

**Unitarian Universalist
Retired Ministers
and Partners
Association**

November 1998

An Association of retired Unitarian Universalist ministers, their life partners,
and the surviving partners of deceased Unitarian Universalist ministers

Volume XIV

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ELDERBERRIES

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From Our President

I want to devote this column to telling about the major sources of funds for assisting our ministers and their families with emergency aid and help in maintaining the quality of their retirement. Access to these funds is usually through application to Ralph Mero, the UUA's Church Staff Finances Director at 617.742.2100 or by email <rmero@uua.org>.

THE SOCIETY FOR MINISTERIAL RELIEF, founded in 1850, provides assistance and support for "aged clergymen" and since 1887 and for "widows and orphans of clergymen." It gives both emergency and continuing grants. Recently, the Society voted a special appropriation to create a position for a representative to proactively seek needy ministers, widows and orphans and to cooperate with Ralph Mero in this work. Glenn Snowden, Secretary of the Society and a member of the Council on Church Staff Finances has taken this position. He welcomes your inquiries at 508.393.1261. The Society meets semiannually to conduct its business.

THE MASSACHUSETTS CONGREGATIONAL CHARITABLE SOCIETY, founded in 1785 (John Hancock was a founder), provides assistance on an emergency or continuing basis to the widows and children of deceased Congregational ministers. In as much as this organization was created before Unitarianism split from Congregationalism, the Society considers requests from both denominations. The Society Board and Officers are equally divided between the two organizations. Glenn Snowden serves as the Secretary. Its current endowment is over \$3,000,000.

THE UNITARIAN SERVICE PENSION SOCIETY, founded in the early part of this century, is responsible for the Service Gratuity given to qualifying Ministers of at least 66 years of age. Its current endowment as of 9/30/98 is over \$7,400,000. The USPS has recently concluded an agreement with the UUA in how the funds are distributed. The UUA turns over the income from its endowment funds, that are restricted to funding pensions, to the Society, which determines the policies governing the Gratuity. The UUA issues the checks.

The monies held by these societies are, in a sense, "OUR" monies. They are there to help us maintain our quality of retirement and in emergencies. They are a wonderful safety net for us, managed by our volunteer ministerial colleagues and dedicated laity. The key to their successful use lies with us, the potential beneficiaries. We need to apply for or request assistance from them. In a future column, I will describe how applications are processed.

In the meantime, if you have needs, contact Ralph or Glenn. If you have questions, contact me.

Bill DeWolfe

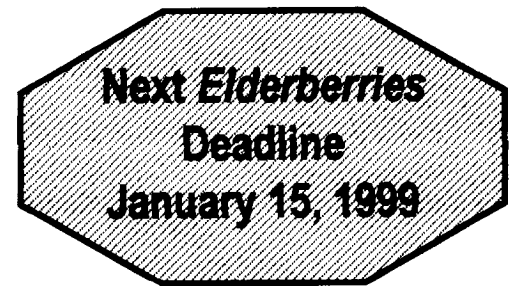


The 1998-1999 UUA Directory is now available for surviving spouses or partners. If they would like to receive one they should contact Jean Hartman at the UUA Department of Ministry, by phone: 617.742.2100, ext. 437, by fax: 617.742.2875, or by Email: jhartman@uua.org

The UUA provides complimentary copies to retired ministers. These copies are sent out by the Publications Dept. If a retired minister has not received a copy then he or she should contact Publications.

WELCOME!!!

to our new Archivist, Alan Seaburg, who will make some sensible arrangement of the collection(s) of paper which have accumulated over the years by well meaning UURMAPA squirrels.



CARING NETWORK NEWS

Our long-standing Contact Persons Chair for the Northeast District, Maurice Cobb, has turned over his chair to Iska Cole. He will continue as a contact person. We're grateful to Maurice for his many years of service to members, and to Iska, who fills many roles in our organization and has added this new one to her many organizing skills.

Maurice was exemplary in his Caring Network activities. One of our members was released from the hospital to his home following surgery, and Maurice stayed with him there for several weeks, taking care of him.

Earle McKinney has also stepped down as a Contact Person in the Northeast District. He and Pete, until her death, had for a long time carried on for the Caring Network.

The project of being officially affiliated with all districts has been a goal we have been working toward. It is important for the leadership across the continent to know about our organization.

Congratulations to the following districts that, according to my records as of November 10, recognize UURMAPA: Ballou Channing, Central Midwest, New Hampshire-Vermont, Mid-South, Northeast, Pacific Central, Pacific Northwest, Pacific Southwest, Prairie Star, St. Lawrence, Southwest, Thomas Jefferson, and Western Canada.

I want to encourage the Contact Persons of the following districts to move forward with the process: Central Mass, Connecticut Valley, Florida, Joseph Priestley, Mass Bay, Mountain Desert, Metro New York, Michigan, Ohio-Meadville, and Ohio Valley.

We deeply appreciate the important role of each of our Contact Persons. The current Caring Network is listed in this issue of Elderberries.

Gratefully —
Ginny Crane, Chair

Caring Network Contact Persons

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Caring Network Contact Persons (cont.)

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LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

I would much prefer to keep the present name - we UU's need more humor! ElderVision sounds entirely too pompous - as if within us lies the wisdom of the ages!

Re: "the delicate issue of non-settled ministers (including retired ones) maintaining friendships with parishioners of settled ministers..." - we UU's seem to be dragging more and more Methodist rules into the precincts of free religion! UU's should be free to maintain friendships with whomever they wish, and if that includes asking a close friend to do the daughter's wedding or the wife's funeral, rather than the resident minister, SO BE IT. Next thing you know, someone will be suggesting we purchase our meat only from UU butchers, our autos only from the Methodist dealer, etc. (as were the analogous expectations within the Methodist parsonage of my childhood).

HOWEVER, that does not suggest that we should be poaching on our successors' territory by acceding to all requests for services. Here, I think the Methodists have a good rule in suggesting that ministers not retire in the last parish they have served.

Re: reporting of deaths in our ranks, here is a DEFINITIVE OPINION: Most of us recognize the names of our colleagues, but few of us know more than a slice of their biographies. And when it comes to spouses, most of us cannot be sure we are matching couples properly. (e.g.'s from August - was Mildred, Dick Gibb's wife? Was Eva Bush born a Hungarian Unitarian? To which Jones was Nathalie married?). The UUA Directory does not give us such info (in fact, there is far less info therein than was contained in the old AUA and UCA directories!) until more than a year after the death has occurred - and by then it seems intrusive to write notes of condolence.

Orloff Miller

A few years ago when I served as the "goodies-getter" for Collegium's Cape Cod meeting I discovered a useful word. It is *manciple*, and is the traditional name for the office in a monastery or other religious or secular establishment: the person responsible for providing food and drink to the community organization. I think it is a splendid term and a great improvement over any of the other words I have heard. I move that henceforward the UURMAPA Board recognize the office of manciple when a person is appointed to get the goodies for the social hour at meetings.

Charles Grady via Farley Wheewright

The Gradys now have an e-mail address for those of you who might like to reach us electronically. It is <<charclaud@juno.com>> please write us either by e-mail or U.S. mail to tell us how it is going with you. We'd like to share your news with the readers of the Elderberries newsletter nationwide: your travels, discoveries, joys, setbacks, sorrows. Maybe even a favorite anecdote or reminiscence from the good old days. Have you done any writing, publishing, preaching or ship-model building? How are your grandchildren? All such news items are of interest to us

Charles and Claudine Grady

WOW!! Do We Write Books!!

Between Sisyphus and Me is the title of a new book by Robert Wolley, a collection of seven story-poems, each in a different style. Cost: \$10.95 + \$2.00 S&H. This is his third published book. For a copy, contact
Encircle Publications
PO Box 219
Sagamore Beach, MA 02562

FROM THE OLD GEEZER...

Somebody is unhappy with me, or at least the amount of space the editor gives me.

I don't mind that; I can't please everybody. But I don't like being sniped at from the peanut gallery by people who hide behind "reports by others." Now, I know that it's kind of polite not to criticize face to face, but it ain't polite to snipe. Besides, like Elbert Hubbard said, "Etiquette's a substitute for war." So, those of you in the Midwest who have complained anonymously for two years -- come on out and let's play. If you do, I will too and will reveal the true name of the O.G.

Speaking of playing, what's happening to our courage? Two resolutions, one from the East Coast and one from the West Coast calling for brotherhood, sweetness, light, and world peace have recently come my way. Is that the best we can do? Who's willing to make sweetness and light exciting? Can you? Is Hegel dead? Or are we? Besides, what have you done to advance world peace lately -- except complain about the human condition? Or me?

I think I'm going sour!

O.G.

EDITORIAL NOTES...

We will shortly be publishing a new Directory of members. Please let me know quickly if there are any errors in your name(s) or addresses. If you are not sure we have your telephone number or email address, please send them. My various addresses are on the masthead.

DEATHS

Hazel Fletcher
February, 1998
(Partner: Norman Dewey Fletcher)

Esther Engvall
May 20, 1998
(Partner: Charles Engvall)

Barbara Brewer
July 5, 1998
(Partner: James Brewer)

Mary Kyper
August 20, 1998
(Partner: Ralph E. Kyper)

John S. MacPhee
August 27, 1998.
(Partner: Eleanor Farley MacPhee)

Shannon Bernard
August 29, 1998
(Partner: George J. Pennington)

Arnold Crompton
August 31, 1998

Eleanor C. Gesner
September 4, 1998
(Partner: Herbert M. Gesner)

Norma Cordell
October 2, 1998
(Partner: Brad VanEvery)

Norman Sparbel
October 27, 1998
(Partner: Erleen Sherbert Sparbel)

Deborah Greeley
October 29, 1998
(Partner: Dana Greeley)

Chadbourne Spring
November 3, 1998

Every night when someone whose life has touched ours dies, over a hundred thousand other persons somewhere on the planet have also departed this life. Death in the abstract defies our capacity to mourn. The deaths this past year of colleagues and partners are close to home. They strike our grief.

What are we to do with the mountainous grief with which death besets us? We all have passed through Kubler Ross' five stages of grief and presumably we all come through its tragedy and carry on our lives as though nothing has happened. This but a half truth. Because something has happened.

Persons whom we loved and admired or were loved and admired by friends and associates simply do not disappear into the maw of those whom death took last year. No more do those rare individuals whom we knew but did not love or admire. They were part of our family -- our institutional religious family. Surely, death is not the end of them; memorial services are not enough, although it is heartless not to memorialize the dead. They are our Unitarian Universalist immortals.

We are called not simply to remember them, but to assess what we can do to perpetuate those values they transmitted to us upon their deaths.

We are called to do more than mouth pieties about how wonderful the people were who died this past year; we must further take stock of ourselves and decide how we can validate their lives through our continuing ministry.

Adapted from Farley Wheelwright

PAN-SOUTH CONFERENCE
March 19-21, 1999 Knoxville and Oak Ridge, Tennessee
FROM THEN TO NOW

THEN:

- Story of the founding of three present UU churches.
- Recently discovered evidence of an 18th century dwelling on the Tennessee Valley UU Church land.
- The story of the controversial Highlander Center, training civil rights activists (*Rosa Parks inter alia*) for 40 years- and still going!

NOW:

- Visits to impressive new church buildings in Oak Ridge and Knoxville.
- Swing Dance party, featuring live band with familiar tunes.
- And, of course, time to share our personal "thens and nows."

ARRANGEMENTS

COST: \$110 per person for 2 nights in a double room and most meals

DEPOSIT: \$50 PER PERSON. SEND BY JANUARY 15 TO:

BETTY-BIPPUS GRAHAM

104 OAK LANE

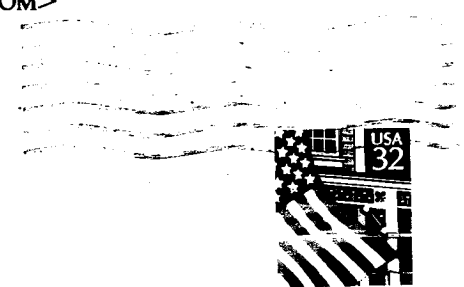
OAK RIDGE, TN 37830

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Forwarding and Address Correction Requested