

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

February 12, 2005

Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship, Bloomington MN

**PRESENT:** Sam Wormley - Chair, Eric Severson, Gina Dugan, Suzanne Owens-Pike, Elaine Rockwell, Diana Allen

**MINUTES TO:** Mildred Larson, Nancy Heege, Phillip Lund, Sarah Greene

**CHECK IN**

**AGENDA REVIEW** – Agenda approved

**REVIEW MINUTES OF OCTOBER 23, 2004** – Minutes corrected to include Sharon Merritt and approved.

**LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS REPORT**

Sharon Merritt submitted a detailed summary. The conference is well staffed with a strong local arrangements leadership and volunteers. Bus transportation between the hotel and host congregation is a great option for the youth con.

The question of who pays to attend the conference re-surfaced from the Program Council. Sam reiterated the PSD Board resolution and this committee's agreement that in the interest of fairness, everyone attending the conference pays the appropriate registration fee.

**FUTURE CONFERENCE PUBLICITY AND GROWING ATTENDANCE**

We discussed current publicity practices, brainstormed new ideas, and goals for increasing attendance at the annual conference. What if we boosted participation in the conference by 5% per year working toward a goal of 400 attendees? Registrations have been hovering around 200-225 in recent years. Conference fees have ranged from \$110-\$125 since 2002. An increase in attendance has to come from congregations building new leaders from within. How is the annual conference vital to your congregation? That's our goal, to make the annual conference a vital growing conference that enriches youth, adults, congregations and grows new leaders in the Prairie Star District.

We can do a better job of publicizing our own district work by creating a text box for the brochure identifying the Annual Conference Working Groups. By naming the joint efforts of Site Selection, Awards, Program, Local Arrangements and Archives, district members will get a clearer picture of the many hands necessary to plan the annual conference. Additionally, it will bring to light volunteer opportunities in the district and provide contact information much like a Sunday bulletin identifies who to call if you are interested in an activity or would like more information. During the conference we can recognize small, medium and large congregations who send the most representatives. This prompted discussion of a new initiative growth: Data analysis of past conferences. Diana Allen, PSD Archives can help us collect this information. She will contact

Carol Jackson, Mildred Larson and past local arrangement registrars for their assistance in collecting:

- # registrations per congregation
- # repeat attenders
- # newcomers
- # children attending
- registration fees
- conference location
- distance traveled/how localized is attendance
- list of workshop presenters
- titles of workshops
- # total registrations
- list of congregations not represented
- barriers to attending/additional costs of attending
- future hotel space – can they accommodate 400 attendees?

#### CURRENT PRACTICES:

- The Prairie Star district newsletter, 2 editions;
- Summer mailing to PSD leadership (279) including cover letter, workshop application and conference flyer;
- Conference brochure mailing in January (count?) to past attendees, PSD leadership and every congregation.

#### FUTURE POSSIBILITIES:

- ♣ Congregation email addresses;
- ♣ Congregation's board & council – announce conference to church leadership to identify potential new leaders who would benefit from attending & extend invitation to attend;
- ♣ StoneTree Resources list, utilize point person in each congregation to share info;
- ♣ Church administrators and newsletter editors;
- ♣ Banner ads for church web pages
- ♣ PSA's for Sunday bulletins, newsletters and pulpit announcements;
- ♣ Encourage internal social justice within congregations by suggesting budget line item for GA and PSD conference registration fees for delegates or those who face financial barriers;
- ♣ Donor opportunities for 1/3 of registration fees, church pay 1/3, attendee pay 1/3.

#### **IOWA CITY 2006 AND NEW THEME**

Last year we approved the theme “The Heart of Stewardship”, it was expanded to “The Heart of Stewardship: Nurturing our Congregations, Programs, and Communities”. Today we questioned the length of the theme and shortened it to “The Heart of Stewardship: Nurturing Our Faith Communities.” “Nurturing our congregations, programs....” would be included in the descriptive paragraph about the conference along with “faith is what we place our heart on.

We considered faith as that which “we place our heart on” or that which “allows us to turn the pages of our lives.”

We threw the cards up in the air and embarked on an energetic discussion of bold new themes that captured our feelings about justice in our communities, the democratic process and our vision for

the common good. We unanimously agreed that we as UU's need a dramatic, energetic mission-oriented way to connect with more UU's to catapult us into action. With energy and urgency, we identified a strong need for UU's to step to the front lines to show the way, not being anti this or that, but rather putting forth our UU vision and mission for justice and the democratic process. We want youth to join us in this conference to carry the message and make change. The theme ideas we discussed are a break from the norm and the envisioned conference events would make our presence known in Iowa City, a rally, a march, a service project. We talked about fewer workshops and a hands-on project for all ages that would give back to Iowa City. The Iowa City congregation would help identify the specific need or project. We'd like to ask all conference participants to bring a nonperishable food donation for the local food shelf. More discussion will follow via email to finalize details prior to the 2005 annual meeting. We see this as a multigenerational conference with the youth can teaching adults how to hold a con. Isn't the PSD annual conference essentially a con, adult con? Oh yeah. For 2006, after much ado, we propose a slightly out-there, youth oriented, outside the box theme in the spirit of vision, mission, motion, and action:

**“UU.Con ~ Giving Life the Shape of Justice”**

Speaker ideas who can effect change and communicate the message of movement and call to action: Charlie Clemence UUSC, Barack Obama (sp?), hostess of Democracy in America, Garrison Keillor, Valerie Mapstone Akerman.

**\*Nancy and Phil:** Can you recommend speakers who are dynamic, would appeal to young people and inspire UU's to action?

The theme “The Heart of Stewardship: Nurturing Our Faith Communities” is postponed.

**MINNEAPOLIS – FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY 2007**

Proposed theme, continuing the idea of mobilization and action. More discussion will take place via email:

**“Mission in Motion”**

Other brainstorming ideas: Stewardship: Mission in Motion; The Heart of Stewardship: Nurturing Our Faith Communities; M2U2.con (mission in motion unitarian universalists); Human Con; UU Dot Con; PSD.Con; Whatever Happened to the Common Good? Engaging Our Vision; Spirit of Life; Be the Change You Wish To See In The World; Re-shaping Justice; Stewards of Peace; Stewards of Resistance; Stewards of Revolution; Stewards of Land; Building a Just Community; Values-Vision-Mission-Motion.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Conference debriefing on Sunday, April 10, 8-9:30AM at the hotel for combined Local Arrangements and Annual Conference Program committees.

Recorded by Gina Dugan