

REPORT OF THE UUA BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

October 1999

The following is a selection of items from UUA Trustee reports of their January meeting. Thanks to Trustees Walt Courtley, Phyllis Daniel, Beth Graham, Patti Lawrence, Beth McGregor, Kathryn McIntyre, Linda Olson Peebles, Robert Senghas, Sue Stukey, Ed Wilde, Carol Yager and to Financial Advisor Larry Ladd for the use of their materials. Specific credit is not given because there has been editing.

Retreat

The Board meeting started with a very intense retreat with six new Trustees, with the theme of "What Does It Mean To Be A UUA Trustee?" led by U.T. Saunders. At the end of the retreat we confirmed a Covenant with one another. Here they are in a preliminary, slightly edited form:

We will stay in relationship even in disagreement or conflict; we will respect our communal meeting time, using it to advance the designated agenda; we will focus on policy issues, not management; we will work to find balance between good, inclusive process and closure on substantial matters; we will presume good faith; we will not re-do the work of the working groups and committees, and we will own that work; we will be honest and direct with each other; we will speak out when something is of serious concern, asking question rather than making attributions, working on an issue directly with the person(s) concerned, supporting and encouraging others to do the same; we will practice confession and forgiveness; we will attend to and manage the energy level and spiritual tenor of the meeting; we will treat each other with respect, not interrupting nor speaking when we have not been recognized, listening to and respecting the recognized speaker, minimizing side comments.

These agreements will serve any congregation's or districts board and committee meetings. Please feel free to share them, post them and apply them. Better, consider a retreat where you adopt your own promises to one another.

Working Groups

At each Board meeting, the members spend some time in one of four working groups, to which they are assigned for a two-year stint. They are Ministry; Faith in Action/Religious Education; Congregations, Districts, and Extension; Communications and External Affairs. The purpose of the Working Group is to allow a smaller constellation of people to carefully analyze various pieces of business which the whole Board must deal with. They then bring the business to the whole Board, accompanied by a proposal or resolution for the Board to focus

upon. The Working Groups have been part of how the UUA Board does its business for about eight years now.

Board Elected Officers

Dr. Elisabeth McGregor, First Vice Moderator
Sue Stukey, Second Vice Moderator
The Reverend Wayne Arnason, Secretary
Margaret Sanders, Assistant Secretary

Board Appointments to Committees

A complete list of the appointments of the Board to committees appears at the bottom of this report. A new Funding panel, the *Fund for International Matters*, was created which will be chaired by the Rev. Morris Hudgins.

The Moderator, Denny Davidoff, has appointed also a Task Force to address the *Actions of Immediate Witness* process, composed of Brad Brown, Ruth Bruns, and Kevin McCullough, which will present a final report to the Board in January. A task force to update the *Socially Responsible Investing Guidelines* will be convened by Lucia Santini-Field (chair of the UUA Investment Committee), to report in June. Robert Lavender, former Financial Advisor, chairs a Beacon Press Task Force.

UUA Elections

We began discussing the upcoming elections for UUA President and Moderator. Though our rules stipulate that candidates can't announce their intent to run until Dec. 1, 1999, we spent some time agreeing on guidelines for this election concerning electronic communications. The UUA will establish a special mailing list called "election-L" for election discussion. Those who wish to vigorously campaign or discuss election issues will be encouraged to join this list. As of February 1, 2000, a new section of the UUA web site will be sponsored by the *Election Campaign Practices Committee* and will contain all election materials posted in UUA printed publications and linked to the web sites of announced candidates. Patsy Madden and Diane Olsen intend to run for Moderator. Diane Miller, Director of the Ministry Department plans to run for President as does Bill Sinkford, Director of the Congregational, District and Extension Services Department. (Having both of these candidates on the UUA staff complicates the election process). We are urged not to get involved until after the nominations close; we can inquire of the Secretary, Wayne Arnason, if we have policy concerns.

UUA Organization

The *Committee on the Presidency and Governance Practice*, which has worked with the officers to pin down officer job descriptions, relationships among officers and between officers and the Board, learnings of the current officers to be passed on, and structural governance issues presented its final report. The Board also adopted a detailed policy on "Personal Statements and Statements on Behalf of the UUA," applicable to Board, Staff and Administration.

General Assembly

The call for the General Assembly has been mailed to each congregation. Annual Certification forms **must** be in to the UUA office by **February 1, 2000**, or congregations will not be considered certified for the coming year, and will not be allowed to vote at General Assembly. In the interest of fairness and consistency, there will no longer be exceptions to this rule.

Here are a few highlights on the upcoming General Assembly in Nashville:

GA 2000 Theme: This will be the third year of our four year plan of having GAs focused on some aspect of the "Fulfilling the Promise" program. This year's focus will be to promote understanding of how UU congregations are in relationship with each other, and how our destinies are linked as part of the larger Association. The working title of this GA is "Sharing our Destiny." It will start as usual on a Thursday evening (June 22) and run through Monday night (June 26).

Empty Shelves Service Project: We will repeat the highly successful Empty Shelves Project in Nashville, with a local school receiving books for their library. In 1999 over 1,200 children's books were added to the Edison School library in Salt Lake City.

Lots of Music: Nashville bills itself as "Music City USA", and you'll be very aware of that as you stroll around town. You will also notice it at GA. The Planning Committee will make sure there is at least one music program in each of the 11 programming times. You will also have the opportunity to hear the special Children's Honor Choir, sponsored by the UU Musicians Network.

Some items on the GA Schedule (grid): Plenary sessions have returned to the morning on Friday and Saturday, with afternoon sessions on Sunday and Monday. Each will be 4 hours long.

In addition to the many worship services offered by UU organizations, the Planning Committee will again sponsor the daily early morning Spiritual Practices sessions and a worship service immediately preceding each Plenary Session, plus a daily evening service. The Bridging Ceremony will be Saturday evening. The Youth Caucus will plan the worship for Sunday night. The Service of Living

Tradition will follow the Awards Breakfast on Sunday morning, as usual. The Planning Committee will arrange for up to 5 programs to be presented during Plenary Sessions on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. (We expect that everyone will want to attend the Friday plenary, which will address little, if any, official business items.) These same programs will also be offered during the "regular" programming times. The Committee made this change in response to GA registrants who are not delegates (generally more than half the total registration) and also in response to those who asked that some programs be repeated.

GA '99

The official count in Salt Lake City last summer at GA was 1726 delegates representing 595 congregations, 50 states and the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Mexico, New Zealand, and 8 Canadian provinces. Total registration for the Assembly was 3538, including 344 youth.

GA Resolutions

Every congregation should have received by now a packet of information from the *Commission on Social Witness (CSW)* which includes materials to study the 1999 "Study/Action Issue" (SAI) titled "Responsible Consumption as a Moral Imperative." Your congregation is encouraged to take advantage of the resource packet, and send in your comments.

But it is very important that your congregation also take the time to read carefully the current "draft" wording of the 1998 SAI, which will be voted on at the 2000 GA to become a Statement of Conscience. This is titled "Economic Injustice, Poverty, and Racism: A Journey of Action and Reflection." Many UU leaders believe this statement deserves attention and thoughtful feedback before it comes before the General Assembly to be voted upon.

If you cannot locate the packet sent to your congregation, contact Barb Greve at bgreve@uua.org.

UUA Staff

The evaluation of the role of staff has taken place. It is a very candid document. We are served by smart people who are working very hard in a collegial fashion. The Board voted to support the president as a spokesperson for the denomination and limited others to speaking personally and not on letterhead unless quoting policy.

Skinner House Renovation

We finally got the Building Permit to proceed with the renovations of 8 Mt. Vernon Place (Skinner House). Work is to begin January 2000, and we expect to be able to partially occupy by July. When finished we will have complete accessibility to all three buildings. We will also have two apartments, a training room (The Living Tradition Room), a large library/meeting room (The Westwood Room), plus two other meeting rooms and six offices.

Strategic Planning

Kay Montgomery shared with us the results of a strategic planning process that the Executive Staff of the UUA engaged in recently. The four overarching goals they articulated for the UUA staff for the next five years include:

- promoting the health, vitality and growth of congregations as transformative religious communities;
- strengthening leadership training for laity, ministers, and religious educators;
- increasing the visibility and strengthening the voice of Unitarian Universalism as a force for justice in the world;
- providing adequate support and infrastructure to undergird excellence in services and programs.

Each of these goals has accompanying strategic objectives that our elected leaders hope to achieve.

UUA staff Mission Statement

(per their October strategic planning retreat), "The mission of the UUA staff is to strengthen Unitarian Universalist congregations and to give voice to Unitarian Universalist values by providing services, information, connections, resources, and leadership, using their skills and commitment, good stewardship and accumulated knowledge, wisdom and Association-wide perspective."

Capital Campaign

John Buehrens shared with us that he has begun the exploratory work to launch a Capital Campaign drive designed to raise over \$30 million dollars. The purpose: strategic investment in the future effectiveness of our religious movement. Though this is still a work-in-progress, and specific amounts have not been decided upon for specific program areas, there are three broad areas of need, as John and others see it:

- STRATEGIC GROWTH with Grants for new/growing congregations

- MINISTRIES FOR OUR FUTURE with scholarships/debt reduction for seminarians and ministers; Lay leadership development programs; Ministries to Youth: Ministries to young adults; New directions in religious education (including education for religious educators)
- VOICE AND VALUES funds for Beacon Press and Public witness and visibility at the national level

Expense Reimbursement

A new expense form was authorized. Mileage is \$0.32/mile. Meals are increased to \$30-\$40 per day. Dinner max is upped to \$24 including tip. Room tips are \$1-\$2 per day.

Mid-size Congregation Conference

Denny and John will be presenting a work shop at the Mid-size Congregation Conference in Atlanta entitled "It's Hard to Dance When You're Stepping on My Toes." You should plan to attend.

Congregational Life Survey

Each congregation will be receiving a Survey Form from the Lily Foundation that is a major survey of Congregational Life in the United States. The Board endorses and encourages participation in this survey. The forms are to be mailed in January 2000.

C-UUYAN and YRUU

The Board approved the proposal of C-UUYAN (Young Adults Network) to become a Sponsored Organization, joining YRUU as the only sponsored organizations in the UUA. The Board later agreed to financially support, through the Youth budget line, a Youth observer at the Board of Trustees.

Ministerial Fellowship Committee

During the period September 1998 through September 1999, the Committee interviewed 88 candidates for UU Ministry; 77 candidates for Parish Ministry, 9 for Community Ministry, 2 for Religious Education Ministry. 55 received a 1, 11 received a 2, 13 received a 3, 7 received a 4, and 2 received a 5. (1=ready to enter the ministry; 2=ready except for a particular issue or area the committee would like the candidate to address; 3=quite a bit of work still to do; 4=much rethinking and preparing to do; 5=Professional Ministry is not for you.) Six of the seven Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy are now set up and have started or are starting their work with seminarians studying for UU Ministry. The purpose

of these committees is to provide information, support, and early candidacy interviews with people aspiring to UU ministry.

International

UUA President John Buehrens will be going to Romania in early November to receive an honorary degree, and for discussions with the Unitarian Bishop. He will travel to Amman, Jordan in May, for a gathering of the World Council on Religion and Peace (WCRP). The WCRP, and the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) are our primary interfaith commitments, organizations that the UUA helped to found.

Alignment Meeting

An "Alignment Meeting" took place in October where representatives from the various current UUA initiatives and constituencies met and compared notes and learned more about each other's efforts. Those represented included: the UUA staff; the UU Ministers Association (UUMA); Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA); the UU seminaries; Commission on Appraisal; UU Service Committee Board; Fulfilling the Promise; and Journey Towards Wholeness.

The purpose of the meeting was information sharing and clarity, to make sure that the various efforts our congregations are asked to be engaged in are in alignment with one another and with the larger Association and its staff. By the end of the meeting, four main planning efforts were outlined and (re)committed to:

- Journey Towards Wholeness
- Fulfilling the Promise
- The UUA staff strategic plan (referred to in #1, above)
- The President's Council and Development office's exploratory Capital Campaign Committee

John Buehrens reported that there were many helpful sidebar and "front and center" conversations at this meeting, and that "reporting out" is expected to happen with each organization or constituency involved. It proved to be a fruitful meeting.

Lilly Survey

The Board voted to encourage our congregations to participate in a forthcoming major survey of congregational life in the U.S. which the Lilly Foundation is sponsoring; it will cover 40 or more denominations and religious associations and will give us valuable comparative information as well as making us highly visible to other religious bodies and to the media.

Finances

The insurance plan has been amended to provide "Domestic Partner" Life Insurance of \$5000 to partners regardless of marital status or sexual orientation. This policy is available to congregational staff as well as UUA staff.

The Annual Program Fund (APF) request for the year 2000/2001 will be \$42, and for the year 2001/2002 will be \$44. For congregations of 550 or more the ask for 2000/2001 will be \$42 per member or 4.2% of operating budget. 2001/2002 has not been established as yet. Most denominations ask 7% from their congregations.

In January 2000, each congregation will receive a salary and benefits survey questionnaire from their District Compensation Consultant. The data from this will give the UUA the first empirical documentation of the progress that congregations are making toward bringing the salaries and benefits of their employees up to the levels recommended by the UUA Trustees in June 1997.

Retirement Plan: The UUA retirement plan has been converted to the Fidelity Investment Tax Exempt Services Company. The following motion was passed by the Board, which encourages employer contributions and allows voluntary contributions.

Move: To continue to urge employer contributions into the Retirement Plan at 14% of salary of all eligible employees, and to amend the Unitarian Universalist Organizations Retirement Plan to permit additional voluntary contributions by individuals where contributions by an employer/congregation are at a 10% level or higher, effective January 1, 2000. Total contributions are subject to the IRS maximum of 25% of taxable earnings in any calendar year.

Beacon Press: The main area of financial concern continues to be Beacon Press, which experienced a serious deficit this past year. Though they are rock solid in their reputation as being an excellent press (current #1 bestseller All Souls, by Michael Patrick MacDonald, is a Beacon book, as is Marian Wright Edelman's new Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors), the ways of the publishing and book distribution world have not been kind to Beacon. Beacon Press had a deficit of \$346,000, and that deficit must be subtracted from our operating surplus to show a real operating loss of \$116,000. Six huge corporations control 90% of the media and the large chain book stores control the market. In spite of the problems, President Buehrens says "We will find a way to put our values into print." In line with this, Moderator Davidoff has appointed a Task Force on Strategic Options for Beacon Press. We are committed to Beacon Press, but we must explore how we can best manage with it over the long term.

Financial Advisor: Larry Ladd, the Financial Advisor included [this chart](#) in his report

Committee Appointments

Two-year Appointments Beginning January 2000

Those in bold are new appointments, those not are re-appointments.

ANNUAL PROGRAM FUND COMMITTEE

Jane Fogg -- to replace Nancy Libby-Fisher -- 1 year term for Ballou Channing District
Sharon Harmer -- to replace Walter Herz -- 1 year term for Ohio Valley District

COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE

The Rev. Sheldon Bennett (6/95)
Mr. Boon Ooi (6/96)
Mr. John Bush (10/98)
Ms. Nancy Chaddock (6/95)
Mr. David Tedesco, Chair (6/95)
Mr. Ron Green (6/97)
Mr. Lawrence Ladd (ex officio) (6/97)
Mr. Edward Landreth (Board) (6/99)
Mr. Robert Messing (4/98)

CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTIES AND LOAN COMMISSION

Mr. Arnold Bradburd (4/97)
Ms. Denny Davidoff (Board) (1/00)
Ms. June Gillespie (4/96)
Alvin Kone (1/00)
Mr. John Patillo, Chair (4/96)
Mr. Stuart Sendell (4/96)
Mr. Edward Simmons, (4/96)

ELECTRONICS COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Dwight Ernest (6/98)
Mr. Donald Griggs (1/97)
Ms. Gila Jones, Chair (6/96)
Ms. Margaret Levine Young (1/97)
Mr. Jim Mason (6/96)
Ms. Kok Heong McNaughton (1/98)
Mr. Ed Wilde (Board) (6/99)

FUND FOR A JUST SOCIETY REVIEW PANEL

Mr. Carl Cade (6/96)
Ms. Luz Bravo-Gleicher, Chair (1/96)
Mr. Peter Henrickson (1/00)
Mr. David Provost (1/98)
The Rev. Richelle Russell (1/97)
Ms. Holly Ulbrich (1/00)
Mr. Stan Williams (1/98)

FUND FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM REVIEW PANEL

Ms. Betty Bobo Seiden (1/94)
The Rev. Dr. William Hamilton-Holway (1/94), Chair
The Rev. Dr. Morris Hudgins (6/96)
The Rev. Stephen Kendrick (1/94)
Ms. Linda Lu Schulz (1/97)

FUND FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REVIEW PANEL

The Rev. Rachel Anderson (1/97)
John Blue (1/00)
The Rev. Stephen Furrer, Chair (1/94)
Mr. Eddie Hadden (1/00)
The Rev. Maureen Killoran

FUND FOR INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

Ms. Julia Bradburd (1/00)
The Rev. Morris Hudgins, Chair (1/00)
The Rev. Stephen Kendrick (1/00)
The Rev. Marlin Lavanhar (1/00)
Ms. Elena Shirley (1/00)

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

The Rev. John A. Buehrens
Ms. Ann Butler, (Board) (1/97)
Ms. Lucia Santini Field, Chair (1/97)
Ms. Karen Harris (1/00)
Mr. Lawrence Ladd (1/97)
Mr. Charles (Mel) Gray (1/94)
Mr. Craig Scholl (1/00)

MELCHER BOOK AWARD COMMITTEE

Dr. Carol Fontaine (1/99)
Ms. Beverley Hesel (1/99)
The Rev. Thomas Mikelson (1/00)
The Rev. Patrick T.A. O'Neill, Chair (1/99)
Mr. Ted Thomas (1/96)

MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Rev. Dianne Arakawa (1/98)
The Rev. Mark Belletini (1/00)
The Rev. Helena Chapin (6/96)
Ms. Phyllis Daniel, Board (6/99)
Mr. Jerry Davidoff (4/94)
The Rev. Jim Hobart, Board (1/96)
The Rev. Diane Miller, Executive Secretary (ex officio)
Ms. Milly Mullarky (1/94) Vice Chair
Ms. Tamara Payne-Alex (1/95)
The Rev. Dr. O. Eugene Pickett (1/94), Chair
Dr. Doug Sprague (1/94)
The Rev. Leslie Westbrook (6/96)
Open

PAMPHLET COMMISSION

The Rev. John Gilmore (6/99)
Mr. Dan Harper (1/97)
Ms. Mary Ella Holst (1/97)
The Rev. Dr. Jane Rzepka (6/96)
The Rev. Kenneth Sawyer, Chair (6/96)

PANEL ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Rev. Barry Andrews (1/00)
The Rev. John A. Buehrens (1/94)
Ms. Denise Davidoff (1/94)
Dr. David Robinson, Chair (1/94)
The Rev. Bruce Southworth (1/94)
The Rev. Dr. William Jones (1/94)

ART SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Ms. Patricia Frevert (4/98)
Ms. Barbara Martin (4/98)
Mr. Ted Thomas (4/98)

STANFIELD LAW SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Ms. Kay Hodge (6/98)

Ms. Patricia Shepherd, Chair (4/98)

Open

UU-UN OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES

The Rev. Ben Bortin (1/97)

Ms. Elaine Harvey, Chair (1/97)

Mr. Richard Kopp (1/99)

Ms. Eleanor Mason (1/97)

Mr. Phil Rutledge (1/97)

Compiled by [Arthur Ungar](#)