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## Minutes of the Triennial Delegate Assembly of The Urantia Book Fellowship

July 9-10, 1997

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The 1997 Triennial Delegate Assembly (TDA) of The Fellowship for Readers of *The Urantia Book* was held on Wednesday, July 9, and Thursday, July 10, 1997 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 P.M. pursuant to a call issued October, 1996.

The President, Stephen Dreier, presided and the Secretary, David Elders, recorded the minutes of the meeting.

After welcoming remarks and thanks to all attendees, the Chairman introduced David Elders who gave the opening address to the Assembly and attending visitors.

After a brief explanation of the process of the TDA for the benefit of Delegates, Alternates, and visitors, Chairman Dreier called for the report of the Credentials Committee, which was presented by its chairman, Marilyn Kulieke, recommending the seating of the following Delegates and Alternates:

The First Sociey	Carolyn Kendall	John W. Hales
First Society of Los Angeles	Lucile Faw	Pierre Chicoine
Society of Glenview	None	None
First Society of Oklahoma	Harry McMullan	Waldine Stump
Orvonton Society of Chicago	Scott Forsythe	Virginia K. Yarbrough
Fort Wayne Society	Meredith Sprunger	Irene Sprunger
Evergreen Society of Washington	William Lloyd	Elaine Monesmith

First Society of Houston	Adrienne Jarnagin	Carol Weatherford	
Golden Gate Circle for Students of <i>The Urantia Book</i> Pando		Larry Watkins	Jerry
Connecticut Fellowship for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i> Anne Lugin		David Elders	Dale
Dallas Society	Timothy Spurgers*	Tommie Clendening	
Rocky Mountain Spiritual Fellowship	Chuck Thurston	Phil Geiger	
Northern Light Society Of Alaska	None	None	
Pilot Light Society Of Seattle	Marvin Gawryn	Anthony Finstad	
Heart of America Society	Don Heinerikson	Robert Bruyn	
Society of New York for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i> Laurence		Barry Clark	Eileen
Ontario Fellowship for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i> McDougal*		Sue Tennant*	Scott
Grand Canyon Society for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i> Peggy Johnson		Lawrence Bowman	
First Wisconsin Society for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i>		Robert Arkens	None

\* Absent and not seated.

Marilynn Kulieke reported that due to the absence of the Delegate from the Dallas Society, Timothy Spurgers, the Alternate Delegate, Tommie Clendening, was seated as the Delegate. She also noted that inasmuch as no Delegates or Alternate Delegates from the following societies were in attendance they will not be represented at this TDA: Northern Light Society of Alaska, Ontario Fellowship for Readers of *The Urantia Book*, and Society of Glenview.

The Chairman declared the attending Delegates and Alternates from 16 societies, pursuant to the report of Marilyn Kulieke, seated.

Steve Dreier noted that this TDA will be required to elect 15 Councilors, 12 with nine-year terms, two with six-year terms, and one with a three-year term.

The second order of business for the TDA is the development of resolutions to present to the General Council for consideration and action.

Steve Dreier pointed out that the Constitution requires that the President appoint a committee on elections and a committee on resolutions. He then laid out the general process to be followed and the issues that needed to be discussed. He noted that with a reasonably small group, it might be advisable to operate as a committee of the whole, which would necessitate the conducting of business sequentially. Steve then appointed Harry McMullan to serve as temporary chair of the TDA until the election of a permanent chair(s).

The President then stated that the first order of business would be for the Delegates to elect a permanent chair(s) for the two sections of the process. Some of the issues the Delegates would need to address includes the level of participation of the Alternates: Would they be permitted to attend? Would they be permitted to speak? Would they be permitted to vote? He noted that for all matters not required by the constitution the group would need to operate under *Robert's Rules of Order*. The group would also need to determine if they would conduct business in closed or open session. Once the election process was complete, the committee chair would contact Steve Dreier so that the formal meeting would be reconvened to report the results and formalize the vote for General Councilors. Then the meeting would again recess to take up the matter of resolutions.

The meeting was recessed at 9:15 P.M. to conduct its business in closed session unless otherwise decided by the Assembly. All visitors left at that time.

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Harry McMullan, as temporary chair, called the meeting to order.

Lucile Faw moved that the Alternates be included in the meeting, with voice but no vote. It was passed unanimously.

It was agreed that we would elect the chair for elections now and the chair for resolutions prior to that process. It was passed 15 for and 1 against.

Scott Forsythe was nominated for chair of the election process. There being no other nominees, he was formally elected as chair for the election portion of the meeting.

Adrienne Jarnagin moved and Carolyn Kendall seconded that the election process be conducted in closed session. It was passed unanimously.

It was moved that David Elders act as secretary. It passed with no objections.

It was moved, seconded, and carried that any Delegates or Alternates who are being considered for election would leave the room during the discussion of their candidacy.

It was moved, seconded, and carried that we would vote for the nine-year terms first, then the longest remaining terms second until all positions are filled.

It was agreed unanimously that all discussions be held in strictest confidence.

Harry McMullan was elected as vice-chairman of the election process.

The meeting was recessed at 10:30 P.M. to reconvene at 9:00 A.M. the next morning, July 10, 1997.

Scott Forsythe, acting as chair, called the meeting back to order at 9:10 A.M. on Thursday, July 10, 1997. Meredith Sprunger began the session with a prayer of thanks to our Heavenly Father with a request that we each seek to do his will in the process of our deliberations.

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The Triennial Delegate Assembly reconvened in formal session at 3:20 P.M., Thursday, July 10, 1997.

Mr. Dreier called the meeting to order and requested a report of the Nominations Committee. The report was made indicating that it was the wish of the Delegates to elect, by resolution, the 15 candidates nominated in closed session.

A **motion** was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to place the following names in nomination and to elect them for the following terms on the General Council:

9-Year Term (12)      6-Year Term (2)      3-Year Term (1)

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Matthew Block      Avi Dogim      Christel Garrick

Robert Bruyn      Brian Smith

Robert Burns

Gary Deinstadt

Stephen Dreier

Earlene Green

Gard Jameson

Michelle Klimesh

Harry McMullan

Dolores Nice

Charles Olivea

Stephanie Shaefer

Stephen Dreier declared that the nominees are elected and indicated that those candidates will be contacted as soon as possible. It was also requested that the Secretary send a letter to each of the non-elected candidates thanking them for their willingness to be considered for service on the General Council.

Lucile Faw moved, seconded by Marvin Gawryn, that the work of the resolutions committee be conducted in closed session. The motion was passed 14 in favor, with 1 against and 1 abstention.

It was the decision of the Assembly that Scott Forsythe serve as chairman of the committee on Nominations with Harry McMullan serving as vice-chairman.

The meeting was recessed at 3:30 P.M.

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A procedure to streamline the process of considering resolutions was put forward by Harry McMullan and seconded. Because this procedure does limit the debate on the resolutions, it was noted that it would take the approval of two-thirds of the 16 Delegates,

or at least 11 votes. The motion passed unanimously.

The resolutions to be considered by the committee were numbered as follows:

1. Regional Teacher Training ProgramCFirst Society
2. Study Group ConsultantsCFirst Society
3. Refocus Fellowship ActivitiesCFirst Society
4. Request that Societies be Informed and ConsultedCFirst Society
5. Public Information ProgramCFirst Society
6. Fellowship OrganizationCFirst Society
7. Unity Among ReadersCFirst Society
8. Teamwork and Conflict ResolutionCFirst Society
9. Fellowship Support of Urantian Religious Belief and PracticeCRocky Mountain
10. Creation of a Committee on Revelatory ReligionCRocky Mountain
11. Separation of Powers: Walking the Fifth Epochal TalkCRocky Mountain
12. Changing TDA Delegate CredentialsCRocky Mountain
13. *Spiritual Fellowship Journal* ResolutionCFort Wayne
14. Fragmentation ResolutionCGreater New York
15. Competitive Selection of Conference PresentersCRocky Mountain
16. Direct Society Representation ResolutionCGolden Gate Society
17. Society Representation and the TDA ProcessCDan Massey
18. Improving the Nominations ProcessCEvergreen Society

## 19. Financial Support for TDA Delegates and General Councilors CDallas Society

Each resolution was taken in order in the context of our agreed-upon process.

### **Resolution 1: Regional Teacher Training Program**

WHEREAS at the time of the publication of *The Urantia Book* it was advised by the revelators that an early publication of the book has been provided so that it may be in hand for the training of leaders and teachers, and,

WHEREAS the Constitution of the Fellowship charges the Education Committee to find, prepare, and qualify teachers of *The Urantia Book* who shall be persons of high moral character, devoted to the teachings and principles of *The Urantia Book*; [and who] shall seek to interest such suitable persons in preparing themselves to teach the truths of *The Urantia Book*. By and with the approval and consent of the Executive Committee, [the Executive Committee] shall establish and implement standards of character, conduct, and education for such teachers. (Section 11.14)

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Fellowship will oversee the development of an educational program for all persons who wish to prepare themselves to become certified teachers of *The Urantia Book*. Such a program would be ongoing, regional, and not limited by the ability of students to travel great distances to attend classes. Such a school will be decentralized, and could utilize computer and/or mail for correspondence courses. The responsibility for conducting an educational program in a region could rest with the local society or any other group of students organized especially for educational and teacher training purposes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the teacher training curriculum shall consist of, but not be limited to: the basic concepts of *The Urantia Book*; the unique concepts of *The Urantia Book*; ideas that set it apart from other religious teachings; the subtle teachings of *The Urantia Book*; the little-recognized, small ideas that enchant and reward the true scholar; the human sources of the revelation -- the winnowed wisdom of the modern age; and the study of comparative religions, including the Bible. Any such Fellowship school shall avoid the making of official interpretations of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

**Disposition: This resolution was placed before the assembly, seconded, discussed and was defeated by a vote of 2 in favor, 9 against, and 4 abstentions.**

### **Resolution 2: Study Group Consultants**

WHEREAS at the time of publication it was advised by the revelators that the book is being given to those who are ready for it long before the day of its world-wide mission. Thousands of study groups must be brought into existence;

WHEREAS it is the view of many long-time students of *The Urantia Book* that study groups are not thriving. The Study Group Directory, while an excellent tool, is merely a list of study groups, and a more personal touch is necessary to revitalize the study of the book;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the function of the Area Coordinators be more fully focused on the support and nurture of study groups.

**Disposition: The motion passed unanimously.**

### **Resolution 3: Refocus Fellowship Activities**

WHEREAS the Brotherhood/Fellowship's mission is to be the representative and open organization for the purpose of creating quality study groups and education of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, to encourage the creation of study groups, and to support the efforts of local groups, especially societies, in achieving such goals of study locally; and

WHEREAS URANTIA Foundation, whose mission includes publishing and translations, has done much better of late in enacting its mission; and

WHEREAS the resources of the movement, including both monetary and human, are limited;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Fellowship refocus its activities away from publishing and translating *The Urantia Book* and instead begin doing its real job of supporting study groups, societies, and quality study of the book.

**Disposition: This resolution was defeated by a vote of 3 in favor, 11 against, and 1 abstention.**

### **Resolution 4: Request that Societies be Informed and Consulted**

WHEREAS Societies are intended by the Constitution of The Fellowship to be the

component parts of The Fellowship, and

WHEREAS Societies are channels through which Fellowship members hold their membership, and

WHEREAS Societies are the most effective agents for development of local study and fellowship in the movement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Council and Executive Committee formally and promptly apprise the Societies of their actions and decisions, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Council and Executive Committee consider the impact on Societies of all actions which they are contemplating.

**Disposition: The resolution was approved by a vote of 12 in favor, 1 against, 2 abstentions.**

**Resolution 5: Public Information Program**

WHEREAS public awareness of *The Urantia Book* is rapidly increasing, especially on the Internet,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the General Council develop and implement a comprehensive public information program to support Fellowship purposes and activities, and to assist Fellowship members in dealing with mass media situations as they may arise. The purpose of the program would not be to encourage sudden increased attention in mass media, but simply to deal effectively with evolutionary developments that are taking place.

Such a program would seek input and involvement from individual members, societies, interested readers, the Central Office, and Department Committees. The program could include:

"Review existing public information policies, procedures, and tools.

"Evaluate needs for expanding and upgrading public information services, developing new services as necessary and feasible.

"Publish and distribute public information guidelines for members and interested readers, including a list of available tools and resources. Provide training.

"Monitor public communication about *The Urantia Book*, societies, members, associates, and readers on the Internet and in the print and broadcast media worldwide.

"Develop a plan for dealing with mass media situations that could develop.

**Disposition: This motion was passed with 13 in favor, with 1 abstention.**

### **Resolution 6: Fellowship Organization**

WHEREAS proposed changes in our organizational structure have increased in recent years,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we continue as a membership organization.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any proposed changes to the fundamental elements of our organization be carefully and thoroughly studied if they are proposed. Benefits of membership versus other methods of association would be fairly and objectively compared and contrasted, and input of all members solicited regarding proposed changes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the local society structure be maintained and that any proposed changes to that element of our organizational structure be submitted to the same rigorous standards described above.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the departmental committee structure be maintained and that any proposed changes be subject to the above standards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the central office of the organization be properly maintained and supported.

**Disposition: The Delegate from First Society withdrew this motion after discussion.**

### **Resolution 7: Unity Among Readers**

WHEREAS the Urantia movement is undergoing unprecedented change, opportunity, and potential for progress,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the General Council immediately develop and implement a plan to foster and promote unity among all readers. Activities would be

designed to strengthen our spiritual focus and priorities in all aspects of organizational functioning, especially emphasizing the purposes of fellowship and fraternal association for which the Fellowship was created.

This plan for promoting unity would be developed by thoroughly soliciting, considering, and integrating the input and feedback of all societies and would include a direct survey of each and every individual member of the Fellowship. Other groups, such as associations, study groups, and interested readers may also be involved in this effort, but the emphasis would be on our constituent membership.

The surveys could be conducted in writing, but telephone and face-to-face interaction would be included as much as possible, with an emphasis on using and following up on survey data.

**Disposition: This resolution was amended with the acceptance of the proposer and seconder to drop the last two paragraphs keeping only the first two. The resolution was defeated by a vote of 5 in favor, 8 against, and 1 abstention.**

### **Resolution 8: Teamwork and Conflict Resolution**

WHEREAS the growing complexity and heterogeneity of the Fellowship expands our viewpoints and activities, creating the need for efficient and effective teamwork and resolution of internal issues that may arise.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the General Council promote teamwork and constructive conflict resolution. Activities could include:

Guidelines for committees and working groups promoting state-of-the-art teamwork policies, procedures, and practices. Principles of the Urantia teachings could also be applied, as well as relevant features of the Fellowship Constitution, by-laws, and *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Training for all leaders and members.

Develop a program by which members and associates could raise concerns and issues confidentially, if necessary. This program would model employee concerns programs in business and industry, which allow individuals to bring issues to the attention of a qualified group of independent parties who may investigate, mediate, and facilitate resolution of conflicts and problems. Such a program could also be used by individuals or

groups who would like help in resolving issues among themselves.

**Disposition: This resolution was defeated by a vote of 6 in favor, 8 against, and 1 abstention.**

**Resolution 9: Support of Urantian Religious Belief and Practice  
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Support of Urantian Religious Belief and Practice**

WHEREAS The Fellowship includes within its constitutionally stated purposes  
AYfostering a religionY@;

WHEREAS many current members of The Fellowship hold religious beliefs that are born from teachings that are revealed in *The Urantia Book*, and are engaging in group worship and group religious identification based on these beliefs,

WHEREAS many current members of The Fellowship are realizing the crucial importance of establishing a Urantia religious identity that is recognized by the world at large,

WHEREAS the emerging revelatory religion born from the teachings presented in *The Urantia Book* needs appropriate, unencumbered name identification and symbolism,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that The Fellowship for Readers of *The Urantia Book* hereby intends to support the emergence of clearly defined Urantia religious groups. Through this resolution we wish to give our blessings to all members of The Fellowship who so desire to openly distinguish themselves as religionists and *Urantia Book* believers, with a mission to live, teach, and honor the high spiritual teachings and concepts within *The Urantia Book*.

**Disposition: This resolution approved by a vote of 11 for, 2 against, and 2 abstentions.**

**Resolution 10: Creation of a Committee on Revelatory Religion  
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Creation of a Committee on Revelatory Religion**

WHEREAS the emergence of revelatory religion is an inevitable consequence of the prolonged presentation of revelation;

WHEREAS the Fellowship is organized as a social organization that includes a spiritual purpose;

WHEREAS there has lately occurred a strong desire for more religious fellowship among

readers of *The Urantia Book*, evidenced by the creation of unique *Urantia Book*-inspired Achurches@ (at least two to date);

WHEREAS there is no standing committee for religious matters in the Executive Committee;

BE IT RESOLVED THEREFORE that the General Council create a new standing committee, The Committee on Revelatory Religion, for the following purposes:

To strengthen the Fellowship=s ability to foster a revelatory religion, as per Article II of the Fellowship Constitution -- APurpose: ...to increase and enhance the comfort, happiness, and well-being of Man, as an individual and as a member of society, by fostering a religion...@;

To assist Societies who wish to form their own religious organizations;

In conjunction with items 1 and 2, in whatever ways are appropriate, encourage and facilitate the application of *The Urantia Book*=s guidance regarding group religion. For example, from Paper 99, AThe Social Aspects of Religion,@ (99:6:2):

AThere is a real purpose in the socialization of religion. It is the purpose of group religious activities...

To dramatize the loyalties of religion

To magnify the lures of truth, beauty, and goodness

To foster the attractions of supreme values

To enhance the service of unselfish fellowship

To glorify the potentials of family life

To promote religious education

To promote neighborhood welfare

To provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance

To encourage group worship

To encourage human friendship

To conserve morality

To facilitate the spread of the gospel. @

**Disposition: This resolution was defeated by a vote of 6 for, 8 against, and 1 abstention.**

### **Resolution 11: Separation of Powers**

WHEREAS *The Urantia Book* states that Athe only sacred feature of any human government is the division of statehood into the three domains of executive, legislative, and judicial functions @;

WHEREAS *The Urantia Book* states that AThe great struggle in the evolution of government has concerned the concentration of power @; that AThe universe administrators have learned from experience that the evolutionary peoples on the inhabited worlds are best regulated by the representative type of civil government when there is maintained proper balance of power between the well-co-ordinated executive, legislative, and judicial branches @;

WHEREAS the Fellowship as presently constituted has no such separation of power and as evidenced by the fact that nearly 1/3 of the 1997 TDA delegates are current members of the General Council, and that xx of these occupy seats that are currently subject to re-election;

WHEREAS pursuant to Section 14.1 it requires only five members of the Executive Committee to have effective veto power over any changes to the Constitution;

WHEREAS legislative, judicial and executive functions are all vested in various degrees in the Executive Committee;

BE IT RESOLVED, therefore, that the Fellowship make changes in its Constitution to provide for an organizational structure that is more clearly patterned after the principle of separation of powers, as articulated in *The Urantia Book*.

**Disposition: This resolution was not seconded.**

## **Resolution 12: Changing TDA Delegate Credentials**

WHEREAS a cardinal role of the TDA is to provide an opportunity for members of the Fellowship not currently serving as General Councilors to actively participate in the governing of the Fellowship;

WHEREAS such participation by non-Councilors can provide a greater diversity of viewpoint to the General Council and the Executive Committee;

WHEREAS approximately one-third of the 1997 TDA delegates are also current members of the General Council;

BE IT RESOLVED, therefore, that the qualification criteria for TDA delegates be changed to disallow currently-seated General Councilors.

**Disposition: This resolution was not seconded.**

## **Resolution 13: *The Spiritual Fellowship Journal***

We recognize that members of The Fellowship have a wide range of attitudes toward religion and we rejoice in this diversity.

We therefore petition the General Council to assume the publication of *The Spiritual Fellowship Journal* which will initiate a platform for discussion of the theological, philosophical, and polity positions of religious groups germane to the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

**Disposition: This resolution was approved unanimously.**

## **Resolution 14: Fragmentation of *The Urantia Book***

BE IT RESOLVED that any publication of *The Urantia Book* sponsored by The

Fellowship, either in English or any other language, be done in its entirety.

**Disposition: This resolution was tabled by a vote of 12 in favor, 2 against, 1**

**abstention.**

**Resolution 15: Competitive Selection of Conference Presenters**  
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WHEREAS conferences constitute one of the most important services that The Fellowship provides;

WHEREAS the readership is best served by dynamic conference presentations that represent the best of a broad range of interests and viewpoints;

WHEREAS broad-based participation in conference content will heighten the interest and anticipation for upcoming conferences;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that at least some portion of major conference presenters be selected by a competitive jury process, wherein proposed material is submitted anonymously to a selection committee that chooses presenters based on the relevance, originality, and overall quality of the proposed presentation.

**Disposition: This resolution was not seconded.**

**Resolution 16: Direct Society Representation**  
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Representation**

The Golden Gate Society requests that the General Council reconsider the 1994 Judicial Committee Proposal addressing the issue of direct society representation.

**Disposition: This resolution was defeated with 5 in favor, 10 against, and 1 abstention.**

**Resolution 17: Society Representation and the TDA Process**

I move that at the completion of the business of the moment, the 1997 Triennial Delegate Assembly of The Fellowship shall not adjourned *sine die* but shall recess to reconvene at a time and place to be announced, which shall be the same place as the 1998 annual meeting of the General Council and at a time 48 hours prior to the convening of said General Council meeting, or such other time as may be agreed in writing by a majority of the seated delegates. In support of this, the Committee on Resolutions of the 1997 Triennial Delegate Assembly, at the completion of the business of the moment, shall not adjourn, but shall recess to reconvene at the same time and place of the reconvening of the 1997 TDA.

**Disposition: This resolution defeated by a vote of 6 for, 8 against, with 1 abstention.**

**Resolution 18: Nominations Process Improvements**

WHEREAS not all candidates for General Council are well-known by all delegates; and

WHEREAS the existing application form leaves room for adequate information but does not require it, leading to some candidates inadequately describing their qualifications; and

WHEREAS some candidates are more apt to Atoot their own horn@ than others;

BE IT RESOLVED that the questionnaire form be revised to include such state-of-the-art sources such as the Internet, etc., as a method of obtaining more information including the candidate=s vision for the future of the movement.

**Disposition: This resolution defeated by a vote of 6 for, 9 against, with no abstentions.**

**Resolution 19: Financial Support for TDA Delegates and General Councilors**

BE IT RESOLVED that the General Council develop a mechanism to fund, where needed, the travel expenses of those persons who agree to service on the TDA or as General Councilors.

**Disposition: This resolution was defeated by a vote of 2 for, 13 against, no abstentions.**

\* \* \* \* \*

Steve Dreier called the meeting back to order at 10:15 P.M.

It was moved, seconded and carried to forward to the General Council for consideration resolutions 2,4,5,9,13 as detailed herein.

There was no old business and no new business.

Steve Dreier thanked the Delegates and Alternate Delegates for their service in the 1997 Triennial Delegate Assembly.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

David N. Elders

Acting as Secretary