

Unitarian  
Universalist  
Retired  
Ministers  
Association

MARCH 1993

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

VOLUME VIII

# ELDERBERRIES

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## The Mysterious Disappearance

David Hubner remarked to me the other day that retired UU ministers seemed to disappear. I was struck by the remark, and began to ponder its implications. One of them is that we have little voice in the ongoing concerns of the UUA. Our members appear to be divided on the question of whether we want or need such a voice.

Now and then matters arise in which we have at least a casual interest. A discussion about the shrinking amount of service gratuity payments did evoke some passion at the Northeast UURMA Conference last October. To some the amount is not of great concern because they have ample resources. To others it is an urgent concern.

When the investment results from the funds which undergird the service gratuity payments declined, and even though other contributions increased, the UUA saw fit simply to reduce the amount given as service gratuity, even though the Finance Committee received a request to appropriate additional funds to maintain the level of the gratuity, rather than diminish it. The retired ministers and spouses had effectively disappeared. Earlier the UUA had used funds restricted to ministerial sustentation for other purposes and is now in the process of restoring them, though not completely. Here, again, the retired ministers and spouses disappeared.

It need not be this way. We can speak up on behalf of those of our members whose financial resources are meager. We do not need to be invisible, mysteriously missing when the welfare of some is in jeopardy.

- Gordon B. McKeeman -

# RANDOM NOTES FROM

We have had a communication from Julia Bradburd concerning Unitarian Universalist House in Philadelphia. It has two adjoining facilities -- Priestley House, which offers supported independent living for 25 people; and Rush House, which offers skilled and intermediate nursing care and has 39 beds in a single story building. It is prepared to support long term, short term, respite and hospice care. The Marketing Committee is concerned that the number of Unitarian Universalist residents comprises less than half of its residents. The Committee wishes to increase the U.U. component of its population. There is no longer a waiting list; U.U. House is eager for applicants. Further information may be obtained by contacting Unitarian Universalist House, 224 W. Tulpehocken Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144. The telephone number is (215) 843-0809.

HITHER

Interested in living in the scenic Shenandoah Valley in Virginia? We're a small Unitarian Universalist fellowship in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley, seeking a part-time minister. Despite having only sixty members, we've recently completed a beautiful new meeting hall in Waynesboro, Virginia. Now we are looking for ministerial support to help us grow both physically and spiritually. If you are interested in further details, please contact Ed Milner, Correspondance Secretary for the Ministerial Search Committee, phone (703) 885-4281.

THITHER

The Nominating Committee of UURMA has been screening names suggested as nominees for the UURMA Board. Committee members are Don Hinckley, Barbara Gudmundson and Harry Thor. Look for their report in April.

AND YON

At its January meeting the UURMA approved the proposed changes in Bylaws to provide for term limitations and for staggered terms of service on the Board, so that the terms of members do not all expire at the same time. A copy of the revised Bylaws is enclosed.

Just a reminder that UURMA is supported by the voluntary contributions of its members. We have no dues. Contributions may be sent to Rev. William Gardner, 77 Sailfish Drive, E. Falmouth, MA 02536.





## NEED A JOB? WANT A JOB? HERE'S HOW!

Why would a retired minister, glad to be tending orchids fulltime at last, want to return to the rigors of the parish? Well, for the money, sometimes. Other times, it's because the old throat has a word or two to say yet, and the ears still like to listen, and because the touch of a hand says, "I have been there. I survived, and so can you."

Most retired ministers, after a brief period of adjustment, seem quite happy to remain retired, and I salute you. You have earned your leisure, and this article is not for you. It's for the rest of you who wonder about opportunities for paid service in the ministry.

First of all, I want to dispel the notion that "retirement" means you can't return to service. The UUA pension plan once had such restrictions, but no more. You can work as you wish, and the UUA will help you if we can.

How the UUA can help depends on what you want to do. If you wish to seek a settled, full-time ministry, call me. You can work with the Settlement Office just as a younger colleague would. The same goes for full-time interims. Most of our career interims are over 59, and some draw pension money--though the word "retired" hardly applies to someone in that demanding specialty.

If you are interested in part-time ministry the UUA staff member who will be best able to assist you is the District Executive where you could serve. The DEs often are aware of congregations too small to afford a full-time minister but eager for some ministry. Naturally, the DE will need to make a judgment about your suitability for any given position, so you'll want to collect your resume and some recent sermons and make an appointment for an interview. The relationship will work best if you present your strengths and limitations frankly, and listen well to what the DE has to say.

What are the odds for older ministers? I would say that older ministers need to overcome two main anxieties UUA staff and congregational leaders may bring to an interview. First is the worry that an older minister will stay too long and become a burden. Any older minister is wise to anticipate this and to offer reassurance. It is not reassuring to insist that you're strong as an ox and always will be. It is better to acknowledge any ill effects of aging, and to accentuate the wisdom and perspective that enable you to cope. It is appropriate, even in a "settled" ministry, to negotiate a periodic review, or even a defined term.

The second worry about older ministers is that you are out of date. It is a challenge in our sometimes faddish movement to keep up. But ministers must show respect for all of their parishioners. At the moment this means using gender-inclusive language and acknowledging a diversity that may include important Jewish, pagan, feminist, and neo-spiritual elements. You don't have to agree with everybody, but you have to respect and try to understand them and support them in their varied quests.

There is discrimination against older ministers, especially for settled ministry. It helps, of course, to be willing to go where the congregations are. Your track record has to be good. In my experience, though, the most older ministers who are energetic and who wish to can overcome all obstacles and find gratifying and productive service. If you want to polish up your spurs and get back in the saddle once again, please know the UUA is here to help.

Daniel D. Hotchkiss, Ministerial Settlement Director, UUA

## IS THERE LIFE AFTER MINISTRY? (CONTINUED)

We (and perhaps some of you as well) have had a lengthy account of Vi Kochendoerfer's adventures in getting her book, "One Woman's World War II" published. Texas A & M University Press had agreed to publish it, and was enthusiastic about it. Then it abandoned its commitment, citing budget cuts, but referred her to other possible publishers. The University of Kentucky agreed to take on the publication if a second reader filed a favorable evaluation of the manuscript. Here's an excerpt from that evaluation: "I have no hesitation in recommending the publication of this MS. This work will be studied by scholars as long as World War II is studied. As a professional historian, I believe that time will increase the value of her many minute observations of customs, habits, dress, interior decorations and the like; but the work is valuable right now for the very difference of her insights into the armed forces and foibles of World War II as compared to the usual male author...." As a result of this evaluation, the Editorial Board of the University of Kentucky Press voted to approve the book for publication on November 28. So Vi is busy making suggested changes to complete the manuscript to be published.

**Sharon Harris**, after the death of her husband in 1985, returned to her university and earned an MSW degree. She is now a therapist in a prison.

**Betty Lawson** has just written a book, "Shelling San Sal" which she reported in December to be on the way to the printers. She entered five shell shows, won eleven blue ribbons, and the Best Self-Collected Trophy for her 250 species from San Sal!

**Paulette Loomis** writes of her life: "My life has evolved greatly since finding myself on my own. Strangely I have found I enjoy aloneness, a different thing than loneliness. There are times when loneliness strikes, but less often now. All the things I enjoyed doing with my time while Dave was with me continue: metal smithing, painting, sewing, making music with my 'cello and reading innumerable books still fill my days. I have a new enjoyment in growing orchids (about 80) in my livingroom and when I can arrange it financially I love to travel. The thing for me is to find ways to be independent in my own home as long as feasible, realizing strength, sight, etcetera diminish."

## NORTHEAST U.U.R.M.A. FALL CONFERENCE

**Arthur and Marion Jellis** write: "We are announcing the annual Fall gathering of the UURMA in the Northeast. It will be, again this year, in Hudson, NH, at the Oblate Retreat House on October 5,6,7. More about it will be sent directly to our members sometime in late Spring or early Summer, along with registration and reservation forms.

Since many of our folks have found the rooms (cells) at Oblate somewhat less comfortable than tired and creaky bones permit, we hope also to furnish information about nearby motel accommodations. In the meanwhile, please tell the Elderberries subscribers to make note of the dates. We are going to have a lively and informative and provocative program. If anyone would like to contribute with personal statements or other concerns, please be in touch with us. (The address: Arthur and Marion Jellis, 21 Laurel Lane, P.O. Box 1495, New London, NH 03257-1495.)





## APPOINTMENT

A letter, dated February 3, 1993 has been received from President Schulz of the UUA. The text follows:

It is my pleasure to announce the appointment of *The Rev. Diane M.W. Miller* as the new UUA Director of Ministry, effective July 1, 1993.

Diane was the unanimous and enthusiastic recommendation of John Buehrens, Carolyn Owen-Towle and Leon Hopper (President of the UUMA) who interviewed the final candidates.

A 1972 graduate of Macalester College, Diane received her M. Div. from Harvard Divinity School in 1976. After graduation from Harvard, she was called to First Unitarian Church of San Francisco where she served in succession as Assistant Minister, Interim Senior Minister and Associate Minister until 1981. In that year she was called to the First Church in Belmont, MA, where she has served with distinction for the past twelve years.

Recognized for her scholarship, particularly in the field of women's history, Diane has taught at Starr King School for the Ministry and served on the Purposes and Principles Committee and the Council on Church Staff Finances. In recent years she has been one of the Fair Witness individuals to whom decisions of the ministerial settlement office may be referred.

Having known Diane for almost twenty years, I can attest to her strength as well as her compassion. She is a highly respected colleague who will bring intelligence, experience and integrity to her new position and be a most fitting successor to David Pohl. I regret only that my tenure as President will not overlap with her service to the Association.

(Note: this letter was sent to all ministers, but we thought it might be of interest to the other members of UURMA.)

## THE WHEEL OF LIFE

**David Pilger** - November 5, 1992  
surviving - Mother, Marietta Pilger,  
1333 Norwood NW, Warren, OH 44485

**Howard Gilman** - November 22, 1992  
no known survivors

**Charles Slap** - November 28, 1992  
surviving - Andrew and Derek  
both of Springfield, MA

**Jacob Trapp** - December 28, 1992  
surviving - Wife, Helen  
815 Gildersleeve Street,  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

**George Marshall** - February 15, 1993  
surviving - son, Charles,

**Raymond Baughan** - February 15, 1993  
surviving - wife, Mildred  
16 Wilson St., Hudson, MA 01749

Inasmuch as Universalists and Unitarians are celebrating an anniversary, I got to wondering why we celebrate anniversaries. When someone is born -- or dies; weddings, the day we bought the first new car we ever had-- we celebrate. One old sage I know suggested rather simply, "We want to see where we've been, even if we don't know where we're going." So it was with this reporter. Where have we Universalists been and who started this idea of a liberal, more meaningful religion that inspires a belief in the power of forgiveness, harmony and universal love for all, rather than a spirit of vengeance and fear? There have been many fine books written through the years on the subject of the beginnings and development of the Universalist faith, but a long time since some of the earlier ones have been read. So I pulled down from the top shelf of our library two books I had read when they were published. They weren't too easy to read in some parts, but too fascinating to put down once they were picked up. They are Hell's Ramparts Fell by Clarence Skinner and Alfred Cole, (1941) and The Life and Times of George de Benneville by Albert D. Bell (1953). During this anniversary year, each will abundantly repay a return visit or an initial one.

- Hope Reamon -

## A N Y W A Y

People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest ideas.

Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.

Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you may get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you have anyway.

- Quoted in the Newsletter, First Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, OH -

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS ASSN.

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