



Liberal Beacon

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We have a board! We have bylaws!

Hello everyone. This is my first “regular” issue of *Liberal Beacon* as its editor, but it’s mostly about NAUA’s first ever Yearly Summit—just like our previous issue was—only this time with lots of pictures and articles about how it went.

Our inaugural Summit, held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, is widely regarded as a resounding success. As a young organization still in its first two years, this event marks an important milestone in NAUA’s development.

In this issue, there are various reflections and recaps from the Summit’s planners, but don’t miss other details, like how to contribute to *Liberal Beacon* by submitting a Letter to the Editor (on pages 10-11).

Can’t wait to see where we go from here!

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John Griffin Miller
Editor



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Thoughts on the First Annual Summit of the NAUA

Joyce Kinnear

The first Yearly Summit of the North American Unitarian Association (NAUA) began for us on a Zoom call in Fall 2023. Rev. Todd Eklof was in Spokane and we were in our living room in Bucerias, Mexico. My husband Scott and I had agreed to help put together the first Summit and Todd was meeting with us to get to know each other better and talk about what, where, and when might be good to start thinking about.

About a year later, our entire planning team met in Spokane, Washington to finish copying schedules, setting out tables and chairs, and to go over last-minute changes in plans. It was an exciting time.

Some of us had just flown in. Others live in Spokane and were able to simply “drop by” the UU church where the event was being held. One of our members even had his Tesla drive him across multiple states to get there.

Most of us had never seen each other in person, though we had spent hundreds of

hours on Zoom calls with each other (not to mention an uncountable number of emails) talking about everything from speakers to food and hotel options to what looked good on a t-shirt. We had spent many hours developing and going over the Zoom script. Some on our team had held classes with the Zoom hosts. Others had called and reconfirmed food availability many times. One couple had put together workshops. All of us were

hopeful, excited, and tired before the event had even started.

On the evening before it was to officially begin, we quickly discovered that our excitement was shared by lots of people. We had scheduled reservations to begin at 4:00 pm, assuming that attendees would slowly trickle in, allowing us time to talk and get to know them. Surprise! The registration area was almost immediately crowded with participants eager to meet each other! It was one loud and crazy evening and our hotel’s small registration room was packed! The decibel level was pretty daunting, so I had to take people out into the hallway for our introductory photos and videos. What fun!

By Friday morning, the coffee and muffins were ready, and attendees arrived at the church ready for the Summit’s official start. Many were already donning the NAUA t-shirts they’d purchased during registration. Even before the first visioning

workshop began, small groups were excitedly getting to know each other all over the church’s lovely grounds and inside its spacious sanctuary. That area around the coffee pot was exceptionally crowded, keeping alive a Unitarian tradition of ensuring that a coffee pot never sits alone.

The church’s beautiful rural location unfortunately means that Wi-Fi bandwidth is a little less than we

would have liked. Working through that and a couple of Zoom issues kept us busy at the start of the first Workshop. Joanne Krettek, John Wunderlin and I worked to smooth out the issues and calm the Zoom attendees, while Judi Durham led the group through some thought exercises for Visioning the NAUA, and then we split into groups, both in person and on Zoom.



NAUA Summit Planning Committee Chair Joyce Kinnear (right) discusses her experience at a small group workshop led by Lynn Jinishian (left).

After our catered lunch of filling sandwiches and other delicious foods, coordinated by Cindy Fine, was finished, we moved to the second workshop, “Losing My Religion.” This was put together by Candace Schmidt and Lynn Jinishian. Although Candace was ill during the Summit, Lynn ably led the group through their workshop. Afterward, our breakout groups were filled with heartfelt discussions on what people had gone through at their local churches, the denomination as a whole, and how they came to be connected with NAUA. It was an especially helpful and positive experience.

The first day’s final workshop was facilitated by Rev. Eklof and was about the UU Church of Spokane’s Kerdcera Dojo, which practices the “Art of being Thoughtful” in our conversations and interactions with each other. We had a lively discussion. Most learned at least a little about bridging the gap in our conversations with others who have different viewpoints.

Continuing this theme, the amazing Keynote Presentation by

John Wood Jr. started off Saturday morning. Mr. Wood 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. Wood brilliantly discussed how we can work together with others in our community who have different points of view and help reduce the polarization in our society. His presentation was so interesting that many of us could easily have listened to him for another hour or more. It was the highlight for many, with about 65 in the room and another 75 on zoom. A total of 140 attendees! What a great level of participation for our first Summit!



John Wood Jr. of Braver Angels delivers NAUA Summits historic first Keynote address.

After another catered lunch and a necessary Board Meeting (during which bylaws and a new Board were approved) we moved to the Discussion Tables section. We had discussions on NAUA Activities, the International Alliance, getting to know others at NAUA, and the NAUA Academy. There were separate discussions in-person and on-line. The discussions were quite lively and left people wanting even more. After a happy Closing Celebration, this excellent day ended with an amazing catered dinner from a local restaurant. We dined on tasty mediterranean food of all types, while continuing to get to know each other better in person.

The Summit ended on Sunday with the UUCS service during which we were able to experience the joy of being together in a spiritual setting.

The conference was fabulous. So many people worked hard to make it a success, especially the planning

committee and all of the Spokane

church members who worked long hours to make sure we were welcomed. From washing dishes to setting up chairs, these volunteers all were fabulous. Online hosts, registration assistance, and moderators worked hard to help the meetings flow.

The majority of attendee responses on the feedback forms reflected this, with the average rating of 4.5 out of 5. Some of their comments are below:

- Everyone was friendly and helpful.
- This was a joyous event! Shout out to all the volunteers who were so generous in making us feel welcome. They bent over backwards to make sure we had rides, food (!!) and conversation!! Great hotel for the Summit!

- I very much appreciated and enjoyed meeting other like-minded UUs in person, beyond just a face on Zoom. Good accommodation, good food.
- Appreciated all the vegetarian options. The dinner on Saturday night was the best Mediterranean food I have ever had!

There were also suggestions for ways the Summit might be improved in the future. A common request was that the NAUA look at ways to improve bandwidth and do even more Zoom host training to ensure that Zoom attendees have a better, more inclusive experience. Another common area of suggestion was that future Summits have more workshops, likely more than one at the same time, on a variety of topics. Here are some examples of the recommendations made for future events:

- There wasn't a consistent theme to tie together all the workshops. Having more than one workshop option at a time would have been good. Also, more workshops on actual religious topics like practicing your religion at home if you do not have a congregation to join nearby, finding internal peace in the midst of chaos, humanism, Enlightenment wisdom, false prophets, finding your internal compass, teaching faith to the next generation (especially since there were few young people

present at the Summit). The keynote presentation was good but short, and there was too little time for questions. I wish there had been more side activities going on during the Summit, like vendors, meditation circles, singing or drumming circles, and information displays.

- Chances to exchange real SOLUTIONS to the split between UUA - NAUA. We are so small and fragile - we need practical ideas moving forward.
- Good design and content overall. Perhaps a little more music during breaks.
- More wine :-)
- More singing
- Would need to think about how to include more content while still allowing time to meet & talk with others in person - community building
- Evening activities to hang out with and get to know fellow participants (in person).
- More music and movement.
- More energy and enthusiasm.
- More children or at least younger adults.
- More to do for those who arrived early each day.

These and other suggestions will help us improve future Summits, but not without lots of help. Please consider volunteering as, together, we continue to build NAUA.

Visioning NAUA's Future Summit Workshop Summary Report

Judi Durham

Our first ever NAUA Summit included a lot of listening, including a Visioning Workshop as one of its very first events. From this we learned there is much agreement among our members about future NAUA services. Their wishes also largely align with NAUA's purpose as a support and service organization. The resulting list of suggested services will be an important resource as NAUA's elected leadership begins strategizing how best to help liberal religion survive and thrive.

The most frequently mentioned suggestion is a desire for assistance helping a congregation understand how to leave the Unitarian Universalist

Association, should it wish to do so, without putting its financial resources in jeopardy. There were also several requests for help understanding how to legally establish new fellowships or congregations. Wishing to maintain congregational autonomy, many Summit participants were also eager for new and creative ways of finding ministers or getting ministerial services, without having to rely upon the UUA. There were other practical concerns like where to get hymnals, or religious education materials for both kids and adults.

Some also expressed the desire for regional opportunities to connect with other NAUA members in-person. They want a quality of connection that has more depth and dimension that occurs when interacting only on Zoom. Some suggested having access to a list of members within their geographic area to establish such connections. (Some of us who live in New England have already begun discussing how to do just that.) I personally agree that regional networks will help NAUA to

substantially increase our membership. Such groups are especially needed now, given that an increasing number of people, dissatisfied with the direction the UUA has gone, are, or on the verge of, leaving their current congregations. Regional groups may give them a place to go, especially those who desire more than online interactions.

During the visioning workshop and throughout the Summit, I was frequently reminded of how important NAUA has become to so many people, and how much they want it to grow and succeed. There was lots of discussion about increasing NAUA's visibility, increasing publicity, and securing its viability for future

generations. One practical suggestion for doing so is to produce a brief video explaining who we are, who can join, and what we do, that can be published on various social media platforms, where it might attract a younger audience. It was widely agreed that there are still too many folks who do not know who we are, or those who have made erroneous assumptions about us.

There were frequent requests that NAUA integrate a spiritual or theological orientation into its programming, in addition to Humanism. Some say they embrace its commitment to Freedom, Reason and Tolerance, but who want more. Some would like the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism included in an expanded NAUA statement of purpose.

I have given some thought to this and see it as an opportunity for us to expand our programming. NAUA could, for instance, offer courses, sermons, or Academy sessions on the history or basic tenets of the multiple liberal religious communities that are represented in NAUA including-- Atheists, Humanists, 'Classic' UU's, Unitarian Christians, Universalists, Buddhists, Pagans and Christian Mystics, to name a few. These courses, sermons, or

Academy sessions could then be housed in a new digital 'Resource Library' for local groups to use. We might also have Circle groups oriented to these different spiritual or theological groups, similar to how many UU congregations and fellowships also hold Buddhist group sessions. Another idea would be for NAUA to create its own version of the UUA

Building Your Own Theology program which was very popular. Something like: *Creating your own Spiritual, Theological, or Moral Compass*. By including such programming and groups, we really would be serving ALL liberal religions.

Just a few participants also suggested creating a broad-spectrum Social Justice Group; and some that we invite other existing groups that are concerned about what's happening to Unitarian

Universalism to join NAUA. Taken together, these suggestions could provide opportunities to increase our membership by appealing to other like-minded people and groups.



ABOVE: Official Summit logo created by John Wunderlin, new Vice President of our NAUA Board of Trustees.

Participant Reactions to NAUA Summit

Joanne Krettek

Just as interesting as some of the NAUA Summit speakers were the participant reactions. All participants were asked to submit a Summit evaluation form. We received 32 responses from in-person attendees and another 32 from those attending via Zoom.

Overall, participants rated their satisfaction with the Summit as a 4.4 on a 5-point scale (about halfway between "satisfied" and "highly satisfied." Some of their comments include:

"Such a profound experience."

"Glad to meet like-minded people. Super job with your first Summit."

"Overall, it was a great success. impressive organization, and I am grateful to those who worked so hard, particularly the woman in charge of food."

"On the whole, I thought the first NAUA Summit was very good. There were some technical glitches and some other issues, but the inaugural Summit was a success in my view."

"Thank you for all your efforts re-forming and beginning to flesh out detailed issues of this new organization.

Everyone who worked to put it on and during the weekend did a really great job from what I can see. Kudos on choosing a wonderful keynote speaker in John Wood, too."

"Great first Summit for all those that were involved in planning! Well

attended and interesting

engagement. Yet always opportunities for improvement!!! I participated via zoom. Perhaps with more planning time, there could be an improved experience for those who participated either as Zoom host, co-host or attendee."

"You guys did a great job. I loved that there was dedicated time to process feelings related to the UUA, but there were also plenty of other activities, which made it clear that we don't want the UUA to be our focus all the time. Clearly it is still a big topic, and will be, until we can be confident that we've differentiated ourselves enough; but I see that we are also ready to choose our own direction of travel instead of just retreating from the UUA. Can't wait

to see what NAUA is doing by the time the next Summit rolls around!"

Additionally, 31 out of 44 respondents indicated an interest in attending NAUA Academy sessions following the Summit; 21 expressed an interest in joining an NAUA Circle; and 16 were interested in joining an NAUA committee.

Most participants reported feeling welcomed and appreciated throughout the Summit, especially those who attended in person:

"I can't remember the last time I felt as safe, free and welcomed as I did during this Summit."



Attendees gathered on Zoom and in the sanctuary of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane for NAUA's first historic Yearly Summit.

"This was a joyous event! Shout out to all the volunteers who were so generous in making us feel welcome. They bent over backwards to make sure we had rides, food (!) and conversation!! Great hotel for the Summit!"

"The team working on this Summit did such a great job. Where to go and when was clear and that set my mind at ease. The church is

beautiful and very easy to navigate. The hotel was a really great choice. Many meaningful conversations happened at breakfast each day and the facilities & staff at the hotel really made us so comfortable after our long trip."

There were also some helpful bits of feedback for future annual gatherings. Some of the considerations for next time include:

"Make the Zoom experience smoother and minimize technical difficulties for Zoomers, including some people winding up in the wrong Zoom room initially, some less-than-smooth breakout room experiences and insufficient bandwidth, which created some issues with sound and required Zoomers to turn off

their cameras or switch to streaming during the keynote presentation.” [Note: If you missed or could not hear a Zoom sessions, recordings of all sessions can now be found on the [NAUA website](#).]

“For in-person participants, be sure to offer and clearly label food options for those with dietary restrictions.”



“Offer a choice of workshops during each time block, if possible. While the workshops overall received positive feedback, some participants felt one or more of the topics were not especially relevant to their needs.”

“Provide skilled moderators for all small group discussions to ensure everyone has a chance to speak and no one unfairly dominates the discussion.”

For the discussion tables during the Summit (Getting to Know other NAUA Members, NAUA Academy, NAUA Activities & Programs, International Alliance), several participants expressed a desire to participate in more than one discussion topic and/or to have more time for discussion.

There were also several requests for more music and movement throughout the Summit, especially

for in-person participants. Others requested planned evening activities for each day of the Summit, such as a river walk or walks with NAUA leaders.

Other miscellaneous suggestions included a grander



NAUA Summit attendees Allen Lindrup (left) and Gail Sandlin (above) participate in Summit discussion via Zoom.

opening reception, more engagement between online and in-person attendees, youth teen participation, a more centralized Summit location, and a smoother annual meeting with more competitive elections, an automated voting system, and the possible addition of a parliamentarian.

Participants also offered suggestions for workshop topics and possible keynote speakers for next year, while also suggesting that an overall Summit theme be incorporated throughout. Some participants asked for the Summit to take place earlier in the year, perhaps September. And finally, there were requests for more visual displays during workshops and perhaps handouts to focus discussions and provide a place to record notes.

Bottom line, NAUA’s first Yearly Summit was a resounding success! We look forward to making next year’s even better.

NAUA’s First Official Board Report

Candace Schmidt

The first meeting of the newly elected NAUA Board met on November 13, 2024, over Zoom.

The full Board was present and included Todd Eklof, Ron Strange, Bob Simoni, Lynn Jinishian, Judi Durham, John Wunderlin, Terry Anderson, Jan Anderson, Stephen Polmar, Marga Hanna, and Mike Long. Members introduced themselves and discussed their impressions of the recent Summit held in October in Spokane, Washington.

A Board Retreat to be held in January of 2025 was discussed, and a Board Retreat Planning

Committee was formed and will include Judi Durham, Mike Long, and Bob Simoni. Goals for the Retreat were discussed, with suggested topics of importance including visioning, developing a strategic plan, and improving communications within NAUA.

The following Board members were unanimously elected for the positions indicated:

President: Todd Eklof
Vice President: John Wunderlin
Treasurer: Bob Simoni
Secretary: Stephen Polmar

The Board agreed the position of Vice President will not involve an automatic promotion to the position of President after the current President's term has concluded. Since Treasurer Bob Simoni does not reside in Spokane where donation checks are mailed to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, it was agreed that outgoing Provisional Board Treasurer, Lynn Jinishian, would continue to deposit incoming checks in NAUA's local financial institution account.

The Board agreed to create staggered terms among the current Board positions to allow for the election of new Board members at future Summits.

One-year term members are Mike Long, Lynn Jinishian, Ron Strange, and Terry Anderson.

Two-year term members are Todd Eklof, Stephen Polmar, Jan Anderson, and Marga Hanna.

Three-year term members are Judi Durham, Bob Simoni, and John Wunderlin.

It was also suggested that the Board consider creating a "Past President" position, which could possibly be included in a future revision of NAUA bylaws. Discussion of this will be continued during the upcoming Board Retreat.

Lynn Jinishian, as the outgoing Provisional Board Treasurer, reported that NAUA assets, as of 11/08/24, were \$40,117.11. The Board discussed the costs incurred over the past two years in creating NAUA's website. Lynn reported in 2023 the costs equaled \$18,000, and in 2024 the costs equaled \$11,948.75. The Technology Team,

consisting of Terry Anderson, Bob Simoni, and John Wunderlin, expressed the view that while the costs appear to be high, they have worked to keep the costs as low as possible, while still striving to create a quality website. They added while they continue to make improvements to the website, the costs to maintain it should continue to decline. Bob Simoni reminded us that the product is not merely a website but includes many other tools necessary to help run an online organization such as ours.

The Board also discussed the need for the development of a Nominating Committee to put forward candidates to fill open Board member positions at future Summits, to be voted upon by the membership. It was suggested that a process also be created by which individuals could nominate themselves for open Board positions. Discussion will continue on this topic.

Todd made a motion stating the NAUA official year begin on January 1st of every year and conclude at the end of December of the same year. The Board voted unanimously to approve this motion.

The next Board meeting is scheduled to take place on Zoom December 11, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. PST.

Call for 2025 NAUA Summit Planning Committee and Volunteers

Joyce Kinnear

The Planning Committee for the NAUA First Annual Summit wants to thank each and every person for your involvement! Thanks to all attendees, in person or on zoom, for your time in coming and participating. We can't state our appreciation enough for every Zoom moderator and tech assistant. For those who moved chairs and tables at the UU Church of Spokane where it took place, made the food and cleaned up after meals—the world is a better

place because of people like you. For those who spoke and led workshops, presentations, or breakout groups, thank you!

The Summit was a great success, especially for our first annual meeting. There's always room to improve and grow. We have received quite a bit of input on the feedback evaluations for us to consider for next year.

As many suggested, we'd like next year's Summit to be even better with more workshops, stronger bandwidth for Zoom, and activities that meet the needs of all our members. This will require more help from a broader group. The small team who put this year's event together are all busy people and most are moving on to other activities and responsibilities in NAUA, so we will need a large number of planners in a variety of areas.

Before the current team ends its duties, we will be sending out requests for people to submit the ways they are willing to assist. We are recommending that next year's planning group get proposals on ideas for workshops and programs from throughout the membership, so start thinking about whether you can put something together or can contact others who can develop programs for the 2025 Summit.

Several of you have already sent in your willingness to help with the business meeting, workshop planning and other activities. Do not be surprised when you hear from our planning team. If you don't hear from us, please reach out at summit@naunitarians.org

We need your help. So please think about ways you can be of assistance and help to make next year's Summit an even greater success.

Writing on Ribbons

NAUA Summit participants, including those on Zoom, were invited to personalize a ribbon with their name and a few words or describing something spiritually significant to them. The ribbons were then hung

from a paper lantern and displayed on the last day of the Summit.



Here's a sampling of their various inscriptions:

- "Free & responsible search for truth and meaning"
- "Right of conscience"
- "Emerson – Thoreau – Fuller – Ripley – Parker"
- "Freedom – Reason – Tolerance"
- "New Beginnings"
- "Be like the cliff against which the waves continually break but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it. – Marcus Aurelius"
- "The power of the people"
- "Helping to re-establish reason & logic"
- "Community – meditation in nature"
- "Let there be joy!"
- "Freedom to not believe"
- "Let reason and joyous community prevail"
- "Gaia"
- "Peace, order and good government"
- "Seven principles ... from the beginning ... long story"

“We are not alone”
 “Freedom of expression”
 “Spiritual integrity – community”
 “Human thriving”
 “Cheers! Cookies for everyone! Life is good”
 “Compassion + wisdom”
 “Reborn UU”
 “No matter how thin you slice it, there will always
 be two sides. – Spinoza”

“Spirit of Life, come unto me.....”

MY RELIGION IS KINDNESS

Fighting brainwashing

Music

Community : Tolerance For All Free Thinkers.

Kittleen Reeves Word Symbol Long Burning Flame

TRANSFORMATION

Handwritten symbols and drawings

Freedom to think, believe, speak, ♡

Want to Connect with NAUA Members Near You?

NAUA frequently receives requests from those wishing to start a new NAUA affiliated fellowship or to simply meet in person with other NAUA members. NAUA is still growing, and its members are widely spread throughout North America and elsewhere, but if asked we can let you know if there are other members living near you. We will not share the contact information of any members who have explicitly requested that we don't by opting out of this service. If you're interested in potentially

finding other NAUA members in your region, contact us at info@naunitarians.org.



A small group of our members meet together during NAUA Summit.

Joining NAUA

Our first Yearly Summit generated a lot of interest in NAUA. If you or your congregation are thinking of joining us, please visit our website and fill out our online Membership form at:

<https://naunitarians.org/membership/>

If you have already subscribed to our email list but have not officially joined, please do! Be sure to use the same email address you have in the past, so you don't receive duplicate emails.

To become a member, check the box indicating, “I agree to join the NAUA in good faith with a sincere interest to support its Mission.” We do occasionally make contact information available to those seeking to connect with other NAUA members in their same geographic area. If you do not want your info shared, check the “Do Not Share” box at the bottom of the form.

Letters to the Editor

[The following note was originally sent to our NAUA Summit planners, and we are happy to share it here.]

Dear Summit Planning Team,

Thank you for organizing this ribbon thing. It has been more meaningful to me than I expected. Finding NAUA after these last few years has been such a relief, and I could not be more pleased with the choice of John Wood as your keynote speaker. I'm greatly looking forward to seeing you all in some capacity soon. May whatever powers exist in this universe bless your work.

Joe

Surprise! It's me, Todd Eklof. Rather than write another entire article about our historic first NAUA Yearly Summit, I thought I sneak in a few words in our *Letters to the Editor* section. Firstly, I want to THANK EVERYONE involved in planning this outstanding event! If I started naming names, I'm sure I'd leave many deserving souls out, because there are so many, including the dedicated and talented members of our Summit Planning Committee (Hurray! Hurrah! I bow to your brilliance and organizing skills! You made this happen!). Our dedicated provisional Board members were also greatly involved, as were other member volunteers, including members who came and pitched in during the actual event. There's so many I/we owe my/our gratitude to.

I'm also incredibly grateful for having had the opportunity to be with Unitarians and UUs from all over North (and even some from South) America and to feel what it is supposed to be like to be among other religious liberals! What joy there was, and enthusiasm and excitement, along with openness and curiosity and kindness! This is what our liberal religious communities are supposed to feel like, and is what the world needs, and what we have to give. So thank you for not giving up on our venerable religious tradition, on our values and principles, or on each other.

Todd Eklof

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.

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.

Thanks for your Support!

Picasso said, "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." NAUA remains an organization run by volunteers who give their time, energy, skills, and commitment, and of members who give what they can to help fund our many efforts. We're still only just beginning and, together, we've already accomplished a lot! Of course, we aspire to do a lot more in the coming months and years. Thanks to everyone for your continued support. If you'd like to make a contribution, just click here: <https://naunitarians.org/support-us/>

Save the Dates

NAUA Summit T-shirts Still Available



We still have a small supply of our NAUA Summit t-shirts left. They

cost \$20 per shirt, plus shipping. The front of the shirt sports our cool Summit logo, along with our name and web address. The back lists our values—Freedom, Reason, Tolerance. If you'd like to purchase one while they last, please email Cindy Fine at cynfine@yahoo.com.



When we almost got it right: Societies that worked

On January 14th, 2025, 4:30 to 7:00 PM Pacific, NAUA Academy will host, Dr. Mark Reimers, a



quantitative neuroscientist who has worked at the National Institutes of Health, the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, and

Michigan State University. He was the leader of the Richmond Humanists in Virginia and UU forum in Lansing Michigan. He has lectured on a wide variety of scientific, humanist, religious, and behavioral subjects.

As we hear distressing stories of violence and oppression from around the world, we may benefit from reminding ourselves of times and places when human beings did organize themselves into durable and just societies. In this presentation Dr. Reimers will discuss some of these times and places: from the world's first cities in 4000 BCE, to the Indus Valley civilization, widely revered as the most advanced society of 2000 BCE, to the small democratic city states in Central America, which held off the encroachments of the Aztec empire for centuries, to the peaceful coexistence among Christians, Jews and Muslims in 12th-century Andalusia which lit the spark for the European Renaissance a century later. Dr. Reimers will discuss what principles and strategies they used to organize their societies, how they ended, and

how their experience may inform our ideas of justice today.

January Worship Service to Focus on Enlightenment Values

NAUA's third Saturday worship service is entitled "The Enlightenment Values of Freedom, Reason, Tolerance; Advancing the Human Condition Materially and Spiritually; Our Core Strengths." It's being hosted and facilitated by our NAUA Worship Team and will take place on January 18, 2025, starting at 10:00 AM Pacific (1:00 PM Eastern). Breakout discussion rooms will follow the service. Please plan to join in exploring and honoring the primary core values of our faith tradition.

For information and updates about specific NAUA events, please visit our website at www.naunitarians.org