

UUA District President's Association Meeting
General Assembly
June 28, 2008
Ft Lauderdale, Florida

Members present: Charlie Boothby-Maine; Kathy Bowman-Prairie Star; Jennifer Carver-Florida; Rosemary Donahoe-Ballou/Channing; Ernie Hall-St Lawrence; Myrtle Hepler-TJ; Dick Jacke-PNWD; Nana Kratochvil-Heartland; John Malluck-Mid South; Mary Ellen Morgan-PCD; Jerry Muntz-Metro NY; Elyse Reznick-JPD; John Sanders-NNED; Charlie Scholz-Mountain **Desert**; Jim Sherblom-Mass Bay; Tom Stapleford-PSWD; Joe Sullivan-Southwest; Ken Wagner-Clara Barton.

New Presidents: Mike Harris-JPD; Lisa Jennings-SW; Jim Key-TJD; Phil Reed-Ohio Meadville; Howard Rees-Mid-South; Michael Sallwasser-PSWD; Melissa Quirk-Mass Bay

UUA Board Observer: Joan Lund

UUA Staff: Harlan Limpert.

The meeting was called to order by Ken Wagner at 8:45 a.m. introducing outgoing members Elyse Reznick and Joe Sullivan who led us in worship.

We read our covenant together. Elyse read from "You Get Used to It", by Barbara Merritt. Joe and Elyse both reflected on how the DPA has "turned on the light" in the last four years. "Blessing Us Now" Rebecca Parker benediction.

Myrtle Hepler to be process observer for her last meeting with us. N
President Ken Wagner announced that there would be no DPA ribbons this year, as he left them at home-arriving by Fedex later!

Presidents retiring introduced incoming Presidents. Phil Reed-Ohio Meadville. Myrtle Hepler introduced Jim Key-Thomas Jefferson. Elyse Reznick introduced Mike Harris-JPD. John Maluck introduced Howard Rees-Mid South. Joe Sullivan introduced Lisa Jennings-Southwest. Tom Stapleford introduced Mike Sallwasser-PSWD. Jim Sherbloom introduced Melissa Quirk-Mass Bay. All new presidents talked about their professions and their home congregations.

All current Presidents checked in with new developments in their District's. They spoke of much transition with District Staff, distribution of Association Sunday funds, economic, growth and congregational conflict challenges, progress with policy governance. Some spoke about sharing of staff between Districts.

Discussion of distribution of funds for recent flooding disaster in Iowa and Illinois with cooperation between three districts.

Farewells being said to departing Presidents: Jim Sherblom (Mass Bay); Theresa Cooley (DE) . Six years on BOT, two years as President. Jim created environment to “learn as we go”. His tenure was known for not micromanaging staff, for sound financial management and coherent leadership. All this was accomplished while starting a new ministry.

Report from Harlan Limpert: Identified five activities most helpful in moving faith forward-DPA & District Services achieved some things together, forged spirit of partnership.

1). Need for metrics-was shocked by how little we knew, we didn't measure much. Didn't know how much we were growing or how. Who grew fastest? What percentage of congregations growing or getting smaller? John Weston started measuring who was retiring in ministry-the number is frightening. Looking at numbers was not part of our culture. There was resistance to measurement within staff team, not Districts. Staff team concerned that metrics would determine evaluation, this was something over which they had no control. People have come to understand that neither Districts nor UUA staff will use the numbers in an inappropriate way. What does this tell us about our faith, how does this inform what we do? District metrics we received last November was a good step forward. Use of metrics not commonly known. New congregations account for 25% of growth. Current adult membership of our congregations stand at 165,000. This is the same number as at merger. Unitarian Universalism is only growing at about 1%, last year .7%. Harlan wants to use these numbers to advance our faith.

We need to concentrate on numerical growth as an outcome of what we do, how does this speak to our depth? We know that if we are doing church well and living our vision out, our membership will increase. Although increased membership is never the goal. Growth is the outcome of doing church well. If you “can't count 'em you can't see 'em”. “If you can't see 'em, you can't serve 'em”, Some UUA policies may have inadvertently holding back growth. If we could look at five congregations in each District and finding out what they need, we might advance our movement.

2). We should focus on health and not on dysfunction. What % of our time is spent on conflict (some District Executives say 80%). Now 90% of these say less than 40%. Conflict is not always dysfunction. There is a natural tendency as ministers to focus on congregations that need help.

3), Be innovative in everything that we do. Harlan used Target's new prescription bottle as example. No one was complaining about the bottle, Target didn't respond to a “need” they looked to build a better relationship between company and customer. Harlan encourages District teams to think about better solutions to problems. DPA members Sullivan and Jennings, who thought that Carver training was religiously based, were thinking about a new way to look at policy governance.

4). Connect congregations with congregations. What was helpful to growing congregations from District Staff (Chapter 8-Listening to Experience)? Breakthrough Congregations, Drive Time Essays...

Comments: Change this to what can and should be measured (Harris-JPD) This is the value of setting your ends first (Stapleford-PSWD). The metrics Harlan handed out in November, Prairie Star is a proud District. It was painfully embarrassing that we had fallen far behind in Chalice Lighters, and we had started this program. We are starting a new program with Association Sunday \$\$ to grow program within the District. "Do It if it's Useful"- the measure of it's usefulness is the quality of the conversation-(Sullivan-SW) If we don't talk about growth all the time we grow lazy. "Voice of Experience" DVD -an important element of growth are ministers who fall in love with their congregations-but some fellowships are anti-clerical and do not want to grow and do not want to be led in another direction towards growth (Scholz-MD) Focus groups at District Assembly discussing direction of the District, engaging the members (Stapleford-PSWD) Large congregations do not participate in Districts-what do they do for us? (Nana-PSD) How many ministers participate in District Boards? (Morgan-PCD) How do some Districts handle clusters? (Carver-Florida) Learning centers for Districts-lots of thinking and planning on how that could happen (Sullivan-SW) Do you have formalization of how that would happen? (Reed-OMD)

During General Assembly, Harlan invited the District Presidents to set up a private meeting with him during this convention. He passes around a sign up sheet.

New postcard on lay leader resources was developed and will be available at the District Services booth. Drive time essays #3 available this fall, the focus is on small congregations. DVD will be available on this year's UU University. A DVD on governance is being requested, (possibly could be produced-but more challenging than would be expected). We should encourage congregations to be aware of resources that are available from the UUA.

Harlan announced the four breakthrough congregations this year, which are from four different districts. There will be a poster outside each workshop.

Bill Sinkford asked Harlan to lead a team of people for lay theological education. This is different from lay leadership development. Many people are asking for more depth, want something more than sitting in the pews and less than attending seminaries. October 12th is scheduled as the next Association Sunday, the hope and desire is that we will raise more than 1 million dollars for lay theological education and excellence in ministry.

UUA sponsored policy governance training will be taking place September in Dallas. There has been good response, and have cut off registration at this point. Should we do another version of Policy Governance training later in the spring? Tom Stapleford proposed a graduate level for those who have been at this for three or more years. Jennifer Carver echoed that they are not sending anyone to this conference, as they feel that they didn't need the introductory level. John Sanders suggested late spring, early

summer for new members joining Policy Governance boards. Reed also likes advanced level and wants to know what comes next and how you sustain it. The challenge is that after five years, policy governance is institutionalized. Reznick recognized need for various levels in training; training for people thinking about District Staff work, they need this too. Sullivan talked to Mary Higgins and Annette Markee; how can this be accessed by anyone at anytime? What else can we do and what would we be doing to offer introductory and graduate training all the time? Video tape it and make it available all the time on the web. (Stapleford)

DPA list serv needs Moderator. Rosemary has agreed to stay on as co-moderator; she needs one more person. Harlan says main task on list serv's is to stay civil; which is not a problem with this group.

Issues for Harlan: Difficulty for ministers to pay off educational debt. "Co-District Executives", I've heard it's a term we should not be using? (Malluck) Harlan-asking us not to use it now, still don't want to get into the formal official way that any District has two District Executive's, because the roles and responsibilities are really quite different. We felt that this was fodder for much longer conversation. Joan-"Congregations Come First" task force may address this. Stapleford-PSWD has a shared executive-they were hired on this basis. Harlan-some Districts are moving towards this-some away. Muntz-some question about extending shared costs, such as insurance. to non-co employed staff. Reed-Nominating Committee-how do you develop leadership when the Nominating Committee falls apart?

Lunch

Presentation by UUA Board Members: Anna Olson-Trustee; John Blevins-Trustee' Tom Loughrey-Trustee; Gini Courter-UUA Moderator.

UUA Board Goals-Governance plans. UUA Board's October meeting-they have plans for moving the UUA Board to Policy Governance and how District President's Association (DPA) can develop ends (the means have been established and are available now). Owner-member congregations. Set schedule-July 2009 coincides with new President's term. Appreciative Inquiry-leaders to gather to talk about Board's work, this is the first step in drafting ends. DPA will help move that work along in October in conjunction with UUMA and outside consultants. Through the winter and spring, asking UUA Trustees to get out in the Districts and to share the work, to ask for comments and suggestions. We can help by gathering a discussion in our Districts, to have a conversation. June 2009-what's the follow-up to open space from last year?

Monitoring reports will start coming in from UUA staff-Board will monitor these on a monthly basis and will discuss at quarterly meetings. Put in place a process that will run forever.

UUA Board wants our counsel in developing ends. Begin to think about what are the good sides for going in this direction. We love to pick good leaders and then compete with them. UUA Board does not want to do this. They want our help and experience.

Even if this process fails, the Board has changed in fundamental ways. Be intentional to bring to the table our experience. This is an opportunity to engage all aspects of our movement (youth, POC). Courage and persistence, quality they need in trustees. This will affect Trustee election process. Board has devoted a significant amount of time to this process for the last three years (some for the last five). The Board means open to critique. Carver information is good in listing qualities of good trustee and board members (Reznick). Board has covenant that enforces the covenant. How do we engage congregational Presidents and District Boards in the conversation?

(Unity Consultants)

Discussion about our involvement in October Board meeting: (Wagner facilitating): Having the whole Board involved with all of the DPA is too many voices. Having some of the DPA members involved is far more desirable and do-able. DPA does not speak with one voice, but are representative of the group. Gini- your experience not as valuable it shouldn't matter. Appreciative Inquiry Workshop being held at 3:15 tomorrow (6/25) to start the work-congregational and district leaders should be involved. Sullivan- if you have engaged the moral leaders in vision, mission, they should be involved. Stapleford- DPA members who attend have homework to do to make sure that they are really representing their congregations and their Boards. Not just the individuals stating what they know now. Must speak to our "owners" Carver- all of us need to do this work, not just the ones who are going. Gini- The Board has owner linkage, too we're not the only ones. We are trying to maintain a relationship with the middle judicatory (DPA) Represent as we are called to represent the members of our Districts, we should all talk to our Trustee.

District Presidents attending will be selected through a self selection process. Members attending need to meet beforehand. The Board will need our participation on October 16th and 17th. Melissa, Ken, Nana, Dick, Jerry, Mary Ellen and Phil were selected to represent the DPA at this Board meeting. Those participating should come to Boston on Wednesday night and stay through dinner on Thursday.

Policy Governance Institute- Joe, Nana, Mary Ellen, Tom and Jim. 8000-9000 UU's involved in Board service at any one time (at the congregation/District/denomination level). We are entrusted with the mission, and we all serve on multiple boards. Perhaps we can all say that these experiences were all rich and growing. If not, we should be. This is fundamental to the health and vitality of our movement. However scattered our training in governance in our movement, we have some wonderful trainers, but how many of the 8-900 leaders do they touch? We can do better and we are called to do better. We are not talking about preaching the "gospel of Carver", we are talking about training leaders who understand their fiduciary responsibilities are grounded in our faith. UU University is moving into the heart of GA, could we envision that religious governance can be a part of this? We should set up a network of interlinked purpose. Connie Haas

Zuber-can we take Carver language and make it religious? Some people are thinking about it. Could we bring this to Mid-sized Church Conference in February? Mary Higgins wants to. We recommend that Harlan work with our District staff. Bring the conversation to the UUA Board and to explore how our ends can be so deeply grounded in our faith. John Blevins-this conversation is also happening in the UUA Board's governance working group. Sensitive that much of their training is coming from staff, when they are going to be writing monitoring reports. Clearer about the line between staff and Board, our objectives make sense to the UUA Board. Charlie S-Application makes sense to plug this into UU University. This is also practical for our leadership schools to create better leaders at a higher level, grounded in our religious principles. Stapleford-when the staff was involved in the discussion, when they write their reports, you can see that they have a stake in the game. Salwasser-not a physical place, but that could be in the congregations. Not just a place to receive information, you need to bring it back into the congregation, so it's a living thing. Joe-We should decide how as the DPA, you want to be involved in continuing this conversation. Most of the members of the task force are leaving the DPA, although Nan and Mary Ellen continuing and are willing to stay with this.

Harlan continued recognition of our out-going Presidents-John Maluck has been a special gift to Mid South District.

Myrtle Hepler-(Thomas Jefferson); tireless volunteer for many years. Oversaw considerable staff transition, went out and welcomed congregations personally.

Joe Sullivan-(SouthWest); served during most challenging times; hurricanes Katrina and Rita. He led the Board to Policy Governance. Served on the Congregations Come First Task Force and Fifth Principle Task Force denominationally.

Tom Stapleford-(PSWD); Brought the District Board to Policy Governance. He has a keen business sense and always kept his eye on the issue at hand.

Elyse Reznick-(JPD); Under her leadership the District fully embraced Policy Governance. She also served the denomination on the Congregations Come First Task Force

DZ-(Ohio-Meadville) Under his leadership, the District and Board communication greatly improved.

Charlie Boothby and John Saunders-led an almost seamless consolidation.

Ken Wagner then led us into the Business meeting- Jennifer moved and John seconded the approval of November meeting minutes. "Mountain Desert District" misspelled-only amendment. Minutes Approved.

Presidents report-Ken Wagner really enjoyed being President. The opportunity to participate with UUA Board was very special. Transformation, wonder and connection-

three values that underlie the UUA Board of Trustees. Encourage Jerry to read through the notes because there is a nexus with the work we do. Ken was not been able to confirm that we have special seating at Plenary this year. Ken recommends that we seek forgiveness not permission and sit up front with the UUA Board. Joan authorized it. Ken thanked us for allowing him to serve this past year.

Treasurer's Report-John Maluck- The DPA budget is very simple. We make a little interest. Biggest expense is the travel to November meeting in Boston. UUA Board observer is reimbursed, we have a few GA expenses. Charlie moved and Jim seconded the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. Jim thanked for clear reports by Mary Ellen.

APF Report-Dick Jacke. No surprise that there are financial ripples out in the Districts. Latest information is 97.2% by this time last year. This year we are at 95.5% of our goal even with a significant jump in the goal. But even with that, it doesn't look as if we are going to have a really strong finish to the year. District chairs reporting that many pledge drives are down. Relationships are fragile at these times and awareness and connection are important. If congregations have a sense of connection they will want to support the association. Joan- made the observation that at the UUA Board meeting APF is expected to come in above goal (Lyn Conley reporting). Legacies and Friends of UUA down. Some discrepancies in the information available.

Nominating Committee (Charlie Boothby, DZ and Joe Sullivan): President-Jerry Muntz, Vice President-Mary Ellen Morgan, Secretary-Nana Kratochvil, Treasurer-Ernie Hall. APF-Dick Jacke.

Charlie moved, Elyse seconded. Passed. Nominating Committee: Kathy Bowman, Charlie Scholz, and Jennifer Carver. Passed.

Report from the Congregations Come First Task Force-Joe Sullivan and Elyse Reznick. Task Force met in January in Dallas. Quick update by Elyse: CCF came out of District Summits (used to be held night before GA-DPA and District Staff and Trustees) Would discuss assumptions of inequities in District services and financing. This conversation has been going on for about 30 years, but this is the latest iteration. There has been lots of feedback and nervous conversation regarding the task force's assumptions. They met in January to put together their latest report and the case statement. Bill Sinkford came to talk with them and discussed whether they would continue, he told them that there was no more money to meet in person. Task Force felt that their work was not done and that they could continue their work by conference call and webinar. Talked again about inequities they saw and are asking again for feedback. Teleconference with both candidates for UUA President, Task Force: don't see anything happening until the new candidates come in. Timeline teleconference in August, they will update APF at this time. Workshop will be held at GA on Thursday. There is some feeling by some Districts that now that they have gone to Policy Governance, how relevant are the Districts? They don't know if their final report will be in January or April of next year. Elyse and Joe will stay on and one of them will report back to us in November.

Living Agenda-started last November and we were intentional about how every issue goes forward. Allies for Racial Equity-spreadsheet sent out with District resources.

Looking for co-moderator for DPA list: DPA Pres only-closed list. DPA-L list a bit broader membership. No attachments are allowed on those lists. Nana was volunteered by Elyse. Thank you Elyse.

Liberal Religious Board Governance Institute-Jim and Rosemary and Dick. Charlie Scholz. They join Nana and Mary Ellen. MEM volunteered by Nana. Thank you, Nana.

Mike Harris-pledge includes both District dues and APF in each payment.

AUUA pitch was made by Mary Ellen Morgan, who also serves on that group's Board.

Charlie Boothby-has served as a District President for five years. His tenure saw the change in relationship in this organization and UUA as significant and all to the good.

Adjourn-Charlie Scholz; second-Charlie Boothby.

Process Observer report-Myrtle. Used form from UUA Trustees-how did we include items that addressed issues if AR/AO. We did not raise issue of AR/AO, Michael did raise up Journey Towards Wholeness, GLBT and anti-racism conference. We were not focused on this and did not recognize that we are part of the privileged group. Suggested that we go back to our Districts to make sure that we include members of color on our Board's so that we can someday have POC as members of the DPA. Joan urged us to add some AR/AO issue at every Board meeting.