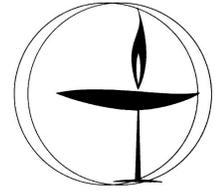


# Elderberries



the newsletter of the  
Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association

VOLUME XXIV

NUMBER 2

February 2009

## Keeping in Touch

### *Caring Network News*

I hope you've had a chance to look over the *2009 UURMaPA Directory*. If you have, perhaps you noticed the abbreviations next to each listing. Did you notice that these codes tell us which Caring Area members live in? You may have already found the list at the back of the directory with members listed by Caring Area.

Our hope is that this new format will help all of us be more deliberate about staying in touch with retired ministers and partners who live closest to us. Perhaps you'll find an old friend or make a new one.

And, if you look carefully, you will see the Caring Network Contacts have asterisks next to their names, so you know who serves which area.

You can help them do the best job possible by letting them know if you hear of someone who could use a helping hand or a listening ear. And don't forget to ask for help for yourself, when you may need it.

This newsletter, our directory and the Caring Network help us stay connected. Thanks to all of you who give so much time and energy to make UURMaPA the vibrant group it is.

— Makanah Morriss

## Bill Houff named “Chaplain of the Year”



In October 2008, Hospice of Spokane (WA) named Rev. Dr. William Houff *Chaplain of the Year* for “his wisdom and great work.” Bill has been a volunteer chaplain for the past ten years. He served the UU Church of Spokane for 15 years. He then did interim ministries in churches across the US and in Canada for ten years.

He says, “In hospice work we recognize our interconnectedness and the importance of being available to others. We need to be aware of what we're trying to accomplish; with hospice we're helping people deal with life's most certain experience.”

Bill is now 80 years old and has reduced his work schedule some. His advice to anyone who is trying to be helpful: “Pay attention to where you are and why you're doing what you're doing. The word ‘love’ needs to come in. Be sure the other person wants and needs your help, and that you're not promoting your own agenda.”

Congratulations Bill!

To see a world in a grain of sand  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour.

From William Blake's *Auguries of Innocence*

## Executive Board

*(contact information appears in hard copy of newsletter)*

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**David A. Johnson**

*Secretary*  
**Jean M. Rowe**

*Treasurer*  
**Kathleen Hunter**

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**Makanah Morriss**

*Newsletter*  
**Chris Lilly Backus**

*At-Large*  
**Ralph M. Mero**

*At-Large*  
**Peter Haslund**

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*Nominating Committee Chair*  
**Edwin A. Lane**

*Webmaster*  
**Eleanor Richardson**

*Database Manager*  
**Andrew C. Backus**

UURMaPA website:  
[www.uurmapa.org](http://www.uurmapa.org)

*Elderberries* is published quarterly in November, February, May, and August by the Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association.

**Next newsletter deadline is April 15.** Send your news, photos and views to the editor: Chris Lilly Backus at 2746 Broadway, Bellingham, WA 98225 or at [chrisbackus@msn.com](mailto:chrisbackus@msn.com)

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# President's Perspectives

Despite these intense times of raging storms across the continent and financial uncertainty around the globe, I find myself feeling optimistic about the work UURMaPA is doing. I am grateful to our wise and energetic Board members for their ongoing dedication and hard work. We have been meeting by conference call in recent months to update one another, as we work to fulfill our mission to support retired ministers and their partners.



I want to thank **Ed Lane** for his years of service on the UURMaPA Board as *Elderberries* editor and more recently as Nominating Committee Chair. He has been a tireless and upbeat colleague and a resourceful leader for his committee (see their report on page 15). And I appreciate **David Johnson's** willingness to be our observer at the January UUA board meeting. His work will help us stay better connected to the Association and ensure that we have a presence there.

I am grateful to **Ralph Mero** for representing UURMaPA at "Crafting a Culminating Chapter in Your Ministry" in April in Jacksonville, FL. This four-day workshop is for active ministers who are planning to retire in the next few years. Larry Peers (UU minister and Alban Institute consultant) is facilitator and will work with staff from the UUA's Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group.

Our new Endowment Fund is starting to grow. We have an impressive committee with **Peter Haslund**, Chair, working with **Joel Weaver** and **Dave Hubner**. I want to remind you that this is separate from our annual giving. The Fund will strengthen UURMaPA for future generations of retired colleagues and partners. As life expectancy rises and so many of us stay active into our 80's and 90's, this is crucial work. Please see Ralph's report (on Page 14) and consider how you may contribute.

**Kathleen Hunter**, our Treasurer, reports that we are half-way to our goal of raising \$22,000 for UURMaPA this year. This is our most ambitious goal ever. Nearly 170 donors have given gifts averaging \$70 each. I am touched by reading heartfelt notes from members who have had to reduce their gifts due to the economic downturn. I want to thank you for your courage in giving at this time.

Overall the average gift is up, which is encouraging. However, the number of donors is down. Like any organization, we need a broad base of support from members to carry out our mission. I encourage all of you to contribute what you can, even if you must reduce your gift. There is, indeed, strength in numbers.

Please don't be shy about letting your Board know what we can do for you. (Our contact information is in the directory.) Our next Board meeting is March 12-15, 2009.

I look forward to catching up with many of you at our Pan South Conference in Fort Myers, FL in February and our West Conference in Menlo Park, CA in March.

In faith,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Doughty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**You know you're getting older . . .**

**. . . when you bend down to tie your shoe and wonder what else you can do while you're down there.**



**UU Notable News:  
GREAT IS THE  
POWER OF  
BLACKNESS**

These words and this symbol are known worldwide through the Harvard Square Library. The response has been remarkable. Since 1970 our online radio broadcasts have featured the following black speakers: James Baldwin, Julian Bond, Shirley Chisholm, Steve Curwood, Marian Wright Edelman, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Peter Gomes, Dick Gregory, Lani Guinier, Henry Hampton, Vincent Harding, belle hooks, Vernon Jordan, Congressman John Lewis, Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot, Nelson Mandela, Toni Morrison, Dr. Alvin Pous-saint, Bayard Rustin. Desmond Tutu, Cornel West, and many more.

Contact Dr. Patricia Suhrcke, Director, Cambridge Forum, 3 Church Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 for more information.

Or e-mail [camform@earthlink.net](mailto:camform@earthlink.net) to subscribe to webcasts and podcasts of Cambridge Forum discussions through the WGBH Forum Network. Just write the word "Subscribe" in the subject-line of your e-mail to begin this free service.

The First Parish in Cambridge is the only one of the 1,000 plus UU Congregations to do nationally syndicated broadcasting. Check with your local NPR or college station to find out if Cambridge Forum is broadcast in your area.

- Herb Vetter

Beacon Press offers 10% discount and free shipping to UURMaPA members



Visit [www.beacon.org](http://www.beacon.org) to select books you'd like to purchase. Enter UURMAPA as your discount code. *Please note that 4% of the proceeds from our purchases benefit the Living Tradition Fund.*

Questions? Contact Kathryn Wyle at [kwyle@beacon.org](mailto:kwyle@beacon.org) or at (617) 948-6573.

**UURMaPA Mission Statement**

Acting in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the purposes of this organization shall be to serve Unitarian Universalist congregations and their Association, and to enhance the well-being of retired Unitarian Universalist ministers, their life partners and surviving life partners and to provide such programs and activities as may be feasible for their benefit.

*UURMaPA includes 850 people in  
580 households*

**Stay Warm**

The UUA's Office of Church Staff Finances has recently awarded a dozen small **winter heating**



**grants** to our retired ministers and their survivors. For assistance contact Joyce Stewart at (617) 948-6421 or [jstewart@uua.org](mailto:jstewart@uua.org), or Rev. Richard Nugent at (617) 948-6456 or [rnugent@uua.org](mailto:rnugent@uua.org).

Joyce and Richard welcome your calls and emails with other questions and concerns.

# Older Brain Really May Be a Wiser Brain

By Sara Reistad-Long

When older people can no longer remember names at a cocktail party, they tend to think that their brainpower is declining. But a growing number of studies suggest that this assumption is often wrong. Instead, the research finds, the aging brain is simply taking in more data and trying to sift through a clutter of information, often to its long-term benefit. The studies are analyzed in a new edition of a neurology book, *Progress in Brain Research*.

Some brains do deteriorate with age. **Alzheimer's disease**, for example, strikes 13 percent of Americans 65 and older. But for most aging adults, the authors say, much of what occurs is a gradually widening focus of attention that makes it more difficult to latch onto just one fact, like a name or a telephone number. Although that can be frustrating, it is often useful.

"It may be that distractibility is not, in fact, a bad thing," said Shelley H. Carson, a **psychology** researcher at **Harvard** whose work was cited in the book. "It may increase the amount of information available to the conscious mind."

For example, in studies where subjects are asked to read passages that are interrupted with unexpected words or phrases, adults 60 and older work much more slowly than college students. Although the students plow through the texts at a consistent speed regardless of what the out-of-place words mean, older people slow down even more when the words are related to the topic at hand. That indicates that they are not just stumbling over the extra information, but are taking it in and processing it. When both groups were later asked questions for which the out-of-place words might be answers, the older adults responded much better than the students.

"For the young people, it's as if the distraction never happened," said an author of the review, Lynn Hasher, a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto and a senior scientist at the Rotman Research Institute. "But for older adults, because they've retained all this extra data, they're now suddenly the better problem solvers. They can transfer the information they've soaked up from one situation to another."

Such tendencies can yield big advantages in the real world, where it is not always clear what information is important, or will become important. A seemingly irrelevant point or suggestion in a memo can take on new meaning if the original plan changes. Or extra details that stole your attention, like others' yawning and fidgeting, may help you assess the speaker's real impact.

"A broad **attention span** may enable older adults to ultimately know more about a situation and the indirect message of what's going on than their younger peers," Dr. Hasher said. "We believe that this characteristic may play a significant role in why we think of older people as wiser." In a 2003 study at Harvard, Dr. Carson and other researchers tested students' ability to tune out irrelevant information when exposed to a barrage of stimuli.

The more creative the students were thought to be, determined by a questionnaire on past achievements, the more trouble they had ignoring the unwanted data. A reduced ability to filter and set priorities, the scientists concluded, could contribute to original thinking.

"This phenomenon," Dr. Carson said, "is often linked to a decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex. Studies have found that people who suffered an injury or disease that lowered activity in that region became more interested in creative pursuits."

Jacqui Smith, a professor of psychology and research professor at the Institute for Social Research at the **University of Michigan**, who was not involved in the current research, said there was a word for what results when the mind is able to assimilate data and put it in its proper place: "wisdom."

"These findings are all very consistent with the context we're building for what wisdom is," she said. "If older people are taking in more information from a situation, and they're then able to combine it with their comparatively greater store of general knowledge, they're going to have a nice advantage."

*New York Times* May 20, 2008

# Directory Updates

*(Updated and new contact information for these members appears in hard copy of newsletter)*

Elizabeth & Ted Alcaide <i>CV</i>	Willemina Esenwein <i>CMW</i>	Paulette Loomis <i>MBC</i>
Caroline Adams <i>NE</i>	Linnea Fiske <i>CV</i>	Shirley Miller <i>NE</i>
Armida Alexander <i>CMW</i>	Dorle Gehrmann	Lansing S. Moran & Douglas J. Schave, MD, PhD
Nancy & Joseph Bassett	Betty B. Graham <i>TJNW</i>	Priscilla (Peri) Murdock <i>MBI</i>
Liz Benjamin	Esther Hopkins	Gertrude Nerad <i>MBC</i>
Joan Blanchard	Ingeborg Jack <i>MNY</i>	Richard Norsworthy <i>AZ-NV</i>
Dorothy Boroush	Richard Kellaway <i>MBC</i>	David Parke
Edith Christensen <i>TJNW</i>	Doris Kellison <i>NE</i>	Marcia Payson <i>NE</i>
Dennis M. Davidson <i>CO-MT-WY</i>	Stan Kimble (corrected surname)	Elena L. & David Rigg
Muriel Davies <i>JPDS</i>	Eugene Kreves <i>MS</i>	Elizabeth Strong <i>CMA</i>
Ora Eads <i>H</i>	Spencer & Susan Lavan	Art & Heather Wilmot
	Phyllis LeShane	

## The Turning of our Lives

**Paul L'Herrou**, Caring Contact for Mass Bay Inland says that **Polly Guild** is staying busy in retirement by continuing to work on a volunteer basis as the Pastoral Care Minister at the Follen Church in Lexington, MA. In fact, when Paul spoke with her, she was working on a memorial service which she would be conducting that weekend. She took a trip to Israel, which was sponsored (and paid for) by the local synagogue. She says that it was a very strenuous, but fascinating, trip.

Paul says **Wynanda Helverson**, widow of Rev. Ralph Helverson, has moved to an assisted living unit at the retirement community where she had been living in Bedford, MA. She says that she has to use a walker and that her hearing and eyesight are not what they were, but that she is feeling well and in good health. He notes that **Joseph and Nancy Bassett** are in good health. Joe keeps busy with his life-long interest in creating puppets and puppet dramatizations.



**Charles Grady** currently serves the UU Fellowship of Hendersonville (NC) as its librarian. He also serves on its Committee on Ministries (the plural is deliberate), which is chaired by UU a remarkable professional trainer and consultant, Helen Bishop, who is probably known to a number of our ministerial colleagues. The group was taking a break at a recent COM meeting, and got onto the subject of collective nouns: a pride of lions, a skein or a gaggle of geese, an exultation of larks, etc. Charles suggested "a divinity of preachers," and the committee officially adopted it as *the* collective noun for clergyfolk. Charles says he has to admit lifting the term from a minister's partner who once advocated a bumper sticker which would read:

**Ministers do it divinely**

**Kathleen Hunter**, Caring Contact for New Hampshire, reports that in November twelve UURMaPA members met for lunch at Havenwood, a retirement community in Concord: Carolyn and Peter Baldwin, Jane and David Brown, Esme Cahill, Neil Ferris, Catherine and Brad Greeley, Peg and Jerry Goddard, and Alan Deale and Kathleen Hunter. Everyone enjoyed catching up; some people hadn't seen each other for years. **Peter Baldwin** looked at **Brad Greeley** after they were at lunch and said, "Oh, I recognize you from Crane." **Jane and David Brown**, who live at Havenwood, arranged for the private dining room for the group. They had just been to hear the Boston Symphony the day before, via shuttle from Havenwood. If anyone is thinking of retiring in the Northeast, Havenwood/Heritage Heights is certainly worth looking at. It was founded by the UCC and many UUs have retired there. **Peg and Jerry Goddard**, who live on Great Bay, are very involved with a number of sea-coast environmental organizations as members and as docents. **Neil Ferris** has published a book, available at [naturalreligion@verizon.net](mailto:naturalreligion@verizon.net).

Kathleen notes that **Elizabeth Allen** is in a nursing home and now knows only her son Jeff, who can be reached at (603) 924-9390.

And Kathleen reports that **Pauline Woodman** has been diagnosed with a form of bone cancer. She is getting along fairly well but can't go out much.

**Charles Howe** and **Ann Howe** now live in Raleigh, NC where he's active as a "quasi layperson" in the local UU congregation. Retired from the active ministry since 1989, he finds collegial support in the area UU ministers group and has been author and/or editor of several Skinner House history books and a frequent contributor to the *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*.

## The Turning of Our Lives

**Ginny Crane**, Caring Contact for Southern California, sends the notes that **Garth Van Nest**, a graduate of St. Lawrence Theological School, is now 96 and suffering from severe dementia. His daughter, Dee Torres, is his 24-hour home caregiver in California. Ginny says his poor eyesight and hearing belie his strong body. **John Nicholls Booth**, a graduate of Meadville-Lombard Theological School and the New England School of Law, is now 96 and in good health. Busily reading for a weekly meeting of a Los Angeles organization, Ginny says John loves to reminisce on his worldwide experiences described in his book, *Fabulous Destinations*, and also his years as a professional magician. He has family nearby to enjoy and frequently attends the UU Church of Long Beach which he served among others. **Adele Frazier**, widow of G. Douglas Frazier, has been living at Leisure World in Seal Beach, CA for ten years and wants to recommend it to any and all retirees. Ginny says her perky and happy take on her life there resounds as a testament to her satisfying and meaningful experience of life at Leisure World.

**Dick Fewkes** writes, “In the spring my dear 98-year-old stepmother Barbara Hunter Fewkes took leave of this world after a long siege in a nursing home in Agawam, Mass. In the fall we said our final farewells to my 96-year-old beloved mother Elinor Marie Lovelace who died at a nursing home in Florida. Both my mother and stepmother were interred at Hillcrest Cemetery in Springfield, MA, where we had previously buried my father, Maxwell Fewkes in 1990 and my stepfather, Warren E. Lovelace in 2002. I had the honor of conducting the burial and memorial services for all four of my parental loved ones. Though they were blessed releases they each carried their portion of tears and losses along with the gifts of memories of better days shared from times past.”

**Ralph Mero** is making a good recovery from unexpected cardiac bypass surgery in October. He thanks his family, friends and colleagues for their support.

**Gene Navias**, Caring Contact for Mass Bay Coastal, reports **Richard Kellaway** has sold his New Bedford (MA) home and has made more major improvements to new his house. He has four roomers on the upper floor. Next he will tackle his bedroom on the second floor and install his art studio as soon as he can. Gene also reports that **Liz Strong** was snowed in without power or heat for a number of days. Happily, the grip of winter is easing at this writing. Gene says that his own best success in 2008 was a recent historical Universalist sing-along, at the UURMaPA Northeast Conference in Attleboro, MA this past October. Gene’s partner, **Jim Buckley**, is starting his second year as chair of the UU Religious Education History Group. He also gives interpretive tours of the Forbes House Museum, serves on the Curriculum Committee of the Lifelong Learning Center at Wheelock College. Jim has also taught at Wheelock and U Mass—Boston. And the two of them continue to enjoy opera, whenever they can.

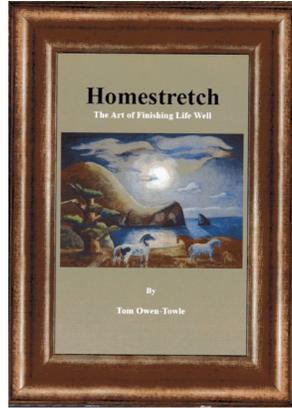
**Jean and Lackey Rowe** have helped both of their mothers move into assisted living this past year. Lackey is now sleeping better after being diagnosed and treated for sleep apnea. Jean enjoys hiking in the Blue Ridge Mountains and aerobic dancing and fitness classes; while Lackey works out daily with cardio and strength machines and lap swimming in summer.

**Andy and Chris Backus** were awarded the 2008 *Darwin Personius Award* by Squaticum Yacht Club (Bellingham, WA) “in appreciation of achievement in education for safe boating.” Andy has served three years as educational officer of Bellingham Sail and Power Squadron and Chris is the immediate past commander. Both have taken and taught courses since 1996.

**Gretchen and Ray Manker** have traveled widely this past year. They look forward to celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary August 27. And they are slowly downsizing, as they prepare to sell their home of 45 years, to move into a retirement community, slated to open in 2010.

## The Turning of Our Lives

**Tom Owen-Towle's** book *HOMESTRETCH: The Art of Finishing Life Well*, is a work which the author says will assist the reader in balancing core pursuits of solitude and quest, joy and service, surrender and legacy. If you wish to order a copy send a check for \$17 (\$18.16 for California residents) made out to Tom Owen-Towle, 3303 Second Ave., San Diego, CA 92103. (The cost includes shipping.) At 67, Tom says he aspires "to complete his own final laps with grace, juice and dignity."



### Chime in, please!

In the May *Elderberries* we will feature the adjustments we have made and are making to go from active to retired status.

What surprised you? What's the best part? What do you want to tell the "nubies?"

Forward your musings by April 15 to Chris Lilly Backus at [chrisbackus@msn.com](mailto:chrisbackus@msn.com) or 2746 Broadway, Bellingham, WA 98225



## Plan now to find a home for your library



**J. McRee (Mac) Elrod** writes, "Rev. Felix Lion's library numbered well over 1,000 volumes. After his death, his wife Eva asked me to find a home for his library. When a University of Victoria Library bibliographer saw the collection, she opted to take all the books, instead of 'cherry picking' select titles. Felix's small worship materials collection has been catalogued for the library at the First Unitarian Church of Victoria. His sermons fill a two-drawer filing cabinet in the archives. Selected ones may be used if a Sunday speaker fails to appear. If you have not yet made arrangements for the disposition of your book collection, you might want to make plans. I am happy to say mine has been accepted at the University of Western Ontario."

The Andover-Harvard Library at Harvard Divinity School is a repository for Unitarian Universalist, Unitarian, or Universalist ministerial papers (not just for graduates of HDS, but all UU ministers), including copies of our sermons. They don't want clipping files that we have saved as sermon ideas. But, they do want sermons, articles quoting us, papers we have presented, etc. They want everything in hard copy, not electronic media. Electronic media becomes obsolete and they are not geared to converting large floppies, to small floppies, to DVDs, to whatever will come down the pike next. For Harvard, these are the archives for future students and historians who will be studying our era of ministry. For us, this is a great opportunity to unload all those file boxes of old sermons and important papers before our heirs have to do it, or for the families of our deceased colleagues to find a home for their loved ones voluminous papers. For further information, go to <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/library/bms/guidelines/ministerguide.html> or contact Frances O'Donnell, Manuscripts and Archives, Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School, 45 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138 [fdonnell@hds.harvard.edu](mailto:fdonnell@hds.harvard.edu)

*Thanks to Nancy Doughty for submitting these two pieces from SpeakUP online chat*

# Holy infant, so tender and wild

Dick Leonard served the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City in active ministry from 1979-1997. In 1997 he was named “minister emeritus.” Although he is officially “retired,” he still does many weddings there. For years his wife, Polly, assisted him, working with the couples and their families and making sure everything was just so.

About eight years ago Polly’s granddaughter, Jennifer, asked Dick, “Why is grandma asking the same question twice?” She was the first family member to see that Polly was having trouble with her memory. Polly, who is now 84, has never acknowledged changes in her own motivation or memory. However, those closest to her could see she was becoming confused and her habits had changed. For example, she no longer wanted to get up in the morning.

About a year ago Polly, who was assisting Dick with a wedding, tried to lead the wedding guests in singing “Here Comes the Bride.” Needless to say, the church organist and the guests were taken aback. Sadly, Dick realized Polly could no longer assist or even attend the weddings.

Last June, Polly and Dick went to Atlanta, when Dick was undergoing knee surgery. Polly has family there and Dick reasoned that they could both get some extra care, while Dick recovered. They planned to return to New York together. Jennifer, who operates a long-term care facility in Atlanta, found them a place to stay for six weeks. As that time came to an end, Polly’s family could see that it would work for her to stay in assisted living, when Dick was ready to go home.

Dick, who is now 81, says the transition was complicated. It was lonely going home without his wife of 40 years, but he was relieved not having to worry about Polly’s care, which had been consuming almost all of his time.

Now Dick has time to play his violin in an orchestra. This was a passion he had developed back in 4th grade. As assistant concertmaster in the National High School Orchestra, he had planned a career as a concert violinist. However, he left Eastman School of Music for Yale, and eventually for the ministry.

As to his own support, Dick says there are many resources in New York City. He and Polly have had good medical care through the years with geriatric specialists. He emphasizes that All Souls Church has been tremendously supportive, as the couple coped with the changes brought on by Polly’s losses.

Dick has also found several recent PBS programs worthwhile. He recounts seeing “The Forgetting,” which describes the experiences of several families, including one who had lost their mother and sister to Alzheimer’s disease. Another show featured Alan Alda submitting himself to memory studies to discuss what is normal aging and what could be the onset of dementia.

Every six to eight weeks Dick travels to Atlanta to spend a few days with Polly and her family there. It’s a delicate balance to keep from disrupting her routine as he tries to keep her in his life. She doesn’t ask about the church or the weddings but she seems to enjoy the visits.



Photo by Eleanor Richardson

He recounts singing Christmas carols with his wife this past November. As they sang “Silent Night,” Polly, who had always loved rhyming and playing with lyrics, sang out “Holy infant, so tender and *wild*.” Dick had a good laugh over this. This past Christmas, back at All Souls, he softly sang Polly’s version and smiled to himself remembering their visit.

## *In Memoriam*

### **Rev. Berjouhie (Berjie)**

**Andreassian Bergler**, 86 died July 10, 2008. Born in Turkey, she fled with family to Lebanon and later moved to New York State. She graduated as class valedictorian from Keuka College, later earning a BD in Ministry from Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, again graduating as valedictorian, and as the only woman in her class. She was Assistant Professor of Religion at Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA. She also preached regularly at the UU Society of Amherst, MA. She served as Director of Religious Education at All Souls Unitarian Church in New York, NY and was the first woman to preach there in its 142 year history. She was ordained in 1962 at Community Church of New York City jointly by five New York churches as Minister to College Students. In 1965, she married Robert Bergler. She joined the faculty of Douglass College of Rutgers University as Assistant Professor of Religion and continued teaching there until her retirement in 1984. Even though her work was primarily academic, she often conducted weddings, dedications, and memorial services. She and her husband were also active members in the Unitarian Society of New Brunswick, NJ. In a letter of reference for Rev. Bergler's application for Fellowship, Rev. Sophia Lyon Fahs said "Her personal integrity is of the finest. Her philosophy of life is whole-hearted and all-encompassing; and she is forthwright [sic] in expressions of her thoughts, as well as unusually capable intellectually in expressing them." Rev. Bergler is survived by her sister, and three nieces.



**Betty M. Curry**, 86, passed away unexpectedly October 19, 2008. She worked at Saint Mary's Hospital in Rochester, MN, and later, at the Veterans Administration in Minneapolis, where she worked until her retirement. An active UU, she selflessly dedicated her life to the welfare of others and all creatures great and small. She was preceded in death by three sisters, a former husband of 27 years, the Rev. Vernon Curry. She is survived by a son, Mark Curry of Rochester and daughter, Lynne Morin of Minneapolis. Other survivors include nieces and nephews, as well as many loving friends. A memorial services was held October 23 at the Church of St. Edward Chapel Bloomington, MN. Fr. Michael Tegeder of St. Edward's and the Reverend Kate Tucker of the First Universalist Church officiated.

**Marion Wood Hatt**, 86, died in Utica, NY on November 4, 2008.

She was an English teacher, who volunteered with Literacy Volunteers. She was also interested in environmental issues and protecting wildlife. From 1950-1960 she and her husband, Rev. Roy J. Hatt, Jr., taught at the Proctor Academy in Andover, NH. In 1985 two of her students, who are brothers, established a scholarship fund at the school in her honor. Marion personally reviewed scholarship applications each spring until this past year. She is survived by two sons, Andrew J. Hatt and Christopher R. Hatt, and a grandson. Her husband died in 1999. Her memorial service was held November 15, 2008, at Acacia Village Masonic Care Community of Utica.





Photo by Mary Cramer

**Rev. Felix Danford Lion, 94**, died peacefully on November 29, 2008, in Victoria, BC. Born in Massachusetts, he married Eva Hoel in 1943. A graduate of University of Chicago and-Meadville Theological Seminary, he received an honorary

Doctorate degree from Starr King School for the Ministry. He served congregations in MA, NY, CA and BC and was named minister emeritus by the Palo Alto and Victoria congregations. A lifelong human rights activist, he was a member of the NAACP, who helped to register blacks to vote in 1964. He participated in the freedom marches in Selma, AL and Washington, DC. He served as Chair of the Board of World Interfaith Colleges; as President of UUMA, and was a founding member of the Vancouver Island Civil Rights Coalition. He was a member of the Archeology Society of BC and of the IARF. His lifelong passions were gardening and music. At age 93 he climbed to prune the very tops of his trees. Starting in his early teens and continuing until he was 92, he played the trumpet in a variety of jazz bands and orchestras. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, by his three children: David, Ingrid, and Roger Lion, and three grandchildren.

**Gladys Elgie (Stone) Soroka Parkhurst, 95**, died December 22, 2007 in Whitingham, VT. She was the widow of Rev. Dr. John Q. Parkhurst, a retired UU minister from Joliet, IL, who died in 1989. Her first husband, John E. Soroka, a tool and die maker at Ford Motors, died in 1977. She worked for four decades as a nurse in Detroit. Late in her career she served as a medical evaluator in the Levels of Care Program, inspecting nursing homes. In 1983 she returned to her birth state of Vermont. She was an active volunteer in the historical societies of southeastern Vermont and traced her ancestry to John and Priscilla Alden. She is survived by her daughters, Sherry Duff and Mary Frame, a brother, five grandsons and two great grandsons.

**Rev. Mounir Raphael Sa'adah, 99**, died July 25, 2008 at Harvest Hill Retirement Community in Lebanon, NH. Born in Damascus, Syria, he worked as a librarian and taught history and ethics at American University's Near East School of Theology. He married Marjorie Anne Abrahamian in 1937. The family immigrated to the US in 1947. The American Friends Service Committee recruited the Sa'adahs in 1949 to organize the care of the first Arab refugee settlements in Gaza. Rev. Sa'adah taught history for 18 years at Woodstock Country School in VT and initiated a program in Arabic and Near Eastern Studies at the Choate School in Wallingford, CT. Ordained in 1947, he served congregations in Woodstock, VT, and Mt. Kisco, NY. When he retired in 1976, he was named minister emeritus of the All Souls UU Congregation in New London, CT. He is survived by three children, two brothers, three grandchildren, four step grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and nine step great grandchildren. His wife died in 2002.

*In Memoriam*



**Harold (Hal) Victor Sternberg, 87**, husband of Rev. Connie Sternberg, died peacefully December 11, 2007, after two years of ill health. Born in Brooklyn, NY, he attended local schools and went on to follow in his father's line of work in the grocery business. He managed several supermarkets in the New York area.

When he retired he was Office Services Manager for Value Line. He was also an avid poker player, who enjoyed gardening. After he retired, he volunteered as a teacher's aide, focusing on teaching reading and gardening to children and youth. He is survived by his wife, his daughter, Jill and his son, Carl.

# Visions of Love

*Dick Fewkes shared these thoughts in his 2008 Christmas letter*

As most of you know for the past seven years we have been forced to come to terms with the gradual decline and loss of Ellie's physical and cognitive functions due to the effects of Alzheimer's dementia. She is now in the last stages of this difficult disease. There have been many good times and memories mixed in with the sad times and farewells of this long goodbye. Because of it I feel closer to my wife of 41 years than I would have been otherwise. I think the best way for me to share some of the blessings that have come our way in spite of the challenges is to share some recent dreams that have come my way. These are dreams that carry a message for the Christmas season and I would pass them onto you with the blessings of the angels who sent them.

I had a dream the other night that my Ellie was all dressed up in a beautiful green gown, all dressed up for Christmas, and we were going into church. While there she fell into a crib and I tried mightily to help her up. Some three months ago Ellie took to bed and she has been there ever since. Family, friends and VNA health aides have all banded together to meet her physical needs and to let her know that she is very much loved and cared for. Her countenance is nearly beatific as we wait for her to complete her spiritual journey. Jesus taught his followers that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who would welcome and become as little children. That is what she has done. She who loved children dearly, her own and others, at home and in school, as parent and teacher, has become in her last days a child again, innocent and beautiful, blessing us as we bless her.

In another dream Ellie and I are visited in our home by three guests—a man named David King, a tall female brunette named Allie, and a mysterious unknown female personage. Ellie is her former self, younger and fully dressed, ever the gracious host, ready to serve us coffee as we sit 'round the table.



Photo by Eleanor Richardson

I associate David King (a minister from college days) with the visit of a Davidic King on that first Christmas morn, who fell not into a crib, but as the story goes, was laid in a manger. The Visitor comes in many guises and honors our home this day. Allie is the name of one of our

health aides, a tall brunette, but in the dream she is much taller, seven feet at least, and angelic in bearing. Allie the Angel represents all the health aides who have been coming in our door all through the year. This story has angels in it and we got a big one. And she's awesome. The Trinity of guests is completed by that mysterious unknown female personage. The Holy Spirit blows where it lists, and visits us in our dreams and in our secret thoughts and imagination.

In a final dream image we enter the room where Ellie is resting and the room is filled with flowers, profligate with blossoms of every color imaginable—red and orange and yellow, green and blue and violet. The bed is gone. She who fell into her crib has become a rosary of flowers, a pagentry of beauty, and a garden of the soul in full bloom.

May your home be visited this year by a Davidic King (man or child), an angel of awesome bearing (male or female, tall or short), and a mysterious spirit full of gratitude for the amazing gift of life wherever we find it. You may meet your Visitors in the eyes of your children, or in the eyes of fellow human beings near or far who need a helping hand, or perchance in the eyes of your own face in the mirror as you rediscover the secret that the Kingdom of Heaven comes to those who, like children, know their need for love and compassion and are willing to be givers and receivers of the same. May you open the door of the room where your soul has been sleeping and rediscover there a garden of delights and blessings that surely come to those who endure the long journey home.



*May Love and Peace be yours this Season and for all Seasons to come.*

# Report of the Nominating Committee

In 2009 we elect a President, Vice-President, Caring Network Chair, one Member-at-Large, and the Nominating Committee Chair.

The Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following slate:

- President - **Makanah Morriss** - two-year term
- Vice-President - **David Johnson** - two-year term
- Caring Network Chair - **Ralph Mero** - two-year term
- Member at Large - **Peter Haslund** - two-year term
- Member-at-Large – **Marjorie (Midge) Skwire** - one-year term
- Chair of the Nominating Committee - **Ellen Brandenburg** - two-year term

The bylaws read: “If only one person is nominated for each position the persons shall be declared elected.” This is the case for the list of nominees above. We thank them for their commitment to serve. And thanks to those continuing in office:

- Secretary - **Jean Rowe**
- Treasurer - **Kathleen Hunter**
- Newsletter Editor - **Chris Lilly Backus**
- Nominating Committee Member - **Ellen Johnson-Fay**
- Nominating Committee Member - **C. Leon Hopper**

—The Nominating Committee  
Ed Lane, Chair, Ellen Johnson-Fay, Leon Hopper



## Creative Sage-ing Award

The UURMaPA Creative Sage-ing Award committee seeks to recognize a UURMaPA member (minister, partner or surviving partner) or couple for outstanding service and creativity in recent years. This could include new ventures after retirement, community service, mentoring and initiation or participation in service projects. The winner will receive \$500.

The deadline for nominations (of yourself or others) has been extended to **February 28**. Send yours to Rev. David Johnson at [djohnson@uuma.org](mailto:djohnson@uuma.org) or c/o First Parish in Plymouth, 19 Town Square, Plymouth MA 02360. For details visit [www.uurmapa.org](http://www.uurmapa.org) or contact Dave.

We know there are many creative retirees among us who have found fascinating, creative, life giving and sustaining ways to serve people, their needs, hopes, dreams. Don't be shy. Submit their names and contact information, even if the retiree is *you*!

# Our Endowment Fund

The first gifts to our new UURMaPA Endowment Fund have been coming in. They support the long-term future of the only organization solely devoted to the well-being of retired UU ministers and their partners. And since we are in an economic downturn—when investments are at bargain levels—this is an optimal time to invest for the future.

We are delighted that **Rev.**

**David Hubner, Peter Haslund, and Joel Weaver** have been appointed to serve as the UURMaPA Endowment Committee to manage the Fund. Many of us know David, who was the Director of Ministry and Professional Leadership at the UUA until he retired in 2006. Peter (chair) serves on the UURMaPA Executive Board and is the spouse of Rev. Bets Wiencke, who retired in 2004. Joel is the husband of Rev. Carol Taylor, who retired in 2007. They have expertise in banking, corporate finance, and personal investment.



The Endowment Committee will make a formal financial report to the Executive Board annually, and any UURMaPA member may request a status report at any time.

The Endowment has been created to grow an economic base under UURMaPA that will last in perpetuity. The Fund will assure accomplishing our mission, and safeguards have been built-in for its independence and stability. First, the Endowment has no connection with or intermingling of funds with the UUA.

Withdrawals can be taken only from earnings, not from the principal, and withdrawals must have been approved by the Executive Board at two consecutive meetings.

How can we help launch this new development? Gifts or contributions may be made in the form of personal checks made out to UURMaPA with “Endowment” written in the memo line or accompanied by a note designating the purpose of the gift.

Send your gifts to UURMaPA Treasurer **Kathleen Hunter** (see UURMaPA directory for her address). The Fund has the same US federal tax status as UURMaPA itself, so all contributions are income-tax-deductible.

Money now in a regular IRA in the US can be contributed directly to a non-profit organization and is not reported to the IRS as a taxable distribution. The firm managing your IRA will provide a simple form for this transaction. The gift is not reported as either income or a deduction.

The Endowment can also receive bequests through a Last Will and Testament. If you are updating your will, please consider this option. Unitarian Universalists have lagged behind other religious donors in such planned giving.

Many of us receive quarterly gratuities from the UUA for having served over 20 years in ministry. I am asking us to consider donating the gratuity we will receive toward the end of March 2009 to the Endowment.

Finally, an excellent way to contribute to UURMaPA (or any other UU organization) is with the purchase of a Charitable Gift Annuity through the UUA. The \$5,000 minimum brings in return lifetime interest at a currently favorable rate, an income tax deduction in the year of the gift, and the principal of the annuity transferred to UURMAPA upon the death of the donor and spouse.

The UUA does not charge for handling the paperwork, and more information is available from Larry Stritof at [lstritof@uua.org](mailto:lstritof@uua.org), (617) 948-6511.

As a new UURMaPA Board member, I am enthusiastic about this new Endowment and only wish it had been established long ago. Please join me in supporting it now for the benefit of our colleagues, their partners, and those who will be retiring from our ministry in the future.

— Ralph Mero

# Let's Get Together!

**LAST CALL!**

WEST – March 15-18, 2009, Vallombrosa Center in Menlo Park, CA. Keynote speaker is David Sammons on “Seminaries and the 21st Century.” Shirley Ranck, will share highlights of the first International Convocation of UU Women and will have updates on her book and curriculum, “Cakes for the Queen of Heaven.” Discussion moderated by Ralph Mero on the impact of current economic, social and political events on our lives. Coordinator is Sue Ayer, (503) 760-5610, sayer3333@aol.com. Registrar is Barbara Cheatham, bcheatham12@att.net. Enjoy a peaceful retreat setting with your colleagues. (Registration form on our website: [www.uurmapa.org](http://www.uurmapa.org))

***We must hear from you by February 12, 2009.***

NORTHEAST – October 6-8, 2009, LaSalette Retreat Center, Attleboro MA. Contact Med Anderson, revmua@sover.net. Watch for more details in upcoming issues of *Elderberries*.



STAR ISLAND ANYONE? Many of you have been to Star Island, off the coast of Portsmouth, NH, and others of you have been meaning to go. If there were a small, informal conference there early this fall would you come to it? If so, please email Kathleen Hunter at [kdhagd@mac.com](mailto:kdhagd@mac.com). If there is enough interest she will organize it.

*Remember that there is a \$200 grant to four first-time attendees at each conference. You must contact the registrar to see if you are among the first four. Continuing education grants to attend conferences are available from Rev. Jory Agate at [jagate@uua.org](mailto:jagate@uua.org), 25 Beacon St, Boston MA 02108 or at (617) 742-2100. Attend any conference, regardless of where you live!*

Address Service Requested



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