



Pre-Summit Edition

Liberal Beacon *Express*

ISSUE 13 | OCTOBER 2024

Hi, John Griffin Miller here, new editor of the Liberal Beacon. You might know me as the editor of another, even newer Unitarian newsletter.

And yes, I still plan to put that one together every month, as long as there is interest.

What you may not know is that Rev. Dr. Todd Eklof was my minister in Louisville, before he came to Spokane and I moved on myself. I was even Todd's music director at Clifton Universalist Unitarian Church there for a while. (My day job for 25 years was running movie theatres, followed by a decade building houses for HUD, and then running homeless shelters, before I retired to Savannah GA.)

I am a lifelong UU, slightly older than merger, and have been so fortunate to be one of the relatively few who got to grow up in our freethinking, tolerant, liberal denomination. After I began to have a family, I drifted more and more into UU church management, serving repeatedly on church boards, district boards, being president, being treasurer, doing lots of newsletters, running Chalice Lighters, and lots of other activities. My kids often said, "My dad doesn't know how to say 'No.'"

Anyhow, one day this spring, I was listening to one of Todd's sermons on line and was pretty much blown away by what I heard. I couldn't believe the direction that the national association had taken while I wasn't paying attention. I had read Todd's book, and even understood some of it, and was quite appalled by the negative over-reaction from the association and his

fellow ministers, some of whom I knew personally.

GA for June was looming, and some even more radical changes were on the horizon. I heard that the national magazine that I used to read had also changed dramatically and that there was no easy way to let UUs in the pews know what was afoot. As an inveterate *rabble-rouser*, I thought I could put together a similar one, a parody of the old national magazine that could help get the word out. Never much of a fan of the current national association, I also started getting interested in NAUA.

Well, we lost. Even more changes are happening. Meanwhile, UUnderWorld continues on, attempting to be an independent platform for freethinkers to express themselves.

And while the NAUA is growing, Todd was wearing too many hats. A new editor for the Liberal Beacon was needed.

And here I am.

John Griffin Miller
Editor

In This Special "Express" Issue
Preview of the First Annual
NAUA Summit

(You can access past issues of *Liberal Beacon* on our website at www.naunitarians.org.)

On these pages

- Summit Schedule (below)
- Keynote Speaker (p3)
- Blessings of an in person retreat (p4)
- Current NAUA Activities (p7)
- Workshops & Presenters (p10)
- New Board Members (p13)
- NAUA Draft Bylaws (p18)

NAUA Yearly Summit: October 17-20

Spokane, Washington, USA

The full detailed schedule is available on the NAUA website: <https://naunitarians.org/>
Note All times are in Pacific Daylight Time (PDT). For EDT add 3 hours, CDT add 2 hours, MDT add one hour.

Schedule

Thursday October 17

4 to 7pm Check in, Greeting and Registration at Oxford Suites Downtown

Friday, October 18

9am Registration and Snacks

10am Opening Welcome

10:30 Opening Workshop:

Visioning NAUA's Future

Workshop (Judi Durham).

Noon: Boxed Lunches

2pm ***Losing Your Religion:***

Moving Toward Wellness

Workshop (Candace Schmidt and Lynn Jinishian)

4pm ***Kerdcera - The Art of Being Thoughtful Workshop*** (Rev. Dr. Todd Eklof)

Dinner on your own (Sign-ups for exploration walk, group dinners, etc.).

Saturday, October 19

10am Keynote Presentation (John Wood, Jr.)

Noon: Boxed Lunches

1:30 Business Meeting:

Adoption of By-laws and Election of Board

4pm Discussion Tables

NAUA Academy Programs

This Discussion Table will discuss favorite past Academy programs and gather ideas for future topics and suggested speakers.

NAUA Activities

This Discussion Table will briefly describe and answer questions about all of NAUAs many activities and programs.

Getting to Know Other NAUA Members

This Discussion Table will give attendees a chance to meet other NAUA members and learn what other NAUA programs people have attended.

International Alliance

This Discussion table will share information about NAUA's International outreach, contacts with other Unitarian and Universalist Organizations, and the International Alliance's study courses.

5pm Summit Celebration

6:30 Catered Buffet dinner

Sunday October 20

10am Worship Service *Reaching the Summit* Rev. Todd Eklof

Our Keynote Speaker (10am Saturday)

John Wood Jr. is a leading figure in the American depolarization movement. He is national ambassador for Braver Angels, the United States largest grassroots, bipartisan organization dedicated to political depolarization.

A nationally recognized public speaker on the subjects of political and racial reconciliation, Wood has spoken across America to a wide range of the nation's most respected think tanks, universities, corporations, philanthropic organizations and political associations including the Aspen Institute, the Manhattan Institute, CPAC 2019, Global Philanthropy Forum, the Philanthropy Roundtable, Upswell, Target, General Mills, LucasFilm, Oregon League of Cities, Institute for Local Government, and campus audiences including Pepperdine, Duke University, USC, Purdue, UC Berkeley and many others.

Mr. Wood's written work has appeared in a wide range of publications, including The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The Washington Examiner, Quillette Magazine, Areo Magazine, Reflections (A Journal of the Yale School of Divinity), Real Clear Politics, Persuasion Magazine, The American Interest and many others. Wood is a cohost of the Braver Angels Podcast and host of The John Wood Jr. Show.

Prior to his work with Braver Angels, Wood was the state of California's youngest active nominee for congress in the 2014 election cycle, challenging Maxine Waters in California's 43rd district. His unifying campaign was covered by outlets including The National Review and The Larry Elder Show. After the election Wood was elected as 2nd Vice-Chairman of the Republican Party of Los Angeles, the largest Republican county party in America.



In addition to his work with Braver Angels, Wood serves as an advisor to The American Project (an initiative of the Pepperdine School of Public Policy dedicated to restoring the communitarian roots of conservatism), the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism, the 1776 Unites Project, is a member of the Progress Network (an initiative of the New America Foundation) and is a field-builder with the New Pluralists Collaborative (a coalitional group focused on connecting and supporting organization committed to depolarization and social justice). Wood has worked in support of educational opportunities for at risk youth in inner-city Los Angeles in the areas of tutoring and private education. He sits on the board of directors for Strive Arts and Academics, a celebrated private educational facility in South Los Angeles.

Wood was raised in a musical family. His father is noted Jazz Pianist John Wood, his mother a popular Los Angeles based R&B singer Deonda Theus. Wood's grandfather was record industry pioneer Randy Wood, of Dot Records and Randy's Record Shop fame. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three children.

The Blessings of an In-Person Retreat

by Joyce Kinnear

Humans have been interacting with each other in group settings for hundreds of thousands of years. Archeologists believe that the first early human trading occurred about 320,000 years ago in Africaⁱ. While we don't know when this trading first led to what we might call business meetings or organized discussions between different groups of people, we can be certain that the need to coordinate activities is long-term. Humans have been getting together to plan activities, set schedules, and enjoy each other's company for tens of thousands of years. These discussion groups have both enhanced individual lives and led to political and cultural change.

In US history, women's knitting circles and sewing bees have been the center of political activism since the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and have continued to be a focal point for the discussion of difficult and political topics up to the present day. For instance, PBS' News Hour reported on a group, the Yarn Mission, which was developed as a knitting collective in 2014 to fight racial injustice by supporting black creators' work and allow a space to discuss difficult issues around raceⁱⁱ.

For much of history in the United States and other cultures, these conversation groups have been important in how women in particular viewed interaction in society. "Women were limited in lots of areas of public activity. They were not supposed to be visible in public," Katherine Durack, former associate professor at Miami University, told the NewsHour Weekend. "It makes sense, then, that needle arts would be an important means of expression and that includes political expression."ⁱⁱⁱ Many of us have participated in groups like this one that help us both form our political and spiritual beliefs and then help us learn how to act on them.

Not only do we form and act on our personal beliefs, but we become aware of the concerns of others in our society by participating in group meetings and discussions. For example, as a member of a knitting group while living in Panama for nearly seven years, our weekly Friday afternoons included a diverse range of North American expats, Latina Panamanians and Indigenous women. The focus of the group was on creating blankets and sweaters for the children of the poorest families in the area, but the women regularly engaged in discussions around personal and political topics and would never have interacted beyond the briefest of situations without the weekly knitting bee.

The history of the meeting, particularly those with an organizational or business focus, suffered a major change during the pandemic. Most groups learned to move from in-person interactions to Zoom calls or similar technology. In-person business meetings are an often-cited reason to dread leaving the work-at-home movement and going back into the workplace. Some regional associations have turned their annual meetings into solely on-line structures both to reduce cost and to lessen disease transmission. Much of the world has moved into this on-line technology that allows so many of us to interact without traveling long distances. The North American Unitarian Association (NAUA) as an organization hosts religious services, discussion groups, training and other topics for the 900+ members and friends almost entirely through Zoom.

Zoom and its technological cousins help us interact on a personal, spiritual and business level from our diverse geographical locations. Even with the benefits that our technology provides, there remains a purpose for continuing to hold face-to-face events. Some of the benefits of in-person meetings include ^{iv}

- Reading nonverbal communication and interpret cues more effectively, thus avoiding many of the interpersonal problems that can come in email, Zoom or other types of interactions,
- Brainstorming and developing new ideas in a more personal interaction and leading to more complex or creative strategies,
- Avoiding the technical issues that too often come with on-line meetings (thus saving time and reducing frustration),
- Dealing more effectively with sensitive topics or issues,
- Improving communication by limiting distractions and increasing participation by everyone in the group, and
- Participating in the ‘off-topic’ small talk and activities that help new relationships to be developed or increase the quality of ongoing ones.

For many, the last item is the best reason for any group, particularly one dealing with spiritual growth and development, to have at least occasional in-person meetings, retreats and summits. These meetings build and enhance social relationships that can last a lifetime. The bonds forged through in person retreats and meetings can significantly exceed anything available in on-line situations.

As a child, I remember attending 10-day camp meeting retreat every summer. Depending on the part of the country my parents were serving at the time, the retreats were held on the campuses of local church high schools, rented state campgrounds, or properties owned by the regional conference. Even though there were services for all ages at all times of the day from the sunrise song fest to the mid-day business meetings to evening sermon followed by nighttime vespers, the 10-day long camp was as much a social event as it was religious. Families scheduled annual

reunions. Many others met together in meals with friends seen once a year or less, skipped afternoon meetings to chat with someone not seen since college, or made group trips to a local river or lake for picnics and swimming. It was truly the highlight of my childhood. I will go to my grave remembering the happiness of sitting around a campfire, singing songs and eating treats with friends and family.

Mine was not the only church to hold multi-day meetings. The history of the annual church meeting and retreat is lengthy. Many Protestants in North America have had annual summer summits for more than 150 years. For example, the church of my background, Seventh Day Adventist’s (SDA), held its first annual camp meeting in 1868 on a farm in rural Michigan. SDAs continue to hold over 111 camp meetings each year.^v Well before SDA’s began their summer retreats, the Rock Springs Camp Meeting in North Carolina in 1794 is said to have been the first summer, multiday camp meeting in North America. These in-person, multi-day meetings have been held by many Protestant denominations, especially the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists. These events originally were religious revivals, but evolved into retreats sponsoring spiritual development, group interactions and social activities.^{vi}

Historian John R. Stilgoe says about these retreats, “Much of the excitement of camp-meeting convocations derived from the pure pleasure of group activity. For families accustomed to week-long isolation and hard work, meetings offered a social release unlike that of raisings, bees, and funerals.” The social function of these multi-day meetings among religious groups continued to grow during the Second Great Awakening of the early to mid-1800’s, and camp meetings began to be used as regional business meetings for Methodists and other Protestant churches.^{vii}

Unitarian Universalists (UUs) continue this long history of multi-day retreats through

both summer camp weeks and organizational, business meetings, such as the General Assembly (GA). In the 1980's, when my family first became members of the Alamogordo Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in southern New Mexico, one of our first draws to the church was the annual summer camping trip. It was a 4-day trip to a national forest, where the group rented a large camping area. While significantly less religious than the SDA camp meeting, the four days did allow time for many social activities, as well as workshops on meditations, social justice activities, and more. Regional retreats and camp weeks are still held around North America every summer for UUs.

In addition to the important interpersonal and group building reasons just discussed, in-person meetings can enhance the development of our liberal religious belief system. We can work together to build a structure for our faith that encompasses our strongly held humanist ethical issues in the arena of logical and liberal religion. These religious values are often best when developed and critiqued with others. Liberal spiritual thought, of which we in the NAUA are a part, holds that true spirituality is not based on any one external authority or hierarchy. Instead, we place our values on an openness to scientific inquiry and logical thought, prioritizing personal reasoning and experience, understanding how spirituality can help individuals and groups move into a life of ethics and goodwill, and having beliefs that are credible and relevant in the modern world.^{viii}

There is a valued space in our togetherness for individual exploration. While these solitary pursuits are very important, we also need to keep set aside time to grow together as a community. Spending too much time alone can keep us from experiencing the joy and depth of knowledge gained through interacting with others. We can and should work together to build our spiritual home, where we can

all feel that we belong. Let us take the time and space offered by this inaugural NAUA Summit to feed our hearts and minds with the joy of personal interaction and growth. See you in Spokane!

ⁱ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/03/180315140733.htm>, Scientists discover evidence of early human innovation, pushing back evolutionary timeline, Smithsonian, March 3, 2018.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/stitch-stitch-history-knitting-activism>, Stitch by stitch, a brief history of knitting and activism, by Corinne Segal, Apr 23, 2017 5:38 PM EDT

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/stitch-stitch-history-knitting-activism>, Stitch by stitch, a brief history of knitting and activism, by Corinne Segal, Apr 23, 2017 5:38 PM EDT

^{iv} (<https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/in-person-meeting>, Benefits of In-Person Meetings (With Tips and Alternatives), Written by Indeed Editorial Team, Updated June 27, 2024)

^v (<https://www.nadadventist.org/news/camp-meeting-still-here-after-150-years>, Ivan L. Williams, February 23, 2019).

^{vi} (<https://washingtongrovesmd.org/history-features/the-origins-and-early-development-of-camp-meetings-in-the-united-states>, The Origins and Early Development of Camp Meetings in the United States, Oct 4, 2020).

^{vii} (<https://www.teachushistory.org/second-great-awakening-age-reform/articles/religious-revivals-revivalism-1830s-new-england>)

^{viii} (The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805 - 1900 Paperback – October 1, 2001, Gary Dorrien).



Current NAUA Publications, Activities and Groups

by Joyce Kinnear

The North American Unitarian Association (NAUA) is a member service organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the practice of liberal religion by embracing freedom, reason, and tolerance—rooted in our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and all peoples. The NAUA has an ever evolving and increasing number of publications, activities and groups for members and friends. Each different activity is set up with different goals and audiences in mind. You may find benefit or interest in any or all of them. Keep checking back on our website, as the activities provided will likely be changed and added to before you know it.

- **The website www.NAUnitarians.org** is the best place to start your search for activities and programs available to you through the NAUA. Updates to the schedule are first made here.
- **The email “NAUA - Sept. 2024 Reminders, Announcements and Events”** is generally sent out twice a month with updates on all of the activities and events. Your name is added on the email list when you sign up as a member at [Join Us - North American Unitarian Association \(naunitarians.org\)](http://Join Us - North American Unitarian Association (naunitarians.org)). You can also email info@naunitarians.org with questions or to sign up for the email.
- **Monthly Worship Services-** On the third Saturday of each month at 10 AM PT (1 PM ET), NAUA hosts an online worship service. The Zoom URL link is posted on the website at [Monthly Worship - North American Unitarian Association \(naunitarians.org\)](http://Monthly Worship - North American Unitarian Association (naunitarians.org)). The service is typically about an hour with conversation after the formal service. Services are recorded, so you can watch them at a time more convenient for you, but you do miss out on the conversation period if you watch them later.
- **The *Liberal Beacon*** is the bi-monthly newsletter of NAUA. It is distributed at no charge to members and subscribers who have completed our mailing list form below. If you are a member of NAUA, you are automatically placed on our mailing list. You may unsubscribe at any time. You can find a copy of the latest *Liberal Beacon* on the website at [Liberal Beacon - North American Unitarian Association \(naunitarians.org\)](http://Liberal Beacon - North American Unitarian Association (naunitarians.org))
- **The NAUA Academy** provides courses to members and others interested in Unitarianism, Unitarian Universalism and Liberal Religion. Single-session and multiple-session courses deal with the history and development of Unitarianism and Liberal Religion, as well as with issues of concern in contemporary society from a liberal religious perspective. Participation in courses is virtual, using Zoom. Sessions consist of a presentation followed by small group discussions.

Check upcoming events for times dates and ways to register and participate in the monthly Academy sessions. All are welcomed.

Generally, there is a lecture format on the issue for that month with a discussion after the session. Presentations are recorded, but the question session is only available to those on Zoom. [NAUA Academy - North American Unitarian Association \(naunitarians.org\)](https://naunitarians.org)

- **Circles** were created to provide NAUA members with a platform for getting to know each other better and to explore shared interests. They are the NAUA version of a virtual Coffee hour. The CIRCLES are very flexible, individualized and decentralized. As such, they rely on the membership to provide ideas and inspiration for ongoing success.
 - The first CIRCLES met twice a month for a period of 10 weeks. They are primarily conversational, unstructured events, like a dinner party, that generally last about 1 to 1 1/2 hours.
 - Forum Circles have also been added as weekly discussions on a specific topical or controversial issue or problem society faces. Readings are sent 3 or 4 days prior and after a brief introduction and overview of the topic, each participant is encouraged to share their views. The first 4 or 5 topics have been selected in advance. Then members will decide on the topics and lead the discussion.
 - Another Circle recently developed is the Nurturing Your Spiritual Life CIRCLE that will be open to 12 participants and meets every other week for about 12 weeks.
 - If you wish to take part in a CIRCLE or want to talk to someone about forming a new CIRCLE, send an email to circles@naunitarians.org, with NAUA Circles in the Subject line.

- **The NAUA Book Club** is designed to allow the members to discuss fiction and nonfiction books chosen by fellow book club members. It is hoped that this will expose the members to books that they may not chose to read on their own. The format will encourage members to discuss how the book was interesting to them given their life's experiences and to hopefully give a liberal religious dimension to the discussion. Members are encouraged to be frank and to discuss any differences over interpretation that might arise in an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance. To participate, please email Ed Hudak at bookclub@naunitarians.org

- **The International Alliance** is an organization of Unitarians, Universalists, and other religious liberals from around the world. Members of the International Alliance embrace the principles of Freedom, Reason and Tolerance that are rooted in our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every individual and all peoples. Synchronous activities of this group are designed to allow members from outside of North American time zones to participate, though not prohibiting North American members from attending. For more information or to participate, Email your name and country of residence to either of the two study group coordinators: John Eichrodt at jeichrodt@sfr.fr or Stephen Polmar at stephen.polmar@gmail.com

- **Anything Goes** is an evening of conversation led by UU Minister Rev. Jack Reich. These chats allow you to get to know other NAUA members and yourself a little better!

Access this chat on the first Wednesday evening each month from 4:30 PM PST (7:30 EST) at <https://tinyurl.com/naua-anything-goes>

- **Ministerial Services:** For more information about current or upcoming services for ministers, please contact info@naunitarians.org.
 - The recruitment, training and support of professional leaders is concern of the NAUA. We are developing several programs and services to benefit to ministers and thus to congregations that they serve. NAUA serves as a clearinghouse allowing ministers and congregations in search to find each other. It is up to each congregation to determine the credentials and experiences they are looking for and to verify both.
 - NAUA provides advice, resources and best practices guides for finding quality leaders for our congregations. NAUA membership includes ministers with years of experience who are willing to provide guidance to congregations and fellowships regarding organizational matters and questions. (This service does not include individual therapy or counseling).
 - On the fourth Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m. PST, NAUA ministers can attend a regular meeting meant to foster support, collegiality, and learning. Periodically, there are also longer ministerial gatherings that by provide unique programs, professional development and networking opportunities.
- The **First Annual NAUA Summit** is October 17-20, 2024 in Spokane, Washington We will have a Keynote Presentation on Saturday on current issues facing Unitarians globally, as well as a Sunday service focusing on where we go from here. There will be workshops on “Losing Your Religion,” “Visioning Our Future” “Visioning NAUA ” and other topics. There will be excellent food and opportunities for in-person fellowship. The conference will be both in-person and on Zoom to meet all schedules. [Register now](#) and check the Schedule for details on workshops, speakers, hotels and more.

Registration for the NAUA Summit

There’s still time to register for this exciting Summit, both in person and on-line. With a dynamic and fascinating Keynote Speaker, interesting workshops, a chance to meet a couple hundred attendees and more! See the website (NAUnitarians.org) for details.



Summit Workshops

Opening Workshop

Visioning Workshop Description: Visioning NAUA's Future

Judi Durham, Workshop leader



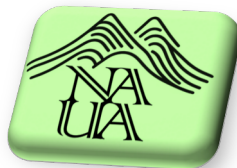
Board members:

Terry Anderson, Mike Long, Stephen Polmar

This workshop will begin with a brief overview of some of the many organized activities and accomplishments since NAUA's conception.

Following this introduction, we will break into small groups to explore our ideas, aspirations, hopes & dreams for the future of this growing organization. Where and how do we want to go and grow? For instance, does your vision for the future of NAUA include the development of Fellowships or regional groups? What are your ideas for doing that? Do you think NAUA should have a stated commitment to Justice in its many forms? Are there other foci that you think NAUA might attend to? What new committees or groups would you like to see developed and/or participate in?

During breakout groups, workshop participants (both in person and online) will brainstorm ideas with a group recorder keeping track of ideas that have been generated. Participants will then come back together to the larger group to share their ideas. Each recorder will hand or email their lists to the workshop leader to be compiled and given to the NAUA board.



2 pm Workshop

Losing Your Religion: Moving Toward Healing

*Candace Schmidt and Lynn Jinishian,
Workshop leaders*



Lynn



Candace

The past several years have proven to be challenging to many UU members as they have experienced church leaders speaking and behaving in ways antithetical to the traditional liberal values that attracted them to UUism in the first place. Emotional responses have ranged from confusion and disorientation to hurt, fear and a sense of betrayal. This workshop will provide a space for participants to process their experiences in small groups, with an opportunity to share personal stories and also listen to others who are also grappling with similar experiences and emotions. The two facilitators, Candace Schmidt and Lynn Jinishian, hope

participation in this workshop will help NAUA members to process difficult feelings in a supportive environment, and ultimately help them to gain a better understanding of what they have gone through and how to move on, toward a mindset focused on building a healthy religious liberal home for themselves and others.

4pm Workshop

Kerdcera – The Art of Being Thoughtful

Rev. Dr. Todd Eklof, Workshop Leader

Kerdcera (pronounced curd-car-ah) is derived from two proto Indo-European words meaning “heart” and “head.” Dojo is a Japanese word referring to a place students practice a particular art, usually a martial art. The Kerdcera Dojo is a place participants practice reason and emotional intelligence, “The Art of Being Thoughtful.” Developed in 2017 by Rev. Dr. Todd F. Eklof and psychologist Candace Schmidt, PhD, its participants have been meeting weekly to practice the Kerdcera technique ever since. “The purpose of Kerdcera has always been to boil logic down to its most fundamental principles so this ancient tool can be useful anywhere, anytime, to anyone,” Eklof says. “But people are also emotional creatures. We all think and we all feel. Kerdcera is about both heart and mind working well together.” In this workshop, you’ll learn the Kerdcera technique and can begin practicing the Art of Being Thoughtful for yourself.

Letters and Contributions

We welcome letters from our readers for potential publication in Liberal Beacon. Letters should address matters of interest to Unitarians and Universalists and other religious liberals, including current news and events. Please email your submission no less than five business days before the end of the calendar month in order for publication in our next issue. Letters are shorter than opinion pieces and should be no more than 250 words. Form letters and letters considered libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Anonymous letters will not be printed. NAUA reserves the right to edit all letters for length. The decision to print any submission is completely at the discretion of the editors.

Please write “Letter to the Editor” in the subject line and email your submissions to nauaedboard@gmail.com or mail them to:

North American Unitarian Association
Letters to the Editor
4340 W. Whistalks Way
Spokane, WA 99224

Letters must include the writer’s name, full address, and phone number for verification purposes. Only the name and town will be published.



The Proposed New NAUA Board

The provisional board of the NAUA, acting as nominating committee, proposes the following as new board members – subject to approval by the membership at the NAUA Summit Annual Meeting. Business session is at 1:30pm Saturday October 19, where the Board and the new Bylaws (following) will be voted upon.

Rev. Dr. Todd F. Eklof

Rev. Dr. Todd F. Eklof has been the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, WA since 2011, where he's appreciated for his mind-altering sermons, compassionate soul, and social activism.

Rev. Eklof started in the ministry as an ordained Southern Baptist minister but left the Christian faith while still in seminary as a young man, explaining, "I simply outgrew it." He then began a 16-year career in TV news and corporate video production, during which time he became a Unitarian Universalist (1988) and reentered the ministry as such in 1999, when he began serving the Clifton Unitarian Church in Louisville, Kentucky until 2011. He's been widely appreciated

for his environmental and gay rights activism, in addition to engaging in the areas of criminal justice reform, restorative justice, the peace movement, as well as immigration and racial justice. Eklof has two undergraduate degrees, one in Philosophy, the other in Communications, a master's degree in religious studies, and a Doctor of Ministry. He is also a certified member of the American Philosophical Practitioners Association (APPA). He is also a founder of NAUA and author of *The Gadfly Papers: Thee Inconvenient Essays by One Pesky Minister* (2019).



Lynn Jinishian

Lynn Jinishian was born and raised in Spokane, Washington. She recently completed a 36-year career as a Registered Nurse and Nurse Educator. Lynn joined UUCS in 1996 to be part of a religious liberal community with her husband Robert and their then infant son, Brian. Today she enjoys learning the tiniest details of things she didn't have time for previously—like how to make the perfect loaf of sourdough. She loves all dogs. If she is not at church on Sunday to learn more about Unitarian

history and values, she's not far away—probably just unplugged at a cabin in the woods of North Idaho where there is a never-ending list of projects.

Judith (Judi) C. Durham, Ph.D., L.P.C.

Judi and her husband, Lorry King, joined the UU Society East (UUSE) in Manchester, CT about 15 years ago. At UUSE, Judi chaired both a group that resettled a refugee family, and the Sanctuary Team that housed an Asylum Seeker. Leading these two groups intersected well with her professional experience as a Professor and Psychotherapist with specialization in international and trauma counseling, and cultural issues in mental health. She has served as a president and on national boards within the Counseling profession. About a year ago, she joined NAUA and is currently involved in the NAUA Summit planning committee.



Jan Anderson

Jan Anderson facilitates a NAUA CIRCLE and actively participates in other NAUA programs. For 20 years, she's been involved in two UU Congregations, serving in leadership roles, teaching, leading RE programs, and engaging in small group ministry. Raised in the Mormon Church, she chose her own path after 38 years. She embraces the NAUA values of freedom, reason and tolerance. Jan was a successful small business owner and now volunteers to lead an English conversation program. She lives with her husband Jim in Snohomish, WA. Jan enjoys nature, dogs, reading, simple living, connecting with friends and is a mom of five and grandma of four.

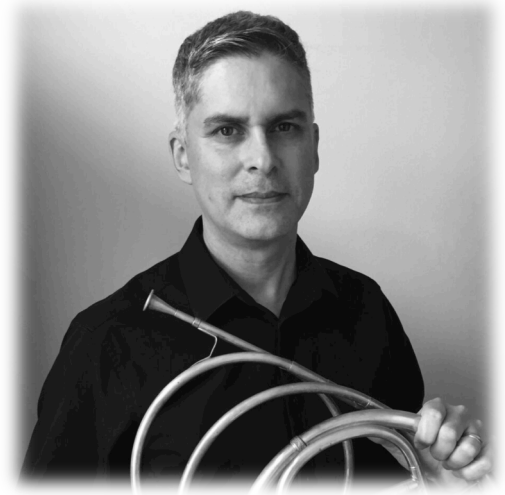
Bob Simoni

Bob Simoni is a founding member of the NAUA Fellowship of Hayward, CA and is also a member of the NAUA Tech and Worship Teams. He is a former board member of the Starr King UU Church of Hayward and the UU Fellowship of Redwood City, CA as well as a former member of the UU Church of North Easton, MA. He has been a UU in spirit for 35 years and his brother is a UU Minister. He currently works part-time as a System Administrator for an online bank called SoFi and lives in Paso Robles, CA.



John Wunderlin

John has been a Unitarian for more than 20 years. He is a member of Prairie Unitarian Society in Madison, Wisconsin, where he serves on the Board, chairs the Technology Committee, and is a member of the Housing and Property Committee. He is also a member of the NAUA Summit Planning and Technology Committees. Over the years, John has served on the board of directors for four different non-profits. He holds degrees in Computer Science and Music and is currently a member of two professional orchestras in Wisconsin. He and his wife, Nancy, live in Fitchburg, Wisconsin.



Marga Hanna

Marga Hanna, M.A., Dip. Ed., Dip. A.T., RCC, joined the Unitarian Church thirty years ago, much preferring its more liberal principles to those of the Lutheran faith, in which she was raised in Germany. She is an outspoken advocate of the democratic process and freedom of expression. She worked as a Trauma Treatment Therapist for eighteen years and now offers seminars on 'Fostering the Creative Process' and 'Mythology as a Personal Quest'. She has been an active Board Member of her local Unitarian Church for the past three years, helping to guide her congregation through a very difficult period of internal conflict and divisiveness, focusing on retaining, working within, and maintaining the Seven Principles as a strong foundation of Unitarianism. Marga is an active member of NAUA, the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women and of NAUA's International Alliance of Unitarians and Universalists.



Stephen Polmar, Ph.D., M.D.

Stephen has been a Unitarian since age 17. Professionally he was a Professor of Pediatrics and Immunology and subsequently a Vice President of the German pharmaceutical firm, Boehringer Ingelheim GmbH. He is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane where he serves as one of the Hosts for the Sunday Service Zoom Group. He is currently a member of the NAUA Provisional Board of Trustees, Chairperson of the NAUA Academy Advisory Board and Coordinator of NAUA’s International Alliance of Unitarians and Universalists. He has also been a contributor to the Liberal Beacon. He lives in Woodbridge, Connecticut and Perugia, Italy with his wife Suzanne.



Terry Anderson Ph.D.

Terry has been a Unitarian since he was 21. He is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane where he serves as a Host for the Sunday Service Zoom Group. He is currently a member of the NAUA Provisional Board of Trustees and has served as lead for the technical team that maintains NAUA’s web site, Facebook and X presences. Terry conceived of the NAUA Academy and serves on its Advisory Board. His careers include, education administrator, University faculty member, and academic journal editor. His research and publications are related to distance and online education. He lives in Edmonton Alberta with his wife Susan.



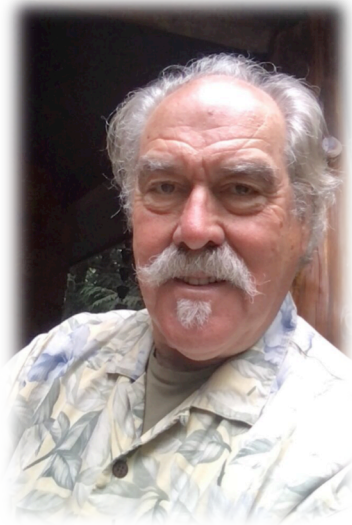
Mike Long

Mike “converted” from Catholicism to UU 35 years ago. He was a member of a 600-member congregation where he was Chair of various committees and task forces, including long-range planning, membership, stewardship and small group ministry. He served on the Board of Trustees of the congregation and the Open Door School and as Chair of the Endowment Fund. He is now a member of UUC Spokane attending services regularly via Zoom. Mike is currently a member of the NAUA Provisional Board of Trustees and also created and coordinates NAUA’s CIRCLES. He has spent the past 50 years doing special situation investment analysis. He and wife Heather live in Charlotte, NC, and have two married daughters and one granddaughter.



Ron Strange

Ron Strange describes himself as a Traditional Transcendentalist Unitarian. He is one of the founders of the new Salish Sea Fellowship (SSF), which he serves as a Board Member. He is deeply committed to the ideal of liberal religion, the concept of classical Enlightenment liberalism, the Transcendentalism expressed by Henry David Thoreau, a Zen/Taoist approach to life and still survives as an unreformed romantic idealist and tree hugger. He is deeply interested in the philosophical concept of “Deep Ecology” and the psychology of Carl Jung and now offers courses on these subjects at SSF. As one of the original members of NAUA, Ron currently serves as a member of the Provisional Board of Trustees.





Proposed Bylaws of the North American Unitarian Association

As a Washington Non-Profit Corporation

Article I: Name

The organization shall be known as the North American Unitarian Association (NAUA).

Article II: Purpose

NAUA's purpose is to help Unitarianism, Universalism, and other liberal religions thrive by providing support and services to our members, requiring no adherence to any specific creed or ideology.

Section 1: Mission Statement

NAUA is a member service organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the practice of liberal religion by embracing freedom, reason, and tolerance—rooted in our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and all peoples.

Section 2: Legal Structure

NAUA is a nonprofit entity registered in Washington, organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Article III: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility

Membership is open to individuals and organizations supporting NAUA's mission. Details on membership qualifications, rights, and responsibilities shall be outlined in the Membership Policy.

Section 2: Classes of Membership

There shall be two classes of members:

- Individual Members: Any person who supports the mission of NAUA.
- Organizational Members: Any church, congregation, fellowship, or other organization that aligns with NAUA's mission and values.

Article IV: Governance

Section 1: Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall manage the affairs of NAUA, consistent with Washington Nonprofit Corporation Law and these Bylaws.

Section 2: Composition and Terms

The Board consists of 9 to 11 NAUA members, including four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) and five to seven At-Large members. Trustees shall serve staggered three-year terms, with a limit of two consecutive terms. This limit promotes governance refreshment and prevents the concentration of power.

Section 3: Duties of Board Officers

1. **President:** The President is responsible for leading the Association in accordance with the objectives and strategic direction approved by the Board, acts as the primary spokesperson, and represents the Association in all external matters.
2. **Vice President:** Acts in the absence of the President and assists the President in the administration of the duties of the presidency. The Vice President is also tasked with overseeing the strategic initiatives of the Association and ensuring that committee activities align with the organization's goals and policies.
3. **Secretary:** Keeps the minutes of the meetings of the members and of the Board of Trustees, sees that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law, manages the corporate records of the Association, and in general performs all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.
4. **Treasurer:** Has charge and custody of and is responsible for all funds and securities of the Association, receives and gives receipts for moneys due and payable to the Association from any source whatsoever, and deposits all such moneys in the name of the Association in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws; oversees the financial budgeting, reports financial health to the Board regularly, and ensures compliance with financial regulations and best practices.

Section 4:

Duties of At-Large Members

1. **General Responsibilities:** At-Large Members of the Board of Trustees play a crucial role in providing diverse perspectives and expertise to the governance of the Association. They are expected to contribute actively to the strategic planning and decision-making processes.
2. **Committee Participation:** At-Large Members are required to serve on at least one standing committee of the Board. Their participation is crucial for bridging the gap between committee work and the Board, ensuring that committee recommendations align with the Board's strategic vision.
3. **Advocacy and Representation:** At-Large Members are expected to advocate for the interests of the Association's members and stakeholders. They should also represent the Association at external events and functions, promoting its mission, programs, and goals.
4. **Fundraising and Resource Development:** At-Large Members assist in fundraising efforts and resource development for the Association. They leverage their networks and resources to support the sustainability of the Association.
5. **Membership Engagement:** At-Large Members play an active role in membership engagement, retention, and recruitment. They are expected to interact with members, understand their needs and concerns, and bring this feedback to the Board.
6. **Special Assignments:** At times, At-Large Members may be assigned specific responsibilities by the Board that leverage their unique skills and experiences to benefit the Association.

Section 5: Powers and Duties

The Board has authority to hire staff, manage finances, amend policies, and oversee operational procedures.

Section 6: Selection of Board Officers

Board officers shall be selected by the entire Board of Trustees during a regularly scheduled meeting.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1: Board Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held at least quarterly; special meetings may be called as necessary through a process as established by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2: Member Meetings

An Annual Business Meeting shall be conducted to elect Trustees, approve budgets, and address other association matters.

Section 3: Quorum

A quorum for any meeting will be in excess of fifty percent of the Board members or ten percent of the membership, as applicable.

Article VI: Nominating Committee

Section 1: Purpose

The Nominating Committee is tasked with ensuring that the leadership of the North American Unitarian Association (NAUA) maintains a high standard of commitment and competence. The committee is responsible for identifying and vetting candidates for the Board of Trustees and officer positions, ensuring a diverse and skilled board that aligns with the strategic goals and values of the NAUA.

Section 2: Composition

The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three members of the Association. Efforts shall be made to include both current board members and at-large members of the Association to provide a balanced perspective on candidate selections.

Section 3: Election

Members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected annually at a regular meeting of the Board. Committee members may serve for a term of one year and are eligible for re-election for up to two additional terms if they continue to meet the criteria for membership on the committee.

Section 4: Duties and Responsibilities

- 1. Candidate Identification:** Identify potential candidates for all board and officer positions. This includes soliciting nominations from the membership and actively searching for qualified individuals who can contribute effectively to the Association's governance.
- 2. Screening and Evaluation:** Conduct thorough evaluations of all potential candidates to assess their qualifications, commitment, and alignment with the Association's mission and strategic objectives. This process includes reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and checking references as necessary.
- 3. Recommendations:** Make formal recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding candidates for each open position on the Board and among the officers. The committee should provide a rationale for each recommendation to facilitate informed decision-making by the Board.
- 4. Election Process Oversight:** Oversee the election process to ensure it is conducted fairly and transparently in accordance with the Bylaws of the Association. This includes preparing ballots, monitoring voting, and certifying election results.

5. Succession Planning: Assist in planning for orderly transitions in leadership, including preparing for anticipated vacancies and advising the Board on succession planning for key roles.

Section 5: Meetings

The Nominating Committee shall meet as needed, but not less than twice per year, to perform its duties effectively. Additional meetings can be called by the chair of the committee or at the request of any two committee members.

Section 6: Reporting

The Nominating Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual business meeting of the Association, or more frequently as required by the Board or the circumstances of its work.

Article VII: Elections and Voting

Section 1: Eligibility

Members eligible to vote must have been in good standing for at least ninety days prior to the election.

Section 2: Procedures

Elections shall be conducted in accordance with the Election Policy, ensuring access to voting for all eligible members.

Section 3: Running for the Board

The 2024/2025 Board of Trustees will determine a process allowing for NAUA members to run for the Board in time for future Yearly Summits.

Article VIII: Conflict of Interest

The association shall adopt a conflict of interest policy to protect the integrity of its decision-making process, and to enable compliance with public trust and legal standards.

Article IX: Indemnification

Officers, Trustees, and employees will be indemnified against claims arising from their organizational duties, as allowed by law.

Article X: Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the membership at an Annual or Special Member Called Meeting, provided the amendment proposal has been circulated at least forty-five days prior to the meeting.

Article XI: Dissolution

Upon dissolution, assets will be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as determined by the Board.