

Elderberries

The Newsletter of the

Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association

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Elderberries is published quarterly in November, February, May, and August. Deadline for submitting material is the fifteenth of the month preceding publication.

Material for publication should be sent to Ed Lane (addresses at the left of this page—e-mail preferred if possible).

Address changes should be sent to Larry Hamby, 245 McDuffie Drive, Athens GA 30605.

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From Your President ... "Denial" Peter Raible

I was reminded recently of the old observation that when Americans become tourists, the condition they strive most to attain is not to be taken as tourists. "I can't stand old folk!" was a vehement response I received from an eighty-year-old cleric, when I asked him why he never attended UURMAPA conferences. Since he could hardly pass for anything but a senior, I knew he meant that he found his retired brothers and sisters were too limited in their interests. I thought of other comments I've heard in the last year or so about older clerics from other ministers and their partners:

- 1) "My life is more than preoccupation with my medical issues."
- 2) "Why are the only things important to us, things that happened years ago?"
- 3) "What do we really do to minister to one another?"
- 4) "How can we be helpful rather than hurtful in the life of the churches we attend?"
- 5) "Why can't we hear more about significant activities presently engaged in by retired ministers and spouses?"

I have no profound answers to such comments, but I know that the key is participation. We should provoke one another to share comments on what the significant issues in our lives are. We should make our gatherings reach beyond mere entertainment to engage us with the issues concerning our retired ministers today. We should be willing to share vignettes that might have relevance to those still engaged in active ministries. In short, we need to make sure that we try to bring our insights from experience to the contemporary ministry.

We also have a responsibility to be sure that we loft our issues of senior life before our colleagues and our laity in active leadership positions in the UUA. We have much to give and some things to receive. Let us begin by taking our collegiality in UURMAPA with seriousness, which lacks not humor.

PSR

Election Results

177 ballots were cast by mail and the following persons were elected:

Secretary: Sue Nichols

Member at Large: Peter Weller

Treasurer: Fred Campbell

Nominating Committee: Ann MacPherson

Newsletter Editor: Ed Lane

Polly Leland-Mayer

*Gene Navias, Chair
Nominating Committee*

In Memoriam

The Reverend Gerald Weary died June 4th. His partner, **Alma Weary**, died June 11th. Messages may be sent to their children: William A. Weary, 2127 California St., N.W., #202 Washington, D.C. 20008 and Catherine H. W. Shaer, 6 Florence St. Andover, MA 01810.

Nancy Kitchell died May 18th. Surviving partner, Webster Kitchell, 2845 Plaza Rojo, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

William Gayle Wetzel died July 2nd. Surviving partner, The Reverend Christine M. Wetzel, 7109 Ruane Street, San Diego, California 92119; e-mail: cwetzel@inetworld.net

John R. Jablonski died July 4th. Messages of remembrance may be sent to his son, Christopher Holton Jablonski (a student at Starr King) 1622 Oxford St, Berkeley, CA 94709.

Mary Holmes died July 12th. Deceased partner, The Reverend Robert Holmes. Son David Holmes lives in Harrison, Maine, but we do not have an address.

Ruth Smith, died July 31, 2002. Surviving partner, The Reverend Kenneth Smith Messages of remembrance may be sent to Ken c/o the UU Society of Martha's Vineyard, PO Box 1236, Vineyard Haven, MA. 02568-1236.

The Reverend Rudolph W. Nemser died August 3, 2002. Surviving partner, the Reverend Judith Wright, 114 Park Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476.

The Reverend Tom Ahlburn died August 13, 2002. Surviving partner, Ruth Lawrence, P.O. Box 269, Greensboro, VT 05841.

If I can let you go as trees let go
 Their leaves, so casually, one by one;
 If I can come to know what they do know,
 That fall is the release, the consummation,
 Then fear of time and the uncertain fruit
 Would not distemper the great lucid skies
 This stranger autumn, mellow and acute.
 If I can take the dark with open eyes
 And call it seasonal, not harsh or strange ...
 And, treelike, stand unmoved before the change,
 Lose what I lose to keep what I can keep,
 The strong root still alive under the snow,
 Love will endure—if I can let you go.

—May Sarton

Regional Conferences

Funds too tight to make one of the Regional Conferences? Partial scholarships are available through Michelle Bentley at the UUA: 617 742-2100 – mbently@uua.org. (Note: Michelle steps into this work in September in place of Kenn Hurto and David Hubner.)

MIDWEST – September 27-29, 2002 – Signature Inn, Elkhart, Indiana,

The Midwest Conference will be held at the Signature Inn at Exit 92 on I-80/90 in Elkhart, Indiana, chosen for its central location. Registration begins at 4:00 followed by a social gathering at 5:30 and a Grecian dinner at 6:30 p.m. Nancy Doughty will share her odyssey that evening. The featured speaker on Saturday morning will be David Bumbaugh, now on the Meadville faculty, who will lead us in a discussion on “The Future of Unitarian Universalism.” In the afternoon we will visit the Shippshewana Amish community to learn of their life style and crafts and have a family style dinner at Shippshewana. Church Sunday morning will be with Gordon Gibson and his Elkhart congregation and followed by a potluck lunch with the congregation.

Cost for program, three meals (not including Shippshewana), and lodging: \$163 each for shared room; \$235 for single. But you need to act quickly. Registrar: Fred Campbell, 1186 Wild Cherry Drive, Williamston, MI 48895 – fredffcc@aol.com - 517 655-9765.

To reach Elkhart by Air plan to land in Chicago or South Bend, Ind. South Bend is served by Delta, Northwest, American Connection, United Express, and US Airways. There is a \$14 shuttle from the South Bend airport to Elkhart and a \$34 shuttle from O’Hare to Elkhart.

NORTHEAST – October 8-10 2002 – LaSalette Center, Attleboro, Massachusetts

“A Celebration of Diversity Within Unitarian Universalism and in the World”

Connect with friends and colleagues, hear Dick Leonard’s odyssey, and enjoy a provocative program. Peter Richardson will introduce the retreat theme with a talk on “Four Spiritualities or Spiritual Paths Characteristic of World Faiths,” sharing his understanding of these four spiritualities and their implications for our movement. Dick Fewkes will give a presentation on the Partner Church Program. We will join in a diversity of worship services and fun, do a little (very little) business, and meet with Ralph Mero from the Department of Ministry who will speak of concerns and issues in retirement.

Cost: \$135 which covers program, room, and all meals. Registration deadline: September 15.

Registrar: Vera Kafka, 45 St. James Circle, Hudson, MA 01749
hvezdon@aol.com. - 978-562-5966

Chair: Peter Baldwin, 113 Pancake Hill Road, Gilmanton, NH 03237
pabjdwn@aol.com - 603 435-8037.

PAN SOUTH – March 20-23, 2003 – Sarasota, Florida

Featured program events will include a tour of “Florida’s Cultural Coast” with visits to an array of museums, natural attractions, performing art centers, etc.

Featured lecturers include: Howard Simon, Executive Director of Florida ACLU; Ed Harris speaking on “Birmingham In the 50s”; Judith Frediani, Director of The Lifespan Department at the UUA.

A special Saturday night social event will be “A Night On The Town” when you may choose from a variety of cultural events. On Sunday we will attend the Sarasota church followed by a luncheon with the Sarasota congregation.

Watch for further events and details in the next issue of *Elderberries*

Registrar: Polly Leland-Mayer, 705B West Venice Ave., Venice, FL 34285
uumum68@aol.com - 941 834 4791

Chair: Keith C Munson, 9 Island View Ave., Saco, ME 04072
kcmunson@maine.rr.com - 207 282-2204

WEST – April 7-10, 2003 – Vallombrosa Conference Center, Menlo Park, California

Vallombrosa means “beautiful valley,” and it is an exquisitely beautiful conference center, an elegant church retreat, relaxing and pastoral, in the midst of Silicon Valley, about mid-way between the San Jose and San Francisco airports. We are working on an inspiring workshop, elevating speakers and exuberant discussions. The food is outstanding. More details in later issues of *Elderberries*.

Contacts: Dick Allen, 131 Sunnyside Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94611-4419, loissong@link.net – 510 653-7347 or Joyce Smith, 1903 E. Rhea Road, Tempe, AZ 85284-3467 – joysmi@juno.com. – 602 839-7639.

UURMAPA Is Now An Affiliate of the UUA

Word has been received from the UUA that UURMAPA’s application for Independent Affiliate Status has been approved.

Money Management Matters from Mero

With the poor stock market performance in the past two years, it is tempting for retirees to let a stock broker take over the funds in their account in the UUA retirement plan. Brokers are adept at pointing out how their firm can do better than the Fidelity or socially responsible mutual funds. Or so they say.

This can be a costly mistake if it cancels out the tax benefit of the retired clergy housing allowance so that future withdrawals from the brokerage house become subject to US income taxes.

We encourage retired ministers with accounts in the UUA retirement plan to use the Fidelity Managed Income Portfolio II for the bulk of their assets, and leave the money in the plan. The FMIP invests in contracts with the world's largest insurance companies, and has traditionally had better earnings than money market funds, while also being immune from stock market fluctuations.

Retirees may want to reduce the amount of their monthly or quarterly withdrawals from their accounts in the UUA plan to the minimum necessary for their immediate expenses of daily living. Hopefully the market will rebound so that a better return on investment is realized in the years ahead.

When retirees receive their 1099 form from Fidelity next January for their 2002 tax returns, the dollars they have asked to have considered a retired clergy housing allowance will be noted as "tax status undetermined," thereby simplifying having those dollars excluded from taxable income on the 1040 tax returns for 2002. Call Fidelity at 800 343-0860 or the UUA's Retirement Plans Specialist, Joyce Stewart, at 617 948-6421, jstewart@uua.org, with any questions.

Ralph Mero

The Caring Network

New lists containing the latest retirees have been distributed to the caring network volunteers. A new directory will be forthcoming this fall. We ask all UURMAPA members and Caring Network Volunteers to check your listings for accuracy. Also, we are missing numerous e-mail addresses and providing those would be greatly appreciated. Send your e-mail address to Doe Lockwood at dlockwood@gorilla.net or Larry Hamby at larryhamby@mac.com.

Dick and Lois Allen have relocated to Redding, CA. We appreciate their work with the caring network and are currently searching for their replacement in the Bay Area.

Doe Lockwood

What Do I Miss?

Much as I enjoyed the work of ministry, I have experienced little nostalgia thus far in retirement. Delighted as I am on those occasions when I fill a pulpit, I do not miss doing this week after week. Pleased as I am to take a wedding our minister cannot fit into his schedule, I do not miss having such a tight schedule myself. I enjoyed the many General Assemblies, District Meetings, and other such gatherings that I attended during my active ministry, but I do not envy those who currently experience these junkets. “Every-Member Canvasses” are in a category by themselves. Not only do I not miss them—they are blocked from my memory!

Not long ago, while browsing in a fine bookstore, I realized what it is that I do miss. I MISS HAVING A PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE ACCOUNT!

George Briggs

What We Are Writing

John Morgan has a new book out: *Pursuing the Dove: Reminiscences of the Peace Struggle*, an account of his volunteer work for the Canadian Peace Congress and the World Peace Council—including many stories of his repeatedly trying to explain what Unitarian Universalism is as he traveled abroad. Copies are \$18.00 US or \$25.00 Canadian, including postage and handling and are available from him. Address: John Hanly Morgan, RR 11, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 6Y3.

Ed Lane gave four lectures on “Slow the Pace—Savor the Journey,” a philosophy of leisure, as theme speaker at the All Star I Family Conference in July. Lecture titles: “An Overview” (of the rat-race in American culture), “The Philosophers & Theologians” (from Plato to existentialism), “Thoreau and the Transcendentalists,” and “Serendipity.” They’re on Star’s web site, <http://www.starisland.org/bb/ASI.html>.

Ministers Wanted

The UU Church of Southeast Arizona is looking for retired ministers who would like to preach there when they are in the area. Jean MacKeen, Sunday Services Committee, P.O. Box 3123, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-3123 or KingMacKeen@msn.com.

The Red Hill Universalist Church 7031 Taylor’s Bridge Highway, Clinton, NC 28328 is seeking a part-time minister, possibly a retired or semi-retired person. They are a small church, describe themselves as “famous for our fellowship and our food,” and are currently involved in a project of repair and renovation of their parsonage. They are in process of preparing their packet. Clarence E. McLamb, Jr., Chair, Ministerial Search Committee.

I Laughed All the Way Home From the Church

The couple sat in my office for our pre-wedding meeting. I glanced down the form and noted that the groom was a widower. His wife had died eighteen years earlier. "Well," I said, "you certainly waited a long time before remarrying."

There was some kind of a muted reply which I could not hear—that should have warned me—and I said, "I'm sorry, but I didn't hear what you said."

This time his response was clearer: "Well, I was in prison most of that time." Again a prudent cleric should have realized these were murky waters, but I was intrigued and so I continued, "What were you in prison for?"

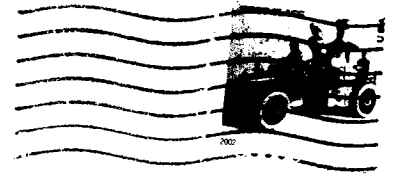
A silent pause and then he said, "For murdering my wife!"

Not knowing quite how to respond I turned to the prospective bride who had a broad smile on her face. "How does that make you feel?" I queried.

Quick as a flash her answer came back: "Careful!"

Peter Raible

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