

Item 4- 2026 BUF Board Nominees

The Nominating Committee is presenting the following four candidates to be elected to the BUF Board of Trustees:

Jim Shaver came to BUF to connect and meet with a community of like-minded people, and he jumped right in and began running a chalice circle with his wife. Jim and his family moved to Birch Bay five years ago and have a child attending Bellingham Technical College. Jim works in information security and, in his spare time, is a beekeeper. Jim also serves on several other committees around Whatcom County. Already having served one year on the BUF board to fill a vacancy, Jim brought prior board experience, technical skill, and a fresh perspective as one of our newer BUF members. Jim is nominated to a new three-year term.

Peggy Jones (she/her) is a retired para-professional in education who spent the last 13 years of her career in a Vision Program, translating braille for blind students and adapting classroom materials so blind and low-vision students could learn alongside their sighted peers. In that work, she regularly collaborated with students, teachers, and parents, and frequently supported school office operations, bringing strong communication, organization, and teamwork skills. Peggy first attended Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship in July 2024, just days after returning to Bellingham, and became a member in October 2024. Since then, she has been an active participant in Chalice Circles, Dining with Friends, and Lunch for All, and has volunteered as a greeter and in the BUF office. She is drawn to BUF's values and its social justice commitments. Born in Burlington and spending her teen years in Bellingham, Peggy spent 42 years in Alaska before coming home. She is the mother of six children (five living) and grandmother of nine. She enjoys reading, quilting, cross stitch and music. Peggy was appointed to the BUF board earlier this year to fill a vacancy, and is now nominated to a new three-year term.

Ellen Berning arrived at BUF 11 years ago straight from Hawaii where she helped my husband run a business when she wasn't busy being a long time state school teacher. Ellen spent years on the administrative team at her school and also volunteered at several Hawaii charities. Ellen embraced BUF from the get-go, realizing that she had always been a Unitarian. Here at BUF, Ellen has been involved in Chalice Circles, book groups, Hospitality committee, Wednesday night dinners and Humanitas where she writes the Humanitas blurb for the Mid-week Update. Ellen

always loves a new challenge and the Board of Trustees at BUF is just that. Ellen is nominated to a three-year term on the Board.

Chris Sorich first came to BUF over 15 years ago after moving to Bellingham from the Midwest and became a member in 2022. He has been involved at BUF as a member of the choir, completing group and individual projects for the Buildings and Grounds committee, and serving as a mentor for the Coming of Age program. Most recently, he's been behind the bar at BUF auctions, serving cocktails and pouring his homebrewed beer and cider. As a jack of all trades by nature, Chris looks forward to helping BUF in myriad ways from maintenance issues to offering his perspective as a parent of young children. He is a chemical engineer and people manager, and looks to bring his leadership, organizational and digital skills to the BUF board. Chris enjoys hiking, biking, backpacking, playing guitar, woodworking and spending time with his wife (Annie) and his two girls (Marta, 8 and Joey, 4). Chris is nominated for a two-year term to fill the position formerly held by Ahwren Ayers.

All four current members of the Nominating Committee will return next year: Kathryn Allen, Rod Haynes, Steffany Raynes, and Annie Sorich.