

**Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association
Annual Meeting of the Membership
Thursday, June 24, 1999
Salt Lake City, Utah**

The annual meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. on June 24, 1999, by president Gary Smith, in the meeting room of the Salt Palace. Gary offered a thought from a New England town meeting. The minutes of the annual meeting of June 25, 1998, were approved as submitted by the consent of the body.

Daniel Simer O'Connell was appointed as parliamentarian. Aaron Payson was appointed as timekeeper. The rules and procedures set forth in the agenda were adopted.

Linda Hart gave the report of the nominating committee, after introducing its members and explaining the process of the committee. The nominees for the Executive Committee of the UUMA for 1999-2000 are Patt Herdklotz, treasurer; Kate Walker, arrangements; Polly Leland-Mayer, chapter visits; and Gretchen Woods, CENTER. Gary appointed tellers to collect the ballots. Linda nominated Kendyl Gibbons for the Berry Street Conference Committee. She was elected by acclamation.

Gary reported that there was a quorum present.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Gary gave an oral report in addition to the written one included in the packet. He said, "There are many issues facing us as a denomination. We expect a lot of each other and our congregations expect much of us. We expect much of the UUA and they expect much of us. We took up this profession to make a difference. Mostly we are proud of what we do. We hold each other accountable. That's what you elected us to do." Gary gave particular thanks to the department of ministry who "stand shoulder to shoulder with us in what we do."

Gary introduced the collegial conversations that will take place in the afternoon. He also apologized for the mix-up in housing. Gary reported on recent meetings of groups and individuals doing the Journey Toward Wholeness work.

Gary introduced the Exec members who will be continuing: himself, as president; Kenn Hurto, vice president; Annie Foerster, secretary; Aaron Payson, publications; and Betsy Stevens, good offices.

CENTER REPORT

Beth Miller, Chair of CENTER, expanded on her written report by thanking those who have made the year a success, those who will be leaving, those staying, and those coming on the committee, presenters and coordinators. She especially thanked Ralph Mero for suggesting this year's speaker, Steve Grey. She also suggested people pick up the new CENTER brochure.

Beth called the group's attention to the two models of anti-racism training available and suggested all chapters choose one to present at a meeting this year. She announced the speaker for next year would be Nicolaus Mills, author of *The Triumph of Meanness: America's War Against its Better Self*.

GUIDELINES COMMITTEE

John Nichols, chair of the Guidelines Committee, introduced the members of the new committee. The committee will take up issues suggested by the membership or the Exec and to have conversations preparatory to presenting them to gathered body next year. John solicited any issues of concern about the Guidelines from the membership.

OFFICE OF CHURCH AND STAFF FINANCE

Ralph Mero reported from the office of church and staff finance. “Each year becomes more interesting, challenging, exhausting. I appreciate those of you who come up to me and say thanks and I urge you to do the same for all members of the Department of Ministry.”

Ralph reported that we have now weathered the crisis of last year’s cancellation of our medical insurance. Where new plans do not cover our colleagues sufficiently, we have increased subsidies to supplement them. The department is now considering a new policy carrier.

Ralph reported on the recent survey of members 50-or-older to assess our preparation for retirement. A full report is expected by the end of July. Ralph fears that the overall results will be sobering and scary. Compensation Consultant teams will be available for consultation during the General Assembly to talk to ministers and members of our congregations.

Ralph reported on the recent conversion of our retirement plan to a single vendor, Fidelity Investments. Ralph introduced two members of Fidelity and allowed questions from the floor. Mike Denson from Fidelity spoke. Mike introduced Erin Egley. “\$100M is a big plan. We are happy to serve you,” he said. Denson thanked the UUA for trusting Fidelity with the plan and outlined some of the enhancements.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Richard Speck presented the treasurers report. He reported that we are now a 501(c)3 organization. This means that chapters will now be exempt from tax on meetings. Richard told the members that if they approved this budget they will be voting to double the chapter subsidy. He challenged the incoming treasurer to continue to send monies back to the chapters, where they should go to subsidize expenses. He also reported we now take credit cards for dues and purchases.

Richard reported a recent Exec vote to have Canadian colleagues be able to pay in their own currency. He also reminded members that grants are available from the Exec for worthwhile projects in the chapters. We are, he said, in a healthy position financially, enabling us to support our association works.

The budget was accepted as presented.

ELECTION REPORT

Annie Foerster presented the result of the election, all four members elected by acclamation.

Gary introduced the outgoing Exec members, Richard Speck, Judith Downing, Linnea Pearson and Elinor Artman, and thanked them for their hard work and dedication to the association.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Resolution on bylaw change regarding appeals of MFC decisions.

The granting of fellowship is a privilege and not a right.

Since the Commission on Appraisal has called for a “higher standard” for entrance into the UU ministry; and

The Consultation on Appeals to MFC Candidate Decisions has determined that the current “structures and process [in regard to fellowshipping are] equitable and just”; and

Since the opportunity to review and reconsider decisions by the MFC (and forthcoming Regional Sub-Committees) is available to candidates receiving “3”, “4” or “5” who may always petition the Committee with new materials to show why they should return and be interviewed again (these petitions are frequently successful for “3’s” and “4’s”); and

Since unlimited appeals of MFC decisions would seriously weaken the Committee and turn the Board of Review into the arbiter of all decisions regarding unsuccessful candidates;

While constructive attention to improving weakness in candidates would be deflected into appeals of unwanted decision which would add a commensurate cost in time and money; and, moreover,

Since the MFC and UUA have invested substantial time and resources in developing a means of screening at the front end of the preparation process in order to minimize the need to turn down candidates after several years of training;

And furthermore, since the value of the newly established Regional Sub-Committees of the MFC has only begun to be realize:

Therefore, the UUMA at its Annual Meeting June 24, 1999, urges the 1999 General Assembly of the UUA to oppose any change to Bylaw Section 11.8.

Brad Greeley presented the report and the resolution to oppose a bylaws change to be presented on the floor of the General Assembly on Friday, June 25. This resolution followed resolutions already made by the Mass Bay District, the UUMA Exec, the UUA Trustees and the Board of Review.

David Sammons spoke for this resolution. As former chair of the Committee on Appraisal, he reminded attendees that a complete four-year study of the MFC showed that the MFC operates very well without additional appeals by a separate body.

Peter Scott spoke against the resolution on the basis that the MFC is an absolute committee, which goes against our principles.

Wayne Arnason, speaking for the resolution, responded to Peter’s statement by saying that there is nothing in the way of allowing people to return to the MFC. He also pointed out that the Board of Review can review MFC for process-error decisions.

John Higgins spoke against the resolution stating that the objections do not respond to the issues of the bylaws change. Our bylaws insist that no committee have absolute power.

Anita Farber Robertson supported the resolution by telling her own experience as she prayed for the MFC to be as discerning as they could be and tell her if she wasn’t ready. Any committee who listens to appeals, she said, will eventually be the committee with absolute power.

Lily Henley, a minister in preliminary fellowship, reminded the body of its covenantal relationship with one another to be in a democratic process.

The resolution passed by a clear majority.

2. The following resolution, signed by Sarah Clark, Laurie J. Auffant, Mykel Johnson, and Sherri Puchalsky, was presented:

We ask for a resolution to guarantee that DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministers) be represented with one position on the UUMA Executive Committee and one position on the CENTER Committee. These two people to be appointed by DRUUMM to monitor and address the needs and concerns of UU ministers and ministerial candidates of color. We ask that these two positions be added and filled this year and that the process be initiated for a change to be made in the bylaws of the UUMA that establishes the two positions permanently.

It was determined, in consultation with the parliamentarian, that this resolution would not fall within our bylaws rules for changing the bylaws. Gary noted there is a person of color on CENTER, and asked that DRUUMM appoint an *ad hoc* person to meet with the Exec and work toward a possible bylaws change. The resolution was withdrawn.

3. A second resolution was presented by the same group:

We ask that the UUMA cosponsors, with the Journey Toward Wholeness Committee, a consultation on ministry and anti-racism with 50-100 ministers (influential). The purpose of the consultation is to begin a dialog on race between UUMA white ministers and professionals of color with a goal of positive action with the UUMA and UUA.

Susan Suchocki, chair of Journey toward Wholeness Committee, reported that a meeting is already in the pipeline with the Exec and the UUA. Gary reported that money is in the budget.

A friendly amendment to delete the word “influential” was accepted. The resolution passed.

4. A third resolution was presented by the same group:

We ask that the UUMA encourage creation of a full-time staff member at the UUA for the sole purpose of addressing issues surrounding professionals and people of color in general within the UUA.

Rob Eller-Isaacs disagreed, saying the UUA cannot solve this problem; that it needs to be done “at home.”

Dorothy Emerson spoke in favor of it, saying change needs to come through institutions.

Wayne Arnason spoke against it on the basis that we have not had sufficient time to consider it carefully and it deserves more time than that.

Ellen Johnson-Fay added that she has learned to listen to people of color, and we need to respond to them.

The resolution passed and will be taken into Exec discussion this year to perfect it.

Gary thanked the presenters of all resolutions for their work.

GUESTS

John Gibbons introduced guests from Transylvania, Danis Jacob, his wife Ava, and their son Jolt, who bring greetings on behalf of the Transylvanian Unitarian Ministers Association. Rev. Jacob told the gathered assembly, through an interpreter, that he is still eager to learn and thanked us for workshops given in his country and for the invitation to our General Assembly. The money sent to Transylvania has been used to give financial assistance to those who are ill or retired, and to younger ministers at the birth of their children. The \$1000 sent by the UUMA for books is appreciated. Each Unitarian minister will be given a chance to choose one book.

Gary recognized Judith Crompton vice president of the British Unitarian Association, who brought greeting from the Assembly of Unitarian Churches of Great Britain.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20
Gary gave a benediction before lunch. Gretchen Woods sang us out.

Minutes revised January 2000