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Contact information for everyone above can be found in the on-line directory at www.uurmapa.org or in the printed directory.

You may view online or download the Membership Directory (updated regularly) at www.uurmapa.org under the Publications tab. The required ID is UU-SAGE and the password is WISDOM (in caps and with the hyphen.)

From the Editor:

You may have noticed that this issue is only 12 pages long, rather than the usual 16 pages. Because of the printing requirements, I have to deal with pagination in multiples of 4 pages, so one issue might be markedly shorter than another, while the next might be markedly longer. My apologies to those whose contributions were not included in this issue — I am most grateful to you anyway, and I will do my best to include your efforts in the next issue.

Using this space for the little matters of business that might otherwise get lost, I will ask you to pay attention to the following:

- We have recently printed a new Membership Directory. While the online version is updated monthly (at uurmapa.org/publications/ user name UU-SAGE and password WISDOM), those who prefer a printed version may request one from UURMaPA President Dick Gilbert at rsgilbert@uuma.org or 70 Harper St., Rochester, NY 14607.
- We have some “missing members.” If you know anything about Erleen Sparbell (widow of Norman Sparbell) or James Sullivan (partner of Robert Hadley), please notify our Membership Coordinator, Marcia Olsen, at membership@uurmapa.org.

As always, I am delighted to edit this newsletter that keeps us connected. Please don't hesitate to send me your ideas or submissions.

With my best wishes,
Judy Welles, Editor

Dear Colleagues,

Some of you are aware that I volunteered, about two years ago, to begin editing obituaries of our ministerial colleagues for e-mail distribution, publication in Elderberries, and posting on the UURMaPA website. I undertook this work because I felt the existing efforts were unsatisfactory. I thought, and continue to think, that our fallen colleagues deserve memorial tributes that embody a more graceful measure of literary quality.

This work has turned out, however, to be more than I've been able to keep up with by myself, and so I send this note as a request for help. I and the UURMaPA Board are looking for a couple of additional colleagues who would be interested in sharing the editorial task. I've developed some organizational and stylistic guidelines that I would be happy to send to anyone who might consider joining me in this work.

I warn you that my standards are rather curmudgeonly when it comes to the formality of English usage. But if you share that kind of care for our language and would like to give this work a try — or are just curious and would like to explore tentatively what is involved — please contact me (jayatk40@gmail.com), and I'll be in touch with more details and discussion. I welcome your inquiries.

Jay Atkinson

A Word from Your President

The “Inconvenience” of Elderhood

Richard S. Gilbert, UURMAPA President

I had just returned from my morning walk when the phone rang. It was our younger son, the father of our three grandchildren, inviting me to join them for a brisk winter walk around a familiar reservoir. How could I refuse?

It was almost a month since some hernia surgery, and I am in recovery mode. While working my way back to my usual morning walk, it occurs to me that it takes time to regain what was lost in the inactivity surrounding surgery. Perhaps it only seems to take longer to recover after each of these surgical events. There is more discomfort than real pain. But warned by my surgeon, by the nurse who took out my stitches and, most importantly, by my wife, I try to take it a little bit easy. I am the impulsive sort, occasionally guilty of “elderhood denial.”

We had a fine walk, though I certainly felt it after finally getting my shower and noting that I was a little more tired than usual. It was worth it; there I was with my wife, two sons, three grandchildren and their very energetic dog, enjoying one of those rare cold, but extraordinarily sunny, Rochester days.



14 below
0 wind chill

Who would stay in the frozen tundra of upstate New York when cavorting on some sunny beach sounds appealing? That life is not for me, however. Facing into the wind and embracing the cold, feeling a tingle not only in my toes but my whole body, gives me a feeling of aliveness. I could not help but note that I was wearing a Christmas present from my wife – a sweat suit – designed more for outdoor exercise than indoor loafing.

I treasure such moments because of my fortunate proximity to family and because of my delight in the sheer physicality of life. A little cold, a few aches and pains, realization of 78 years of wear and tear, are acceptable since I can still walk and talk with a certain moderate vigor (talking has never been a problem).

A contemporary, upon reading of my surgery and recuperation, said in one of the understatement of the ages that this business of getting older is “really inconvenient.” It surely is. I don’t know how much longer I can chuckle at this felicitous phrase, but I hope to live with this “inconvenience” as long as I can. I hope, and pray, that when I can no longer accept invitations to walk with my grandchildren, I will look back in extreme gratitude on days like this – walking around a reservoir with my family on one of the coldest and most beautiful days of winter. Long live the “inconvenience” of elderhood.



Send updates! Please send any changes to your address, phone or e-mail to: Marcia Olsen at membership@uurmapa.org or 285 NW 35th Street, Apt. 52, Corvallis, OR 97330. The most current Directory is online at www.UURMAPA.org (ID: UU-SAGE, password WISDOM).

What Brings You Joy?

Joy Flows

Stephen M. Shick

An early winter blue stretched across the still pond, filtering the colors I was seeing on a flock of ducks. I watched for a long time, then slowly moved my camera into position and pushed the video button. Success, I thought, I was capturing the many yoga postures only known to ducks. Turning off the camera to reposition myself, I heard the muffled rush of wings flapping hard. Descending quickly, other ducks were arriving further down the pond. I switched the camera back on and in that instant felt a flow of energy and emotion that I could only describe as joy — a fluid, fleeting moment of surprise and delight.

I relived that moment again and again as I edited the video. Putting the event in slow motion, I saw unnoticed details: the way a duck across the pond called out and literally walked on water for a second before swimming in the direction of the new arrivals, and the momentary intensity on the face of a duck as she touched the water, and how that expression changed to a nonchalant confidence as she swam out of the way of those still landing. Here's the duck-inspired poem I wrote:



Nature's Advent

sometimes the heart
fills the whole body
with an unexpected joy
for what the next moment
may bring

For the past nine months, I have videoed and edited such scenes, letting them inspire a haiku or short poem. Enticed by joy, I look forward to this task weekly. I asked UU musician and composer Jim Scott if I could use some of his instrumental music to accompany these videos. He agreed. Listening closely to his music added another dimension of joy. I have been placing these *Momentary Meditations* on YouTube. I hope you'll visit them there and subscribe — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDVQYxxGIoQ>

J.D. Salinger drew a distinction between joy, the experience I just described, and happiness. He said: "...the most singular difference between happiness and joy is that happiness is a solid and joy a liquid." I think J.D. got it right. I would add, however, that happiness, the state of our being, is an enabler of joy. A baseline of happiness makes the pathways wider for joy to enter.

I go to Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Concord for this project. There I recently learned that when joy enters my body I gain perspective. The waters that flowed under Emerson's "rude bridge that arched the flood" still run deep next to this refuge. One day I set up my tripod, mounted my camera and settled in. The September sun was high as I watched a turtle approach a rock about twenty feet away. The multi-eyed heads of American water lilies also watched that turtle struggle to climb up that rock, perch, then suddenly teeter and fall. After a short swim he climbed up again. With only a tinge of compassion for his fate I packed up my camera and relocated where I had earlier seen a great blue heron land.

My encounter with that turtle was not yet over. Reviewing the video, I noticed that the turtle had only three legs with a stump for the fourth. With that small change of perspective, I saw that common turtle transformed into an inspiration of determination. Joy flowed once again into my body.

Stephen Shick is a UUMA Center Presenter teaching speaking without a script. He directed the UU Peace Network and U.S. programs of UUSC, and helped found Community Ministry. He served 16 years as a parish minister and is the author of two Skinner House books, Be the Change and Consider the Lilies.

Partners' Column

We Made a Life Together Chuck Rzepka

Jane and I were married at the age of twenty, by her minister, Brad Greeley, at her family's UU congregation in Ohio. Mark Belletini, a friend of mine since Catholic high school, took part in the wedding. This was my first real introduction to Unitarian Universalism (and Mark's, too, for that matter), although I'd known that Jane and her family were UUs within minutes of meeting her in our Philosophy of Religion class at the University of Michigan.

I'd been raised Roman Catholic in East Detroit, Michigan, but by the time I met Jane I'd lapsed quite severely, and wanted little if anything to do with religion. The UU church and my new bride's family showed me how to be religious without giving up my conscience and freedom of choice. It was an important step in my spiritual growth. (Mark Belletini, who was still an active Catholic, eventually followed Jane's example and became a UU minister himself.)

For almost forty-five years, Jane and I have made a life together: first, as undergraduates in married student housing at Michigan; next as graduate students at UC Berkeley and Starr King, where our two boys were born; and finally as parents in the Boston area, where I became a professor at Boston University and Jane a UU minister in Winchester, Reading, and, finally, at the Church of the Larger Fellowship. We were lucky in innumerable ways, but one of the luckiest was that we worked in professions where writing was important. We got in the habit of consulting each other about our prose, and while we both gained from the teamwork, I'm pretty sure I got the better of that deal!



Mark Belletini and Chuck Rzepka, friends from Notre Dame High School, on the occasion of Toby Rzepka's wedding.

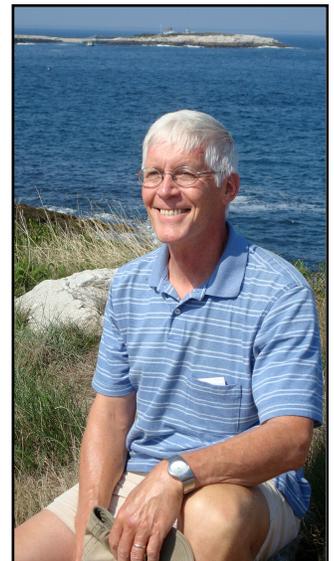


Chuck Rzepka, day 1 of grandparenting Ivy Green Wolf, Portland, Maine.

As Ph.D. candidates with two infants, we learned to divide our schoolwork, part-time jobs, housekeeping, and baby-nurturing schedules pretty evenly. Leveling the workload this way became a lifelong habit, with a few exceptions that I have conveniently forgotten. I'd have to say we've managed to give each other room to thrive in our individual careers over the years, but we've lived a lot of life together, loving the kids and grandchildren, deciphering foreign bus schedules, hauling our lobster traps into a kayak, and on a good day, streaming a video using multiple remotes.

Because I became a minister's spouse at a time when few of us were men, I was relieved of many congregational expectations my female counterparts sometimes suffered: if I made chili for a church dinner, it was a miracle on the order of the loaves and fishes. I joined social action and worship committees, taught church school, led the Amnesty International and Youth Groups, and played trumpet for the choir's "Hallelujah Chorus" at Christmas. It was all gratifying, and a version of church-going and

religious community that I'd neither seen nor experienced in my eighteen years of growing up in St. Basil's Parish.



Chuck at Star Island

Chuck Rzepka has been one minister's partner for all of his adult life. And lived to tell the tale. He is an English professor at Boston University, specializing in both British Romanticism and Detective Fiction.

The 100-Day Journey

The Revs. Barbara and Bill Hamilton Holway

We are grateful to have had lives in ministry. And we are grateful for this time after active professional parish ministry to grow our souls. We have retired from jobs but not from work. Our work is to grow in wholeness and into this next chapter of our lives.

We are grateful to have shared co-ministry, and for both of us to be ready at the same time for retirement. Re-tiring, we've been saying, is being ready to put new tread on the wheels of our lives. We celebrated with new hiking boots and with John Muir, "The mountains are calling and I must go."

We are grateful to have had months of making a good goodbye with the congregation we served and for the retirement celebration we had with them. And we are grateful for time to mark this transition personally and soulfully.

There are as many ways to retire as there are to minister, as there are to live a life. We are practicing a "ministry of absence," so as the fall start-up to the church year began, our daughter Sarah blessed us and we took off in our mini-van, fitted with a storage platform and a futon, on a 100 day journey across the country and back.

We logged 12,884 miles, visited 29 states, the District of Columbia, Ontario, national parks, family and friends. Inspired by Jim Harrison's novel *The English Major*, we took along a wooden puzzle of the United States. As we left a state, we wrote on the back side of its puzzle piece our thanks for the state's gifts to us and left the piece in a significant spot. As we traveled, we read aloud Bill Plotkin's *Wild Mind* and *Nature and the Human Soul*.

Beauty restores the soul. We understand that we are in the process of becoming elders, so visiting elder redwood groves, old mountains, ancient canyons, billion-year old flowing rivers, and thousand-year old desert creosote plants inspired us. During our 100 days, we were held in so much beauty.

Our son Ben began in the Iowa Writers Workshop in Iowa City this fall. We were able to visit him as we traveled east and as we returned west. So grateful to glimpse his life, hear stories written by his fellow writers and meet them, see his mother's old desk in his study, his grandfather's old overstuffed chair in his living room.



Celebrating Bill's 67th Birthday
November 19, 2014
Bright Angel Trail, Grand Canyon



Grandson Miles' first church service,
South Church, Portsmouth, New Hampshire
October 26, 2014

As we turn toward becoming elders, what a joy to be with babies. Our daughter Laura and son-in-law Josh are the parents of Miles, born in June, our first grandchild. We spent time holding and beholding Miles. We held our niece Amy's baby when she was only nine days old. We met great-nieces and -nephews and greeted our colleagues' children.

A trip across the country gave us a review of our lives, a walk from a childhood home to grade school, views of our parents' and grandparents' homes, our childhood churches and neighborhoods. We saw each other's colleges, family vacation spots, church camps, and stood on the ground where our parents are buried or their ashes strewn.

We reconnected with friends from our childhood and youth, former colleagues and students and lay religious leaders from churches dear to us. We spent an evening with an aunt and uncle, Presbyterian co-pastors, hearing about their retirement.

We visited dear colleagues Sean Dennison, Alicia Forde, Marcus Hartnet Liefert, who ministered in internships with the congregation we served in Berkeley; and with beloved colleagues who once were part of our ministry

team, Chris Holton Jablonski and Laura Bogle. We visited colleague friends from theological school days, and ministers who once were active in the Pacific Central District.

As we step away from active ministry, it is good to know such fine Unitarian Universalist ministers. We worshiped in services with their wise and loving leadership. And we worshiped in the Vermillion Cliffs and the Grand Canyon. As we drove through beautiful country, we sang “For the Earth Forever Turning” with tears in our eyes.

At a friend’s invitation, we read aloud Susan Vreeland’s novel *The Luncheon of the Boating Party*, and then met our friend in front of the Renoir painting at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.

Art, myths, stories, poems, music and driving across the country via scenic by-ways as much as possible fed our dream life and our conversation. As we beheld the Yellowstone River, we sang Kenny Loggins’ lyrics, “And we have just begun watching the river run, further and further from things that we’ve done, leaving them one by one.” We named joys and blessings of ministry, disappointments, things we wish we’d done, and things accomplished. We acknowledged how what was good came by grace, through something mysterious, something loving working through us and through the congregations we served.

Along the way, we celebrated our 25/50 golden silver wedding anniversary. Our wedding was 25 years ago, but since the two of us have shared our personal and professional lives, we count the years double. Who are we now beyond our identities as Unitarian Universalist ministers?

As we visited significant places of our lives, we remembered who we are. We remembered previous jobs we’ve held; the parenting we’ve loved; the people, places, travels, collaborations; the hiking, reading, and writing. We have been and are part of the beauty of the earth.

Retirement is a miracle. We are so grateful to have this time when we don’t have to go to a job, when we have health and resources. We want to live simply and to grow. This is a time to try new things, or to have time for things which we had no time during our active professional lives. We want to take classes, dance, paint, pick up litter, greet our neighbors, laugh and walk more, become more gentle, show appreciation, reassure others they can make it, model letting go of professional work, become more one with spirit, and grow into elders. The journey continues.



Mystic Falls, Yosemite National Park
September 19, 2014

Nominating Committee Report

The following UURMaPA members have been nominated for the Board. One of the guiding principles for the Nominating Committee over several years is to keep a balance of ministers and partners on our Board. We also try to find balance between female and male members and work for geographic diversity.

All nominations are for two year terms; the slate of nominees will also be posted on UURMaPA-Announce, our e-mail list for official business. If no other nomination is received from members to the Nominating Committee (Nancy Doughty, 231-933-4801 or nwdrev@charter.net) for any position before April 1, then the slate is considered elected, and begins serving on July 1, 2015.

President: Jim Eller

Vice President: Marni Harmony

Caring Network Chair: Liz McMaster

Members-at-Large: Doug Gallager (incumbent) and Judy Gillis

Nominating Committee: Doris Hunter and Bob Morriss

On behalf of UURMaPA members, we thank Dick Gilbert who has so ably led the Board for 4 years as President. Thanks also go to Caring Network Chair Margi Nasemann, who is ending her term in that position. Nancy Doughty is also completing her term on the Nominating Committee, and Chris Backus will be the next Chair.

The continuing Board members — Joel Weaver, Treasurer; Judy Gibson, Secretary; Judy Welles, *Elderberries* Editor; and John Weston, Member-at-Large — have our gratitude for all the leadership they have given and continue to give to our organization.

UURMaPA Nominating Committee
Nancy Doughty, Chair
Chris Lilly Backus.

The Leadership Column

For decades, as most of you know, Unitarian Universalists have discussed changing the way we select the President of the Association. That change has finally come about. The President elected in 2017, at General Assembly in New Orleans, will serve a single six-year term. And he or she will be chosen by the delegates from among the candidates nominated by the brand new Presidential Search Committee.

The Search Committee was created by the delegates to discern who among us might best lead the association for our times. Our charge is to nominate **at least** two candidates by Feb. 1st, 2016. Those candidates will then campaign for the office. (It is still possible for someone to run “the old way” — by collecting petitions from the required number of congregations.)

The delegates elected five members to our committee, and the UUA Board appointed two. The seven of us are four ministers, one recently retired DRE, and two active lay leaders. We span generations and geography. We have wide connections and deep experience in a variety of parts of our faith. I will say, personally, that is the finest committee I’ve ever served on. Each person brings strong gifts, and we’re working well together.

So far, we’ve created a set of very important documents. These include:

- Our Value Statement, which reads, in part, “We will be relying heavily on Unitarian Universalists to be the ‘eighth member’ of our committee, helping identify qualified leaders and encouraging them to apply.”
- Our statement on confidentiality, laying out how information about potential nominees will be protected.
- A job description for the office of President. There has never been a formal job description before, and we believe that such a document will be deeply useful to potential applicants and the UUA board.
- A selection process, including application questions, interview questions, and how we will decide among applicants.
- A suggestion form, for folks to suggest well-qualified persons. Each person who is suggested will get a link to the application.



L to R: Elandria Williams, Rev. Joanna Fontaine Crawford, Rev. Matthew Johnson, Liz Jones, Rev. Michael Tino, Jacqui Williams, Rev. Wayne Arnason

You can find all of these documents, as well as minutes of our meetings, at our blog: uupresidentialsearch.wordpress.com.

We are now in the process of accepting applications, which are due no later than July 15, 2015. Committee members have encouraged people to apply, and we know that other Unitarian Universalists have been thinking about who might be right for our time, and encouraging their application. This is wonderful! We hope to have a wide variety of applications to consider, including potential candidates who fall outside the traditional categories of who has run before. I urge you to suggest names and encourage people to apply.

The committee has also spent time batting down rumors about supposed decisions. We have not ruled in or out any person or group of people, so long as they meet our requirements. Many have asked if we will only consider women for the office, or if we will consider lay people. The answer is that we will consider anyone who is a good fit for the job description. (I should also note that it is not our place to imagine a radical reconsideration of the duties of the President. Some have suggested, for example, splitting the job in two. That work belongs to the Board of Trustees and the delegates as a whole.)

It is a vital time for our Association. The radically changing world of church requires excellence in leadership. There are amazing opportunities — and great challenges — awaiting the next president. If Unitarian Universalists will encourage the best leaders they know to apply for this position, we will be able to put forward at least two excellent candidates for the delegates to choose from. If you have any questions about this work, please don’t hesitate to contact any of us, using the address pres_search@uua.org.

The Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson
Co-chair, UUA Presidential Search Committee
Senior Minister, UU Church, Rockford, IL

Unsung UURMaPA, contd.

Rhonda, my wife of almost fifty four years, and I are both most grateful and appreciative of this honor and recognition. I will try to continue to live up to your expectations. We are both glad that UURMaPA exists, and we know that its various activities touch the lives of our colleagues and partners many and diverse and important affirming ways that are, indeed, blessings, every one of them. Every act of care and concern is surely a blessing upon both the giver and the receiver. And, thus, ministry continues to flourish among us and to that I can only say Amen.”

— Liz McMaster

New Members Since October, 2014

Harold Babcock (partner Sabrina Babcock)
Paul Daniel
Patricia Jiminez (partner Krishna Seshan)
Deborah Mero (partner Ralph Mero)
Taheri Nayer (partner Cynthia Kane)
Michael Douglas O'Kelly (retired 2012)
Carolyn Price (partner Orval Osborne)
Loring Prosser (partner Beth Prosser, retired 2007)
Kate Rohde (partner David Cohen)
Amy Samonds (partner Suzy Reno)
Charles Stephens (partner Carolyn Stephens)
Rod Thompson (partner Mary Thompson)
Denise Tracy (partner William Decker)

Tax Time and Housing Allowance Tax Exemption – for Retired Clergy

If you were a participant in the Unitarian Universalist Organizations Retirement Plan (UUORP) and received funds from your account during 2014, then you'll be receiving a 1099-R form from TIAA-CREF.

All or a portion of *any income received from our denominational retirement plan may be taken as an allowable tax exemption from income when you complete your tax return *only if*:

1. You can document that the monies were actually spent on qualified housing-related expenses during the tax year, and
2. The amount you exclude does not exceed the fair market rental value of your residence, furnished, plus taxes and utilities.

Remember that the permitted exclusion is the *lesser* of: Actual Expenses or “Fair Rental Value.”

*Use your 1099-R and the following simple worksheet to determine the amount (if any) that you may exclude from the income on your tax Form 1040.

Your 1099-R form may show that the taxable amount of your 2014 distribution is “not determinable,” or it may list the dollar amount distributed.

1. Enter the total reported on Form 1099-R _____ (you report this
(or, if “taxable amount not determinable” is noted on your 1099-R, use the dollar amount distributed to you from your UU Organizations Retirement Plan account in 2014.) figure on line 16a of your 1040 tax return)

2. Less: Allowable housing expense amount _____

= _____ *If the difference is a positive number, enter it on line 16b of the 1040. If the difference is a negative number or zero, enter zero on line 16b.*

By the end of January, the UUA's Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, Tim Brennan, will be mailing the standard letter regarding this topic; it includes the worksheet above, and can be attached to your tax return.

Unfortunately, the spouse of a deceased minister is not permitted to take the clergy housing exemption.

If you have any questions about the tax implications of your retirement plan distribution, please contact your financial advisor. Remember, if questioned by the IRS, it is up to the retired minister to document what portion of their distribution(s) from the denominational retirement plan was used for qualifying expenses.

Linda Rose, UU Organizations Retirement Plan Director: retirementplan@uua.org

Turning of Our Lives

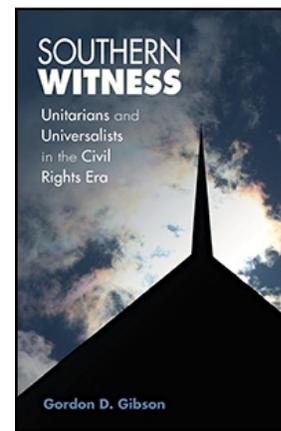
“As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.”

— Proverbs 25: 25

Jeremy Brigham recently retired from his position as a faculty member in social science at Kirkwood Community College, after retiring from ministry in 2010. He and his wife, Selma, a retired special educator, are raising three grandchildren in 7th, 9th, and 10th grades, as well as two rescued greyhounds. Jeremy intends to resume efforts to reduce gun violence, having worked as a research associate at Iowans for the Prevention of Gun Violence, and wants to write a book about how the naming of Iowa counties connects Iowa to pre-Civil War history.

John Cummins, Minister Emeritus of the First Universalist Society of Minneapolis, says he has no complaints, but that his body serves mainly to support his head. Upon retirement, he decided to live simply, giving up most of his material possessions, and dedicating himself to reading biographies (often of little known people), and histories.

In February, Skinner House will publish *Southern Witness*, written by **Gordon Gibson**. He plans to have hot-off-the-press copies with him at the February 24-26 UURMaPA conference in Orlando, where he will be offering a response to Mark Morrison-Reed’s keynote presentation. Gordon and Mark have enjoyed working in tandem, sharing resources, questions, and observations in the course of writing their books, but Gordon says his book may have funnier stories in it (like the best response to the umpteenth telephoned bomb threat) and some very sad stories too.



By early December, **Leon Hopper’s** Parkinson’s disease had progressed to the extent that “within a 36 hour period I had three serious falls; even with Dorothy’s help I could not get upright, and outside assistance was called in to get me up. so the decision was made to move me into a Supported Living unit here at Horizon House ASAP, which turned out to be the Friday before Christmas. Living in a somewhat cloistered environment takes some adjustment for both Dorothy, who is still in our apartment, and me. After 64 years of living as a unit, we are now living in a somewhat disconnected way. It takes time to change patterns of living.”

Ward Knights is living in Minneapolis with his wife, **Lucile Swenson-Knights**, who was honored at the St. Paul Winter Carnival for having been the princess of the festival in 1952. They were both delighted for her to be recognized so many years later. Ward, a former CPE supervisor in Georgia, is looking forward to meeting with other retired UU colleagues in the Twin Cities area. He dreams of having a monthly newsletter of information about retired clergy in the Twin Cities area and possibly throughout the Prairie Star District.

After a number of health issues this Fall, **Margret Kolbjornsen** has moved across the street to the Summerhill Assisted Living Home in Peterborough, NH.

Berkley Moore reports that he is now in an adjusted living facility and can get around only by using a walker. He travels to church and other nearby places with the aid of friends.

Kerry Mueller received a right knee replacement on October 15, and is doing well. She is still benefitting from physical therapy, but has a much improved gait and stamina .

David Parke became a great-grandfather on 28 Sept. 2014, with the birth of Zachary Ross Ecklar to Trent Ecklar and Elizabeth Crystal Parke in Columbus, OH. All parties are doing fine.

Charity Rowley, retired religious educator in Iowa and Massachusetts, lives in Iowa City and is quite active in the UU Buddhist Fellowship, as well as in the First Unitarian Church of Iowa City.

Bob Schaibly writes, “I first met Steven Storla on Presidents’ Day in 1985. I was the host minister for the first annual UUA Gay and Lesbian Convocation held at First Church Houston. We met and became friends, until our relationship changed, and in 1991 our romance began. We had a Commitment Ceremony February 16, 1992, with a church-full of celebrators. Liz Benjamin and Terry Kime officiated. Now marriage in Oregon is legal. After 24 years together, we will be married by Bill Sinkford on Presidents’ Day!”

Charlotte Shivers and her husband Robert Baker celebrated 35 years of marriage in a recommitment ceremony at First Unitarian Church in Des Moines with the Rev. Mark Stringer officiating. Charlotte and Bob are spending a couple of months this winter in Florida to be near their son, his wife and their granddaughter — and to enjoy warmer weather!

In Memoriam

Longer and more detailed versions of all obituaries can be found on the UURMaPA web site at <http://www.uurmapa.org/obituaries.html>. No password is necessary to access that page. Many thanks to Chris Lilly Backus and Jay Atkinson for their careful and sensitive work writing the partners' and ministers' obituaries, respectively.



Jean L. Higgins, 85, wife of the Rev. Dr. Daniel G. Higgins, Jr., died, January 9, 2014 with her family by her side. She was born August 4, 1928 in Baltimore, MD, and attended the University of Maryland, earning a degree in social work, later serving as a social worker in Baltimore. While at the university, she met Dan and they were married September 11, 1954.

The Higginses served congregations in Lubbock, TX; Malden, MA; Easton, MD; and Salisbury, MD. In addition to parenting and church work, Jean enjoyed reading and art appreciation. She also was a bird watcher.

After retiring in 1987, they moved to Georgia to be closer to their daughters. Jean lived at a memory care facility, and their daughter took Dan to see her every other day.

In addition to her husband, Jean is survived by her sister, Leslie Everheart of Kensington, MD; and her children: Cynthia Westlake of Marietta, GA; Daniel G. Higgins III of Milton, MA; Ann Spicer of Atlanta, GA; and Kim Clark of Houston, TX. She is also survived by her six grandchildren.

Jean donated her body to medical research. A celebration of life was held this past summer in Easton, MD.

Condolences may be sent to: Dan Higgins, 100 Whitlock Ave., Sullivan #1220, Marietta, GA 30064.

Eugenie (Nina) Morin Smith, 71, long-time spouse of the Rev. Theodore R. Smith, Jr., died February 6, 2013 in Patterson, NY.

Nina was a spiritual teacher for many years, working through her practice, Education for Life, Inc. She sponsored a number of children overseas. She enjoyed the outdoors, watching birds and animals in the countryside. She was an animal rights advocate. Her long-term friend, JoAnn Tannenbaum, said Nina was well-loved and is greatly missed.

Rev. Theodore Smith died in 1999.

Nina is survived by her sister and by two sons, Theodore R. Smith III, and Remi Merlo Smith. Notes of remembrance may go to Nina's sister, Michele Morin, 220 Quaker Rd., Patterson, NY 12563.



Al and Mary Thelander

The Rev. Al Thelander, who served parish ministries in California, died on October 20, 2014, at the age of 89.

Albert Hill Thelander was born on August 8, 1925 to Margaret and Albert Levi Thelander. He earned a B.S. from Harvard University in 1949, then served the United States Air Force from 1952 to 1970. He was graduated from Starr King School for the Ministry in 1973.

Mr. Thelander was ordained to ministry in 1977 by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Saddleback Valley of Laguna Hills, CA, where he served as minister from 1977 to 1979. He then answered a call to the Humboldt UU Fellowship of Bayside, CA in 1979, where he continued until his retirement in 1993, when he was voted Minister Emeritus.

The Rev. Mr. Thelander served his colleagues and the UU movement in a variety of ways, in both the Pacific Central and Pacific Southwest Districts and for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Al enjoyed chess, carpentry, reading, and spending time with family, among whom he was affectionately known as "GrandAl." His granddaughter Emmy remembers, "GrandAl approached everything in life, including the whimsical and the grave, with the assumption that it was — or could be — meaningful. He was and is a model for intentional living."

Al Thelander is survived by his wife of 63 years, Mary; children, Carl Thelander, Margo Thelander, and Kate Alvarez; six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Notes of condolences may be sent to Mary Thelander, 12833 Lake Wildwood Drive, Penn Valley, CA 95946.

**Unitarian Universalist Retired
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