

**Unitarian Universalist  
Retired Ministers  
and Partners  
Association**

Feb 1998

~~November 1997~~

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 2

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## From Our President

We survived the worst ice storm in history. What an introduction to a Maine winter! We were luckier than many Mainers. I guess we chose the right place to settle. The hardships from the storm brought out the best in our people. Barb and I were glad we had a Caribbean cruise in December to help us ward off cabin fever. Now we can't wait until the Savannah conference.

In January, the UUA Ministerial Aid Funds Committee delivered its final report to the UUA Board. I have represented UURMAPA on the committee for the past two years. Established in 1993, the Committee had a five fold charge including analyzing present and future needs for ministerial aid funds; studying the Service Gratuity Program, working with the Department of Ministry to establish guidelines for the use of aid funds and providing the Director with recommendations on distribution; work with interested groups to make known the availability of these funds, and to report annually to the board on the distribution. (The complete report can be obtained from the Office of Church Staff Finances.)

At its November meeting the Committee received a report from UUA Treasurer Jerry Gabert on the payback of the Misapplied Funds (sic!). Through June 30, 1997, all scheduled repayments have been made in the sum of \$1,092, 665. UUA Budgetary plans for Fiscal Years '98 and '99 include the last two years of scheduled payment. Thus by June 30, 1999, this matter will be completed. The Committee also reported that the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society provided \$88,080 to 18 individuals (10 UU and 8 UCC) during the past year and that the Society for Ministerial Relief with assets of \$7,700,00 provided \$109,000 for 24 individuals.

The Committee reported that there are 197 ministers and 61 surviving partners receiving quarterly grants from the Service Gratuity Program. Today \$138,000 is provided from UUA funds and \$252,000 from the Unitarian Service Pension Society to support this program. A subcommittee of the USPS chaired by David Pohl recently made a series of recommendations for changes in the Gratuity, which were passed by the USPS. With the concurrence of the UUA Board at its April meeting the changes will be implemented. The changes include a \$200 annual increase for all gratuity recipients over age 75, a commitment to a modest annual increase in the Gratuity, the addition of \$50,000 for general ministerial purposes, and a commitment to use each year 5% of the value of the portfolio of the Society for the Service Gratuity program. It is expected that these changes will be instituted in 1998. In the meantime "Patience is a virtue."

There is more in the report including the recognition that there is much more that needs to be done in developing more effective ways for meeting the needs of our ministers; such as discovering the potential needs of older persons entering the ministry and those of our ministers and surviving partners who have long been in retirement. This work will need be carried on by the Council on Church Staff Finances and its member organizations. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to the appointment of a part-time "case-worker" to follow up on the needs of individual ministers and surviving partners.

Under the leadership of Leon Hopper, the Ministerial Aid Funds Committee has performed a valuable service to all of us and the denomination. They have effected a real sense of organization and cooperation in providing for the needs of our ministers.

If you have any concerns on these matters, please get in touch with me. I represent our organization on the Council and will bring your concerns to its attention.

Bill DeWolfe

**More Mail Asking Advice From**

**Ulysses U. R. M. A. Palimpsest-Androscoggin, (aka, The Rev. O. Geezer)**

**Ed Note: since this first letter came from Anon, I have given it to the Geez.**

To The Editor:

Hey, are you trying to get me into trouble? I think you should ask the Exec to appoint a task force to deal with all this stuff about partners. They're the ones in charge, aren't they?

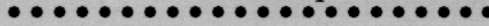
Dear Geez:

What is a **PARTNER**? If a female minister is sleeping with 2 or 3 males, are they "partners?" Must there be sexual activity to make for full partnership? How many partners may a male or female have? Is there freedom to disagree? Must we all believe the same thing about race, sex, etc.? What about a couple of males - but no sex between them? Life-long friends? Has the world gone crazy? Have I lived too long? Have a nice day.

(Signed) I. M. Anonymous

Dear Anon:

Regarding the last two questions: yes, the world has gone crazy (but no crazier than it has always been) and yes, you have lived too long and gotten too timid to sign your name. How can you have nice days when you're such a timid wabbit. I can manage my nice days easily without your help, and besides, I have other plans. -- (Signed) The Rev. Geez



Dear Rev. OG:

I wish we would stop the practice of referring to humans as "chairs." The late Congresswoman from Texas, Barbara Jordan, still referred to herself as Chairman and in Berkeley the lady who is President of our Board. --- (Signed) Rev. Name withheld

(This one is too hot for me, so here's Ms. Geez)

Dear Withheld:

With O's encouragement, I am responding to your complaint. He reminded me that, regarding calling our leaders, "Chairs," your President Emeritus, Max Gaebler, once said, "After all, most of us have two legs rather than four." Following Gaebler's Second Linguistic Principle (GSLP) (you'll have to ask him about the First), I've analyzed this matter carefully.

If we return to the old term, "Chairman," which I assume is what you'd like, we unfortunately come up with a total of six legs (4 chair legs + 2 human). The number of legs in "Chairperson" is the same; two too many. Following GSLP, we need to find a suitable two-legged, non-sexist alternative to Chair. We could substitute "Stool" for "Chair," but "Stool" would give us three legs, and "Stoolperson," five. Still too many. Besides, who wants to have a title that sounds like stool pigeon, or worse. We could use some other piece of furniture symbolic of the elected leader of the group, like the lectern, for example. But it won't do because it gives us only one leg. "Lecternperson?" No, that's three.

How about another symbol of leadership which represents a leader who is strong, assertive, androgynous, a leader free of earthly anchors like feet of clay. I am referring of course, to the gavel. No legs at all! An improvement over GSLP! Efficient! Portable like the Ark of the Covenant! Perfect! And the gavel's power is incipient, ready to crash down upon our meanderings as abruptly and forcefully as a lightning bolt hurled from Olympus. I agree with you, Rev. Withheld, we should absolutely give up the term Chair. From now on we should refer to our elected group leaders as "Gavels." Wouldn't that bring a semblance of order and calm to our wandering, free flowing, individualistic, undisciplined UU meetings? --- Ms. Geez

## LETTERS AND PERSONAL HAPPENINGS

Recently while visiting with my fellow UURMAPA member, Lee Huebert, he related to us an excruciating experience that he and Shirley had endured while returning from Denver with their daughter, her husband and their granddaughter. Caught on the highway in the ... freak snowstorm which made national TV, they were trapped for eighteen hours -- the five of them in their van.

Eighteen people did not survive that storm and that gave Lee the basis for his recent sermon, "Why Me? Why Not Me?"

He did see his car on TV the following day, but what a tale... Two men, two women and a young girl isolated for eighteen hours. I am truly thankful they did not run out of gas.

Grant Haskell

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A Letter to Jo Bartlett:

I just got around to reading my August *Elderberries* and learned of your prognosis. I hope this letter reaches you before your departure.

An open gestalt for me is that I never told you that you were one of the greatest teachers of my life. Everything that I am and have done both as a minister and a psychologist had its beginning in my learning experience with you.

I hope that my spirit will be worthy to join you when my time comes to go.

(Name Withheld)

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It is a splendid time to be among the retired. There are new waves of excitement, growth, expressions and thought moving through our liberal religious household. To witness and be a part of this dynamic is electrifying, that is, shocking to some but energy to others.

It behooves us to bring our wisdom to this vital and creative time, to not be obstacles in the way but to continue our participation in guiding the direction we should go.

I salute you one and all, my brothers and sisters, and count each day a gracious blessing.

Keith Munson

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It is a curious experience to face the question, "What do I feel like doing today?" For so many years that question was answered for me by my various commitments and obligations. I was and am glad for all of them, but they did have the effect of pretty completely defining my life.

In the first season of the freedom of retirement there was only a trickle of spontaneous impulse left in my hitherto so well organized life, but it is growing in volume and power as it flows (downhill, to be sure). I find I feel like doing this or that as opposed to something else and that adds an extra pleasantness to what was attractive to begin with. I even venture to hope that this new freedom releases qualities and ideas which previously were buried under routine.

I hadn't been sure I could stand retirement after so active a life - especially with the unexpected prospect of doing it by myself - but for almost the first time in sixty years I feel I am running easily in the race of life rather than struggling to keep up. My interests have proved real, absorbing and rewarding.

Nathaniel Lauriat

### Conference Schedule

<b>Midwest</b>	<b>10/16/98-10/18/98</b>
<b>Pan South:</b>	<b>2/28/98-3/2/98</b>
<b>Western:</b>	<b>3/30/98-4/2/98</b>
<b>Northeast:</b>	<b>10/6/98-10/8/98</b>

### ICCU CONFERENCE, APRIL 18-22, 1998

The International Council of Unitarians & Universalists (ICUU), welcomes you!

The ICUU Conference will immediately follow the  
BRITISH UNITARIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
April 15-18, 1998,

in Chester, a beautiful old Roman town. From Chester, transportation will be provided to the Unitarian Conference Center, Great Hucklow. In route we will visit an outstanding historical home and/or church.

The program will include regular morning and evening worship, talks and discussion with representatives from ICUU Member groups, and walks through the flowering countryside filled with spring lambs.

For more information, contact

Rev. Geoffrey Usher  
Upper Chapel  
Norfolk Street  
Sheffield, S1 2JD  
United Kingdom

For More ICUU details, look for ICUU under International on <<[www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)>>.

For details on the British Unitarian G.A. write

Rev. John Clifford  
Unitarian Headquarters  
1-6 Essex St.  
Strand, London WC2R 3HY  
United Kingdom

For the British Unitarian Web site <<[www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk)>>.

In 1959, Jan Myrdal caught amoebic dysentery while in Delhi. For four months he lay in bed thinking about vague subjects like "Destiny and Man and Fate, etc. ...

"That experience led me to suspect that a large part of the Asian, the one of soul and inwardness, that Europeans have such a high regard for, is just the psychological expression of physiological changes due to protozoans eating the intestines."

Jan Myrdal, *Confessions of a Disloyal European*

**Next Elderberries  
Deadline  
April 15, 1998**

## CARING NETWORK NEWS

I want to report some changes in District Contact Persons in our Network.

YVONNE GILES in Ballou Channing has relinquished her role. Thank you, Yvonne, for your many years in the Network. DOROTHY BOROUSH is our new Contact Person.

ROBERT HEMSTREET joins SHIRLEY HADLEY as Co-Contact Person in Metro New York District. We appreciate your willingness, Dorothy and Robert, to work for us in your districts. Welcome!

Thanks to SCOTTY MEEK for contacting all district presidents and executives about giving UURMAPA affiliation status. The leadership of districts has been made aware of our organization. I've now had word of several districts moving forward on recognizing UURMAPA as an affiliate (or whatever designation is appropriate).

Here is my message to all Contact Persons. Please do what you can to make it happen in your district. Thank you. Problems or questions?

Ginny Crane

**WOW!!**

### Do We Write Books!!

Jeff Selth has published two books in recent months: *FIRM HEART AND CAPACIOUS MIND: THE LIFE AND FRIENDS OF ETIENNE DUMONT*, an early proto-Unitarian; and *THE BRAVE WILD COAST: A YEAR WITH HENRY MILLER*, which Jeff edited from the autobiography of Judson Crews.

George Brooks' essay given at the IRAS Summer Conference in 1996 on "The Epic of Evolution" is now in the September, 1997 issue of *Zygon: Journal of Science and Religion*, pp. 439-453. Reprints are available from George at \$1.00 per copy.

### SPOT DOES IT AGAIN!

As Hosea Ballou dozes on a bench, his diminutive dog sniffs out the first clue in the case of *MURDER ON BOSTON COMMON: A FATHER BALLOU AND HIS DOG SPOT MYSTERY*, Ernest Cassara's second mystery novel laid in the bustle and color of mid-19th-century Boston, and the restful charm of Nahant, the peninsula resort, with a unique fictional plot.

Readers will enjoy Ballou's collaboration with the Detective Inspector Sean O'Riordan of the Boston Police, as they set about solving the mystery in a UU setting. And dog lovers, whether UUs or not, will identify with the antics of Spot, as she discovers clues overlooked by her friends.

The book is available from the Cambridge Cornerstone Press, Dept. UE, PO Box 351, Cambridge, MA 02140. (e-mail: <<CORNER3B@AOL.COM>>) Special UU pre-publication price: \$8.00 plus shipping and handling.

Ernie is willing to make a presentation on the "Writing of Boston UU Mysteries," within a reasonable driving distance from Cambridge, followed by a book signing. He has done it on the first mystery, *MURDER ON BEACON HILL: A FATHER BALLOU AND HIS DOG SPOT MYSTERY*, at several churches and at the Mass. Bay Ministers meeting. Fun was had by all, not least the author!

**DEATHS**

**Geraldine (Earl) Engle  
May 16, 1997**

**Donald W. Lawson  
July 21, 1997  
Age 76**

**Catherine (Arthur W.) Olsen  
November 26, 1997**

**Alan Shaw  
November 28, 1997  
Age 58**

**Irving W. Stultz  
December 7, 1997  
Age 91**

**Dan O'Neal  
January 5, 1998  
Age 51**

**Charles C. Forman  
January 11, 1998  
Age 72**

**Martha (Robert) Day**

**Ursula (Theodore) deLuca**

**Lucille (Joseph) Guinta**

**Gertrude (John) McNally**

**Laura (Henry Nelson) Wieman**

## Election Time!!

In 1998, we will elect a Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, one Board Member and two members of the Nominating Committee. Three incumbents, Iska Cole, Scotty Meek, and Larry Hamby are eligible for reelection though not necessarily only to the office each now serves; treasurer, secretary, and newsletter editor respectively. Board member, Barbara Gudmundsen, having served two terms is not eligible for reelection. Nominating Committee members, Jeanne Bletzer and Alan Deale respectfully decline a second team.

Please send your nominations for Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, one Board member and two Nominating Committee members to me by March 10, 1998, Thank you!

Elizabeth Anastos  
Gavel, Nominating Committee  
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**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS AND PARTNERS ASSOCIATION**

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