

**Unitarian Universalist  
Retired Ministers  
and Partners  
Association**

August 1997

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

Volume XII

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1996-1997

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# ELDERBERRIES

Number 4

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As I begin my work as your President, I am very mindful of how Max Gaebler's leadership as our President has brought UURMAPA to a very unique place. We now enjoy a most cooperative relationship with the UUA staff and with the UUMA. The service gratuity has been increased. Ours is a much stronger organization thanks to Max.

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The challenge facing us and other UU organizations in regards to the financial needs of retired ministers and their surviving spouses is to find the processes to be able to match the available funds with the financial needs. This year we will conduct a face to face survey of our members in the Northeast District as a pilot project to understand their situations and where there may be needs

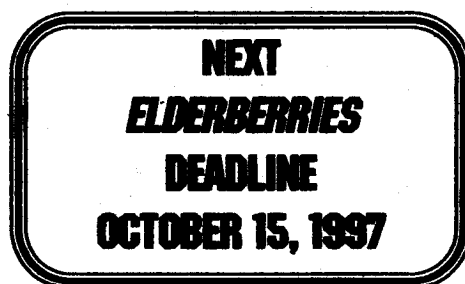
We will begin with the surviving spouses and those ministers who have been retired the longest. There appears to be sufficient monies in all the concerned agencies to meet emergencies and even do more. I will keep you posted.

We were all saddened by the death of former Board Member, Ray Nasemann, who represented us on the Council on Church Staff Finances for many years. He also served as an advocate for us with the New York State Convention of Universalists, securing several grants for our organization. I will represent UURMAPA on the Council.

UU WORLD. If you are not receiving the WORLD on its bi-monthly basis, please call me and I will get your name on the subscription list.

Your board will be meeting in Boston October 20-22. If you have any concerns that you would like to have considered at that meeting or handled by me, please let me know. My addresses are listed on the cover page.

Bill DeWolfe



## LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

**LEROY & LUCILLE CONGDON** celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary in June. This anniversary recognizes a dual career and life partnership of two individuals who worked their way through college, starting during the Great Depression. This union produced a son with a life-career in the AT&T Company; another son who is a psychologist and Executive Director of a two-county Behavioral Center; and a daughter who teaches French and Spanish.

After three months of soaking up the morning mists and enjoying the daily sunshine, Roy and Lucille are finding Westminster Shores "very much to our liking." They agree, "Our whole life together has been a two-person team, with lots of supporting players, and plenty of opportunity for winning fulfillment."

## MORE LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

from **FARLEY WHEELWRIGHT** . . .

We plan half a year in our retirement home in San Miguel de ALLENDE, Mexico. This year we motored as far as Richmond Virginia. Virginia Wheelwright tripped over a suitcase and broke her hip. Finis Mexico for the year. I teach each fall semester at Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement, write for FDR, preach when invited — not often enough to stem the New Age spirituality tide that is inundating the denomination. Sometimes I feel like a stranger in a strange land. There are so many ministers I never heard of at GA. Remember when we knew everyone?

from **AL NILES** . . .

As for life here on the west shore of Lake Sebago it is good to report we finally have open water. There are, however, some snowdrifts around in our fields to remind us winter is having a hard time giving up this year. Three months ago I decided it was better that I be taken up to our area hospital, where I was kept for four days because of an enlarged heart and a leaky valve.

Well, part of the trouble in having a couple of primitive computers set up so they can be used in easy chairs, it is sometimes too easy to let my fingers do the talking. I hope this finds you all in good fettle and that Spring will help put some in your step.

from **DONALD LOTHROP** . . .

Since my retirement in 1975, Alna, Maine has been my legal, tax paying, voting address. The old house is 200 years old and one cannot insulate it without tearing it apart. It would be too costly and destroy its periodicity.

Thus to keep warm I go to Cape Cod for the Winter and rent a house. This is reasonable because they make their money in the summer. I have college mates and retired parishioners there and the bones of my family lie about.

**JOAN WATERHOUSE**, who is part of our Caring Network for Connecticut Valley, reports: "Because of the UURMAPA Directory, I located a cousin whom my father lost touch with many years ago. With a correspondence established, I was visited by BELLE and AL NILES and a daughter.

A note to our wise advisor, **REV. DR. ETC., ETC., OLD GEEZER**:

"I strongly dislike the term, Elderberries for our newsletter. It suggests fruit that's about to drop off from the vine. In its place, I recommend **THE ELDERBOOMERS!**"

(Signed) Rev. Name withheld

Dear Withheld:

What a perfidious betrayal of our New England roots! But then, what you expect from anyone who attended the new ministers seminar with the editor of *Elderberries*.

Maybe we should have a contest. Send in new names for the UURMAPA newsletter! A suitable prize will be awarded. Like maybe a free subscription — or something.

I am still pondering the second part of your letter which I didn't print yet. Maybe next time!

## MORE LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

from **DICK BOECKE . . .**

We are delighted to be living in the English Countryside in the Spring. Each evening, we see foxes or deer out our window as we have supper. The spring flowers ... ahhh! Early this week, I climbed Cissbury Ring, a pre-Roman hill fort on top the South Downs. I walked the circuit of the one mile ditch around it, napped in the sun, then walked up to the marker at the center of the ring and wrote:

### CISSBURY RING

A mile circle around this pre-Christian fort high on the South Downs.

Look in all Directions :

South is the sea,

North, the Chanctonbury Ring full of trees,

Where Warlocks and Witches dance beneath the midsummer moon.

I have walked the circle, and napped mid buttercups.

This ancient ground has power from earth and sky.

Separated from our roots in nature, we lose power.

In isolation comes frustration.

Sense the vibrations, follow them:

The KAMIS of earth and sky will do the rest.

And another note to **OUR WISE ADVISOR, REV. DR. ETC., ETC., OLD GEEZER . . .**

"Dear Reverend O. Geezer,

"My male sailing companion while relieving himself over the stern in the usual fashion developed a severe coughing spell and saw his dentures sink into the briny deep.

"Dear Dr. O. G., how can we prevent such a denture departure from happening again?

(Signed) A bewildered sailor caught in the teeth of a gale."

Dear Bewildered.

I'm glad you wrote me, because this problem is reaching epidemic proportions among those who fish or go down to the sea in ships, especially where the water is so cold you can't rescue the teeth.

I will now speak in a parable, as an earlier advisor did. There was once a doctor who liked almonds in his daiquiris. And every day, as he entered his favorite bar, the bartender would mix his favorite daiquiri with an almond. One sunny afternoon, the doctor came in and the bartender realized he had no almonds, so he quickly substituted a hickory nut. The doctor took one sip and eyed the bartender suspiciously, "Is this an almond daiquiri?" "No" the bartender replied, "It's a hickory daiquiri, doc."

Moral for those who do not know how to interpret parables:

"Hanging out in bars with clever bartenders keeps you out of boats."

## OUT OF THE ARCHIVES

(Here is a letter from Max Coots recently unearthed by Harry Thor. Since Max isn't yet an archive himself it seems appropriate to share it with him as well as the rest of us. I have always aspired to a genial curmudgeonry and this letter inspires me! . . . Editor)

December 1, 1994

Dear Harry,

I received your letter of the 27 today, and am happy to report (though that was not the purpose of your letter) that I have had all the changes in my life I'm going to have. No more changes. I am just going to play out Hamlet's wish that "this too too solid flesh would melt and resolve itself into a dew" when ever the moment comes that change threatens me.

Neither do I expect to have "special needs." Furthermore, I am through asking questions. I have decided that if I don't know the answer already, it's not worth knowing.

While I appreciate your offer to use your 800 number, my recent experience is that every time I use an 800 number someone charges something to my credit card and I think that's quite enough debt without you adding to it too.

~~And lastly, your offer to be available to have someone to talk to, while tempting, is not something I do any more. I stopped talking to people shortly after I retired. I still say, "hmp" and "um ah" and similar things when really pushed, but I've found it better to, as I've indicated, not allow changes, have no needs (special or otherwise), ask no questions, save my money by avoiding 800 numbers, and talk to no one.~~

Should any of the above be altered, despite my best efforts, such as terminal illness, which, as terminal illnesses will, threaten a change, namely death, I will notify you immediately, ask questions, and ask for all the money you can scrape up.

Until that time please send me a copy of the list of retired ministers in New York state, as I'm mildly curious who I am ignoring. Your letter said you were enclosing such a list, but you didn't. You lied. So much for meeting special needs and answering questions -- can't even remember to put in the damn list. Some communication link you turned out to be.

hmmph.

Max

P.S. Thanks for the letter, give my best to Iris, take care of yourselves and each other, say "Hi" to anyone around who knows me, and send the damn list.

## CONFERENCES

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

The Sixth Annual Western Conference of UURMAPA was held March 24-27, 1997 at the Marianist Center, Cupertino, California. Conversations with Huston Smith and meditation instruction with Kendra Smith were instructive, enlightening and very congenial. In addition, Brandy Lovely gave a fascinating and insightful paper on the politics of parish ministry which evoked great interest and much discussion. Further enriching the conference Til Evans shared her personal life odyssey as did Dorothy and Leon Hopper. The story of their life and ministries was deeply moving. Thirty-four ministers and partners shared these program highlights - as well as the peaceful ambiance of the Marianist Center.

New officers for our Western Conference are as follows:

Co-Coordinator	Joyce Greenwood and Guy Meyer
Registrar/Treasurer	Joyce Smith
Program Planners	Ted and Marguerite Webb
Program Planner	Kenneth Helms

We will return to the Marianist Center in 1998, March 30-April 2.

### PAN-SOUTH CONFERENCE

Nineteen retired ministers and partners gathered in New Orleans in mid-March for one of the best southern conferences ever, thanks to the excellent organizing work by Al D'Orlando and his wife Cathy, and the hospitality of New Orleans First Church and its minister, Suzanne Meyer.

Sister Helen Prejean, author of the book "Dead Man Walking," was to have addressed us on Tuesday morning on death penalty issues. However she had to cancel when a close friend afflicted with terminal cancer became worse. We were fortunate, however, to have a young attorney who specializes in capital cases and an associate of Sister Helen, speak to us; Denise LeBoeuf gave us an eloquent and moving overview of the issues involved in working with death-row inmates.

Two other speakers completed the formal program: a history professor gave us insights into New Orleans history, and the director of the Southern Institute spoke on "Civil Rights: the Unfinished Revolution.

This conference, and its organizers, were extolled by outgoing UURMAPA President Max Gaebler as setting a high standard for midwinter southern conferences. An attempt will be made to find an attractive site on the eastern seaboard, perhaps Savannah, Georgia, for next winter or early spring.

### NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

The Twelfth Annual Northeast Conference will be held Oct. 8-10, 1997, (not Oct. 7-9). Our presenter will be Harvey Cox who will address issues of cultural diversity and the religious community's responsibility in this area. The rest of the schedule is not firm at this time, but it will include worship, reports from the Ministry Department, time to snooze and get reacquainted, etc. Planned free time activities are a tour of Slater Mill Historic Site, a trip to Diamond Hill Vineyard, or smoozing with friends.

Again we'll be gathering at the LaSalette Center for Christian Living in Attleboro, MA.

This year the cost of the retreat is \$110.00. Please remember that LaSalette requires a fee of \$10.00 per day for those not staying overnight, in addition to meals. Subsidy funds are available through Dorothy Boroush, so don't let money keep you from being with us.

Although treats and snacks for Coffee Hour and After Hours Get-togethers are provided, we invite you to bring some of your own choice, too. We are limited to 56 reservations, which will be accepted on a first come basis. Deadline is Sept. 12. For additional information, call Dorothy Boroush at (508) 824-2953.

## DEATHS

Katherine L. Wing

April 19, 1997

Widow of Charles A. Wing

Sidney A. Peterman

May 30, 1997

Age 74

Raymond R. Nasemann

May 30, 1997

Age 72

Phyllis S. Morris

May 31, 1997

Wife of John M. Morris

Joan Mary Mason

June 26, 1997

widow of Leonard Mason

Elderberries has received a beautifully written note from Josiah Barlett announcing that "some lurking malignancy has struck, suddenly, fiercely and decisively. My doctors say I have only weeks to live." He says that all is well with him and wishes everyone a fond goodbye.

PLEASE, he asks, NO PHONE CALLS JUST NOW.

## **CARING NETWORK NEWS**

Because of the large number of members in the Mass Bay District I have now divided it into two sections for the Caring Network: "Coast" and "Inland."

RALPH and WYNANDA HELVERSON, who live in the Inland area, will continue in that section of the Mass Bay District.

I'm pleased that ALAN SEABURG is now the Contact Person for the Coast area. Welcome, Alan, to the Network.

At GA Phoenix i was privileged to attend the Surviving Spouses and Families Dinner. Sponsored by the department of ministry, all the survivors of the year are invited guests. It was meaningful for those present to be able to gather together on this occasion.

Ginny Crane, Caring Network Chair

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Minister Sought Half-Time Position

Red Hill Universalist Church is offering a halftime position to a minister with an understanding and appreciation of classic Universalism, and of rural life.

Red Hill currently meets twice a month for worship services and weekly for Adult Discussion. There have been Universalist meetings held at the same location since the 1820's. Our property, deeded to us in 1858, includes the church and a parsonage (both built in the 1950s), a picnic shelter, and cemetery. We are seeking a person willing to devote time and energy in not only performing normal pastoral duties but in seeking out and bringing new, younger members into this older congregation which is determined that their liberal religious voice will not die in an area which is religiously ultraconservative.

Our church is located ten miles from Clinton, the county seat of Sampson County, and makes no claims to any special amenities except a slower pace of living, a somewhat lower cost of living than in large cities, the friendliness of our neighbors, and the loving care of our members. For more information, please call or write:

Regina Burton  
P O Box 287  
Clinton, NC 28329-0287  
(910) 592-3023  
E-mail: [joe@intrstar.net](mailto:joe@intrstar.net)

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*Address Correction Requested*