - as a Sunday morning worship service.
- Adapt a major Pagan holiday into UU liturgy, adhering as much as possible to a standard order of service and using elements from *Singing the Living Tradition*.

These options are listed in increasing order of difficulty and provision of the easiest option fulfills this suggestion completely. The other options represent a growth path for chapters with a particular interest in liturgy. Assistance is available.

These activities serve two important functions. One is to keep the Earth-Centered spiritual option clearly available to members of the congregation. This is particularly valuable if congregational leadership is indifferent to Paganism and elects the tactic of tolerating, but marginalizing a CUUPS chapter. Indeed, with adoption of the Sixth Source, such would be a more intelligent tactic than overt hostility for those interested in limiting UU Pagan activity.

These also serve to keep the chapter mindful of its working relationship with its home UU congregation. Should the chapter come to lack the resources or interest to provide even the least difficult option, this should be taken as a warning sign no less baleful than overt frustration by congregational leadership.

The chapter or the clearly identified UU Pagans in it should do something significant for the congregation as an institution that is not categorically Pagan at all, preferably something that raises money for the general fund or is so environmentally correct that no one can have a problem with it.

This helps keep UU Pagans from being stereotyped as constituents of just one cause, whereby UU Pagans can marginalize themselves without any help from a hostile establishment.

It also may move members of the congregation who do not give a fig for spiritual alternatives, but are respected as pillars of the institution, from neutrality to tolerant defense of Pagans. "They may be a little weird, but they worked their beezers off for the pledge drive", not perhaps a ringing endorsement, but that kind of praise from the right person can stimulate the approval of others and put the Pagan-hostile on the defensive, if such exist.

Only the smallest UU congregations operate as a permanent committee of the whole responsible for everything. Most UU congregations have a partially overlapping internal structure of committees, action groups, choirs, grounds tenders, newsletter crew, etc. A CUUPS chapter organized within the framework of such a congregation is one such internal structural element.

Unless the UUs in the CUUPS chapter are utterly new members of the congregation, or are members who never did anything for the church before, there should be some

overlap with other subgroups, whether they be the choir, adult education committee, worship committee, or whatever.

The quality of the relationship between the chapter and the congregation as a whole will be strongly influenced by the quality of the relationship between the chapter and these other subgroups. Problems with such inter-group relationships are a distant early warning of problems with relating to the congregation as a whole. The amount of overlap - individuals serving in more than one subgroup - between the chapter and other subgroups is another direct sign of the quality of the chapter's relationship with the congregation. High overlap is a good sign; isolation is a warning sign.

Resistance to Paganism within UU congregations may still be encountered. Passage of the Sixth Source amendment should help overcome such resistance. Some chapters have found that even before the Sixth Source amendment, a forthright statement of the general rights of UUs to theological options and free association, together with carefully drawn parallels between anti-Pagan animus and other forms of more familiar prejudice have sufficed, meanwhile others have not.

Mediation is available. If it is necessary to invoke mediation, it is helpful to prepare a case in advance. Here are some questions whose answers may influence a final resolution.

- Has there been ventilation of issues before a neutral party or body? If the minister or the board of trustees has exhibited clear partisanship, have they recused themselves in favor of a neutral venue, or have they insisted upon retaining control of the discussion?
- If resistance to Pagan elements has taken the form of a whispering campaign, has a forthright request been made for an open discussion? If so, what has been the response? How has the congregational leadership processed such requests?
- If reasons for resistance to Pagan elements have been openly adduced, do they relate to actual harm done? What is the quality of evidence, if any, of actual or potential harm?
- Are reasons for resistance to Pagan elements couched in terms of a problem that others, named or unnamed, will have with Pagan content rather than a problem the complaining party has? In particular is the argument logically equivalent to a request that the prejudices of such other parties be given paramount concern?
- Have the parties in dispute made an effort to respond to points raised by the other side, or has there been simple repetition of the same talking points? Is there a distinction between the two sides on this matter of debating style?
- Has resistance taken the form of discussion and attempted persuasion, or has there been peremptory use of institutional power? For example, has the church office refused to print Pagan or Earth-centered material and thrown the power of control over the mimeograph onto one side of the disagreement?

- If the complaint from the Pagan side is of systematic marginalizing, can other subgroups within the congregation be cited that have received different treatment?
- Has the CUUPS chapter exercised prudence and diplomacy as alluded to heretofore?
- Has the CUUPS chapter drifted away from contact with the congregation in the manner alluded to heretofore? Have consultations toward resolution of that matter been made as recommended?

If clergy of the home congregation resists Pagan presence, the CUUPS chapter in formation should consider sheltering under the umbrella of the church's Adult Religious Education committee. Adult R.E. is certainly consistent with the important chapter function of keeping the Earth-centered spiritual option available within the congregation. Adult R.E. leadership may prove more tolerant and willing to provide institutional shelter. This can be an important way station toward the ultimate goal of unconditional acceptance.

Under happier circumstances, a mark of such acceptance within the home congregation is a line item for the CUUPS chapter in the church budget. Even a relative small dollar figure says, in a way everyone can understand, that the chapter is perceived as contributing to the home congregation.

CUUPS chapters by virtue of being both UU and Pagan are likely to draw in some people who are highly sensitive. Highly sensitive people can be somewhat draining and it is sometimes tempting to ignore them when possible. Besides being unmannerly, this can be a strategic blunder for a CUUPS chapter.

Many of the warning signs of impending chapter problems heretofore described are very atmospheric and full of nuance: Assessing the attitudes of others or the informal orientation of a group; deciding when the composition of the chapter has gone "too far" in one or another direction.

Highly sensitive people are typically quite alert to such things. They can provide key observations that would elude most people, if they are heeded and if they are in an environment where they feel their input is valued. Thus the quality of the process and the transactions within the CUUPS chapter can determine whether the chapter will benefit from the valuable talents of all its members, or not.

### **Notes**

1. Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon* (revised and expanded edition), p 421ff.

### **About the Author**

**Dave Burwasser** is a CUUPS Board Member Emeritus, and a UU since his mid-teens (1950s). A Humanist since his college years, he became Paganized after taking Cakes for the Queen of Heaven and consequently suffers from multiple-theology disorder. He has helped introduce two UU congregations to UU Paganism from the inside, and co-founded the CUUPS chapter at the UU Society of Cleveland, where he also served three terms as a congregation Trustee and two terms as President. He has been published in *Pagan NUUS* and *MaleCall* (newsletter of UU men) —the latter included a Pagan-based ritual of reconciliation between men and the Earth— and crafted a UU Samhain service currently in use by UU congregations, and recently [1996] described in *Circle Network News*. He co-founded Chalice in the Woods, A UU Pagan

mid-May rural retreat in Michigan recently affiliated with CUUPS. He is now a member of the Oberlin (OH) UU Fellowship, where he serves as a congregation Trustee, and where he and Lisette Burwasser were handfasted in 1995 in the first public Beltane service in Oberlin.

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