

# UU ELDER BERRIES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE U.U. RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

Vol. V #4

Albert Q. Perry, Editor

10 Mechanic St.

Spring, 1990  
Dexter, Maine 04930

## UURMA VOLUNTEER "CONTACT PERSON" PROGRAM

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1989-91

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*"Contact with people, whether parishioners, colleagues or friends, was the most universally missed aspect in retirement."*

The above statement is taken from the Research Analysis report prepared in early 1989 from the survey, conducted in the Fall of 1988 by KRC Research and Consulting Inc. firm, in which 115 of the then 210 Unitarian Universalist retired ministers had participated.

For the UURMA Executive Board the finding promoted the searching question of how to help alleviate this obviously common problem of our far-flung retiree membership.

The newsletter "ElderBerries" has for five years served well as a link with our scattered membership, many of whom are isolated from all significant UU contact. The Area UURMA Conferences are most helpful, too, for renewing long neglected colleague contacts. However, the Newsletter, printed only quarterly, and the Area Conferences, held annually and in only three sections of the country (Northeast, Southeast and Midwest), as important as they are, do not provide the on-going direct and personal contact called for by the Survey responses above mentioned.

Accordingly, the Executive Board has, for a little over a year, been conducting two experimental Volunteer Contact Person programs in the nearby UUA Districts of New Hampshire-Vermont (NHV) and Northeast (Maine). From these separate experiences two quite different types have developed. 1) A couple (minister and wife team) has served the smaller area (NHV) and 2) the larger area (Maine), with many more and very scattered members, is divided into four sections with a Contact Person for each, one of whom serves as Area Chairperson. (i.e. each type is set up to fit the situation) From these experiments, too, a set of suggested guidelines has been developed to assist the beginning Contact Person.

At the September 14, 1989 UURMA Board meeting, two of its members, Margaret "Peg" Johnston and Freda Carnes, were appointed to coordinate an expanded volunteer Contact Person program. Also, early in 1990, in response to a Board appeal for financial assistance to continue the program on a much larger scale, a check for \$5,000 was received from the UUA Department of Ministry Aid Funds. This grant will be used to cover local volunteer Contact Person expenses along with any administrative costs. Accordingly, plans are now in process to expand the program into other Districts in New England, the Southeast and Midwest plus, as soon as possible, to make it a Continental-wide Caring Program.

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Already, as a result of action taken at the February Southeast Conference at Camp UU in the Pines, Brookville, Florida, a chairperson is at work organizing the Contact Program for the Florida District.

Simply and briefly put, yet obviously simplistic, the role of the Contact Person is described in a two-liner by a couple with one year in- the-field experience thus:-

*"We're a couple - - in touch by mail or phone -  
No retiree in our District need feel alone."*

**PLEASE NOTE: - The Contact Person Coordinators will welcome any and all suggestions that you feel might help the program.**

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

*STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES FOR THE SIX MONTH PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1989*

|                                     | Operating<br>Actual  | Account<br>Budget     | Conference<br>Account |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                       |                      |                       |                       |
| Contributions from Members          | 2,105.00             | 4,500.00              |                       |
| UUMA Grant                          | 200.00               | 200.00                |                       |
| Conferences                         |                      |                       | 3,485.28              |
| Interest Income                     | <u>327.76</u>        | <u>400.00</u>         |                       |
| Total Income                        | <u>2,632.76</u>      | <u>5,100.00</u>       | <u>3,485.28</u>       |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                     |                      |                       |                       |
| Executive Board                     | 935.84               | 1,500.00              |                       |
| Newsletter (ELDER-BERRIES)          | 612.05               | 1,200.00              |                       |
| Telephone, Postage and Supplies     | 346.90               | 1,000.00              |                       |
| Contact Program                     |                      | 500.00                |                       |
| Conferences                         | 346.30               | 1,500.00              | 5,656.13              |
| Council on Church Staff Finances    | 200.00               | 200.00                |                       |
| Miscellaneous                       | <u>20.00</u>         | <u>500.00</u>         |                       |
| Total Expenses                      | 2,461.09             | 6,400.00              | 5,656.13              |
| NET INCOME (EXPENSE) for Period     | <u>171.67</u>        |                       | <u>(2,170.85)</u>     |
|                                     | <u>2,632.76</u>      |                       | <u>3,485.28</u>       |
|                                     | Operating<br>Account | Conference<br>Account | Total                 |
| Balance, July 1, 1989               | 4,296.55             | 5,721.11              | 10,017.66             |
| Add/Subtract Net Income/(Expense)   | <u>171.67</u>        | <u>(2,170.85)</u>     | <u>(1,999.18)</u>     |
| Balance, December 31, 1989          | 4,468.22             | 3,550.26              | 8,018.48              |
| Checking Account                    | 4,018.48             |                       |                       |
| Cert. of Deposit (1/12/90 - 8 1/4%) | <u>4,000.00</u>      |                       |                       |
|                                     | 8,018.48             |                       |                       |
| Allocation of Conference Funds:     |                      |                       |                       |
| Southeast (Florida IV)              | 541.83               |                       |                       |
| Mid-West                            | 1,070.00             |                       |                       |
| Western                             | <u>1,938.43</u>      |                       |                       |
| Total                               | 3,550.26             |                       |                       |

William E. Gardner, Treasurer

Probably it is hardly necessary to call attention to the fact that at the end of a half a year, we did not have half of our needed support from the membership. We trust that all know that there are no dues for membership in the UURMA, but that this organization may serve all retired ministers, spouses and surviving spouses, it depends upon the generous contributions of as many as can help support it.



## "TOO SOON OLD, - TOO LATE SMART"

John Ruskin Clark

I can't remember who said that, but I think it is an old German proverb. That's my problem, I can't remember. Perhaps, besides the passage of time, open-heart surgery a while ago has something to do with it.

One sign of aging, I am told, is when "you think you know all the answers and nobody asks the questions."

An old man said, "If, as I grow older, I become more forgetful, it is not that I am becoming senile, but that I have so much to remember." Now when I read *America* by Alister Cooke, I am surprised by how much of it I recall: WW I, Lindberg's flight to Paris, the Great Depression and Roosevelt's New Deal. Then, WW II against the Nazis and the Japanese - on Okinawa I participated with the Marines. Then, the Youth ("trust no one over 30") and Sexual ("if it feels good, do it") Revolutions of the 60's that made the ministry difficult, at least in California.

Really, though, my mind is losing control of my brain. My mind ("I", "self" or whatever it is that is conscious and intentional) used to be able to better command my brain to recall a name, though I have never understood how I could order my brain to produce the name of someone when I didn't know what name to ask for. Perhaps sight of the face was clue to what I needed. But increasingly I have to wait for it to show up - maybe hours later. The image I have is like the black glass billiard-ball with a clear window on top that used to decorate coffee tables: shake it and a number would slowly emerge in the window.

But then, I never was very good at names. My present minister astonishes me by his ability to instantly recall a name as well as the shared context of anybody he sees. He is always "with it".

Genetically, I can expect to live another ten years or more. But I am haunted by the memory that my father in that last decade of his life began to respond to most anything said to him with only a beautiful smile, but his legs functioned until he died at 85. My mother kept all her buttons until the day she died at age 96, but she was wheel-chair bound for the last few years. I don't know whether my father's or my mother's genes will prevail in me, but my legs are still adequately functioning, though I can no longer run a mile, or a block.

However, every afternoon before sundown my "exercise machine", a little, short-legged dog, alerts me by dancing about and wagging her tail, that it is time for a brisk walk to the neighborhood park where children play and the mountains seen.

And I have been able in the past 12 years, with the help of a forgiving Word Processor and Editing friends to write and publish a biography of Joseph Priestly. So, it's not so bad to be an old man.

What next? Death doesn't concern me; I will never experience my death, - though some of my survivors will. Now, I can't even remember the word-processing commands for my computer that I learned ten years ago.

## "JOSEPH PRIESTLY - A COMET IN THE SYSTEM"

*By John Ruskin Clark Reviewed by the Editor*

Having grown up and served most of my ministry in the Universalist parent of our combined movement, I had never realized that there was no up-to-date biography of Joseph Priestly, - the real founder of American Unitarianism. Anyway, this lack has now been filled, and we owe a real debt of gratitude to John Ruskin Clark, - one of our members and the Minister Emeritus of our San Diego church.

I had known a bit about Priestly and had occasionally mentioned him in sermons and a Sunday School series on the early days of American Universalism in that he and Benjamin Rush almost founded the U.U.A. back in the 1790's; but I discovered as I read this biography that I had known really very little about him and his religious activities and insights.

For those of us who find that increasing years make extended study more difficult than it once was, it might be noted that this biography is really short considering the complications of the life and philosophy of Priestly.

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Humanists will certainly be intrigued by the initial steps of Priestly to resolve the dualism of Spirit and Matter which prevailed in most sects in the 18th Century, as well as by his rejection of Trinitarianism.

Considering the unending struggle to maintain a separation of Church and State, any who are still active can get some significant quotes and readings and stories from this book. All of us who, at one time or another, have used a clever phrase which exploded in controversy will have a warm sense of identification with Priestly who once spoke of "...laying gunpowder, grain by grain, under the old building of error and superstition..." only to find himself identified with those who had threatened to blow up the House of Commons in the infamous "Gunpowder Plot".

Certainly, we may all weep a tear that the warm relationship and general agreement between the two great scientists of our early liberal movements, Joseph Priestly and Benjamin Rush, did not result in the creation of a single, united liberal movement which granted full freedom of belief to all, whatever their personal interests and emphases. I learned from the book that some of the Universalist laity were antagonistic toward Priestly and made him look elsewhere for a building in which to begin a Unitarian Church, but we have to suspect that the Boston liberals, if there were any in the 1790's, might have been equally unsympathetic.

### **Services Available To All Retired UU Ministers And Spouses, & All Surviving Spouses**

UU Retired Ministers Association: (In Northeast District, contact The Rev. Maurice W. Cobb, H. C. 81, Box 1714, W. Newfield, Me. 04095, Tel. 793-4453, or Sectional Contact Person).

Support, Counsel and Communication  
"Elderberries" - Our own Newsletter  
Conferences - Gatherings for all members for fellowship and programs

UU Ministers Association: (Write to Editor, UUMA Newsletter, 1107 Harvey Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27608)

"UUMA Newsletter"

Northeast District: (Write or call Northeast District, 125 Auburn Street, Portland, Me. 04103, Tel. 797-3246)

\*UUMA Chapter Meetings  
"Viewpoints", the NED occasional newsletter  
Mailings for Fall Conference and Annual Meetings  
Annual District Directory  
Counseling - contact the Rev. Glenn H. Turner at above address  
\*All retired ministers are welcome to attend.

Unitarian Universalist Association: (Write or call Department of Ministry, Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, Tel. (617-742-2100)

Department of Ministry Packet  
UU WORLD - If you are not on a local Church list, you may get it through the Department.  
UUA Directory  
Service Gratuity  
Medical Insurance Program and Dental Insurance Program  
Medical Insurance Assistance  
Low Income Assistance through Alan Doran Fund  
Financial Assistance from Aid Funds  
Special UUA General Assembly Registration Fee of \$50  
Counseling - contact The Rev. Dr. David C. Pohl or the Rev. David P. Hubner

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REQUEST ANY OR ALL OF THESE SERVICES**

*The above list of services has been compiled by The Rev. Earle T. and Pete McKinney.*

# SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE, MIDWEST CHAPTER

## TENTATIVE PROGRAM:

### Friday, September 28

Register at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, 35 South Seventh Street, Minneapolis.

Social Hour at 5 p.m. and Catered Dinner will be served in the First Unitarian Society's Chalice Room, 900 Mount Curve Avenue, a short distance from the Hotel.

After dinner a 'round-robin check-in.

### Saturday, September 29

Continental breakfast in the Chalice Room at 9 a.m. for those who wish it.

9:30, a talk by Bill Holden, 56 year-old UU minister, who lives and works full time with a 19 year-old's heart in his body.

Coffee break at 10:30.

11:00, readings from her Journal by Audrey Masterson, author and poet.

Lunch: Transportation will be provided to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. An excellent gourmet cafeteria on the top floor will provide home-made soups, salads and light sandwiches. Choose what you want and pay for your own. After lunch, a special showing of 17th Century Dutch Marine Art is available in addition to this large museum's regular fare.

5:00, regroup for social hour and brief meeting at Unitarian Society. Dinner will be a gourmet buffet in the gracious foyer of the famed Guthrie Theatre at 6:30 (Once again, choose what you will and pay for your own), followed by Thornton Wilder's Skin Of Our Teeth, included in the price of your registration.

### Sunday Morning, September 30

Attend the First Unitarian Society's 10:00 A.M. Forum and/or Service at 11:00, or any of the fourteen Unitarian Universalist Churches and fellowships in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. For those who wish it, there is an excellent cafeteria atop the Walker Museum of Modern Art, adjacent to the Unitarian Society.

*NOTE: Registration Fee includes: Friday social hour and dinner, Saturday continental breakfast, transport to museum, museum fees, Saturday social hour, theatre tickets, and hotel accommodations. You pay for one dinner, one lunch, one breakfast - all modestly priced - and limo from airport to hotel on arrival: \$7.50. We will take you from the Unitarian Society to the airport at the end of the conference.*

#### REGISTRATION

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Per Person Check Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TEL: \_\_\_\_\_ SORRY, I (We) CANNOT ATTEND \_\_\_\_\_

FLYING \_\_\_\_\_

DRIVING \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND/OR ANY INQUIRIES BY JUNE 1st TO:

John and Dru Cummins  
4238 Sheridan Ave So.  
Minneapolis, MN 55410  
612-922-2477



# NORTHEAST UURMA CONFERENCE

October 16-18, 1990

At the OBLATE RETREAT HOUSE, Hudson, N.H.

*(We were so well served at the 1989 conference that we decided to return.)*

## HERE'S WHAT'S IN STORE (with more to come):

\*Enjoy New Hampshire's glorious fall colors, in fellowship with Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and their Spouses, renewing the valuable times we had together, but yet relishing the opportunities to serve in the present age. (We're not "over the hill").

\*Hear a presentation by Dr. Jack Mendelsohn, prolific writer and interpreter of UUism, recent president of the UUMA, and retired from 10- year stints in Bedford, MA, First Parish, Chicago First Unitarian and Boston Arlington Street Church. He will speak on "THE CUTTING EDGE IN TODAY'S CHURCH," followed by a re-act group from UURMA.

\*Participate in a kaleidoscope of topics, possibly including: "LEGAL THINGS FOR SENIORS"; "MAKING IT ALONE"; "WHERE DO WE PUT OUR VOLUNTEER HOURS?"; "BARGAINS FOR TRAVEL, FOOD, OFFICE SUPPLIES, BOOKS AND PRESCRIPTIONS"; and others.

\*Enjoy an evening of entertainment.

\*Hear the occasional sermon by Dr. Dorothy Tilden Spoerl, beloved leader in UUA circles, and especially in the field of religious education, with a current interest in effective social action.

\*An optional visit to "AMERICA'S STONEHENGE" at North Salem, N.H., where evidence has been uncovered that this site was frequented by the early Celts of Western Europe, and where astronomical alignments are revealed of standing stones. This site is of great importance to American history. It is potentially the oldest man-made construction in the U.S. (Reference book: "AMERICA B.C." by Dr. Barry Fells, M.I.T. scholar.) There is a comfortable visitors center with VCR presentations and a comprehensive display of the findings. For the more adventuresome, and for a small fee, there is a 3/4 mile hike to view the findings.

\*Your committee is : Roy and Lucille Congdon, Gardiner, ME, chair; Don and Rose Hinckley, Augusta, ME; and Earle and Pete McKinney, Gray, ME.

The cost is \$70 per person for the 2 nights and 6 excellent meals. If this is too much for your budget, get in touch with Reverend David Hubner, in the Department of Ministry, for limited subsidy.

Send "early bird" registrations to: Mrs. Rosalyn Hinckley, registrar, 26 Old Winthrop Rd., Augusta, ME, 04330. For further information contact: Roy Congdon, 39 Central St., Gardiner, ME, 04345, or phone (207) 582- 2521.

## REGISTRATION

for the October 16-18 NORTHEAST UURMA CONFERENCE:

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (\$70 each) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to UURMA.  
Registration is refundable for emergency.*

## NEWS and NOTES

With very great sorrow we learned of the death of George Jewell Spencer. During his many years in the Department of the Ministry, most of us sat across the desk from him discussing some triumph or trouble, and always he was a supportive friend as well as a denominational official.

He was born in Newport, Vt., was graduated from Bates College, earned a B.D. at Andover-Newton Theological School and received an honorary D.D. from Meadville-Lombard. He served as parish minister of Universalist Churches in Swampscott and Worcester; was Extension Minister for the Universalist Church of Ohio and also worked with the Eastern Hills Fellowship in Cincinnati. He served as Superintendent of the Massachusetts Universalist Convention. Following Consolidation, he became Director of Ministerial Settlement and Welfare, and was Director of the Department of the Ministry for the U.U.A. from 1971-1975.

George is survived by his daughter, Sylvia Gruner of Bolton, Massachusetts, a sister, Alice Lawson of Coventry, Vt. and two grandchildren. A Memorial Service was conducted by Dr. Rhys Williams and Dr. David Pohl on Sunday, March 4th. Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society in his memory.

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Alice Cummins, widow of "Bob" Cummins who was Superintendent of the Universalist Church of America for many years, and mother of John Cummins, minister of our church in Minneapolis, died on Valentine's Day in her 92nd year. She was surrounded by her family and then died peacefully in her sleep without any sign of an ache or pain. As her son wrote: "...reminds me of a letter dated 1837 commenting on the death of another aged woman. It said: 'She was a lifelong Universalist, and so she died happy'." Her ashes will be deposited on a ridge overlooking the ocean, beside those of "Bob" at their summer home in Maine.

Doris M. Sullivan, widow of Rev. Dr. Joseph Sullivan, died February 25th in Norway, ME. She was active in our church in Norway for many years, and earlier taught school in Vermont. A Memorial Service was held in the Norway Universalist Church which she attended for thirty years.

Rev. Carl Bihldorff died March 8th at Boca Raton, Florida. He was 81 years of age, and he is survived by his wife, Martha, a son and a daughter. By his request, there was no public Memorial Service.

For a happier note, - we would extend CONGRATULATIONS to one of our UURMA Members, - Eula Kelley, wife of the late Will R. Kelley. She celebrated her 99th birthday on March 28, 1990.

*PLEASE NOTE: - Your Editor and his wife, Irene, are making what they hope is their final move to 10 Mechanic Street in Dexter, ME. With some reluctance, they have been serving the Unitarian Church in Eastport, ME for the last three or four years, and they hope that someone can be found to keep this historic church alive. Because of injuries received in an accident a year and a half ago, they needed to find a house with only one floor, but within reasonable distance from one of our UU churches. It also is good insofar as the editorship is concerned in that "ElderBerries" has been printed in Dexter for the last few years.*

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UURMA is recognized by the Unitarian Universalist Association as an independent "denominational group" and it has been accepted as a full-fledged chapter of the UUMA.

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# SOUTHEASTERN U.U.R.M.A. CONFERENCE

Jeanette & John Morgan

The Fourth Annual Convocation of the Southeastern U.U.R.M.A. met in Brooksville, Florida at "UU in the Pines", Feb. 12 to 14. Fifteen retired ministers, eleven spouses and three widows attended. Beside the usual "catch-up" opening round robin on personal events of the past year, we shared opinions and information in sessions devoted to "UU Core Values and the Future of our Movement"; special personal experiences during our lives that remain definitive, and helpful hints on travel, health, education, finance and recreation. Our special speaker for the convocation was the Rev. Richard Benner, minister of the Sarasota, Florida church, who delivered a well-researched and moving lecture on "GLORY: Unitarian and Universalist Contribution to Abolition", giving background from the life of the Unitarian, Robert Gould Shaw, commander of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment (the first Black regiment in the Civil War) whose heroic story is portrayed in the movie.

On the lighter side we enjoyed social hours before dinner both nights and had a cabaret party the final evening. Seated at candlelit tables, we had a delightful evening filled with laughter which included eloquent and humorous readings presented by Waldemar Argow, a special song, "Come to UU in the Pines, to the tune of "Cabaret" written and sung by Iska Cole, and a spontaneous "improv" of jokes and stories.

Our sessions were opened with brief devotionals led by George Brooks, Annette Redman, Phyllis McKeeman, and William Gardner; Harold Hadley, UURMA President, concluded the final session with appropriate inspirational parting words. Two other national officers were present: Vice-President, Keith Munson, and Treasurer, William Gardner.

The convocation was chaired by John and Jeannette Morgan, assisted by Jack and Marie Zoerheide and Mary Aymar Hobart. Plans were made to hold the next convocation on February 11-13, 1991 at "UU in the Pines" with George and Priscilla Brooks and Jack and Marie Zoerheide as chairpersons.

## UU CORE VALUES SESSION REPORT

The session on "UU Core Values and the Future of Our movement" was led by a panel consisting of Al Ziegler, George Marshall and Jack Zoerheide, chairman, followed by general discussion. The following precis, far from complete, gives an idea of the range of commentary.

We need better understanding of who we are as an institution, not just as individuals, for an institution that doesn't know itself well is not able constructively to change; we have "Ministerial Guidelines" but where are Church Guidelines? We resort to the use of guidelines written for Christian churches, which are inadequate. The institutional emphasis was challenged by the counter-view that our proper concern should be for the individual, not for the organizations which emerges anyway when it is needed. We get individuals and then try to institutionalize them. The concept of "core values" was criticized by several: values in general, "Yes", but not alleged "UU Values", we need core "Understandings", not core "values". If everybody agrees then someone is not thinking. Freedom, reason, aspiration - such terms are adequately descriptive.

Lay leadership is the big question before us; too often a minister's leadership frustrates the laity. It is also true that lay leadership is often a problem; for instance, many Fellowships are anti-minister, not growth-oriented, and die. Fear of authority is the root of our problem. Our need is to teach anarchists to cooperate.