

Reading – by Jane Rzepka (A Boston area UU minister's take on how we know who we are.)

"The One That Got Away"

I performed a wedding not long ago and had a little trouble with the marriage license: it blew away.

That's right, in all its signed, stamped, sealed, and ready-to-go splendor...it just sailed into the heavens on that windy wedding day and was never seen again.

So I went to Boston City Hall. Having had previous trouble proving I was a man of the cloth...I had my ordination certificate along. Having occasionally been suspected of I never quite knew what, I thought to bring the actual wedding ceremony, the couple's check, our parish register, church letterhead and my drivers license. (I had a few nice wedding pictures along, too, just in case.)

But the woman behind the desk said, "no dice. I have to see the 'church records'." I pointed out that this hefty stack of offerings was the church records...but she wasn't budging.

I couldn't think what to do. I hated to go to jail, which is what I always figured happened to ministers who didn't properly file marriage licenses, so I kept at it.

After a couple of hours, I, too, began to doubt that I'd ever performed the wedding, become a minister, or been born and given a name. Eventually, the evidence did suffice.

As an adolescent, I sometimes doubted my existence or my place in the universe; I turned to the existentialists if only to confirm the legitimacy of doubt.

But the actual healing came from the love, or even the nonchalant acceptance of folks around me.

Our existence, our name, our place is affirmed by the acceptance of those around us.

May we remember to do that for each other.