

The Urantia Book Fellowship

Triennial Delegate Assembly (TDA) Meeting Minutes July 16-17, 2003

Wednesday July 16, 2003

Opening remarks were provided by Avi Dogim, President of *The Urantia Book Fellowship*.

Bob Bruyn presented the report from the Credentials Committee. Society representatives were certified if The Fellowship Secretary had received written notice from the Society President of his/her election and written verification from the representative of having read *The Urantia Book* in its entirety.

The following Delegates and Alternate Delegates were seated by the TDA:

<u>Delegate</u>	<u>Alternate</u>	<u>Society</u>
Barbara Newsom	John Hales	001 - The First Society
Richard Omura		002 - <i>The Urantia Book</i> Los Angeles Society
Paul Snider		003 - Society of Glenview
Beth Challis	Tom Allen	004 - First Society of Oklahoma
Bud Bromley		008 - The Fort Wayne <i>Urantia Book</i> Society
David Holt	Ms Lee Loots	012 - Golden Gate Circle for Students of <i>The Urantia Book</i>
Linda Huff		013 - Connecticut Fellowship for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i>
	David Glass	014 - <i>The Urantia Book</i> Society of North Texas
Lenny Cowles	Jack Kane	015 - Rocky Mountain Spiritual Fellowship
Ken Raveill	Susan Cook	019 - Heart of America Society
Dale Szejnberg	Robert Buselli	020 - <i>The Urantia Book</i> Society of Greater New York
Larry Bowman		023 - Grand Canyon Society for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i>
Robert Arkens		024 - First Wisconsin Society for Readers of <i>The Urantia Book</i>

The assembly was given a brief overview by Bob Bruyn of the tasks given to each TDA and procedural guidelines that have been passed down from previous TDAs.

Bob Arkens volunteered to serve as temporary chairperson for election of a permanent chair. Dale Szejnberg moved to appoint Bob Arkens as permanent chairperson. The motion was seconded by Paul Snider and carried by acclamation. Ken Raveill moved to accept Dave Holt's offer to serve as secretary. Motion carried by acclamation.

Ken Raveill moved that the alternate delegates be allowed to stay and speak during the selection of General Councilors but not to vote. Bud Bromley seconded the motion and it was carried by acclamation.

Paul Snider moved to accept Linda Huff as the delegate from the Connecticut Society even though her credentials had not been received in advance. He stated that his motion was to be considered as non-precedent setting. The TDA accepted her statement that she had read *The Urantia Book* in its entirety and she was seated by acclamation.

Dale Szejnberg proposed that the portion of the meeting devoted to the nomination and election of General Councilors be closed to all but Delegates and Alternates. After discussion pro and con, and a recommendation from John Hales that it be a closed session, Beth Challis seconded the motion and the motion passed.

A short break was called to send out for copies of the applications of candidates for the General Council (GC).

Dale Szejnberg made the motion that candidates who were also in the TDA be asked to leave the room when their applications were discussed. Lenny Cowles seconded and the motion passed. Paul Snider initiated discussion about whether General Council candidates could make a personal statement; Jack Kane pointed out that such a statement was in the application. Dale moved that candidates who had no written application be allowed to make such a statement before they leave the room, but those whose application was in our possession could not. Larry Bowman seconded and the motion passed.

As a practical answer to the lack of copies of candidate's applications (still waiting to find a photocopying facility that was open), Paul Snider moved to reverse normal agenda procedure and go into the resolution portion of the TDA now. Ken Raveill seconded. The motion carried.

Dale Szejnberg moved that we open the meeting on resolutions to observers who were not TDA Delegates and Alternates, but that no commentary would be allowed from non-Delegates and Alternates unless questions were posed to the observers. Susan Cook seconded. The motion carried.

Dale Szejnberg moved that discussion on the resolutions be limited in accordance with the spirit of the debate guidelines in the TDA Delegate's Guidelines #20 and to rely on the Chairman to end debate as appropriate. Ken Raveill seconded. The motion passed.

A consideration of the Society of Greater New York's Resolution #1 regarding easier access to the materials on the Fellowship website was begun. The resolution said, "*WHEREAS the 2003 annual report of The Membership Committee of The Urantia Book Fellowship states belief that societies and individual members should have easy access to all administrative forms and materials and also states the intention to assist in making increasing amounts of information and materials readily available on The Fellowship's Website; and WHEREAS the TDA agrees that all members should have ready access to administration materials and forms, including minutes of past TDA and General Council meetings and Annual Reports of the President and Committees of the Fellowship; Be it RESOLVED that The Fellowship will support and facilitate the timely availability of user friendly access to the following information on the Fellowship web site for members:*

*** List of current councilors and their terms*

*** Contact information of councilors (as provided by individual councilors - may be e-mail or c/o Fellowship e-mail or snail mail address for privacy, if desired)*

*** List of current Executive Committee members and their terms*

*** List of current Society Officers and their terms*

*** TDA information (as listed presently on the urantiabook.org/admin web site)*

*** Organizational forms (as listed presently on the urantiabook.org/admin web site)*

*** Minutes and reports (as listed presently on the urantiabook.org/admin web site)*

There was some discussion regarding the question of whether the resolution was needed. A motion to accept the following friendly amendment to the resolution was made, "*WHEREAS ongoing improvements to the Fellowship website have been noted and appreciated;*" and with that addition, the resolution passed unanimously.

The TDA then took up consideration of the Rocky Mountain Society's Resolution #1 that Fellowship Societies be able to purchase *Urantia Books* at wholesale or distributor prices. The resolution said, "*Whereas Urantia Book Fellowship Societies are the central outreach arms of the Fellowship, and; Whereas the Urantia Book and its dissemination is the central focus of the Fellowship, and; Whereas Societies are in a regional position to donate Urantia Books to libraries, prisons, old age homes, schools, churches, synagogues, mosques, temples or to give them to potential new readers or to use in fund raisers or various other uses; Be it resolved that Societies belonging to the Urantia Book Fellowship are permitted to buy Urantia books printed by Uversa Press at a price equal to the lowest wholesale or distributor price offered to any customer that Uversa Press sells to. In receiving this discount, Societies will agree not to sell these Urantia books in any store or trade outlet that is presently or potentially a customer, excluding individuals, of Uversa Press.*"

Avi Dogim, Fellowship President, in answer to a question from the TDA, stated that a mechanism was already in place for books to be purchased by the case at a discounted price. Other objections raised to the resolution were: that it would undercut sales and that a picture

of Jesus being on a book donated to a mosque was inappropriate etc. A vote to call the question was passed. The resolution was defeated.

Recess was called at 10:20 PM. Meeting to resume the next day, Thursday July 17, 2003.

Thursday July 17, 2003, 8:45 AM

Discussion began about a resolution from the 2000 TDA by Ken Keyser of First Society which seeks a recommitment of interest in the establishment of a group of society representatives to investigate the financial management, specifically the sale of the Fellowship's Wrightwood Ave. building. Barbara Newsom motioned that the financial working group continue to report and review The Fellowship's financial activity over the coming year. Motion was seconded by Linda Huff. Discussion centered on the advisability of an unprofessional audit. (Yearly audits by a Wells Fargo firm are done to maintain The Fellowship's non-profit status). Ken Raveill serves on the fund-raising committee and thought effort should focus on securing a professional fundraiser especially due to time constraints of the committee members. Dave Holt moved to close debate; Bud Bromley seconded. The motion failed to pass (one abstention).

The TDA then took up Rocky Mountain Society's Resolution #2 regarding a consideration of establishing added benefits to membership in the Fellowship as an added incentive to belonging and supporting *The Urantia Book Fellowship*. The resolution said, "*Whereas, membership in The Urantia Book Fellowship is important to the continued growth and success of the Fellowship, and; Whereas, there does not presently exist any real difference between being a member or not, excepting for governance issues; Be it resolved that some added benefit be given to Fellowship members only, as an added incentive for belonging to and supporting The Urantia Book Fellowship. Such benefits might include: Conference discounts, Members' receptions and/or lounges at conferences, Members' only publications. Priority status in consideration for project funding, Uversa Book discounts, Members only webpage, Members only Health Insurance, Members only low interest rate credit card with commissions going to the Fellowship, Members' old age retirement home or community, These benefits could also be given to long time donors and supporters who don't happen to be members.*"

Paul Snider opposed any plan that created an in-group and an out-group. Bob Buselli was concerned that conference discounts would cut into the funds needed to maintain Fellowship conferences. He put the question to John Hales whether conferences had made money. John answered that over the last 20 years they had lost money but that we were getting better at breaking even. Dave Holt proposed a friendly amendment that instead of saying, "*Be it resolved that some added benefit be given...*" the resolution should read, "*that some consideration be given to the ideas regarding some added benefit, etc.*" However, the amendment died. When the vote was called, the resolution was defeated.

The 4th Resolution to be considered was from Golden Gate Circle Society initiative to continue the development of proposals for rewriting relevant portions of The Fellowship Constitution so that it become more representative of the world-wide membership of the

organization. The resolution said, *“WHEREAS we are taught in The Urantia Book that all human institutions evolve and none are sacrosanct, AND WHEREAS over the last fifty years, both the world and the Urantia Movement have undergone considerable evolution, experiencing rapid change, AND WHEREAS there has been no substantive update or reform in the Brotherhood/Fellowship constitution within the five decades of its life, though The Fellowship made a significant effort to foster direct representation initiatives more recently, AND WHEREAS a full accounting of General Council/Executive Committee actions on the matter was requested by the 1997 TDA, to preserve the spirit and intent of the TDA resolution process, and to provide a basis of understanding for future action on this issue, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Judicial Committee of The Urantia Book Fellowship be tasked with development and dissemination of proposals and plans for re-writing relevant portions of The Fellowship Constitution, to become more representative of and responsive to the planetary membership of the organization, so that such a constitutional change might be debated and eventually ratified. We need, at this time, a new vision for a re-engineered and relevant structure that is reflective of the principles of governance and administration included in the revelation of the Urantia Book, especially as it pertains to direct Society representation in the political process of the Fellowship. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the move toward greater representation begin with the appointment of a Standing Committee for Constitutional Reform which will specifically solicit input from other bona fide Urantia Book organizations that will contribute to the articulation of this vision.”*

Because the resolution proposed the involvement of both the Judicial Committee and appointing a new standing committee, Larry Bowman suggested it be divided into two resolutions. Bob Buselli objected to the formation of another committee. Paul Snider said the Judicial Committee was not the place where a rewrite should originate from. He believed the present Constitution “works beautifully” and it would accommodate future growth of membership. Linda Huff moved that the last paragraph be deleted. The vote to consider the truncated version passed with 4 abstentions. On the first vote called on the resolution there was not a clear majority; Chairman Bob Arkens was called upon to add his vote and he added the 7th vote to defeat the resolution. (It was pointed out that the Chairman should always be voting in addition to chairing the meeting.)

Richard Omura proposed a resolution from the floor that a web site advisory committee be formed to maintain *The Urantia Book* Fellowship’s web site, but the resolution died for lack of a second.

Barbara Newsom proposed a resolution from First Society: *“Whereas cooperation among readers is desirable to promote study and dissemination of the teachings of The Urantia Book worldwide; and Whereas, intra- and inter-organizational conflict continues to create dissatisfaction among readers and impede progress, Be it therefore resolved that the General Council review Fellowship programs and continue to take actions to reduce conflict and increase cooperation among The Fellowship, Urantia Foundation, and the International Urantia Association.”* Resolution was seconded by Paul Snider who also added a friendly amendment at the end *“and to do this with all deliberate speed.”* Although during discussion there was some disagreement that the resolution was needed or desirable, the resolution passed when vote was called with 6 for, 2 against, and 4 abstentions.

Ken Raveill proposed a resolution from the floor: *“Be it resolved that the International Fellowship Committee maintain a list of U.S. and international study groups who desire to have a relationship so that we can get better acquainted, form friendships with readers, and foster a sisterhood relationship among international study groups.”* The idea was received favorably and with much group help on the language, the resolution was written, and it was passed unanimously when the vote was called.

Richard Omura proposed a revamped version of his resolution about The Fellowship web site which had died on the first attempt. He suggested that a preamble regarding David Kantor’s longtime service to the site be added. With help from Ken Raveill and observer Steve Drier on the wording, the resolution was drafted: *“Whereas we recognize David Kantor’s contribution to and creation of The Urantia Book Fellowship web site; and Whereas a quantum leap has occurred in the record-keeping and data input demands of the web site; Be it resolved that a Web Site Advisory Committee be formed to advice on the management and maintenance of The Urantia Book Fellowship web site.”* When the vote was finally called, the resolution passed unanimously.

The TDA broke for lunch at a little before 12 noon

The TDA resumed at 12:45.

The candidates for 12 openings on the General Council (all 9 year terms) and 2 vacancies that needed to be filled (3 year terms) were listed on the white board provided by Education Committee Chair, Lee Smith. The candidates were listed in alphabetical order as follows:

1. Sara Blackstock (Golden Gate Circle, Benicia, CA),
2. Michael Challis (First Society of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, OK)
3. Susan Cook (Heart of America, Smithville, MO)
4. Lenny Cowles (Rocky Mountain, Nederland, CO)
5. Avi Dogim (Greater New York, Cliffside Park, NJ)
6. Lila Dogim (Greater New York, Cliffside Park, NJ)
7. John Hay (Rocky Mountain, Boulder, CO)
8. Jack Kane (Rocky Mountain, Lakewood, CO)
9. Rebecca Kantor (Golden Gate Circle, Sebastopol, CA)
10. Barbara Newsom (First Society, Chicago, IL)
11. Richard Omura (Los Angeles Society, Los Angeles, CA)
12. Thomas Orjala (Member-At-Large, Coeur d’Alene, ID)
13. David Owen (First Society, Chicago, IL)
14. Ken Raveill (Heart of America, Independence, MO)
15. Bill Rocap (Connecticut Fellowship, Southington, CT)
16. Maddie Strauss (Los Angeles Society, Los Angeles, CA)
17. Paula Thompson (Rocky Mountain, Boulder, CO)
18. Joanne Wiedman (Rocky Mountain, Golden, CO)

The 18 applications were read and discussed at length. When the votes were taken and counted by the Alternate Delegates Bob Buselli, Jack Kane, and Lee Loots, there were more

candidates with a majority than there were positions. Bud Bromley motioned that we accept only the 12 top winners and not publish the number of votes received. The motion was seconded. Fortunately the numbers provided 12 clear winners. Elected for 9 year terms on the General Council were Sara Blackstock, Michael Challis, Susan Cook, Lenny Cowles, Avi Dogim, Lila Dogim, Jack Kane, Rebecca Kantor, Thomas Orjala, Ken Raveill, Paula Thompson and Joanne Wiedman.

For the 2 vacancies in seats expiring in 2006, a new vote was taken. Bill Rocap and Richard Omura were elected.

Various volunteers from the TDA offered to inform the candidates in person. Avi Dogim was called in to receive the results and also his congratulations on reelection.

A motion to waive the reading of the minutes was made by Larry Bowman and seconded by Paul Snider.

The TDA then had to decide whether to recess or to adjourn. The previous TDA of 2000 had voted to recess and continue meeting annually. The group debated whether to continue the TDA in cyber reality and meet via email. The final outcome was that the vote to adjourn the 2003 TDA passed with 3 abstentions.

Respectfully submitted by Dave Holt, Concord, CA (Golden Gate Circle Delegate)