

**Annual Report**  
**U.U. Rowe Camp and Conference Center**  
**Board of Trustees Annual Meeting**  
**September 10, 2011**

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# AGENDA

**U. U. Rowe Camp & Conference Center**

**Board of Trustees Meeting**

**September 10, 2011**

**Presentation of July 14, 2011 minutes for approval**

**Greetings from the Board President**

**Executive Director's report**

**Director's report**

**Presentation of budget for approval**

**Presentation of the new slate of trustees for approval**

**Transition actions: paving the way for Doug's 2012 retirement**

**Other committee reports**

**Draft Minutes**  
**U.U. Rowe Camp and Conference Center**  
**Board of Trustees Annual Meeting**  
**September 10, 2011**

**Board Members Present**

Jerry Burke, President; Clay Conner, Vice President; Kerri Florian, Treasurer; Cynthia Bolling, Clerk, Cathy Perkins, Gail Epstein, Annie Skillings, Members-at-Large

Also present: Guy Thompson, Stewardship Committee Chair; Karin Broadhurst, Marketing Committee; Douglas Wilson, Executive Director; Felicity Pickett, Director; Paulette Roccio, Director of Operations

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Twenty-eight people attended.

Jerry Burke opened the meeting with a request for a moment of silence, asking those present to think about what Rowe is now and what we hope it will be in the future. He thanked those present for sharing their memories of Rowe at the opening circle the previous evening.

**Approval of Minutes** (*Jerry Burke, President*)

The minutes from the July 14, 2011 meeting were presented for approval.

Motion to accept the minutes (Clay). Second: Cathy.

**Message from the President** (*Jerry Burke, President*)

As your new president, I want to say that I appreciate the confidence you have placed in me. The Board faces two special challenges this year: Revenues are down in the camp and conference center. Donations for the year just ended are also considerably below where they were budgeted. The budget to be presented assumes that we are able to bring those numbers up. I invite comments from members about how we can do that. The Board would not recommend a similar budget for a second year if these numbers evolve into a downward trend.

The second challenge is Doug's retirement on December 21, 2012. Policies and standards that have been followed but never written down must now be put in writing. The transition committee has made a good start on doing that.

**Executive Director's Report** (*Doug Wilson, Executive Director*)

Greetings. Welcome to the Annual Meeting of the Members of Rowe Camp and Conference Center. This is my 38th year of working for this odd camp and conference center and as many of you know, I'm retiring on the 21st of December 2012. I told the board about my retirement two years ago and announced it to everyone at last year's annual meeting. I wanted enough time for an orderly transition and so far it feels as though I got the time frame right.

Rowe has been my life, as well as the life of my wife and partner, Prue Berry. I first came to Rowe in the summer of 1971 to be the assistant director of Rowe's three-week-long Junior High Camp. On the last night of camp, two-thirds of the campers cried for two hours. I've never seen anything like that, before or

since. I liked the camp a lot more than I liked the middle-aged to older First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, where I was the twenty-four-year-old assistant minister.

The camp was radical and so was I. I considered myself a Yippee!, which is a political hippie, and I seemed to fit right in at Rowe. The United States was still deeply involved in their invasion of Southeast Asia. That spring I'd been arrested three times in Washington, where the motto had been, "If the government won't stop the war, the people will stop the government." It is hard to imagine the nature of those times now, when people seem docile and domesticated. In those days everything was called into question.

I'd been schooled in the radical educational ideas of A. S. Neil, the founder of Summerhill School in England, where the students set their own agendas. They learned math when they wanted to learn math, not when the teacher said it's time to learn math. Rowe Camp struck me as a Summerhillian summer camp and I was smitten. As Bob Dylan put it, "If dogs run free, why can't we?"

The next two summers, 1972 and '73, I was the assistant director of Homestead Camp in Harriman Park near Bear Mountain in New York state, about an hour north of New York City. Homestead was another free camp that was founded when Rowe was full by Rowe Camp people and the Community Church in New York City in the late 1950s.

On the Ides of March in 1973 I walked across the George Washington Bridge and up to the Appalachian Trail. I headed south through New York and New Jersey, probably the least wild and least inspiring part of the trail. After I'd been walking for a couple of weeks and was into Pennsylvania I asked a nice Quakerly looking gentleman when the leaves were going to come out on the trees. "In a little over a month," he said. Having grown up in Santa Barbara, there was a lot I didn't know about the natural world, which is why I went to live in the mountains. The next road I came to I stuck out my thumb and hitchhiked to Springer Mountain in Georgia, where the trail begins. Most people start hiking the trail in Georgia, so I wasn't alone and didn't feel quite so crazy. After a few weeks I met a great guy, Jeff Menzer, and we started walking together.

That summer I got Jeff a job at Homestead. In September we hitched up to Mt. Katahdin and hiked south, where we ran into people we'd met on the trail in the spring. They were dog tired, but we had taken the summer off and were hiking south with the fall. Holly Bell had been studying for the ministry in New York City and had often stayed with me in Brooklyn, so when we got close to Massachusetts we hitched over to visit her, and to take long baths and empty out her refrigerator. She was on the board of Rowe Camp and said the camp had bought the farmhouse down the road and was looking for someone to be caretaker over the winter. I needed a place to stay while I looked for another church so I lived that winter at Rowe without a car or a telephone, hitching to town once a week with my backpack for supplies.

I had gone a little feral living in the woods for half a year, and some would say I was pretty feral to start with, so being a minister in a suburb didn't sound too good to me. Being from California, I was aware of Esalen Institute in Big Sur, an experimental, experiential center where teachers like Abraham Maslow, Fritz Perls, and Alan Watts offered seminars for adults. So I suggested to the board of trustees that I start a conference center in the fall, winter, and spring and that we'd keep the camp going in the summertime. The board didn't really know what to do with the farmhouse, so they agreed. I said I would work for the first \$2,000 after expenses and after that, we'd split it. The first year I made \$2,050 and the camp made \$50. The second year I made \$2,700, the third \$3,600, the fourth \$4,700, and the fifth \$5,600.

The summer of 1974 I was the camp manager and the director of Junior High Camp, but I was smart enough to hire Margaret Woodside and Holly Bell, two ace religious education directors, to help me navigate. I was only twenty-six. I remember the entire camp gathering at the farmhouse to watch a little black and white tv as Richard Nixon resigned from the presidency. It wasn't hard to see where our sympathies lay.

The original conference center flyer was an 18 by 24 inch broadside that folded up to 6 by 9. On the outside was a Vietnamese girl holding a flower, which I saw as an offering of penance for what my country had done to Southeast Asia. Inside was a drawing by Rick Tsukada that bears a remarkable likeness to the cover of our current catalogue—mountains without end. There was a Taoist monk sewing that I fancied was a picture of myself and a strong woman to honor feminism. The flyer also had the five words that are shorthand for what we offer: Retreat Relax Reflect Relate Revitalize. I realize these words came from within me and knowing that helps me believe I was suited to this work.

The first year Harvey Cox, the Harvard theologian, Ben Spock, the radical baby doctor, and Ram Dass, the psychedelic explorer and Hindu missionary, all came to share their wisdom. We were off and running. When I saw someone I wanted to learn from, I invited him or her to lead a workshop. I've always been curious and open-minded, though I wasn't about to invite members of the John Birch Society to come to Rowe. Now those crazies have taken over the Republican Party. Times have changed, but I have been wearing my heart on my sleeve, as Shakespeare put it in Othello, all these years.

While I have offered programs that I believe outline a better way to live in the future, I also believe that what we've done here is consistent with the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism that are in our mission statement. We don't preach to the kids or offer workshops in UU history, but I like to believe that when a camper leaves Rowe Camp, s/he understands in his or her being not only who s/he is, but what Rowe Camp is and what Unitarian Universalism is.

After a few years, I noticed the campers weren't crying as much as they used to at the end of camp. I mentioned it to one of our regular staff people and she said, "Now they cry during camp, instead of saving it for the end." Camp continued to be great and I began to realize the camp was self-perpetuating. Some years every ninth grader, about twenty-four campers, applied to be CITs. Prue Berry became co-director of Junior High Camp in 1978 and we would pick four boys and four girls, looking for energy and warmth, talent and fun, passion and compassion. We would meet with them every day to talk about what was happening in camp and as we got to know them, we were better able to pick the two or three who would become counselors the next year. Like the Spirit elections in High School Camp, this is one of the few places competition enters camp life.

I was making it up as I went along. No one told me who to invite to the conference center, though I've always been open to suggestions, even though I don't always appear to be. If I read about someone who interested me, I asked him or her to come. Some never made it, including Gary Snyder, Joan Baez, Wendell Berry, John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Bill Cosby, Garrison Keillor, Thomas Moore, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Peter Matthiessen, Steve Jobs, and Tom Robbins, but others eventually did join us, including Noam Chomsky, Robert Bly, Holly Near, Sun Bear, Cris Williamson, Patch Adams, Subonfu and Malidoma Somé, Zalman Schachter, Dorothy Maclean, John Bradshaw, Marianne Williamson, Ysaye Barnwell, and James Hillman. I have a persistent streak and don't easily take no for an answer. If you don't want to come, it is probably better not to answer than to say no. A no acknowledges our existence and lets me

think they took the fishing lure, so I let them swim free for as long as they need to, before I once again try to haul them in.

The summer of 1975 we started WomenCircles, though it wasn't called that then, and in 1976 Liberation Camp. By the fifth year of the conference center, it was clear that it had become a viable institution, so I told the board I was going on sabbatical for a year. I had learned about sabbaticals from my father, who was a college professor. The idea grew out of God resting on the seventh day after creating the world and the Old Testament instruction to let the land lie fallow every seventh year. I've long attributed my long tenure here to the sabbaticals I've taken that allowed me to do something completely different and to allow the harness to be loosened from time to time.

Prue and I and her daughters Kim and Virginia went to Berkeley in the fall of 1979, where I taught a course in non-parish ministry at Starr King School for the Ministry. In the winter we went to Mexico to study Spanish and in the spring Prue and I took a month-long course at the Gestalt Institute of San Diego. When we returned, the board appreciated my skills much more than they had before I left.

Prue moved to Rowe and we entered a new, more expansive phase, with many more nationally known workshop leaders. Prue's natural warmth and loving compassion melted the hearts of the guests, while my sardonic wit and wise-guy remarks lightened up the workshops. We went to most of them, especially when they were run by one of our heroes, like Philip and Daniel Berrigan, Liz McAlister, Scott and Helen Nearing, Paul Winter, Gioia Timpanelli, Dave Foreman, Grace Paley, Jeremy Taylor, Margot Adler, Ram Dass, Joanna Macy, Jean Houston, Abbie Hoffman, Susun Weed, Babatunde Olatunji, Patricia Sun, Zerka Moreno, David Spangler, and many more.

Throughout the eighties we just got better and better. Having Alice Cozzolino and Margaret Woodside cooking was like having Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig on your team and they turned Rowe into a gourmet restaurant. Jeffrey Frey was the best maintenance person since Russ Jolly in the early years. Bruce Robbins, the Cal Ripken of the Rowe board, invented a superb system for our mailing list, which he is still maintaining. Arnold Westwood showed us the value of fundraising, as well as sending all his children and grandchildren to camp. Zita Lazzarini and Gary Reiter took our place when we built our home three miles from camp on Prue's first sabbatical and my second; then they became mainstays of the board, with many other fine people.

It felt like we could do no wrong; the love was flowing. Barton Rouse, Ted Altenberg, and Moira Rouse were legendary counselors, among many others. Nat Needle started Young People's Camp in 1983, with the help of Sarah Pirtle and Christine Hurd, and kids as young as nine started coming to camp. Prue and I graduated to Senior High Camp after I'd done eleven years in junior high (I'm a slow learner) and in 1990 we turned the senior high leadership over to Missi Salzberg and Aaron Kropf, as they were ready to become the directors. In the early 90s Felicity Pickett offered us her administrative skills, which are considerable. I honor people who can do things I don't know how to do, like fixing cars, playing musical instruments, organizing office procedures, bossing people around, cooking for a hundred people, balancing the books, maintaining buildings, using machinery, and singing in four-part harmony.

The 90s were the high point of the human potential movement, which is what I like to call the Esalen-inspired movement to use all the senses to educate the entire person, rather than just the mind, which is what most educational systems do. This was the genius of what we do, but it's also what got us characterized by a variety of pejorative, dismissive clichés like wu wu, airy fairy, out there. Much of this

reputation results from our willingness to explore topics that are not yet scientifically proven, like esp, shamanism, and alternative medicines. I don't mind. I know who we are and what we're doing and I've endeavored to offer programs by the most qualified presenters I could find.

I have never lost sight of the reality that we are in the vast marketplace and people vote for the programs they want by signing up for them. We have offered dozens of great programs over the years that people didn't sign up for. The people who look at our program disapprovingly rarely understand that we put out programs that we consider excellent and that people will come to. This is at the heart of my work. Over the years I've developed a sixth sense (another wu wu, "unscientific" term, I might note) about what people will want to attend. One of my regrets is not having the time to respond in a meaningful way to the hundreds of people who've offered to do programs here.

In the larger world, the 21st Century has been a disaster, in my opinion. W., who lost both elections, started two wars without having any plans for how to end them or how to pay for them. The financial industries decimated much of the economy and the Supreme Court is turning the country over to outright corporate control. Obama was a great candidate, but his campaign theme of change seems to have been an advertising slogan because it is largely business-as-usual and his commitment to consensus governing seems to be failing. Electing reactionary Republicans to congress or god forbid, to the presidency, is like going back to an abusive husband who almost killed you last time. Giving trillions of dollars to the banks while failing to restore and protect the middle class has evaporated much of our client base. If you're in deep trouble with your mortgage, or you lost your job, or you got sick and ran up a big credit card debt, you're in no position to go away to a weekend workshop.

When I was young the Catholic Church taught their parishioners that religious retreats were an important part of religious life. Unitarian Universalist young people spent amazing amounts of time getting to know each other on retreats through LRY, the UU youth group. Rowe Camp has been, for thousands of young people, their deepest and most profound spiritual experience, but I don't believe that the larger culture of young people know what they're missing.

I don't know a lot about the business world, but I know business executives are constantly flying to meetings all over the country to have face-to-face meetings with business partners. This is real human interaction—looking people in the eyes, finding out who they really are.

One of the constant refrains I've been hearing for a long time is we need to have workshops that young people will want to go to, but I have my doubts about whether young people really want to go to retreats at all. There are always exceptions to any general trend and my evidence is anecdotal, not comprehensive. I know I will sound like an old fogie when I talk about young people not being on the right wavelength, but I've earned my old fogie stripes; I'm going to be sixty-five on Monday. Nowadays I'm going to more funerals than weddings. I've seen friends die slowly with ALS and Parkinson's and die fast with brain tumors and pancreatic cancer. Death is a part of life.

We've had declining enrollments for almost five years, which predates the economic meltdown, and I believe there are a number of possible reasons. One is that people are looking elsewhere for community. Facebook, for example. I believe the communities that are connected by Facebook and other social media are inferior to face-to-face interactions, though I've never friended anyone. I do know a good joke when I hear one: "My God, my God, why hast Thou unfriended me?"

This year was the first year Rowe Camp had openings in Junior High Camp. We used to have waiting lists of fifty or sixty. We invented Transitions Camp so that seventh graders could have their own camp, leaving more room for eighth and ninth graders in Junior High Camp. For decades, our camps have been full or close to full. They remain powerful, profound experiences that are at the heart of this organization and I don't really believe that our camps are in danger, but recruitment does need some attention. We can't rest on our laurels.

I've always intended to give an honest and accurate vision of where we are in the camp and conference center. For most of the years I've been here, the news has been good, but not recently. The recent gay men's weekend had a lot less people than the year before, though the quality of that workshop has been getting better as the new leaders grow into their roles. In addition to the people losing their jobs or getting into mortgage or credit card hell, when people are afraid, they're less likely to go away for a weekend retreat, even if the content is just what they need.

I've often described what happens here as live theatre. When you go to the theatre, you experience live people doing live things. When it's over, you have the memory, and perhaps a program, but that is all. It isn't a television show; you can't watch reruns. Over the years dozens of people have suggested that we film what is happening or even do a live feed so people can watch it at home. I've always resisted these calls, because I know that having a camera running changes the spirit of what is happening. People begin to play to the camera, rather than being spontaneous, improvising actors in a live theatre.

Many years ago Prue and I went to Jacob's Pillow to watch a former camper dance in the Merce Cunningham dance company. It cost \$70 and I gulped and paid. When we saw the show, I saw how many people were involved in making it happen and the ticket price no longer seemed so expensive. We feed people here and the food is excellent. People sleep here and while many of the beds are excellent, this isn't our strongest point. Our programs are excellent. It is beautiful here. The guests who come are lively and interesting—just look around this room. Though we don't pay a lot, it costs money to operate a summer camp. All summer long there are directors, counselors, program staff, CITs, and seven cooks. It costs money to have ten staff people here year round and to bring leaders from California, New Mexico, and Colorado.

The conference center is in competition with Omega, Kripalu, and the Open Center, all of which are at least ten times bigger than we are. We cannot match the honorariums the big centers offer, or the speaking fees that universities offer, but people like teaching here because of the mood we create. Over the years I've formed bonds with many of the leaders and the personal relationships will not be easy to pass along to whomever takes my place. Over the years I've stayed in touch with our leaders, writing them thank you letters and homemade postcards, and I've gone to concerts of Ysaye Barnwell, Paul Winter, and others. I stay in touch.

I actually consider myself to be an artist, and that has some interesting side effects. Artists take time to make art, so if I'm sending someone an invitation to do a workshop here, after I've written the letter itself, I often take an hour gluing cartoons onto an envelope that will contain the invitation, along with some catalogues and newspapers, as well as some other writings, individually tailored to the person. I sometimes compare it to tying fishing lures, which is another art form. Different fish require different lures and fashioning them is part of the art. I did pick art forms, writing letters, and homemade postcards, where there is very little competition, though I also make collages. The heart of my art, of course, is the



catalogues and the newspapers, which are the map that describe the territory of the events I set up. These, too, have elements of collages. Lately I've begun calling myself an impresario, a person who arranges operas, musicals, or theatre events.

Of course, living with an artist, or working with an artist, can be trying. Making art is not the most efficient way to get things done and it can annoy other people. I've had the very good fortune to be able to set my own agenda for most of my working life at Rowe. That doesn't mean that I get to ignore the fact that fifty people are showing up on Friday or that eighty high school campers are arriving on Sunday. I accept the discipline of the calendar, but within the weeks and the months and the years, I've had the freedom to set my own schedule, and I feel blessed.

I do not want to put out the impression that I believe that the conference center is doomed. I believe we have created a viable institution with a strong history and a lot of momentum. Some things, like the economy, are beyond our control: all we can do is react in intelligent and visionary ways, offering programs with people like David Abram, James Howard Kunstler, and Chris and Becca Martenson. When Alice and Margaret left our employ, the quality of the food continued to be excellent and I think that can happen with the programs we offer. While some fear my departure, I think the organization is ready for some new energy and vision. Everyone is capable of getting into ruts, including me. I'm less sure we will be able to sustain the warmth and the caring that Prue offered, as she was remarkably gifted at loving people. Time will tell. It has been a great life for me and for Prue and we thank you all for making it possible.

#### Discussion

Doug concluded his report at 10:50 a.m.

Jerry recommended that the Board get together with staff at lunch to let them know who we are. He said the Marketing Committee meeting should be held that afternoon, and invited those interested to join. He also invited members of the audience to get together in a committee to plan Doug's retirement party, which will be held December 16, 2012, or December 23, 2012 if it snows. Ricky suggested we set up a blog for Rowe to invite other people who are interested in planning for Doug's retirement party. Jerry said that the marketing committee is already addressing the addition of social media to Rowe's marketing arsenal, and asked Karin to keep Ricky informed about it.

#### **Director's Report** (*Felicity Pickett, Director*)

Last evening I sat down to finish my annual report. I felt confident that it wouldn't take me long as I had found time in July to work on it and I was pretty pleased with how it was coming. I should have known better. If I wanted to give a name to this year, it would be the year of the do-over. My director's annual report seems to be amongst the files that weren't retrievable after the network server crashed a few weeks ago.

I tried to think back about the past year. It all seemed pretty colored by the events of the last month, and nothing beyond that would come to mind. So I went to look back at my recent board meeting reports to put together something cohesive about the year, but they were missing too.

It was not an easy year. At times it seemed like we were being pushed to the edge. We started out the year very hopeful that it was going to be a better year. Enrollment was up by 10% through March. It felt good to see the dining room full again and it felt like things were turning around. Then we had two program cancellations one right after another because the conference leaders weren't able to come due to illness. In

April our attendance for the month was 79 guests, less than half what it was the prior year and that led to us ending the year slightly under the prior year and at an all-time low—at least in the last twenty years.

But the more difficult disappointment was that our youth camps didn't fill. Jr. High Camp, which generally has a waiting list, had 4 openings and YPC had 3, representing a 3 % decline in enrollment. Enrollment for Men's Wisdom Council was down 25% and WomenCircles was down 39%.

Numbers don't tell the whole picture and programs were excellent. At the same time, we have seen this decline happening over the last five years and it is getting more difficult to keep the finances on an even keel.

Once we began talking about transition—the big transition—Doug's retirement, it seemed like transition began to take on a life of its own. We had a major staff turnover this year. Dan Ross left this spring in search of a position where he could have potential for future growth. His first job didn't work out for him but he is now working at Trader Joe's, has relocated to the Boston area, and seems quite happy. Deb Lively and Joan Lager both moved on this June. They each worked six years for Rowe, started within weeks of each other, and left at the same time. Mike Walker left in July. He is returning to school at Northeastern in a doctoral program in education. And Abby Lively finishes her time at Rowe on Sept. 18th. All were very valued members of the staff and contributed a great deal to the organization.

In the summer camps, Coleen Murphy has resigned after fifteen years as Sr. High Camp Co-Director. She always said that she would leave when her son Nash started attending Sr. High Camp and he will be doing that next year. We are grateful for the many years she gave to camp.

Ben Schnare and Phoebe Westwood have also resigned from co-directing Jr. High Camp. They will be going to grad school next year and will be unavailable to direct camp. Ben and Phoebe are also long-time Rowe staffers and have given much to camp over the years. They will all be missed.

We hired Ian Tapscott as Assistant Director for Jr. High this past summer with the understanding that he will be moving into one of the co-director positions next summer.

As the saying goes, each crisis is an opportunity and we are moving forward. In contemplating the situation I had an insight about the change. During this period, the leadership has been strong and able to hold this ship on its course through all the changes in personnel, which is never easy in a small organization. I want to appreciate Paulette for her steadiness through all the changes in personnel and for Douglas in his consistency of bringing in excellent leaders year after year.

And though we hadn't planned on it happening this quickly, we are now building a new foundation, which will be strongly in place and will have the capacity to hold Rowe as we go through the major transition of the founding director's retirement.

Over the last year I have spent a good deal of time with the Transition Committee planning for the future. What I didn't anticipate was that the future was here. As staff left, I was actually able to implement some of the changes so that we will truly go into the transition with a new model in place.

And it wasn't just the staff that was breaking apart. Doug's computer died and then our network server crashed and the backup system that was in place failed. Fortunately, we did have a backup, though it was a month old. We have spent the last month doing all the registration work and all the accounting over again. It was a process of reconstruction. It was time-consuming and frustrating and made us realize how wonderful computers are when they are working and just how dependent we have become on them.

The well that serves Fromson and Brook House has been periodically testing with bacteria, which we have been dealing with over the last year or so. Over the last several months we have been trying to get

some resolution to the problem. This often felt like walking through quicksand and I am very grateful to Paulette, who was the lead person in working with DEP, our water operator, and the well person. I was the contact person while she was on vacation and felt very frustrated by the process. But she stuck with it and got through the quagmire.

Unfortunately, because of the water problem, we were advised to put our DEP application for a septic variance for the Farmhouse addition on hold.

But suddenly things have started to move in a positive direction. Yesterday was a banner day. The well work was completed and the new network server was installed. And there have been other achievements this year.

For many years we have been asked about doing a family camp but have not had a space to do that. We began to organize our winter vacation retreat as an alternative to a family camp. It is our intergenerational camp and welcomes families as well as single people. This past year we saw that it had really taken root. It is a wonderful and fun celebration and there are a number of people here now who have attended. It is becoming its own community, much like our other adult and youth camps.

We have talked about the need to reach out to those in their twenties and thirties as our population is aging. Kindred Spirits is doing just that and introducing many new people to Rowe. There camp is full of new life and new younger campers. Some of this has been through the efforts of board member Karin Broadhurst, who has been spreading the word among the Rowe camp alumni, and some of it has been through the efforts of Lisa Silverman, who is a strong social networker. They are leading the way for us in this effort and showing us that it can be done.

This year *The Center Post* got a new facelift with a new design and full color on many of the pages. We also got a new website. A special thank you to Zack Leven, who raised the funds to have the site redesigned, worked with the web design company, and did a lot of the transfer from our old site to the new site. I would like to thank him for his key role in this project and to thank David Dvore, our webmaster, who worked with Zack in developing the registration pages, and Jon Rhemus, who gave us time this summer to transfer some of the data. It is a beautiful site and we are all very pleased.

As part of the reorganization of staff the office has been restructured. We are now developing a programming department, which will be somewhat separate from the administrative office. We have hired Megan Kingsley and Carrie Nordstrom as program coordinators. Each will have responsibility for marketing specific programs. In addition, Megan will hold responsibility for distribution of our publications and Carrie for our electronic marketing. We have just contracted to use MailChimp to do group e-mails. Although they have been here for less than a month, I can already see that we are going to do a much better job with getting the word out about our programs and that can only help us.

Mike Schwab, a former UU Camp Director from Minnesota, joined us this summer to help with finances. I thank him for his work keeping staff paid, entering deposits, and paying the bills this summer. I am also grateful to Joan Lager, who magically called just before the big computer crash to ask if she could come and barter a couple days a week. We said an enthusiastic Yes! We were in the process of hiring a new person for the Finance position. Krista Ainsworth will be joining the staff sometime around the end of the year, but in the meantime she and Joan will be job sharing. It is wonderful to see Joan back in her little office again and sometimes groaning about all the do-overs and catch-up work that is still to be done. And once again, not having someone immediately in place has its benefits. It will help with the transition to a new model.

With Dan gone, we implemented a new structure that called for one lead person in charge of both the kitchen and the facilities—an operations person. Paulette took on that role this summer as we played with

the idea. It was a tough summer in that we started it fully staffed in the kitchen and the new Head Chef we hired didn't work out and was gone within two weeks. But despite the difficulties, we can see the benefits to this new model and plan to move forward with Paulette taking on the role of Director of Operations. I thank her for all her work this summer and over the last year and look forward to working with her as we develop this new leadership model that you will hear more about later.

We are happy to welcome Nate Peterson to the full-time staff as one of our full time Chefs. I remember Nate working in the kitchen with Margaret at work weeks when he was only ten years old or so. I remember telling him then that many campers come back to be on camp staff but I thought he was going to come back and work in the kitchen and sure enough he did. He is now our new Chef.

Jim Musson, who was our summer maintenance person in 2010, came back this year to do summer maintenance again. He is now taking on the position of Head of Maintenance and we are all pleased to have him. As the Labor Day directors said, Jim is amazing. He just magically appears whenever you need him.

Despite the challenges of the last year, I feel new life stirring in the new equipment, new website, new staff. I believe we have everything in place to have a great year. Transitions are always difficult, and I believe we have the foundation in place to face the future.

#### Discussion

Felicity concluded her report at 11:25 a.m. Felicity added that we lost some valuable registration data when the server crashed, but we've learned some lessons from the event. Now the server has three redundant copies.

#### **Treasurer's Report** (*Kerri Florian, Treasurer*)

Overall Rowe is in good financial standing, as has been the case year after year at Rowe. Revenue from conferences and the campers has remained fairly flat, however. This is something the board and Rowe would like to see change to help ensure a long future for Rowe conference center.

#### **Some notes from the budget:**

- Website donations have been fairly flat, but we are hopeful that with the new website up and running, this will change. Donations are now easier to make from the site!
- Conference fees are budgeted to remain flat from last year
- Camp fees for Junior and Senior High are increasing by 2% [[[or is it 3%?]]]
- Breakdown of budgeted revenue:
  - Conferences: 55%
  - Camps: 38% (with largest being Senior High, 12%; Junior High, 11%; and Transitions, 6%)
  - Rentals: 3%
  - Sales: 1%

Like everywhere else in the country, healthcare costs for staff have increased.

#### **Actuals vs. budgeted amounts**

- Operating expenses, Sept-June, this year vs. the budgeted amounts are lower by \$47k or 6%. There isn't one large item but a few totaling the difference. Expenditures for

employee benefits were down due to staff changes. Electricity and auto maintenance were below budget but more than last year. The accountant fees were well below budget because we didn't do the audit that we had planned on.

I would like to highlight a few of the donation areas, which Felicity will give in more detail:

- Overall donations are down from the budgeted amount by 16%. This is a sign of how the continued slump in the economy is still affecting Rowe.
- Endowments are down. But if we continue to do what we've been doing, we'll be great!

	Sep '09 - Aug 10	Sept 1, 2010 - June 24, 2011	Budget 2010/ 2011	Budget 2011/ 2012
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
<b>Total 4 Development</b>	164,304.03	134,000.43	180,850.00	211,150.00
<b>Total 5 Income From Operations</b>	1,006,257.02	617,304.19	1,074,021.54	1,092,749.85
<b>Total Income</b>	1,170,561.05	751,304.62	1,254,871.54	1,303,899.85
<b>Expense</b>				
<b>Total 6000 Program Expenses</b>	403,575.44	284,643.75	430,463.48	420,340.00
<b>Total 7000 General and Administrative Exp</b>	589,046.63	472,267.91	674,685.09	675,133.68
<b>Total 8000 Development Expenses</b>	94,730.64	37,344.01	138,723.00	135,125.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	1,087,352.71	794,255.67	1,243,871.57	1,230,598.68
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	83,208.34	-42,711.05	10,999.97	73,301.17
<b>Total Other Income</b>	12,391.08	51,080.15	5,202.00	-80,000.00
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>95,599.42</b>	<b>8,369.10</b>	<b>16,201.97</b>	<b>-6,698.83</b>

#### Discussion

The above budget is a shortened form of the full budget, which the Board approved previously, and which Kerri handed out. A member of the audience asked to see a balance sheet.

#### Remarks from Felicity:

A balance sheet is available through June. We sold the LaGrange property for a profit of \$50,000, once expenses were deducted. The proceeds are restricted, however, to the Iris Fund, which includes a woman's library. The May Tree artist program is currently separate from the Iris Fund, but it was set up by the same woman, who is now deceased. In the spirit of what she wished to do in her will, the programs

will now be moved under the umbrella of the Iris Fund. Amina Silk is set to start as an artist-in-residence next week.

We are looking for a person to rent the Leominster property we own. We're not thinking of selling it now, since it is costing us relatively little to carry.

Motion to approve budget (Clay). Second (Kerri). The motion was unanimously approved.

**Nominating Committee Report** (*Clay Connor, Chair*)

As the Chair of the Nominating Committee and recently nominated Vice President of the Board of Trustees, I am pleased to report that I have made contact with several prospective Board of Trustee members and the preliminary indication is they are enthusiastic about serving on the board. As usual, we request that people who are interested in serving on the Board attend a few Board meetings to observe the culture of the Board, the needs of the Board, and how we interact and operate, so I will not name these people now.

We presently have a good Board that could be enhanced by a select few new members. We have two openings for members-at-large. My hope is that we will be able to add new members who can help us with the important work of the Board as we move closer to the leadership transition that is rapidly approaching.

President	Jerry Burke
Vice President	Clay Connor
Clerk	Cynthia Bolling

These three officers will serve two-year terms. Kerri Florian will remain as Treasurer.

Motion to approve the slate as presented (Karin Broadhurst). Second (Eleanor Roberts). The motion was approved unanimously.

Discussion

Someone suggested we post the names of the committee chairs on our website, and asked that we also add what that committee does.

At the next Board meeting we will discuss changing the terms of Board members so that they are staggered. Karin is leaving as member-at-large but will continue to serve on the Marketing Committee.

**Organization Transition Committee Report** (*Annie Skillings, Chair*)

Members: Annie Skillings, Chair, Cynthia Bolling, Cathy Perkins, Gail Epstein

It has been quite a year for this fledgling board and this committee. Starting out as the Personnel Committee, and facing Doug Wilson's impending retirement in December of 2012, the committee wrestled with what our mission actually was. It became clear that a more accurate name was Organization Transition Committee, and that our first step was to review Rowe's organizational chart and leadership structure.

Through much thoughtful, sometimes provocative discussions amongst ourselves and with Felicity and Doug, we decided that the best route was to move away from the current model of Executive Director

(currently Doug) and Director (currently Felicity Pickett) to just an Executive Director (ED), and to eliminate the Director position.

With this revision in place we analyzed the appropriateness of Felicity stepping into this role upon Doug's retirement. After reviewing her resume and interviewing her, we reported to the board in executive session our recommendation. The board took this critical charge very seriously—there was no “rubber stamping” this change to the model or Felicity's assuming the Executive Director role. After thorough review and reflection the board agreed that Felicity is well qualified to serve as Executive Director upon Doug's retirement, and we are so thrilled to have determined so!

With that critical piece satisfied, we worked to refine job descriptions to ensure that the responsibilities held now by the two positions are reassigned appropriately. Doug is currently responsible for all the conference programming. Upon his retirement, this critical work will no longer be the job of the ED, but rather there will be a Director of Programming who will report to the ED. While we know that Felicity will be the ED, the future Director of Programming is not yet known. We will start spreading the word, searching for the best person to fill this vital role. The individual will have to go through at least one cycle of getting programs in place and getting the catalog out with Doug. Ideally this would happen prior to December of 2012, but if the right person is not identified by then, Doug has agreed to stay on as a consultant to mentor the newbie.

We recognize that Doug's leaving is not just a switch of roles and responsibilities. He is the founder of this incarnation of Rowe Camp & Conference Center and is an impressive presence. We are elated that we have Felicity to help us with this landmark transition, but while org charts and job titles are important, stewardship of the Spirit and vibe of Rowe is crucial as well. There is a large community of “Rowies” out there who are trusting us with this unique aspect of Rowe. We hold this trust very seriously, and want to keep the larger community informed and involved as they may see fit.

#### **Stewardship Committee Report** (*Guy T. Thompson, Chair*)

The Rowe Building Stewardship Committee meets once a year, the weekend before Autumn Work Week. The committee's recommendations influence the improvement projects Rowe tackles during the rest of the fiscal year. The committee's major recommendation for 2010-2011 was to build the Farmhouse addition.

The Rowe Building Stewardship Committee met on Saturday, September 25, 2010 at 2:00 p.m.

Present: committee members Guy Thompson, Jonathan Drummey, and Cathy Perkins. Rowe staff members present: Felicity Pickett, Paulette Roccio, and Deb Lively. At the meeting Felicity gave a brief review of activities and initiatives over the past year.

The Stewardship Committee recommended the following projects, which Rowe completed in 2010-2011:

- Replaced one section of roof and the skylights in the Rec Hall - \$21,730
- Replaced the Rec Hall front deck - \$11,544

Fundraising initiatives made the following projects possible:

- Put in a bamboo floor in the Farmhouse dining room - \$19,552
- Installed new push doors in the Chapel (custom made to look like the original) - \$5,588

- Completed drainage work in the basement of the Chapel - \$6,249

Unexpected Expense:

An inspection of the heating/hot water system for the Bath House revealed that it was on its last legs. The system was replaced with a new, more efficient one. As it turns out this was the largest capital expense for the year (\$26,228)

**Total capitol improvement expenditures: \$90,891**

In addition, the condensation problem in the Farmhouse dining room roof was fixed.

The Committee members gave their inspection reports. Guy Thompson read the reports of the committee members who were absent.

The Committee reached consensus on the following list of recommended capitol projects for 2010-2011, in order of priority:

- 1 Farmhouse Addition
- 2 Clay/Blue Room deck, doors and sills
- 3 Hobart replacement in the Rec Hall
- 4 Tree work

The following capitol projects were left over from 2009-2010. They were not completed because there wasn't enough money left to address them and the administration felt that they could be put off without jeopardizing the safety or the integrity of the campus:

- Improve drainage and repave road to the Rec Hall
- Replace joists in the barn floor
- Replace Orchard Guest House roof

The 2011 Building Stewardship Committee meeting is scheduled for Saturday October 8, 2011 at 2:00 p.m., with a continuation, if necessary, on Sunday October 9, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. to set the priorities for the capitol projects for 2012.

Stewardship Committee Members For 2011

Chet Bator - Bathhouse  
 Jonathan Drummey - Grounds  
 Sequoia Hale - Fromson  
 Cy Kano – Joffie House  
 Robert Lodinsky - Barn  
 John Montan - Farmhouse  
 Cathy Perkins – Orchard Guest House  
 Ricky Peterson - Chapel  
 Felicity Pickett – Rowe C&CC Director  
 Chris Roccio - Rec. Hall  
 Paulette Roccio – Facilities Manager  
 Andy Sebula - Cabins  
 Guy Thompson - *Chair*

**Development Committee Report (Cathy Perkins, Chair)**



With the turnover of the Board of Trustees this year, the Development Committee did not get under way until now. The committee is being reformed using members from the current board as well as two volunteers from the previous board. Felicity handled the responsibilities of Chair for the entire year.

Donor appreciation occurred during Members and Friends Weekend in September 2010.

We had three fundraising campaigns for the Capital Campaign, beginning last winter. The focus was on adding rooms, bathrooms and a new outside staircase to the Farmhouse. Architect and friend-of-Rowe Jim Shipsky proposed the Farmhouse addition to address all three needs. Felicity is currently in negotiations with the Rowe Board of Health regarding septic capacity, but there is a good case to be made that the system installed with the dining room addition is sufficient. We have now raised \$59,980 for the Farmhouse addition. That is up 122% from the \$27,000 we raised last year for the end-of-the-year capital campaign. Our most recent donation was a \$2,500 gift that came in from a board member's call. The donor generally gives us a small donation each year but wrote that though he can't do it every year, this project made a lot of sense to him. Another good example of how the board's effort in development does increase our fundraising income.

In February each year we send out a Valentine's letter to folks who have not given in the past year. Last year we were very pleased with the results at \$4,200. We raised the budget to \$4,300 and exceeded that with donations totaling \$4,718. Everyone loves to get a Valentine's card.

We are winding up the Woodside Campership campaign very soon. The donations from our annual mailing are slowing down and board members are completing their calls and letters. To date we have raised \$30,325, well below our goal of \$70,000. Camp staff members continued to be strong supporters of this program. There is a 90% giving rate from camp staff who contribute through payroll deductions. At this point we have not raised enough to cover the camperships that we have given out.

Our goal this year to raise \$70,000 included the funds to provide a day of training for each of the four camps. Last year one of the folks who was involved in training talked about the need for everyone to be on the same page and move forward together. With four different camps with different leadership, we have not seen that. Of all the camps, Junior High Camp has really taken the lead with this work. At the director's meeting last year, we got agreement for all the camps to move forward together, using the same trainers that Jr. High Camp uses and arranging for an additional day of training for each of the camps at a cost of about \$4,000 from a Woodside Coordinator. Our hope was that the trainer would then become more familiar with the camp and there would be more consistency. Camp directors have had a lot of autonomy around what they do and this seemed like a big step forward to have them all agree to training that they weren't planning.

In addition to the three campaigns that we usually do, we also raised \$3,000 to fund a new website, thanks to the efforts of Zack Leven, a former camper and former board member. Zack saw the need for us to update our website, raised the funds to have it redesigned, and did the work to transfer the information from the old site to the new one. This is another wonderful example of how someone sees a need and finds a way to fill it. We are very grateful for Zack's initiative and for all who donated to make this happen.

For fiscal year 2010/2011, we raised \$149,000, down \$9,000 from last year. Of that total, \$38,816 was raised through the direct efforts of the Board of Trustees.

The Kim Klein workshop will be held Oct. 14-16. Traditionally, all Board members are encouraged to attend this fundraising workshop for nonprofits. Kim is a great stand-up comic, so her workshop is always fun. She gives so much information that it's impossible to take it all in at once. Trustees who have attended multiple times have taken something different away from each one.

#### Discussion

Felicity remarked that when she saw how short of funds the program was, she did not hire the Woodside coordinator we had planned on. She felt that the coordinator was necessary because as ready as the staff is to tackle problems, race is one subject they are just not comfortable discussing. So now we need to make sure we raise enough money to cover both the camperships and the trainings. We are going to have to make an extra effort to make up that difference. Felicity said she was sure we could do it.

A member of the audience said that she knows two people who might be willing to do pro bono work as a Woodside Coordinator.

#### **Technology Committee Report** (*Zack Leven, Chair*)

I knew some design people in Holyoke, and used them to help redesign the website. Finding the right talent was crucial. I also appealed to Rowe friends to raise funds. It was remarkable how many people asked how they could donate to Rowe. When people view the website, I hope this will no longer be a question.

This new site is managed through a Content Management System (CMS), so anybody with access can edit the site. So everyone in the office can do so without needing to have special programming knowledge. This is just the beginning. Now we can use the site to do many more things. We will give a favorable impression of Rowe, use it as a revenue generator, and turn our numbers around. I work doing community organizing on the web, so I know this is possible.

I also installed a Google analytics program that will give us more information about who visits. An average of 700 plus people visited last week and spent an average of 2 minutes on the site. Forty percent of the visitors came from direct links and 40% came from a search engine. We can even tell how many visitors came to the site via Facebook. In general, people are most interested in the calendar of events.

#### Discussion

During his presentation, Zack used his laptop to show the audience pages from the new website and explained how it worked. He showed the home page, which prominently displays a Support Rowe section as well as beautiful pictures of Rowe. Zack also showed some subpages with a Photo gallery and calendar of events.

Doug thanked Zack once more for his excellent work.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cynthia Bolling  
Clerk