

St. Lawrence District Board Meeting February 6 - 7, 2009

Friday, February 6 – First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

Dinner with area professional and lay leaders

Ernie lit the chalice and read from the new UUA Welcoming booklet. The Board met with congregational leaders from Albany, Schenectady and Glens Falls. Questions were answered on what is going on with the District, UUA and the Futures Team.

The board met informally. After a Check-in, President Ernie Hall submitted his President's Message. In addition, he discussed our policy of having a district connection to any program we sponsor at GA. One of the programs we voted to sponsor at this year's GA had to drop out. In its place, we may sponsor a panel discussion on the challenges facing small congregations. This issue will be decided by the GA committee.

Saturday, February 7 – First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

(Attending: Board Members: Ernie Hall, Karen Palmer, Nancy Reed, Robb Smith, Rev. Frances Manly, Bill Parke, Taylor Longo, and David Friedman: Also: Program Consultant Karen LoBracco, Jeanne Crane and joined by Linda Friedman, District Assembly Coordinator and Dave Munro, Chair of the Futures Team)

Before the meeting opened, there was a clarification of what should go into minutes and reports. **The secretary will highlight action items in the minutes.**

The meeting began at 9:25 with opening words and a lighting of the chalice.

Program Consultant for Lifespan Faith Development, Karen LoBracco,

submitted a written report of recent activities and added:

- She will be doing a DRE Start-up in Ithaca.
- She has begun a discussion of scholarship resources in the District.
- She is thinking carefully about how she uses the rest of her allotted time and money this year; and how to balance her responsibilities to lifespan faith development with those for a congregation as a whole.
- Plans for the four-district leadership-training institute, UULTI, are going ahead but it will be necessary to find a new model that is financially more reasonable.

Program Consultant Jeanne Crane, who has been filling in for District Executive Tom Chulak during his sabbatical, reported that the work of the District

has gone smoothly in Tom's absence because of his advance planning. Her activities during this time have included –

- writing a letter supporting the Chautauqua building effort
- writing references relative to ministers
- working with the leadership of the church in Albion
- reaching out to some of the new board presidents
- doing a first Right Relations training in Amherst

**** Motion to Approve Minutes of November Meeting - MSP (Moved, Seconded and Passed)**

Financial Reports and Budgets including **Second Quarter 2008-09 Reports** and **Consideration of Draft 2009-10 Budget**

Discussion of this year's budget:

- The district will be OK at the end of the year but we will be taking \$6000 from our reserves as was expected
- PC professional expenses will limit what Karen LoBracco would like to be able to do
- The office expenses line included the unusual expense of replacing a computer
- **Youth Board Member Taylor Longo will track income from Youth Cons that should be coming to the District treasurer, and will work to keep YAC expenses down for the rest of the fiscal year.**

Discussion of next year's budget:

- Necessity of cutting Board expenses in light of an \$11,000 deficit as next year's budget stands now
- What will be the financial impact on the District Leadership Development committee budget of the Birth of UU Conference in Syracuse in October 2009? There were both positive and cautionary comments.
- Compensation to the web consultant and the roles of other communications staff
- How to use money from Association Sunday/Growth Committee.
- Rent expenses may be increasing

District Assembly Planning

Coordinator Linda Friedman joined us. There was discussion on where to put the Annual Meeting in the program. The schedule will be –

Friday, April 24 at First UU Society of Albany

6:00 dinner

7:30 Gould Lecture

Saturday, April 25, at First UU Society of Albany

9:00 Morning Worship by Sam Trumbore

10:00 Keynote Address by Rev. Thomas Owen-Towle

11 – 12:15 Workshops
12:20 – 1:20 Lunch and Discussion groups
1:30 – 2:45 Workshops
3:00 Annual Meeting and Awards
4:15 Worship/Bridging Ceremony

Also discussed:

- **Board members in their role as liaisons to clusters will communicate directly with congregation presidents around the process of sending delegates to both the District Assembly and General Assembly.**
- People presenting programs at General Assembly will be encouraged to present at that year's District Assembly.
- A collection could be taken at this year's DA afternoon worship service to support a scholarship for district activities.
- **Nancy will coordinate the awards ceremony this year.**
- The Futures Team will have a display table and a lunchtime discussion group at DA.

Future's Team Chairman Dave Munro reported that he and his team are having discussions with leaders from all 34 congregations in the District around "What can the District do for you and with you?" They will also be meeting with representatives from NYSCU and Unirondack.

One discussion will be "How serious are we about growth in the future?"

The team is considering offering a workshop at the 2010 GA in Minneapolis.

UUA Board Member David Friedman submitted a written report. In addition, he discussed –

. UUA has financial concerns for the future – income is down slightly and with the current recession the endowment value is down. Cost cutting is being done. For example, nominees for UUA president will do more campaigning on the web and less traveling.

The UUA has developed a new Drivetime Essay CD on Small Congregations (which Tom Chulak was very involved with).

There is a powerpoint presentation from Deb Hoffman on Behavioral Covenants.

Liaison Reports

Written and verbal reports on recent activities in SLD congregations were shared with the board. **This information will be shared with the District reporter Ellen Asprooth for the website.**

Administrative Secretary Sue Tabone submitted a written report.

Youth Representative to the Board Taylor Longo reported:

- Youth from more congregations have been participating in Youth Cons, including Glens Falls, Canton, Binghamton and May Memorial.
- First Unitarian of Rochester put together a spiritual development con for youth.

Communications

The E-survey has been completed and the report on it is available.

District Safety Policy

Pertains only to district events.

If approved at the District Assembly, it will be tried provisionally for one year and then reassessed after three years.

Some definitional problems and other issues were highlighted on a written handout and were discussed. The Board agreed that it didn't know enough to advise RE and YAC on these complicated issues.

Karen LoBracco, with help from Frances Manly, Taylor Longo, and an RE committee representative will get a revised version to the Board by March 2.

Upcoming Events

Board Teleconference, First week in March

Next Board Meeting, Friday afternoon, April 24, before DA

District Assembly 2009, April 24 – 25

SLD Board Retreat, August 14 – 15, at Christ the King in Syracuse

Social Justice Conference, "Doing Justice in an Economic Tsunami"

Meeting Adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Nancy Reed
Secretary