

UU ELDER BERRIES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE U.U. RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

Vol. VI #3

Albert Q. Perry, Editor

RR-1 Box 45

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Dexter, Maine 04930

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

(According to the Bylaws...) "The officers and a Nominating Committee consisting of a Chair and two other members shall be elected biennially in the month of May in the odd numbered years... All members shall be eligible to vote in an election conducted by the Nominating Committee. During the month of February preceding the election the Nominating Committee shall poll the membership for suggestions of nominees. From these suggestions the Committee shall make its nominations..."

In 1985, when a group of retired UU ministers and spouses gathered at Petersham, there was a reasonably representative group present, and it seemed permissible to choose officers out of those there. However, they were all from New England, but this seemed necessary if there were to be regular Board Meetings in that funds for traveling expenses were very limited.

The tendency continued in the following elections ('87 & '89), but there has been on-going discussion as the desirability of better representation. Actually, the Board authorized the President to attend the 1990 Midwest Convocation, and to investigate the possibility of members from that area accepting responsibility for leadership.... However, the response seemed to be that representation on the Board would be welcome, but that total responsibility would be too much of a burden. (Unfortunately, our finances would not permit bringing one or two East four times a year: so, this transitional proposal is not really practical.

None of the present officers is complaining about the burden of serving, but several who have held office for the six years we have been in existence do not wish to monopolize positions of leadership. Your Editor, for example, suspects that just about every minister has put out hundreds of newsletters and could do an excellent job with "ElderBerries", - and he is more than willing to step down and give someone else a chance.

Actually, all of this will be wrestled with by the Nominating Committee and all are invited to communicate their ideas and desires and suggestions to any of the following:

Rev. Robert T. Dick, Chairperson

1 Walnut Way, Springfield, VT 05156-9142

Laura Hersey

12 St. Louis Ave., Gloucester, MA 01390

Donald Hinckley

26 Old Winthrop Rd., #208, Augusta, ME 04330

(Such may constitute the Survey of the Membership as required by our Bylaws.)

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West Newbury, Vt. 05085
Tel. 802/429-2412

NORTHEAST UURMA CONFERENCE

Members of the UURMA from the Northeast area held their annual conference at the Oblate Retreat House in Hudson, New Hampshire. It was our second gathering at this spacious monastery, and we have every reason to be grateful that our Catholic friends over- built a bit in this area and always seem to have room for the UU Retired Clergy.

The arrangements and program was developed by a committee composed of Roy and Lucille Congdon, Don and Rose Hinckley and Earle and 'Pete' McKinney. All live in the Augusta area and had every opportunity to get together regularly and work things out perfectly. The big surprise was to discover that Earle was practically a professional song leader who got everyone into a great mood whenever a break was needed.

On the first evening, we caught up on what had been or was happening to one another, and, curiously, this often seems more interesting and important than when we were all involved in the great accomplishments of the active ministry. We also brought our "Time Lines" up-to-date, and if anyone ever wants to do a biography of any of the folk in this area, the details are all available about most.

On Wednesday morning, we had a briefing on trends at Beacon Street, and then two sessions... One dealt with ways to save on trips and travels; and, if nothing else, we learned that our folk do get around. The second dealt with "Making It Alone", and was led by Laura Hersey. (We had hoped for some of the material from this very important discussion in this issue, and will try for it in the next. Self-evidently, this is not an easy subject to talk or write or read about, but half of us will have to deal with it, and if we can help, this is reason enough for a UURMA.)

On Wednesday evening, Gary Smith from the First Parish Church in Concord, MA reported on a recent trip to Transylvania and had some wonderful slides he had taken of our churches and people in that newly freed area. Then, 'Bucky' McKeeman provided a jovial time reading Burns and discussing "What's Under the Kilt".

On Thursday, we heard from the Dept. of the Ministry and from our President of the UURMA, Harold Hadley. Finally, we gathered in the Chapel for a worship service at which Dr. Dorothy Tilden Spoerl gave a magnificent address on "Ceremonial Time". 'Dotty' never uses a manuscript, but she did re-write a few of her remarks for publication in this issue. (It was even better live!)

Bill Gardner performs a great service at our Northeast Conferences by providing words of greeting for many who are unable to attend, and we are all invited to sign these addressed to friends. We recommend something of this nature to those organizing conferences in other areas.

Another delightful part of the whole occasion was a collection of tid-bits, poems, etc., - a few of which will be used as 'fillers' in this and, possibly, other issues. See below!

* * * * *

Teach us, Oh Truth of Life
the art of sharing without presuming
the art of loving without demanding
the art of being without judging
the art of creating without pretending.
Teach us, Oh Truth,
the art of knowing thee.

* * * * *

"CEREMONIAL TIME"

Dorothy Tilden Spoerl

(One of the most significant addresses which your Editor has heard at any of our conferences was given as the sermon at the Chapel Service by Dottie Spoerl. She did not use a manuscript, but prepared this condensation after it was all over. I am proud to have this to publish. A.Q.P.)

John Hanson Mitchell in "Ceremonial Time: Fifteen Thousand Years on One Square Mile", - taking the concept of ceremonial time from an Indian friend, defines it as that time "in which past, present and future can be perceived in a single moment."

This concept of a moment when the past comes into the present and illuminates the future seems to me a useful concept for us as retired ministers. We have read about or can remember so much of our church's past, - we are still concerned with the present, and look to the future. And these three concepts of time can meld together usefully.

So I have chosen a few 'verbal artifacts' to share with you as we look at time and our history and future. The first two quotations are one from Universalist and one from Unitarian history, and they show our likenesses to one another go back in time, indeed.

In "The Larger Hope", Miller quotes a Universalist editor who:

"...in the course of noting the publication of Andrew Dais' THE GREAT HARMONIA (1852) complained that there was 'rather a disproportionate number in our connection who were attracted to the fads and novelties of thought then current . . . that the latest rage was spiritualism, represented by Davis' work. Taking them together what a brood of Mesmerists, rationalists, biologists, Fourierists, and necromatists, we have hatched from our maw."

In "Our Unitarian Heritage", Wilbur speaks of the young transcendentalists who, -

"...become impatient with the continued existence of ignorance, poverty, intemperance, slavery, war and other social ills . . . threw themselves eagerly into all sorts of reforms and philanthropies that promised improvement: - popular education, normal schools, temperance reform, communism, the anti-slavery movement, women's rights, non-resistance, vegetarianism, spiritualism, Mesmerism, phrenology, - some wise and some foolish, but all of them earnestly espoused."

Clearly, both Unitarians and Universalists in the mid-Nineteenth Century were tarred with the same brush, as one could say with Yeats "full of passionate intensity."

Looking from our own past into the present, it is clear that this passionate intensity is still with us. You need only turn to the section of our Yearbook listing "Independent Affiliates", and you find: (among many others) Conservative Forum of UUs, Covenant of UU Pagans, Fellowship of Religious Humanists, Network of Black UUs, UU Christian Fellowship, UUs for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, and so on....

There is, however, as I see it, one great difference between these enthusiasms among us in the past and those of the present. The older enthusiasms did not divide into this kind of affiliated organizations. Today, with this tendency to divide, we lose, I feel, that true diversity which comes from being a single group, sharing ideas and diversities with one another. This sharing would strengthen our understanding and widen the scope of our ideation.

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It would seem that one thing they seek in common is new rituals for themselves, when what we really need are new rituals that will be overarching concepts that will unite us in our diversities. We need a broad spectrum of people to work on this: - musicians, poets, dramatists, artists, theologians, etc. who can work together. One does not find new rituals by going back, say, to what we think might have been the rituals for worshipping the Mother Goddess. We live in a different time and climate of thought. And we divide our strength when we should be searching for those common symbols and meanings which unite us, while still allowing for the differences which each of us bring to our common worship. It is not impossible, but it takes time and effort... And it is essential to our future.

The second set of verbal artifacts I would bring to you are from the present, but relate to our past. the first is simply a sermon subject as announced in the Midcoast (Maine) Fellowship Newsletter. A sermon I did not hear, but I believe each of us can well imagine.

"The Rev. Arthur B. Jellis' sermon will ask: "Where are you - Theodore, Waldo, Henry, Joseph, William, John, Hosea - when we need you so dearly?" It will be a look at Unitarian Universalism, - its enterprises and adventurisms, and what appears to be its lost radicalism."

(Midcoast Fellowship Newsletter, Summer, 1990)

The same idea was put into a single sentence by Edith McDonald in her history of Universalism in Vermont and Quebec when she was asked why so many of the churches did not endure.

"My concluding thought is simply that Universalists lost the vision." (REBELLION IN THE MOUNTAINS - Page 36)

As I look over my own years in the ministry, preceded by my years in Unitarian and Universalist Churches in one capacity or another (including being on the "Cradle Roll") I see three examples of visions which were important, and which seem somehow dulled by the years.

Growing up in the Middle West I was strongly influenced in my high school and college years by the ferment of the Western Conference. There were few enough churches with the result that our conferences, conventions, workshops were led by Unitarians as well as Universalists. Most particularly, for me, was the presence of Curtis Reese who not only spoke at these meetings, but took the effort and time to talk with the young people as individuals. I am convinced that one thing the "Humanist Controversy" did for both Unitarian and Universalist churches was to make the theology alive and full of meaning again. It did not split our associations, - it brought them to life.

I am convinced, too, that in part the Fellowship Movement in the Unitarian Association grew out of this willingness to discuss theological issues without rancor. When Munroe Husbands went into a new town and placed advertisements in the papers, he did not invite people to come to his meetings because they were some kind of minority groups, assuring them that we liked all minorities. He told them briefly what were some of the ideas we had to offer, time enough for them to discover our acceptance of diversity when they had met together.

One thing the three major studies of our values made over the decades since merger has shown that is that people do not come to us to learn our value system. They come to us and discover that they and we share a common value system. This is why they so often report "I felt at home immediately".

All of these things led, of course, to the third movement which was the final acceptance of the idea of merger for our

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two associations. It happened over a quarter of a century ago, - OR DID IT? I worry about us so long as we still ask one another, "Are you a Universalist or a Unitarian?" As long as we still hear complaints (from both sides) based upon some of the ridiculous stereotypes we held (and still hold) of one another. Our symbol of that merger was two circles, not quite come together. After all these years we still use that same symbol. When we can use, meaningfully, a single circle as our symbol, we shall be truly merged.

And this single circle will mean that we have clarified our visions and ideals, - that we have put them into words that articulate them clearly for others, - and that further we have translated them into actions which make clear to anyone who watches that our visions have become reality, - for the moment, at least. It is hard to do this in an Association where the search for truth includes the conviction that the nature of truth is ever-changing.

So let us recapture our radical vision of a diversity that truly accepts diverse thoughts, understands the views of the other, and can express this ideal in words and liturgies and symbols which are meaningful to all.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Periodically, someone suggests that we list the names and addresses of those attending a conference; and we do this hoping that it will encourage others to come and be with their friends. Attending the Northeast Conference were ...

Jeanne & Russel Bletzer	RR #1 Box 662, Woodstock, VT 05091
Freda M. Carnes	25 Revere St. #2, Boston, MA 02114
Edith M. Christensen	Box 10056, Wilmington, NC 28405
Maurice W. Cobb	HC 81 Box 1714, W. Newfield, ME 04095
Roy & Lucille Congdon	38 Central St., Gardiner, ME 04345
Susan Cooper	80 Austin Dr. #178, Burlington, VT 05401
Bob & Helen Dick	1 Walnut Way, Springfield, VT 05158-9142
John & Dorothy Fisher	25 Culver St. Box 791, Groton, MA 01450
Bill & Priscilla Gardner	77 Sailfish Dr., E. Falmouth, MA 02536
Phil & Yvonne Giles	27 Herring Run Rd., Harwich, MA 02645
Deborah Greeley	276 Main St., Concord, MA 01742
Harold & Shirley Hadley	35 Pomeroy Ct., Amherst, MA 01002
Bill Hammond/Grace Lindquist	230 Foster St., Littleton, MA 01450
Ken & Janet Hawkes	401 Cumberland Ave. #401, Portland, ME 04101
Ralph & Wynanda Helverson	125 Fresh Pond Prkw., Cambridge, MA 02138
Laura Hersey	12 St. Louis Ave., Gloucester, MA 01930
Don & Rosalyn Hinckley	26 Old Winthrop Rd. #208, Augusta, ME 04330
Joyce R. Huff	956 Main St., Fitchburg, MA 01420
Don & Helene Lothrop	RFD #1 Box 698, Wiscasset, ME 04578
Gordon & Phyllis McKeeman	24 Lake Forest Dr., Charlottesville, VA 22901
Earle & 'Pete' McKinney	Box 130, Gray, ME 04038
George N. Marshall	Box 322, W. Hyannisport, MA 02672
Gladys H. Morrissey	247 Park Ave., Arlington, MA 02174
Keith & Peggy Munson	9 Island View Ave., Saco, ME 04072
Al & Belle Niles	Box 1038, No. Sebago, ME 04029
Al & Irene Perry	RR 1 - Box 45, Dexter, ME 04930
Ray & Barb Pontier	RD 2, Box 626, Narrowsburg, NY 12764
Hope Reamon	17 Tyler Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301
Beatrice Robbins	19 Manley St., Augusta, ME 04330
Monica Sharp	201 Countryside, Greenfield, MA 01301
Harry & Iris Thor	393 Bunn Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
Arthur & Miriam Webster	5 Lee St., Salem, MA 01970
Horace & Virginia Westwood	169 N. Walnut St., Fairhaven, MA 02719
Farley & Virginia Wheelwright	1241 Adams St. #606, Boston, MA 02124
Beatrice Wood	434 Long Pond Dr., S. Yarmouth, MA 02664

We suspect that many of our membership do some writing, but George Whitney, out in Las Cruces, N.M. publishes his thoughts and experiences upon a more or less monthly basis, and we are happy to re-print the literary expressions of our readers. Actually, we think the following which appeared in his "DESERT JOURNAL" for December deserves wider notice....

PRELUDE

Now as we watched she waved, as though to friends
And far-off family, with the quiet grace
That women have before young beauty blends
Into a lined and older, wiser face
Made strong by time and cares now unforeseen
Yet lovely still with patience of the years.
Now smiling on the television screen
She shows no hint of shadows or of tears.
Wearing unassuming work day dress,
A shapeless dappled hat upon her head
She turns to leave - and who of us would guess
Than when tomorrow comes she may be dead.
The hands with which she waved are soldier's hands,
Her post of duty anxious desert sands.

gcw

For a happier and less controversial thought we would quote a very clever poem that was recently accepted for publication by a literary publication of the New Mexico State University.

THE KITE

The
kite is
dashed to earth.
Like cobwebs in spring
the slack string hangs
from trees and
wires. Pull
it and
you
feel
the
tug
of
a
small
boy's
heart.

gcw

SOUTHEAST UURMA CONVOCATION Feb. 11-13, 1991

The final program for the Southeast Convocation has been received from George Brooks and is printed below. It will be held at 'UU In The Pines', Brooksville, FLa. Registration forms have been in the last two issues of ElderBerries, and we would remind all members of the UURMA that wherever they live they would be welcome.

The Program is as follows:

Monday, Feb. 11th

4:00 P.M.	Registration
5:00 P.M.	Social Hour
6:00 P.M.	Dinner
7:15 P.M.	"Catching up with 1990" - A Sharing of Experiences

Tuesday, Feb. 12th

9:15 A.M.	David Pohl with all one might want to know about present ministerial problems and procedures
10:30 A.M.	More time with David, and time for DeWolf-Hurts to fill us in on regional matters
1:15 P.M.	Ed Ericson - "Florida as seen by a Floridian" with time for discussion
3:00 P.M.	Free time
7:15 P.M.	"What's Under the Kilt?" - led by "Bucky" McKeeman
8:15 P.M.	Readings from Sandburg's "The People, Yes", organized by Dave and Iska Cole. (VOLUNTEERS TO READ INVITED!!!)

Wednesday, Feb. 13th

9:15 A.M.	UURMA Concerns - brought by one of the national officers
10:45 A.M.	Whatever concerns need some extra time and attention
11:30 A.M.	Final Worship (PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

REGISTRATION

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

_____ Telephone () _____

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

Please enclose a check payable to "UU IN THE PINES" for \$54 each.
(\$8 for Program Expenses will be collected at Convocation.)

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

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

NEWS AND NOTES

Word has been received of the death of Rev. Myles Blanchard on October 29, 1990. He was 91 years old. Among other settlements, he served the Monson Unitarian Parish in Massachusetts from 1963 to 1985. He is survived by his wife, Rachel Blanchard of 25 New Road, North Hampton, N.H. 03862. (Your Editor remembers Myles very fondly in that on one occasion, when trying to re-organize a semi-dormant church and running into some bitter opposition, he called all of the UU ministers of the area together that I might tell my story and that support might be organized.)

On October 30, 1990, the Rev. George Sikes died. He was 64 years old. Rev. Sikes served the First Unitarian Society of Chicago from 1971 to 1982. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen Sikes, of 221 S. Wesley Ave., Oak Park, IL.

As noted in an earlier edition, Bob and Mary Holmes lost a very beautiful home and all of their works of art and other personal treasures in a disastrous fire. Seeking some way to express sympathy and support, our Contact Person, Earle McKinney, took the story to the UUMA Chapter in the Northeast District and it, together with Retired Ministers and Surviving Spouses, collected a purse which might assure the Holmes that they were not forgotten in this sad time. Eight hundred and forty dollars was given as an expression of our common concern. ... (This could have been a difficult thing to acknowledge, but their grandchildren wrote delightful little letters of thanks to those who gave.)

The Board of the UURMA will meet in Boston on January 16, 1991.

We have been reminded on several occasions that we list two different addresses for the Editor on the front page of our newsletter. On the masthead is his mailing address. If you have some news or a story about something that should be publicized, send it to RR 1, Box 45 in Dexter, ME 04930; but if you should be traveling in Central Maine, you would be warmly welcomed at 10 Mechanic Street.

Phil Giles, Chairman of the Conference Committee for the 1991 Northeast gathering, has already reserved the Oblate House for October 8 - 10. See you next year!

CORRECTIONS

In our story about Bob Dick during World War II there were some errors and for the purpose of keeping the record true to what actually occurred, - it was at the Brattleboro, VT Retreat that he worked 12 hour days. It was in W. Campton, N.H. where he drove a truck, did road and forestry work from May 15, 1942 to February 15, 1943. He spent the next 18 months working with the mentally ill. In August, 1944, he was transferred to the Rochester Unit where there were 21 men... Actually, I am told, Rochester solicited Peter Watson rather than he contributed voluntarily. Sadly, since I heard about all of this, I have learned that Peter Watson died of a heart attack in late October; but the Department of Peace and International Cooperation will eventually be established in his name.