

2020 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF UUHHS

Saturday, July 18, 2020, 7 pm, on Zoom

Members Present: Jay Atkinson, Bill Bechman, John Buehrens, Barbara Coeyman, Phoebe Cos, Joan Cudhea, Patrice Curtis, Gail Forsyth Vail, Richard Gilpin, Mark Harris, Earl Holt, John Hooper, Wesley Hromatka, Nicole Kirk, Jay Kiskel, Herb Klitzner, Dan McKanan, Jessica Mink, Dan Mouhot, Kathy Parker, Doug and Marilou Parkhurst, Frank Potter, Connie Simon, Richard Stower, Victor Urbanowicz, Rali Weaver, Tisa Wenger, Alice Blair Wesley

Introductions

We began by identifying some key roles. John Buehrens, UUHHS President, will chair and facilitate the meeting. Dan McKanan, UUHHS Secretary, is taking minutes. Nicole Kirk will assist John in calling on people in discussions. Connie Simon will follow the chat and assist people with technological support needs.

John then asked UUHHS officers and board members to introduce themselves, followed by everyone else in attendance.

John then invited us to begin with a moment of quiet reflection on the death and legacy of Congressman John Lewis. He also invited our prayers and heartfelt attention to former board member John Marsh, who recently suffered a debilitating stroke.

John asked Dan McKanan to work with Jay Kiskel to make our minutes available on the UUHHS website.

Financial Report

Treasurer Rali Weaver reported that we balanced our budget for the previous year in part because of COVID, which reduced expenses for this meeting and for our General Assembly events. For the coming year, we will take a 4.5% draw on our endowment, about \$9000. This will allow us to make some strategic investments, particular in the Dictionary of UU History. We actually did not need to draw down the endowment during the past two years. Our bank balance is about 50% of our annual expenses.

IN response to a question, Rali indicated that our endowment this year grew by more than the draw.

John mentioned that we have one restricted endowment, which supports the Conrad Wright Lecture.

Nicole noted that membership dues provide the bulk of our budget, and urged the gathered members to invite others to join.

John noted that historically we have kept dues low; he urges us to create multiple tiers of contribution level to encourage some of us to make larger commitments to history as a source of reflection for the wider movement.

Journal Report

Editor Kathy Parker expressed her gratitude to everyone who has expressed appreciation for the current issue of the journal. We strive to make the journal relevant to our history as it inspires us in our religious practice. For example, we included three essays about congregations reflecting on their suppressed

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history of complicity in slavery and settler colonialism. We are exploring ways to make the journal more available digitally.

Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography

Connie Simon offered a power point presentation on the DUUB. Currently we have 391 biographies published, 2 under review, 38 assigned and not completed, and 510 suggested but not assigned. Her priorities are to appoint an editorial board, redesign the website, review which essays are missing, and then begin soliciting new entries. She is also asking: through what lens do we view our history? What biographies are missing? What biographers are missing? Our history is more than Channing, Emerson, Parker, Thoreau and Selma. Piggybacking on the Commission on Institutional Change and the diverse identities of our country, we seek to look at our history in more inclusive ways. We also need to acknowledge more fully the flaws of our biographical subjects. Connie concluded with a quote from the Commission on Institutional Change report that provides crucial guidance for our work. We will be announcing a prize competition for new entries in the September newsletter!

General Assembly Report

Nicole Kirk shared the news of this year's Conrad Wright Lecture, featuring Professor Sylvester Johnson of Virginia Tech. After previous audiences of about 150 people, we attracted 411 to this year's digital presentation. We are equally excited about our possible speaker for the coming year.

Dan McKanan reported that we had a presence in the virtual exhibit hall and conducted a virtual stage webinar. Though the numbers of participants were relatively low, the number of new memberships paid after General Assembly was higher than usual.

Congregational History Project

Dan McKanan announced that we are launching a national project of inventorying congregational histories, building on the work begun by Barbara Coeyman ten years ago, and the recent successful inventory of congregational histories completed by the History and Heritage Committee of the Mid America Region.

Victor Urbanowicz shared some more details about the Mid America project.

John expressed some of his own enthusiasm for this project. He also underscored that the work of our society is more than the journal, more than the DUUB—we seek to be a wide-ranging resource for everyone engaging in historical work.

Connie Simon noted that it will also be important to offer advice to congregations about how to manage their archives, and how to decide whether to pass them on to archives at our seminaries. Kathy Parker noted that she included some guidelines for archivists Barbara Coeyman's project, which is still available at <https://uuhhs.org/congregational-history-project/>.

Jay Kiskel noted that one good option is for congregations to digitize their records and hand on the digital record to one of the seminary archives.

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Barbara Coeyman noted that one dilemma she confronted was how to include both existing congregations that are no longer in existence. John Buehrens gave an example: Peter Richardson has a thousand page manuscript on all the existing and previously existing congregations in Maine.

Wesley Hromatka mentioned attending an excellent archival session at Harvard a few years back.

Report on Merger Process

John Buehrens reported that we are in active merger conversations with Collegium. We had a very constructive meeting today, and will be continuing over the coming year. We are also in dialogue with Meadville Lombard about providing institutional support for the new organization, as it has been doing for Collegium.

Dan McKanan shared the agreements made at the earlier meeting. We will begin by clarifying our mission through deep dialogue with the Commission on Institutional Change report. We will then identify the specific activities needed to support that mission, including tasks previously carried by one or the other predecessor. We hope to announce the new organization at GA 2021 and hold our inaugural conference in fall 2022. Stephanie May is chairing a task team focused on the mission of the new organization; Patrice Curtis and Barbara Coeyman will chair a task team on specific tasks. Both welcome volunteers.

Election

Dan McKanan offered a report on nominations. Today three members of our board are standing for re-election. In light of the pending merger process, we chose not to nominate any new members to the board at this time. Dan acknowledged those who are continuing to serve and those who are now completing their service. President John Buehrens, Vice President Nicole Kirk, and board members Patrice Curtis, Mark Hicks, Connie Simon, and Tisa Wenger are currently midway through two year terms and will be eligible to stand for re-election in 2021—if UUHHS still exists! Kathy Parker continues on the board ex officio in her role as journal editor. Josh Leach is currently stepping down from the board, we thank for his energetic engagement and creative participation. That leaves secretary Dan McKanan, treasurer Rali Weaver, and board member Phoebe Cos who have agreed to stand for re-election this year. Dan asked that someone move that we re-elect this slate of candidates by affirmation?

Several people moved and seconded this. The slate was affirmed.

Thus, our current leadership team is as follows.

President: John Buehrens (term ends 2021, term limit expires 2025)

Vice President: Nicole Kirk (term ends 2021, term limit expires 2025)

**Secretary: Dan McKanan (term ends 2020, no term limit/began serving 2014)*

**Treasurer: John Buehrens completes his service; Rali Weaver (term ends 2020, no term limit/began serving 2018)*

**Phoebe Cos (term ends 2020, term limit expires 2022)*

Kathy Parker (ex officio)

Patrice Curtis (term ends 2021, term limit expires 2023)

Mark Hicks (term ends 2021, term limit expires 2023)

2020 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF UUHHS

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Connie Simon (term ends 2021, term limit expires 2025)

Tisa Wenger (term ends 2021, term limit expires 2025)

Remembrances

We concluded the meeting by sharing our memories of particular individuals who have died in the past year. This year we have lost at least two whose like we will not see again. One is Robert Richardson, author of profound biographies of Emerson, Thoreau, and James. Another is David Parke, editor of one of the first documentary histories of Unitarianism, editor of the UU World in its early years, and often one of the few who attended this annual meeting.

We adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm, Eastern Time.

Respectfully submitted by Dan McKanan, UUHHS Secretary