



Elderberries

Unitarian
Universalist
Retired Ministers
and Partners
Association

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Fall 2024

www.uurmapa.org

UURMaPA @ Seabeck
October 2024



Front Row: Barbara Wells ten Hove, Suzanne Reynolds, Deborah Raible, Phyllis Morales, Patti Pomeranz, Toni Tortorilla;
Seated: Joy Atkinson, Linda Horton, Linda Andrews, Peter Morales, Roger Rochester, Sue Redfern-Campbell; Standing,
3rd row: Millie Rochester, Jane Boyajian, Flossie Bode, Debra Faulk, Wendy Fish, Lynda Sutherland, Barry Andrews;
Back Row: Patty Eaton, Bruce Bode, Geoff Rimositis, Duane Fickeisen, Dennis Reynolds, Lloyd Horton, Jaco ten Hove.

Seabeck Podlings Enjoy an Excellent Fall Retreat

For the Fall 2024 UURMaPA conference, 26 of us (18 clergy and 8 non-clergy partners) gathered at the historic Seabeck Conference Center on the Hood Canal in Washington State to enjoy three days of human contact, storytelling, worship, games, tears and laughter. While we listened together to the virtual conference (and some earnestly discussed the material presented), participants say the most meaningful and fun parts of our in-person retreat were the many face-to-face moments we had to hug, refresh our connections, and make new friends. We enjoyed snacks and beverages together every evening, ate well in a dining hall we had

(Continued on page 2)

Greetings from the Elderberries editor

George Buchanan here. I'm the editor for Elderberries. If you have story suggestions or ideas for improving Elderberries, contact me at elderberries@uurmapa.org

I deeply appreciate the information provided by so many of you and wise copy-editing and layout advice from Ned Wight and my spouse Carrie Buchanan. Thanks also to Ann Marie Alderman for curating our directory.

All outdoor photos are from the Eastern Ontario town where I live.

Seabeck Pod, continued from page 1

mostly to ourselves, produced our own local parallel of the Remembrance Service, celebrated two birthdays, laughed during our version of "To Tell the Truth," and took walks around the beautiful campus.

We have room for a few more folks to join us if you'd like the chance to engage with your UURMaPan peers in a "live and in-person" context. Let us know if you might be interested and we'll add you to the notification list for next autumn's event (which begins with Sunday dinner Oct. 19–22, 2025. Seabeck pod does not meet in the spring).

***Jaco & Barbara ten Hove
Co-convenors***

Presidential Ponderings

**By Susan Veronica Rak
UURMaPA Board President**

Greetings, friends!

Years ago, I came across a cartoon - might have been a New Yorker gem - that pictured a sporting goods store with a sign in the window: "Now Is the Winter of Our Discount Tents".

Not sure why this stuck with me—maybe because it's such a sly Shakespeare pun.

As I write, we in the States are, in one way or another, reckoning with the changing landscape of this country's essence and being. But this is not another hand-wringing essay of worry and fear (although those things dance at the margins), even as we feel a winter of discontent approaching.

Now we need to find those havens of comfort or support and encouragement that will carry us through. Because this is also the season of gratitude. The lingering darkness is a thing of beauty when holiday lights shine. There are, amidst the sadness and concern, whether it's personal or political, shining shards of hope and support and, dare I say it, joy.

We're on the brink of the winter holidays and perhaps you aren't feeling very festive. Understandable. But we still need to find joy and grace and festivity in the midst of the gloom.

UURMaPA continues to be one of those places where we can find hope and joy, even when we only gather occasionally. The threads of support are there, nonetheless.

Most of the time when I talk about UURMaPA, I'm given to earnestly touting the good that we do as an organization and the ways we connect within this small community. Maybe it's an idealized version of who we are. But it is who we aspire to be as a community of retired Unitarian Universalists, ministers and partners or spouses.

Do we always get it right? Is it always seamless and effortless to make these connections? No. But maybe that kind of perfection isn't the point. The heart of the matter is that we carry on. We pivot and adjust as circumstances require. And we keep trying. Differing groups of people have kept this organization alive and thriving in various ways for almost 40 years.

In these coming days and months, we will keep on in these endeavors, amidst changes and uncertainties. Please stay in touch and involved in whatever ways that work for you, so that the connections we make here in UURMaPA remain vital.

We are here. And I, for one, am so grateful to have YOU in my community!

Warmly,
Susan

Table of Contents

Focus on UURMaPA

Seabeck Pod	1
Presidential Ponderings	2
News from Your Nominating Committee	4
Connections Corner	5
Fall Conference Wrap-up	7

Awards

Carole Martignacco: Creative Saging.....	9
Patt Herdklotz: Unsung UURMaPAn	11

Announcements

Welcome New Members	12
Save the Dates	12

Book Corner

<i>Active Hope</i>	13
<i>People, Power, Change</i>	14

NEWS FROM YOUR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

By Beth Miller, Chairperson

I believe most of us want to support the organizations that help us stay connected as UU ministerial colleagues and partners. As retirees, it is easy to lose some of our sense of belonging and engagement. UURMaPA plays an especially important role in helping us live into these retirement years with mutual support and less of that sense of loss. That's why I serve on the Nominating Committee and hope you will help us fill the following two-year terms beginning next summer:

Four Board Positions and Current Member Serving:

President, Susan Veronica Rak

Vice-President, Ned Wight

Board Connections Chair, Fritz Hudson

Board Denominational Liaison, Wayne Arnason

Two Nominating Committee Positions Currently Served By:

Sue Redfern-Campbell and Virginia Luke

Might you consider serving in one of these positions? Do you know UURMaPA members who would be good additions to the Board or Nominating Committee? Those UURMaPANS retiring happen to be ministers, but partners are equally welcome and encouraged to serve as well. We value that diversity in our leadership.

Give it some thought. Look up the job descriptions here:

<https://uurmapa.org/leadership-position-descriptions/>.

I know the incumbents would be happy to talk with you about their roles. You can find their contact information here:

<https://uurmapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/10-1-2024-MembershipDirectory.pdf>

If you want to know more about our openings for yourself or know of someone you think we should contact, please be in touch. I promise to answer your questions without pressuring you. **Email:** beth849@gmail.com **Phone:** 617-893-1949.

CONNECTIONS CORNER

Want to strengthen your connections with other UURMaPAns? Here are some opportunities:

Join a GENERAL CONNECTIONS ZOOM GROUP

77 UURMaPAns are now involved in 12 regular Zoom Groups

Though self-governing as to format and schedule, most groups

- > Have 5-8 members
 - > Choose a Convenor/Facilitator member
 - > Meet monthly for a 90-minute session to
 - * open and close with a reading
 - * give each member 5 minutes to share “How is it with thy Spirit?”
 - * spend the remaining time discussing a topic chosen at the prior session (and choosing the next session’s topic.)
 - > Each fall and spring, free all to “depart with thanks” or re-commit for 6 months more.
- To explore joining an on-going Connections Zoom Group, or forming a new one, email fhudson@uuma.org.**

Try out a FOCUSED ZOOM GROUP

(Learn more by contacting the convenors directly)

We have three groups now being formed:

1. Book Discussion: *Life After Doom* by Brian McLaren

Convenor: Shelley Page — **Email:** shelleypage.imagine@gmail.com **Phone:** (313) 550-1437

Reading and reflection for moving forward in this uncertain turbulent time with climate change, imperiled democracy and civilization collapse at our doorstep.

2. Single Retired Ministers

Convenor: Beth Miller — **Email:** beth849@gmail.com **Phone:** (617)-893-1949

Whether divorced, widowed or always single; gay, straight, non-binary, or transgendered, being single through this transition into elderhood has its own challenges. The group is not about match-ups but rather, support for the single life in retirement as clergy.

3. Ministers' Partners

Convenor: Janet Tillman — **Email:** jetillman@comcast.net **Phone:** (302) 388-3499

Come together with other partners to share personal experiences, establish a social network, offer & receive support, and have fun.

We have two On-Going groups that always welcome newcomers:

1. Grief Support

Convenor: Duane Fickiesen - **Email:** dfickeisen@uuma.org **Phone:** (717) 448-3279

For UURMaPAns who have been recently widowed and are grieving the loss of their partner. Meets monthly. Each of us grieves in our own way. We offer a safe and confidential space to find support in our separate journeys.

2. Caregivers

Convenors:

- Sylvia Howe — **Email:** sylhowe42@gmail.com **Phone:** (978) 317-0013
- Makannah Morris — **Email:** revs2uu@aol.com **Phone:** (434) 384-7821

For UURMaPAns caring for another person, who come together for an hour of check-in, shared resources, and caring for one another. We covenant for confidentiality.

Partner with (or become) a LOCAL AREA CONNECTOR

Our membership is clustered into 35 Geographical Areas. [In 14 areas,](#) Area Connectors now offer:

- welcomes to newly retired & new-to-Area UURMaPAns
- annual check-ins with continuing Area UURMaPAns
- support to survivors at an Area UURMaPAN's death

Check out your Area's listing here: <https://uurmapa.org/resources/#Area-Connectors>

- If your Area has a Connector, contact them to join in their ministry.
- **If your Area has no Connector, email fhudson@uuma.org to explore how to partner in this ministry.**

Let's Connect!!

Fritz Hudson – Connections Co-ordinator — **Email:** fhudson@uuma.org

Fall Conference Wrap-Up

By the Conference Planning Team

Our conference this fall featured **Sharon Welch**, who gave us ideas about “Generative Democracy.” This was the 9th virtual conference since the pandemic forced us to change our approach to conferences. Today, everything points to conferences with both on-line and on-site options for attendees as the “new normal.”

We registered 174 people for the fall 2024 conference. Of those, 49 folks attended one of three different on-site pods. Among the registrants were three newly retired (or nearly retired ministers), and 12 who attended a virtual UURMaPA conference for the first time. We welcomed 25 partners and 149 ministers.

Wayne Arnason moderated our Theme Panel, which used a time slot previously devoted to presentations from UUA and UUMA leaders in a style more responsive to the theme. The change in format was well-received.

Wayne said, “Three community ministers currently serving within UU institutions engaged with diversity, inclusion, and justice all reflected on their experience with elder supporters within their institutions. Joseph Santos-Lyons is a UUMA Board member and past President of DRUUMM; Cathy Rion Starr is the UUA staff leader overseeing our ‘Side with Love’ programs and Lisa Garcia Sampson staffs the UU State Action Network in North Carolina.”

“The panelists described their own experiences and fielded questions from the conference participants. Perhaps the best summary of the outcome of this panel is a comment posted on a conference evaluation. ‘... It was very important that they reminded us that this work can be messy and sometimes you have to just act, even if it not perfectly planned or structured. We can’t keep planning and planning to try to make it perfect, we just need to take the leap and act.’”

Richard Speck, along with **Jon Claney**, was responsible for technology, registration and administration. Although one pod had audio problems, Richard thought the Zoom conference, for the most part, went well. Meetings are already scheduled for those invested in technology and communication, and they will address problems ahead of the spring conference.

Jan Carlsson-Bull was charged with organizing the Connecting Rooms and recruiting facilitators. She was pleased with the connections she made. She said, “Recruiting, providing prep sessions, and holding a post-conference Zoom session for facilitator feedback meant that I connected more deeply with colleagues I knew or had known and forged a connection with those I had never known.”



Duane Fickeisen coordinated the Odysseys. Duane, a writer of stories himself, said, “Odysseys offer an opportunity to share parts of life stories. Knowing more about people helps us to build deeper connections within our beloved community. They are a highlight of our gatherings that are not to be missed.

“We heard two Odysseys, continuing our practice of offering one from a minister and one from a partner. **Larry Ladd** was introduced by Wayne Arnason and **Diane Teichert** was introduced by **John Gibbons**. Both Larry and Diane offered compelling stories of engagement with Unitarian Universalism and the richness of bringing in their life experience in other venues.”

Sonya Sukalski was the convenor for the conference. She had a good experience, as the conference had many of our “greatest hits,” as she calls them. She said, “The slide show is always fun for reconnecting with new friends and old alike. The Odysseys were very engaging and gave me insight into life all the way from our youth movement to the ‘9 to 5’ movement to ways to negotiate our golden years. We had lots of opportunities to connect with each other—some to check in, and others to react to where our democracy is headed with our input. I am grateful for the team who put this conference together, for our beautiful times of worship and remembrance, and for all the folks who gave us feedback—during the conference and afterward through the evaluation form.”

Ned Wight and **Anne Marsh** led us in an opening worship service with stunning natural views and a lamentation for injustices visited upon First Nations and Native Americans. George Buchanan, with only a few days’ notice, offered a closing worship. He said, “Sharon Welch’s thoughts and ideas have had a major positive impact on my life and ministry. Her ideas, including her most recent ideas, have enormous value. That said, I understand some might have felt a bit overwhelmed by the rapid flow of ideas. I based my closing worship service on the need to deal with that feeling.”

Charles Stephens led us in a service of remembrance set among some small trees, which helped us preserve our memories of our colleagues. We shared a deep sense of gratitude for the gifts our colleagues gave us and for their contributions to our Unitarian Universalist movement.

Jeff Briere produced the slide show, created publicity and composed the evaluation form. This was the fourth slide show he produced for our conferences, and he is always pleased that people seem to enjoy it. “Publicity,” he said, “can be a challenge at times, but I enjoy writing, so it was a good challenge. I was happy to get a few more photos onto FaceBook, as well as the website with Jaco ten Hove’s help. Although I wasn’t directly involved, I thought the interview format for the teaser with Sharon Welch and Sonya Sukalski was successful.”

For the first time in a few years, **Barbro Hansson** stepped back (but not too far) from the role of Convenor. We believe that she and Sonya considered installing a permanent phone and text connection between New Hampshire and California. Truth be told, she didn’t throw the planning team in the deep end, but hovered politely in the background, only inserting herself when she thought we were going off the rails.

Sonya was pleased that Jeff Briere agreed to be Co-Convenor for the spring conference, but he only did so knowing that Barbro was going to be around for a few more conferences.

And speaking of which, our 2025 spring conference is scheduled for April 21, 22, and 23. Mark your calendars! We’ll publish our theme and presenters as soon as we can.

Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers & Partners Association Presents 2024 Creative Sageing Award to **Carole Martignacco**



Former teacher and religious educator Carole Martignacco retired from parish ministry in 2019, after over two decades serving congregations in Minnesota, Quebec, and Vermont. During her Canadian ministry, she served as President and Vice President of UUMOC and on the CUC Board; she also designed and conducted training workshops for lay chaplains all across Canada. During her ministry she published The Everything Seed (Tricycle Press 2006), a contemporary origin myth, as well as a meditation manual Open to the Spirit (AuthorHouse 2018) based on her weekly interfaith newspaper column. Since retiring she heeds her own counsel to reclaim an earlier version of herself as poet

and artist, continuing to expand her creative life as a writer in myriad ways:

- Exploring reprint possibilities for The Everything Seed in English, Spanish and French, in softcover and as an e-book;
- Publishing her first full-length poetry collection entitled A Bowl of Orange Suns (Shoreline Press, QC 2021);
- Founding the Fundy Bay Writers in New Brunswick, offering regular poetry readings and twice-monthly online writing workshops;
- Teaching writing and other workshops, both in person and online;
- Creating and editing Eco Lyrics of Love and Lament, an anthology published in cooperation with the local Sunbury Shores arts center;
- Serving on the executive board of Haiku Canada;
- Publishing Teasing the Times (Yarrow Press, QC May 2023), a collection of 100 haiku. She writes a daily haiku as spiritual practice;
- Creating and editing Porch to Porch, a maritime haiku anthology;
- Continuing to write a weekly column with interfaith colleagues for the Record newspaper in Sherbrooke, QC (since 2014);
- Leading interfaith retreats and designing e-book meditation manuals in the spirit of her first one, Open to the Spirit: The Soul's Alphabet;
- Leading worship from time to time, often on Zoom — “a modern miracle”;
- Offering Labyrinth retreats and earth-based events at a local church;

- Launching a new project focused on grief following the death of her husband, David Turner, in May 2024, employing the 5-line Japanese tanka poetic form.

Deeply committed to improving her craft, Carole maintains a list of projects above her computer, including a memoir in poetry of her years as a single parent, work on five e-books based on her "Open to the Spirit" newspaper column, distilling decades of sermons to a series of one-pagers, and continuing to build a wider community of artistic collaborators. She loves to encourage others' creativity.

Carole is passionate about claiming this stage of life as richly fulfilling.

"One way I've found to keep energy from lagging in these truly 'golden' playful years is to go with the flow. I have more creative projects than I can ever hope to complete." Creativity brings a perpetual renewal of wonder, joy and awe, which serves as her own fountain of youth. She stands by Bob Dylan's adage, "The purpose of art is to stop time."

Carole's wide-ranging creative endeavors writing, publishing and teaching, as well as her passion for drawing people into creative community, inspire us all to follow her lead in keeping creative energy flowing. We are pleased to honor her with UURMaPA's 2024 Creative Sageing Award.

**Presented by her UURMaPA colleagues
at the Fall Conference, October 23, 2024**



Patt Herdklotz, Unsung UURMaPAn of 2024

UURMaPA runs as well as it does because of our volunteers. And most of the time we are unaware of what goes into keeping us connected and informed.

So each year, the Board honors an “Unsung UURMaPAn” - a volunteer who has made a singular contribution to our organization, working behind the scenes in their retirement years.

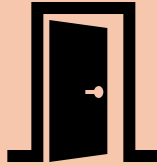
Our 2024 Unsung UURMaPAn is Patt Herdklotz.

Patt, who resides in Oregon, has been retired from ministry since 2017. In July of 2020 she began her UURMaPA service as Membership Coordinator. This particular position has a lot of moving parts ... the coordinator is responsible for keeping membership information current, and this involves updating an Excel spreadsheet plus two Directories in a different format, and a separate e-mail “Announce” list — adding new members as ministers retire and deleting those who pass on. And then making sure the webmaster and others all have the latest directory information. And extracting information from the Excel data for mailings ... and so on.

The job entails a lot of data management and sometimes proves frustrating. Patt wrangled the information into shape, sometimes against time constraints and a bulky, complex system. Her good humor and flexibility in continuing to do this work when we didn't find a replacement in a timely fashion is also so deeply appreciated.

For these years of service behind the scenes, keeping us connected in important ways, we are thrilled to award this honor to the Reverend Patt Herdklotz, the UURMaPA Unsung Volunteer for 2024. Congratulations!

**Presented by her UURMaPA colleagues
at the Fall Conference, October 23, 2024**



Welcome to New UUURMaPA Members

Janet Bush & Booker Bush

Peter Connolly

Rayna Hamre

Kim Crawford Harvie & Kem Morehead

Susan Karlson & Alan Kindler

Kathleen Owens

Bryan Plude & Margaret Aumann

Tamara Suzuki

Save the Dates

**UURMaPA Spring 2025 Conference,
April 21-23, 2025**

**UURMaPA Fall 2025 Conference,
October 20-22, 2025**



Book Corner

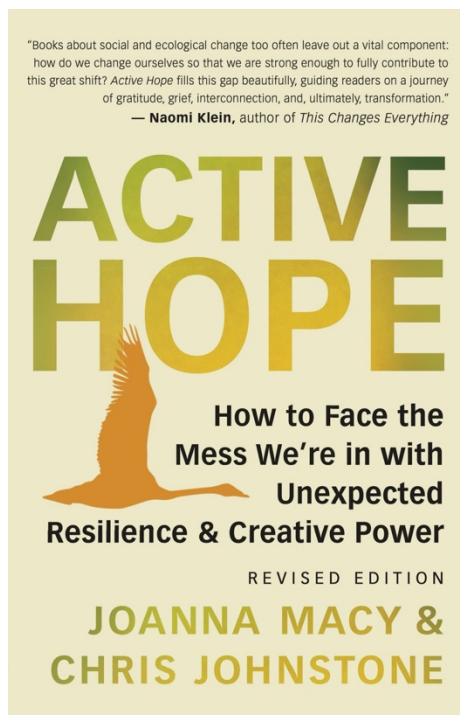
By George Buchanan
Elderberries Editor



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King wisely taught us to envision the Beloved Community in our world. And I still maintain this vision, along with the goal of a healthy planet to sustain us.

And we recognize the journey to this will now be longer and more difficult. This journey is not impossible, but probably more challenging, confusing, and dangerous than we expected until recently.

With this in mind, I have dedicated the Book Corner this issue to two books that can help us sustain ourselves and get a clearer understanding of our journey. If you have suggestions for other such books we can describe in future issues of *Elderberries*, please let me know.



Active Hope (revised edition): How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience and Creative Power

By Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone

In this book, Macy and Johnstone provide us with tools to help understand what they rightly call "the mess we're in."

They begin with their basic idea of "active hope." This is the hope we demonstrate when we are willing to work towards a goal without being held up by our concerns about how likely or unlikely the outcome is.

They also describe "the spiral of the work that reconnects." This is a four-stage process for clarification and renewal: coming from gratitude, honoring our pain for the world, seeing with new eyes, going forth.

I have led workshops with this spiral process many times, using the earlier version of this book. While the spiral process is demanding, it can also lead creatively to new insights and new goals. I highly recommend this book!

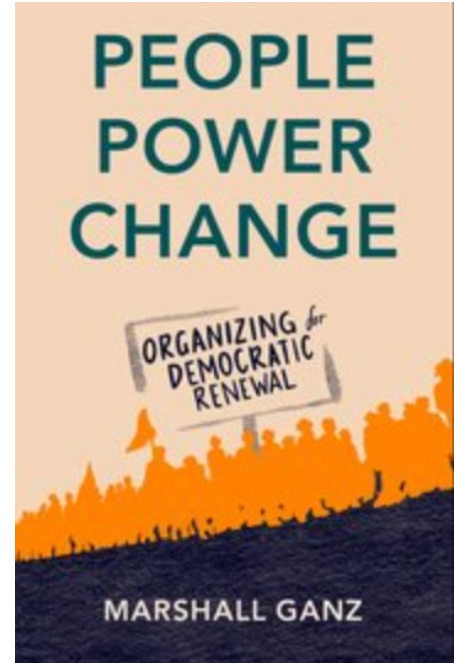
People, Power, Change: Organizing for Democratic Renewal

By Marshall Ganz

Marshall Ganz has had a long career as a labor organizer, college professor, and speaker. In this book he takes us back to the basics of working together and building coalitions to renew democracy and work for justice.

Ganz stresses the importance of storytelling and public narrative to the process of drawing groups towards action. He breaks down the storytelling into steps, explaining the reason for each step.

This book is newer to me. That said, I highly recommend it if you have any interest in the theory and/or practice of motivating groups.



Spotted on a fall walk in Perth, Ontario: the trans flag on this store's door.

Photo by George Buchanan