



# **CUUPS 2018 Annual Report**

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## **President's Report for July 2018-June 2019 / Jerrie Hildebrand**

I have now been in the role of President for around two years. I am filled with gratitude as I meet many members, ministers, and supporters of CUUPS.

Before I move into organizational business, here is a brief synopsis of the duties the President is accountable for and what has been accomplished.

**President's Job Description:** Convene meetings (Board meetings and annual meeting). Set Agenda. Run meetings. Supervise the Executive Director (ED.) Third person on the bank account and PayPal (with ED and Treasurer.) With UU General Assembly (GA) Liaison, responsible for ritual and/or workshops at GA. Support other board members with their work. Public face of CUUPS on social media, media, UUA and at congregations. With the Ministerial Relations board member, assist with conflict resolution with chapters, members, and host congregations or Earth-Relating/Pagan groups. With the VP Membership, welcome new chapters and members. Liaison to all working groups and special projects except Nominations (Bylaws, technology, Convocation, social justice, sermon contest, etc.).

**Board Meetings** These have occurred monthly. We moved from the second Tuesdays to the last Wednesday of the month. We have had a quorum for all of our meetings. In October, we added new board members Treasurer, Irene Glasse to take on Curriculum Development, Susan Morgan to manage GA, and Sally Walsh as a member at large. They joined already sitting board members Debra Gilbert our VP of Membership, Pamela Backstrom as Secretary, Om Prakash (Rev. Dr. John Gilmore) as Ministerial Liaison/Right Relations, and myself.

Sadly, organizational and life circumstances cause the need for board members to leave or to be removed from the board. This year due to lack of attendance Susan Morgan and Sally Walsh were removed by a vote of the board as our norms and policies document we operate under.

**Financial Changes:** The position of Treasurer was finally filled with Ron Zorn from the Louisville, KY chapter. He is totally qualified and I welcome his business acumen and thinking.

Under Ron's leadership and incredible coaching by retired executive director David Pollard we will be divesting our funds from Wells Fargo to Fifth Third in Ohio. This will put our banking in the same state as our incorporation papers. We looked for a financial organization that gave the ability to bank online and be more in alignment with UU principles and purposes and more socially responsible during this next half of the year. It is wonderful to have this moving forward. Please see the Treasurer's report.

We are grateful to Rev. Joan VanBecelaere in shifting how board members take on their roles. Board members to nominate who will fill various roles on the board. It has worked well.

**Incorporations Papers Updated & Upcoming Address Changes:** Many thanks to Laura Vondenhuevel for supporting us with upcoming address changes and making sure we had what we needed to file our updates with the state of Ohio. Thank you to board members Pamela Backstrom and Ron Zorn for the hours you spent updates online done, paperwork stuff handled, and updating resources like Guidestar and Smile.Amazon.

Currently our address will be shifting with the launch of the new website. We get very little snail mail with the use of online communications and we love having someplace for those members who do not use these tools a place to be in communication. It is good to have updates done.

**General Assembly Spokane, WA:** This year CUUPS had one program on the schedule at General Assembly. A team of 10 people crafted the Annual Summer Solstice Ritual for about 275 participants. The ritual celebrated the “The Power of We”. On Saturday afternoon, CUUPS hosted the Summer Solstice Celebration in one of the larger convention hall rooms with approximately 275 people in attendance. We had a wonderful team of folks who volunteered and stepped in to help lead it. Many thanks to former CUUPS President Amy Beltaine, David Troxel, Alice Muciek, Pat McCutcheon, Glenn Morrison, Lucia Kasulis, Rodney Walston, and Anahi for music, inspirational invocations, poetry and love of shaking up and having fun! Attendees tied ribbons the color of the Fire and Sun in to a hoop with blessings for the season.

Board member Om Prakash (Dr. Rev. John Gilmore) and I anchored the table in the exhibit hall this year along with CUUPS member Lucia Kasulis. She stepped in and made sure we took breaks and lunch. She fabulously invited event attendees to come to the Annual Summer Solstice Celebration! It was wonderful talking with members, our neighbors in the UU Mystics, UU Christian Fellowship, and the Women and Religion booths. The Red Tent was across from us playing a lovely array of music.

We loved talking with our members and UU ministers and board chairs who were interested in starting or having a CUUPS chapter in their congregation. We also met with chapter leaders, ministers, and board chairs who needed support in managing chapters, understanding the need for chapters to have covenants with the churches, and getting clear what they needed to get their chapters in right relations with CUUPS, Inc. It was good to see the leadership in and working with chapters interested in supporting one another and the larger organization.

Next year we hope to see many of you in Providence, Rhode Island for the 2020 General Assembly. It is also the 400th Anniversary of the landing in Plymouth, MA by the Pilgrims. See you there!

**Calling for Volunteers:** The board has two slots to fill this year. We would love to have someone to manage and organize the table and booth at the General Assemblies and someone to support Communications Development, Membership and Chapter Development.

We are also looking for volunteers for these teams who are willing to participate on the committees with no board commitment. Interested? Write me at [president@cuups.org](mailto:president@cuups.org).

**E-Newsletters:** Five email newsletters have gone out since last July as well as a membership campaign newsletter. The results of the past two newsletters have been beating industry averages for open rates at 31-32%. The June newsletter in the first 12 hours out garnered over 600 reads. The Spring newsletter was the first CUUPS Bulletin to get over 1,000 verified reads since 2014. Overall the open rates and click throughs are up. Feedback has been lovely.

**Website Development:** It has been a long time coming and the website will be moved to Wild Apricot over the next month. With this move we will have a mobile site. We have already shifted our membership registration to the new site with a link from the current site there. When you renew or join newly you will receive a mechanized membership cards people via email automatically. We will also take online registrations for events and chapter dues. There is the capacity on the website side to have an area for chapter forums and materials to be available only to chapters current with their renewals and who have current covenants and information required on file.

**Social Media:** Many thanks to the beloved David Pollard for continuing to manage the blog and our social media outreach. It is so appreciated.

**What's Next:** How great it is to envision new things for the coming year! Continuing to professionalize the board and communications and support of members, chapters, ministers, congregations and the UUA. Creating and empowering team across the board and volunteers. Reviewing policies with bylaws.

**Chapter Development:** The board will be putting focus this coming year on what is needed to support chapters. Many chapters are not in right relations with the organization and there have been issues between chapters and congregations resulting in this. The good news is that ministers with chapters are interested in creating and working on processes to support chapters in being the small group ministries they are intended to be. We will be working with chapters on renewals, getting their covenants created with the congregational leadership, and making sure the chapters are in alignment with the mission and vision of CUUPS. It has been noted that many chapters are not operating as intended. We want to support everyone in healthy relationships!

Lastly we have heard you and are looking at scheduling bi-annual or quarterly online meetings with chapter leadership to be more connected and offer more support. This is a long time coming and it is something we have heard and plan to implement finally.

**Communications:** Building out the website with updated information that aligns with where we are at now. We will have a section of the past and it is time to move CUUPS into the 21st century in what UU Paganism is and the depth of it. We hope to create an online store on the new website. There will be printed brochures for chapters and

congregations to purchase for their congregations and events like Pagan Pride and more. Also the curriculum committee will have work that they create available on that site for purchase.

**What Else Can We Create Together:**

It is my hope that we create vibrant and active committees this year. If you have ideas your chapter would like to support the organization with let us know. We would love to have convocations again. The ideas are endless.

**In Gratitude...**

I want to thank our Executive Director and the board who are still engaged in moving the organization forward for all of their work this year.

First of all, David Pollard our Executive Director has been my guiding light in maneuvering the world of the UUA and practices of the organization past and present. His brilliance is not lost on any of the board members. His gifts of wit, humor, and memory of organizational history is priceless. It is a joy to work with him.

VP's Debra Gilbert and Om Prakash/Rev. John Gilmore are calm, centered, and good at reminding us when we need to make hard choices. Debra's business acumen and Om's ministerial training are guiding us into new levels of integrity, accountability and responsibility. Pamela Backstrom's administrative capacity keeps us on task during our meetings. The one thing across the board they all bring is a sense of humor and openness as well as an extreme love for the humanity around us.

Lastly, I want to thank all of our chapter organizers, members, home congregations, ministers and religious professionals, and so on around us. You are the reason for our work. It is your vision and needs that guide us in working to do the best we can. I thank you on behalf of all of us.

Thank you all so much as members, chapters, ministers, lay leaders, congregations, and all of the folks in the UUA for your continued support of CUUPS, Inc. Many blessings to all of you. Here is to next year!

Submitted in Service,

Jerrie Hildebrand  
President, CUUPS, Inc.  
president@cuups.org

## **VP for Membership Report 2019 / Debra Gilbert**

### Membership 2018-2019 Annual Report

The main focus for Membership is connecting with CUUPs members and chapters. Membership worked to create and maintain relationships with CUUPs members including active members, potential members, lapsed members, chapter representatives and UU congregations.

The biggest transition for CUUPs in 2018-2019 was assuming the membership activities of the Executive Director. This change caused a slight delay in response to individuals requesting information changes, membership numbers and other membership information. Membership, along with the board is in the process of evaluating which membership processes work for us and which no longer serve us. A special note of thanks is given to the Treasurer who assumed many of the duties of the Executive Director in partnership with Membership.

Membership was in communication with CUUPs Board about membership or chapter issues and used a team approach for follow up. The most re-occurring inquiry was for the CUUPs membership number which is not auto-generated when PayPal is used for payment. Besides working with active members and chapters, Membership has been committed to reaching out to members who membership have lapsed to invite them to become an active CUUPs member. Membership created a newsletter that connected UU incarcerated members who identify with earth based spirituality, in collaboration with the Church of the Larger Fellowship, A committee was formed to create this newsletter on an ongoing basis but life circumstances caused committee members unable to fulfill this Membership commitment. Membership will be looking to replace committee members to fulfill this commitment.

Membership VP served on CUUPs executive committee and regularly attended meetings. In closing, I would like to personally thank all the members and chapter representatives that have worked with this committee and me. We are honored to be a part of your spiritual journey with CUUPs.

Blessings,  
Debra Gilbert

## **CUUPs Annual Report Ministerial Relations June 2019 / Om Prakash (Rev. Dr. John Gilmore)**

I began to formally serve on the CUUPs Board in September of 2017 in the Right Relations position. I have worked to inform various groups within the UU Movement, via, Facebook and email, about who we are as an institution, what activities we are engaged in, what resources we have, and how they can plug into our activities.

I attended monthly meetings as well as others focusing on specific tasks like GA Planning, GA Ritual Planning, and the Executive Committee meetings. I worked to help schedule some of our activities at the GA pertaining to planning and spent time at our booth in the Exhibition Center to help introduce more people to CUUPs and CUUPs programming. I have also been in contact with ministers, as necessary, who are at congregations that are interested in starting a CUUPs Chapter, offering any type of information they might need and in order for them to become more familiar with what a chapter would mean for the larger institution.

I am available to various groups like the UUSCM Lay Ministerial Chaplaincy Program offering any type of aid they may need in clarifying their roles and how CUUPs might be an aid to them. We are consistently working on broaden our associations to become more multicultural. In lieu of this I am still working in that direction by posting some of our activities on various social media platforms to inform people that we are available to aid in their spiritual search for truth and meaning.

Namaste,

Om Prakash Gilmore

## **CUUPS 2019 Treasurer's Report / Ron Zorn**

Treasurer's Report – Submitted by Ron Zorn

Balance in accounts as of June 30, 2019

PayPal - \$9309.52

Wells Fargo - \$6005.15

UUA - \$12,448.19                      Total funds on account – \$27,764.00

Fifth/Third Bank \$ 20. \*\* Awaiting transfer of Wells Fargo Funds

I took over the treasurer position at the beginning of 2019 and I am still working through that transition. We are moving the dues membership and donation transactions to Wild Apricot to eliminate most of the PayPal transactions and allow immediate transfer of monies. This will also save us a 20% upcharge to our costs using Wild Apricot.

We will be moving our funds from Wells Fargo to Fifth/Third Bank and can read more about this below. We have been looking for a company that held many of the same values as our CUUPS organization. This was not an easy task and we are happy with Fifth/Third as our selection of Banking Institution.

### **For fiscal year (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) our expenses are outlined below:**

Quarterly Executive Director fees for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters - \$ 544.74 (position dissolved in January 2019)

Social Media – David Pollard fees for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters \$ 600.00

General Assembly 2018 – Merchandise, Shipping, Board Attendee stipends - \$1688.47

General Assembly 2019 – Ritual Expenses, Board Attendee stipends \$2110.38

Ohio Non-Profit registration fees - \$25.00

Constant Contact fees - \$ 588.00

Web Hosting – Go Daddy \$ 20.17

Mailbox / office use - \$100.

Wild Apricot Fees for the year 2018/19 - \$972.00 renews in October

UUA Fair share donation for 2018/19 - \$552.00

### **Non-Membership income and donations:**

PayPal Annual Giving fund income \$12.00

Patheos Payment for content hits - \$111.66

Amazon Smile - \$ 44.36



\*\*Our Organization recently opened an Account at Fifth/Third Bank in order to transfer our currently held, Wells Fargo funds, into a more ethical financial institution. Fifth Third Bank has been recognized by the Ethisphere® Institute, a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices, as one of the 2019 World's Most Ethical Companies®. Scores are generated and weighted in five key categories: ethics and compliance program (35 percent), culture of ethics (20 percent), corporate citizenship and responsibility (20 percent), governance (15 percent) and leadership and reputation (10 percent). Fifth Third Bancorp is a diversified financial services company headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio and the indirect parent company of Fifth Third Bank, an Ohio-chartered bank. As of December 31, 2018, Fifth Third had \$146 billion in assets and operated 1,121 full-service Banking Centers and 2,419 ATMs with Fifth Third branding in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, Tennessee, West Virginia, Georgia and North Carolina.

## 2019 Secretary's Report / Pamela Backstrom

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve on the CUUPs Board of Trustees now for several years. We have a wonderful team who work really well together to move our organization forward to provide support to our chapters and membership in a great many ways.

My responsibilities are in the administrative realm. I create my magick with record keeping and minute taking during our meetings. Among my skill sets is parliamentary procedure which helps keep us on track and "legal"; although rare is the need for me to use that wand.

Over the 2018, I have tended to sending our condolences and congratulations to the members of the magickal community as their life events have become known to CUUPs.

I monitor the "[info@cuups.org](mailto:info@cuups.org)" email address. It is essential to our organization that contact through this is responded to quickly and forwarded to the appropriate individual. It is apparent by the increase in contact that CUUPS is becoming more widely recognized in the Pagan and Magickal worlds.

I help maintain the google doc archives of past CUUPs documents.

I worked with Ron Zorn by doing the initial leg work on our move to a new bank by taking time to go physically visit a bank in Ohio and learn what was required of CUUPs. I secured the new PO Box address in Ohio for CUUPs. (announcement coming soon!)

I would like to express my gratitude to a great Board team. I have had a few family issues the last couple months and the supportive qualities of this Board has made worries less. I greatly appreciated their understanding the last two months.

We are fortunate indeed to be lead by such a dedicated and caring team.

Bright Light and Blessings,

Pamela Backstrom

National Secretary

## **2019 Curriculum and Liturgy Report / Irene Glasse & Sarah Tso**

Irene Glasse and Sarah Tso convened meetings this year developing the Curriculum Team.

**Materials on Diversity & Cultural Appropriation:** Sarah Tso has been working on a mini-book on the nature of cultural appropriation and how to avoid it. The plan is to have the curriculum complete by Fall 2019.

**Path Brochure for Ministers:** This brochure will be a tool for ministers and church leadership to reference when speaking with earth/nature relating people about CUUPS. CUUPS is an open and diverse community and many ministers are only familiar with Wicca or Euro-centric traditions. The hope is that this will serve as a tool to welcome our family honoring the Earth as sacred to chapters and such. A draft of the entry for Heathenry, various traditions of Wicca, and traditions such as Hoodoo, African, Carribeann, Asian, Native, Deep Ecologists, Hedge Witch, Kitchen Witch, Reconstructionist Traditions, Second Wave Shamanism, Strega/Stregeria, and others known at this time will have brief descriptions of major celebrations, symbology, and rites. We hope to include Earth Centered Traditions that do not necessarily self-identify as Pagan

**“Voices of UU Pagans & Earth-Centered Spirituality” Companion Curriculum:** Many congregations are using this book in book studies to educate congregations on earth/nature relating traditions and thinking. This curriculum will be a guide for this created with the original authors involved.

**Fun Earth/Nature Relating Things to Do with Children:** This booklet will have fun things to share with children, DRE's, ministers, and chapters that share with children the opportunity to experience the earth as sacred. Still in brainstorming mode.

If you are interested in participating with this team please contact Irene Glasse at [curriculum@cuups.org](mailto:curriculum@cuups.org).

## **Volunteering with CUUPS**

We love all of our members and chapters and invite you to volunteer with us. Many hands make for lighter work they say. Contact Jerrie Hildebrand at [president@cuups.org](mailto:president@cuups.org) with ideas, and any interest you have in participating with us.

## **Many Thanks...**

CUUPS exists because of a vision brought forth in 1986 to support UU's who honored the Earth and celebrated it. Today we are a covenanting community of the UUA.

Our vision and mission statement say:

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) is an organization dedicated to networking Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists (UUs), educating people about Paganism, promoting interfaith dialogue, developing Pagan liturgies and theologies, and supporting Pagan-identified UU religious professionals.

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) was chartered by the Unitarian Universalist Association at the General Assembly in 1987 for purposes of enabling:

- networking among Pagan Identified UUs; providing outreach of Unitarian Universalism to the broader Pagan community continentally.
- providing educational materials on Paganism for Unitarian Universalist congregations and the general public.
- promoting Pagan - Jewish & Christian dialogue; encouraging the development of theo/alological and liturgical materials based on earth and nature centered religious and spiritual perspectives.
- encouraging greater use of music, dance, visual arts, poetry, story, and creative ritual in Unitarian Universalist worship and celebration.
- providing support for Pagan-identified UU religious professionals and ministerial students; and fostering healing relationships with our mother, the Earth and all her children.

Thank you members, supporters, ministers, board chairs, governing bodies in churches, and all who support CUUPS. We so appreciate you and honor you.

Here is to next year!