

**Unitarian Universalist  
Retired Ministers  
and Partners  
Association**

May 1998

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

Volume XIII

# ELDERBERRIES

Number 3

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
1997-1998

**PRESIDENT & GAVEL**

**William A. DeWolfe**  
RR 1 Box 929  
Damariscotta, ME 04543  
(207) 563-3868  
bdewolfe@tidewater.net

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

**Charles Grady**  
419 4th Avenue West Apt 51E  
Hendersonville, NC 28739  
(704) 697-7325

**SECRETARY**

**Alexander Meek**  
26231 Lakeside Drive  
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248  
(602) 895-8540  
golfrev@webtv.net

**TREASURER**

**Iska Cole**  
36 Clifford Road  
Edgecomb, ME 04556  
207-882-5034  
iskadave@lincoln.midcoast.com

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

**Larry Hamby**  
487 Cedar Walk  
St. Simons Island, GA 31522  
(912) 634-9902  
larryhamby@compuserve.com

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**Virginia Crane**  
2880 Exeter Place  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
(805) 682-3476  
ginnycrane@AOL.com  
**Barbara R. Gudmundson**  
5505 28th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55417  
(612) 722-9132  
**Farley W. Wheelwright**  
1241 Adams Street, #606  
Boston, MA 02124  
(617) 298-1684  
revwheel@aol.com

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

**Elizabeth Anastos, GAVEL**  
17 Griswold Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

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## From Our President

During our sons' growing-up years, I would share with them what it meant to grow up during the great depression. I had to abandon the practice as they got older, because their eyes would glaze over with boredom, whenever I started on another story of that era. The depression meant little to them, just something in the history books. The depression impacted the lives of all of us retired folks and still influences our interpretations of today.

Many times when I raise the issue of personal financial needs with a colleague, I have the feeling that their response of "I have enough" or "I'm getting by" really is a depression-era response. Perhaps I should not mention the word, "need". One of our colleagues has suggested that we talk about "ease". Others have suggested "comfort". The more I work with the members of the Council of Church Staff Finances, the more I am impressed with their concern for the welfare of all ministers and their partners. They and their colleagues in the organizations/agencies they represent are really committed to enhancing the quality of the lives of all of our colleagues and utilizing the many financial resources at their disposal to enhance the ease and quality of our retired folk.

I am open to suggestions about how we can convince our colleagues (especially those long retired or living on limited incomes) to think not in terms of the Depression, but rather in terms of Today. We are entering into a new way of viewing things here. Off the top of my head, today's thinking might see a well functioning television as a necessity not a luxury, a visit to the children and/or grandchildren as a peak experience, perhaps a trip to the General Assembly or an Elderhostel would brighten our lives. Please let me know your thoughts on the matter.

In the meantime, if you can think of ways that your retirement years can be "eased" or enhanced, please let us know.

### INSURANCE UPDATE

On April 15 Ralph Mero notified the 108 individuals and families left in the Comprehensive Major Medical, VIP 2000 and HMO Blue Plans with Massachusetts Blue Cross that these plans will cease to offer medical insurance protection for employees of UU organizations after August 31, 1998. All efforts to find another carrier have failed. NOTE: We do not know whether the dental and Medex policies will be continued. Ralph will keep us informed. If you have questions, contact Ralph at the UUA or UURMAPA President Bill DeWolfe.

The UURMAPA Board will meet at General Assembly with the board of the UUMA. If you have concerns to be aired at this meeting, please contact me.

Bill DeWolfe

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### A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

I dislike people who make excuses and "whine." Yet, I find myself in the position of perhaps being read that way. Be kind.

This issue of Elderberries is being composed while our condo is being remodeled. "Remodeled" means moving walls, new cabinets, complete painting ... and every room, as a result, is populated by mountains of personal belongings covered with sheets; the air is filled with dust (Have you ever heard a computer sneeze?), and there is while of saws, sanders and what not, accompanied by jolly joking craftsmen insulting each other.

So, there may be problems with Elderberries. I know there is some materials which will need to be used next time. I hope the stuff I have used is timely. I hope there aren't too many mistakes. Oh well, enough excuses.....

## CARING NETWORK NEWS

George and Priscilla Brooks have accepted the position of Contact Persons for Florida. Welcome to both! They replace Mable Harkins, who has carried it for four years, and earned a heartfelt, "Thank You!"

**WOW!!**

### DO WE WRITE BOOKS!!

Carl and Alan Seaburg and Thomas Dahill have written *The Incredible Ditch* (Anne Miniver Press \$30 )

"The Incredible Ditch" tells the lively story of America's first major civil engineering exercise (a canal designed to connect the Merrimack River with Boston Harbor), through the eyes of the workers who built and ran it, with the authors drawing on private diaries and business records. Dahill's drawings bring alive the bustle of activity that helped shape the life of a new country. Also included are a series of aerial photographs taken in 1970 that indicate the route the canal once took, and show the remnants of some canal locks.

The canal was begun in 1793 and was completed in 1803. The railroad made it obsolete by 1850. The last canal packet boat rode its full length on Nov. 25, 1851.

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Charles Eddis writes, "John Morgan published a wonderful collection of anecdotes and personal stories about the ministry last fall. I as a minister could not put down once I began reading it."

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Congratulations to Virginia Knowles, who received the UUA Annual Program Fund and UUMA Sermon Award for 1997: "Making A Difference: A Theology of Money."

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Sam Wright's book *Koviashuik: Making a Home in the Brooks Range* was originally published by Sierra Club Press in 1989 and has now been reissued. *Booklist* says "This is the best book about Alaska written this decade, possibly this half-century." It is available in bookstores but if you'd like a signed copy send \$20 to him at P.O. Box 240, Young, AZ 85554 and he will sign and send it to you. Sam also has a second book to be published the fall of 1998 by THE EDGE OF TOMORROW. Its context is twelve months near the top of the world.

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Frank Anderson has been honored by the Hilton Head, SC Fellowship by publishing *Poetic Moments, A Retrospective*. Copies may be obtained for \$10.00.

### A LETTER FOR THE OLD GEEZER

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Geez:

I wonder if humor could be a focus for a Conference. What a joy it would be to be with a bunch of geezers who finally found themselves, and much in life, funny. I know I would attend.

Sad and Needing a Laugh.

Dear Sad,

Have you thought about what this bunch of serious world changers would do to a conference on humor? I remember once attending several workshops on scatology in literature at the Modern Language Association and discovered that academics can take the fun out of sex and swearing! Just think what a bunch of aging, earnest zealots would do with humor! I shudder! But it just might be worth a try.....I'll check it out with Mrs. Geez.

Geez

## LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

From Earnest Cassara .....

"Beverly and I will be spending most of June in England and Scotland. Our main purpose in going this year is to attend the Golden Anniversary meetings of the Kilvert Society at the end of the month. (If you do not know the Diary of [Robert] Francis Kilvert, a humble parson, which he kept re his life in the border area of England and Wales, from 1870, I heartily recommend it to you.)

"The Seaburgs and the Widricks will be attending, also. However, before the meetings, Alan will join Beverly and me in a trip to Edinburgh, Inverness, and then on over to the Orkney Islands."

From Orloff Miller .....

"Just a note to express my appreciation for your inclusion of email addresses in *Elderberries* whenever possible. I was able to order Ernest Cassara's *Murder on Boston Common* via email and have the bill sent to me - even here in Germany!

"*Elderberries* seems to be about the only print source of actual news of our colleagues nowadays, though I am pleased at the various UU email and www resources now available.

"Please know that the existence of UURMAPA is, for me, a much appreciated link to both past and present!"

David van Strien .....

He started out to participate in a demonstration in a Manchester, NH mall against sweatshop abuse in shoe manufacturing and discovered himself arrested. Now there is a free speech issue. "It's a story that has legs and will be unfolding over several months. My guess is it will ... go as far as the NH Supreme Court, ... This was the first time I've been handcuffed and had a ride in the paddy-wagon, but life is always full of surprises."

Vi Kochendoerfer .....

"I so wish *Elderberries* could be involved with UU issues rather than our old ageism! I realize we include wives and partners. Even so, if we changed the name it might give us and others the idea that we do have something to say from our years of experience."

(OK, Vi, change it to what? Don't tell only me... tell the board. Editor)

Carol Edwards .....

"I do believe in story telling as a rich educational tool for the teller and the listener.

And so I wish that this could come in a conference where we are all face to face, telling the development of our personal theologies, our family lives, our trials and tribulations and what we made of them. The intention, for me, in all of this would be to share the accumulated wisdom of the "old ones." Most tribes do this. Could we do this for our 'younguns'?

"One idea for *Elderberries* might be to ask each of us to tell a brief story from our lives and how that event has formed us. I would do that."

(Carol, you are the first to have an idea and also be willing to help implement it! so, you're on! Send me the story! And thanks! Editor)

**Summary of the 1998 Western Conference  
by Joyce Greenwood and condensed by the editor**

Guy Meyer launched the first session with thoughts about the human mind making a "god" of a nation, religion or culture, which institutions sacrifice human beings (i.e., ignore human worth) and personal relationships; a prophetic faith for today would proclaim human worth.

In the discussion which followed, facilitated by Eva Gilmartin, we talked about the need for prophets, foremothers and other visionaries pointing the direction we much follow. The charismatic leader must be in partnership with the pragmatic leader, one sets visions, the other accomplishes tasks. We questioned whether our UU principles implied core values and wondered if an overlap between them and "universal" values exists.

We agreed that institutions are necessary but the system needs to be changed to be life enhancing by getting rid of racism and patriarchy. ... We should be prepared to learn as well as teach and avoid intellectual arrogance.

During the course of our conference some of us became painfully aware of how difficult it is to communicate with one another, and we wondered whether the problem of communication was institutionalized and we wondered whether aging affected our abilities for social activism. Retired UU's need to be heard by the rest of the UU's and ways should be found to encourage such communication and involvement.

**UURMAPA  
at the  
1998 General Assembly**

On Sunday, June 28, 1998, our annual luncheon, honoring the recent retirees (ministers and partners) will be held at 11:45 a.m. in the Gift Shop Room of the Four Points Sheraton Riverside Hotel in Rochester. The menu will be Chicken Sorrentino or a Vegetarian Entree. The cost will be \$19.00 per person. Please make your reservations by **June 7, 1998**, and mail your check to Scotty Meek.

At 2:45 p.m. UURMAPA will present a workshop entitled "Time on Your Hands", featuring a panel of our members sharing their meaningful retirement experiences with Farley Wheelwright as Moderator.

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Return this registration form with your payment by June 7, 1998 to:

Scotty Meek  
26231 Lakeside Drive  
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248  
(602) 895-8540

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Registrations \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$19.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFERENCE NEWS****Midwest**

October 16-18, 1998

Springfield, Illinois

**Pan South**

Spring, 1999

Knoxville, Tennessee

**Next Elderberries****Deadline****July 15, 1998**

**At every Board meeting, Farley Wheelwright reads the names of our colleagues (including partners) of those who have died since the last meeting. His preliminary comments from the last meeting are well worth our reading**

The death of a colleague or a colleague's spouse I am learning is not only loss, but discovery and even a certain joy. No one who has lived as long as retired folk knows as well as we the loss part. We all have dealt with death in our parents, some with our partners, siblings and children. All of us have shared deaths in our parish and have presided over many funerals and memorial services.

But discovery? Joy? What new is there to discover In the suffering of, in recording and memorializing our colleagues and their mates? What possible joy can come from reminding ourselves of the steady erosion of our number? I shall tell you of my discovery, my joy.

This lists which we read in *Elderberries* contains some names of men and women unknown to me -- and probably to you. It is not only the names that are familiar. We remember this one for a sermon published, that one for a memorable speech on the floor of General Assembly, another for an office held in our ministerial association or district structure, another for some considerate act or statement. But even those colleagues and partners we did not know personally suddenly take an importance hitherto unknown to us.

They all have been part of our lives, the known and the unknown. Though varied the paths, they all contributed vastly as ministers or partners to our movement and by extension to our individual selves. It gives me a sense of discovery to contemplate their history, to reflect upon their lives. It gives me joy to relive old associations, to appreciate anew the gift of their lives -- their wisdom, their humor, their grace.

Their triumphs and failures, their insights, intuitions, knowledge have become enshrined in those of us who are following them. Our lives have been enriched by lives that ennoble us all. They are our heroes who have sailed before us to the port of death, all dressed as admirals. In his poem, "Only Death," the Mexican poet Pablo Neruda sees death itself as an admiral, leading us, like Walt Whitman, to come, come, come, dear lovely death.

I see, on the other hand, our colleagues gone before us "dressed" as admirals. They are urging us to take over their leadership roles and become admirals ourselves, sailing on their shoulders the better to see the distant shore to which they have arrived. We who remain are ordinary seamen and women taking our cues from our superior officers.

**DEATHS**

**MARCELLA WALKER MCGEE**

(widow of Lewis McGee)

May 28, 1997

**DONALD W. LAWSON**

July 21, 1997

**LAURA HERSEY**

(widow of Benjamin Hersey)

October, 1997

**STEWART MOORE**

November 27, 1997

**WILLIAM B. MUNDY**

January 21, 1998

**ELIZABETH KING**

(widow of Don King)

January 21, 1998

**FRANCIS RULAND**

February 6, 1998

**VIRGIL (BUD) MURDOCK**

February 18, 1998

**ALBERT D'ORLANDO**

February 28, 1998

**CATHERINE W. WITHINGTON**

(widow of Robert C. Withington)

March 11, 1998

**IRENE MCGLENEN**

(widow of Edward McGlenen)

**MARY BEYER SUMNER**

Be sure to return your ballots for the UURMAPA election  
if you haven't already done so.

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The UUA Publications Department sends a complimentary copy of the UUA Directory to retired ministers each year. After being contacted by several retired ministers looking for their copy, it was discovered that when the 1997-1998 Directories were sent out from the mail house there was a "label glitch."

Some retired ministers received the Directory, some did not. If you are a retired minister and have not received your copy, please contact Brenda Wong at the Publications Dept. of the UUA by mail or phone at extension 603 or email at <bwong@uua.org>.

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**A Philosophical Closing**

The Zen master steps up to the hot dog cart and says, "Make me one with everything."

The hot dog vendor fixes a hot dog and hands it to the Zen master, who pays with a \$20 bill. The hot dog vendor puts the bill in the cash drawer and closes the drawer.

"Where's my change?" inquires the Zen master.

The hot dog vendor responds, "Change must come from within."

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS AND PARTNERS ASSOCIATION**  
c/o L. M. HAMBY  
487 CEDAR WALK  
ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GEORGIA 31522



**Address Correction Requested**