

UU ELDER BERRIES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE U.U. RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

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Albert Q. Perry, Editor

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AREA RETREATS OR CONFERENCES

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In October of 1985, an organizational meeting was held for retired ministers, spouses and surviving spouses at Petersham, Massachusetts. This was held in New England because that is where the largest number of potential members for a UU Retired Ministers Association live, but the need for future gatherings in other parts of the country was recognized. A subsidy of \$2,000.00 was offered to retirees and their associates in Florida for a gathering to serve the Southeast, and another \$2,000.00 has been pledged to subsidize a New England retreat.

Work on the Florida gathering is progressing under the leadership of the Reverend Donald Lawson of Naples, FLA. Others on the organizing committee include Jack Daniel, Mabel Harkens and Cliff Hoffman. The plan is for a meeting at some time in January, 1987, probably in association with some other denominational activity.

The New England Retreat is being organized by a committee of which Earle McKinney is Chairman. Others on the committee include Keith Munson, Robert Holmes, John Hammond and Bessie Borgford. Recognizing that spouses were significantly underrepresented, the wives of committee members were invited to an all day planning session held at the Munson home at Ferry Beach, Maine.

The New England Retreat will be held at the very beautiful Sheraton Ocean Park Inn at Eastham (Cape Cod), Massachusetts. It will be on Nov. 5, 6, & 7, 1986, from 3:00 p.m. Wednesday to 1:30 p.m. on Friday. Provided will be six meals and two overnights in an outstanding resort with a swimming pool, sauna, exercise room, tennis courts, etc., all under one roof and fully adapted to the needs of handicapped people.

The UU ministers of Massachusetts have found this a wonderful place for a convocation and recommend it highly. The total charge for a room occupied by two persons is \$82.00 each. The charge for single occupancy is \$145.00. Some subsidies will be available, but this is worth saving up for.

The program is not entirely completed, but taking part will be Natalie Gulbrandsen, Moderator of the U.U.A.; David Pohl, Director of Ministry; Silvio Nardoni of the Church Staff Finances Office; and Elizabeth Silliman, widow of Vincent Silliman. One innovation at this gathering will be one completely free afternoon for enjoying the resort facilities and informally meeting with one another.

An association of retired Unitarian Universalist ministers, their spouses and the surviving spouses of deceased Unitarian Universalist ministers.

DISPLAYS AT NEW ENGLAND RETREAT

The Program Committee is making plans for the New England Retreat next November 5, 6 & 7 would like a roomful of displays which might visually demonstrate what ministers and spouses and surviving spouses do in retirement. It could be a craft, a collection, writings, or almost anything else that could somehow be worked into a display. Just designing a display could be a retirement activity.

A LETTER FROM A READER

We do not deny receiving a number of letters which were critical of the name chosen for this Newsletter, but we might note that few alternatives were suggested, and therefore we stuck with what had been approved at the Petersham gathering ... Finally, however, we received a letter supporting our choice and offering a rationale which even the Executive Board had not envisioned. Needless to say, we will print this one in full:

Dear Mr. Marshall: (The first Editor)

I hope that I am not too late to add my wisdom to the naming of the little journal, "Elder Berries"

I once baked an elderberry pie, so I'm a very good authority. To be good, an elderberry pie must have a tart fruit added. Then, when it is served you should not say, "Have a piece of my elderberry-tart apple pie," but simply say, "Have a piece of my elderberry pie." Any knowledgeable person knows an elderberry pie has a tart fruit added.

Therefore, I have concluded that "U.U. ELDER-BERRIES" is a very good title, and no need to add Elderberries, Mouse, Mice, Spouse, Spice and especially not Surviving Spice.

Please, just "ELDER-BERRIES". What a delicious name! I loved the little journal.

Sincerely,

Nelle C. Hauser
(Mrs. Argyl)

So we will stand by our chosen title for the present and only hope to find some tart items to spice it up.

RETIREMENT READING

One of the special advantages of the ministry as a profession is the right to claim to be working when reading just about any kind of book, and one of the dangers of retirement may be that this fringe benefit seems to be terminated when there are no sermons to write or need to appear learned.

In an effort to discourage this tendency and to provide a little intellectual stimulation we invited a few folk to write very brief reviews of whatever they were presently reading. Now, we would make the invitation general and ask any and all to send in a three sentence description of the best book read recently. For now, we suggest the following.

“LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN” by James Agee, of which John Brigham writes:
“This book instills in me the importance of verbalizing visual images. In all my writing I seek to create a picture that will come alive in the reader’s mind. This Agee does vividly and beautifully.”

“HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK”, a biography by Miller, of which Seth Brooks writes:
“Fascinating, easy, enjoyable reading, but expensive and long.”

“THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT” by Oliver Sacks, of which Maurice Cobb writes:
“A remarkable collection of what Dr. Sacks calls ‘Clinical Tales’. Told by a psychiatrist with compassion, they arouse in the reader the same compassion and a determination to see the normal behind the abnormal, and to know that there are paths to the estranged mind if one takes the trouble to find them.”

“RICHARD NIEBUHR” by Richard Fox, of which John Daniel writes:
“Niebuhr’s life is all there, in 300 packed pages ... and is summarized as ‘a pattern of paradoxes and a sequence of ironies’. Do you re-read purple passages in favorite books? You will if you get started on this one.”

“DAMNATION AND DEVIANCE” (The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Failure) by Mordecai Rotenberg of which Phil Giles writes:
“The thesis is that the behavioral sciences took on a Calvinist view of humanity, giving them a pessimistic and anti-therapeutic attitude toward the deviant (‘the eternally damned’). After the first two chapters it’s pretty heavy going for one not trained in psychiatry/psychology. but the first two are worth your time.”

And while we are thinking about books to read, your editor might suggest “INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN AMERICA” by Lewis C. Perry, his son. This created sufficient interest that the author has a lecture tour this summer that will take him to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. He has the Andrew Jackson Chair of American History at Vanderbilt University and attends our church in Nashville, Tenn.

In some future issue we hope to do a whole series on achieving a meaningful retirement, but in the winter issue we asked people to share the story of what they were doing. The response was not overwhelming, but perhaps it is enough for a beginning.

MAURICE COBB, who settled in West Newfield, Maine, after retirement from the parish ministry wrote:

"The idea, in retirement, is to do a variety of things. Preferably they would be of one's own choosing and in keeping with whatever talents one is fortunate enough to possess. In many cases, rather than from freedom of choice, I must do things of necessity for which I have no talent at all. I refer to making drawers for kitchen utensils and doors for cabinets. It becomes inconvenient when dishes are always falling on the floor.

"I wanted to combine social responsibility with pleasure. I joined an Amnesty International Chapter in Brunswick where I have many friends. When I attend meetings, I can renew a few old acquaintances both within the church (local minister's permission granted) and in the community. The Holocaust and Human Rights Center in Augusta provides a new experience to relate to legislators, educators and others dedicated to the saving of the human race. I am a 'volunteer' in that program.

"It is rewarding to retain ties with former churches and the local, present one. Since retirement, I have been writing a one page column for Billerica's 'Banner'. In the local (Sanford, Maine) church, I try to do what the minister thinks I'm capable of doing. My last project was to sand and paint four folding chairs ..."

REGINA CARY LAPOINT, daughter of two ministers, wife of a third and mother of a fourth, faced retirement after being widowed, and had a kind of unique career experience. Not everyone could do it, but she did and wrote:

"I retired from Smith in 1979 and went to live with my sister, Maud, in Flushing, N.Y. At first, I worked for the Census as an Enumerator. I became well acquainted with Flushing in short order. Then Bob Hemstreet (the local minister) pointed out an article in the New York Times having to do with library services in the Metropolitan area. The name, Gossage Regan Associates, captured my interest. I contacted them, they needed what I had to offer in library services, and I was hired to handle temporary library services around New York City. I soon became acquainted with Manhattan, working from the Columbia Law School Library at 116th St. to the tip on Manhattan at International Nickel Corporation. I worked in Art, Investment, Law, Accounting, Insurance, Medical, Engineering and other libraries. I gained a great deal of knowledge about a good many areas, and it was thoroughly stimulating.

(Continued on next page)

(Retirement Opportunities continued)

"I worked with this agency until I moved to Spokane in 1984 to live near my older son and his family. This past year I have been working as a Volunteer Committee Coordinator in the local Unitarian Church. There were no guidelines, but I chugged along and I believe I have been helpful in this area ..."

JOHN BRIGHAM responded to both the request for a book review and a description of retirement activities. He wrote:

"In the tasks of each day I find it takes longer to complete each than it used to in my youth. So I have less time to worry about usage.

"In the year now ending I edited a book of my own creative (?) writing. It was a frightening experience. I found I have material for a dozen books and this may require time I will not have. Vol. II is in process.

"I also garden, am House & Grounds Chair for the local church; meet with a 'think' tank regularly and produce 30 second TV statements on world peace and order for the World Federalist Ass'n; am deeply involved with Central America Peace Education in Illinois, organize peace marches, candlelight walks, etc., etc. ..."

A special pole of the activities and interests of Surviving Spouses was made by 'Peg' Johnston, a member of UURMA Executive Board, and of those responding it was learned:

"83 people did not work outside the home and 15 people did have jobs which were counselling, babysitting, in psychiatric hospital, college teaching, a Graphic Editor, in a bank, in a dress shop now and then, preaching, art curator, organist, minister, flower shop, antique business, medical recorder and an Executive Secretary."

46% of those answering volunteered and the report revealed:

"Many volunteered in their churches, a health food store, literary program, U.U.S.C., political campaigns, meals on wheels, thrift shop, music center, reception clerk in a retirement home, bereavement support group, speaking, library arts society, national history survey, politics."

WE WOULD LIKE OTHER ACCOUNTS OF RETIREMENT ACTIVITIES. Send your story to the editor.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO RETIRED MINISTERS, THEIR SPOUSES,
AND THE SPOUSES OF DECEASED MINISTERS

The Office of Church Staff Finances

Silvio Nardoni - Director

The UUA Office of Church Staff Finances has several programs to serve the needs of those retired from active service in our ministry and their spouses or survivors. Listed below is a brief description of the programs and eligibility requirements, if any.

1. Medical Insurance

For those over 65, Medicare is the primary medical coverage. Our group program supplements Medicare in those instances where Medicare does not cover 100% of their costs. This kind of coverage is available in the open market as well (AARP has a good plan), but our plan includes mental health benefits and prescription drugs, which some others do not. Contact our office for current rates.

2. Medical Insurance Premium Subsidy

For those in need, subsidy of medical insurance premiums is available. The subsidy is partial only, depending on income level. Applications for the subsidy can be obtained from our office.

3. Service Gratuity Benefit

This is available to those who have served in our ministry in active fellowship for more than 20 years and have reached the age of 65. A survivor benefit option is available. We attempt to keep track of everyone who might be eligible for this benefit, but applications are available for those who feel they are eligible but have not been contacted by us.

4. Alan B. Doran Fund Grants

The eligibility requirements are the same as those for the Service Gratuity, with the additional condition that annual income (from all sources) be under \$10,504 and total resources less than \$100,000. Contact our office if you or someone you know might be eligible for this program.

5. Emergency Financial Aid

There are several different funds administered by our office which are available for grants or loans on the basis of indicated need. We have funds for aid specifically to women, widows and dependents, and other specified groups. It takes too much space to describe all these, but the general advice would be to contact us and to see if we can help. Often times we can.

6. Personal Financial Counseling

Part of the Director's job is to consult with individuals on their financial situation and help them consider various options, whether short-range or long-term. This can be done by telephone, correspondence, or in face-to-face meetings. Call the Director for an appointment.

RETIRED MINISTERS HONORED AT THE 1986 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Twenty-one retiring ministers will be honored at the General Assembly at Rochester, New York, this June. Thirteen plan to be in attendance and will be given a special reception at the center of the U.U. Retired Ministers Association.

Being recognized (and welcomed to our organization) are the following: Walter W. Baese, Merrill O. Bates, George C. Brooks, Joseph I. Craig, Roger E. Greeley, Roy Hatt, Kenneth LaFleur, Marjorie N. Leaming, Robert S. Lehman, J. Ford Lewis, Felix D. Lion, George W. Marshfield, Earle T. McKinney, Guy Myers, Keith C. Munson, Richard R. Rhodes, Wayne Shuttee, Phillip A. Smith, Harry A. Thor, Farley W. Wheelwright and Robert L. Zoerheide.

FROM THE U.U.M.A. — TO SURVIVING SPOUSES

The UU Ministers Association would be happy to send free of charge to surviving spouses of UU ministers the regular issues of the UU Ministers Association newsletter. Please write to Reverend Wayne Arnason, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church, 717 Rugby Road, Charlottesville, VA, 22903, if you are a surviving spouse interested in being put on the U.U.M.A. mailing list. The list of surviving spouses is large enough that the U.U.M.A. is hesitant to send newsletters to the entire list, and would prefer to have an expression of interest from each individual before adding a name to the list.

Wayne Arnason

FINANCIAL REPORT

As of May, members of the UURMA had contributed \$1,476.70 in lieu of dues, while expenses to date, excepting conferences, have amounted to \$2,226.97. Fortunately, we had grants of \$7,000.00 to fund the costs of the Petersham convocation, organizational expenses and subsidies for coming area retreats. Actually, we are still in the black, but with the commitments made for coming conferences, things are getting a bit tight.

A special brochure about the organization and its plans and needs has been prepared for distribution at the General Assembly and also for mailing to members who have not yet become actively involved. Even before this goes out, contributions from those who would like this to be a really significant and serviceable organization are urged to provide whatever support is possible. Send a check to William Gardner, Treasurer, 77 Sailfish Drive, East Falmouth, MA, 02536.

RESERVATION FORM

UU RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION FIRST ANNUAL NEW ENGLAND RETREAT

Please make reservations for: _____

Address: _____

Deposit of \$50.00 per person is requested with this reservation and must be received by October 1st. Refunds will be available up to Oct. 1, 1986. The resort will keep rooms available for the exact number that we request and will charge us for them whether used or not.

Single Occupancy _____

Double Occupancy _____

I have my own roommate: _____

You may assign someone: _____

I _____, we _____ will need transportation.

I/we can provide transportation for _____ (number) from the _____ area.

Special dietary needs: _____

I wish to apply for a scholarship/subsidy _____

Mail this form to:

The Rev. Earle T. McKinney
P.O. Box 130
Gray, Maine 04039

Registrar

The Rev. Keith C. Munson
9 Island View Ave.
Saco, Maine 04072