



by Susan V. Rak

Living here at the New Jersey shore, every August the air seems thicker with humidity and the sand is so blisteringly hot that a trip to the beach becomes less and less attractive. I long for the waning light and cooling breezes of autumn during these dog days.

This shift in seasons, when temperatures begin to cool off and days shorten, signals a welcome change in my own energies. UURMaPA seems to mirror this, as a newly configured Board is coming together, thinking and planning for the year ahead.



In preparing for the Board's in-person meeting at the end of August, I've been gathering up bits and pieces of UURMaPA history. According to sources, it all started back in the early 1980s, when a small group of retired Unitarian Universalist ministers wondered, after so many years of leading an active life in congregations and organizations, was there anything available to retired UU ministers that was particular to or inclusive of their unique life as clergy in liberal religion?

Truly, a person could figure out living a life in retirement, free of the day-to-day bonds of work. But an important connection seemed severed—or at the very least, slackened—when they left their ministerial positions one last time. So a new organization was formed, the UU Retired Ministers Association. When it expanded its membership to include spouses of retired ministers, it evolved into what is now the Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association.

Over the span of those two-score years, the organizers and leaders of UURMaPA have continued to refine its purpose and activities for each new “class” of members. Generations are short in UURMaPA parlance—shifts in focus or interests or needs seem to happen when there's a change in leadership or a crisis refocuses our attention. We've grown with the times, assessing the needs of members and finding ways to nurture community, always seeking to inspire our ongoing growth and deepening for people in this new phase of life.

The post-pandemic shift to virtual gatherings has widened our circle, making our community readily available to more people. As I prepare to spend a final year as President of this esteemed organization, I know we will continue our efforts to

encourage diversity, inclusion and equity in our relationships and continue programming and community-building. We will be sussing out how to augment the support and resources available to UURMaPAns in their home communities, making sure whatever we do has that unique character of Unitarian Universalism and the core values we endeavor to live by.

It is my fondest hope that YOU will be part of this ever-growing community in the coming year!

-Susan
