LEADERSHIP NOTES: PAST-PRESIDENT

This year I have been an advisor to the Leadership Team and will be leaving after serving for four years. I am sorry to go but know that every new team brings its own dynamic along with new ideas and greater efficiency.

Some years ago I met Roger Meyers and he suggested that I join The Alliance. So I did. Maryann Roulier was President. I remember thinking that she looked so poised and confident up at the microphone and there was NO WAY I could ever do that job. I knew only a few members and had only a vague idea about how the group was run or what they did. After several months of attendance I really hadn’t gotten to know anyone, so I decided to help out by signing on to host one of the lunches.

Luncheon Coordinator Karen Kovich was welcoming and introduced me to other members. At the end of that year she asked me if I would replace her as Luncheon Coordinator. It sounded like fun so I did. That put me on the Leadership Team where I began to get a better understanding of the “inner mechanics” of The Alliance. At the end of that year Maryann Roulier and Peggy Snyder asked me to be Co-President with Liz Scully. That was a shock, but I said yes. You can see the pattern here. It takes someone to ask and someone to say yes. We need both to keep The Alliance going.

Now I occasionally overhear a member saying that they too could never get up in front of so many people. But as I found out this isn’t running for Congress, it’s LUNCH and you could do it too. It’s a team effort with lots and lots of support. Now I know that sometimes the timing isn’t right and that many members have already done their years on the Leadership Team. But there are a number of other jobs on the team besides President that are just as important. Every member should consider being on the team or heading up one of the committees at least once after joining. Think about helping out if you are asked or let someone know if you see something you are willing to try. I am so glad I did. It really has been fun and an honor to work with so many wonderful people.

Yours in Fellowship,
Barbara Morrison
Past-President

MEMBER IN PROFILE: Carolyn Buhl

In a yoga class, brand-new to Portland, Carolyn met Fran Daggett who invited her to come to First Unitarian Church. That was 14 years ago. Carolyn has attended enthusiastically ever since. She joined in 2017. Ours is the first church she has ever joined. "It was a big step for me and I’m grateful for it.”

Born, raised and college-educated (Kent State) in Ohio, Carolyn married in 1961 after graduation. She then moved to Boston for her husband’s doctoral studies at Harvard. Carolyn’s life-long commitment to abortion rights began in the late 60s after the birth of her two children, Dana and Kent. Moving to Cleveland in 1970 and knowing the critical “need for a woman’s resource facility,” she began work with a coalition of agencies counseling women applying for abortion resources — to secure legal abortions in NY, if affordable, or in Cleveland, if
Carolyn Buhl, continued

on Medicaid. She became the coalition’s first director. Carolyn describes feeling “on fire with the need for good services.” After Roe v. Wade in 1973, when women still needed affordable services and few were available, she started Pre-term, a nonprofit clinic, and became its first director. For 27 years Carolyn engaged in manual-writing and massive fundraising, until she was “worn down.” The Preterm clinic continues to provide most of the reduced-fee abortion care in Ohio. Carolyn also chaired NARAL for two years.

In response to the question, “What gives you hope?” Carolyn replies, “My family — they are excellent people.” She adds “And also, that so many women are running for office, 22,000 women who are pro-choice!”

Carolyn is proud to be an Oregonian — with its liberal coverage for abortion resources. She house-shares with daughter Dana, our inspiring Social Justice Director, son-in-law Bill, and 12 year-old granddaughter Zola who is “already compassionate and concerned with doing the right thing.” It is Carolyn’s great pleasure each evening to hear, “Nannie, I love you.”

Carolyn joined The Alliance in 2016, fully intending to refuse an invitation to serve on the Leadership Team. When Jan Wolf called, “she kept telling me how much fun [leadership is],” Carolyn said “Yes.” We are very grateful for Carolyn’s promise to serve as our Co-Vice President of Programs and for her presence among us.

MEMBER IN PROFILE: Ruth Lane

Ruth joined First Church just months ago soon after friend and member Scott Winter recommended our church as the spiritual home she was seeking. Looking over all those tables in Fuller Hall, she was “thrilled and overwhelmed.” In short order she joined the Good Times group, the Committee On Hunger and Homelessness (COHHO), and The Alliance.

Ruth was raised Catholic, the 3rd generation of her family to be born in Brooklyn. She spent her high school years in New Jersey and discovered during confirmation classes that Catholicism failed to answer her questions. The first in her family to attend college, Ruth chose William Penn, a small Quaker college in Iowa and stopped attending church. Urged by friends after graduation to join them in Boston, she stayed for 27 years, holding a variety of jobs and earning an MBA. But she knew she wanted a warmer place to live.

On a visit to Portland in 1997 Ruth “liked the vibes — so laid back!” She found the amenities she sought, especially transportation, and settled in the St. Johns neighborhood. She found work with the City of Portland’s Bureau of Transportation. Her focus was on parking operations. She invited residents’ input when free parking was threatened in the Markham Hill/OHSU neighborhood. “I’m a parking expert!” she laughs. It’s not surprising she describes herself as a synthesizer and a generalist who enjoys organizing groups.

Now retired, Ruth helped to initiate AARP Neighbor-Walks and volunteers with the St. Johns Business Resource Team to help small businesses. At First Church, Ruth is inclined to sign up for all “interesting classes.” She admits she has learned the value of balancing her activities. Next up, “I’m looking forward to taking Wellspring!”

Ruth’s enthusiasm is clear. “I like to work with like-minded folks, find community.” Welcome to First Church and The Alliance, Ruth!