

**Unitarian Universalist  
Retired Ministers  
and Partners  
Association**

August 1998

An Association of retired Unitarian Universalist ministers, their life partners,  
and the surviving partners of deceased Unitarian Universalist ministers

Volume XIII

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1997-1998

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# ELDERBERRIES

Number 4

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# From Our President

Summer Greetings from Midcoast Maine. The editor tells me he has scads of copy for this issue, so I will stick to what's new.

- Welcome to our newly elected board member, Doe Lockwood of Tulsa and Disney, OK.
- UURMAPA has received a \$5,000 grant from the Shelter Rock congregation for which we are very grateful.
- Service Gratuity beneficiaries received an increase this last quarter from the UUA and USPS. Those over 75 received an additional grant.
- Massachusetts Blue Cross and Blue Shield notified the UUA in June that it would no longer carry our medical insurance plans, effective August 31, 1998. This has caused a great deal of difficulty for the participants as they scrambled to find coverage and to meet increased premiums, decreased benefits, or both. We appreciate the UUA's willingness to assist in underwriting this extra cost, for those for whom this would be a hardship.
- The Society for Ministerial Relief has appropriated funds for a part-time position to assist the Office of Church Staff Finances in serving Retired Ministers and Surviving Spouses. Glen Snowden of Northborough, MA has accepted the position and will cooperate with Ralph Mero in meeting your needs. Glen, an UURMAPA member, serves on the boards of several of our agencies and is most knowledgeable in the field. He will be attending the Northeast Conference in October.
- The UURMAPA Board will be meeting in Boston, October 4-6, 1998. If you have any matters for our consideration, please send them to me or any board member by September 20.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and the early fall.

Bill DeWolfe, President

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### **Did You Have Earned Income in 1997?**

Ministers who receive a W-2 showing earnings for 1997 that will be reported on their self-employment tax return should contact their local Social Security office or call 800.772.1213 to make an appointment. They should do this after the end of the tax year when they have completed their self-employment tax return.

When they contact SSA, they should have their 1997 W-2 and their 1997 self-employment tax return available.

If the amount reported on their self-employment tax return, added to the amount on the W-2 exceeds the exempt amount for 1997, they should also contact SSA even if their actual earnings are under the annual exempt amount.



# CARING NETWORK NEWS

Here's a warm welcome to new Contact Persons JEAN MCGEHEE for Mid-South District and HELEN & ED LANE for Mass Bay District, Inland area.

AL D'ORLANDO had covered Mid-South for a long time and before that the Southwest District. We were saddened by his unexpected death--just as he was preparing to attend the Pan South Conference in Savannah last February. UURMAPA was important to him and he to us.

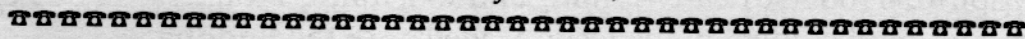
WYNANDA & RALPH HELVERSON have been Contact Persons for Mass Bay, and felt they needed to give it up. Many thanks and best wishes, Helversons, for all of your activities in behalf of the Caring Network. You've been there for us in a district with a large number of our members.

Our Network goal of being recognized by each and every district has been accomplished with not quite half of our districts. Will you Contact Persons please let me know of any problems, so you can move forward in this endeavor if you haven't already.

It would be good for UURMAPA to be listed in district directories and/or with district offices during this coming church year if at all possible.

The current members of our Caring Network will be reported in the November Elderberries.

PAX - Ginny Crane, Chair



## MIDWEST UURMAPA CONFERENCE

Friday, October 16 through Sunday, October 18

The Abraham Lincoln UU Congregation in Springfield, IL, will host this year's conference. Mary Moore, our minister in Springfield, has lined up a wonderful program taking full advantage of the Lincoln presence. We'll be hearing from Lincoln scholar Cullum Davis, *emeritus* professor of history at the University of Illinois in Springfield, and we'll be visiting the Lincoln family home and other Lincoln sites. If you come a bit early or stay late, there's the fascinating and beautifully restored New Salem village, where Lincoln kept store and got his political start, only a few miles away.

In addition we'll visit Frank Lloyd Wright's 1902 Dana-Thomas House, built with an unlimited budget and filled with more than 100 pieces of original Wright designed furniture and more than 250 examples of art glass doors, windows and lamps' We'll be escorted by docent Wes Duiker, a staunch member of the UU Congregation.

There's more, too. But most important is the opportunity to touch base with one another in the pleasant ambience of the new UU church building on the city's far South side.

The all-inclusive cost (except for one luncheon on your own) is \$120 per person (\$50 additional for a single room). And to get the special rate, you must reserve by Sept. 15.

Max Gaebler  
1212 Dartmouth Road  
Madison, WI 53705

## Stories

**In a letter published in the last *Elderberies*, Carol Edwards stated that she thought it important for us to share some of our personal histories and indicate how these impacted on who we are today. She has responded to the editor's request to be the first with the following:**

I was raised in a small neighborhood, thirty families, when I was born, with one Church, nondenominational, with a Methodist Minister.

Some of the affirming things I recall are the potlucks, the community field days and the teachings of Jesus, particularly the "Suffer The little children to come unto me" phrase, and its accompanying teaching that Jesus loved me. ME! It was real to this eight-year-old girl, offered me value when none came from other sources.

I would have been a follower of Jesus if it had not been for Christianity. The organized church with its teachings that could not be questioned and that all too often spoke of all but love and compassion set me on a lifelong search for something different to guide my life.

This search led me to Unitarian Universalism and the permission to search openly through both religious and secular teachings. What I found most akin to the early Jesus teachings were Buddhism and Taoism with their emphases on love, compassion, and simplicity.

However, I just this year ran across Stephen Mitchell's *The Gospel Ascending to Jesus* and rediscovered my spiritual roots so heartwarming and soul filling. I could never be a Christian but I certainly can be a grateful student of the Jesus as well as of the Buddha.

I wish I had the words to tell you how heartwarming this has been for me. I can tell you that it leads me to act, to do, for self and others whatever my individual talents allow.

Carol Edwards

### And here's another:

I was fourteen and a high school freshman. Our family had moved to a new home in a new community. My Sunday School teacher was a retired Methodist minister, the Rev. Dr. B. J. Smith (not his real name). Within days, B. J. was at our front door, visiting "on behalf of the church." World War II was still being fought and we learned that B. J. worked an evening shift as watchman at a local factory.

It did not take long to realize that B.J. and his wife, Phoebe (not her real name), kept a high profile in the church. As a matter of fact, B. J. had his own following in the congregation and was clearly taking every opportunity to usurp the role of the pastor -- successive pastors! He was manipulative and divisive in word and action. This was truly sad! B. J. was highly literate and an able person. Instead of being divisive and manipulative, he could have been an asset to the congregation and a supportive colleague for his minister. Regrettably, he chose to play a destructive role in the church.

My mother, long angered by B. J.'s behavior, once said to me, "Dr. Smith is using his ordination for self-aggrandizement." As the daughter of a Methodist minister, my mother had great admiration for the clergy — and great disgust for any clergyman who dishonored his ordination.

The last time I saw B. J., I was a minister myself. On a visit home, I was waiting while my car was serviced. B. J. walked by the service station, saw me, and stopped for a chat, Phoebe had been dead several years. He looked tired and worn and lonely as we exchanged pleasantries. I felt genuinely sorry for him.

(Continued on the next page)



As I approached my own retirement, memories of B.J. led me to make a solemn vow:

**AS A RETIRED MINISTER,  
I SHALL NEVER PERFORM ANY MINISTERIAL FUNCTION IN ANY PARISH  
WITHOUT THE EXPLICIT INVITATION  
OF THE MINISTER OF THAT PARISH.**

I stand by this vow, made to myself and to all of my colleagues  
George Briggs

### LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

I like Vi Kochendoerfer's suggestion for a change of name. I suggest "ElderVision." It is true that wisdom is not a given that accompanies aging, but it is also true that we have much wisdom to share, not only with each other, but with those who are now in positions of active religious leadership. We could do issues such as Vi suggested, and stories from our lives that Carol Edwards suggested. Both subjects — current issues and perspectives on spiritual and denominational matters, and stories from our lives — could be instructive and inspirational. They could be published periodically and then later in collection. Stories are a powerful part of sermons which we all know. By all means, let us have "ElderVision" and stories from our lives. I guess it would take general agreement to change the name. It would take volunteers to do the articles on issues, and to write the stories. Later, it would take volunteers to collect, edit, and publish the stories. Other ideas may be coming as well. This is great!

Mary Louise DeWolf

Farley Wheelright's remarks in the May, 98 *Elderberries* were wonderful, especially his use of the now deceased Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda.

Neil Bakker

The UUMA Chat Line has recently had much comment about the delicate issue of non-settled ministers (including retired ones) maintaining friendships with parishioners of settled ministers, such friendships at times including ministerial services, informal if not formal.

It occurs to me that our Caring Network holds some danger in that direction, and the danger of retired ministers stepping on settled ministers' toes is well known.

Do we need some guidelines for the Caring Network people? ... How should CN people be relating to settled ministers? Are CN's in any sense ministers to the retired ministers and surviving spouses in their districts? Some discussion of this would be welcome.

Maryell Cleary

**CONFERENCE DATES**

**Northeast**  
October 6-8, 1998  
Attleboro, Massachusetts

**Midwest**  
October 16-18, 1998  
Springfield, Illinois

**Pan South**  
March 19-21, 1999  
Knoxville, Tennessee

**Next *Elderberries*  
Deadline  
October 15, 1998**





## DEATHS

**Mildred W. Gibbs**  
January 24, 1997

**Eva Bush**  
1998

**Francis Randall**  
March 29, 1998

**Paul M. Husted**  
April 13, 1998

**Cary Cameron**  
April 23, 1998

**Mary Leta Tolleson**  
May, 1998

**Nathalie Jones**  
June 17, 1998

**Robert W. Sterling**  
August 7, 1998

**Jack C. Loadman**  
August 12, 1998

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### **From the Editor**

I have received a number of suggestions about the best way to take report deaths in our group. They range from requests to include every available bit of information about the deceased and relatives to comments like, "I wish we wouldn't devote so much space to our dying." Consequently, it appears to me that no one way of handling this is going to please everyone.

It seems to me that the information about survivors is known by those who will use it, and if not, can be obtained from the UUA. Much of it is in the UUA Directory and the UURMAPA Directory. So, there is little need to print it in *Elderberries*, especially since we are limited in available space.

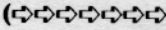
So, in the absence of more Definitive Opinions, I have decided simply to list the name and date of death, if known. This is memorial enough for most of us.

### A Paid Florida Semi-vacation??

An interim pastor is wanted to serve until a permanent minister is hired for a 75-year-old, nondenominational community church in a small central Florida community. The church is located in an area with a large beautiful lake and needs someone with experience in reaching ages twenty-to-forty-five. Good people skills and pastoral counseling a plus. Currently, 40 active members and 20 winter visitors. Sanctuary can hold 150. An attractive social hall is used for activities. The salary is negotiable.

Contact: Mary Morrison  
Babson Park Community Church  
P. O. Box 35  
Babson Park, FL 33827  
941.638.1235

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( Earned Income? Continued from Page 2)

The exempt amounts for 1997 are \$8,640 for under age 65, and \$13,500 for age 65-69. Those who are over age 70 for the entire year are not subject to the earnings test.

If you have any questions or need additional information on any Social Security related topics, please contact your local Social Security office.

#### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS AND PARTNERS ASSOCIATION

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**Forwarding and Address Correction Requested**