

## **Minutes of the Conference Call Board Meeting—April 3, 2014 Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association**

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

**CENTERING** – Jim shared a reading by Thich Nhat Han on how separateness is an illusion

**CHECK IN:** personal updates

**REPORTS:** additions to written reports, which follow these minutes.

**President** – Dick Gilbert

He has been receiving an enormous amount of email, referring much to other people. He's glad to see the activity on SpeakUp and urged us all to be on that list, to follow discussions there even if we don't choose to participate.

For GA he will ask the UUMA if we can place our brochure on their table; he is still waiting to hear about his application for a Ministry Days Conversation.

**Vice-President** – Jim Eller

Creative Sageing Award: no nominations received yet; **Judy will again solicit nominations in the newsletter.**

Partners' group: Chris has a co-convenor lined up who is obligated until summer; they have a list of interested partners; **Jim will follow-up with Chris**

Unsung Hero Award: **Liz will nominate a person she knows**

GA: plans are on target. Our Luncheon will be on Thursday, June 19, 11:30am-1:30pm.

Invitations to retiring ministers and partners will go out soon (see his report). The program will include a retirement ritual and UUA and UUMA reps (probably Sarah Lammert, Richard Nugent, Linda Rose).

**Secretary** – Marcia Olsen

Minutes of 3/6/14 conference call were approved with one correction.

Seabeck: the registration deadline is 04/10; she will talk with Chris Backus on Saturday.

**Treasurer** – Paul L'Herrou

Treasurer's report of 3/6/15 was approved.

The appeal letter will go out next week

**Audit: he will follow up this.**

**Caring Network** – Margi Nasemann

She has heard from some Coordinators on what they're doing.

GA: she plans to invite Coordinators to sit together at a specified table at our luncheon.

**At large** – Liz McMaster

She has had some contacts with Coordinators. In one instance she verified that a spouse is an MRE so we will list her as "Rev" in our Directory.

**Conferences** – John – see report

**Newsletter** – Judy Welles

A questionnaire regarding a logo design will be sent to Board, plus a separate invitation to former Board members if they wish to participate. **She will inform members through the NL that we have removed the password on our website to access the NL. She will also notify members**

that we're developing a logo; a survey has gone to the designer and others can request to give input in similar way. Marcia will post an announcement about removal of password for the newsletter (the Directory remains password protected).

**At large** – Doug Gallager – Good Offices

Looking for nominations for Good Offices people or who should be invited into discussion with Fritz Hudson.

**MEMBERSHIP POLICY PROPOSAL:** “After discussion of possible situations where a potential member does not fit into one of our defined categories for inclusion in UURMaPA membership, it is agreed to not change our Bylaws or Operating Procedures and to continue to consider such situations on a case-to-case basis for someone who requests membership outside our usual guidelines.”

Moved to approve this, which confirms our existing Operating Procedures. Motion passed.

**POSSIBLE MEMBERS**

There was extended discussion regarding three people we might include as members, or perhaps should be in the “friend” category.

One minister wants to receive the NL and attend conferences but is still working (perhaps afraid if he is “retired” that might jeopardize changes for future employment?). Doug will contact Keith Kron about this. Should we check with UUA/UUMA to learn more about applicants?

Another minister is a Life Member who filed an Intent to Retire form years ago but is not in our membership. Marcia will invite her to join.

A third minister has a long, checkered history with the UUA (but still fellowshipped) and is not a member of the UUMA. Another member had inquired why this minister is not a member. Marcia will draft a reply to the inquirer, telling her that she is free to have lunch with whomever she wants, but you need to know that he is not a member of UURMaPA, for the Board’s review.

**IRS AND HOUSING ALLOWANCE UPDATE**

The Board authorized Dick to send a letter on our behalf, to sign on as friend of the court regarding the IRS suit about the ministerial housing allowance; he will check with Richard Nugent on the proper procedure.

**BOARD-SPONSORED CONFERENCE**

Members of the Board volunteered to serve with John as a Planning Committee: Jim, Margi, Judy. Dick will ask John to convene this group.

**ORIENTATION of new Board members for June conference call.**

Marcia has sent the ByLaws & Operating Procedures and sends current Minutes/Reports. She will check with Joel Weaver and Judy Gibson about any other information that might assist them.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Storing our “pre-obits”**

It was moved, seconded and passed that “we will store our members’ pre-obits in a password-protected area of the website, available to people authorized by the Board”. Marcia will ask Duane to set up such a secure link.

**Board liaisons** to our off-Board volunteer leadership positions, such as webmaster, membership coordinator, obit-writers, historian. Tabled until May.

**Calendar:** Dick distributed a timeline calendar to plan our tasks for a year. Marcia suggested that we time the spring and fall appeal letter mailings to fall between newsletter distributions, since this will minimize undeliverable addresses. **Everyone: look at the Calendar; send additions/changes to Dick.**

Next conference-call meeting is **Thursday, May 1, 2014, 4:00-5:30pm ET**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Marcia Olsen, Secretary*

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## REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR 4/3/4014 CONFERENCE CALL

### **President: Dick Gilbert**

1. Sent one letter of condolence.
2. Sent four "welcome to retirement" packets with letter, "Retirement Guide" and the latest "UURMAPA Directory."
3. Submitted chapter for a Skinner House Book to be edited by Kay Montgomery on spirituality and aging. It is due out in about a year.
4. 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. I'm thinking about a little survey to send out ahead of time to my St. Lawrence colleagues – a pump primer.
5. I'm still waiting to hear about a Collegial Conversation at GA. Presumably Don Southworth is back, so we should hear soon. It was encouraging as I registered for professional days that in the generalized invitation it mentioned retirement.
6. Working with Judy re. a Rite of Retirement. Nothing new to report.
7. The usual voluminous correspondence with you and many others.
8. Wrote letter to Richard Nugent requesting the distribution of information about potential funds for retired ministers in need.
9. Drafted spring financial appeal letter and distributed it to Board for critique. I have edited it in view of your comments. Paul has it now.
10. Wrote Sarah Lammert re. what her office sends out to recently retired ministers so we don't duplicate materials.

### **Vice-President: Jim Eller**

**GA:** We are set for our annual luncheon. See below for details. I have yet to arrange the meal menu, but I have gone over the menu. The cost for a hot lunch buffet will be \$35. This is the amount we have been paying for the last three years. We have been offering our guests, those retiring and their spouse or partner a free lunch as we honor them. We also subsidize the lunch and charge UURMaPa members \$25 per person. So, it is easier to afford.

My next steps will be to send out an invitation to our membership, I hope in *Elderberries*. I will send multiple emails to our guests and confirm who will be there. I will confirm our menu with the Biltmore.

We are set for Dick and my hotel, my GA registration and flight arrangements. I will also be substituting for Doug at the Good Offices training on Monday of GA week. This feels like a good follow up on my previous involvement in the UUMA Retired Ministers and Partners Task Group. I will be working with Fritz Hudson who was also on that TASK force and is now the UUMA Good Office person.

Clergy Peer Conference Video Calls: Our group continues to work with the technology and to enjoy each other. I hope to start a new group. Doug has volunteered and I hope to recruit a woman co-facilitator (Liz.) This will be offered to our newly retired ministers.

Here is the official word about our Luncheon:

**SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:** UU Retired Ministers & Partners Association

**EVENT CONTACT:** Jim Eller

**CONTACT PHONE:** 405-582-2387

**PROGRAM TITLE:** UURMaPA Annual Luncheon

**SCHEDULED DAY & TIME:** Thursday, 6/26/2014 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

**FACILITY AND ROOM:** Biltmore -- Salon 2

**FOOD AND BEVERAGE:** If you requested this for your event, it is listed here. You will be contacted by the Biltmore catering staff with menu information. Under no circumstances can you bring in outside food or beverage. It must be supplied by the caterer.

**F&B REQUESTED:** Lunch

**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. I'll process some additional new retirees soon.
2. An April 1, 2014 version of the Directory will be sent to Duane to post online.
3. Duane has posted our Operating Procedures on the website, and also the Minutes. The Reports have been a separate document; from now on they will be incorporated into a single document.
4. For the next newsletter, the password-protection will have been lifted (on archived issues, too) and Duane will provide a direct link so the Announcement can be shorter for accessing *Elderberries*.
5. I sent an email invitation to the Seabeck Conference to those in the Pacific Northwest and Western Canada caring area. The conference information and registration form are on our website. The deadline for registration and full payment (\$250) is April 10<sup>th</sup>. To date we have 17 people signed up.
6. I will send Paul a mailing labels file for the appeal letter mailing.

**Treasurer: Paul L'Herrou**

Donations continue to dribble in. I recorded donation information, sent our thank you letters, and prepared one bank deposit.

The retreat center in Florida requires that we provide (\$1 million) liability insurance for our conference. To my knowledge we have not had to do this for any of our other conferences. I contacted the Tim Brennan, UUA Treasurer, who directed me to their Church Mutual Insurance agent. I have prepared and submitted an application for a quote and await a response.

I am in the process of preparing the mailing of the Spring Appeal Letter. I asked for a quote from Minuteman Press, which Judy has found to have reasonable pricing and good service for mailing of the hard copies of Elderberries and it would have been reasonable, the most expensive aspect being the stuffing of envelopes.

However, before I received the Minuteman Press quote, Sylvia reminded me that the teenage daughter of a friend served as an intern in the office of the State Treasurer (who is now running for Governor) last summer – and that one of her duties was to prepare mailings. I asked and she was eager to stuff envelopes and put on the mailing labels and stamps and be paid minimum wage. (I recently filled in for a Sunday morning at the church where we are members, the First Universalist Church of Essex. My sermon was in support of the current effort to increase the Massachusetts minimum wage from the current \$8/hour to \$10.50/hour and indexing it to inflation and insuring that employees have earned sick leave.) In good conscience, I will be paying her at the \$10.50/hour rate.

So, the letters have been printed and folded by Staples. Minuteman Press has printed the return addresses on the mailing envelopes and the mail-to address (my address) on the envelopes which will go in with the appeal letter. Stuffing and sealing envelopes and affixing the mailing labels and stamps will be done by a local teen.

Accompanying this report will be the spreadsheet 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter report of Budget vs. Actual. At this point in the year we are under budget.

**Financial Report as of March 31, 2014**

**Checking Account**

|                                                        |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>February ending balance</b>                         | <b>\$ 9,333.35</b> |
| Income: Member donations                               | 125.00             |
| Expense: Appeal Letter - printed and folded by Staples | 78.04              |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> class postage stamps                   | 235.20             |
| <b>March ending balance</b>                            | <b>\$ 9,145.11</b> |

**Money Market Account**

|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>February ending balance</b> | <b>\$ 40,229.55</b> |
| Interest earned                | 6.83                |
| <b>March ending balance</b>    | <b>\$ 40,236.38</b> |

**Caring Coordinator: Margi Nasemann**

1. Had phone conversation with three area coordinators
2. Received correspondence from five area Coordinators
3. Regretfully accepted t the resignation of the St. Lawrence District Coordinator, Maureen Thitchner. (Any ideas, Dick)
4. Am working on a letter to all coordinators about the luncheon at GA for Retired Ministers and Partners. I hope to have a table designated for Area Coordinators.

**Newsletter Editor: Judy Welles**

Materials for the Spring issue of *Elderberries* are trickling in, and I have commitments from people who will be writing all of the major columns. Soon I plan to send out to UURMaPA-Announce a notice that the password protection on the newsletter will be lifted as of this issue, and will also take that opportunity to invite "news from a far country." (When I did that last Fall I was inundated — in a good way — with news.)

I have received from Greg Bear a questionnaire for the current and past Board members (if they wish) to complete and return to him, as part of his research/brainstorming for the logo project. He suggested that copies be sent to me as well so that if he has questions, we can discuss them easily. I'm wondering how you feel about that, since it means that they wouldn't be anonymous. I can't think of a reason why you would want them to be anonymous, but maybe I'm missing something.

Greg has said that he doesn't need any advance or partial payment yet. However, I presume that we will want to be paying him in full within this fiscal year, while we have the money budgeted for it. I don't know what his time line is, but I think there's a very good chance that he will be finished with this project before the end of June.

### **At-Large Member – John Weston**

*I request the board's attention to and feedback on the following issue:*

We need to decide on a Wednesday morning program for the Orlando conference. One excellent possibility is Dick's "My Gift of Grace." (See the last section of my report for a description of this program in obituary creation.) Another thought would be to ask another colleague-thinker to present a new theological piece. Galen Gingerich's *God Revised: How Religion Must Evolve in a Scientific Age*, is a major piece of work, in my opinion. Gary Kowalski has published a number of volumes on animals and our relations—meaningful and distorted—with them. And a third thought would be . . . well, something I have not thought of, but one or two among you have. A decision would be timely, but is not yet necessary.

### **Council on Church Staff Finance**

The Council next meets April 7-8. See my March report for agenda items. Additional items:

- congregational expectations and compensation of community ministers
- the Council's convening of a Collegial Conversation during Ministers Days
- (from the Retirement Plan Committee, on which I no longer sit): the Plan will soon offer the Pax World Fossil-Fuel Free fund as an additional option

### **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. See the announcement in the next *Elderberries*. The Board will meet Sept. 28-30.
- **Winter 2015** Southeast Conference, February 24-26 at San Pedro Retreat Center in Orlando FL. Marni Harmony is handling arrangements, and I'm looking for a registrar. The Board will meet February 23-24.

### **Unsung UURMaPan Award**

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

### **Here's Dick's description of "A Gift of Grace"**

Did you know that the archived obituaries on the UURMaPA web site are, in many cases, the only written records of lives and deaths kept by the UUA? We take our obituaries seriously, not only for this reason, but because those among us who die each year are beloved by many others, whose hearts long for them to be remembered well. And don't we all deserve to be remembered well? For this reason, we encourage you to spend some time writing your own obituary — telling your story, as it were — so that when your time comes, you will be remembered in the way you deserve. We are grateful to the people in the Office of Ministries and Faith Development for their groundwork in providing death notices to us and to

many other UU organizations. And we're also deeply grateful to Jay Atkinson and Chris Lilly Backus, who elaborate on the material provided by the UUA to write both the long versions (sent by e-mail and archived on the web site) and the short versions (published in *Elderberries*) of ministers and their partners, respectively. How about making this task easier for them by writing some information about yourself and keeping it on file with the UURMaPA Secretary? Of course you should include schooling, professional service, and the names of close family members. But in addition, think of the ways that your life and your values could be described. What were some essential lines of poetry for you, or songs that perfectly described your feelings? Who were your mentors, and why? What are some of your proudest accomplishments? In what ways were you lucky? What were some of your particular challenges? Did you ever write anything that described your understanding of ministry or of your life's task? If so, please include it. When you're satisfied with it, please send it to our secretary, using the address [secretary@uurmapa.org](mailto:secretary@uurmapa.org), which will be consistent no matter who is serving as secretary. And while you're at it, give a copy to your minister. Wouldn't you have appreciated such a gesture for the memorial services you've conducted?

**At-Large Member: Liz McMaster**

Contacted 4 Area People about retiring ministers who have joined UURMaPA, as indicated by Marcia. Contacted a minister to solve a problem listing his spouse as "minister" – confirmed that she is (UU MRE). Informed Marcia and that that problem is solved!

**At-Large Member: Douglas Gallager**

I've consulted with UUMA Executive Director, Don Southworth, and UUMA Trustee with the Good Offices portfolio, Fritz Hudson, and participated in a conference call involving UUMA Chapter Good Officers.

In addition to UUMA Chapter Good Officers, the UUMA is establishing a network of six Regional Resource Officers serving the five US regions and Canada. The first six will be those specializing in working with retired ministers, partners and their former congregations/interims/settled successors. As previously reported UURMaPA should nominate six regional candidates this spring. The UUMA will provide a \$300 (total) subsidy for the named Regional Resource Officers to help with his/her/their attendance at the Ministry Days Good Offices Training at GA this year. Jim has agreed to represent UURMaPA at that training.

So far we have two people willing to be nominated from the incredibly vast Pacific West Region and one considering it from the much more vast all-of-Canada territory, and one volunteer from MidAmerica. We will need to identify potential nominees from the Southern, Central East and New England Regions.