

SOME NOTES ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN PROVIDENCE RI, JUNE 2014

I hardly saw many of the 20 (?) delegates at the conference. I saw Gary Smith, Kitsy Rothermel, Alice Van Deusen, Darien Smith, Laura Graham, Twinkle Manning, Lilian Anderson, Lois Suarez not many more. These convention centers are so enormous. I never did find our church banner. It does not stand out from the crowd of colorful banners everywhere. Light blue and white doesn't attract attention. It is time for a new one. I'll mention it to the WPA. Maybe they can commission someone for a design. Any thoughts?

Lois Suarez celebrated her 70th birthday by rappelling down the outside wall, about 10 normal stories high. It was a last minute activity to raise funds for the UUA. I heard from Beth McGregor, who did most of the organizing of GA, that the conference broke even so they organized the rappelling activity to increase the profits. I don't know how successful that was. It didn't last the whole day, closing early I thought. It did attract attention and we enjoyed watching the beginning from our hotel room at the Omni.

I loved hearing the Ware lecture by the "Nun on the Bus," Sister Simone. Her speaking was a terrific example of how to hold the audience in the palm of your hand. She could have asked for anything and people would have responded enthusiastically. I heard the other (ex) nun, Karen Armstrong, 2 years ago at GA in Charlotte, NC. Both were excellent speakers, sounding more like UUs than Catholics.

I did not like all the titles of lecture etc, offerings having the word LOVE in it. Maybe I'm too old fashion but I thought it made the lectures seem less serious. I did enjoy observing the debate about our gas/oil investments, giving arguments that I had not considered.

The lovely ending of the conference, water fire, was sponsored by the UUA. I think it was worth it, a showing of UU generosity to the thousands who attended. It was originated by Buddy Cianci, the corrupt/ good/bad mayor of Providence who spent time in jail. I hear he is coming back to rule again. He transformed Providence, whose canal stank when we are students at Brown. He made it the splendid city it is today.

I forgot to mention that I attended with my daughter and son-in-law several programs for the youth including the "Bridging" ceremony where each of 61 youths attending from all over the country walked across the stage, stated their name, city, state and were given a small round chalice emblem on a chain. My grandson, Gare II was one of them. I was impressed with the fine quality of youths. Only a few had the funky look which seemed not too extreme. Dyed red hair was popular even with some older adults.

I was not a delegate this time and did not attend many of the offerings. I relaxed and enjoyed what I attended. I did lack the enthusiasm I had at my first GA in Charlotte, NC.

Enough from me,
Helen Stoddard