

UU ELDER BERRIES

A NEWSLETTER FOR RETIRED MINISTERS, WIVES AND SURVIVING
SPOUSES OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

VOL. I

FALL 1985

NO. 3

IN THE BEGINNING...

Almost from the time of the formation of the UUA there was recognition that our retired ministers and their partners represented an un-met responsibility and an un-used resource. Little was done officially, but upon his retirement, Dr. Max Capp began publishing a journal for retired ministers which he called "THE ELDER CHURCHMAN", and he continued the effort for nine years. Upon his death, several others tried to pick up the project, but in the mid-seventies publication ceased. Other efforts were made to recognize or serve retirees but little was accomplished until a coming together at G.A. in Vancouver '83 when eight retired ministers met and began promoting the concern. Finally, in the spring of '85 the Council on Church Staff Finances arranged a meeting with Harold Hadley, William Gardner, Walter Kring, Arnold and Horace Westwood to make plans for a conference. All retirees and their spouses were invited to a two-day gathering at Petersham, MA and the response from those near enough to make attendance possible was immediate and enthusiastic.

Actually, some came from as far away as Florida, California and the Mid-West, but most were understandably from New England. It was a great success. Perhaps the greatest attraction was a chance to meet again with old friends or to feel involved in the movement to which, in most cases, a life-time of effort had been given; but in the process the needs and hurts of retired folk came to the surface and made evident the need for some representative and serving organization.

Much was accomplished in less time than most would have dared to anticipate. Before two days were done, By-Laws had been adopted, officers elected and a Newsletter authorized. We trust this one will be followed by a minimum of four each year to help knit us more closely together.

I N M E M O R I A M

Gilbert Phillips	West Barnstable, MA	July 25, 1985
Clinton Lee Scott	Norfolk, VA	September 28, 1985
Edward Redman	Alexandria, VA	October 9, 1985
Lon Ray Call	Seattle, WA	October 7, 1985

I failed to get to the Petersham Conference in time to participate in the Memorial Service honoring these four of our colleagues who died most recently. All that I can do is to share a feeling that...

When I started out in the ministry some forty-eight years ago I was inevitably called upon to officiate at funerals and Memorial Services for deceased parishioners, but that was no great problem. The overwhelming majority were old: --in their seventies, sixties or fifties anyway. I felt that I offered their families and friends a lot of comfort pointing out that they were undoubtedly tired, and 'had completed the work' given them to do, and philosophically, "...of the generations of flesh and blood, --one cometh to an end and another is born."

However, during the busy years of my ministry I must have become so involved in administration and social protests and denominational politics that I failed to notice a great change was taking place. When finally I was reasonably relaxed serving a village church in Maine I was shocked to discover that now most of those dying are

young: in their sixties and seventies and, if in their eighties were still young in spirit. All seem to have a lot more to live for, badly needed skills and experience, and had earned some quiet and peaceful years surrounded by family and friends.

We here, also, salute the memory of those older, yet still "young" contemporaries and friends of ours.

A.Q.P.

WORK SHOPS AND BUZZ SESSIONS

Much of the time at the Petersham Conference was spent in Buzz Sessions and Work shops, --and to tell the truth, your editor was rarely sure as to which was which, --but whichever, all had plenty of opportunity to speak their minds, voice their grievances and express their desires. These included the following:

SPREADING THE STORY--Led by Carolyn Howlett and Phil Giles

It recommended that building upon the success of this initial gathering in New England, efforts should be made to hold similar events in other geographic areas where UU's are reasonably numerous, --with special attention being paid to:

- searching out surviving partners of deceased ministers;
- enlisting cooperation of UU groups whose membership may over-lap ours, --such as UUMA, UUMPS, UUWF, and the UUA Dept. of the Ministry, Dept. of Social Responsibility and the UU World;
- working through the Districts, --their Newsletters and locally-based ministerial organizations.

THE NEWSLETTER--Led by George Marshall and Bud Murdock

Guidelines:

- to provide information channel for members;
- to promote organization activities;

-to provide a little humor, but also, to keep all informed of vital statistics in respect to our ministry.

Name: in spite of G.M.'s demurer, there was a unanimous vote to stay with "Elder berries".

Editor: recommended that Al Perry of Plymouth, ME be the next Editor and a member of the Exec. Board.

BY-LAWS-Led by Bill Gardner

Copy of final form enclosed with this mailing. Unusual and significant were the decisions (1) that retired ministers, wives and spouses of deceased ministers, would be members automatically, and (2) that the organization would be supported by annual voluntary contributions, rather than fixed dues, in recognition of the fact that the financial means of retirees vary greatly.

FINANCIAL SURVIVAL-Led by David Hubner and Ray Nasemann

No report as yet, but will have one in the next Newsletter.

TALENT BANK-Led by Walter Kring and David Pohl

Recommended that a computer file be set up at 25 Beacon Street listing all available data on individual talents.

Explored opportunities for volunteer work such as at the Andover-Harvard Library.

Recognized need of retired ministers as interim leaders of churches seeking a new minister and serving small churches unable to pay scale.

DEVELOPING SUPPORT SYSTEMS-Led by Robert Doss and
Horace Westwood

-Recommended holding similar national conferences in other areas and the development of area or District gatherings.

- Proposed the establishment of a 'Buddy System' in areas where UU ministers are not numerous and a 'Caring Correspondent' in each District.
- Urge the UUA to continue mailings to retired ministers and their spouses,--including the UU World and the annual Directory.
- Seek support from the UUMA to have retirees included in all District Chapters.
- Hold dialogues at the Chapter level around the issue of the relationship of retired ministers and their successors in local churches.
- Suggest reduced registration rates for retirees and their spouses at General Assemblies.

SURVIVING AS A SPOUSE--Led by Freda Carnes & Monica Sharp

-This was the most largely attended Work Shop and the issue that seemed to concern many most. There is not room for a full report of issues explored and recommendations made in this issue of our Newsletter and we hope to make a special focus upon this in our next issue.

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We also had a certain amount of singing and story-telling for our mutual entertainment and special thanks are given to Lucille Congdon and Malama Robbins for providing leadership in the realm of music, to Horace Westwood in arranging this part of the Program.

ANNUAL BUDGET (1985-86) Retired Ministers Association

This Budget was proposed by the Interim Executive Board and submitted to the UU Grant Making Panel. They voted support to the extent of five thousand dollars during our first year. It is as follows:

Executive Board (6 Meetings at \$400. each)	\$2,400.
Newsletter	600.

Telephone Calls	200.
Bank Charges (Checking Account)	100.
Conference (Planned for 1986)	3,000.
Conference Planning	500.
Conference Travel Assistance	1,000.
Contingencies	500.
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TOTAL	\$8,300.

At first glance this budget may seem quite generous, but we have some debts from our October 1985 Conference, and to get fully organized we will undoubtedly need extra meetings of the Executive Board and a great many phone calls.

The UU Grants Making Panel approved supporting this budget to the extent of \$5,000. This leaves a sum of at least \$3,300. to be raised by contributions from the membership. At Petersham, William Gardner was elected Treasurer, and he received contributions from eleven who were present to a total of \$275. in amounts as follows:

2 at \$50	1 at \$20
5 at \$25	3 at \$10

Those desiring to see this organization fulfill the needs expressed may send their contributions to William Gardner, 77 Sailfish Drive, East Falmouth, MA 02536.

OFFICERS ELECTED

President - Harold Hadley
 Vice Pres - Robert Holmes
 Secretary - Walter Kring
 Treasurer - William Gardner

BOARD MEMBERS

Carolyn Howlett
 Peg Johnston
 Horace Westwood

Newsletter Editor - Albert Perry

P.O. Box 89
 Plymouth, ME 04969



T H A N K S . . .

We rejoice that many of the leaders of our movement appreciated the significance of this conference of what might have seemed to be 'has beens', and we extend our thanks to the following for taking part: Dr. William Schulz, President of the UUA; Rev. Robert Doss, President of the UUMA; Dr. David Pohl, Director of the Dept. of Ministry; David Hubner & Raymond Nasemann of the Council on Church Staff Finances; Mary Andrus-Overley, Associate Director of the Dept. of Social Responsibility; and Virgil Murdock, Executive Director of the Benevolent Fraternity of Boston. We warmly praise the work of Arnold Westwood, Vice-President on the Interim Board and Chairman of the Assembly Planning Committee for his expert work in organizing his conference. We (and he) regretted his inability to attend due to the emergency hospitalization of his wife, Carolyn, who had to undergo emergency surgery. Arnold's brother, Horace, took over for him as M.C. for the Evening Entertainment and Shirley Hadley as coordinator of the Social Hour. Both did an excellent job.

We also thank Judy Deutsch, Interim Minister and the members of the Petersham Unitarian Church who cooperated with the arrangements committee and helped to provide us with a most beautiful church auditorium for our formal conference worship service led by Harry Meserve who concluded with the admonition to "wind up our clocks for the morrow."

We truly appreciate the kindness and cooperation of the staff of the Maria Asumpta Academy where we met and to all of the Planning Committee for arranging a stimulating and satisfying experience.

Finally, the patient yet determined leadership from the opening words to the final Friendship Circle by Harold Hadley must be recognized as a major contribution to the success of the conference.

IT's EVERYBODY's TURN...

There was much discussion of the needs and problems of retired ministers and their spouses at the Petersham Conference, but now we need the help of the wider membership as we seek to develop a meaningful program. We urge all to express their interests by means of the questionnaire below and to return it to me (Albert Perry, P.O. Box 89, Plymouth, ME 04969) or you could put it in with your Membership Contribution and send it to William Gardner, 77 Sailfish Drive, East Falmouth, MA 02536.

- _____ Publish a newsletter that we may keep in touch.
- _____ Hold annual National Conferences in different parts of the country that all may eventually get to one.
- _____ Encourage organization of District associations of retired ministers, wives and widows.
- _____ Promote area conferences where feasible that all may associate with other retirees on a regular basis.
- _____ Organize a 'Caring Network' that we may not lose touch.
- _____ Develop a 'Buddy System' where UU ministers are scarce.
- _____ Intervention on a national level in support of services to retired ministers and spouses.
- _____ Encourage appointment of District Representatives to keep in touch with retired ministers and spouses on a regular basis.
- _____ Cooperate in the development of UUA Pre-Retirement Seminars.
- _____ Develop a Retirement Manual for UU Ministers Spouses.
- _____ Promote dialogues in ministerial associations on relationships between retired ministers and their successors.
- _____ Provides intellectual stimulation related to current issues or ideals that retirement may avoid lethargy.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

DO IT NOW! WE MEET ON JANUARY 1ST.