

**UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting
July 18, 2024**

Note: **Board decisions are in bold-face type; action items are in red.** Reports are appended.

Present: Wayne Arnason, Joy Atkinson, George Buchanan, Barbro Hansson, Fritz Hudson, Paul Johnson, Anne Marsh, Susan Rak, Ned Wight.

Susan called the meeting to order at 2:03pm Eastern - 1:03pm Central - 12:03pm Mountain - 11:03am Pacific. She lit a chalice and read our UURMaPA Board covenant as opening words.

Agenda review:

There are two additions to the previously-sent agenda: Barbro requests input to questions in her report about financial assistance for conferences, and George will briefly review plans for the retreat book discussion. A brief check-in followed.

Reports: The Consent Agenda was accepted.

Matters for Discussion:

1. Conferences:

Barbro noted that the Fall Conference planning team is functioning well. She, Ned, and Paul are serving on the Conferences Financial Aid Task Force, and from that group, Barbro brought four questions for which the Task Force seeks Board input:

- Does the Board wish to establish a special financial aid fund?
- Does the Board want to promote in-person pods with financial assistance?
- Should UURMaPA subsidize pod attendance, and if so, to what extent?
- Does the Board support surveying UURMaPA membership to determine interest in pods and need for financial assistance for pod attendance?

A lively discussion ensued, with a variety of ideas offered. Issues of inclusiveness, equity, justice, and sustainability were raised, as well as where aid funds might come from. **No votes were taken, but there was consensus on the following:**

- **The Board would like to set up a financial aid fund. Money could come from financial aid donations (including past unspent donations) and perhaps a designated amount from the endowment.**
- **Financial aid should be for registration fees for online participants, and for registration fees plus an additional small amount (e.g., \$45) for pod participants. The Board would also like to encourage more local in-person gatherings and watch parties, these being less expensive and more sustainable.**
- **The Board does not support the idea of surveying the membership on these issues, feeling that a survey is not likely to yield helpful information.**

Barbro, Ned, and Paul will take this feedback to the Task Force's next meeting. The Task Force will draft guidelines for administering a financial aid fund, and bring those back to the Board. It was suggested that the Treasurer add an income line for financial aid to budget reports until the financial aid fund is set up.

Paul will continue the practice of giving registration fee scholarships to those who request them until and unless the Task Forces establishes a different procedure.

2. Welcome Event:

Ned reported that out of 56 participants in the online Welcome event, 18 were new retirees and partners. Small groups ended up with a good mix of newcomers and old-timers. All Board members all felt the event went very well. It was suggested that Q&A time be included after the informational segments, though time constraints and the need to keep questions to those of general interest may make this difficult. We should emphasize that UUA staff members are happy to take questions by email and phone.

3. Retreat:

George elaborated on the plan sent out before the meeting. He will facilitate the discussion of Sharon Welch's book (*After the Protests Are Heard*) and how we might apply her message to UURMaPA's mission and vision. He pointed out some questions for thought on page 208, and noted that the reading guide Sharon sent via Barbro is probably too lengthy for our purposes. George will try to focus on what ideas could be most relevant to our work. Susan noted that we can be flexible about where the discussion leads.

Susan asked for volunteers to fill in some of the retreat programming, and folks stepped up as follows:

- Opening Worship - Fritz
- Evening Conviviality - Barbro and Anne
- Morning Centering - Wayne (Tuesday) and Paul (Wednesday)
- Closing Worship - Ned
- Transportation coordination (from BWI) - Barbro
- Wayne and Fritz will bring beverages and snacks in their car. Everyone email Wayne with any food/drink requests or restrictions.

Wayne is our contact person for Bon Secours, and will double-check on what supplies they have (flip charts, stands, markers, etc.) There is a pool - bring swimsuits.

4. Connections:

Fritz expressed concern that our new Membership Coordinator Ann Marie Alderman is not getting membership@uurmapa emails. Susan will follow up with Jaco to correct this oversight. Richard Speck will continue to work with Jon Clane on the new membership system, which we hope will improve outreach and recordkeeping. Fritz noted that we have about 1400 people listed in our directory, but only 900 email addresses. Fritz also suggested we may want to re-visit the question of whether the Membership Coordinator should be a paid position.

Susan announced that former Membership Coordinator Patt Herdklotz will receive the Unsung UURMaPA award at Fall Conference. The Creating Sageing Award will also be given at the conference. Susan will ask Richard Speck to write up the certificate for Patt's award, as he is knowledgeable about her accomplishments and contributions.

4. Confirm monthly meeting schedule:

We will not have a regular Board meeting in August because of the retreat. We will meet on September 26 at 2pm Eastern, but starting in October, we will meet on the second Thursday of each month, at 2pm Eastern.

Miscellaneous items:

- Barbro will develop a job description for Board's Conference Liaison, but not until after the Fall Conference.
- Deadline for the next issue of *Elderberries* is August 10.
- Paul and Richard are working on a bank issue that is delaying the changeover of Treasurers, but it should be resolved soon.
- Travel reimbursement requests should be submitted to Paul via email, as there is not a special form for this purpose.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58pm Eastern - 2:28pm Central - 1:58pm Mountain - 12:58pm Pacific.

- *Anne Marsh, Secretary*

REPORTS FOLLOW BELOW...

REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR BOARD MEETING JULY 18, 2024

1) VICE PRESIDENT - Ned Wight

Here are items on my workplan for 2024-2025 (based on VP job description). Most recent activity is indicated in ***bold italic type***.

Arrangements for UURMaPA gift distribution

- ***The InSpirit Bookstore confirmed sending out 42 copies of [The Seasoned Soul: Reflections on Growing Older](#) by Eliza Blanchard to our new members in the U.S. and Canada. We were billed \$720.52. We received one thank you e-mail.***

Attend Service of the Living Tradition and survivor's luncheon (during GA)

Propose workshops during Ministry Days or GA

Creative Sageing Award selection group and Unsung UURMaPA Award

- ***This month I will convene a meeting with Marni Harmony and Wendy Fish to begin this year's selection process for the award to be announced at our Fall Conference.***

Organize peer support groups

- ***This function has been graciously taken on by Fritz Hudson.***

Communication with UUA re "intent to retire" forms and lists

- ***Gratitude to Fritz Hudson, who is now managing this relationship.***

Administrative Tasks

- ***Awaiting receipt of final job descriptions for reformatting and forwarding to the Board for final approval and posting on the website.***

New Member Welcome Event

- ***Finalized the "run of show" for the July 15 virtual welcome event, confirmed participation of all presenters and sent them confirming e-mail reminders.***
- ***Secured use of the SOLT slide show for this event and forwarded it to Richard Speck with a listing of all those on the new retiree and partner list that Fritz Hudson sent me that were not included in the SOLT this year.***
- ***Sent an invitation e-mail to 42 retirees and 16 partners with the link to register for the event.***
- ***Welcome event took place on Zoom on July 15 with over 50 members participating, including 18 new members.***

Conferences

Financial/Scholarship Review Task Force

- ***Met three times with this Task Force and volunteered to serve as notetaker. Prepared and sent out notes to participants.***

2) CONFERENCE COORDINATOR - Barbro Hansson

It's such a joy to attend the Conference Planning Team meetings as simply the UURMaPA Board Liaison to conferences. The Team with Sonya at the helm is functioning exceptionally well, charging forward with plans. This has freed me up to convene the Conferences Financial Aid Task Force.

Fall 2024 Conference, October 21-23, 2024: "Generative Eldering and Democracy's Future"

At the most recent meeting, which included theme presenter Sharon Welch, the theme was tweaked, as indicated above. With the acceptance by Diane Teichert to present her odyssey at the fall conference, Dwayne is off and running providing support for her and Larry Ladd. At this point, meetings have been focused on theme, theme presenter and preparing for on-line registration to open as of August 1.

The Team suggested that odyssey presenters be chosen a year in advance to provide more adequate time for presenters to prepare. To that effect, I propose that Susan reviews the current list of potential invitees and select one minister and one partner to invite for the Spring 2025 Conference.

Conferences Financial Aid Task Force

The mission of the Conferences Financial Aid Task Force is to explore the possibility of UURMaPA to provide financial aid to individuals attending pods and to create and implement a written policy.

The task force has met three times at this writing, mostly discussing the complicated context of providing financial aid beyond that given since our conferences went virtual and how to make it equitable and fair. Though scholarships have been given out in the past, a policy for providing financial aid has never existed. Decisions about requests and how much to give has always been exclusively at the currently serving treasurer's discretion. Richard is in the process of creating a historical analysis showing number of scholarship donations and amounts from attendees and number of scholarships and amounts awarded. In the past, scholarship donations have averaged \$1,800-2,000 per conference. In-person conferences typically awarded scholarships to a handful of individuals, at most, with the average amount in the neighborhood of \$200 each. For the past four years, the scholarship amount has covered only the virtual registration fee. The number of individuals requesting scholarship since the conferences went virtual, has increased slowly, a total of 10 requests for the most recent conference.

Much of the conversation has revolved around the fact that all pods are not the same. We currently have two very different structures. One type is residential-centered pods, like the one at Seabeck Conference Center in Washington State, where lodging for 3 nights and 9 meals are included in a completely separate registration fee. That fee is currently \$362/person. All attendees at the Seabeck pod also pay the virtual registration fee of \$45, which brings the total to \$407/person.

The other type of pod is UU Church-centered, like the one in Wilmington, DE, with

minimal costs. Individuals attending this kind of pod either commute from home or make their own arrangements for overnight stays. Meals are handled in different, creative ways, with each pod attendee contributing to the cost or, paying their own meal if eaten at a restaurant.

Over time, we will likely continue to see an increase in virtual conference attendance and in requests for scholarships to cover the virtual registration fee. If we promote pods (both church-centered and residential), the demand for scholarship aid will likely increase substantially.

The task force has discussed the idea of setting up a financial aid fund, seeded by endowment monies, or operating funds, utilizing designated contributions. This kind of fund could be established in the amount of \$40,000, and if drawing 5% from it to provide \$1,000 in scholarships for each of the two conferences every year, it could be sustainable over time.

Here are some questions for the Board to ponder and respond to:

- 1. What is the desire of the Board regarding the establishment of a special financial aid fund?***
- 2. Does the Board want to promote pods with financial assistance?***
- 3. How much should UURMaPA subsidize pod participation?***
- 4. Would the Board support sending a questionnaire to UURMaPA members, asking if they are interested in more in-person pods, if financial assistance would be helpful, what might you like financial assistance toward: Registration? Lodging? Transportation?***

The task force meets again on Tuesday, July 30.

Spring 2025 Conference - April 21-23, 2025

At the most recent conference planning meeting, it was suggested that odyssey presenters be chosen a year in advance to provide more adequate time for presenters to prepare. To that effect, I propose that Susan reviews the list of potential invitees and select one minister and one partner to invite in the near future.

Fall 2025 Conferences - October 20-22, 2025

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3) AT-LARGE MEMBER FOR UUA and UUMA RELATIONS - Wayne Arnason

In the last month, we've had GA and our Welcoming Event on-line. I attended all of the UUMA meetings and events and attended GA as a congregational delegate to monitor the business sessions and participated in voting. The outcomes were predictable in advance and there is nothing that I recommend UURMaPA has to respond to from the business decisions.

At the Welcoming Event, I did a short presentation on the UUMA Chapter for Retired Ministers, outlining activities that the chapter has engaged in for its first year. My work with the Guidelines study group will pick up again in September.

The work in my role as the Good Offices Person for retired ministers and partners has quieted down as we reached the end of the church year. My ongoing case over the past several months that involves a renegotiation of covenant with a minister emeritus has a final chapter to be taken up in September. Also ahead in the Fall I will participate as a support person for a retired minister undertaking an accountability/reconciliation process with a congregation this person once served. I have to complete some end-the year reporting required of all Good Offices Persons. I have also offered to co-lead with Kathleen Rolenz a training for Chapter Good Offices people on the diverse circumstances of retired/former/emeritus ministers who wish after a time to re-connect with a congregation where an interim, contract, or settled minister serves. I am waiting for a response to that invitation.

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4) CONNECTIONS COORDINATOR - Fritz Hudson (New Information in Red)

1. Area Connectors

Areas with Connectors: 10

Maine: Lucy Ijams

Vermont: Brendan Hadash

Metro NY/NJ: Ann Marie Alderman

St. Lawrence: Dick Gilbert

Ohio-Meadville: Janet Newman

J. Priestley North: Paula Maiorano

Florida: Bob Murphy, Eleanor Richardson

Heartland North: Fred Wooden

Central Midwest: Marcia Marino

New Mexico: Christine Robinson

Areas with Identified Connector Prospects/Partners: 5

New Hampshire

Mass Bay North

Ballou Channing

J. Priestley South

Tennessee

Areas with Uncertain Connections Prospects: 19

Area Connector Canvass Revelations & Take-Aways

As of May 1, 2024, our data base file indicated 1434 Active Members: Ministers or Surviving Spouses: 968; Partners:466

Minister/Survivor Email Addresses: 821

Partner Email Addresses: 218

In Canvass: Emails bounced back as undeliverable: 55

Members with no email entry BUT with telephone entries: 147

1. My immediate focus will be to enlist Connectors & Partners to conduct a phone/mail canvass seeking valid email addresses to forward to Membership Coordinator.

2. In the course of our acquisition of a new data-base system, I will work with our Membership Coordinator (Ann Marie Alderman) to:

- Reformat the website Area Connector Directory to include email addresses & phone numbers
- Assess the advisability/feasibility of hiring/training/supervising a paid administrator to actively maximize the completeness and accuracy of our database information

2. General-Interest Zoom Groups

Total groups reported: 11

Total group participation reported: 70

UURMaPAns awaiting connection with a group: 2

3. Special-Interest Peer Support Groups Open to New Members

Ongoing Groups continuing: *Caregivers, Grief*

First Year Group: *Goddess* (Considering whether open to New Members,)

Group in Formation: *LGBTQ+: 5 Interests expressed. Launch email sent*

Spirituality+: 2 interests expressed, Facilitator actively recruiting.

Proposal for publication (Elderberries, Conference, Email Announce

"International UU/U Today"

4. Peer Support Group Invitations

New "Welcomes" sent to "Intent to Retire" submitters: 4

Replies received: 2

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5) ELDERBERRIES EDITOR - George Buchanan

I will publish the next Elderberries issue by the end of August 2024.

This issue will contain, among other elements:

- President's report
- A brief preview of our upcoming Fall 2024 conference
- Possibly, reports from and about our spring 2024 conference
- An article on being election chaplains for the November USA elections
- Book announcements
- Creative works from members
- Obituaries

I plan to continue publishing Elderberries four times per Calendar year: February, May, August, and November.

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6) PASSAGES COORDINATOR - Joy Atkinson

Since the last Board meeting, I have sent death notices to the membership for the following beloved colleagues and partners: the Revs. Kenneth Torquil Maclean, Robert T. Latham, Marjorie Rebmann, and David Turner, partner of the Rev. Carole Martignacco.

I sent personal welcome letters to several new members, and encouraged them to attend the New Member event, which some did. I know they get multiple invitations to this event, but I think in this case the duplication is appropriate.

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7) SECRETARY - Anne Marsh

I have updated our record with the Massachusetts Secretary of State's office to list our new Board.

TREASURER'S REPORT will be added later...