

*Unitarian
Universalist
Retired
Ministers
Association*

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

JANUARY 1992

ELDERBERRIES

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

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Some wag once wrote that in a small town people read the local newspaper to find out whether the Editor is getting the news. That may also be true of a newsletter such as *Elderberries*. We are very grateful for the many suggestions and contributions that have come to the Editorial Office. We have no doubt that they will make the newsletter more newsy, more informative and more worthy of the time you put into reading it. We trust that this flow of information will continue. And we encourage contributions of whatever you feel will enhance its usefulness.

Issues will follow at three month intervals: April, July, October and January (approximately). Contributions are welcomed at any time. We have been asked for more details regarding some items, deaths in particular. In the interest of evenhandedness we have tried to provide similar information regarding each deceased colleague. We have received a request to report matters of concern and interest from UUA Board meetings. We will try to provide some of this, though our publication schedule is not helpful, since it precedes the quarterly UUA Board meetings.

And as we garner experience, we will try to improve on the publication's appearance since it is one of the few advertisements for our organization. We may even decide whether the name of the newsletter is *Elder Berries* or *Elderberries*. But don't hold your breath waiting for that to happen. A pleasant Candlemas Day/Groundhog Day to all, unless you're hoping for an early Spring and do not want Punxsutawney Phil or Phyl to see his/her shadow.

Gordon B. McKeeman



MUNSON'S MUSINGS

When the Board meets for its mid-winter deliberations, many UURMA concerns will fill the agenda. Matters that will receive our attention will include:

Our need to fill the unexpired term of Peg Johnston. **Helen Dick** who (with Bob) have been most active with Peg (and Freda) in developing the Contact Persons Program has agreed to stand in nomination for this position.

There has been some concern over our "official" status with the UUMA. We don't fit the "mould." Perhaps "Honorary Chapter" as suggested by Leon Hopper would clarify this relationship.

There is some concern about "adjusting" our name to reflect the membership of spouses, widows and widowers.

By-law changes are under consideration to establish terms of office.

There are requests that we establish a Memorial Fund - and also an Endowment Fund.

Plans need to be made to confirm our involvement at the General Assembly in Calgary. These include the now traditional luncheon for newly retired ministers and spouses, plus the co-sponsorship of workshops with the Department of Ministry.

Because of such a full agenda, Board Members will gather on the evening before to discuss some of these items. If you have any concerns or input regarding these or other issues, please contact me or any members of the Executive Board.

Keith C. Munson

EASTERN EUROPEAN STUDY TOUR

Meadville/Lombard Theological School is sponsoring a Tour, August 4-14, 1992. Itinerary stops include Vienna, Prague, Transylvania, Budapest, Sighisoara and the Theological Seminary at Kolosvar. Spend two nights in a rural village. Good health is essential. Tour leaders will be Elise B. Cade and Rev. Arvid Straube. Swissair and air-conditioned bus transportation. Four-star hotel accommodations in Vienna, Prague and Budapest. Most meals, visas and trip cancellation insurance included in package price of \$2391 (Raleigh-Durham) or \$2266 (Chicago). For further information contact Elise Cade, 5701 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago, IL 60637, (312) 753-3195 or Rev. Arvid Straube, 4907 Garrett Rd., Durham, NC 27707, (919) 489-2575.

SIDELINES

The 1993 General Assembly in Charlotte, NC, will include a celebration of the 200th anniversary of Universalism as a continuing religious body. In 1793 the New England Convention of Universalists met (in Oxford, MA) and began the organization which later became the United States Convention of Universalists in 1833 and successively the Universalist General Convention and the Universalist Church of America. A Committee has been appointed to make plans for celebrating this organizational anniversary. **Drucilla and John Cummins and Phyllis and Gordon McKeeman** have been appointed honorary co-chairs of the committee. The committee welcomes suggestions as to ways in which the impact of the celebration may be maximized through observances in local societies and in District and sub-district gatherings. Any suggestions may be directed to the Committee's attention at 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108.

ELDERBERRIES

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UURMA MEMBER'S BOOK HONORED AS "OUTSTANDING"

The Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights in the United States, based at the University of Arkansas, has selected George Marshall's most recent book, "A. Powell Davies and His Times" as the year's outstanding book on the subject of human rights in the United States. The official date of the announcement of this award was December 10, Human Rights Day.

Dr. Marshall released this statement on being notified of the award:

"I am grateful for the life and commitment to human rights and liberal religious values of A. Powell Davies, which alone made this opportunity possible. He was one of the towering figures of that era, not simply in religious attitudes but in the defense and articulation of human rights. This award honors the heroic commitment to human rights of Davies, which I simply record."

Davies, who died in 1957, was the outstanding Unitarian minister of that era, and from his pulpit in Washington, desegregated recreational facilities and restaurants in the District of Columbia, led the lobbying effort to remove nuclear power from the control of the military, fought to maintain the wall of separation between church and state, resisted the influence of Senator Joseph McCarthy and joined with other non-Communist liberals to found the Americans for Democratic Action. He was honored by Howard University with a doctorate, by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and by the Afro-American Newspapers.

The award winning book, "A. Powell Davies and His Times," was published by Skinner House Books, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, and sells for \$19.95 by mail.

For those not familiar with the Gustavus Myers Center, it was founded to continue the research into intolerance in the United States inaugurated by Gustavus Myers in his "History of Bigotry in the United States," (1943, edited and amplified by Henry M. Christman in 1960). The specific purpose of the Center is to identify, reward and publicize outstanding books about all kinds of intolerance in the United States. Each year in January publishers are asked to nominate books published in the preceding year, and winners are announced on Human Rights Day, December 10.

Elderberries is pleased to add its congratulations to UURMA member Marshall on this signal achievement, and to commend his book to UURMA members.

UURMA FLORIDA CONFERENCE

Last minute reminder of the conference at **UU in the Pines**, Brooksville, Florida, February 19-21, 1992. Here's the program:

Wednesday, February 19

4:00 p.m. Registration, room assignments

5:00 p.m. Social hour - wine, juices, nibbles

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. A personal spiritual odyssey by **Claudine Grady**, "Uncommon Sense"

7:20 p.m. Rounds - a sharing of our past year

Thursday, February 20

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. **Todd Taylor** on "Native American Spirituality"

9:20 a.m. Speaker from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Florida: Supplemental Health Care and Long Term Care Insurance"

10:45 a.m. Coffee Break

11:00 a.m. **Mr. Robert Marshall**, local archeologist: "The Early People of Florida"

12:15 p.m. Lunch

12:40 p.m. Group Trip by private cars to the Crystal River, site of Indian mounds. Cost underwritten by social charge; Mr. Marshall will accompany us. Optional activities for those not joining the auto tour.

5:15 p.m. Social Hour - wine, juices, nibbles at the domicile of Todd and Carolyn Taylor

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. **Carolyn Taylor** on "Women's Spirituality"

7:50 p.m. "The Way I Heard It: Jazz and the Big Bands, 1922-1947" with **Bill Hammond** as narrator

Friday, February 21

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Strip beds, remove gear to porch or car; new conference arrives early afternoon

9:20 a.m. **David Hubner**, Director, UUA Office of Church Staff Finances

10:30 a.m. Coffee Break

10:45 a.m. UURMA matters with President **Keith Munson**, followed by final worship

12:00 m. Lunch and au revoirs

LAST MINUTE RESERVATIONS? CALL PRISCILLA BROOKS 813-625-2275

BOARD

Financial Directions

To assure that endowment funds are maintained at a level which will provide income for the intended life of the funds, and to continue to abide by the wishes of the donors, the Board has approved a gradual reduction of the percentage of the fund corpus that can be spent from 7% to 5% over eight years. Earnings in excess of 5% will be added to the principal to provide the larger funds that will be needed to offset the long-term effects of inflation. In the fiscal year 1993, this draw will be 6.5%.

Salary projections must necessarily be ahead of actual expenditures, but cannot be exact. A 5% increase is expected to meet needs imposed by inflation, and the ratio of benefit to salary is expected to rise from 26.9% to 28.9% in 1993.

General expenses are projected to increase about 5% for fiscal year 1993.

Hymnbook and Worship Manual

The selection of musical and service manual materials is complete, the manuscript has been delivered to Beacon Press, and the completed "Singing the Living Tradition" should be available early in 1993, with the latest expectations "prior to the General Assembly." Marketing suggestions for the new publication will be coming to the congregations soon.

General Assembly 1992

Western Canada District is gearing up for the every-ten-year GA that is held in Canada, and all who plan to attend should be aware of the special factors which apply whenever we gather in Canada. To expedite crossing the border from the USA, it is wise to carry a passport, a birth certificate, or a USA voter card. Expenses will be higher for air travel, and registration, and those who attend should be aware that there is a currency exchange rate that favors US dollars by an average of 10% to 14%. The Planning Committee, however, urges those who wish to reduce their costs to consider working part time during the GA as volunteers in exchange for waiver of the registration fee of about \$200.00 US.

doing

Young Adult Ministries

While of no direct benefit to retired ministers, there is continuing interest by all UUs of all ages in the Young Adult Ministries. Young adults, the future members and leaders of the denomination, will benefit from grants, training workshops and other aspects of the program

Capital Campaign

Two years ago the Board authorized steps which would lead to a Capital Campaign, and it is now expected that those steps will lead to acceptance of initial gifts to that Campaign during 1994. Details of the Campaign and projected allocations of those funds will be provided over the next two years.

Board of Trustees Meeting Format

For the first time in many years the Board meetings will take on a different format. Early in the meetings, members will meet in one of four groups which will deal with operations of the Association. After full discussion of the issues of ministry, education, administration, social justice and other general issues, the four groups will gather in a more traditional format and will discuss the issues studied in depth by each of the groups. This trial run will no doubt require future modifications to improve its efficiency, but will allow the Board to function essentially in smaller groups, a partial concession to those who think the Board is too large. It also allows Board members who have special expertise, or special interest, to function in an environment which best utilizes their talents.

The above information was supplied by Erv Miller, UUA Trustee for the Prairie Star and Western Canada Districts.

BOOK REVIEW....

"Private Lives of Ministers' Wives" by Liz Greenbacker and Rev. Sherry Taylor; New Horizon Press, Far Hills, New Jersey; \$19.95

This book is based on an in-depth survey sent out in the form of questionnaires to 464 minister's wives. The authors received 119 responses, and those who responded referred 131 other women to them. They received 101 completed questionnaires -- a response rate of 22%. Eight responses were polite refusals. The authors did not know personally any of the women on the list, who ranged in ages from 29 to 79 years.

The survey contained 26 pertinent questions. (Note: As far as this reported could detect, there were no liberal minister's wives on the list. While problems would have been the same the approach to handling most of them, I believe would have been different.)

In many congregations the attitude regarding the place of the minister's wife was a hangover of traditional expectations, and a real trouble-maker. On the part of the wives, some felt that they were "called" to be minister's wives and felt they were better qualified to do certain things and make certain decisions in the church than most parishioners.

Returning to careers on the part of the wives was often totally misunderstood. Learning to be supportive to her husband, and taking her part in church activity was a delicate area. The average minister's salary and the stress of making ends meet was another item of concern. Lack of private time together of the minister and his wife and family was another sensitive area.

It's not necessary to list any more of the common problems here - the reader knows them well. The importance of the book is what the survey shows regarding the meeting of these problems. Were they met with understanding and wisdom, or sadly, were they not met and solved, causing problems worse compounded?

In the back of the book is a complete list of the 26 questions asked and a review of the survey results. There also 2 Epilogues, one by each of the authors and their important conclusions.

There are reports of unfair attitudes of congregations that the readers never suspected existed. On the other hand reports of ministers and their wives who never suspected they were also taking the wrong path at times. There were reports of kindly understanding parishioners, sensitive to the well-being of the church and the minister and his family, who met the problems head on and made it their business to correct errors for the good of all.

The book is important and a good idea for an addition to the Church Library. (Note: The chapter titled "Filthy Lucre" should be read by every Search Committee before it begins its work.)

This reporter's first reaction was "Why review this book for the UURMA; they've all been through the mill?" On second thought (having been through the mill for 56 years) I well remember how a kind word or helpful hand from someone who understood lifted me up when things were pretty questionable. We in our "ex-spots" can do the same in a non-interfering way should the occasion arise. This book will help us recall those days - and we may even buy the book for the Church Library.

Hope Reamon

HELP WANTED....

The Universalist Unitarian Church of North Hadley, Quebec, is seeking a part-time ministry during the Spring and Summer months. The church has a parsonage, and is willing to negotiate hours per week and the duration and all other details. The Department of Ministry has been consulted. For further details, call Walter Robbins, 818-837-2814.

PEG JOHNSTON REMEMBERED

THE



OF LIFE

Margeret "Peg" Johnston (Mrs. Donald) died October 19, 1991. Her death came as a total shock to those who knew her. She had gone to Unitarian Universalist District meeting during the day and then returned to West Newbury, Vermont, to a community pot-luck dinner where she was an active participant. After dinner she drove home, turned on a couple of lights and then literally dropped dead. Death was instant and she did not suffer. This is the account sent out by Peg's family. It is so like her - living actively to the very end. She was 83 years old, but she never seemed "old." Not that she ever made the effort to be younger than she was, but that she was young in heart and in love with life. She could appreciate the past and remember it without being so tied to it that she could not move on.

We became friends when she and Don moved to Niagara Falls, NY while we were in Buffalo and through the years when Don had his first heart attack and Paul had his lymphoma sarcoma diagnosis our friendship deepened. She was supportive of me as I coped with changes in my life and I encouraged her when she doubted that she was ready to retire to Vermont and leave a job she was involved in and which she did well. We were both lucky in that our husbands both outlived the predictions of the medics at that time. However, we both lived with less certainty than we had previously and this made a bond.

After Don and Paul died, we shared still another chapter of our lives. We were fortunate to serve on the Board of UURMA together these past few years and we both looked forward to our evenings together the nights before the meetings when we would eat together often at my apartment. I enjoyed her accounts of her trips to Russia, China,

Europe as well as the more recent weeks at Ferry Beach and the trip this past summer to Newport, RI where she and Don had served. This last trip was with her daughters and granddaughters to reminisce and discover the parsonage where the youngest daughter was born. She made and kept friends wherever she lived. She said of her 80th birthday celebration planned by her children that friends had gathered there all the way back to her kindergarten

days and that she would not need to have an account of her life later.

Peg was proud of the birth and growth of the West Newbury Church which she worked hard to help found and in which she remained active. Her interest in and dedication to Unitarian Universalism was strong and unwavering. I loved her. I am glad I knew her. I will miss her. I was not ready to let her go. We had plans for the mid-January meeting.

Freda Carnes

Donald B. King - October 6, 1991

surviving - Wife, Betty King

409 Harrison Street

Walkerton, IN 46574

1 daughter, 1 son, 6 grandchildren, 1 greatgrand child

Lyman I. Achenbach - October 20, 1991

surviving - 1 son, 1 daughter, 1 nephew whom he raised

8 grandchildren, 3 great grand children

James M. Becker - October 20, 1991

surviving - Wife, Mary Becker

5366 La Jolla Boulevard

La Jolla, CA 92037

1 son

Ernest W. Kuebler - January 2, 1992

surviving - Wife, Naomi Kuebler

40 Presidential Court

Syracuse, NY 13202

2 daughters, 1 son

The Journey

We walked together as mountains beckoned

Beyond the banks of winding streams

Always climbing and laughing

With our dreams.

And if I slipped and fell upon the path

you gently held my aching hand

in yours and kissed it

in our magic land.

Together from the soaring heights we

descried a world alight with fire

reaching wide and endless

in our desire.

O urgent dreams still vivid below the

sunset's shadow, still bright

before the relentless

denison of night.

George C. Whitney

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