

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
RETIRED MINISTERS & PARTNERS
ASSOCIATION**

2011

**Handbook
for
Caring Network
Contact Persons**

Welcome. This Handbook is designed for people who have agreed to serve as Contact Persons for the UURMaPA Caring Network. Contact Persons are selected from those who have made it known they are willing to serve in this manner, or from individuals nominated by friends and colleagues. We appreciate your service to retired ministers and partners and to our wider movement.

There are more than 40 Contact Persons in 34 UURMaPA caring districts. Your job is to reach out to the UURMaPA members in your caring district and to facilitate contact among them -- first, of course, by being available and offering a listening ear, but, more concretely, by initiating contact with each household at least twice a year and organizing one small social gathering a year for those who live nearby to you (or are willing to travel).

There is no fixed term of office although we would like Contact Persons to serve at least two years, four if possible.

Remember: you are not alone in this work. The Caring Network Chair, Paul L'Herrou, is always there for you – to offer advice and to clear away obstacles. And all information about UURMaPA and its activities is readily available on the web at www.uurmapa.org. Furthermore, there are forty others engaged in the same work; you have ready contact with all of them through individual email and phone, and, as a group, through the list-serve, UURMaPA-careteam@lists.uua.org

Who are the people in your caring area?

You can obtain a list of those in your area anytime by going online and downloading the UURMaPA Directory. Go to the Resources page of the UURMaPA website (www.uurmapa.org) and click on Membership Directory. The following link will take you directly to the page:

www.uurmapa.org/resources.html

You will need a username and password to obtain the download. These are:

username = UU-SAGE

password = WISDOM

These are case-sensitive, so type them in exactly as they appear above (hyphen, too).

At the end of the Membership Directory portion there appears the Caring Area Directory. In that you will find the list of folks in your area. In the Membership Directory you will find their contact information.

What do Caring Network Contact Persons do?

Contact Persons are asked to connect with all members in their designated area twice a year – by email, greeting card, phone, or visit; and to host one social gathering a year held near where they live, to which all those in their caring area are invited.

Please remember that nothing takes the place of a personal phone call or visit in getting the feel for how someone is doing and establishing a relationship, or reminiscing about the past. Long distance telephone charges are reimbursed and so are reasonable mileage costs for trips to see members.

Also remember that nothing is more energizing than a social gathering for folks who share so much common history, as do ministerial families in a denomination so small as ours. Costs for such gatherings are subsidized by the continental UURMaPA organization.

The purpose of these semi-annual communications is to:

- Check in to see how people are doing, emotionally and financially.
- Share information and provide collegial support.
- Find out if any contact information has changed (address, phone, email).
- Ask if they are receiving *Elderberries* and the *UUWorld*.
- Ask if they have news they would like shared through *Elderberries*.
- Ask if they have questions or concerns that should be brought to the UURMaPA Board or the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group at the UUA.
- Ask (especially if the person is living alone) if they would like to share contact information of their relatives or caretakers. This can be very important in preventing us from losing contact with a person if they make a move to live with a child or move into assisted living or a nursing home.
- Listen “between the lines” for indications that the person is experiencing difficulty and provide whatever support may be appropriate (you could, for example, ask another who lives near them to give the person a call or drop in for a visit).

The purpose of annual social gatherings is to connect UURMaPA members on a face-to-face level and to celebrate our common pasts and our anticipated futures. They provide an opportunity to share the joys and sorrows of retirement and to swap strategies for negotiating its many challenges. They are, as well, just plain good fun and enjoyment.

New contact information that you glean from your people should be communicated to our UURMaPA database manager, Andy Backus at: andrewbackus@msn.com or 360-715-1984. You will also be notified by him when there are new retirees in your area. Please reach out right away via email or phone to welcome them. Introduce yourself, and invite them to any UURMaPA gatherings coming up (information published on the website and in the newsletter). A personal note or email is a great way to follow up so they have on record how to reach you.

News about people's lives and health should, in general, remain confidential. But if you learn something that other UURMaPA members might want to hear about, check with the person first, then communicate it to the newsletter editor, Chris Lilly Backus at: chrisbackus@msn.com or 360-715-1984. Consider this option often because we want to keep our members connected with one another. Often people are glad to have news about their lives shared widely, particularly when it is good news or about an honor they have received, but even when it is bad news, too.

An UURMaPA member in financial hardship should contact the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances through Joyce Stewart at: jstewart@uua.org or 617-948-6421. Paul L'Herrou, Caring Network Chair, can sometimes facilitate assistance, either with the UUA or through other financial sources as well; reach him at: pauillerrou@gmail.com or 978-290-7285.

Members with health or emotional challenges may be helped by more frequent contact. Hospitalizations should be responded to with offers of support and understanding via whatever means is most feasible – perhaps a visit by another UURMaPA member who lives nearby.

In the event of a death of a member, please contact:

Rev. Paul L'Herrou, Caring Network Chair, at: pauillerrou@gmail.com or 978-290-7285
Rev. Richard Gilbert, President, at: rsgilbert@uuma.org or 585-244-7403
Rev. Andrew Backus, Database Mgr., at andrewbackus@msn.com or 360-715-1984

The UUA provides a laurel wreath for the memorial service of a deceased minister. UURMaPA sends flowers to the family in the event of the death of a partner (the UUA does not). You may also want to notify other UURMaPA members in your area or persons who you know had a relationship with the person who has died.

Some Help in Planning Social Gatherings

Local luncheons and dinners have often brought us together in fellowship. Most UURMaPA members prefer to meet within two hours of home, rather than spending the time and money to go to regional gatherings.

An advantage of a local gathering is that there is no complex program needed. Be sure, though, to provide nametags, as not everyone may know each other. Pick someone to greet people as they arrive, to hand the nametag to each participant, and to collect the funds (if that applies).

Have participants do an informal "check-in" at the outset of the gathering. Some groups like to invite a speaker to join them for lunch and share news about UU happenings or perhaps a bit of local history or politics.

Having a group of six to twelve is ideal to make socializing easy and finding a space more likely. In nice weather a simple picnic can be fun so long as there are chairs to sit on and the terrain isn't too uneven.

Since some of us are on fairly modest budgets, a very simple catered meal can be a good alternative to the restaurant scene. Participants might bring side dishes with the host providing a simple entrée or sandwiches and beverages. This way the meal can be very affordable, perhaps as little as \$10 or \$15 per person. Generally alcohol is not served because people have to get home safely.

Some people have homes with a large enough room or outside space to host the party. Often the local UU church will provide space, usually at no charge. For those who live in a retirement community, some successful gatherings have taken place in a dining room within the complex that can accommodate the group.

Those in the NY/NJ Metro area have been very successful at this. A group of six to eight folks have gotten together a few times a year at a restaurant or pub and often go out afterward to see a play or to visit an interesting historical site or museum. Last year in December a dozen of us in the Pacific Northwest gathered for lunch at University Unitarian Church in Seattle. It was a great success.

In publicizing your gathering it's ideal to give people a couple of months of lead time. Email is the easiest method but please remember those who don't use email or who have visual losses. In those cases a phone call or a written letter of invitation (in large print) is more likely to bring folks out. Whether able-bodied or mobility impaired, our members enjoy riding with someone else to have the company and to save on parking hassles. A friendly phone call from a fellow UURMaPA person improves attendance in any case.

Information You Need to Know

Purposes of UURMaPA

. . . from the bylaws:

Acting in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the purposes of this organization shall be to serve the Unitarian Universalist movement, to enhance the well-being of retired Unitarian Universalist ministers, their life partners and surviving life partners, and to provide such programs and activities as may be feasible for their benefit.

UURMaPA cares for and facilitates communication among retired UU ministers and their life partners. We offer educational conferences and social gatherings for our members.

We provide a member directory and a quarterly newsletter (*Elderberries*). We have published a Retirement Handbook specifically for UURMaPA members. We maintain a website (www.uurmapa.org) and we sponsor list-serves for discussions and announcements (speakup@lists.uua.org and uurmapa-announce@lists.uua.org). Access to all of the above can be obtained through the website resources page at:

www.uurmapa.org/resources.html

Caring Network contact persons have their own email discussion list, uurmapa-careteam@lists.uua.org – to which caring reps are automatically subscribed.

UURMaPA works with the leadership of the UUA and the UUMA to represent the interests of our membership, and to offer creative input to the process of making decisions that affect our movement and its future.

UURMaPA is recognized by the US Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization so all donations are tax-deductible. We have no paid staff and all our work is entirely accomplished by volunteers like you. Thank you.

The eight-person UURMaPA Board meets in Boston once a year, and has monthly telephone conference calls and regular email correspondence. The President is always eager to hear directly from members about concerns.

UURMaPA Membership

Membership in UURMaPA is automatically extended to all ministers in fellowship with the UUA when they formally announce their retirement. Membership is concurrently extended to their life partners. It is not necessary to apply.

There are no dues. But we rely, nevertheless, on the financial generosity of our members. The 2010-11 UURMAPA budget is \$26,000, funded by member donations and a \$1000 subsidy from the UUMA. Individual donations to UURMaPA range from \$5 to \$500 per year. Members are solicited by mail twice a year for a financial contribution.

Our membership in 2011 includes 430 retired ministers, 300 life partners of some of those ministers, and 160 surviving life partners of deceased ministers. Since half of UU ministers are now age 52 or older, we know UURMaPA's numbers will grow considerably in the next decade.

When is a UU minister considered retired?

Ministers in fellowship with the UUA are considered retired when they announce their retirement *formally* to the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group of the UUA. Their years of service are subsequently recognized at a Service of the Living Tradition, which is held in conjunction with the UUA General Assembly. UURMaPA hosts a

luncheon at each GA for new retirees so that UURMaPA members at GA can honor and welcome them into our association.

Many ministers opt for retirement when their settled ministry with a congregation, or their professional relationship with another employer-organization, ends. Many retired ministers continue to work as interim or contract ministers with UU congregations for several years during retirement. Some retired ministers seek ways to earn money in secular fields. So while many ministers remain employed in some way, they still can be “retired” for purposes of ministerial standing. Partners may or may not be concurrently retired.

Some ministers are designated as Minister Emeritus/a by a congregation they previously served. Only a minority of retirees have this status, and these individuals have voting rights at the UUA General Assembly.