

## 2005 PRAIRIE STAR DISTRICT CONFERENCE COMMENTS ON EVALUATION

The evaluations for the conference were very positive. *This was a very successful conference.* Thank you to the Program Planning Committee, Local Arrangements Committee and host ministers, Awards Committee, workshop presenters, and all who contributed to the event.

Elements receiving the highest ratings were the Keynote speaker and Judy lecturer, the banquet and entertainment, several workshops, and Friday evening and Sunday morning worship services. Attendees were very pleased with the accommodations. A summary would be inadequate to reflect the range of helpful and strong comments throughout.

### Areas to consider in the future

*Opening Celebration:* It would be a good idea to develop a template for this event. Welcome should be provided by the Prairie Star District President and the representative from the host congregation (s). The Banner Parade is popular and needs a little fine-tuning. Is this the time to recognize all the volunteers who worked on the conference or is the Awards Luncheon the appropriate time? When should the Board be introduced?

*Equipment:* We need a microphone when there is audience participation. Some workshop speakers were hard to hear. Do they need mikes also?

*Awards Luncheon:* There is support for this year's format of giving a few awards at other times during the conference and providing a "short and sweet" awards ceremony. See note above on Opening Celebration.

*Workshops:* The workshops that were most successful were those where there was a good balance between presentation and participation and where information was provided that can be put to use in the local congregation. Workshop application could include section on what participants will take away from the conference.

*Banquet and Entertainment:* It would be helpful to have a little more formality, with a welcome and introduction, especially if an award is to be given.

*Music:* Music is a very important element throughout the conference. UUs love to sing--especially when they have the printed music, or at least the words, in front of them.

*Food:* UUs love to eat. They like dessert and some like food for breaks. Vegetarians and vegans need options and variety. It's also wise to have some choice of beverages at the major meals.

*Signs:* Even with helpful guides, participants still would like more signs.

**PRAIRIE STAR DISTRICT  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE: ST. PAUL, MN  
April 8-10, 2005  
EVALUATION**

**Evaluation Forms returned: 78**

**1. Opening Celebration Rating 4.2**

Comments: Loved introductions, poetry, etc./ Loved the folk music. Meet and greet--people tend to stay w/those in their own church; there are creative games/methods to get people to mingle more. They would have been helpful./ I save 5s for something amazingly spectacular. This was a satisfying, very nicely put together service [rated 4]./ Would be nice to see more banners./ Excellent-enjoyable./Very attractive stage--flowers, branches, fabric screens were quite lovely./ No "opening ceremony" except for banner parade./ Need more banners./

Missed some of it, but very much liked what I saw./ Overall it was good. A few suggestions--better transitions between items (like leading into hymns)--should have a welcome from a PSD representative (it's a District conference./ OK-but disappointed that our church banner did not get brought with us./ 1) Have planning team members assemble on stage to be acknowledged--they worked hard & it's easier to see them & express our thanks. 2) Is the banner parade a must? Could we have the banners hung ahead of time and simply point them out for applause--would allow everyone to see them better & allow carriers to be part of the opening words, etc. Great music/ I liked having a printed program.

The whole celebration was excellent--the singing, the banner parade, the warm welcome. Thanks for a great beginning!/ I missed it. I was standing in the hallway with my banner./ Very good. Would like some background music during the banner parade./ Nice tone, flow, humor, spirit. Simple, attractive stage banners/ More music! What we had was excellent./ Add congregational singing--"Enter, rejoice and come in."/ Just sort of seemed to start./ Great./

There was no music for the banner parade. I thought that was weird./ Banners: the person who signals to each carrier when to proceed should be sure the carrier's congregation has been called. When the congregation had no banner, the synchronization was lost./ Loved the songs and readings. The banner parade was a little disappointing. (I did like how they were displayed, thought.) Missed the first minutes because of being in banner parade. Music chosen was fitting./

**2. Keynote Address (Rev. Michael Schuler) Rating 4.7**

Comments: I hope to find this is available on audio or videotape./ Loved Michael Schuler's talk--so rich w.so many angles and depths. He doesn't miss a thing./Outstanding...I will be looking for the text of his address on the PSD website, as promised./ Got long--last 10 to 15". Intense. Not let-up, too much/ Many good ideas./ I wanted you to "tell us what you told us" by repeating your three sufficient principles a second time, but I was interested in what you were saying the whole way thru./ Excellent. Nice to hear our UU ministers speak./I learned new words./ Excellent address./

Should have used a standing mike for questions--questions were seldom repeated./ I seldom give highest rate [gave a 5]./ Second half of talk contradicted first half./ Stimulating. I look forward to re-reading his remarks. Will it be on the website?/ Excellent speaker--very thought-provoking./ Well done speech./ Got the proceedings off to an excellent start./Excellent./ Challenging ideas, great presenter./ Good address, but way too long and at the end somewhat boring as he trailed off without a powerful ending./Excellent./ Need traveling microphone./ Good information & analysis of who we are./ Outstanding and moving! What a speaker!/ Fine speaker! Like the question/answer time. Thought-provoking./

He was great; very articulate / Provocative, held up mirror that was sometimes uncomfortable, wished there were more easy answers./ it online goes quickly./ Excellent!!!/ Questions and discussion are an important part of our presentations--we need a roaming or stationary microphone that questioners can use.

Not having a mike compromised our discussion since so many could not hear. I declined to ask a question since I did not want to shout./ Very good topic, lots of food for thought./ Very thoughtful./ Terrific./ Stimulating thoughts that we can incorporate in our church ideas and planning/ A very exciting address!/  
 He's a good speaker technically but didn't really tell me anything new./ Very good, provocative. I'm most concerned with overcoming socio-economic barriers & classism in our movement. Michael did a great job laying out the issues and giving some ways to overcome barriers. Glad to hear it'll be on the website!/  
 Very current topic, well-delivered./

## 2. Judy Lecture (Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt)

**Rating 4.7**

Comments: Wow! Especially the "live as an example everyday/everywhere" reminder./ I loved her openness. I loved her stories. I think our UU preachers are so inspirational !!!They are great thinkers./ Same as #2 (outstanding, will look for address)/ Very sincere. Challenging/ Thought-provoking./ Provocative. Regarding wearing of symbols when doing interfaith work, if crosses on Christians and stars of David on Jewish people are ok, UUs can wear chalices. Also I thought Darwin fish were displayed by Christians who believed in evolution--which lots do. Please give us words for what we are to sing. It is much more fun./Excellent.

Great choice of speakers./ What a woman! Glad these speeches will be posted on website. Too rich & pithy for one exposure./ It was a brilliant and inspiring talk. Thank you!/  
 Questions were repeated, but a standing mike would have been better./ A challenge presented--a sensitive speaker./I'll try to locate her book and I'd like to re-read her talk. Rev. Judy should be pleased./Excellent speaker! She had a lot to say in a limited time./ Fabulous, heartfelt & important./ Kept the energy and focus from last night alive in the morning./ If content is available for publication, would be wonderful./ Interesting to hear the reactions afterwards--some felt the 2 speakers were Humanist bashing or Pagan bashing. I didn't feel that at all./

Overall very good talk--but she was not as powerful & dynamic a speaker as she was made out to be.--I was disappointed to some extent./ Excellent./ Enjoyed her words & speaking style. Enjoyed the discussion afterwards. Goad there was a sprinkling of humor throughout. I would have gotten more out of singing if song lyrics were printed out in our packet of materials./ Thought (and discussion) provoking./ Need traveling microphone./ Excellent presentation--challenging, truthful, heartfelt, carefully thought out and well-written, inspiring/

Excellent. Gave me a lot to think about./ Wonderful./ Wonderful. Message we needed to hear, delivered with grace./We needed to hear this./ Excellent, thought-provoking about the overall spirit of the Association./ After criticizing folks who put Darwin fish on their car for being insensitive to fundamentalists, she insulted atheists by saying that you cannot do social justice without being spiritual, and generally denying that a non-spiritual life is valid./ Need microphone. Even just one in the middle of the room to which people can go would have helped. It is nice we have more attendees than anticipated, but it means facilitating discussion with a microphone./

Encouraged to hear the emphasis placed on spirituality, together with impassioned action./ Really good./ Excellent choice of speaker--new ideas so well spoken./ I really appreciated her enthusiasm./ I really appreciate your point that we are disrespectful of other faiths by "wearing" buttons and bumper stickers that poke fun-or give our opinion visually at others./ I really liked what she said about the Darwin fish. I never thought about it before./ Outstanding! I loved how Rosemary reminded us of our roots, challenged us to be more than irrelevant and invited us to express Uuism's hope in life and courage for life. Glad to hear it'll be on the website./ Liked having questions/comments afterwards both in this & keynote address./

## 3. Workshops

### Workshop 1A *Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood*

**Rating 3.3**

Comments: Great interaction/Small turnout. Helpful ideas and current trends./

**Workshop 2A** *Diversity Fosters Strong Lay Leadership***Rating 3.3**

Comments: Well planned. Island theme effective, hi energy./ A good intro to MW Leadership School./It was only a push for the MWLS./

**Workshop 3A** *Growing Joys/Welcoming All***Rating 4.7**

Comments: Small congregation friendly. I am grateful for all the great ideas and human-ness of the presenters, (i.e. we all make mistakes, but when we learn what they are, we can correct them./Lots of info./ I got so many ideas! Great job./ Fabulous enthusiasm from Jim and loving commitment from Chloe--excellent combination./ So much info, not enough time./ Very excellent workshop--full of great info/ideas on growing one's membership/congregation./ Solid experience-backed info./ Rev. Eller and Ms. Seagrove were enthusiastic & generous with their help & information. Thank you for the good, practical advice./ Very good information. Very complete./ Lots of info in a short time. Good handouts. Remember to address those of us in very small congregations./ A very useful workshop. I especially enjoyed Jim Eller's enthusiasm and ideas./ It would really be great to bring the workshop leaders to the TC metro area to speak on strategies for and managing growth, so more members could attend./ Excellent. Lots of practical stuff to take home./ I appreciated the reminder that we grow in pursuit of a vision, which we and the world would be better for achieving. Great handouts and use of statistics./ Enthusiastic presentation and lots of things/ideas to carry back to our congregations.

**Workshop 4A** *Learning Nonviolent Communication***Rating 3**

Comments: Good topic--logically presented--speaker had very quiet voice so difficult to always hear--I can see where it could be useful./ Gave good picture of the topic and told how to learn more./Speakers who read everything to me do not ring true./ Information was good. Kinney knew her material, but lacked skills as a presenter./ I was workshop leader for this. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this information to more UUs. I really enjoyed it and was impressed by the enthusiastic participation by those attending./ The group and room was too large for the roundtable discussion format. It would have been fine for 10 people or less around a table.

Our size of group needed a more formal presentation of concepts with a presenter standing so we in the back could better hear and see her. A handout listing the concepts, principles, steps and examples would have been very helpful./ Participants focused on parenting. Good approach presented./ If I had known that it was about "I messages" I would have chosen another session./ This one should be repeated next year. I learned a lot about personal inner peace--this process works!./ Too much personal info/comment by leader./

**Workshop 5A** *Theological Diversity: Contention or Convergence?***Rating 3.7**

Comments: One speaker was unable to attend. It would have been nice to have someone else step in perhaps from that same church. OK how Brian Eslinger did it on his own, but would have preferred for him to just talk more himself. It was very helpful what he was saying. Having audience talk so much detracted./One of presenters was absent./ Under the circumstances, Brian did a good job./It was unfortunate that one co-presenter was not present. And the session got out of control, I thought, due to too much in the way of comments/questions from the audience./ Rev. Eslinger did a great job of combining his and his non-attending co-speaker's views./

Missing presenter resulted in limited and distracted discussion./Difficult for one minister who had to speak for two. He did an excellent job./ One of the presenters did not attend, so the remaining presenter had to re-develop the topic as we went along./

Even though Roger was missing, the presentation was informative & pertinent. Brian is always well-prepared and articulate./ Brian did a very nice job with difficult subject./ Brian was excellent, but the other presenter wasn't her and that changed the tone. Too much "audience participation."./ Excellent, except for one man who arrived half an hour late and the persistently criticized the presenter based on a misunderstanding grown out of his own failure to hear the first part of the presentation. People who arrive late should not be allowed to ask questions!./ Offered an insightful spectrum of opinions which was very helpful for me as I continue to grapple with my beliefs and how to integrate my thoughts with others./



well planned and presented./ Lots of good ideas and suggestions--presentation low energy at a difficult time--right after lunch./

**Workshop 4B** *The Sixth Component of a Balanced Youth Program*

**Rating 4.3**

Comments: Handouts could have been in packets before to lessen distraction./ Good program, but not in as much detail as I could find useful./

**Workshop 5 B** *Get out the Binoculars*

**Rating 3.3**

Comments: The activity was pretty good and facilitated well. However, from the write-up I expected to hear more about the vision that the Board of Directors has and the opportunity to feel their leadership toward the future./ I would have been much more interested in hearing the PSD Board's visions and long-range plans./ Poorly organized and conducted. Board members did not reveal their opinion until prompted by participants at the last minute./ Visioning exercise was interesting but missed hearing the Board's view of future./ Good exercises, cooperation by participants, and helpful in raising future goals./

This provided an interesting contrast to the "Oral History" session. It was entirely participatory. It needed more focus, however./ Good practice for envisioning the future./ Good technique to use with our congregations./ Good to hear and share visions of future, but no concrete steps--no way to build foundations under our "castles in the sky."/ I'm not sure what the point of this workshop was. I came away with very little sense of the Board's vision. I didn't fully buy into the exercise./

**Workshop 6B** *Beauty Then & Now*

**Rating 3.3**

Comments: Nice presentation moved well--good content--we all participated which was good--interesting activities./ Well organized. Got people involved./ This gathering was replete with surprising revelations. As usual we UUs were tres wordy, making the subject ponderous. Our leader worked well, even though I understand he was expecting a much smaller group. It'll take some time to process this one./ Session only focused on concept of beauty to each of us. I was more interested in ways to apply beauty in our church, worship lives, RE & outreach efforts. Session also ran 20 minutes longer than scheduled./ The presentation did not follow the workshop description and it was poorly conceived & poorly organized. It was rambling & pointless./

**Workshop 7B** *A Summit on Families*

**Rating 3.5**

Comments: Some of the audience should have been at the table as part of the panel. They had information to share but spoke so quietly./ Need more handouts--like a bibliography & more concrete steps to family-centered spiritual formation./ Perhaps more "concrete" examples of IDEAL with discussion of how to reach out to meet the IDEAL within different size congregations./ Fairly redundant & somewhat boring--left before it was finished./ Presentation was not about reaching out to families, different family forms, scheduling congregation activities around family schedules as described but about creating lifelong UUs--not what I was looking for or what was advertised./ Presentation not well thought out. Little information imparted./ Excellent info./ I thought it would be more participatory. We should have been in a circle./

**Workshop 8B** *Fair Compensation: It's About Unity and Diversity*

**Rating 4**

Comments: Very useful. Can we include the Commissioned Lay Leaders in the compensation schedule?/

**Workshop 1C** *Planning Small Group/Lay Led Worship Services*

**Rating 2.6**

Comments: Difficulty hearing speakers. Speakers lacked passion./ Quite enjoyable & interesting./ I think I misunderstood this workshop concept. It was pretty heavy on the planning aspect, just as the title says. I was hoping it would be heavier on actual ideas for services. Most of this workshop seemed like a business meeting, so I was a little bored, because I wanted something a bit more exciting. I appreciate the "Worship

Planning Resource List."/ Too much "I". / Would have liked more actual suggestions for services. While info. was interesting, it was hard to translate just July lay-led to an entire year or large part of year where services are lay-led./ I would have liked to see this workshop given by a smaller church and one that is lay led a large majority of the time since they have the most practice at it./

**Workshop 2C *Tools for Peacemakers***

**Rating 4.7**

Comments: 41 people signed up for the workshop. The room had 22 chairs. The presenter sat on his hands. Constant distraction ensued./ Excellent, practical, applicable./Excellent, specific tools given./ Excellent & interesting. Well conceived and well organized. Intelligent and useful./ Well prepared. Good handouts. Good discussion/exercises./ Enjoyable participation./ Some good ideas for our problems./ Ted is very knowledgeable in his area and gave us concrete ideas to apply in conflict situations./

**Workshop 3C *The Hope and Courage of Restorative Justice***

**Rating 4.3**

Comments: A wonderful witness on the importance of taking time to worship and support each other while doing the work of the church./ I would have liked more focus on the process of Restorative Justice and how it can be used in one's daily life./ A little over my head./ A truly fascinating and inspiring workshop./

**Workshop 4C *Diversity's Challenge: Conflict and Right Relations***

**Rating 3.8**

Comments: I expected more information to be given, ie suggested guidelines for conflict resolution or talk about the things that are behind conflict of "what's really going on". Activity was fine but there was too much time with this and none of the other parts as described in the write-up about what would be covered./ We were all involved--activity could have been more realistic--too much time reporting to group./Great examples to solve conflict resolution./Timing--enjoyed ideas from participants. Needed control of people's comments, so time for presenters info. as well./ OK, I was late for this one. However, I gleaned a lot from my time here. I think this was a VERY effective format for presenting the sticky wickets we get into & showcasing the resources available to assist congregations.

Good work!/ I didn't really learn anything. It would have been more instructive to hear about the group's experience and expertise, rather than having us share what we think we already know about conflict resolution./ Helpful in developing appreciation of value of conflict./ Good intro to topic, then high participation in stimulating case studies. Handout/bibliography would have been helpful./ Excellent role-playing of conflict situations./ Not really on topic./ Good program, with appropriate group exercise. Good takeaways./ Good "role-playing" scenarios, perhaps more time for discussion on specifics--we could never quite get there./ Needed more time, info on resources./ Workshop consisted of participants solving case studies, while "leaders" took notes on our comments. I had hoped for more from them./ Well planned and organized. Additional clarifying comments on each group's scenario analysis would have been helpful./

**Workshop 5C *Building a Church Community Through Congregational Singing***

**Rating 4.7**

Comments: Excellent, even for small congregations./ Good resources given. Singing was enjoyable./ I would have liked to sing even more!/ I loved the singing. I would have liked even more, and less talking./ Fun & practical./ Lots of ideas enthusiastically presented./ Good to get actual music./ I have no music responsibilities at our church and no talent. But I love music during our services and came for ideas. Learned a new song that's wonderful and received much to pass on to the music committee./ Loved the singing! Appreciated the discussion about the UUMN, staffing, how things get done. Glad for the handouts./

**Workshop 6C *Web Templates for Congregations That Promote Growth***

**Rating 4.3**

Comments: Useful project./ Good idea!

**Workshop 7C *Hands-on Spirituality: (Origami Cranes)***

**Rating 4.3**

Comments:  
*Fun! Fun!*

**Workshop 8C UUA 101: How Our Association Serves All of Us**

**Rating 3.8**

Comments: Liz Weber did a very nice job. Wish there had been more attendees./ Hard to pay attention--speaker has a soft voice. Maybe I was looking for more history, vision & purpose as much as nuts & bolts of how we operate now./

**5. Friday Evening Worship Service**

**Rating 4.1**

Comments:Loved the "Gather here..."/great speaker/The music was very nice to listen to and related nicely to the topic. The dance image applied to relationship I find helpful and stories in sermon went well with readings./ Nice./ The speaker's humility & depth were an excellent combination./ Thoughtful, calming. Solo music was beautiful. Hymn really required accompaniment./ A hymn leader would have been helpful./ Good readings, message, music./ More music./ Great. Think about adding more music./ Very nice--simple and moving./ Readings-good. Reflective statement--very good. Music--very good. But, could have used a leader to alert people to what to expect./ An excellent way for me to get started./

**6. Saturday Awards Luncheon**

**Rating 3.4**

Comments: There was a comment about not finishing our meal and dessert before the awards so they started talking anyway. (No problem) but there was no dessert. People at my table wondered if we were "done"./Good lunch--awards flowed smoothly./ No dessert./ Good to know more about other people./ Program nicely designed so it was easy to see past and present. It was not always clear when we had actual recipient and when a stand-in./ I didn't know anyone. Nice though./ I am impressed by and grateful to the recipients. It is good to be part of honoring others./ Great lunch./

Committee did not find award winner prior to luncheon so when presented the award the impression that I was not there persisted. The awards are meaningful and deserve PSD support./ Nicely done--keep this event. Do not spread awards too thinly./

Handled efficiently. Asking honorees to go to photographer by tree was a good idea. It should result in more satisfactory photos./ No beverages offered other than coffee and water on the table./ More discussion about who started the award (in whose honor)./ Good meal, good program, terrible lighting for presenters (couldn't see the awards recipients)./ Introduction of award winners needed a bit more rehearsal--eliminate stumbling./ I liked having it a bit shorter. Better to have it served instead of buffet.

Lighting wasn't very good./ Enjoyable overall food-wise, food was very tasty BUT no water refills offered or available. No decaf offered and no dessert (as promised)./ Good food and service. No long speeches was also a good idea. Enjoyed hearing what leaders in the District are doing. Enjoyed the opportunity to meet other UUs and chat informally./ Efficient. Well-organized. I like the way we honor folks who do so much for PSD./ UU part was fine. Table service was poor. Our table never got coffee and we had to ask for water refills at least 2 times./

Good comments--good ceremony./ It moved along, honored many people, & was very satisfying./ What else could be done? Short & sweet./ Awards ceremony not too long. I would much prefer to give awards to living people, while they can personally appreciate it./ Better than in past with more presentations at different times. Too much lag time for people moving to stage./Well done- short & sweet. (Dessert, please.)/ You have to give awards, but awards are dull. The vegetarian meal was mediocre./ Moving many awards to have a shorter ceremony was much appreciated. Presenters should speak with greater passion!

We were told there would be dessert, but our table never got any !/ Appropriate length and ended in the time allowed./ No lights on speakers./ Wish all ministers attending had been asked to stand or whatever, and more importantly that the new ministers were introduced on the stage./ Food was excellent. The awards were OK./ It was OK. I thought we were going to have dessert, though./ Good flow between



awards./ Food was awful, but the org. and presentation of awards was done well./ Good food, good program. Not too long and not rushed./ It's important recognition, but kind of boring. There would be more suspense and expectation if winners weren't announced/printed in advance. Powerpoints would be nice!./

#### 7. Saturday banquet and entertainment

**Rating 4.6**

Comments: Entertainment was super!!/ We could not hear when the singers talked!/Loved both groups./ Mila was great./ Great choirs/ Good food, good music./Food good. Singers interesting. I would have liked more complete translations of non-English songs./Loved the music!!!/ Superb entertainment. Serving shellfish is risky. It's an allergen./Wow! I was blown away, delighted, affirmed, filled & thrilled. Thank you./ Terrific entertainment./ Mike was off? Or some spoke away from the mike./ Need welcome, evening recognition & thanks. Ovation was excellent./ The music was fantastic./ A superb event!/ Excellent music./ Great entertainment./Music was great./ Wonderful food and entertainment./Excellent./ Excellent entertainment./ Best music we've had for multiple years! This was great!./ Very lovely--music was great--Milo, that is--the other group's (OVation) female singers were awful./Great music./ Singing groups were great. Really enjoyed Mila and wish I could have understood the words better with OVation./

The musicians were absolutely TOP NOTCH!/ the food was good--entertainment beautiful and moving./ Loved the music!/ Excellent!/ The entertainment was fantastic. The vegetarian meal was mediocre./ Excellent singers!/ Food terrific--singers were delightful./ Music great!/ Entertainment was outstanding! Food was awful./ The GLB songsters were terrific!/ The space was marvelous. The sound system needed monitoring for volume throughout; some speakers and singers were hard to hear. That said, the entertainers were outstanding, particularly Mila./ Musical groups were outstanding./

#### 8. Saturday Evening Worship Service

**Rating 3.9**

Comments: Loved the "gather here..." and way the youth changed the environment and participated in the service./ Good to see young folks do well./ Youth did great job/ Creative kids. Touching./ Great youth. Good community building./I liked walking in and singing. Good readings. Dance was good./ Beautiful interpretive dance. Yet, all for want of a CD player, many tired people faded further waiting for service to begin. Frankly, it did me in & caused me to skip Sun. A.m.'s service, for which I am sad. Just one of those things./ Kids tried hard. Needed more direction./ Guided imagery was stale, the voices didn't project well during Robert Frost poem. Why so dark for dancer? "Gathered Here" was good music, but walking around circle lasted too long./ A little too much dance from one only./ Did not attend--don't like the connotations of "worship service"./ Didn't care for the lapse of time between dinner and service. Service itself was delightful./ Too "New Agey" for my taste./

Words to the song might have made the dance more meaningful. Microphones-- it's hard to participate when you can't hear what's being said./ Could it be earlier in the day? Would that be possible?/ Liked the circular setup. Youth enthusiasm great./ Hard to hear and see. No singing (except chant during entry). I appreciate the kids doing it./ OK, but needed some logistical smoothing. Good in sense of coming from the heart./Difficult to keep up walking circle pace for my disabled companion./ It was very well done--just wish it had been a bit longer./ Kids did a great job./ Always enjoyable to see/experience the teens as leaders./

#### 9. Sunday Morning Worship Service

**Rating 4.4**

Comments: Too long!/Why, oh why, was the name of Albert Schweitzer not mentioned with anthem in program? He wrote the words./ Jan is always excellent./ Less familiar hymns to me and presentation was a little low-key and rambling. I liked that we were told about the youth's bus mix up and thought the short delay showed good judgment./ The sermon did not appeal to me at all. Good worship environment./ A fitting close to a great weekend. Janne E.I. is really inspirational. Will you make copies available?/ Janne is a wonderful, warm speaker./ Very thoughtful, though sermon felt pretty long by this time of the con.../ Good sermon, but a bit long. I started to drift./

Enjoyed the excellent sermon--fun to sing with the choir. / Again, the sermon was thought-provoking. The flute and choir added much./ Good sermon & hymns--thank you. Great idea to take up a contribution!/ I liked singing in the choir. Nice service./ Sermon was most moving experience of conference for me. Thank you./ Janne's sermon rounded out the Schuler-Rosemary message. Sense of wholeness, inspiration to be open to the mystery.../ Please put Janne's sermon on the web, too, if she will./ There should be a coffee hour after the service--it's just not UU to have a service and no coffee hours!/ The sermon was very sophisticated. It will take me time to fully understand it./

#### 10. Accommodations

**Rating 4.4**

Comments: Beautiful! Clean, good air temperature and quality lighting, Ample size...Beautiful!/Very nice! Good bed. Quiet./ Great location./ Pleasant place. I liked pool and location./ Noise level on Fri. nite & smoking in hallway was very disappointing./ Would prefer a non-hotel setting./ Fine for our purposes./ Good space layout, the music from a nearby space was distracting during P.M. workshops./ Desk not exceptionally polite or competent./ Very high quality for price./ Could not afford to stay in hotel, but facility appeared very beautiful./ Good./ Parking was challenging in a 4 x 4 truck/ Pricey but top rate for a person who thinks "Motel 6" is a luxury./ Good bed, wonderful location.

Would have been FAR better to set up booths in one of the meeting rooms--traffic was awful. Also inadequate bathroom #'s./ Excellent./ I was cold the whole time./Nothing special. Slow elevators. No fresh air in rooms./ Dining space with windows./ Excellent./ Would have liked safety handholds in bathroom shower stall. Otherwise, excellent, clean, comfortable, quiet./ Nice to have conference at same hotel as staying at./ First class!./ Good service, comfortable./ Great hotel--price was good./ Great hotel!/ Very convenient and clean.

#### 11. Meals

**Rating 3.9**

Comments: Saturday lunch seemed like an evening dinner. Expected dessert at Saturday noon meal. Expected fruit or cookies at break on Saturday. Expected a sugar-free beverage at Saturday break, perhaps iced tea with lemonade. Breakfast table topics--good in many ways./More choices than (was that turkey?) It was funny tasting. More vegetarian plates./ Good meals! Servers very helpful! / Vegetarian dinner was same as lunch (need variety)./ Good/ Cold eggs towards end of breakfast./ Not enough whole grain options. If you wish you can tell the Radisson that would discourage me from eating in their facilities in the future. One slam/down waitress. Other staff very helpful./ Saturday lunch--too heavy lasagna./ I was very lucky that someone next to me on Sat. Eve (who knew me) suggested that there might be shellfish in the chicken. Luckily I hadn't eaten any. I'm very allergic to it and they were accommodating and brought me a vegetarian meal./

Good food, lovely presentation. Due to food allergies, I didn't eat ALL meals offered, yet didn't expect to be catered to in detail, so relished going off my diet some & blessed food to body's use. As one who lives solo, it was a real gift to eat in community. Thanks./ Everyone at our table was looking for dessert at lunch. (Noone needed it.) Food at all meals was great./ Very good for convention food./Saturday evening meal wasn't the best. The other meals were fine, although Sunday breakfast was cold./Best of any PSD conference yet./ Vegetarian meals were poor. The noon lasagna had no vegetables--it was just noodles & sauce. Then to have the same thing served to us for dinner put together differently was not acceptable. Very disappointed in this. We should have had a meal as different as the meat meals./

Preparation & service ok but menu choices were not good for me. Breakfast: fruit nice, but rest too high fat and laden with cholesterol (eggs & fried potatoes). I'd have been happy to see whole wheat bread and a cup of no-fat yogurt. Lunch: lasagna too much cheese for my diet. Vegetables good./ Dinner: great salad, veg & chicken. Wait staff attentive./ Good breakfasts./ Very efficient service./ Good quality meals served well./ Breakfast very delicious & filling. Too long a break from lunch to dinner. Overall food was decent./ Breakfast--very good. Lunch--very good (Hey, some afternoon choc. Chip cookies would have been lovely./ Good./ Food was tasty. Service at Saturday lunch was poor./ Excellent salads, good breakfast./

Small portion at lunch--tasted good. In general--smaller tables might make conversation easier./ Excellent./ Only had lunch. No dessert? ! Tea/coffee should have been available downstairs./ Better than average I thought./ Better than average./ Milk please, and dessert. Snack in afternoon--it's a long time from lunch to

banquet./Breakfasts were fine, but I don't eat much in the morning. Saturday lunch & supper the vegetarian meals were mediocre./Also excellent./  
The fruit in the morning was excellent. They were the freshest, ripest blackberries I've had. Good o.j. too. I wish they had healthier snacks, though, besides cookies./ Food was mediocre at best, but conference food is difficult.

The service was excellent--servers tried to serve all at one table simultaneously./ Pedestrian and didn't taste all that good. Hotels typically don't do food well, but this was a notch below typical./ Too much food! But delicious./ Good food./ Vegetarian meals could have had more variety, less pasta, more veggies. Pasta for two meals in a row was disappointing. I would have liked dessert with all meals, not just Saturday banquet./ In general the meals were good tasting and well-prepared. It would have been good to offer non-citrus juices./

## **12. What motivated you to come to this conference?**

**Gathering with other UUs-- 58 responses**  
**Workshop selections-- 11 responses**

**Theme--13 responses**

**Other-- 21 responses**

Cost seemed reasonable. Awards Committee work./Networking./ Brought my daughter to youth con./ One voice choir!/ Friends./ Have a close friend we could visit in Saint Paul./to receive inspiration./ Award winner./ PSD obligations./ PSD duties./My responsibility as chair-elect./ Opportunity to be recharged as well as reaffirmed in my participation as a UU at my age (77). I didn't need to learn the "nuts and bolts" info of most workshops./ We have children living in St. Paul and Minneapolis so it was an easy decision to come here./ Never had attended conference and was curious./ Never attended a denominational event and wanted the experience to bring to my community./ PSD volunteer/ Also I'm incoming Pres. & felt I needed to attend as I cannot attend the GA due to personal conflicts./

Opportunity to present info on NonViolent Communication./ We come every year./ Judy lecturer--I heard her speak at GA San Diego./ This was my first Prairie Star District meeting./ My society's representative./ Speakers./ Recommended by past participants./ Chance to "go to church" again with my daughter, who's in her senior yr. At UMN./ Spouse is now on church board./ On Program Council./ I thought it would be fun.

## **13. Share with us a highlight or "tidbit" that you are taking with you from this conference.**

We are at the moment of deciding on whether to risk taking a large loan in order to fund a full-time minister, so Rev. Schuler's passing exhortation to us to "get a full-time minister" was quite unexpected and encouraging! /Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt's story about the Baptist woman who was a living example of acceptance of her religious difference--saying it was her way of living what was intended in the Bible. If only we could live our principles so clearly in our daily lives and in our own congregations./ Keynote address was great./ Making new friends./ Michael Schuler's talk/his insights. Beauty Then & Now--liked one of the readings and thoughts of participants. It was so inspirational! It was so great to be w.like-minded people & have some hope./ The variety of programs available for congregations is great.

We just have to find the ones that suit ours./ Entertainment!!/ Even though I'm from a very small congregation, (less than 30), we have things in common with big churches and we all can learn from each other. I feel more encouraged./ I'm still thinking about all these Darwin fish on cars. We've got to be vocal as a denomination about what we stand for and speak out. Now is the time./ As my first such meeting, I was very happy to come and become introduced to new people and ideas./ Saturday evening service with the young ones was, as it turned out, a "high impact" service for me./ Ideas for worship services, positive energy from others, closer relationships from UU members of our congregation from sharing of a common experience and fun!/ Growth ideas./ Perhaps our goal of seeking diversity in our congregations is a necessary path to world peace./ The young people's service was a very special moment./

I better understand UU thinking as I'm a fairly new UU member--loved the book sales and stands. I still need another lesson on folding the paper crane./UU is a "whosoever" church--EZ way to explain us. I may be the only "Bible" others ever read.--insert spirit-filled presence here. "Actions speak louder than words"

REAFFIRMED./ Rosemary Bray McNatt's lecture--it was terrific./The range of beliefs we UUs have about God. Sincerity and energy of the conference planners. Combined strength we UUs have./ Advertising to the congregation early In the church year the 6 to 8 intergenerational activities for the year. Having no RE parents teach RE over the short winter RE session so they can all have a chance to attend the Sunday services for that period. Classes to be taught by non RE parents./

I want to get UUFT committed to leadership development by forming a year round steering committee, fundraising & promoting MWLS, GA, PSD meetings and local Board and committee training./ No Darwin fish for me!/ "New" social action network./How to help our fellowship move from growing pains to growing joys./ All the people that I met at Leadership School in Beloit gathered 'round to discuss issues of importance to them that were not addressed at Beloit and were not addressed at this meeting./ Increased familiarity and appreciation of PSD functions and staff./ We can do all the talking we want, which is good, but the truth is--it's our actions that really have the greatest impact./

Heightened awareness of aspects of diversity that I may be overlooking as aspects of status quo, and this could be useful as our congregation moves into more interfaith work./ Become "clearer" on theology of Unitarian Universalist faith./ Connecting with Michael & Trina Schuler about how life is in ministry & marriage./ A broader diversity within our congregations will only take place if the members of that congregation understand and accept what diversity really means./ Energy, just need to figure out "how" to share all absorbed with non-attending members./ Visioning process idea--letter 25 years in the future. New music ideas./ The importance of building "family" & making "connections" to bolster our faith./

Creating more artwork--within worship and for worship./ Our tiny lay-led congregation is accomplishing a lot, but there are so many more things we could be doing. In other words, overall I was inspired to keep on doing what we're doing, as well as looking more at continuing to explore new challenges./ I enjoyed meeting UUs from all over the PSD, talking with them about important issues, and celebrating our shared faith./ Good ideas for RE program. Good reference purchased at bookstore./ The Judy speaker, the workshop on "Growing Joys"/ I learned a lot about membership issues. I was very moved by the 2 main speakers. I appreciated the change-of-pace offered by the Labyrinth. Meeting other UUs./

Increased awareness of UUSC from meal conversation. Choral ideas from workshop./ Appreciation of UUs beyond my own congregation./ Both speakers challenged our "standard operating procedures". We need to work on our acceptance of others' faiths--letting them own theirs without our indignation or criticism. Live our own faith in visible ways./ Sense of flow, affirmation of our spiritual side while respecting our pragmatic/scientific side./ UUs need to be the voice of progressive religion. During these times, our role is essential./ Labyrinth ideas./ The confidence that there are "thinking" people in this universe who work for the safety and improvement of everyone./ It's just nice to be around other UUs. All of the speakers were truly exceptional./ As new UU learned a lot about other UUs. Wide scope of backgrounds, forms of worship that others are involved in./

Meaning of Darwin fish on cars. New strength in talking with Christians./ Someone mentioned a solstice idea where you light candles and place them into a spiral./ New empowerment to speak for real diversity that doesn't aim to (or even inadvertently) disrespect other faiths./ Wonderful people./ We must strive to create conversations of intimacy & ultimacy. 70% of all newcomers are in some type of transition. I loved learning new songs in Workshop C. It is my communion./

#### **14. What will you tell your family and friends about this conference?**

Let's plan to go next year./ I will tell them all of it. Thank you!! "Please try it--you'll like it!"/This event was well-planned. The location was great. The fellowship was stimulating./Will recommend to other UUs in my community./ There are kind UUs everywhere./ That it was definitely worth it./ Wonderful people, interesting topics, lovely accommodations./ Great experience to gain ideas, re-energize, experience being part of a bigger UU faith./ Positive. Comfortable. Lots of energy from other congregations. Helps for ideas and carrying on with our small, growing church./ A place to get "seeds"/ That I am glad I came. I will probably pass on the existence of the Non-Violent Communication book and guru and process. I may reread the presenters' speeches and discuss them with people. I will talk about Darwin's fish and about how the youth did their worship service./

The positive attitudes of the leaders in the workshops that said to me that all problems could be solved. It was a joyful experience./ It's fun meeting friends from Camp Unistar and being surrounded with liberal thinkers./ Nothing! But it was a good meeting./Don't know yet...but took notes to present ideas/experiences to my congregation back home. It was wonderful to get a BIGGER view of what's going on in the denomination & district. I wish more people would take this opportunity. Walking the labyrinth was a real gift. A break from the hubbub; an easy way to re-center & gather energy. Thanks for offering this ON SITE. Please make this a tradition @ PSD conferences. Also, the info/product tables were wonderful. Those folks are all dedicated./

That the workshop leaders were very good and the speakers were great. A well-organized and carried out conference. Thank you./ I will encourage UUFT to attend Iowa City conference. St.Paul setting on river lovely. God place to connect with friends and PSD contacts./Well organized. Unity folks were excellent!/ It was better than the previous ones I attended./ Good step in building regional and local community./Two keynote speakers were wonderful and a wonderful opportunity to meet other UU people, get ideas, and feel part of a larger group./ It was a worthwhile experience./ Great weather! Great theme speakers! 2 participatory workshops plus one with information and guidance to carry forth a project I have in mind. Friendly ambience, too. Thanks for all your hard work./ That it was very interesting and informative./ That attendance is worth it./

I plan to go again. Develop a plan for sharing all we learn on return to home church./Family nothing-as none are UUs. UU friends--will encourage them to attend one someday./ It was great./ Always fun to meet or reconnect w/UUs, affirming what our church has/is accomplishing. Heartened by all the artistic & spiritual contributions of so many folks./ Encourage my son to participate next year, as other children seemed to enjoy it./I will recommend that others try it./ A very positive experience./ Got useful information for my congregation. Would have been nice to see daylight./ Twas great, come to Iowa City./ The singers Sat. night provided beauty, laughter, and enlightenment. Keynote speakers made important points for us to consider. Meeting other UUs was equally important./

Child care made my attendance possible. Thank you!./ It was fun, educational, worth the trip./ It's good and worthwhile. I will invite others to come to future PSD conferences./ It's fabulous. They should attend./ Whoever is privileged to hear Rev. McNatt on a regular basis is fortunate, indeed! Both speakers were wonderful--real highpoints of the conference for me. I appreciate your putting their presentations online./ To come if they can./ Gained knowledge and spiritual energy through attending. We met many new UUs--wonderful! Inspirational!./ Business meeting was well run and we (5 delegates from our church) learned more about PSD at dinner with John Blevins and his wife--enjoyed that so much!./

That we thought it an outstanding conference for UUs./ I thought it was kind of boring. There was hardly anyone my age there. They just basically sat and talked at us. I would have like to move around more--tired of sitting./ Two main speakers and growth workshop stuff. The sense that our congregation's doing lots of things right./ Overall, an interesting, well-done, fun conference. We had a great time and we are coming back./ I'll copy handouts I received on growth. I'll probably write a sermon or two, based on things I heard in the Keynote and Judy lecture. I'll probably share music w. our music director. It was a good conference that could have been even better./

#### **Other comments:**

Not enough free time for labyrinth and pool, etc. Only one tour of Unity Church-Unitarian. Had a workshop and was sad to have missed a visit to the host church./ This is a marvelous convention hotel, but it is too expensive; i.e. paying for parking. As long as we are singing without the score, please select the most familiar hymns./ Wonderful conference. Thanks to Unity!./ Request: Could we also have the readings and sermons from the Friday and Sunday worship services on the web/ I liked the youth service but the only thing from it that would be new for most would be the guided meditation./

There needs to be more workshops geared toward small congregations./ This was the first PSD conference I have ever attended. I found it stimulating to meet and hear views of UUs from other congregations (including guest speakers and workshop leaders.)/ I missed not receiving a confirmation packet or e-mail. I would have liked a map (or web version). Also--in previous years we've received choir music ahead of time. Might have helped to remind people to bring their banner, too./ I went to the room assigned for Sunday morning choir practice. I waited there for 15 minutes. Finally someone came and said "Oh, the

room has been changed." No announcements had been made or notices posted. It was an unpleasant experience. I would appreciate having had the choir music in advance./

The table conversations are a nice option. Thank you for organizing them./ Suggestion for Workshop: Meditative singing, sometimes called Taize. We are doing this in our UU congregation as an evening "interest group" activity, & several of us who regularly attend find it a spiritually satisfying experience. (UU Fellowship of Eau Claire, WI). There was a snag with the choir rehearsal. The program said one meeting room, but it was actually somewhere else & there was no sign on the door to indicate the change."/ THANK YOU, UNITY-UNITARIAN, FOR HOSTING A WONDERFUL CONFERENCE! / Thanks./

I would like to have had Sunday service at Unity. I wonder why we didn't? Unity team did a great job putting this together./ Some nice new banners this year. Could use a new Prairie Star banner--this one is stiff and frenetic-looking! I keep wanting to rescue that poor star from all the sticks prodding it. And thank you for planning and hosting./Name of city and state in same size type as first name./ It would be helpful to differentiate between presentations and roundtables. UUs love to talk--even interrupt--and presenters were unable to finish their prepared material./ Could there be a table for outlines and extra handouts for the classes I wanted to attend but could not? I really wanted the information on Commercial-Free Childhood./

There should have been a VEGAN option. All that lasagna (twice!!!) was TOO MUCH CHEESE even for someone who eats cheese, and what was a vegan to do??? In other respects the event was very well organized. Thanks!./ Wish Beacon Press had come, too. Loved the floral arrangements on the stage in the ballroom--especially the walking stick branches--they opened a bit over the weekend--a wonderful symbol./ Great Unity volunteers!./

ALWAYS have microphone for question sessions after talk. ALWAYS list room numbers for each event right on the daily schedule. Always list the exhibit hours in the daily schedule, not in a sidebar./ Cell phones kept ringing; remind people to turn them off. People wanted more opportunities to visit the host church--say, during social/free times. There really were no significant free times--unless you are willing to stay up late or get up early. There also was insufficient signage. People didn't know where the labyrinth was, for example./