

Minutes of the Conference Call Board Meeting—March 6, 2014
Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association

Present: Doug Gallagher, Dick Gilbert, Paul L’Herrou, Liz McMaster, Marcia Olsen, Judy Welles, John Weston, Margi Nasemann Absent: Jim Eller

Centering: Paul read a lovely reflection.

We continued with brief personal check-ins.

REPORTS: see attachment. The following are additions to reports.

President – Dick Gilbert

Item 3 on his report (writing a chapter for a book) is taking much of his time right now. Regarding item 4 (“My Gift of Grace”), Dick asked for input on writing something on this for *Elderberries*. Since we’re considering having this as a theme for the February 2015 Florida conference, it was suggested that he postpone this until later, then use it as a link to that upcoming program (which is still TBD).

Vice-President – (for Jim Eller, by Dick)

As he reported, GA plans are underway but dates will not be finalized until Don Southworth returns from his sabbatical. Margi and Judy plan to attend GA. Jim is **looking for volunteers to lead another newly-retired ministers peer group**; Doug has volunteered; any others?

Secretary – Marcia Olsen

The Minutes of the 2/6/14 conference call meeting were approved.

She is concerned about how to store the pre-obits. Shall she pass these on to Judy Gibson and the Secretary will keep them? Or should we consider a dropbox in the “cloud”? **Tabled for now.**

Treasurer - Paul L’Herrou – see report

Our financial situation is good. We discussed timing for the next appeal letter. **Dick will draft a letter to share with the Board by 3/15 and Paul (and Marcia) will aim for an early April mailing.**

Caring-Coordinator – Margi Nasseman

She appreciates responses she receives from her contacts.

She will invite the Caring Area Coordinators to the UURMaPA Luncheon at GA, as soon as the date is known.

Margi asked us to reconsider our decision to not send plants to the family when a partner dies. We agreed to revise that, and our procedure is now:

“When a partner dies, if the minister is still living the Caring Network Coordinator will send a plant to the minister; in other cases the Coordinator will send a condolence note to the family. The Newsletter Editor sends a copy of the issue containing the obituary to the family of the deceased.”

See revisions to Operating Procedures (end of these minutes)

At-Large Member (Caring Network) – Liz McMaster

Liz will check further on the situation where a minister requested that his partner be listed as “Rev” since they do a co-ministry. UUA records show that she was ordained as an MRE in 2004. Liz will check to see if she is retired and also whether or not she was fellowshipped. **We will discuss this further, to determine a policy when people are ordained but not fellowshipped.**

At-Large Member – John Weston

Conferences: **Send him program ideas for the Florida conference**, for which the Board is responsible. That conference is February 24-26, 2015 at the San Pedro Retreat Center in Orlando, with the Board meeting 2/23-24. We need to set the theme by September. John is busy now with Attleboro planning. **John will work with Marni Harmony to provide us a timeline of the planning deadlines for Orlando.**

Council on Church Staff Finances

1. There are several foundations which support ministers in need. Since we don't get reports from them, we don't know how they are using their funds. John would like UURMaPA to have some oversight of these funds, with regular reports from the foundations.

The Board authorized Dick to write a letter on behalf of UURMaPA to the Council on Church Staff Finances, requesting that we regularly receive the financial reports of foundations providing funds to retired ministers and partners in need. (Passed: 8-0 with 1 abstention). The letter will be given to John to present to the Council, with a copy to Richard Nugent (UUA).

2. Service gratuity: as more ministers retire and live longer, these funds may not be able to sustain the current payments. We agreed that UURMaPA would like a report from the Service Society. John will request this.

3. TIAA-CREF will offer annuities as both investment and distribution vehicles soon and will introduce these through an educational program this fall.

4. Regarding the revocation of the IRS Ministerial Housing Allowance (currently tax-free to the limit of housing expenses): the Administration is challenging the decision of the IRS. John has asked the UUA and UUMA if they plan to sign on as Amicus to the brief, and will find out how UURMaPA might join in on this. John will keep us posted.

Elderberries– Judy Welles

1. Logo: Judy will send to the Board a survey for us to consider what we want in a logo. She will also send it to those who have served on the Board in recent years. Dick added that the process for this is important and we should let members know. Judy will write an article for the newsletter to inform members that we are working on this, so it won't be a surprise.

2. Newsletter distribution: She is concerned that people are not accessing the newsletter on the website (based on the "hits" there). She has considered ways to change the newsletter, recognizing that we will continue to have technological changes. For a truly different approach, we will need someone with more technical experience for our website and the newsletter than Judy and Duane can provide.

Therefore Judy proposed that for now we keep the newsletter at 16 pages and continue to distribute it as we do now, except that in the email announcing a new issue, we provide a direct link. The link can be put in a dropbox and stored on the Cloud, so that one click will take a member to the newsletter.

She asked if it was necessary to have the newsletter password protected. We reviewed the history of that decision and decided that it really isn't necessary. The obituaries are stored in the archives without a password. The Board decided that we will remove the password requirement to access the newsletter (but retain it for the Directory); if someone objects, let them know that it's their choice what they want to submit for the newsletter, with the understanding that it is public. Judy will draft a letter to send to us to announce this decision.

The deadline for the next newsletter is April 15.

At-Large Member - Doug Gallagher.

The UUMA Board meets next week and Doug will receive a report from Fritz Hudson.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE Update

We agreed to invite the incoming Board members (Joel Weaver and Judy Gibson) to join our June call.

ACTION ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

We renamed this document to Operating Procedures. Marcia will ask Duane to post it on the website, with these additions:

1. Under "Membership":

Unitarian Universalist ministers wishing to affiliate with UURMaPA before they have formally retired shall be admitted to membership with the advisement that they will be designated as "Friends" of UURMaPA. They shall be entitled to receive the newsletter and all other publications, but shall not be listed in the Membership Directory. At such time as they formally retire (by notifying the UUA), they

shall inform UURMaPA of their new status and will then be designated as Active members and be included in the UURMaPA Directory.

2. Under "Death of Members"

When a partner dies, if the minister is still living the Caring Network Coordinator will send a plant to the minister; in other cases the Coordinator will send a condolence note to the family.

The Newsletter Editor includes the obituary (a version edited for space) in the next newsletter and sends a copy of that issue to the family of the deceased.

AWARDS:

John has not received any nominations for the Unsung UURMaPA award. **Judy will run the article again in the next newsletter, requesting suggestions.**

PENDING ITEMS ADDRESSED:

1. Posting of minutes: It was agreed that Board Minutes (including Reports) will be posted to the website once they are approved. **Marcia will ask Duane to add these to the Governance section and will send them to him monthly.** (She also sends a copy to Liz Strong, as historian).

2. Caring Networks and mapping: dropped

3. Member Support: **Dick will check with Sarah Lammert** to see if the Department of Faith Development is sending the UURMaPA brochure to retiring members with their letter. He will coordinate with her so we're not duplicating Dick's mailing.

4. Emergency contact information: the Board decided that this is really not our responsibility. We will encourage our members to provide that information to family or close friends, along with promoting discussion of End of Life issues, advanced directives, etc.

PENDING ITEMS (NOT ADDRESSED): see attachment

Next conference-call meeting is **Thursday, April 3, 2014, 4:00-5:30pm ET**

Respectfully submitted,
Marcia Olsen, Secretary

UURMaPA Board Reports – for 3/6/2014 Meeting

President – Dick Gilbert

1. Sent no letters of condolence to partners, ministers and family members.
2. Sent five “welcome to retirement” packets with letter, “Retirement Guide” and the latest “UURMAPA Directory.”
3. Working on a chapter for a Skinner House Book to be edited by Kay Montgomery on spirituality and aging.
4. Thinking about doing “My Gift of Grace/Remember Me” as a column/pump primer in the next *Elderberries*.
5. Continuing work on retirement seminar for St. Lawrence chapter, as well as a generic seminar. Trial run will be at Collegial Conversations if we get a slot.
6. Heard from Jannette Lallier re. request for a Collegial Conversation. “We are waiting for Don to get back before we settle the collegial conversations. I have your request and will bring it to the conversation. Space is tight this year, but you know we always try to include you if we can.”
7. Working with Judy re. a Rite of Retirement. Nothing new to report.
8. Wrote Richard Nugent and Duane Fickeisen re. the court case regarding tax status of clergy housing allowance, asking for communications to members. Richard said he would be glad to do so. Duane noted the memo he sent out to UUMA and UURMAPA, adding, “The only new ‘news’ in it is the reported decision by DOJ to appeal. The UUMA board meets March 10-14. Josh Snyder was tasked a while back with following this for the UUMA board, so let’s include him.”

Vice-President – Jim Eller

GA 2014

We are waiting to hear the exact date of our annual “luncheon and welcome to retirement” event that we hold at GA. The business agenda is out but the program agenda has not yet been published. Once we know the date and location, I can begin arrangements for the luncheon and get out invitations to all our UURMaPa membership and our guests, the newly retired clergy and partners. I am expecting we will have anywhere from about ten more than usual to twice the number because of GA being located in the Northeast this year. We usually have 30 to 35. I asked for a room for 40-50.

As usual, Dick Gilbert and I will room together and offer the UUMA presentation on retirement, if we granted the slot. Dick will be our official at the Service of the Living Tradition. We will also help host the survivors and family reception for clergy who have died during this last year. I am in the process of securing housing and registration etc.

TIAA-CREF

The UUMA has indicated that they believe the decision about going on record as supporting the exclusion of companies that profit from the Israeli occupation from their socially progressive fund at their March meeting. They are meeting March 10-14th. More on this soon.

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Our on-going group is going well. We continue to struggle with some tech glitches, but I believe those will be ironed out eventually. It’s hard to know what the group will do about how long we will continue. We

began in the fall and I expect will run through this year into next fall. I don't know what the group will decide to do after that.

This summer into fall we will hopefully start another peer support group of those recently retired. **I will be looking for both new participants for that group and for two facilitators** for a one year commitment.

(Maybe Doug and Liz?)

Secretary – Marcia Olsen

1. Membership: usual updates as I receive them; new retirees added; obituaries passed on for editing and then posted to Announce-List. This was a relatively quiet month.
2. A March 1, 2014 version of the Directory has been sent to Duane to post online.
3. No further suggestions for the Policies and Procedures document. Can we approve this for posting on our website?
4. There was also a suggestion that we post our minutes online; shall we do this?
5. Liz Strong has received the minutes through 2013, to assist her in preparing a fuller history of UURMaPA.
6. Joel Weaver and Judy Gibson now receive a copy of our minutes and reports, and I included them in posting info on new retirees. I also send minutes to Duane. If there are others who would like to receive them, let me know.
7. Last month we learned that the newsletter is now too large a document for the UUA email program to accept it as an attachment to an email to UUA staff. They will now receive an email when it is available on our website and will access it there. (It was pointed out that the ID and password are printed in the newsletter, so it's already "semi-public".)
8. This week I will send an email invitation to the Seabeck Conference to those in the Pacific Northwest and Western Canada caring area, and also post a reminder notice on the Announce-List. The conference information and registration form are on our website. The deadline for registration and full payment (\$250) is April 10th.

Treasurer – Paul L'Herrou

I called Joel Weaver and we had a beginning conversation about the Treasurer's duties and some of the issues of which he should be aware. I will include Joel in my Treasurer's communications from now on.

Do any of you know about archiving financial reports? I have quite an accumulation of reports going back at least through Kathleen's tenure. Do we have a policy for how we handle this? I believe the Secretary's records are archived at the Andover-Harvard Library at Harvard Divinity School. Should I do the same with the older financial reports when I turn over my records to Joel? If so, should I contact Frances O'Donnell, the Curator of Manuscripts & Archives? She was who Sylvia and I were in contact with when we moved all our hard copies of sermons and other records to the library.

At the beginning of the year, when I opened our endowment account in the UUA Common Endowment Fund (CEF), I did not notice that in order to have access to the monthly on-line statements for our account, I had to submit a request in addition to all the other submission requirements. I have now submitted the request and will begin giving you a monthly report once I have access. I do know that the

CEF was down 1.7% for the month of January. However, results for February, when the market turned positive, have not yet been posted.

Financial Report as of February 28, 2014

Checking Account

February beginning balance	\$10,510.48
Income: Member Donations	975.00
Expense: Conference – Deposit for San Pedro Center	1,500.00
Caring Network – sending plants & notes/communication	156.82
Elderberries – printing and mailing	<u>495.31</u>
February ending balance	\$ 9,333.35

Money Market Account

February beginning balance	\$40,222.39
Interest earned	7.16
Ending balance	\$40,229.55

Caring Network Coordinator – Margi Nasemann

-I have been noting people who have announced their retirement and have bought congratulation cards to send out to them in May and June.

-Corresponded with several area Coordinators who have questions or concerns.

Newsletter editor – Judy Welles

The month after an issue goes out feels like a welcome lull, and I have been lulling! I'm just starting to think about who might write the columns for the Spring issue, and getting in touch with a few folks. I'm gradually also figuring out some shortcuts so that I'm not starting from scratch on every issue.

I heard recently from Greg Bear that he would be traveling on business but had not forgotten about us and his work with us. I sent him the questionnaire used by the UUMA's designer to get some ideas from UUMA staff about their new logo design. Greg will modify it for his purposes, and I expect we'll be seeing it soon. He is following the flap about the new UUA logo with considerable interest. (How nice to be working with a UU designer!)

I think we should give some thought to how we want to introduce our new logo, or maybe to announcing that we are soon going to have one. This won't be anywhere near as controversial as what's happening in the UUA, but perhaps we can learn something there and do a better job than they did (which wouldn't be difficult...). I suspect it won't be ready by the deadline for the Spring issue (4/15), so at least we/I could write an article saying that it's in the works.

Still scratching my head about how to get more people to read *Elderberries*. I've been disappointed to learn how many people don't. Ultimately it comes down to the fact that *Elderberries* is in competition with everything else in the universe, clamoring for people's attention. However, I do think we can do a better job in making it easily accessible, so I haven't completely given up.

At-Large Member – John Weston

Council on Church Staff Finance

The Council next meets April 7-8. Agenda items of interest to UURMaPA include:

- reports from the aid-granting organizations (the Mass. Congregational Charitable Society, the Mass. Convention of Congregational Ministers, the UU Service Pension Society, and the CCSF)

- the increasing difficulty facing the Service Pension Society in funding the quarterly service gratuity in view of the growing number of retired ministers and low interest rates
- the forthcoming availability of both fixed and variable annuity options, both in investment and in payout, in the UU Organizations Retirement Plan
- the potential demise of favorable tax treatment of the parsonage allowance.

Does UURMaPA wish to instruct its representative (i.e. me) on any of these issues?

Conferences

Spring 2014 Northwest Conference, May 13-15 in Seabeck, organized by Marcia Olsen and Chris Lily Backus

Autumn 2014 Northeast Conference, September 30-October 2 in Attleboro), organized by Carol Taylor and Joel Weaver. Keynote speaker: Professor Daniel Lord Smail, a Harvard historian and force behind “Deep History,” which serves as the title for our program. Deep History studies the evolution of primate and human nature and culture over the past five million years, from a perspective combining history, anthropology, and brain science. Peter Richardson has been a helpful brain trust in pursuing this topic. The Board will meet Sept. 28-30.

Winter 2015 Southeast Conference, February 24-26 at San Pedro Retreat Center in Orlando, organized by Marni Harmony and the Board. The Board will meet February 23-4.

Unsung UURMaPan Award

The call for nominations appears in the Winter *Elderberries*. Thanks, Judy!

At-Large Member – Liz McMaster

I contacted the Area Caring people for 3 new retirees.

When I get my new phone (my phone was either badly misplaced or stolen on Feb. 28) I will contact Marcel Duhamel to get more information on his wife, whom he lists as “Rev.”

We need to decide how we will refer to someone when we are told that s/he is a “Rev”. If s/he is a minister in another denomination or if a UU minister refers to his/her spouse as “Rev” when s/he is not.

At-Large Member – Doug Gallager

I’ve been in contact with Fritz Hudson. Attached is the draft he is taking to the UUMA Board next week. I’m in complete agreement with it. The last section is what would apply to the retired GO work. I’ve asked Fritz to take the Alban article to the UUMA Board to see if there is buy-in there. After their meeting I will have a firmer basis on which to do recruiting. Sorry this is taking so long. (see attached UUMA Good Offices description)