

UU ELDER BERRIES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE U.U. RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

Volume III #1
Albert Q. Perry, Editor

P.O. Box 89

Summer, 1987
Plymouth, Maine 04969

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1987-89

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General Assembly thinking begins when one decides to register and begins looking forward to that annual Continental-wide gathering of Unitarian Universalists. There is some kind of magic in it all. It includes an expectation and excitement in anticipation of the socializing, worshipping, decision-making and genuine camaraderie running the gamut of feelings, thinking and activity - all of which has for many UU ministers and their families become a kind of extended family annual reunion.

Each morning, this year, the day began with two worship services - one at 7:00 and the other at 8:00 a.m. These beginning worship services, like others that followed on varying topics by a wide variety of leaders, helped immeasurably to provide the motivational inspiration that ran throughout this "Faith of the Free General Assembly".

Meeting each mid-morning of the Assembly the 1184 registered delegates, from 437 churches and Fellowships, attending the Plenary Session, adopted for the first time three second-year Resolutions that became part of the UUA official position. The first Resolution "opposed any move by the Government to deny or restrict access to contraceptive and abortion counseling and treatment". The second Resolution called for ending world hunger and requested UU members to work on all levels for an equitable distribution of resources. The third Resolution called for ending gender-based wage discrimination at the Denominational level, as well as, in our Churches and Fellowships, and urged enactment of comparable worth and pay equity legislation.

Unfortunately, limited attention was given to many concerns of special interest to the elder members of the denomination which includes UU retired ministers and their spouses. The latter group with their concerns were not represented in large part because our UURMA Board at its January, '87 meeting voted not to sponsor a workshop or program involving our retirees at this G.A. because few would be able to afford both the increased registration fee, as well as, the expense due to the distance most would have to travel.

Credit should, however, be given to other groups and persons who carried the banner for the elder UU at the G.A. Rev. Ralph Helverson, at one of the morning worship services which he led, devoted his program and remarks to calling attention to the growing numbers of elder UU members and their potential ability to contribute creatively to the denomination and the larger society.

In delivering the 1987 Collegium Lecture, Rev. David Johnson chose as his topic "Old Age in a New Faith" in which he decried the lack of elder recognition and involvement in our denominational life.

Only two of the 139 UUA scheduled workshops dealt directly with retiree concerns. Rev. Silvio Nardoni, Director of the Council on Church Staff Finances, led a Pre-retirement Financial Planning workshop for ministers only. Mary Andrus-Overly, Associate Director of the UUA Department of Social Responsibility, arranged a workshop entitled "AARP Resources for Congregational Programs on Aging" which was conducted by AARP Staff persons.

Continued on next page

General Assembly - Continued

Finally, due credit should be given to Rev. Horace Westwood, one of our number, who spoke most acceptably in behalf of the 50 year ministers at the UUMA Monday luncheon. Also, honorable mention is due Rev. William Gardner, the only UURMA member to run for and be elected to a UUA Standing Committee (Board of Review) even without being able to be present at this year's assembly.

We conclude this report with a Benediction voiced at this 26th Annual General Assembly:

"It was good to have been here together,
It is good to be members of this free faith!"

TREASURER'S REPORT

September 16, 1985 to June 30, 1987

INCOME

Start-Up Grant from Veatch Program Via UUA Grants Panel	\$5,000.00
Council on Church Staff Finances for Conferences	4,000.00
UUMA Annual Subsidy	200.00
Member's Contribution (1st Year)	1,586.70
Member's Contribution (2nd Year)	2,233.25
John P. Christianson Memorial Fund	792.00
Interest Income	376.62
Total Income	<u>\$14,188.57</u>

EXPENDITURES

Executive Board Meetings	\$2,771.09
Newsletter	1,036.62
Telephone, Postage, & Supplies	1,018.08
Conferences	
Petersham	1,732.98
Florida	786.87
California	17.93
New England	2,336.39
	<u>4,874.17</u>
Miscellaneous	
UUA Directory	20.00
Brochure (1985-87)	205.62
	<u>225.62</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>9,925.58</u>
Net Income for Period	<u>4,262.99</u>

\$14,188.57

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING CLERGY

Rev. William F. Schulz, D.D. - President UUA

For almost six years, before we moved into the UUA President's House in Boston, I rode public transportation from our home in Newburyport into the city for work every day. One day a man whom I knew only slightly boarded the train in Newburyport and asked the conductor if he could get off in Ipswich, - about 20 miles north of the city.

"Sorry," replied the conductor, "this train is an express into Boston from Rowley. We don't stop in Ipswich anymore. But I tell you what we'll do. When we pass through the Ipswich station, the train will slow down and you can jump out. But be very careful as you jump to run in the direction the train is going so you won't fall."

Well, my acquaintance was most relieved because he had an important appointment in Ipswich and he simply couldn't afford to ride all the way into Boston and then back out again; so, as the train approached Ipswich station, he prepared to jump. And sure enough, the train slowed to a crawl, the man jumped, and, remembering the conductor's instructions, he ran like crazy in the direction the train was going so he wouldn't fall.

He ran so fast in fact, and the train had slowed so much, that the man suddenly began to run faster than the train until he caught up with the door of the next train car, and all of a sudden the largest fellow you've ever seen in your life leaned out the door, grabbed the man by the lapels, and pulled him back onto the train. "Thank God I was there to catch you," the behemoth said. "Don't you know this train doesn't stop at Ipswich anymore?"

I tell this story because it is at this point in our Service of Living Tradition that we honor those who have earned the right to get off in Ipswich. But if they're not careful, they may very well find themselves, with their lifetimes of wisdom and experience, right back where they started: in the midst of ministry, interim or otherwise.

Now, that's not a bad place to be of course, but I want to remind our retired clergy of the old Babylonian proverb that "God does not count the time spent fishing against one's allotted time on earth." You have earned the respite; earned it with your fidelity and your endurance (My God! How many coffee hours you have experienced!) and no doubt your occasional prolixity. Admit it, my friends: there is not a minister alive who cannot work up some sympathy for the remark attributed to the famous philosopher, Edmund Husserl, upon the completion of a seminar in which he himself had just delivered an uninterrupted monologue for the entire period: "Today, for once," he exclaimed, "we had a really exciting discussion!"

Accept, then, our sentiments in your praise and our gratitude in your honor. Abide with us: we need you still. You know secrets not a one of us can fathom. We cannot offer raiment to the weary ones without you. Hold on, dear friends, and teach us love and mercy. Hold on: that we too might learn to rest complete in satisfaction and compose.

CONGRATULATIONS!

DID YOU SEE the intriguing article in "Yankee Magazine" about Joe Barth and his efforts to produce new varieties of Day Lillies. According to it, he is still seeking to develop a blue one, but in the meantime, his efforts are a source of support for two local charitable institutions each year at a Day Lily Festival.

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING CLERGY

Rev. David C. Pohl - Director Dept. of the Ministry

In his book, **And The Life Everlasting**, John Baillie writes, "It is not really the shortness of life that saddens and offends us, it is its temporality - not that it ends so soon, but that it ends at all; and still more deeply the fact that, even while it lasts, it is made up of nothing but endings, of meetings and partings, of memories and longings, and of 'one thing after another'."

Much of the time we manage to keep such thoughts at a distance through busy-ness and diversions, but the reality abides: the graves of our parents, the good-byes at airports, our sons and daughters leaving the nest, the birthdays and anniversaries that tell us life is fleeting.

For many of us, the Service of Living Tradition exemplifies in a powerful way this truth about our lives. How often can we say to ourselves, "Someday, my name will be read in the roll call of those who have died." Our hearts could not bear the burden of always living in such acute awareness of our own finitude and, even more, of those who are close to us. But it is good to be reminded from time to time, that life is endings as well as beginnings, and of another truth, that endings may also constitute beginnings.

So it is with those of our colleagues who complete full-time service as settled ministers and who thereby begin the elective years of retirement. It may be the time when what is only hinted at during summer vacations and sabbatical leaves becomes at last a serious possibility. For some, that will mean travel, gardening, reading and writing, sailing, ceramics or carpentry; for others, it may mean an interim ministry assignment, a part-time pulpit, or something utterly different from the ministry. Peter Drucker once said, "Here I am, 58 years old, and I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up." Well, here, in retirement, one has a chance to find out - to explore and to enjoy.

The 12 ministers we recognize today for having chosen to complete their settled ministries have given this association a total of 423 years of service which, on a life-line, would extend back to the decades of Servetus, Castellio, and Francis David. They have served in large urban centers like Cleveland, Minneapolis and Ottawa, and in small towns like Westford, Wilton Center and Standing Stone.

Most of these ministers are unable to be with us today, nonetheless, may their lives and service be on our minds and hearts as we read their names and wish them and their loyal loved ones long life and happiness in their elective years.

MINISTERS COMPLETING FULL-TIME MINISTRIES

Russell R. Bletzer

David H. Cole

John W. Cummings

William J. Gold

Margaret K. Gooding

Richard Henry

James M. Hutchinson

Homer A. Jack

Hvezdon Kafka

Virgil E. Murdock

John E. Trowbridge

Carl J. Westman

WHAT I'VE LEARNED SINCE I RETIRED

Rev. Marjorie Newlin Leaming - Santa Paula, California

[This is a small part of an outstanding sermon that Rev. Ms. Leaming preached last May. I regret that it must be 9/10th deleted, but I will give you a little taste. A.Q.P.]

Well, I'm 72 years old, and never have I done anything in my whole life that people have been as interested in as my retirement. I was amazed at the interest before I retired, and the questions have not stopped since I actually did it. I don't flatter myself that all at once people are interested in me. I think rather it is a common concern, almost existential. It is one thing that almost everyone in our society has that can be talked about....

It took me a while to figure out that the only real difference between working and retirement was that I no longer get paid. I work all the time and sometimes it seems like I work harder than ever. I don't even experience this as doing different things. I finally figured out that I am still doing the same things but the time I spend doing them has changed. I no longer preach so many sermons, but I still preach sermons. I no longer go to so many meetings, but I still go to meetings. I no longer do so much counseling, but I still counsel, and I still get paid for that as a matter of principle. I also get paid for preaching and other ministerial services, but these fees hardly begin to make up for my salary. I no longer edit the church newsletter, but I still edit and type a newsletter - it's for the Ministerial Sisterhood UU. I still get an incredible amount of mail - more than ever I think - and I still have to do something about a lot of it besides thinking about throwing it away.

A Zen story illustrates this. A young monk approached his roshi (his master) and asked him what it was that he did before he gained enlightenment. The roshi answered: "Before I was enlightened, I chopped wood and fetched water. Now that I am enlightened, I chop wood and fetch water."

I may be surprised to find myself working harder than ever at the same things and no longer being paid, but what is even more surprising is that my income taxes have gone up. I still haven't been able to figure that one out, but I think it is because I had so many deductions as a minister.... Since most people who retire have less income, I expected to have some financial problems, but I have been totally surprised to find that I'm as well off as ever. Now that just can't be, and when I have time I'm going to try to figure it out.

The lack of time has been a total unexpectation. When people retire they are supposed to have time on their hands. Well, I don't, and this is another reason I feel that I haven't retired. I admit that I've slowed down and slowing down takes time, but surely not that much!

So the biggest surprise about my retirement is that nothing is basically different. True, I'm no longer the minister here. I no longer have the role of minister of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula, but I am still a minister. Whatever I was in my sixteen years here I still am....

Things still come up from time to time when I wonder what I would do if I were still the minister here. Being the minister emerita is entirely different. I've found out the hard way that I don't have any clout or special privileges. I can't protest anything because I have no grounds. I don't even have as much clout as a layperson since I'm mandated to keep a low profile by the UUMA Guidelines.

One of the things I don't suppose anyone can know about until they retire is the loss of a certain kind of power. As the settled minister of this church I had the authority to do certain things, and that included the power to explain and suggest. I didn't realize until I came back a few times that I no longer had the power to tell anyone what to do about anything and expect them to pay any attention. Not that I have stopped doing it entirely, but I am getting better at keeping my mouth shut. No one can say I'm not getting better because you can't know about all that things I could say and don't....

What I've Learned Since I Retired - Continued

One of the things I am more aware of, I think because my life is so much less structured and I have to be aware of it, is a problem about my memory. I don't think I've lost it altogether but it works differently. I had to remember certain things as a minister so I remembered. Now that the pressure is gone along with the structure for keeping my life organized, I can't depend on my memory. It takes a lot of my time to compensate.

I do wonder if I'm becoming senile. I was telling a friend the other day that I didn't know whether I was losing my memory or whether I just had my head so full of 500 unfinished sermons that I didn't have room for anything new. I may be rationalizing, but I think it's the latter....

If there is one thing I've been confronted with since retiring it is the fact that my time is finite. Always before when I quit a job, I've looked for another one. Even when I've had a job, I've speculated about having a different one. Especially I've done this in the last 25 years when I heard about some fascinating opening some place in the UU world. This has been a habit of thought I didn't realize I had. It has been startling and sobering to realize just exactly why I will never again be looking for a job. I still have the reaction though, "Would I want to try that?" when I hear about an interesting job. This does not depress me even though it may startle me. I have no qualms about dying or being dead. What I have the problem with is how to die.

I asked my father shortly before he died what he was doing, and he said: "Waiting to die." I was taken aback but that is what he was doing - waiting to die. As the story goes, someone asked Carl Jung at the end of his life what he was doing, and he said, "Getting ready to die." I identify with Carl Jung rather than my father. I'm getting ready to die, but I've come to the conclusion that I'm never going to be ready. There is a big difference between waiting to die and getting ready to die. Some day, if I don't have a heart attack first, I will know it is time to change and start waiting to die, and it will be okay.

There is a poem that has been making the rounds in UU newsletters for years. It begins:

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me,
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter....

A recent version of the poem begins:

When I am an old woman I shall wear mostly jeans
And T-shirts that say outrageous things
And I shall spend my social security on causes and the UUA
And books, and say we've no money for appreciation dinners....

My poem goes like this:

When I am an old woman I shall wear my blue bathrobe
All day long, and watch television.
That is how you and I will know I am an old woman
Who has retired and had a revision.
And you can come and see me and remind me that I said this,
And we will laugh and laugh and say
Some things really do change after all.
So may it be, with grace.

ELECTION RESULTS

Despite some difficulties arising from mailing delays which resulted in an inability to hold the schedule set forth in the ByLaws, the election of officers for the UURMA was held, and by unanimous vote the following were chosen for the period of 7/1/87 - 6/30/89. We hope that before the next election we will have worked on the process a little.

President	J. Harold Hadley, Amherst, Massachusetts
Vice President	Robert H. Holmes, Harrison, Maine
Secretary	Walter W. Kring, Brookfield, Massachusetts
Treasurer	William E. Gardner, East Falmouth, Massachusetts
Newsletter Editor	Albert Q. Perry, Plymouth, Maine
Board Members	Carolyn C. Howlett, Center Lovell, Maine Margaret H. Johnston, West Newbury, Vermont Philip H. Giles, North Harwick, Massachusetts
Nominating Committee	John W. Brigham, Quincy, Illinois Joyce Huff, Fitchburg, Massachusetts Robert T. Dick, Springfield, Vermont

U.U.R.M.A. FALL GATHERING

U.U.R.M.A. FALL GATHERING

THE THIRD ANNUAL FALL GATHERING FOR UU RETIRED MINISTERS, SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES WILL BE HELD AT THE ST. FRANCIS RETREAT CENTER AT RYE BEACH IN NEW HAMPSHIRE. PUBLICITY AND REGISTRATION FORMS ARE BEING HANDLED BY MAIL, AND ALL SHOULD BE RECEIVING NEWS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE IS REV. KEITH MUNSON, AND HE PROMISES A UNIQUE, FASCINATING, ORIGINAL, CREATIVE AND DYNAMIC PROGRAM - WITH ARTISTS, MUSICIANS, EXPERTS, COMEDIANS AND CONFERENCES PARTICIPATING. THE COST PER PERSON ANNOUNCED IS \$55, BUT IF THERE ARE SUBSIDIES THIS COULD BE DECREASED.

PLAN TO ATTEND!

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[One of the most beautiful things received by your editor from the membership was the following hand-written and duplicated letter. It is most fitting for this page entitled "ROAD'S END"].

ANN RACHEL COOK
January 25, 1892
April 21, 1987

"There is a time for birth
and a time for death."
-Ecclesiastes III, Verse 2:

Dear One(s),

By the time you get this, my time to die will have come. I will have been cremated and my ashes scattered over the Pacific. At my request there will have been no services of any kind. Any memorializing, I want to be done by me for the blessings and joy you have given me, and for the love and concern you have shown me throughout my very long life. So do not shed any tears over my leaving this world. All I ask in the way of immortality is that you remember me for a little while. So I bid you a fond farewell.

Ann Cook

When I assumed editorship of this newsletter and wrote to the membership asking for suggestions, one warned against too many Obituaries, lest we be so depressed by each issue that we did not wish to read it. I am sure that the letter above would have the opposite influence on all who knew this great lady.

I trust that I may also be forgiven for noting the passing of June W. Hawkes, the wife of the former Superintendent of the Universalist Church of Maine, the Rev. Kenneth C. Hawkes. Wives of such officials - who must spend most of their days on the road - can be pretty lonely, but June kept busy serving as Secretary to the chaplain at the Maine Medical Center and serving the now-merged All Souls Universalist Church.