

2008 AGM Recap

Four-hundred-nineteen Unitarian Universalists gathered February 28-March 2 at the Hotel Murano in Tacoma for the Annual General Meeting of the Pacific Northwest District. Ways in which we are **“Blessing the World”** were explored during workshops and small group discussions. Saturday’s keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, and the Rev. Dr. Peter Luton, Sunday morning’s preacher, both delivered inspirational messages in line with the conference theme. Rev. Luton urged attendees to help their congregations continue blessing the world by serving as beacons, not bunkers. (The full sermon is currently posted on the PNWD front page at www.pnwd.org.)

This year’s business meeting was held immediately after Saturday’s breakfast, leaving the day open for three full sessions of workshops instead of the traditional two. Dr. Marcia Shaw was elected to her second term on the PNWD board; Amber Alexander and Tom Clouthier, both completing appointed terms on the board, were elected to their first terms. The board elected officers for 2008-2009: Dick Jacke, president; Dr. Marcia Shaw, vice president; JW Harrington, secretary; and Tom Clouthier, treasurer. The elected board covenanted with member congregations in a ceremony conducted at AGM Sunday Services.

PNWD Treasurer Tom Clouthier presented the district financial report and confirmed that PNWD dues would be increased by one dollar, to \$21 per member, effective with the 2008/09 fiscal year as was announced at prior Annual General Meetings and subsequent notices to member congregations. The last dues increase was in 2001, and while excess reserves have allowed the district to grow services in recent years (covering resulting deficits in operating budgets), cost of living increases – particularly travel expenses – now dictate the need for dues increases.

However, delegates rose to speak to the value of district services and urged the board to raise the dues immediately to \$22 instead of the one dollar increase. While the "fair share" dues amount will adjust to \$21 for 2008/09, congregational dues notices will offer the option to contribute "Fair Share Plus" at the \$22 level. District dues are expected to increase officially to \$22 in 2009/10.

Each congregational and ministerial delegate received a preview copy of an upcoming congregational survey to take back to members of their board and/or committee on ministry. The actual survey will be distributed to PNWD congregations by late April. One delegate from each congregation picked up their congregation’s copy of the UUA’s new DVD, “Ministry Matters: Strengthening Lay and Professional Leadership” by Gini Courter and the Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs. A preview copy of the survey and the UUA’s DVD were mailed to the board president of each congregation not sending a delegation to AGM.

The Rod Stewart Growth Fund of the Pacific Northwest UU Growth Foundation is the customary recipient of Sunday morning’s offering. PNUUGF board member, the Rev. Sue Ayer, described the services of the Foundation, and a generous offering of nearly \$5000 was collected to benefit the Rod Stewart Growth Fund.

During our meeting, Tacoma’s Hotel Murano was undergoing final preparations for their March 8 grand opening. This meant hop-scotching over wet caulk, dancing around construction workers, and harmonizing with power tools. In spite of the disarray – and brief absence of hot water – conference attendees enjoyed the unique art glass installations and had positive comments about the hotel staff and service. On the same note, we heard from the Murano’s banquet captain that his staff was treated exceptionally well by PNWD attendees.

Congratulations and thank you to co-chairs Tim Ransom and Howie Janapol and the planning team from our South Sound host congregations: Olympia UU Congregation, Tahoma UU Congregation, and Saltwater UU Church.

Be sure to put next year’s PNWD Annual General Meeting on your calendar... February 20-22, 2009. We’ll see you in Salem, Oregon, the weekend after Presidents Day!