



## Elderberries

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### Targeted Ministry Program Offers Opportunities

Keith Kron and Scott Tayler

How often have we seen a congregation that needs a little extra help? Perhaps they are moving toward their first ministry, or they need sabbatical coverage, or an outside voice during an interim or settled ministry, or perhaps they just need some targeted development. These needs are not new. Yet they remain timely.

Congregations are often faced with the problem of limited resources, which makes the problem of getting the help they need more complicated. I see congregations with negotiated resignations needing to go without a minister for months. I see new ministers get stuck struggling with complex systems questions. Colleagues go on sabbatical but worry that the congregation they serve may destabilize. An interim minister might benefit greatly by having an esteemed colleague repeat, differently, an idea the congregational leadership resists.



Keith Kron,  
Transitions Director

All of these situations are examples where a short-term, targeted ministry could benefit the congregation and the ministry with this congregation. UURMaPA and the UUA have joined together to address these situations, creating the Targeted Ministry Program (with the acronym, TMP).

The Targeted Ministry Program will have three purposes:

- 1) To support congregational program development, growth, and health
- 2) To utilize the expertise of retired ministers
- 3) To provide more flexible ministry options for congregations and ministers

The Transitions Office will oversee the process in conjunction with Congregational Life staff. Indeed, a regional staff member is likely to be a key point person to congregations, recommending the program to them and helping them refine what they need from a TMP minister. The

Transitions Office will create the application for ministers who wish to apply. Along with the regional staff, we will work for good quality and good matching of ministerial skills and temperament to the congregation and its needs. The Transitions Office and the regional staff will work with the congregations to assure that an appropriate developmental covenant is reached between the TMP minister and the congregation. Congregations will be expected to compensate at the recommended rates set by the UUMA, as well as those recommended by the Office of Church Staff Finances.



Scott Tayler,  
Director of  
Congregational Life

UURMaPA has submitted a grant to the UU Funding Panel to help with the cost of training ministers for this new program. Initially, the effort hopes to provide training in conjunction with upcoming UURMaPA gatherings, beginning in the Fall of 2017.

While it's hard to predict the utilization of this program for our congregations, there is a definite need. And there is a well-remembered positive history of similar efforts from the Minister On Loan program of years ago. When they speak of their ministerial history, many of our congregations don't remember the name, but they do speak well of the effect of having a minister come visit for a month or two. Colleagues in that program saw the opportunity to utilize their skills and make a real difference in a congregation's life. And being able to do so on a short term basis had high appeal to ministers.

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Contact information for everyone above can be found in the on-line directory at [www.uurmapa.org](http://www.uurmapa.org) or in the printed directory.

You may view online or download the Membership Directory (updated regularly) at [www.uurmapa.org](http://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 Your Editor:

Your UURMaPA Board has been busy this summer and fall organizing some new programs, which you will be reading about here. Be sure to read the back pages as well as those big stories near the front. The articles are shorter, but equally important for your knowledge and understanding of what *your* organization is doing.

This is the first issue of *Elderberries* with an updated delivery system since the recent readership survey. If you received it in the mail, you will continue to do so unless you notify us that you would prefer to read it on line. To opt out of snail mail delivery, please notify Richard Speck, our Membership Coordinator, at [membership@uurmapa.org](mailto:membership@uurmapa.org). Everyone for whom we have an e-mail address will be notified when the newsletter is posted on our web site. The on line issue has the advantage of color photos and graphics, but *you have to actually click on the link to see it*.

Our new Advisory Board members are Anne Spatola and Mike Young, each agreeing to serve a three-year term. Thank you!

The deadline for the Winter issue of *Elderberries* is January 15, 2017. Enjoy your winter holidays and peruse those holiday letters for publishable news from your UURMaPA friends!

— Judy Welles

Please send your requests, comments and feedback to [elderberries@uurmapa.org](mailto:elderberries@uurmapa.org).

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Our hope is to build well with a small, more intentional start, creating a few success stories that can be widely shared. Regional staff and the Transitions Office will be looking for congregations ready to engage well with this new program, and for ministers ready to engage with them and meet the congregation where they are. Ministers with good skills around non-anxious behavior, fine preaching and pastoral skills, and specific skills around leadership development will be particularly good matches for the program, especially if they bring a positive and hopeful message.

Jim Eller and Marni Harmony were instrumental supporters and workers from UURMaPA to get this program going, while Scott Tayler and Keith Kron worked diligently from the UUA's side in support of the program.

The timeline:

September, 2016	Grant application submitted to Funding Panel
November, 2016	Funding Panel notifies UURMaPA of decision on application
December, 2016	Transitions Office creates and publishes ministerial application for program (Transitions Office website)
January, 2017	Regional staff begins to identify congregations in need of program, and creates application and covenantal forms for congregation
October, 2017	Training for ministers in program at UURMaPA gathering
Fall, 2017 and beyond	Program begins. Additional training for ministers at subsequent UURMaPA gatherings

Interested ministers should contact the Transitions Office after the first of the year at [transitions@uua.org](mailto:transitions@uua.org).

# A Word from Your President

Jim Eller

## *Membership - What Does It Mean to Belong?*

UURMaPA has a membership of over 1,000 people in more than 700 households. Do all of our members even know that they are members? Last month I received an email from David Keyes, asking how he might join UURMaPA. I told him that he could become a member simply by submitting his “Intent to Retire” form with the UUA, at which point he and his partner would automatically become members. This is the case for everyone who submits the form, whether they intend to be members or not. As an increasing number of ministers retire, our organization continues to grow, but this level of membership does not create a lot of buy-in.

We probably have between 200 and 300 active members, who attend events or who send money. We are beginning to think about a different kind of membership structure, maybe a two-category system — one for those who have passively become members and to whom UURMaPA means little, and another for those who actively participate, and who clearly appreciate their continued associations with our faith and with other UU colleagues.

What will it take to be an active member? We don’t know yet. One of our UURMaPA board members suggested that any contribution of record might be the criterion, but maybe something still more intentional might be useful. Our hope is to move toward formalizing this “active member” category in order to get greater participation, better buy-in, and more financial stability.

We also know that a part of our charge as an organization is to keep track of *all* of our members, to be an organization of memory. It is a sacred trust to remember our members in life and in death. Whether or not they have been active members, we remember those who have given their lives to serving and building our UU movement. Obituaries for all of our members are published in *Elderberries* and archived on our web site. We reach out to those experiencing loss and life challenges. We send welcome letters to those retiring and letters of condolence and sympathy to those whose partners have died.

We know we already have at least two different kinds of members, so the UURMaPA board has established a task force to study this question of membership and make recommendations about how we should proceed. Board members Judy Welles and Marni Harmony will be joined by UURMaPA members Bill Hamilton-Holway, Kathleen Hunter and Wayne Arnason. We look forward to their exploration and to their future report on what it means to belong.

## *Leadership – Each One Teach One*

Like most good volunteer organizations, UURMaPA sees a continuing turnover of volunteers and organizational leaders. At our recent Attleboro conference we witnessed the remarkably capable leadership of Ginger Luke and her partner, Don Chery. They did a knockout job, but they have taken their turn. Phyllis Hubble and John Manwell have agreed to lead the 2017 Attleboro conference. John has been on the UURMaPA board in charge of the conference portfolio, so we are in good shape. Ginger will be taking John’s place on the board, pending her election.

We have several other people rotating off the board, and are looking at several prospective new members. Dick Gilbert is the chair of the UURMaPA Nominating Committee; please email Dick if you are interested in being on the board or think of someone you would like to nominate for the board.

— W. Jim Eller  
President, UURMAPA



— Photo by Susan LaMar

**Send updates!** Please send any changes to your address, phone or e-mail to: Richard Speck at [membership@uurmapa.org](mailto:membership@uurmapa.org) or 4721 Mermaid Blvd., Wilmington, DE 19808-1803. The most current Directory is online at [www.UURMAPA.org](http://www.UURMAPA.org) (ID: UU-SAGE, password WISDOM).

# Leadership Column

## What Is an Elder To Do?

I wonder what it must have been like to live in Europe during the Reformation — during a time when the cultural order was in upheaval. The authority of the Church was declared illegitimate by a legion of heretics, a new world across the Atlantic had been “discovered,” astronomers had removed the earth from the center of the universe, and the printing press was revolutionizing communication. Humanity’s entire symbolic world was in turmoil.



Of course, it must have felt a lot like being alive today. Only today the changes we are living through are much, much faster than during the Reformation. The American religious landscape, the world in which we have toiled and to which we have given so much of our lives, has changed more in the last 20 years than during all previous American history. Membership in religious institutions has dropped at an unprecedented rate. The Reformation seems slow compared to the last 20 years.

As I enter the final months of my time as UUA president and prepare to join you as a retired minister, I find myself wondering what the role of a religious elder should be in a time such as ours. This is a time to consider, as Theodore Parker did, what is transient and what is permanent in liberal religion. The role of elder has always included being a guardian of tradition, helping connect the past to the present and future. But what can that possibly mean in a time when all religion is being rejected by tens of millions of people?

We Unitarian Universalists are fortunate. Our liberal religious friends are hemorrhaging members and closing congregations. By comparison, we are doing much better. I am not happy with our numbers, for I continue to believe that we have potential that no one else does. (Actually, “not happy with our numbers” does not begin to capture my frustration and disappointment.) However, it is clear that the religious “market” has changed dramatically. We cannot continue to do what we have always done. Simply doing congregational life and doing it marginally better than before will not suffice.

What is an elder to do? How do we support and mentor young colleagues? What role can we play in helping this movement we love adapt to a new world?

I think we need to tell stories that preserve our long tradition of breaking with tradition. Elders have always been people who hand on stories. We have to remind ourselves and our movement that we are people who took risks, who broke with outmoded institutions, who challenged orthodoxy. The danger, of course, is that elders can be tempted to cling to what is old and familiar.

Adapting to cultural upheaval is a classic “wicked problem.” It is a problem without one correct answer and a problem that can only be solved by trial and error. When I served as a parish minister, I was blessed to have elders in the congregation who encouraged and supported change. They set the tone. Their confidence and support made the entire system less anxious.

As elders in ministry, it makes a difference what we bless and what we encourage. The core values of our movement — compassion, depth, integrity, community, justice, commitment — are as timeless as ever. This is a time for us support new ways of giving life to those values we have always held as sacred. The temptation is to cling to the past. The challenge is to create the future.

— Peter Morales, President  
Unitarian Universalist Association



## Chris Lilly Backus Wins Unsung UURMaPAn Award

The Unsung UURMaPAn Award annually honors a volunteer who has made an extraordinary contribution to UURMaPA, working behind the scenes during their retirement years. This year’s deserving winner, chosen by your Board, is Chris Lilly Backus.

Reading the citation that accompanied the \$500 award, Judy Welles noted that Chris has served for decades, before and after retirement, as an articulate and committed advocate for ministers’ partners, “the often under-recognized element of UURMaPA’s membership.” She was a founding member of UUMPs (the UU Ministers’ Partners) in 1980, and has been chosen as the spokesperson for partners on several different UUA, UUMA, and UURMaPA task forces.



Chris served as the editor of *Elderberries* from 2008 to 2012, then moved to the Nominating Committee as another way to serve our organization.

The citation concludes, “When Chris and Andy retired and moved to Bellingham, Washington, they realized with some sadness that they could never be laypeople again, and thus would never find religious community within a UU congregation. To some degree, UURMaPA has met that need for them. Chris has given generously and with great skill and commitment to UURMaPA, and we are delighted to give something back to her by recognizing her as UURMaPA’s Unsung UURMaPAn for 2016.”

# Elders in Action

## Meeting Mary Jones

In 1950, when I was about 5 years old, my family travelled from Wilmington, Delaware, where we lived, to Richmond, Virginia, for a family event. I was too young to go to the event itself, so I was left under care of a cousin at my Great Aunt's house in Richmond. While we were playing a game, an African American servant came to me and said that Mary wanted to meet me. I had no idea who Mary might be, but I went with her to meet Mary. I now believe that the servant was Mary's daughter.

We climbed the stairs to the room where Mary lived. Going in, I saw a very old African American woman sitting in a rocker wearing a bright white linen cap. After being introduced to me, she told me that she had been a cook for my father's family when he was a little boy. We talked for a little while, and I returned to the game with my cousin.

This is one of my earliest memories. It has stayed with me over the years. As I grew into adulthood and began to understand the woundedness of racism and slavery, this memory took on an ominous, shaded quality. Forty years later, I started to wonder whether Mary had been enslaved by my family, and I began to ask some hard questions of my family. The answers I received were ambiguous at best, and often met with outright denial.

By 2000, I was getting restless in parish ministry. It was not that I was bored with it. Rather, parish ministry no longer seemed to be calling me. The more I thought about it, the more deeply I felt called to seek the real answers to those hard questions, and in 2007 I retired to begin the work that led me to the answers.

One of the first things I learned was that Mary's last name was Jones. I believe Mrs. Jones to have been born around 1860 into slavery in the household of my father's maternal great-grandfather.

(There is no indication who her father was. One possibility is that it was my great-great-grandfather, though there are other possibilities as well.) If I am right, then she was the last living person to have been enslaved by my family. She died in 1961, thought to have been about 100 years old.

Of course question leads to question, and I have learned a lot about my family's slaveholding history. Three branches of my family held people in slavery at one time or another. According to the US Slave Schedules, between 1790 and 1860 the Colliers enslaved a total of 73 people, the Hardwicks (my father's



Louise Hardwicke Collier, Ken's paternal grandmother. Her grandfather probably owned Mary Jones.

mother's family) held 14, and the Powells (my mother's family) held up to 7. I have discovered the names of about 40



Charles Henry Collier, Ken's great-grandfather, who was a slaveholder and served in the Confederate Navy as a blockade runner.

of these enslaved people. And remarkably, I have found two people to whom I am connected through slavery. Both are related to me genetically, and I am in occasional contact with both of them. Surely there are many more to be found.

From time to time I have occasion to talk with people about all this. Sometimes it is in a sermon, other times at a workshop, and other times it is just informal conversation. I have learned to expect someone to take me to task for doing this work. "Why are you doing this? All it does is re-open old and healed wounds. Let the past bury the past." Sometimes people actually get angry with me. "Get over your guilt trip! You are not responsible for what those people did."

Of course I am not. But there is another meaning of responsibility. We are also responsible to the people who come after us to hand on to them a world that is more healed, more humane, than the world we received. And that is why this work is essential, why I am called to it. It is the ministry of my retirement.

— Ken Collier

*Ken, a graduate of Starr King (class of 1979), has served churches on both coasts, most recently the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara, which honored him with emeritus status. He also holds a PhD in philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh. Ken and his wife, Anne Anderson, still live in Santa Barbara with their Shih Tzu, Bodhi.*



### Are You On Facebook?

If you are, please "like" the two Facebook pages related to retired UU ministers. One is our official UURMaPA Facebook page, curated by member Theresa Novak, which carries notifications and breaking news from our organization.

The other page is titled "UU Ministers Retiring." It is for ministers who have already retired **and** those who are close to retirement – a place to share ideas and get support for some of the unique issues that retirees face.

# Partner's Column

## Santa in Maine

“Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas!” chortled Santa Claus’s helper as Santa climbed the gangway to the Fishermen’s Memorial on the Portland, Maine, fish pier. The Christmas tree was waiting to be lit, the kids and parents were licking candy canes, and Mrs. Claus was also coming ashore from Santa’s lobster boat. After children’s time on Santa’s knee, the tree was lit, we re-boarded the lobster boat and motored back into the larger harbor. It was the beginning of a decade of expanding Santa roles.



Twenty years ago, I joined the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Volunteer Lifesavers on Team Coast Guard. After I had qualified as Boat Crew, I became active in Marine Safety, beginning as Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiner. I worked closely with the Fishermen’s Wives Association (FWA), as we both wanted fishermen to return from the sea to their families. (Almost all fishing boat captains were and are male, but not all.) Hence, the FWA requested that I be Santa. When I found out how much the FWA had paid for the Santa costume and beard, the next year I asked my seamstress wife to make a suit for me.

I stopped shaving on Labor Day to grow an adequate beard for the Yule season. With theatrical spray makeup, I could turn my beard completely white. The Coast Guard Sector Command and the local small boat station in Portland asked me to be Santa for their holiday festivities, as well.

Judy, my wife, joined the board of the York County Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse, now known as “Kids Free to Grow.” Each holiday season, they sponsored a concert for 180 to 300+ children and parents. The program was Rick Charrette and the Bubble Gum Band. Santa and Mrs. Claus (my wife) greeted the children as they arrived at each venue, with 8-9 cartoon characters assisting. Asking not just “What do you want for Christmas?” but also “What favorite cookie will you put out for me?” and “What are you getting for Mom or Dad?” The holidays are not just for kids.

We had lots of repeats in the audience from year to year, and we were remembered by the wee ones. Judy and I had fun with this for ten years. Once, a Board member even invited us for dinner at her restaurant, if we came in our costumes. Great mussels — better than cookies!

My role as Santa came to an end when I got pneumonia at Thanksgiving four years ago. I called a Coast Guard Auxiliary friend who had the build, the beard, and the disposition, and asked him to take over. He said “Yes.” I gave him my Santa suit, bells, and white makeup. The tradition continues.

— Paul Smith-Valley

*Before his retirement, Paul Smith-Valley was a Capital Campaign Consultant with the UUA. He is also a Commodore in the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. His wife, the Reverend Dr. Judith Smith-Valley, an Accredited Interim Minister, retired in July, 2016 after her last interim ministry at the Starr King UU Fellowship in Plymouth, NH.*

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## UU Organizations Retirement Plan News

As many UURMaPA members hopefully know, the IRS requires that you annually draw down your retirement savings if you are age 70 ½ or better, and retired. If you are receiving a W2 for ministerial employment, you can delay the annual required minimum distribution (RMD). If you are earning some income from pulpit supply, and receiving a 1099 (non-employee), then you probably need to draw down your account.

Our retirement plan record keeper, TIAA, is able to calculate the amount you must withdraw. This amount is dictated by IRS regulation, and it is based on several factors, including your age, whether you are married (and if so, the age of your spouse), and your account balance as of December 31 of the prior year.

Until now, plan participants had to contact TIAA each year to request their required minimum distribution (RMD). Starting this year, plan participants can set up a Recurring Required Minimum Distribution. In doing so, TIAA will automatically calculate your annual RMD and ensure its timely distribution to you. This is a major enhancement for plan participants.

**Important Point:** Because many retirees already take systematic withdrawals (monthly, quarterly, or annually) from our Plan in order to “make ends meet,” they may have already met the annual IRS requirement for minimum distribution for this calendar year.

You can ask a TIAA customer service representative for information about your RMD by calling our dedicated phone number, 800/842-2829, and asking, “Does the amount that I am on track to have withdrawn by the end of 2016 meet the minimum

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# What Brings You Joy?

## A Geriatric Addiction.

In September, 2012, my wife Gerry announced that she would celebrate her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday by riding 80 kilometers on her recumbent tricycle. “You must be mad,” her younger friends exclaimed, but I said, “No, not mad. Just addicted.”

It all began in 1972 when our 14 year-old daughter announced she wanted to ride her new bicycle from Schenectady, where I was serving the Unitarian Society, to the Thousand Islands region on the Saint Lawrence river. The only way she could do it was “with her mother.” They did it.

That was the beginning. The addiction didn’t really set in until 1976 when we joined a “Bike Centennial” group and biked from Astoria, Oregon to Grand Teton national park, a total of 1,500 miles with a group of 12 and a leader. We soon realized that we could arrange our own tours, which we did nearly every summer until 1999, riding between 1,000 and 2,000 miles each time. In 1985 and 1986 we bicycled in Europe and Asia, New Zealand, and even Tibet as part of an around the world sabbatical.



Gradually we’ve substituted a credit card or motor home for the tent, sleeping bags and cooking gear. Since the removal of Gerry’s stomach in 2005 and her switch from bicycle to tricycle because of osteoporosis, we’ve ridden mostly on off-road trails in 49 of the 50 U.S. states — 600 miles last summer. Neither of us is willing to give up our addiction. In fact, Gerry has ridden her age every year since 2012. I’ve tagged along behind and added two additional kilometers to make my age.

Why do we do it? Partly to keep in shape, partly for bragging rights. Partly because it feels so good when we stop. But mostly because it feels so good while we’re spinning those pedals.

— Bob and Gerry Eddy

*Bob Eddy is minister emeritus of the Pensacola, FL congregation. He served congregations in Farmington, MI; Schenectady NY; Denver, CO (First Universalist); and interims in Indianapolis and Adelaide, Australia and Niceville, FL before moving to Pensacola in 2001.*

## Retirement Seminar for UU Ministers

UURMaPA is partnering with the UUA and UUMA to offer a retirement planning seminar for UU ministers who are thinking about retirement in 5-10 years. It will be at the Newcomb Tennis Camp, outside San Antonio, Texas, March 27-31, 2017. We’ve contracted with our own Larry Peers to help lead the seminar. Any of you who have, like me, attended one of Larry’s retirement seminars know how valuable it can be.

So why are we telling already-retired ministers and partners about this? Two reasons, actually. First, while targeted invitations will be going out to UUMA members who are 5-10 years out, there’s nothing like a personal “urging.” So if you know colleagues in that target group, please have a personal conversation.

Which brings me to the second reason for telling you all about this. I took Larry’s seminar after I had retired, basically as part of UURMaPA’s investigation into whether to sponsor this seminar. During the training, over and over again I had head-slapping “I wish I had known this” moments.

So I’m asking for your help in fleshing out UURMaPA’s part of the training, which revolves around the topic, “Things I wish I had known before I retired.” I was fortunate to have engaged Alban consultant Susan Beaumont as my pre-retirement coach. And yet Larry’s seminar offered much that would have made the transition better for me and for the congregation.

Please drop me an e-mail ([DWGallager@gmail.com](mailto:DWGallager@gmail.com)) or call (248/647-1912) to share what you wish you had known before you retired. You can help make things better for colleagues, partners, congregations and community settings. Thanks for your help.

— Doug Gallager

As your Historian, I am hoping to create a personal dimension to our history. Therefore I am collecting UURMaPA Odysseys, both electronic and hard copy, from any of you willing to have yours in our archives. I also would like any Orders of Service from the Service of the Living Tradition that you might have saved through the years.

Please send them to me at:

[estrong110@comcast.net](mailto:estrong110@comcast.net) or

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Strong

P.O. Box 324

Ashby, MA 01431

# Early Retirement?

Pam Allen-Thompson

I wasn't expecting it. New sermon ideas kept twirling around in my head. I had miles to go before I stopped. So why the early retirement now? Silence.

"Reverend Pam, we've noticed some confusion," said the Board President. "Confusion?" I asked. "What kind of confusion?" The hard conversations began.

Thanks to the help of colleagues, I began to register what my congregants were seeing that I wasn't. Oh, my. I found a neurologist and started the testing. Alzheimer's. "Surely not," says I. "I'm afraid so," says he.

Questions started falling on my shoulders like heavy rain. Oh, the occasional flashback of printing my Order of Service out of order, missing appointments because I put the date in the wrong place on my calendar, writing my Board report but failing to send it in, or forgetting to ask the ushers to come forward, thus losing the offering for that week.



Why hadn't I seen it coming? After all, I had been present for families dealing with Alzheimer's since the beginning of my ministry. But this was different. My capacity was waning, but I just figured that was normal. There was just too much to do in my little world. Then I remembered the song from Leonard Cohen: "It's Closing Time."

Well, not yet. Blessed be the opportunities to continue to share the gifts we do have, as long as our facilities allow. I've always enjoyed cooking, so now I get to do more of it — as long as I don't forget to turn the burner off. I will have time to write letters, though I notice when proofreading them that some of my words make no sense.

I think the hardest part of this new world will be watching how much extra work my loving partner must take on to keep me as safe and alert as possible. Some days are easier than others.

Since she insists on being my caregiver to the very end, I insist that she secure regular times for her own respite. At present her joy is the weekly train-spotting with her 14 year-old grandson.

In an unexpected way, I think this new turn can be a marvelous gift. While day-to-day and minute-to-minute memories are often gone as fast as they come, dementia in general does not chew up all the old memories — at least for now. Thus there is an essence in all of this that feels most precious.

So many ways to describe it — from Hallelujah to harmony with the great unknown, or opportunities to re-engage with friends and colleagues from the past, or the unspeakable wonder of having been a small dot on a big planet in the unfathomable universe.

And, yes, I will be there for some of the train-spotting with the grandson, who embraces with joy the world ahead for him. As we've sung at GA for many years, "Life Calls Us On" and I love it.

*Pam Allen-Thompson started her journey into ministry in 1998 after a career as a German teacher, both in Berlin and at Ohio State University, where she met her partner Di. They were legally married on June 29, 2015, three days after it became legal. Her last two ministries were interim positions in Pennsylvania, before taking early retirement in May, 2016. She served on the UUA Board of Trustees during Bill Sinkford's presidency*



Pam and Di Allen-Thompson celebrating retirement

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distribution amount required of me by the IRS for this year?" And if you want to set up a Recurring Required Minimum Distribution, ask them to do so.

If you need to request a withdrawal for any reason, please do not wait until December to submit paperwork to our office. Both TIAA and the UUA have year-end deadlines and are not able to process last minute requests. Also, Linda Rose, the UUA Retirement Plan Director, is on her well-earned sabbatical.

To request RMD withdrawal step-by-step instructions, email [retirementplan@uua.org](mailto:retirementplan@uua.org). And of course you may reach out to Joshua Craft, our Retirement Plan Assistant, at [assistplan@uua.org](mailto:assistplan@uua.org) with any questions related to your denominational retirement plan. Questions can also be directed to me at [RNugent@uua.org](mailto:RNugent@uua.org).

Finally, may the holiday season be joyful for you and yours.

— Richard Nugent, Director  
UUA Office of Church Staff Finances

## Fall Conference Was Terrific, Of Course!



Don and Ginger

Perfect autumn weather gilded the lily at the excellent Attleboro Fall Conference of 2016. Many hands contributed to the success of the event, but special credit goes to Ginger Luke and Don Chery, this year's co-chairs, for the degree of preparation that made everything run so smoothly.

The theme of Creativity was carried consistently and successfully through various activities for the entire conference, beginning with an inspiring program presented by Andy and Chris Backus. They made some observations about the creative process and how they work together, followed by a glimpse into their creation of the two-act musical, "Older But Not Wiser," with live music performed by Dave Hunter and Sophie Philibin, a member of the nearby Foxboro Universalist Church. Working groups of six or seven UURMaPAn were then assigned the task of re-writing words to the familiar tune of "For the Beauty of the Earth," with astonishingly successful results. (See page 11 for a sample...)

Afternoon workshops included pottery, photography, further explorations in the creative process with Chris and Andy, and several other well-attended offerings — followed, of course, by the familiar social hour in "the cave." (Thank you, Sandy Fitz-Henry, for organizing this.)

Wednesday brought several choices for exploring the nearby city of Providence, RI, with tours of the Rhode Island School of Design Art Museum, the Culinary Arts Museum, or First Unitarian Church; boat tours on the Providence River; and various options for lunch. That evening we enjoyed an Odyssey delivered by Dick Fewkes.

Worship services offered by Phyllis Hubbell, Carol Taylor, and Kerry Mueller continued to explore the theme of creativity, while Joyce and Dick Gilbert's evening worship gave us a glimpse of their recent trip to Cape Town, South Africa, followed by a slide show giving more detail. Victor and Cathe Carpenter made a surprise appearance; Victor was the Unitarian minister in Cape Town in the 1960s.



"Low Bridge"

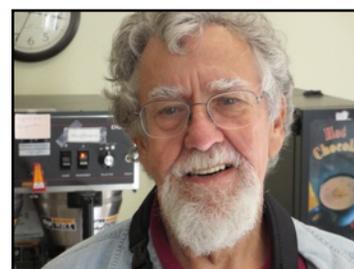
Thursday's business meeting brought us news of UURMaPA's recent activities and the announcement of the 2016 Unsung UURMaPAn, Chris Lilly Backus (see separate article, page 4.) We ended the conference with the good news that 4-day gatherings will continue, so save the dates of **October 2-5, 2017** and plan to come to the Attleboro Conference, chaired next year by Phyllis Hubbell and John Manwell.



"Grandfather" (Dave Hunter) and "Sarah" (Sophie Philibin)



First Unitarian Church  
Providence  
— Photo by Art Severance



Art Severance  
— Photo by David Tedesco



Connie Johnson and her turtle

Photos by Eleanor Richardson  
unless otherwise noted



Newcomers to Attleboro this year  
L to R: Nancee Campbell, Susan LaMar, Janet Newman, Neil Gerdes, Judith and Paul Smith-Valley, Carol Rosine

## New Members Since July 15, 2016

Susan Suchocki Brown and Ronald Brown  
Katie Lee Crane and Jonas Barciauskas  
Phillip and Susan Douglas  
David and Judy Keyes  
Caroline Knowles  
James and Loretta Sherblom  
Barbara and Jaco Ten Hove  
Chip Wright and Lisa Wiggins



## Bylaws Change: Connections Network

Last spring, your UURMaPA Board recommended that we re-define the Caring Network by changing its name to Connections Network. President Jim Eller wrote about this idea in the Spring *Elderberries*. We feel that this change better reflects what we are about. UURMaPA's primary role is helping our members stay connected with each other, not really "taking care" of them. Area Connectors may occasionally ask our members how they are doing, what interests them, where they have traveled, etc. — and with permission, this news may be reported in *Elderberries*.

To make this change official, we would like to update our Bylaws in two places as follows:

### Article IV - ADMINISTRATION

**Section 1** The Board of this organization shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Newsletter Editor, a Connections Network Chair and three Members-at-large.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Article V - ELECTIONS

**Section 1** The officers, three Members-at-large, and a Nominating Committee, consisting of a chair and two others, shall be elected by the members.

The President, the Vice President, the Connections Network Chair, two Members-at-large, and the Chair of the Nominating Committee, shall be elected in odd-numbered years.

By requirement, these changes are submitted to you, the members, to invite your comments before they are ratified by the Board. Send any feedback to me, the Secretary, before December 1, 2016. We promise to consider your opinions at our December meeting before we make the change!

— Judy Gibson, Secretary to the Board  
[judygibson@bellsouth.net](mailto:judygibson@bellsouth.net)

## Attention: All Ministers and Their Spouses Who Ever Served a Congregation in Massachusetts or Maine...

There is a special source of financial assistance to those in need: the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society.

*Who is eligible?* The purpose of the Society is to provide relief and support for persons who have served as Congregational\* ministers in Massachusetts or Maine, and for persons who are the spouses, widows/widowers, children, or former spouses of such ministers.

\*Congregational ministers include ministers who have served Congregational, UCC, Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist churches. Spouse includes any person married to a minister under the laws of the relevant jurisdiction.

*How do I apply?* To apply for a grant, please write, telephone or email:

Glen Snowden, Secretary, MCCS  
34 Meetinghouse Lane, Apt. 201  
Stow, MA 01775  
(978) 298-5726  
[Gsnow3@juno.com](mailto:Gsnow3@juno.com)

Filling out a detailed financial form is a prerequisite. It is due April 15 of each year, as grants are usually determined in May. The Appropriations Committee of the Society will review all applications and make recommendations to the Annual Meeting.

For more information and a downloadable version of the application form, go to the MCCS website at: <http://www.masscces.org/>

*History:* In 1786, ten Congregational ministers and ten laymen petitioned the Massachusetts Legislature for incorporation as the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, to "afford relief and support to the widows and children of deceased ministers." When Congregationalists and Unitarians split about 1825, the Society escaped division and still serves both denominations. Likewise, when Maine became a state in 1820, the Society still covered that territory. The Board was charged with "using and improving the capital," in order to continue to help people today.

— Rachel Tedesco,  
MCCS Board Member

Age puzzles me. I thought it was a quiet time. My seventies were interesting and fairly serene, but my eighties are passionate. I grow more intense as I age.

— Florida Scott-Maxwell

# Turning of Our Lives

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

— Proverbs 25: 25

**Helen Gordon** reports, “I am now working on two novels and writing articles about Shakespeare as the pen name of Edward de Vera, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, on [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu). I am also reviving an interest in writing poetry and light verse.”

Helen is the widow of Clif Gordon, who served the Bakersfield, CA UU congregation. She took on a full time job at UC Santa Barbara to help with the cost of assisted living after he suffered a debilitating stroke. She worked as an editor in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Dept., helping graduate students polish their research papers for publication. She still offers that service to students at Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, through the miracle of e-mail attachments.

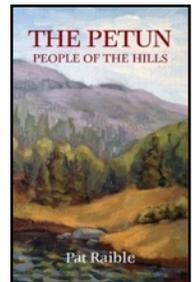
**Kathleen Hunter** writes, “Recently **Alan [Deale]** and I went to Creemore, Ontario, to visit **Pat and Chris Raible**. Chris was a colleague of Alan’s in the Midwest and later he was minister of First Church, Toronto, when I was a member. Pat had a career as a head librarian both in a city and in a law firm in Toronto.

Twenty-one years ago they moved to a renovated schoolhouse near the village of Creemore, then an economically depressed rural centre. While out walking, they saw a run down house on the main street that they thought would make a good bookstore; they bought it, then rented it out for three years while they toured around looking at small town bookstores to see what worked.

The town has revived with the presence of a craft brewery and their bookstore, which includes a gallery for the sale of the work of local artists. Both Pat and Chris volunteered in the community on projects as diverse as the renovation of the medical centre, the first settler’s house, and the jail. Both are interested in history and have written books of local interest as well as for Canadian history journals.

Pat’s latest book on the First Nations (Indians) of the area was launched recently and immediately sold out. It is entitled *The Petun, People of the Hills*. In it, she details the visit of Samuel de Champlain to the area and his mention of the Petun. This is a slim volume, but so important in the recovery of knowledge about those people who lived in North America before the arrival of Europeans.

We came home heartened and cheered at the effect their work has had on their community. The moral of this story for all those about to retire is ‘go to a clapped-out mill town in New England and do thou likewise.’”



**Sue and Vern Nichols** helped **Dick Leonard** celebrate his 89th birthday (September 24) with dinner and a cake at Dan Japanese Restaurant in Manhattan.

**Richard Speck** has become very active with the Delaware Sangerbund, the German society in Delaware. He had to prove his German heritage by showing that his relatives had come from Germany in 1770. Richard has joined the Enzian Musikanten as second clarinetist. They play for the Sangerbund members at special occasions, as well as for the German dancers in colorful outfits. He played clarinet this fall for the Oktoberfest in Newark, DE. Richard can’t wait to play more rousing polkas and marches with his fellow musicians as he deepens his understanding of his German heritage.



## Refrains from the Hymn-Writing Exercise

Hear in your mind the familiar tune... “Source of all to thee we raise/This our hymn of grateful praise.”  
Then try this:

Bless today this sacred space,  
Offering its warm embrace.

Gathered here we now do raise  
This our hymn of wondrous praise.

Here we are in sacred space  
Sharing love and peace and grace.

Come together, bless us all  
As we hear the joyous call.

Home for you and home for me  
Shapes our lives eternally.

Welcome, all who gather here.  
Learn and grow and bless the world.

Love within and Love we share,  
This our hope and thankful prayer.



## *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 Roger Rochester and Jay Atkinson for their careful and sensitive work writing the partners' and ministers' obituaries, respectively.*

JULIA AGEE (1946 - 2016)

Julia (Deedee ) Agee, 69, artist and writer, and the wife of Paul Sprecher, died in Scituate, MA on October 1, 2016.



Deedee was born Julia Teresa Agee to James and Mia Agee on November 7, 1946. Her grandmother called her “Chickadee” and her rendering – “Deedee” – became the name she used for the rest of her life. She grew up in Greenwich Village, lived much of her life in NY, moved to Ridgewood, NJ in 1992 and then to the Boston area in 2005.

The daughter of the writer James Agee, Deedee was an accomplished artist of both words and images. She had an MFA in creative writing from Columbia University and was awarded a Geraldine R. Dodge Fellowship. Her writing appeared in *DoubleTake* magazine as well as in several anthologies. She read some of her stories at the Cornelia Street Café, at libraries and other local venues, and on NPR. At the time of her death she was completing a memoir of growing up in Greenwich Village entitled *Momentum*. She was also an accomplished visual artist, remembered especially for her drawings and prints, which were shown at numerous museums in the greater Boston area.

Her calm, loving manner, her wonderful cooking, and her beautiful art and words will be greatly missed by her family and her many friends.

Deedee is survived by her husband Paul and three sons. Her memorial service was held at the Old Ship Church, Hingham, MA on October 15. Notes of condolence may be sent to Paul Sprecher, 27 Grove St., Scituate, MA 02066-3210.

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ORLOFF WAKEFIELD MILLER (1931 - 2015)

The Reverend Orloff Miller, parish minister, AIDS counselor, veteran of the Selma march, and tireless advocate for civil rights, died on July 1, 2015, aged 83.

He was present in Selma when James Reeb was killed in March, 1965, and returned 50 years later for the anniversary march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Despite his need for a wheelchair by then, he got up and walked across the bridge.

Orloff Wakefield Miller was born on August 8, 1931 to the Reverend Lawrence Miller and Alice Miller. He received a B.A. from Mount Union College (now University of Mount Union) in 1953, and earned a Master of Divinity from Boston University School of Theology in 1956.

He was ordained by the Methodist Church in 1954, then received Unitarian Universalist ministerial fellowship in 1961. He held several positions at the UUA working with youth and young adults, was District Executive of the Mountain Desert District (1967-70), then served All Souls UU Church of Colorado Springs (1968-72) and the UU Fellowship of San Luis Obispo, CA (1973-79).

For five years (1984-89) he served as minister and AIDS consultant to the UU AIDS Crisis Ministry in San Francisco, receiving the Unsung Hero Award of the Pacific Central District in 1987 for his work in AIDS ministry.

He moved to Germany in 1989 and married Renate Bauer. Although he officially retired in 1991, he began service as Minister-at-Large to the European Unitarian Universalists (EUU) in 1993. In 2000 he was accorded the title of *Emeritus* EUU Minister-at-Large. In retirement, Orloff enjoyed volunteering, traveling, and being a devoted husband and father.

Orloff Miller is survived by his wife, Renate Bauer, and three children. His life was celebrated in two memorial services in August 2015, one in Germany for his European family and friends, and one for his American family and friends at the UU Church of Akron, Ohio.

Condolences may be sent to Renate Bauer, Otto-Dill Strasse 20, Ludwigshafen, 67061 GERMANY.



## GLYN PRUCE (1928 - 2015)

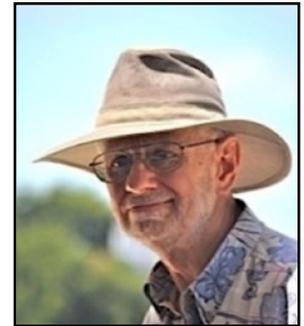
The Reverend Glyn Pruce, British sailor, parish minister, World War Two historian and devoted grandfather, died on June 1, 2015 at the age of 86.

Glyn John Pruce was born on December 25, 1928, in London, England, to John and Ethel Pruce.

The impact of seeing the human suffering in China and India when he served in the British Merchant Marines led him eventually to the ministry, although he had also considered missionary work.

After serving several Unitarian churches in England, he and his family moved to Boston, MA, where he obtained a Bachelor of Sacred Theology (S.T.B.) from Boston University in 1965, and a Master of Arts in Theology from Boston University in 1970.

Mr. Pruce was ordained in London in 1958, and received Unitarian Universalist ministerial fellowship in 1973. Before returning to the UK in 1983, he served churches in Atlanta, GA; Quebec; and Buffalo, NY. He returned again from England in 1992 to become minister to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tarpon Springs, FL until 1997.



The Reverend Mr. Pruce was quite active within the denomination throughout his thirty-nine years of ministry. He served various committees and organizations during his time in the United Kingdom, then served as secretary of the St. Lawrence District Chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association from 1975 to 1980, and moderator of the Arlington Street Unitarian Universalist Church from 1969 to 1970.

He taught sociology at Northeastern University, in Boston, and worked on Boston's Redevelopment Authority. Glyn was an avid reader and World War II history buff; he also loved classical music, traveling and spending time with his granddaughter, whom he affectionately called "Mistress Eden Willow." Glyn's son, Timothy, recalls that Eden was his "pride and joy, and the love of his life."

Glyn is survived by one son; one granddaughter; his companion, Constance Traycheff, and her family; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held on June 27th, 2015 at Curlew Hills Memory Gardens in Palm Harbor, FL 34683.

Notes of condolence may be sent to Timothy Pruce and Family, 157-10 Riverside Drive West, Apt. 14Q, New York, NY 10032, and to Constance Traycheff, 2664 Pine Ridge Way South, Apt. D1, Palm Harbor, FL 34684.

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## PHILIP ASHLEY SMITH (1930-2015)

The Reverend Philip A. Smith, parish minister, psychotherapist, and Selma marcher in 1965, died on March 3, 2015, at the age of 84.

Philip Ashley Smith was born in Bangor, ME on September 15, 1930, to Philip and Blanche Smith. He earned a B.A. from Tufts College (now Tufts University) in 1954 and an M.Div. from Crane Theological School in 1957. Mr. Smith was ordained by the Second Parish (Unitarian) of Marlboro, MA in 1957, serving there until 1960. He then moved on to parish ministries in Louisville, KY (1960-63) and Riverside, CA (1963-80).

During these ministries, the Rev. Mr. Smith took on active roles in a variety of local social justice organizations such as CORE and the NAACP in Louisville; he was also a co-founder and co-chairman of the Kentucky Committee to Abolish Capital Punishment.

While serving in Riverside, Mr. Smith became licensed in Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling in 1970. For the next ten years he practiced psychotherapy alongside his ministry to the Riverside Congregation, and then took early retirement from parish ministry in 1980 to practice psychotherapy full time.

Phil is recalled as a maverick and one who valued individual creativity. He gave voice and support to those who suffered injustice and mistreatment. He is remembered for his love of laughter and his appreciation of life; his final words were "thank you."

Philip Smith is survived by his wife Sharon Rose (McMaken) Smith, two sons, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



# UURMaPA SPRING CONFERENCE

**February 27 to March 1, 2017**

**Santa Barbara, California**

Join your beloved colleagues and friends for learning and laughter, “breaking bread” (and more) together, social time, and relaxing in the serene and beautiful foothills of Santa Barbara at the *La Casa de Maria Retreat Center* from **February 27 – March 1, 2017**.

We will gather on **Monday at 4 p.m.** for registration, 5:00 for social hour, and 6:00 for dinner, followed by Opening Worship at 7:00 in the Chapel and Introductions at 7:30.

On **Tuesday**, after breakfast and worship, we’ll gather for the Keynote presentation:

## **“Spiritual Friendship”**

The Reverend John Buehrens will bring his vast experience as parish minister, author, and President of the UUA to us as he shares his reflections on this theme, which was, according to John, “both a theme and a practice among our Transcendentalist forebears. Their own friendships transcended differences in temperament, gender, class, politics, theology, and even race.” John’s presentation will be grounded in his upcoming new book, *Transcendentalist Disciples*, which “shows how such methods created a spiritual network that lifted liberal religion to the highest level of influence in our history. How do we establish, maintain, and nurture such friendships in our own day?”

The afternoon provides time for relaxing and attending several workshops: *Black Lives Matter* (Betty Stapleford), *InterPlay* (Mary Kay Hamilton), *Writing an Ethical Will* (Bets Wienecke), *Transcendentalists Revisited* (John Buehrens), and an open discussion with a UUA representative. That evening after dinner, we’ll hear an Odyssey by Tom and Carolyn Owen-Towle.

On **Wednesday** after breakfast, we will gather for our closing worship, which will include a Service of Remembrance for members who have died in the past year. Then we’ll have some time for a collegial discussion, including any business that needs to be conducted. After lunch, we’ll say our goodbyes and head out, refreshed and reinvigorated!

Conference fees for all attendees cover the program, six meals, refreshments, general expenses and two nights in a sleeping room (except for commuters). Once again the registration fee is kept low thanks to the generosity of the UURMaPa Board and you, the members. You will receive a confirmation after we receive your check and registration form, and a schedule and other information will be sent out in early February.

Please complete the registration form (next page) and submit it to Lois Wesener no later than **November 30, 2016**. Space is limited, so do it now!

Looking forward to welcoming you in Santa Barbara!

Your UURMaPA Winter Conference Planning Team:

Jay Atkinson, [jayatk40@gmail.com](mailto:jayatk40@gmail.com)

Jim Eller, [wjimeller@gmail.com](mailto:wjimeller@gmail.com)

Mary Kay Hamilton, [marykayhamilton@att.net](mailto:marykayhamilton@att.net)

Anne Hines [irrevanne@gmail.com](mailto:irrevanne@gmail.com)

John Manwell, [jmanwell@uuma.org](mailto:jmanwell@uuma.org)

Betty Stapleford, [bstaple4d@aol.com](mailto:bstaple4d@aol.com)

Lois Wesener, [loisw99@hotmail.com](mailto:loisw99@hotmail.com)

# UURMaPA SPRING CONFERENCE

## Registration Form

February 27 – March 1, 2017

LaCasa de Maria Retreat Center

800 El Bosque Road

Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Please register me/us for the UURMaPa Spring Conference in Santa Barbara. The fee covers the program, two nights in a sleeping room with bath, six meals, social refreshments and general expenses. The commuter fee covers all except the sleeping room.

Name(s) as they should appear on name tag:

Name #1: \_\_\_\_\_ Circle one: Minister Partner

Name #2: \_\_\_\_\_ Circle one: Minister Partner

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

If not listed above, I will share a **double** room with: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

I will share a **triple** room with: \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Double</b> Room Registration fee at \$300/person	\$ _____
<b>Triple</b> Room Registration fee at \$250/person	\$ _____
<b>Single</b> Room Registration fee at \$360	\$ _____
Commuter fee at \$125	\$ _____
Contribution for Scholarships	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED:</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Requests for financial assistance should be addressed to Joel Weaver: weaver\_je@hotmail.com or 535 Gradyville Road, Unit V-212, Newtown Square, PA 19073.

Make check payable to "UURMaPA" and mail it with this registration form to: Lois Wesener, Registrar, 1202 East Kenmore Place, Milwaukee, WI 53211

The Retreat Center has limited room availability of the various room choices. Please register as soon as possible, and **no later than November 30, 2016**. Questions: Lois at 414/963-9590 or loisw99@hotmail.com

**Unitarian Universalist Retired  
Ministers & Partners Association  
c/o Richard Speck  
4721 Mermaid Blvd.  
Wilmington, DE 19808-1803**