

**Unitarian Universalist
Retired Ministers
and Partners
Association**

May 1999

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

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ELDERBERRIES

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1998-1999

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From Our President

Barbara and I finished a four piece mailing this week, which I trust you have received. So this will be a brief message. Spring is really flourishing in Maine with the folks in Caribou enjoying 80 degree days, while we on the coast have to be satisfied with the 60's. Right now we are in an upside-down temperature world. The black flies are out, so we do our yard work with bee keepers netting over our heads and gloves on our hands. It's a small price to pay for being where you want to be.

As I near the end of my board term and presidency, I want to thank all of you for all you have done to support UURMAPA. All our conferences are well attended; four are in the planning process for next year. The Caring Network is well established with nearly 40 volunteers at work. We have strong cooperative relationships with the UUA and the other professional associations in the movement.

I would especially like to thank the other retiring board members for their four years of devoted service, Caring Network Chair Ginny Crane and Necrologist Farley Wheelwright.

The Board has voted for me to continue as the UURMAPA representative on the Council on Church Staff Finances. In that role I will continue to advocate for the needs of our membership in the context of the overall needs of the professionals and their families in the denomination. Out of my experience on the Council, I would urge our membership to make their needs known to me or to Ralph Mero at UUA, so that we may get them answered. Once again, I remind all of you, especially those of you retired for ten or more years, if you need assistance with meeting the costs of medical insurance, new glasses, or hearing aids, contact either one of us.

Again, thanks for making my two years as your President so memorable. It's been a real joy and I shall cherish it dearly.

Bill DeWolfe

At the Last Executive Board Meeting..

Farley Wheelwright outlined the problem he had last year of being assigned a room at a distantly remote location, and a repetition of the same problem this year. Bill will write a letter to the GA Planning Committee with outlining our concern that accessibility issues need to include older persons who are also included in the physically challenged group. Letters from UURMAPA will also help.

Conference Planning Guidelines were discussed to ensure better planning.

A proposal from Diane Miller about a Worships Arts website was enthusiastically approved. Compensation for Editors was discussed.

Bill will write to Diane about establishing a UURMAPA chat-line.

The UUMA Exec has asked for our help in staffing the UUMA booth in the Display Area at GA. Those who can help should contact the UUMA Exec.

Conference Planning Guidelines were discussed to ensure better planning.

(Taken from Scotty Meek's Minutes, April 24,25 Meeting)

CARING NETWORK NEWS

I have profound admiration for all the Contact Persons in the Caring Network. Your work is the heart of our organization. Keeping in touch with our members in your district makes for a vitally important connection. Your personal contact can be a solace for those who are lonely, a stimulating dialogue for many others, and a source of support for those in need.

Our connecting as Unitarians and Universalists touches the very heart of our being: who we have been and who we are. This organization is richer for what you have done and can do as part of the Caring Network.

This is my last report as the Caring Network Chair, as my term of office is ending. It was almost four years ago that HELEN DICK turned over the Caring Network records to me. This position has been both rewarding and meaningful; and also just plain fun being in touch with all of you. The many many hours I've devoted to this work these past four years have been enjoyable, sometimes frustrating, often demanding; but always with concern for the well-being of the membership of our retirees' organization. I'm indebted to ISKA COLE and LARRY HAMBY for all their invaluable assistance. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve UURMAPA.

Congratulations Caring Network! By the time this Elderberries is mailed, we should have accomplished our mission of having UURMAPA recognized by all UUA districts. This means UURMAPA will be listed along with the name of the Contact Person(s) in each district directory. It has been a big undertaking and important for UURMAPA. Thanks for all you have done for the Cause.

Ginny Crane, Chair

LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

Sadly, one of our brethren, **Nick Cardell**, is, at this time, serving a six month sentence in a Federal prison for his involvement in a protest march at the School of the Americas (SOA). SOA is a training school at Ft. Benning, GA, which has turned out more than 60,000 graduates, including some of the most notorious Latin American dictators and terrorists. Cardell was calling for the closing of the school and urges all of us to urge Congress to close the school.

Congratulations to **Felix and Eva Lion**! Their property in Victoria, BC was featured in the *Gardens West* magazine for March, 1999. They are both active members of the Western Garden Club and the Horticultural Society of Victoria. Felix plays the trumpet ... with the Hampton Orchestra and his daily practice, "particularly the long low notes," will bring mute swans drifting toward them.

Harry Thor has invented, patented and is marketing a log splitter called "Woodwiz Splitter" for you wood burning folk. Its primary benefit is that it can be inserted into seasoning cracks and thus helps the wood to split itself. UU's can get a special price by writing to "Easy Motion, Inc., Box 1285, Vestal, NY," or look on the web at <www.woodwiz.com/woodwiz>.

LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

Vi Kochendorfer has done it again! This time it's *Santa Fe in the Fifties: A Memoir of Change in the City Different*, published by Western Edge Press. You can get the book at bookstores or by writing Vi at 206 N. 60th Ave., Duluth, MN 55804.

We have a long and complete diary from **Keith and Peggy Munson** describing their recent two week South American Cruise aboard the Norwegian Crown. There isn't enough space to print it, but they make it sound terrific!

From **Ginny Crane**: "Our hills (and streams) are alive with the sound of spawning salmon! Recently we visited a parishioner out in the boonies. Hills, valleys, creeks, dense, dense woods, colorful trees, fresh earthy smells - accentuated by drizzle. The whole atmosphere was a nostalgic experience of my years living in the Vermont countryside. Mary took us down to her stream and lo, there were huge and numerous salmon running up to spawn! They swirled round and round, splashing vigorously as they worked up energy to negotiate the shallow areas on their route. Thrilling spectacle."

Also from **Ginny**: "On February 10, I returned from a 2 1/2 week visit in India. A dream come true, having left 31 years ago. ... Here are impressions of what India is to me: warm friendly people with a sense of who they are; colorful; fascinating; ancient buildings & heritage; blasting of traffic horns; vibrant; bustling; sprawling; smog; dust; beggars; venders; hawkers; painted lorries; motor and cycle rickshaws; open fires for cooking; makeshift tents where refugees and the destitute live; barking dogs; cows (sacred) wandering the streets; water buffalo as work horses. (She also came home with a jet-lag cure! Ed.)

From **John Gilbert**: It seems to me that aging "means that your file simply goes into another box. I have sensed some institutional disposition for me to do that. It seems a distinction without a difference to me. Now, I allow I'm different all right, but if they want to put my file in another box, it seems to me they should be able to explain to me why since they won't refer me anyhow, I wonder why I should want that, why I ought to help them remember me as "ex" or lesser (or aged, even) or more remote. "Memory Hole" (was it 1984?) comes to mind.

It's John Glenn week as I write. Yesterday's News of the Week carries a piece by Doris Grumbach being generally negative about aging despite acknowledging the cheer-leading attitudes of Betty Friedan and the golden-ager ilk. She notes varieties of loss, unraveling, slippage, and says: "The first thing to go is ambition . . . It is as well that the desire for notice accompanies the loss of any reason to deserve it."

Doris was a teenager already when I was born. That is a big difference, and I realize I am not in her class yet. I note, however, that "ambition" derives from old Latin *ambire*, meaning "to go around seeking votes," and discover some grounds for agreement on the point. I have tended to allow that, although I find of late that I own a variety of insufficiencies, I also realize that I worry less about them. Incapacities that would have distressed and outraged me once don't seem to faze me any more. It's not likely a winning notion, but I like to suspect that in my aging I have been

MORE LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

driven to changed ambitions (seeking votes elsewhere). After having a sore shoulder for 30 years, last fall I fixed it. After having failed in churches for 19 (not the service-gratuity-20) and being enjoined against further engagement, I have taken up voice and piano (with my new shoulder). Since I figure I have to live another 40 years in order to learn the piano, ambition does flicker, but it is not the driving kind. My spouse will say now and then that men like (Zorba and) me should live a thousand years; but I was a teenager when she was born, so what does she know?

Don Wheat (77338 Pinewood Lane; South Haven, MI 49090) wants copies of sermons on the Clinton Impeachment trial from ministers of any denomination.

Who says **Dick and Jopie Boecke** are retired? In April and May: IARE, Vancouver; buying a house in England; trip to Atlanta; saying "goodbye" to daughter Diana as she left for a seven week "Encounter" Camping trip; fly to Budapest to visit Unitarians in Prague and Weimar, back to England.

THE EIGHTH WESTERN CONFERENCE

on April 1, adopted a long, detailed resolution condemning the "tinkering" (Ed.'s word) with Social Security and calling for responsible reform, and a single-payer health care system.

Northeast Conference Attleboro, Massachusetts October 5 - October 7

David and Iska Cole, Chairs
36 Clifford Road, Edgecomb, Maine 04556
207.882.5034
iskadave@clinic.net

Upper Midwest Conference Madison, Wisconsin Friday, October 8 - Sunday, October 10.

Dinner and check in Friday night, then Saturday morning visits to Frank Lloyd Wright houses with information from James Dennis, local art expert. Saturday afternoon, a happy hour at the Gaebler's, followed by dinner at the Madison Civic Center, with the musical director of the Madison Symphony, then a Beethoven/Shostakovitch concert. Sunday service at the First Unitarian Society with a sandwich lunch.

All this for only \$145/person, not including Saturday dinner. Reservations are needed by Labor Day. Write or call:

Max or Carolyn Gaebler
1212 Dartmouth Rd., Madison, WI 53705
608.238.4663

GEEZER POWER!!!

FROM THE REV. & Ms. OLD GEEZER...

Did you know that we now have 518 retired ministers on our rolls, and 233 partners for a total of 751 members? Why don't we unite and vote ourselves something?

GEEZER POWER!!!

GEEZER POWER!!!

UNION NOW!!!

GEEZER POWER!!!

GEEZER POWER!!!



FROM RALPH MERO

1. By June 30, 1999, the UUA will have repaid with additional interest all of the ministerial aid funds misappropriated some twenty years ago. Also, the UUA has begun allocating the income from additional endowed funds to the Service Gratuity program. Ministers and surviving spouses receiving the Gratuity who are age 75 or older are now receiving an additional \$200 per year.
2. At this time, the Department of Ministry has ample funds for financial aid grants to retired ministers or surviving spouses. The process for requesting these is not burdensome; all it takes is a note to me at the Office of Church Staff Finances (617/742-2100, ext. 404) and completion of a simple form. All grants are completely confidential, and we urge UURMAPA members to consider this resource when thinking about their own financial circumstances or the needs of colleagues.
3. Retired ministers are also eligible for the continuing education grants available through the Department of Ministry. David Hubner administers these, and grants equal to one-third of the cost of a continuing education event, up to a maximum of \$500, are not uncommon. These funds might make it easier for some to attend UURMAPA regional conferences. 617/742-2100, ext. 405.
4. The UUA remains very concerned about the economic plight of some of those preparing for our ministry, as well as some of those who are nearing retirement. Seminary students are being strongly urged to carefully avoid taking on loans they will be unable to pay. Ministers with minimal savings who are nearing the end of their active ministries should be studying creative ways of sharing the basic expenses of daily living with others in similar situations. UURMAPA and the Council on Church Staff Finances should be exploring how we might discover low cost living arrangements for those whose retirement income will preclude them from affording market rate housing.

**Next Elderberries
Deadline
July 15, 1999**

There is virtue in singleness of purpose: to will the good. Sadly, we and our leaders often instead have "single-handedness," or "tunnel vision." Too late we discover that "the light at the end of tunnel" is a racing express of destruction.

Dick Boecke on Kosovo

DEATHS**Blanche Grindle Beal**

March 21, 1999

(Deceased Partner: Edmund W. Beal)

Anna Fenn

February 8, 1999

(Deceased Partner: Dan Huntingdon Fenn)

Roy James Hatt

April 27, 1999

(Surviving Partner: Marion Wood Hatt)

Helen Miller

April 25, 1999

(Deceased Partner: Wilburn B. Miller)

Jefferson P. Selth

May 4, 1999

(Surviving Partner: Barbara Craig)

Lois Ann White

March 24, 1999

(Deceased Partner: Bobby Fricks)

Aldea Berna Carroll Derby

April 27, 1999

Our lives are not scattered leaves in the forest. Each generation of us grows on the backs of the preceding, each new generation dependent for its growth upon the spirit and the works of those who came before us.

We do not sing like the birds of the forest in a cacophony of lovely notes; we sing different tunes, but with all parts in essential harmony. Our lives are like boats which sail beyond their own depth into deeper waters marked with buoys to guide us, dropped by earlier sailors. Our relationship with the past is like the wind of fresh air which cleanses as it blows new insights to old thoughts, strengthened convictions and inspiration out of past enlightenment, and gives us the daring to experiment with new ideas.

In recognizing and appreciating those who have preceded us into the great adventure called death, we perpetuate what they bestowed upon us. There can be no "eternal oblivion" in lives which set examples for us to follow, those whose thoughts and deeds and spirit must now be infused into ours.

The gifts of the past are ours for the picking. What we do with these gifts is a matter of individual choice. Our colleagues and partners have bequeathed to us their wisdom. It remains only for us to honor their memories with our lives rather than with simple, however well-meant, sentiment.

Farley Wheelwright

(Condensed by the Editor)

GRIEF IS NOT CONFINED TO DEATH ALONE.

The Board will soon say goodbye to three persons who have contributed immeasurably to its operation, and for the benefit of all of us in UURMAPA and to non-members as well. Bill DeWolfe's efforts to increase retirement benefits as well as his leadership, Ginny Crane's efforts on behalf of the Caring Network, and Farley Wheelwright's artistic skill and wit -- all these have enriched us.

Modern life is characterized by loss and change. And we all learn to grieve.

And we will miss you three.

Larry Hamby, Editor

Who am I now that I am old and retired?

Not too long ago I knew who I was. I was the CEO, the executive secretary, the trial lawyer, the teacher, the parish priest. Throughout my career, my ministry, my fellow workers and associates knew me and knew what to expect from me. I had a certain status that identified me.

Now, however, things have changed. I have retired, and someone else has my job, my title, my office. Someone else is doing the work I used to do. Someone else is being sought out for the advice I used to give. I am sitting on the side lines watching life go by rather than running a business or a church. I am no longer needed at the office, at meetings, at the altar.

I realize that when morning comes, I can ignore the alarm clock and my appointment calendar. I don't have to rush anywhere with a brief case or a communion kit in hand. I have retired. I am without a defined job to do today. Who am I?

I am the marrow of what has been - the voice of our culture's past. I am the echo of a song that has been sung, the spirit and the soul of today's culture.

You and I are ... tradition.

Today's people are born of us - Today's stories have come from us.

Today's ideals have been lived by us - Today's future has been created by us.

We are the bridge over which humanity must walk on its journey to tomorrow.

Who am I now that I am old and retired?

I am a grateful and happy person.

(“The Epistle” from the Association of the Retired Greek Orthodox Clergy of America)

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS AND PARTNERS ASSOCIATION

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