

**Meeting of the St. Lawrence District Board of Trustees
August 15 and 16, 2008
Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua NY**

Attending: District Executive Tom Chulak, Trustees: Ernie Hall, Karen Palmer, Bill Parke, Nancy Reed, Robb Smith, UUA Trustee David Friedman, Rev. Frances Manly

Fran Manly led us in song and an opening worship. Her words were thoughts and feelings about the tragedy in the UU church in Tennessee.

President Ernie Hall opened the meeting with a review of our covenant written last year for working together. He then shared a Process Observation questionnaire used by the UUA Board of Trustees and an additional Anti-Racist/Anti-Oppressive Process questionnaire.

Discussion included

- We will build in a Check Out at the end of our meetings to review the process.
- We will consider selecting a book we would all read as a Board, once a year, to stimulate discussion on a UU topic.

Review of roles:

There was a review of the chart developed last year of the responsibilities of the DE and the Board. Tom mentioned that responsibility for our SLD congregations and the clusters belongs in the partnership column.

Discussion of the importance of our SLD youth and young adults.

Sue Tabone's role in implementing the Board activities was clarified.

Tom Chulak's role: A description developed by the UUA of the District Executive's role was distributed. As part of the annual evaluation process, congregations that Tom has worked with will be asked for feedback on their interactions with him. The Board will be asked to help with this.

Review 2007-08 Goals:

The goals set last year were reviewed. Ernie clarified the financial relationship of the St. Lawrence District to the UUA, and the "One Ask" process.

- We need to continue to clarify this to our congregations. The Annual Program Fund representative will attend the conference of SLD Presidents in September.

Approval of minutes:

- Minutes of the 2008 District Annual Meeting – April 24, 2008 – **MSP (Moved, Seconded, Passed)**
- Minutes of the Board Meeting - April 24, 2008 – **MSP**
- Minutes of Board Telecal - I June 1, 2008 - **MSP**

Reports:

District Executive – Tom reviewed the activities of the Northeast Regional Group (NRG), which includes 200 congregations and 4 districts. NRG is supported by UUA District Services. Its initiatives this year are –

- UULTI and how to more successfully market it.
- A Four District growth consultant focusing on small congregations
- The coordination of youth and young adult staff
- Offering a regional conference for large churches.
- How to partner with UUA regionally to: deliver services, support district staff, increase multiculturalism, and increase partnership with social justice work.

- The stipend position for District Fund-raising Consultant has been eliminated following a re-evaluation of the needs. Instead, Sara Clavez will work on a subsidized per diem basis to provide stewardship consulting to SLD congregations. (District consultants are paid \$250/day by congregations requesting their help. SLD pays other expenses)

- Sabbatical: Tom will be away from Christmas Day until February 23, 2009. Jeanne Crane will serve as consultant for congregational issues. Andrea Lerner, DE from Metro District, will be available in an emergency.

Program Consultant – Karen LoBracco submitted her report ([Attachment #1](#)). Her emphasis has been on making contact with congregations. She is listening and sorting out what her role should be. She will try to meet with clusters along with Tom.

- An upcoming training for youth advisors is not yet on the schedule.
- Karen will be involved with the Futures Team.
- The Gould Library will be transferred to her house by the end of the year.

UUA Trustee - David highlighted the main issues being addressed by the UUA Board

- The costs of governance with a committee system.
- The use of money from Shelter Rock to support ministerial trainees.
- Sexual misconduct issues as part of the credentialing process for ministers.
- The “Ends” of the UUA
- Leadership changes.

David will submit a written report after the UUA board meeting in October.

We will be inviting UUA Presidential candidates to the District over the next year.

President – Ernie highlighted some of the issues discussed at the meeting of District Presidents' Association held before this year's GA.

- The use of Association Sunday funds for lay theological education this year (grants will be sought from congregations and Districts)
- Ways to reduce the time DE's spend on congregational conflict resolution.
- Measurements of growth and innovative ways to grow.
- Policy governance training for boards.

Ernie has been working with new treasurer Mark Jackson.

Futures Team:

(Dave Munro joined us by telephone) Dave reported that everyone is onboard except the youth member is yet to be identified. Their next meeting will be Sept. 18 in Syracuse. The team will develop a new long range plan by talking with congregations, other districts, the Alban Institute and the UUA to find out what's out there and how it relates to us in the SLD. Dave will write up something about the committee's work for the next SLD packet.

The charge to the Futures Team was presented.

***** Motion: To adopt the charge to the Futures Team as presented. – MSP**

Clusters:

Board members shared reports on the news from the congregations in their cluster. Written reports will be sent to our reporter Ellen Asprooth.

Cluster assignments

Board Liaisons will be; Central Cluster (Fran), Mohawk (Ernie), Southern Tier (Karen), GUUSTO (Nancy), Metro (Robb), North Country (Robb), and Western (Bill).

Cluster Facilitators will be; Central (Margaret Hart), Mohawk (Ernie), Southern Tier (Karen), GUUSTO (Ellie Syverud), Metro (Linda Hoddy), North Country (Robb), and Western (Tim Ashton).

District Board Meetings for 2008-2009:

November 21 – 22 in Syracuse (This is a change from dates announced at retreat)

February 6 – 7 in Albany

April 24 in Albany

General Assembly feedback: All who attended shared some of the exceptional moments of this year's GA.

Finances:

Review of FY 2007- 08 Close. Ernie reviewed last year's finances and then the proposed budget and balance sheet. Both look healthy.

He suggested some tweaking to the proposed budget:

- Stipend for fundraising consultant and committee expenses will not be used (budget credit \$4000)
- Karen LoBracco will be paid \$100/mo. beginning in October for office expenses. (budget debit \$900)
- Debbie Herman will be paid for librarian services for only ½ the year because she will be turning these over to Karen. (budget credit \$500)
- Karen's compensation for her health insurance will be increased by \$400 to \$2400 to bring it up to 80% of her premium. (budget debit \$400)
- Patrick Roach's bookkeeper stipend will be increased \$1500 to \$4000. (budget debit \$1500)
- Add \$1000 toward the program consultant expense to cover travel for consultants. (debit \$1000)
- Add expense for an e-Communications survey (debit \$700)

Credits and debits thus balance with no change to bottom line.

***** Motion – To amend the budget as stipulated - MSP**

In addition:

Openings to be filled:

- Nominating Committee – Ernie will contact the Chair of the Nominating Committee.

- Compensation Consultant – This position comes with a small stipend and expenses to meetings like GA. Several names were suggested.

Meet with Growth Committee:

(Eileen Hamlin, Jerol Kent, Karen West, and Amy Lent joined us.)

Eileen submitted a written report. The group brainstormed ideas generated by the committee.

- The committee may bring in an outside consultant.
- Membership Conversation workshops have been offered by Karen West and her husband.
- Discussed the videos of Breakthrough Congregations and how to make services richer.
- How to change to an outwardly focused culture in our churches.

- There will be a workshop “Worship that Works” on November 15 in Rochester on how to help congregations build the capacity for new kinds of worship, “engaged celebration”.
- The Board discussed ideas for using the remaining \$3800 from Association Sunday 2007.

****Motion: To make available \$3800 to the Growth Committee over three years to support the small church growth pilot program and for new worship ideas - MSP**

**Saturday, August 16
Board meeting continues**

2009 District Assembly:

Linda Friedman reported that she will ask for workshop proposals by October 15 and with a deadline of Nov. 15; and will hope to have the program set by the end of the year. The subject will be “Building the Beloved Community” and the keynote speaker will be Tom Owen-Towle from California.

The Friday night ingathering, dinner and Gould Lecture will be at FUUSA. DA will run until about 4:30 on Saturday.

The committee is looking into a spot for a joint worship service by the Metro Area Cluster of churches, possible in Saratoga Springs.

Ernie agreed to coordinate a visit to a possible site at the Best Western on Western Road and Linda will expand her search – possibly to Saratoga Springs. There was discussion of having a cabaret or concert at one of the churches Saturday night.

The costs will be higher. Linda will work with Mark to track the DA expenses line. Karen LoBracco has written a proposed scholarship procedure.

The policy on complimentary registrations was clarified. Linda will bring the list of procedures to the next Board meeting for consideration.

2010 District Assembly:

***** Motion: That the 2010 DA be held in Syracuse. – MSP**

Board is joined by extended Leadership Team.

Joining us: Rev. Dick Gilbert, Harsey Leonard, Alexa Carter, Eileen Hamlin, Jacki Thompson, Elayne Mosher, Jan Gartner, Sara Clavez, Christy Multer, Priscilla Richter, and Jeanne Crane

Opening Worship/Words: Tom Chulak

Everyone was introduced and Ernie reviewed the discussions from the Board meeting Thursday and Friday. He assured us that the District has had a favorable year financially which will allow us to increase programming in 2008-09.

Social Justice: Rev. Dick Gilbert, Coordinator, and Harsey Leonard, Chair Submitted written reports. They would appreciate if members of the Board could help identify people who would be interested in joining the committee to work on any of their issues.

Christy Multer suggested the benefits of communicating this type of request for interested volunteers on the website and also that anything for the monthly newsletter be sent in early to be sure of inclusion.

There was discussion of the ability of the Social Justice Committee to speak for the District on social justice issues.

****** Motion: To empower the Social Justice Committee, with the approval of DE Tom Chulak, to speak for the District on issues in line with the UUA policy - MSP**

Leadership Development – Alexa Carter, Chair, submitted a report.

Growth – Eileen Hamlin, Chair, circulated her written report.

Religious Education – Jacki Thompson, Chair, discussed the schedule of activities. There will be a Youth Adviser training in October. The Safe Congregation policies are still under discussion.

Young Adult and Campus Ministry – Elayne Mosher, Coordinator, reported that she has been making contacts. She has provided an online resource library for YA's and she will email Christy Multer this link. She hopes to work with the clusters. She has worship services that she will do and/or workshops. She will make a proposal to Linda Friedman for a reduced rate at DA for YA's.

UU Leadership Team Institute – Jan Gartner, Liaison, asked that DE's from NRG give the go ahead to do UULTI again next year. Frances Manly suggested congregations think about requesting a NYSCU grant to send a team to UULTI.

Fund Raising – Sara Clavez, Coordinator, circulated a list of the Financial Resource Workshops that she can offer to congregations and clusters. The status of Sara will be changing from coordinator to consultant. Tom will put a policy in writing for compensation to consultants.

Communications – Christy Multer, District Communications Consultant, circulated a proposed e-communications survey and a written report of her recent activities and tentative goals.

Ministerial Transitions - Priscilla Richter will be working with Oneonta and First UU of Syracuse on settlement of a full time minister. Canton will be in

transition soon. **Sara Clavez** – will be helping churches who are searching for a less than full-time minister – Niagara, Athens, Cortland, and Auburn. She is available for Search Committee retreats.

Financial procedures – Ernie did a review.

- For District-wide conferences, income (registrations) and expenses should go through the SLD office. The hosting congregation should make no profit but also take no risk.
- He requests that the budget code be included when submitting a request for reimbursement. These are found on the income and expense statements and on the balance sheet.
- Reminder that Board members request approval from Ernie for reimbursement. This request can be by email.

District Goals for 2008-09 – Jeanne Crane lead us in a brainstorming session about what has immediacy and urgency that we need to address. Many important ideas were discussed. After much consideration, the Board developed goals for this year which included new focus on the e-communication needs of our congregations, helping strengthen right relations, and involving more young adults. This will be in addition to our strong support for our Futures Team, clusters, District Assembly, and key committees.

Closing Words - Tom Chulak

Ernie closed the meeting at 4:30.

Attachment #1

PROGRAM CONSULTANT REPORT TO SLD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Karen LoBracco – August 11, 2008

CONNECTING WITH CONGREGATIONS

During the summer months I have made an effort to visit congregations and attend Sunday worship services. This has helped me get a “flavor” of the congregation, as well as connect with leaders.

- June 15 – UU Church of Amherst
- July 6 – UU Church of East Aurora
- July 13 – First Unitarian Church of Rochester
- July 27 – UU Church of Buffalo
- August 10 – First UU Church of Niagara Falls

At each of these congregations I have connected with the person responsible for children’s religious education. In conjunction with the DRE transition at First Universalist in Rochester I have spoken with the chair of the RE Committee. In Ithaca the DRE was on vacation when I met with the chair of the RE Council and the President, but I have been in telephone contact with Jackie Thompson. In Schenectady, the Search Committee selected acting DRE Melissa MacKinnon to be their settled DRE, and I will be doing a Start-Up weekend with them in September.

In my congregational visits I have been hearing a lot of interest in resources for adult learning, as well as the idea of multigenerational activities.

CONNECTING WITH LEADERS

I appreciate your support in paying the registration fee for General Assembly, which allowed me to meet district leaders during the reception and beyond. I made a special effort to attend workshops on topics apt to be useful in my work: the revised LREDA guidelines, staff relations, congregations as lifelong learning communities, multi-generational worship, the new media, small group ministry, transformative worship, and radical hospitality.

July 28-August 3 was spent participating in the Lifespan Faith Development track at UULTI. Not only was the program great, but I appreciated the opportunity to get to know many of our congregational leaders as well as other district and denominational staff.

September 27 the district RE Committee is sponsoring an Ingathering program for religious educators that I am looking forward to. In late October the LREDA Fall Conference, with it’s theme of “Building a Multigenerational Faith – Creating Wholeness in our Congregations”, will take me to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Here I hope to secure interviews with Rebecca Parker, Laurel Hallman and Peter Morales as part of my membership on the Futures Team.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT

I have participated in the planning of the 4 district NRG Youth Leadership training being held the same weekend of the Board Retreat. The timing is unfortunate, as I would have liked to attend. I am sure we will be hearing more about this from Kelly Masters and Taylor Longo, who with Phil Masters and Michelle George are registered to attend from SLD. I appreciate your funding which makes this possible! A similar training for leaders in Young Adult and Campus Ministry is scheduled for Oct. 9-12 in Titusville, NJ, and Elayne Mosher and I both are planning to attend.

PERSONAL TRANSITIONS

In late May my husband was notified that he was being laid off from AT&T, and so as of July 28 he is officially retired. Already he is in search for another job. In early September we will close on a home in Brockport, NY, and we are looking forward to starting a new chapter of our life back together again. After moving in and getting settled with new telephone numbers and probably email address, I will publicize that updated contact information. My house in Georgia is under contract, and by the time of the Board Retreat all inspections should be complete and hopefully we can close before Labor Day.