

# ARMSS

Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors

Quarterly Newsletter

July 2008

Volume 13, Issue 3

## 2008 ARMSS Convention Summary

By Ray Bayley

R. Worth Frank sometimes would comment to his students at McCormick Seminary, "I hope heaven is a place where all the problems are not solved; what a dismal existence it would be if they were." That attitude permeated the 2008 12th annual convention of the Association of Retired Ministers, their Spouses or Survivors (ARMSS) in Indianapolis, dealing positively with the theme "Peace: A Dream and a Possibility." Worship and workshops, instruction and inspiration, singing and mingling, nourishment and even a little flourishment all had their parts in the four-day gathering when retirees from twenty-two states and thirty presbyteries affirmed their continuing dedication to life by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mark Koenig and Julia Thorne, both of national staff, introduced and developed the theme of peacemaking generally and immigration issues specifically, respectively. They expanded the subjects in lively workshops.

Two additional workshops dealt with current issues and opportunities, Samuel Rizk, executive director of the Beirut based Forum for Development, Culture, and Dialogue described positive relations in the Middle East which are ongoing in contrast with the more obvious and publicized conflicts. Nancy Cavalcante extended her duties with the national church regarding volunteer services to her workshops, illustrating available volunteer opportunities both international and domestic, and both long and short term.

Bill Gannaway had two sessions with presbytery ARMSS representatives in which duties and opportunities of Presbytery Representatives were explained and exchanged. This group is the life blood of the extension of ARMSS. Bill also led opening worship in a tone-setting manner.

The guiding hand of Ella Banton was subtly evident; she served as chair of the convention, and kept things surprisingly on schedule while appearing to be casual.

Interspersed with these relatively mind-stretching activities were song fests led by Lois (also treasurer) and Al Siegel. It's amazing what Al can make a keyboard do! There were first night get-acquainted mixers led by innovative President Jim Reese, inciting revelatory conversations. Jim presided without intruding, keeping the convention in a good spirit.

Phil Gehman, Representative of the Board of Pensions in the North-

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### *ARMSS Quarterly Newsletter*

This Newsletter is distributed quarterly by the Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors.

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## A Message From the President of ARMSS

James F. Reese

### Looking Back, Looking Forward

Ordinarily a message with the above title would be written for the New Year. It is usually in that period between December 28 and January 3 that we do a great deal of reflection and greater "deal" in making resolutions.

At ARMSS where our newsletter year and our fiscal year is July 1 - June 30, we use this time to look back and to look forward.

#### Looking Back:

Our thanks are given to the over 750 of you who purchased memberships in ARMSS. Our thanks are also extended to the great number of you that gave financial contributions that boosted that to a little over \$8,000. The \$15,000 in memberships together with your contributions made up 90% of our budget. The third round of thanks goes to you who have completed the survey included with our April newsletter.

Our 12th Annual Convention in Indianapolis on June 12-15, 2008 was informative and exhilarating. Our secretary, Donna Haines, created a banner with a dove, a cross, and our theme, all done in rich and vibrant colors. The banner and the theme, "Peace: A Dream and a Possibility" provided a great background for our study and workshops in the areas of peace, immigration, volunteering, and individual rolls that each of us must undertake. Added to the

above were the presentations and programs (and food) from the Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Foundation, Westminster Neighborhood Ministry, Princeton Seminary, and Pittsburgh Seminary. All of these made for a great Convention! (more on the convention in the article on page 1).

The four newsletters kept us connected and reminded us of what we are doing, how we are doing, and where we are doing.

#### Looking Forward:

Our newsletter will follow a plan whereby the next newsletter will report activities from synods and presbyteries. This is an exciting and great way to tell what you are doing. This is inspiring and informative to the rest of us.

Our 13th Annual Convention will be in Tucson, Arizona on September 29 - October 2, 2009. This convention will have two "firsts" for ARMSS:

- We will be meeting with the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN).
- A meeting in the fall of the year. All of our meetings have been in May or June.

The planning committee for the 13th Convention will tailor some workshops and activities especially for ARMSS or POAMN and some workshops and activities for POAMN and ARMSS.

Record and remember the dates of September 29 - October 2, 2009.

#### Looking Forward and Backward:

ARMSS is the only communication link to the more than 9,000 retired ministers, spouses and survivors in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We are the only denomination to have such an or-

ganization. We look back with appreciation for your generous support. We look forward to you memberships and contributions that will enable our future. That future will be given direction from the survey.

A convention with POAMN promises new vistas, new relationships, new opportunities, new enthusiasm, and expanded imagination and intelligence.

We have enjoyed a rich past. We look forward to an even richer future.

*James Foster Reese*

God of our life, through  
all the circling years  
We trust in Thee

In all the past, through  
all our hopes and fears  
They Hand we see

With each new day, when  
morning lifts the veil  
We own Thy mercies, Lord,  
which never fail.

The following by-law changes were approved, pending no objections in writing to ARMSS President before August 31, 2008

### Article XI, Amendments

Section 1. These Bylaws may be amended by majority vote of the members present at an annual meeting, providing that the proposed amendments have been reviewed by the Executive Committee and mailed to all members not less than fifty days prior to that annual meeting presented to members on the first day of the annual meeting to be voted on by members on the last day of the annual meeting.

## TUCSON NEXT FALL

Is the site of the 2009 joint conference with POAMN (Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network). The date is September 29 through October 2. We will be meeting at a Holiday Inn with free airport shuttle and parking. This is an exciting city and we have an exciting theme –

### *Joy for the Journey Equipping the Saints*

Put us in your calendar now. Work has already begun finding interesting and informative keynoters and other such folks. We will help our sister/brother organization celebrate 25 years of service to the PCUSA.

Ella Banton  
Convention Committee Chair

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## Swap Shop

Message from Harlan Bentzinger:

“I am trying to find what happened to a high school classmate of mine, Ruth Wirsig Sissel.

She was married to a Presbyterian minister, Ben Sissel and lived in Wilmington, NC for many years. I believe at one time he worked in the main offices of the Presbyterian church. I do know they lived in or around Philadelphia. He passed away a number of years ago, but Ruth continued to live in Wilmington.

She did not attend our reunions, but always sent a letter until several years ago. Letters to her former address in Wilmington were not returned and not answered.

Do you have any information about her or know where I can get

more information?”

If you have any information about Ruth, please contact Harlan at [hbentzinger@rgv.rr.com](mailto:hbentzinger@rgv.rr.com)

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## Treasurer’s Report

As your Treasurer I would like to report that:

The participants at the 12<sup>th</sup> annual convention gave their communion offering of \$675 to the Westminster Neighborhood Ministries, a project of the Whitewater Valley Presbytery. We visited them Friday for lunch and a tour of their facilities. On Saturday evening the younger children came and sang, while the older ones took part in a play they had written.

So far in 2008 (at time of print), we have 765 members which have given donations to ARMSS in the amount of \$8,650. This added contribution definitely helps us as an organization, so keep in mind that any extra you can give is very helpful in keeping your association into the future. Also, the Cuban Connection Project was given \$1,440 and the John Rhea Fund \$850. This is over and beyond our \$20 dues for each member.

John Rhea was ARMSS founding “father”, and in his memory we have established the John Rhea Fund which is used to pay the convention fee for any member that is financially unable to come without some assistance. If you or anyone else you know could make use of this fund for our next convention please contact me. It will be given on “need” depending on the amount that is available when the name is received.

We, also, continue to pay the convention fee for first time attending Presbytery Representatives.

Members, we are asking for your assistance. Please send in the name and address of at least 5 Presbyterian retirees and we will check the names with our list to see if they are getting our newsletter. The HIPPA law will not allow us to obtain any new names that become eligible for the Board of Pension. These names should be sent to Ginny Nyhuis, ARMSS, Box 700311, Oostburg, WI 53070.

Thanks for all your help.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Siegel  
37 Aspen Rd  
Latham, NY 12110  
518-785-0116  
[lois.siegel@verison.net](mailto:lois.siegel@verison.net)

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Below is the ARMSS budget for July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009, as approved by the membership in attendance of the annual business meeting conducted June 16, 2008.

<b>REVENUE</b>	
Dues	\$15,000
Donations	\$10,000
Endowment interest	\$6,000
Newsletter Sponsors	\$16,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$47,000</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Staff Support	\$10,500
Newsletter	\$16,000
Conv. Supplement	\$7,000
Committee Meetings	\$10,700
Office Supplies	\$1,000
Postage	\$1,000
Phone Conferences	\$300
Contingency	\$500
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$47,000</b>

## Strategic Planning Committee Update

by Ray Bayley, Chair

ARMSS Strategic Planning Committee members were told before the current survey was distributed that they would hear from two extremes: those who love you, and those who hate you. While extreme extremes were avoided, the tendencies were evident. The committee was commended for "an excellent survey," and informed that it was "a waste of time." The questions were "very well worded" and "poorly worded."

Another pre-assessment was offered: a 2% return can be expected. The 640 responses constitute more than a 7% return, indicating a high level of interest. With considerable guidance and assistance from Pat Gleich and her staff at the PCUSA Health Ministries, the committee feels comfortable that the results of the survey are representative of the target group. The age range, clergy, spouses, and survivors, are within their percentages of Board of Pensions participants.

Strong support was given to the prior assumption that the most effective programming will be done at the presbytery level. This fact does not rule out the national organization. On the contrary, ARMSS can spread acquaintance with successful things done, and benefit from ideas and actions throughout the church. No national staff has this responsibility.

Other important presbytery responsibility has to do with pastoral care. Numerous responses revealed the existence of physi-

cally (and perhaps mentally) impaired retirees who are ignored by their presbyteries. ARMSS can fulfill an on-going need to remind presbyteries of the forgotten. Ministers' memberships, remember, are in presbyteries.

Still more challenging is pastoral care of survivors of clergy. Commonly they have moved from their presbytery of service and acquaintance to live with or near adult children. They have been forgotten by the presbytery of service and are unknown by the presbytery in which they now live.

There are different audiences for ARMSS to address: obviously its own members and prospective members and presbyteries, but more. One major ally is the Board of Pensions. The BOP offers services some presbyteries use without ARMSS aid, but ARMSS can inform presbyteries of their availability and assist them to avail themselves of them. Just possibly ARMSS may act in the opposite direction and help the BOP become aware of needs, desire, and opportunities.

Some General Assembly Council members already have benefited by the fact of the survey being taken, much less by any of its results; they gained an awareness of aspects of the denomination they had not considered. ARMSS can reach the GAC as a viable church organization.

Synods constitute an audience ARMSS need not bother too much. ARMSS does need synod assistance in the crucial recruiting of effective Presbytery Representatives.

Both denominational and secular communication media need to hear from ARMSS. Even other denominations may want their news media contacted; ARMSS is unique and some of them are watching. So far ARMSS has avoided the conflict that would prick up reporters' ears. They do deserve cultivation as an audience.

The work of the Strategic Planning Committee really begins now. Analysis of responses, including particularly the many pages of suggestions in the "comments" columns, must precede formulation of recommendations to the executive committee. It is just a matter of tallying "majority vote." For example, a Cuba mission trip need not include more than half of the ARMSS constituency involved to be successful; logistics would be well nigh impossible. Twenty to twenty-five interested participants make an effective mission team. Significant interest is more the judgment factor. Designing projects and activities to attract interest and to meet needs will require time, discussion, and revision.

Thanks are extended to all those who took the time to respond to the survey (even to the one who called it "a waste of time" - your responses help validate the survey authenticity). The Strategic Planning Committee anticipates that this survey will assist plans and actions of ARMSS for its many years ahead.



The role of the ARMSS Executive Committee is to lead and support the membership of ARMSS. Therefore the Executive Committee felt it important that you have their contact information. Following is the current list of ARMSS officers:

**James F. Reese, President**

139 Willow Brook Rd.  
Cherry Hill NJ 08034  
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**Bill Gannaway, President Elect**

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785-234-2148  
wgannaway@cox.net

**Claude Klaver, Vice President**

4811 Amherst Dr.  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
907-479-7633  
cjkklaver@acsalaska.net

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518-785-0116  
Lois.Siegel@Verizon.net

**Donna Haines, Secretary**

2800 S. Woodbury Dr.  
Independence, MO 64055  
816-886-2798  
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**Ray G. Bayley Chair  
Strategic Planning Committee**

6209 Mineral Point Rd., #806  
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608-230-3597  
handrbayley@mycidco.com

**John Spaulding, Chair**

**Finance Committee**  
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**Kenneth Smith, Chair  
Governing Body Network**

5646 Correll Ct.  
Ferndale, WA 98248  
360-312-9199  
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## ARMSS VISIT TO CUBA

by Dean Lewis

By invitation of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC), ARMSS members will travel to Cuba between January 29 - February 10, 2009. The visit is a follow-up of the highly successful ARMSS visit of November 2006 and will again be sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Rev. Tricia Lloyd-Sidle, PCUSA Mission Co-Worker with Cuba, and the Rev. Dean Lewis, Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Cuba Connection and ARMSS member, will lead the visit. The program will include visits to congregations in all three IPRC presbyteries as well as to the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, the IPRC camp and conference center, and the National Presbyterian Museum.

Each participant is asked to give or raise at least \$500 for a Mission Gift for the IPRC. The IPRC

Synod Council has asked that PCUSA partners give priority to building up the endowment held in our Presbyterian Foundation for the IPRC. The annual income will be used to put a reliable base under pastoral ministry, both to support current pastors and provide support for retired servants.

**Details:**

(1) The cost will be approximately \$1900-2000 USD which will cover all expenses from Miami, including the January 29 hotel cost in the gateway city, and all expenses in Cuba. Participants are responsible for travel to and from your home and Miami.

(2) Your passport must be valid at least six months after the Feb. 10 departure from Havana – that is, at least until mid-August 2009.

(3) Your “Declaration of Intent to Participate” must be received by September 1, 2008, with final registration and first payment due by October 1, 2008. This is due to the time required for the license and visa processes of the United States and Cuba.

(4) Though the program will not include strenuous activities, travel and accommodations in Cuba can be uncomfortable by US standards.

This is an interesting and hopeful time of change in Cuba for the Cuban people and for the churches, and thus a great time to visit. The “Declaration of Intent to Participate” can be obtained by contacting me at P.O. Box 94, Medanales, NM 87548 or email: deanlewis@cybermesa.com. If you are interested, please complete a form for each potential participant and send it to Tricia soon. Submission of the form is an expression of interest and does

*(Continued from page 1)*

east, and Bob Leech, president and CEO of the Presbyterian Foundation, each hosted a luncheon and brought up-to-date information from their fields of endeavor. Exhibits provided information about numerous Presbyterian-related entities, and representatives were present from several and available for consultation. Among these were Marilyn Cranston from Pittsburgh Seminary and Jack McAnlis of Princeton Seminary; each institution hosted refreshments at breaks. Marilyn Lewis represented Westminster Communities of Florida.

Dean Lewis explained purposes of the "Cuba Connection" which is planning another visit to the Presbyterian church of Cuba; mission teams are able to deliver contributions in support of the Cuban church.

Elder Robert Wilson, with little more than a week remaining in his role of Vice-Moderator of the General Assembly, delivered an inspiring message, and remained in attendance for further contact.

A field trip to visit one of the nation's more successful in shift of services in adjustment to urban demographic change took the conventioners to Westminster Neighborhood Ministries. Steve Crane, director of the Ministries, presented a thumbnail history and description of its work. The Foundation-sponsored luncheon was served on the premises. Youngsters from the vacation church school performed at the final banquet back at the hotel.

A regular feature at the banquet is presentation of Merit Awards to persons nominated by their presbyteries. The award is particu-

larly for services rendered to and through their presbyteries by retirees. The 2008 recipients were: James H. Huffaker of Flint River Presbytery; William G. McAtee of Transylvania Presbytery; David McShane of Lake Michigan Presbytery; and Peter Wendell of Tropical Florida Presbytery. Certificates of appreciation were presented to four Executive Committee members whose terms were completed: Naomi Adamson, Robert Forsythe, William Gannaway, and Walter Sutton, the first three having served effectively as committee chairpersons, and the last as vice-president.

In other articles certain matters discussed at the business meeting are presented. Suffice it at this point to observe that ARMSS now has more than 760 dues-paid members. Whether or not a retiree chooses to be active in the organization, all are encouraged to pay the reasonable (\$20) dues. These make possible the services ARMSS is seeking to provide. Special attention is being focused upon discovery of those who may "fall between the cracks" and their needs. ARMSS is not just a society of the actives.

Need tax deductibility? Dues are not deductible, but contributions to ARMSS are; several have seen fit to exceed their dues by as much as \$100, and many have made smaller gifts. All gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated.

Just a quick note about next year's convention. It will be in Tucson, and not on Father's Day. September 29 to October 2, 2009, ARMSS will meet jointly with the Presbyterian Older Adult

Ministries Network (POAMN). ARMSS folks and their peers in the laity normally are the clientele served by POAMN members, but for a few days all will be one group. Start planning now to be a part of this venture.

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The Convention also brought an opportunity to highlight the ARMSS Mission Focus on Cuba. We were honored by the visit of the Rev. Tricia Lloyd-Sidle, Mission Co-Worker with Cuba and CANAAC, who joined with the Rev. Dean Lewis to lead the Friday Evening Breakout on Cuba Partnership. Participants in that Breakout heard a ten-minute video greeting from the Rev. Daniel Izquierdo, Moderator of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba, thanking ARMSS members for their support and emphasizing the invitation for the ARMSS visit in January 2009. An attractive exhibit table displayed photos of the Cuban Church and its leaders as well as information about the January 2009 ARMSS visit. ARMSS President the Rev. James Reese indicated that he and his wife expect to join the visit, as did several other members. A check for \$445 for the Presbyterian Cuba Connection, representing contributions by ARMSS members from January 1 - June 8, 2008, was presented to Dean illustrating the continuing commitment of ARMSS to stand in solidarity with their faithful Presbyterian sisters and brothers in Cuba.

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Look for a photo gallery of the convention coming in the October newsletter.

## ARMSS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND PLEDGE FORM

Use this form to pay your membership fess for 2008, and to make extra contributions to the work of ARMSS. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and can be given for continuing the general mission of ARMSS, or can be designated to go to the Cuba Connection or the John Rhea fund. Interest from the John Rhea fund is used annually to award scholarships for attendance to the ARMSS Convention.

**Dues of \$20 per person** (\$40 per couple) are for the 2008 calendar year \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Pledge for continuing the mission of ARMSS** (Tax Deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Mission Project:** Cuba Connection (Tax Deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**John Rhea Fund** (Tax Deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print when completing the following information:**

Name of Minister \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Survivor \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers (home, work, cell) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery where you hold membership \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery where you currently reside \_\_\_\_\_

Synod where you hold membership \_\_\_\_\_ Synod where you currently reside \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to ARMSS and mail to:

Lois Siegel, Treasurer  
37 Aspen Road  
Latham, NY 12110

## CONTRIBUTIONS

We are grateful for the contributions which we have received in support of ARMSS.  
It is your gifts that supports our broad ministry.

**The following persons contributed in support of ARMSS since publishing the last newsletter:**

Frank Allard	Solomon & Esther Gruneich	Phyllis Medley
James & Verlee Clinefelter	Wendell & Nora Harford	Barbara Ohly-Dingus
Gordon & Winifred Corbett	Richard & Barbara Huggins	William Paul
Richard & Peggy Cromie	Lewis & Kathy Lancaster	Richard & Joann Schechter
Carl & Shirley Dudley	Dorothy Loye	Howard & Margaret Smith
Paul & Kathryn Epps	Boyd & Mary Jane Lowry	Marie Sovereign
Hal Foster	Robert Lucas	Domingo Rosado
Alida Grady	David & Beth McShane	Frank & Anita Younkin
Mary Lynne Grile		Phillip & Maryalice Zebley

### THANK YOU!

For your generous assistance.

**NOTE:** If we have failed to recognize you as a contributor for this quarter,  
please contact Ginny Nyhuis at: [gnyhuis@verizon.net](mailto:gnyhuis@verizon.net) or: 615-426-1545.

Your support is vital to our program. Please **mark your check ARMSS** and send contributions to:

**Lois Siegel, Treasurer**  
**37 Aspen Road**  
**Latham, NY 12110**

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Their Spouses or Survivors  
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