

*Unitarian
Universalist
Retired
Ministers
Association*

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

APRIL 1992

ELDERBERRIES

NEWSLETTER OF THE U.U.R.M.A.

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1991 - 93

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Looking over the copy that has been received for this issue of Elderberries, I am excited by the variety and interest of the varied pieces submitted. There are a number of them that should prove interesting. The volume of mail is picking up, a number of tidbits of information about members, information about the UURMA Contact Program, a bit about the programs in which the UURMA is involved that will occur at the General Assembly in Calgary, reactions to earlier issues of Elderberries, suggestions for publication, some issues of policy to be pondered, errata, etc.

We are also trying for some technical improvements: a new printer, colored (and recycled) paper, perhaps some colored ink. We are also moving toward producing our own mailing labels. As always, we will be stimulated by your reactions to our efforts and will be as receptive as we can be to your comments and suggestions for further improvements.

Onward and upward! But forever? Unlikely.

Gordon B. McKeeman



from the President

Munson's Musings

When the Board meets in Boston in May, we will recognize the first year when we have held four regional conferences. The first West Coast Retreat in February, held during the Malibu floods, has been evaluated by the Committee as of "professional quality" and indeed it was. The Committee (Ford Lewis, chair) has already met to begin preparations for '93.

Besides the usual matters of budget, conferences and caring network, we shall be looking at:

- 1. The proposed changes in the UUMA Guidelines as they pertain to retired ministers (spouses).*
- 2. Our new status with the UUMA*
- 3. Trends in regional conferences*
- 4. Effects of proposed By-law changes on election procedures and terms of office*
- 5. Changing the Board make-up from regional to continental in representation.*

Again I solicit your responses, input, concerns and visions. As the ranks of the retired swell, we need to expand our vision and involvement to meet the needs and draw upon the talents and interests of one and all.

Let us hear from you.



AT THE GA UURMA will sponsor a luncheon following the Service of the Living Tradition. Special guests will be those recognized at the services as newly retired. **Bill Gardner** will be sending notices of the luncheon to all those members who have registered for GA by May 21. Anyone who is attending GA and hasn't registered by May 21, or who will just be "in town" for the day and would like to attend the luncheon, should contact Bill to make a reservation. (See Bill's phone number, etc., on cover page).

MISCELLANY

Erratum We regret the necessity of confessing that there was an error in the printing of George Whitney's poem, The Journey, in the January 1992 issue. What should have been "benison" appeared as "jenison". Sorry!

Found (Left behind after NEUURMA Conference, October '91) Two "Guess Who" snapshots:

1. Features a chic young woman in dark dress, holding a white, broad-brimmed summer hat. Sleeping (or expired) dog lying on ground nearby.
2. Features a handsome young man wearing leather jacket and fedora with nicely flared brim. He is sitting on right front fender of a 1930's Buick (?) Coupe, which appears to have been licensed in Wichita, Kansas in 1937. Owners may claim same by writing Bill Hammond, 230 Foster St., Littleton, MA 01460.

In a sizeable letter from Harold Shelley, were suggestions for names for the UURMA and Elderberries. He suggests the the organization be called Association of Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Spouses (acronym AUURMAS, pronounced "ourmass"), and that the newsletter be renamed **After Hours**.

Dick Gibbs (7 Pine St., Greenfield, MA 01301) sent hearty thanks for the note sent by the NEUURMA clan from Hudson...

The Dicks report visiting Fred Miller in Brattleboro, VT. He reads to four public school classes each day!

The Editorial office of Elderberries is located at 24 Lake Forest Dr., Charlottesville, VA 22901. Type-setting and formatting is done in Las Vegas by Vern Curry. Distribution is courtesy the US Postal Service and labels are processed at the UUA.

GRIST FOR THE MILL

The UUA now has a Committee on Excellence in Ministry. Its preliminary recommendations have been under discussion for some time now. Its recommendations include the setting up of an Office of Ministerial Development and Leadership; the development of a process by which ministers will assess their present leadership skills and strengths, abilities and areas of growth, develop a plan for addressing those areas where growth is needed. There are other recommendations as well. If you haven't seen the report and think you have some experience that might assist the Committee, write for a copy to the UUA Department of Ministry.

The UURMA is reconsidering its status as a chapter within the UUMA structure. At the January Board meeting of the UURMA, a resolution was adopted that contemplates our surrendering our status as a UUMA Chapter and becoming a separate and independent organization, understanding that such action in no way affects the status of retired ministers as Life Members of the UUMA.

Also on the UURMA Board agenda is a proposal to amend Article V of the UURMA By-laws to provide for the rotation of Board service through a limitation of terms. If adopted the amendment will take effect on 7/1/93.

There seems to be a growing trend in the UUA to become more than an association of churches. It is a development that we might have anticipated, since the major frustration of those working at headquarters is their inability to require churches to do what seems in their best interest. Since the fellowshiping process provides a "handle" on the ministers, the list of requirements grows apace, and what might have been considered an unwarranted intrusion on local church prerogatives is now considered standard operating procedure. What these developments point to in a forceful way is the lack of a forum where such developments may be examined and discussed. Since consolidation, there seems to be no forum analogous to the old General Conference of Unitarians, or the free-spirited debates in the Universalist General Assemblies. Certainly our GA's as they are currently constituted do not seem to be such places or occasions.

A small active congregation on the Mississippi Gulf coast is seeking a part-time minister to help with the worship service and pastoral care. The fellowship serves an area along the Mississippi Gulf coast from Waveland/Bay St. Louis on the Louisiana border to Biloxi. This area has a population of approximately 100,000 and covers a distance of 40 miles along Interstate 10. This is the second largest population center in Mississippi. The fellowship has members from all over the country with many retirees. It meets in the Diamondhead Community Center, 16 miles from the Louisiana border. Diamondhead is a residential resort community with golf, tennis and yacht club. Terms are negotiable for mutual satisfaction. If interested contact **Mildred Lowrie**, President, 230 F.Z. Goss Rd., Picayune, MS 39466.

We note with interest that at least two of our members, Harry Meserve and George Whitney, publish personal newsletters. George calls his, "Notes From A Desert Journal." Harry began publishing his in response to requests from parishioners who missed his newsletter columns when he retired. This got us to wondering whether there might be others doing similar things. And, of course, ELDERBERRIES would much enjoy being on the mailing list for such, so that we have an additional source of material.



Among the publications that you might find inviting are these:

"Guinea Pigs for Peace," edited by Rev. Robert T. Dick, is the story of Civilian Public Service Unit 115-R, a group of conscientious objectors who volunteered for a series of experiments testing the limits of human endurance under different conditions. Copies may be obtained by writing to Bob at 1 Walnut Way, Springfield, VT 05156-9142.

The Fritchman Publication Committee is seeking funding to enable the printing of selected sermons, addresses and radio talks delivered by Stephen Fritchman. The selection committee has nearly completed the task of deciding which of the more than 500 items are most appropriate for the forthcoming volume. Matching funds have been gathered in the amount of \$13,500. The Committee welcomes contributions to enable the publication to go forward. It is also accepting pre-publication orders for the book at \$25.00 each. Checks should be made out to the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, and mailed to the Fritchman Publication Committee, c/o Betty Rottger, 2004 Bataan Rd., Redondo Beach, CA 90278.

In addition to the UURMA luncheon at the GA, there will be some workshops of interest to retired ministers and spouses. One will focus on the relationship of local parish ministers to retired ministers and their families living in the area served by the local parish. As some of you are familiar with this situation, you may be able to contribute to the discussion of the matter which is the subject of a proposed UUMA guideline. There will be another workshop on retirement planning to which some of us might add realism, reassurance and some cautionary notes.

It bears repetition that the Caring Network is seeking additional assistance in providing district contact persons to our members. Florida, Metropolitan New York, Ohio Valley and Southwest Districts are not represented. If you live in one of these Districts and are willing to make contact with others, spouses and surviving spouses, contact Helen Dick for more information.



Just for fun, is this generic editorial from the pen of Richard Shaw, retired English professor living on Cape Cod:

If we can put a man on the moon we certainly can come up with a viable solution. However, the bottom line is: How will it impact on Cape Cod and Pleasant bays? Are we honing Occam's Razor only to squeeze the last drop of meaning out of a foregone conclusion or sidestepping the issue? Is it local or regional? As the Founding Fathers noted, hard problems provoke hard questions and hard questions demand hard answers. It's a trade-off, sort of a Chinese menu, one-from-group-A-one-from-group-B, solution to our economic, environmental, political and ecological problems -- but still a fair and balanced approach.

Toes will be stepped on, the pendulum may already have swung too far, the tail may already be wagging the dog, so the question is not: Are we muddling through or simply muddling?

The answer is, of course, not simply yes or no, but an emphatic perhaps. Abe Lincoln was right.

Since the squeaking wheel gets the grease, cool heads will point out that the race is not always to the swift and that mutual accommodation is not compromise....

It comes down to the ageless question, first put by DaVinci: "Will it fly?"

THE MAIL BAG

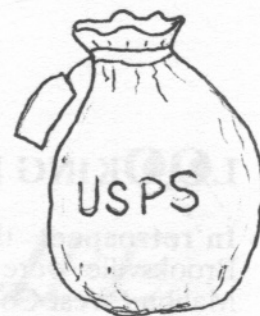
People do write us. Here are samples of what they are saying.

On the subject of UUA Board reporting in these pages:

Anna (Mrs Dan H.) Fenn writes:

"I am so gratified to you for the section on the UUA Board meetings, and hope others feel the same way. It was so cleverly set up!"

Harold Shelley saw it a bit differently: "The last thing I want to read about is UUA Board work."



Reacting to a piece in the October '91 issue of ELDERBERRIES, entitled, "You Know You're Getting Old When...", **Elizabeth Silliman** penned: "I'm only 88 so most of these things don't apply to me yet! I do put down meetings in my date book and not go. My knees buckle occasionally, but so does my belt."

President Keith Munson had a letter from **Don Harrington** who, with his wife, is ministering to two Transylvanian congregations. Don describes their situation: "The winter here is rigorous -- below freezing since the middle of November and about 15 inches of snow so far. (dated 1/27/92) The roads are still icy! Talk about work! a Christmas eve service, 3 Christmas Days with full services in both church, December 25th communion, December 26th with baby dedications, also 2 New Year's Day services and Aniko teaches a Confirmation Class once a week in both villages. Aniko and I have been welcomed here with enthusiasm and love, and we surely are needed. Ceausescu came pretty close to destroying our movement. Winter means keeping two fires going day and night. We have an '87 Mitsubishi Galant, but have to drive 150 kms to get gasoline at .45 per liter because it uses unleaded gas. No telephone. Mail twice a week. Our big crisis at the moment is that last Fall the the government 'de-collectivized', restored land and animals to the people, but kept all the farm machinery. So we are raising money for a tractor for the church which will do most of the ploughing and harrowing for the whole village."

On a similar theme, **George Williams** of Chico State and **Judit Gellerd** are working through the Center for Free Religion to give assistance to the Hungarian and Transylvanian Unitarian groups, especially computer, desktop publishing, and visual aid equipment and training. More detailed information about their work and opportunities to assist it may be obtained by calling them at 916/895-3222.

In quite another vein, **Hugh Weston** wrote: " A question: Are there any REPUBLICANS among the UU ministers these days? (There used to be.) (I am not a Republican.)" Hugh lives in Palm Desert, CA, and, I suspect, could probably find a few Republicans in his own neighborhood, though probably not any are UU ministers.

LOOKING BACKWARD

In retrospect the UURMA Conferences in Malibu and Brooksville were relaxing and stimulating events. The Malibu (West Coast) Conference was a first for UURMA, and thanks to the Webbs, Lewises, Gilmartins and the Ockerts for the excellent organizational work there. A special result of the conversations there was a letter sent to the UUMA expressing concern about the present draft of the UUMA Guidelines as it applies to the relationship between local parish ministers and retired ministers living in the local parish. It seems very likely that as a result of that letter a redraft of the proposed Guideline will be attempted. Nearly twenty attendees survived the torrential rains, flooding and landslides of the Winter season in Southern California, arrived, attended and returned home without serious incident.

The Brooksville Conference, held again the UU-in-the-Pines Center, was planned by at the Brooks, Congdons and Taylors. Program features were testimonies of personal spiritual experience from Claudine Grady (Uncommon Sense), Todd Taylor (Native American Spirituality), and Carolyn Taylor (Women's Spirituality). Carolyn triumphed over a badly sprained ankle to present her program. Another feature of the program was a guided tour of Crystal River Indian Mounds State Archeological Site with Robert Marshall, a local archeologist. Other sessions featured information on supplemental and long-term care insurance and Bill Hammond and Grace Lindquist did a reprise of the Hudson Conference program, "Jazz 1922-1947." David Hubner, Dir. of the Office of Church Finances, who was scheduled to attend, didn't. President Munson stepped in to present a program on the "Future of the UUA," the results of a survey he had taken. There is an opening for the leadership of the 1993 Brooksville Conference. Volunteers should contact UURMA Vice President Max Gaebler who holds the "Conferences" portfolio in the UURMA.

The Editor has considerable trepidation about including much about UUA Board doings, and about omitting same either. The Board seems enthusiastic about efforts to increase racial and cultural diversity of the UUA and its member congregations. The financial condition of the UUA is reported to be much improved, with its investments outperforming the market indices, and the size of its endowment and income therefrom are at the highest level in history.



LOOKING FORWARD

Put in your date book the dates for the Fall UURMA Conference at the Oblate Center in Hudson, NH, October 6-8, 1992. Bill Hammond and Grace Lindquist will be working with a sterling Committee to offer another of the outstanding programs that have attracted the UURMA members in the Northeast.

The UURMA Board is to meet in Boston, May 12-13. Items of concern should be communicated to the President for inclusion in the agenda. (See President's address on cover page.)

It is anticipated that conferences will be held in the Midwest (likely Indiana), on the Pacific Coast and Florida during 1992-93. Watch the pages of Elderberries for the very latest information regarding specific plans.

THE OF LIFE

The Caring Network was initiated by the UURMA Board to meet a need expressed by many retirees/ mates - "Contact with people, whether parishioners, colleagues, or friends, is the most universally missed aspect in retirement."

The purpose of the network is, then, to keep in touch with retired ministers/mates - including surviving spouses.

One way it hoped to accomplish this is to have a "contact person" in each district who will occasionally write or phone those in their district to make sure they are receiving the newsletter; and to see if there is any need that should or could be met. We have listed the districts and contacts persons below.

Make note of your contact person. If your district doesn't have one, why not volunteer? Contact Helen Dick, UURMA Board member, chair of of the Caring Network, 1 Walnut Way, Springfield, VT 05156-9142. Phone: 802/886-8271.

Ballou Channing - Ms Yvonne Giles, 27 Herring Run, North Harwich, MA 02645

Central Mass - William Hammond/Grace Lindquist, POBox 932, Littleton, MA 01460

Central Midwest - Dr. John W. Brigham, 2604 Chestnut St., Quincy, IL 62301

Connecticut Valley - Dr. J. Harold Shelley, 35 Pomeroy Ct., Amherst, MA 01002

Florida -

Joseph Priestly - Dr. Charles A. Howe, 3909 Commander Dr., Hyattsville, MD 20782

Mass Bay - Dr. Ralph and Wynonda Helverson, 125 Fresh Pond Pkwy., Cambridge, Ma 02138

Metro New York -

Michigan - Rev. Maryell Cleary, 1183 Arbor Dr., Apt. B, East Lansing, MI 48823

IRVING R. MURRAY - January 23, 1992
surviving - Daughter, Nanine Parson
335 Interlochen West,
Lake Alfred, FL 33850
Son, David

BARRY STODDARD - February 6, 1992
surviving - Wife, Sharon Stoddard
109 Pleasant Street
Franklin, NH 03235
A son and a daughter

KENNETH WALKER - March 28, 1992
surviving - Daughter, Frances Bos
3942 Central Avenue
Western Springs, IL 60558
Step-daughter, Clarice Jefferson
205 Fairway Drive
Bloomington, IL 61701

Mid South - Rev. Albert D'Orlando, 2236 Dublin St., New Orleans, LA 70118

Mountain Desert - Dr. Leo C. Faye, PO Box 2835, Corrales, NM 87048

New Hampshire/Vermont - Rev. Robert T./Helen H. Dick, 1 Walnut Way, Springfield, VT 05156

Northeast - Rev. Maurice Cobb, HC 81, Box 1714, W. Newfield, ME; Rev. Robert C. Sallies, PO Box 192, Norway, ME 04268; Rev. Earle T. McKinney, PO Box 130, Gray, ME 04039; Rev. Donald Hinkley, 26 Old Winthrop Rd., Apt. 208, Auburn, ME 04330

Ohio Meadville - Rev. Jesse Cavileer, 1240 Palo Alto St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Ohio Valley -

Pacific Central - (awaiting reply)

Pacific Northwest - Dr. Felix D. Lion, 3310 Ocean Blvd., Victoria, BC V9C 1W6 Canada

Pacific Southwest - (awaiting reply)

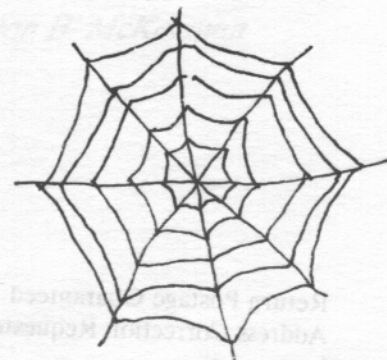
Prairie Star - Dr. John Cummins, 4238 Sheridan Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55410

St. Lawrence - Rev. Rudy Gelsey, 1 Deer Run, Gansevoort, NY 12831

Southwest

Thomas Jefferson Ms Edith Christensen, PO Box 10056, Wilmington, NC 28405

Western Canada - Dr. John Cummins (see above)



Next fall, when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in "V" formation, you might consider what science has discovered about why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% more flying range than possible if each bird flew on its own.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of having to go it alone . . . and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed in the same way.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or geese flying south.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

What do we say when we honk from behind?

Finally . . . when a goose gets sick or is wounded . . . and falls out of formation, two other geese fallout with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies. Only then do they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their group.

If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.



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