

UU ELDER BERRIES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE U.U. RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

Vol. VI #1

Albert Q. Perry, Editor

R.R. 1 Box 45

Summer, 1990

Dexter, Maine 04930

THE UURMA AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 29th Annual UUA General Assembly was attended by more than 3000 UU's from member congregations who participated in hundreds of practica, workshops, business meetings and worship services, located in downtown Milwaukee.

There was a near record number of UURMA members attending, - with three particular sessions being of common interest to most. The first was, of course, the perennially popular annual "Service of the Living Tradition" which included the "Recognition of Ministers Completing Full-Time Ministries". They include:

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At the UURMA annual luncheon which followed the Sunday morning service, attended by 27 members and 3 guests, President Hadley, in congratulating and welcoming the 1989-90 group of ministers just completing full-time ministries, he recalled the words of his own retirement: "I've enjoyed boyhood and youth and manhood; but the disciplines of the years bring, or ought to bring, more appreciative judgments, release from prejudices, ability to be patient with small annoyances, ready to give the oncoming generation a chance." He then concluded: "Let's be eager to add not just years to our life, but life to our years."

The oldest retired minister present was Ed Wilson, who at age 92 has been a living example of "adding life" to his many years.

The UURMA luncheon was held in a beautiful room at the "Top of the Plazas" with a view of Milwaukee and Lake Michigan, good food and camaraderie. The attendees were as follows:

John Cummins
Betty Cyrus
Alberto & Mrs. D'Orlando
Max & Caroline Gaebler
William Gardner
Barbara Gudmundson
Harold & Shirley Hadley
Ralph Helverson
Duncan & Carolyn Howlett
Nathaniell Lauriat
George Marshall
Gordon & Phyllis McKeeman

Margaret Odell
Carl Seaburg
Charles & Charlotta Saleska
Robert Senghas
David & Karin VanStrien
Farely & Virginia Wheelwright
Edwin Wilson

Guests: David Pohl
David Huber
Raymond Nasemann

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At 4:30 that same afternoon the UURMA sponsored a practica session with Max and Caroline Gaebler presenting a series of slides and talks covering their interim ministry experience while serving Liberal Churches in both Australia and New Zealand. (Incidentally, the Gaeblers had earlier that same day become the proud grandparents of a new baby boy born to their son and daughter-in-law in Milwaukee. That joyful event was celebrated both at the earlier luncheon and the afternoon practica.)

THE 1990 FIFTY YEAR ADDRESS

William E. Gardner

(Editorial Note - At the Ministerial Days, preceding the General Assembly, the U.U.M.A. meets and holds a service celebrating the ministry and honoring those who have been ordained fifty years. This year, there were three: - Joseph Reed Bartlett, George Huntston Williams and William E. Gardner. The last was asked to give the annual "Fifty Year Address". In that we have never before had a copy of the address available at the time of publishing this summer issue, we have not been able to carry it; but in that "Bill" is so well known to all of us, and in that he provided a copy without delay, we would like to print a good bit of what he said.)

Fifty-four years ago in the summer of 1936 I was the Executive Secretary of the National Young People's Christian Union of the Universalist Church and I conducted a worship service during the sessions of our national convention at Murray Grove, New Jersey. Dr. Clarence R. Skinner, Dean of the Tufts College School of Religion, heard my service and complimented me on it. He urged me to consider entering the theological school. I felt very flattered by his personal interest at that time, although these feelings were somewhat modified later when I learned how difficult it was to recruit anyone for theological training.

I entered the school the next year with two handicaps: I wasn't a scholar, not even a very good student, and my undergraduate degree was in business administration, not liberal arts. As a result, I developed rather early on an inferiority complex, particularly as regards sermon preparation and preaching. This feeling continued into my entire ministry up to my retirement twelve years ago. On the few occasions that another minister would attend one of my services, I was absolutely petrified. Up to about ten years ago, I would not have considered addressing such a group as I have before me today.

After I retired from full time service I joined a fellowship where we had a series of different ministers preaching each Sunday. I also was free to visit other U.U. churches and hear the sermons. After a couple of years I made the most amazing discovery. I came to the conclusion that most of you are not any better preachers than I am. Now, I say MOST OF YOU because we all know that there are some very fine exceptions to most of us; and I had the privilege of working as associate to one of those exceptions in my last ministry in Wilmington, Delaware with Bob Doss, who I regard as one of our very best.

Now my inferior feelings about sermons did not apply to my ability to pick sermon topics. I thought that I was always pretty good at that. I guess that most of us from time to time have picked topics that were better than the sermons. As an example of my creativity in topic selection, my topic for this morning is "EVERYTHING I EVER REALLY NEEDED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN THE MINISTRY".

Also, my inferior feelings about my preaching were offset by a superiority complex about church management. I thought I knew more about how to run a church than almost anyone else. By the time I entered theological school I had, in my home church, been President of the Boys' Club, founder and president of the Y.P.C.U., church school teacher, church school superintendent, member of the governing board, chairman of the board and Moderator of the Church. I was prepared to manage my first church. I took as my motto, "If you want a thing done well, do it yourself." And for six years I did just that. On my last Sunday there, following the final hymn, the Chairman of the Board came forward and presented me with a fine pulpit robe as a token of the congregation's appreciation of my ministry. After that service two members were talking. One said, "It was great to give Bill a robe, but we also should have given him and Priscilla a nice Farewell Party." The other replied, "Oh, we could have if he had planned it." So much for doing everything yourself.

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I went to my second ministry in 1944 feeling the need to reform society by preaching and working against racial discrimination. I lobbied in the state legislature, helped organize an inter-racial community center and spoke out from the pulpit. A small group of parishioners did not like what I was doing and preaching and began to stay away from church services, but there was one woman who was really the ring leader of the opposition who continued to come to service every Sunday. One of her friends asked her, "Lucy, why do you keep going to church when you dislike him so?" Lucy replied, "No God Dammed minister is going to keep me away from MY church!"

When I heard about this and thought about it and realized that I had been minister for a few months and she had been coming to church for over forty years, I knew it was really her church more than it was my church! We all know that the church does belong to the congregation and not the minister, but sometimes it is good for us to be reminded of it.

My next ministry of nearly fourteen years in Meriden, Connecticut brought me some very fine experiences that I will always cherish and some good lessons that I wish I had time to relate to you, but time constraints make it necessary to move on.

In 1966, after twenty-eight years in parish ministry, I happily accepted the opportunity to become the Association Minister for Administration for the First Unitarian Society of Wilmington, Delaware with only an occasional preaching responsibility. I was fifty-four years old, older than the members of the Board of Trustees and most of the church leadership including the minister. I began to notice a difference paid to me when I made a statement or offered an opinion and I gathered it was due to my age, my years in the ministry and my presumed store of wisdom. So I became cautious to be sure I knew what I was talking about before speaking. I think that most parishioners believe that all ministers are wiser than we are. It behooves us to be careful what we say, particularly if we should make a proposal for action to the Governing Board or the Congregation. All boards and congregations want their minister to succeed. They want to be able to adopt proposals we make. They don't want to have to turn down some recommendation that is faulty. So we need to be very careful and thoughtful and do our homework well so as not to put them in an embarrassing situation. There is an old motto that might well be on the desk of every minister: "NEVER START A VAST PROJECT WITH A HALF VAST IDEA". If we follow the advice in our relations with our churches we will live longer, be happier and enjoy our ministry more.

Now a final word - I could not have been as happy and satisfied as I am with my fifty years of ministry without the association I have enjoyed with my colleagues. I have found this collegiality indispensable. Fortunately, my ministries have all been in area where there were enough ministers near enough to make monthly meetings the usual thing. It takes something very important to keep me from a meeting. I think I can say that I have not missed more than twenty-five meetings in fifty years, - maybe one every two years or so. And now that I am retired I find it even more essential to my well being to be associated on a regular and continuing basis with my younger colleagues, particularly as my own contemporaries are getting fewer and fewer.

We always enjoy George Whitney's "NOTES FROM A DESERT JOURNAL". Recently, we felt that a poem he wrote was most worthy of reprinting (and re-reading in case one is on his mailing list, as is your Editor....)

TO HOPE

Hope lies within the eager seed
Beneath the winter's lingering frost
In quiet glory of a tribal need;
That whispers, "Yes, we are not lost."
Though clocks run down through our neglect;
That says, "Our wills shall never fail
To stand in dauntless self respect."
Our quiet strength and grave desires
Shall gleam as beacons in the night
Made plain by life's mysterious fires,
Made bold by love's tempestuous delight -
A voice that deep within us sings
To music played on unseen strings.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

Statement of Income and Expenses for the nine month period ending March 31, 1990

	<u>Operating Account</u>	Conference	Contact	
	Actual	Budget	Account	Persons Account
INCOME				
Contributions from Members	4,143.95	4,500.00		
UUMA Chapter Grant	200.00	200.00		
UUA Support Services Grant				5,000.00
Conferences			3,485.28	
Interest Income	<u>606.07</u>	<u>400.00</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Income	<u>4,950.02</u>	<u>5,100.00</u>	<u>3,485.28</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>
EXPENSES				
Executive Board	1,120.69	1,500.00		
Newsletter (ELDER-BERRIES)	1,132.68	1,200.00		
Telephone, Postage and Supplies	523.59	1,000.00		
Contact Program		500.00		
Conferences	368.23	1,500.00	5,727.24	
Council on Church Staff Finances	200.00	200.00		
Miscellaneous	<u>20.00</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total Expenses	3,365.19	6,400.00	5,727.24	0
NET INCOME (EXPENSE) for Period	<u>1,584.83</u>		<u>(2,241.96)</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>
	<u>4,950.02</u>		<u>3,485.28</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>

	Operating Account	Conference Account	Contact Account	Total
Balance, July 1, 1989	4,296.55	5,721.11		10,017.66
Add/Subtract Net Income/Expense	<u>1,584.83</u>	<u>(2,241.96)</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>	<u>4,342.87</u>
Balance, March 31, 1990	5,881.38	3,479.15	5,000.00	14,360.53

Checking Account	5,360.53
Certificate of Deposit (6/12/90) 8.2%	<u>9000.00</u>
	14,360.53

Allocation of Conference Funds:

Southeast (Florida)	470.72
Mid-West	1,070.00
Western	<u>1,938.43</u>
	3,479.15

William E. Gardner,
Treasurer

U.U.R.M.A. CONFERENCES

SECOND ANNUAL MIDWEST CONFERENCE

(Previous notice has been given and presumably all wishing to attend have already registered, but we are happy to provide a reminder of things that will be a part of this gathering...)

Friday, September 28

Registration at Radison Plaza Hotel, 15 South Street, Minneapolis
Social Hour, Dinner at the Church, "Round Robin"

Saturday, September 29

Talk by one who lives with a "heart transplant"
Audrey Masterson, author and poet, reading from Journal.
Lunch at Minneapolis Institute of the Arts
Buffet Dinner at the Guthrie Theatre
Attending a performance of Thornton
Wilder's "Skin Of Our Teeth"

Sunday, September 30

Attending services at any of the 14 U.U. Churches in the area.

NORTHEAST UURMA CONFERENCE

October 16 - 18

Oblate Retreat House, Hudson, N.H.

Arrangements being made by Roy and Lucille Congdon, Don
and Rose Hinckley and Earle and 'Pete' McKinney.

Program Includes Jack Mendelsohn - The Cutting Edge in
Today's Church"

Occasional Sermon by Dorothy Tilden Spoerl

Participation invited upon such topics as:

"Legal Things For Seniors"

"Making It Alone"

"Where Do We Put Our Volunteer Hours?"

"Bargains For Travel, Food, Office

Supplies, Books and Prescriptions"

REGISTRATION

October 16-18, 1990 Northeast UURMA Conference

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

Address _____

Send to Rosalyn Hinckley, 26 Old Winthrop Road, Augusta ME 04330
Make checks payable to UURMA

SOUTHEAST CONVOCATION OF THE UURMA

Dates 5:00 p.m. Monday, February 11 through
noon Wednesday, February 13, 1991.

Place "U.U. In the Pines" Brooksville, Florida

INVITED U.U.'s from anywhere who happen to be in the
area next February.

Chairpersons George and Priscilla Brooks, Jack and Marie Zoerheide

Program In process, but planned so far...
Sharing of Experiences...
Very special Choric Reading
Visit from David Hubner or some UU Staff Person

Cost \$62 each

SOUTHEAST UURMA FEBRUARY 1991 CONVOCATION Registration Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone: Area (_____) _____

For couples: Prefer..... Double Bed _____ Twin Beds _____

Please enclose a check payable to "UU In the Pines" for \$54 each.
(\$8 for program expense will be collected at the Convocation.)

The nearest major airport is Tampa International.
Please indicate airline, flight number and arrival time _____

If you plan to rent a car and are willing to help with transportation, please indicate _____

Send to: Priscilla Brooks, Registrar, 1515 Forrest Nelson Blvd. Apt. 0207, Pt. Charlotte, FL 33952

Persons who expect to spend a bit of the winter in the South would enjoy this annual gathering of UU's,
and it will probably be the most inexpensive thing that one attends.

"CONTACT PERSONS" VISIT TO MARY AND BOB HOLMES FOLLOWING THEIR FIRE

In June, Pete and Earl McKinney visited with Mary and Bob Holmes in Harrison, Maine, and conveyed the concern and regrets of the UURMA membership in respect to the fire which destroyed their home. Earle reports:-

The fire, just about three months before, destroyed their home and virtually everything in it. Remaining standing parts had to be demolished. The garage and barn are intact, and a few possessions which were stored there. It happened the night of their return trip from Florida - cause uncertain. If one never saw that lovely 200 year-old farmhouse it is hard to imagine what they have lost.

They have an insurance settlement on the house and will rebuild. New foundation has been erected, and the carpentry work will begin soon. They talk of a September occupancy. They are working now on their claim for lost possessions.

Son David has a home on the same property a short distance away. Mary and Bob are staying there. A daughter came to help them during an earlier period. Naturally they have lost lots of cherished things, including Bob's wood-carvings and some of Mary's paintings and all her piano/organ music and reference books.

There is little that we, as Ministers/Spouses/Survivors can do to help until the new home is ready for occupancy. Then, there may be some way we can express our continuing support and concern. Hopefully, the NED UUMA and the UURMA Contract Program can coordinate it for us.

In the meantime, we urge all to write or call and express their concern personally. Their address is: The Rev. Robert Holmes, Box 83, Harrison ME 04040. The phone at David's home is 583-6144.

UURMA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

The Executive Board of the UURMA met at the Pickett House in Boston, MA on May 9, 1990. Present were Harold Hadley, Keith Munson, Joyce Huff, William Gardner, Freda Carnes, Margaret Johnston and the Newsletter Editor, Albert Perry.

The President reported that Surviving Spouses have traditionally been sent the UUA Annual Directory only upon individual request. He also reported that Senexet House has been sold to the State of Connecticut to be used as a Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Center. It is possible that from the funds received there will be a grant to assist Area Conference programs of the UURMA.

Peg Johnston and Freda Carnes gave a report on their extensive efforts to recruit Contact Persons in new areas. The Board agreed that it would be advisable to set up the program by UUA Districts, but should any such area prove too large for one person, it should be subdivided as in Maine and Florida. Since the Treasurer has received no expense requests from Contact Persons, the Board approved sending all such a letter urging that any such be reported to the Treasurer for reimbursement.

It was voted to print 1000 copies of the 1989-90 UURMA Brochure and to mail an Annual Appeal letter in the fall. The question was raised as to the status of the joint UURMA-UUMA Committee that had been appointed to study the feasibility of raising a substantial amount to replenish the depleted Ministerial Service Gratuity Fund. Because of numerous other fund raising efforts and some continuing controversy over the use of some UUA funds it was voted to put this effort on hold.

PERSONALS

Our congratulations to Kenneth C. Walker of Bloomington, Illinois who recently celebrated his 98th birthday. His son-in-law, Everett Bos, reports that he reads each issue of "Elderberries" to Rev. Mr. Walker, who appreciates and enjoys it.

We are very sorry to learn that John McPhee has had a stroke, and we send our best wishes for a speedy recovery to him. Our very, very best, John!

With great regret we print the notice of the passing of Gladys Hilton of the First Church in Chicago, Illinois. She was the widow of Randall Hilton, who was District Executive of the old Western Conference and later was Director of the Lincoln Center. (This comes to us thanks to Jeanne Bletzer, and once again I would note that we rarely receive word of the passing of 'spouses' unless someone remembers to notify this newsletter.)

Rev. Mr. Fred H. Miller has recently awarded the "Martha O'Connor Award" for his contributions as a private citizen to public education. Fred, who is 84, spends about eighteen hours a week in Brattleboro, Vermont elementary schools, where he is known as "Grandpa". He teaches a literature class to sixth graders, reads to younger students and supervises playgrounds and lunchrooms.

With considerable personal regret, we note the passing of Rev. Clinton L. Davies last spring. He spent much of his life as the greatly -underpaid minister of some of the smaller Universalist Churches in Rhode Island - where your Editor became acquainted with him and the service that he provided churches that could not afford him.

We noted in an earlier issue that a Memorial Service for Bill Lewis would be held in New Hampshire this summer; and it was held at the Keene Unitarian Universalist Church on Sunday, May 27 with Nina Grey and John Papandrew officiating. Bill served the Keene Church during the difficult years of the war (1941-45), and he and Lois retired to Spofford, N.H. in 1969.

We have a new brochure for the UURMA...Probably copies will be sent out with some future financial appeal, but they were needed to acquaint newly retired members of the services we seek to offer.

As noted elsewhere, Senexet Houses which served so many of our churches and groups has been sold. Actually, it was at Senexet that the initial meeting of leaders was held and worked out plans for a conference of retired ministers and spouses. Without it, we might not be.

The group picture of the 1990 Southeastern UURMA Conference held in Florida last winter is available from Vice President Keith Munson. Send \$1.00 and a 4x6 (or larger) stamped, self-addressed envelope to him at:

*9 Island View Ave.
Saco, ME 04072*