



April 6, 2008 -
April 19, 2008

Calendar

Sunday, April 6

- 9:00 Social Action Committee
- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Forum on Two Services
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:00 Forum on Two Services
- 6:00 20s & 30s Movie & Potluck

Monday, April 7

- ***** Zen (Call office for time.)
- 9:30 Joyful Parenting SGM
- 6:00 Anti-Racism Action Com.

Tuesday, April 8

- 10:00 Small Group Ministry
- 5:30 Property Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Book Discussion Group

Wednesday, April 9

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 5:00 Admin. Relations Committee
- 6:00 Music Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 10

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 9:00 Newsletter Crew
- 10:00 SGM Steering Committee
- 6:00 Anti-Racism Action Com.
- 6:00 Mysticism Sm. Group Ministry

Friday, April 11

- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, April 12

- 3:00 Youth Sunday Rehearsal
- 6:00 Second Saturday Potluck

Sunday, April 13

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 9:30 Adult Programs Committee
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 OWL Lunch
- 12:30 Peacemaking Forum
- 12:30 Interweave Potluck
- 1:00 "A Conversation with Thoreau"
- 6:00 20s & 30s Movie & Potluck

Monday, April 14

- ***** Zen (Call office for time.)

Tuesday, April 15

- 10:00 Wisdom Wanderers
- 7:00 Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 16

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 17

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 6:00 Practicing Your Faith SGM
- 6:00 VIA Citywide Meeting

Friday, April 18

- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, April 19

On My Mind

"Good news," Moses supposedly said on his way down the mountain. "I got Him down to ten! The bad news is adultery is still on the list."

The multiplication of sins, like the proliferation of commandments, creates mixed feelings. When I heard last month that a high official in the Vatican had released an updated list of the "Seven Deadly Sins," I was glad to see that the new catalogue included offenses like environmental degradation and widening the gap between rich and poor.

On the other hand, the old sins had staying power: lust, greed, envy, anger, sloth, gluttony, and pride. Promulgated originally in the sixth century, these flaws remain as relevant as the headlines.

Lust? The disgraced former Governor Eliot Spitzer fell victim to that old demon, and his successor David Patterson had to admit to extra-marital peccadilloes before even taking his oath of office. Greed? It's the mainstay of the American economy.

I have no problem with the traditional categories of sin. But where traditionalists believe that we are punished *for* our sins, I believe that we are punished *by* them.

Think of drug abuse—a mortal failing on the Vatican's new list. Does anyone suppose that junkies have more fun? It's the same with envy and anger. People living in perpetual fits of jealousy or rage don't need threats of brimstone after death. They've created their own hells, right here on earth.

Whether or not virtue is always its own reward, behaving badly is almost always its own punishment. We make our own misery—as otherwise good men like Mr. Spitzer have discovered. And adultery is still on the list.

Gary

Upcoming Sundays

April Worship Theme: Change

The British Unitarian and naturalist Charles Darwin wrote, *"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."* Change means disruption: when a relationship ends, when we consider a new job, or try to kick old habits. Sometimes change is the enemy, sometimes our best friend. What clues tell us when to hold onto and preserve our present situation and when to embrace transformation for the sake of a new, larger sense of self?

Sunday, April 6, 9am & 11:00 am "Turning Points and Tipping Points"

Change is the law of life (and death). But at moments, the steady beat of change takes on accelerated pace, like water that gradually heats or cools until undergoing a phase shift, becoming vapor or ice. Do institutions, cultures, societies have tipping points? Gary shares his reflections on this Membership Sunday; if you are interested in joining our congregation, please make an appointment to speak with Gary, Roddy or Martha, who will be happy to answer questions and welcome you to the Society.

Sunday, April 13, 9am & 11am "Change: A Thought Provoking, Youthful, Crazy, Fun Filled, Musically Enhanced, Super Charged Perspective"

If you have ever attended a youth-led service, you know how inspiring it is to witness the energy and idealism of our teens. This morning, participants in our Coming-of-Age program will share their credo statements, presented with the usual blend of audacious creativity and verve that only the Young UU Thinkers can conjure up.

Sunday, April 20, 9am & 11am "Who is My Neighbor"

Save the Date

On June 8, immediately following the service, we will be having Roddy's retirement party. Think about what tasty dish to share that you can bring that is fit for the wonder woman that she is. Help make this a very special occasion. Please put it on your calendar or in your blackberry -- right now. This is number one.



And Now a Word From Our DRE...



What associations do you have with the word, "salvation"? What does it mean to you to "be saved"?

Let me share a short story: The summer after 5th grade, I went fishing with my aunt one afternoon. We were fishing off the end of a long dock on a lake. Suddenly, fully clothed, I lost my footing and fell into the lake. I was a solid swimmer, but in my shock I flailed and thrashed, trying to hold the pole and my head above water. "Help! Help me!" I screamed to my aunt. Would someone jump in after me? Would they throw me a flotation ring? My aunt replied in a firm clear voice, "Martha, just relax. The water's only four feet deep. You can stand there. You'll be okay."

In that moment, with that simple, straightforward, key message, she told me a truth that I needed right then: that solid ground was right under my feet and that I could easily reach it. I could relax and stand. I was cold, wet and shaken, but I would be okay. In short, with that message, she saved me.

A couple weeks ago, while at a UU conference, I scribbled in my notes: "*I must be able to articulate our saving message.*"

I think a UU saving message is like the message my aunt gave me that day we were fishing. It offers us reassurance when we're feeling insecure. It helps us relax when we're feeling freaked out about things. It offers clear possibilities in a world that so often feels cloudy and muddled. It reminds us that we're not alone on the journey.

But I must admit, I'm not entirely confident that I know what this particular congregation's saving message is. I've got some ideas... I think I have a handle on some possibilities, but I'm not sure there is *one saving message of ours* that we'd all agree on.

How would *you* articulate First UU's saving message? What are we saying, in words and/or actions, that gives you hope and draws you back again and again? Putting our answer into words may be tricky, but I think the answer, for each of us, is closer than we think. If we have staked our claim with these people, with this faith, with this movement, we do so because it has somehow saved us. And further, we know it has the potential to save others who haven't yet heard its message. It's too good a secret to keep to ourselves.

I encourage you to share with me and others what you feel our saving message is. Be bold and be honest. If Unitarian Universalism saved you, it will surely save others... *if we deliver our saving message loud and clear!* May it be so.

Martha

Book Discussion Group

Please join us for any or all of our discussions. On Tuesday, April 8, we will discuss Disgrace by J.M. Coetzee ("—Disgrace is not a hard or obscure book—it is, among other things, compulsively readable—but what it may well be is an authentically spiritual document, a lament for the soul of a disgraced century."—The New Yorker). We will meet at 7pm at the First UU Society. Please call Bud or Alison Etherton at 658-4126 with questions.

Short Films Fest Planned

CineSlam, Vermont's GLBT Liberation Short Films Fest sponsored by The Kopkind Colony is a one day VIDEOVAPALOOZA-of-a-festival featuring a day full of fun, short films, music and barbecue and takes place Saturday June 14th at Tree Frog Farm Guilford, Vermont. (www.cineslam.com for more information)

Two Services Feedback Forums

This year has seen changes in our Two Service format: the children are present at both services, we have a new Music Director, the hour of worship has shifted slightly, the pulpit has moved—and more. What's working well? What would like you to see more (or less) of? At the behest of our Board, Linda Gross and Doug Facey will facilitate two forums to field your comments and suggestions on Sunday, April 6, right after each service. Childcare will be provided, so parents can participate. Let the Board know your thoughts!

Newsletter News

Next deadline: Monday, April 7, 2008 @9am covering April 20 - May 3, 2008. You can view the newsletter and this year's schedule on our website: www.uusociety.org.

Quota of Fun

We have not had our quota of fun this year so the board is looking to put on a Talent Show this spring. Hear ye, Hear ye, all talent come forward and call Deborah at 999-3456 or e-mail arahanna@gmail.com.

2nd Saturday Potluck

Enjoy good food, wine, conversation, new friends, or singing old songs? Want to have a 'cheap date' with free childcare? Please join us in the UU Parlors for the 2nd Saturday Potluck on Saturday, April 12 at 6pm. Call Richard Kemp at 862-4418 to make reservations. Please let us know whether you are bringing an appetizer, salad, main course, or dessert and how many adults are in your party. If you bring your own dishes, we can save on the use of paper plates. If you need childcare, call early so we can make arrangements. Hope to see you there.



From the Minister Search Committee



After extensive review of an amazing pool of ministerial candidates, we have selected, and the board has hired, Elaine Bomford for the position of assistant minister of our beloved society. For 9 years, Elaine has been the minister for a small congregation in Ashby, MA. As we got to know this minister, through interviews, informal talks, and reference calls, it seemed a good time to review the ministerial attributes you, the congregation, defined last fall through the survey, focus forums and conversations. We heard that you value strong preaching, warmth, caring and openness, acceptance of our theological differences, intellectual stimulation, enthusiasm, humor, excitement about religious education and social justice, and a cooperative leadership style. Elaine, we're happy to report fits that bill! The congregation's participation in this process has helped us stay on target and we thank you. We hope to introduce you to Elaine at a meet and greet weekend this spring. Look for more in upcoming newsletters.

Fresh Air Fund Hosts Needed

Are you looking for a way to turn your faith into action? Share up to two weeks of your summer with a child, and reap the rich rewards of adventure and newfound friendship. As a host family with The Fresh Air Fund, you will help a child experience the freedom of playing outdoors and the simple pleasures of life in your community.

By hosting a Fresh Air Fund child, you are answering a call made back in 1877 when Reverend Willard Parsons asked the families of his congregation to give children living in New York City tenements a brief respite. This tradition of caring continues today through The Fresh Air Fund's Friendly Town Program.

Every summer, thousands of children visit volunteer host families in rural and suburban communities. Fresh Air children on first-time visits are six to 12 years old. (Hosts may request the age and gender of their Fresh Air Fund visitor). Many families enjoy their young guest so much that they invite their Fresh Air child to return, year after year. There are no financial requirements for hosting a child, just a warm heart and home.

The gifts of hosting are mutual. "My host family taught me to be patient, accept other people, and try new things, even when I was afraid of them," said one Fresh Air child. "Our Fresh Air child makes our family appreciate running barefoot through the grass and looking at the stars, things we take for granted," a Fresh Air host explained.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer host family, please contact your local Fresh Air Fund Representative, Karen Allen at lawnmower72393@yahoo.com or at (802)863-8424 (w), (802) 372-5324 (h) or The Fresh Air Fund at 1-800-367-0003. You can also visit the Web site at www.freshair.org.

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First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington's Bicentennial – 2010

A major milestone in our Society's history is only a year and a half away! We will be 200 years old! That is hard to believe but true. I'm looking for some history enthusiasts who would like to begin planning for what we can do in 2010 to celebrate our glorious history. If interested please call Gary De Carolis at 802-863-9132 or e-mail at: meosla@aol.com.

Renowned Historian Brings Thoreau to Life

Richard Smith will act out the character of Henry David Thoreau while reading from some of his works in a program hosted by the 6th grade Boston Trippers and the Adult Programs Committee. The event is scheduled for 1-2:30 pm on Sunday, April 13 in the Sanctuary. Admission by donation.

Mr. Smith will also carry on a conversation with the audience, in and out of the character of Thoreau. Mr. Smith is an expert on the life of Thoreau as well as a re-enactor who has been featured in a public television special. He loves to meet with school groups and will be giving our 6th graders a tour of Walden pond on May 31. His web site is at <http://web.mac.com/jessicaludlumwright/iWeb/RichardSmith/Welcome.html>

New UU Class

Want to know more about Unitarian Universalism? If you are a newcomer or even an "old" comer – the key is that you have lots of questions – we have such a deal for you! Come to the New UU class on April 26th from 9:00am – 12noon, and we will strive to answer your questions about the UU movement and First UU Society of Burlington, in particular. Please be sure to sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board and let us know if you need childcare. Questions? Call Linda Gross at 865-0038 or email lgross@together.net.

Board Begins Planning for Membership Coordinator Position

In the next few weeks, the board will undertake initial talks aimed at eventually adding a Membership Coordinator to our church's staff. Preparing a detailed job description and seeking the financial means to pay for such a position are at the top of our planning agenda; achieving the latter will be difficult and is by no means assured. But many large congregations across the country have hired a Membership Coordinator, and the feedback we've received is that these coordinators have proven invaluable in adding to their church's growth and financial stability. We see this job as a much-needed help and resource especially for our finance, canvass, membership, and nominating committees and in the welcoming and following-up of new prospective members. If you have thoughts or suggestions on how we might proceed, please share them with any board member – or email me at jerroldpac@aol.com. The board will keep the congregation up to date on developments.

Jerrold Packard, Board President

Barnraising Benefit Dance & Auction

Second Annual Barnraising Benefit Dance & Auction with Tammy Fletcher, Saturday, April 5, 6pm. Dance to the music of Tammy Fletcher, bid on auction items large and small, munch on fabulous finger foods! Sponsored by Mt. Mansfield Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship (<http://www.mmuuf.org>) Location: Browns River Middle School in Jericho, VT. Cost: \$20 per person. Contact: Jean Archibald 802-899-5219

The Gospel of Judas

Join Professor Jeff Trumbower, Dean of St. Michael's College, and Gary Kowalski on Sunday, April 27 at 7 p.m. for a lively discussion on the re-discovered early gnostic Christian text that portrays Christ's betrayer as the instrument of divine will. All are invited.

UU Peacemaking Discussion

Most of us are familiar with our denomination's outstanding magazine, UU World. Perhaps you noticed an ad inside the front cover of the current Spring 2008 issue titled "UU Activism by the Numbers." Our First UU Society of Burlington is one of 10% of congregations participating in the Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) on Peacemaking. Five more congregations are joining the Peacemaking CSAI each week, and 263 congregations must participate in the Congregational Poll by February 1, 2009 for the draft Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking to move onto the agenda of the 2009 General Assembly.

We will certainly be one of the congregations voting on the Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking by next February. But in the meantime as a congregation we need to do further exploring of peacemaking issues like the just war tradition, pacifism, and nonviolence. Fortunately, the same Spring issue of UU World features a wonderful article that is well worth reading titled "Prophetic Nonviolence: Toward a Unitarian Universalist Theology of War and Peace" (also available on-line at www.uuworld.org).

On pages 27-33 author Paul Razor notes that the 2006 UUA General Assembly asked congregations to ponder the following controversial question: "Should the Unitarian Universalist Association reject the use of any and all kinds of violence and war to resolve disputes between peoples and nations and adopt a principle of seeking just peace through nonviolent means?" The exploration by our congregation and others will conclude with a "Statement of Conscience" to be considered by the General Assembly in 2010.

To help us formulate our congregation's position, the Denominational Affairs Committee has organized forums, panels and discussions during the past year to increase our critical understanding of peacemaking issues like pacifism, just war and nonviolence. Please join us for a Peacemaking Forum on Sunday, April 13 from 12:30-1:30 PM in the Susan B. Anthony Room. In preparation, please read Razor's article on "Prophetic Nonviolence" and come to our discussion on April 13 with questions and comments to share. Together we will grapple with Razor's challenge to move toward "prophetic nonviolence" as a way for UUs to bridge the gap between just war theory and pacifism.

Razor concludes his provocative article by affirming that "My proposal for prophetic nonviolence links our deep commitment to nonviolence with our historical practice of prophetic critique, and it is supported by several commonalities between the pacifist and just war traditions." Please plan to come on Sunday, April 13 at 12:30 to express your ideas and listen to others. Refreshments will be served.
Dave Conrad, Denominational Affairs

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UU Congregational Leadership Awards Announced

The First UU Society of Burlington is delighted to celebrate the lives of several members of our congregation who have given so much of their time and talent to our Society over the years. Congregational Leadership Awards will be presented for outstanding contributions to Unitarian Universalism at the annual meeting of the Northeast District annual meeting in April. This year we are pleased to honor Beal Hyde and his late wife Peggy as well as Ethan Sims and his late wife Doro. The following is a brief statement about Beal, Peggy, Ethan and Doro that has been sent to the Unitarian Universalist District Office in Concord, New Hampshire.

Beal Hyde and his beloved late wife **Peggy** have been outstanding members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington since 1966 when their children began attending Religious Education classes. It was not long before Beal was taken by the First UU minister at the time to the Montpelier UU church to hear an expert from Beacon Street speak about how to conduct a canvass successfully. As a result of this positive experience, Beal became interested in the canvass, working tirelessly on fundraising over the years.

Beal served as president of the Board of Trustees in 1970 and for about five years worked steadfastly on the Trust Fund Committee. He and Peggy themselves have always donated generously to the First UU Society. As a woodcarver extraordinaire, Beal has contributed several beautiful items, among them a carved version of the UU logo that now resides in the minister's office.

Peggy Hyde, a leader in the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont and the League of Women Voters, also took an active leadership role in the First UU Society. For many years she was a faithful sanctuary committee member and during that process studied many Unitarian Universalist sanctuaries around Vermont and in the Boston area with Doro Sims and others. Peggy also served on the committee to select a new minister, and was an enthusiastic advocate for our current minister, Gary Kowalski. At least three or four times she organized the Women's Alliance annual bazaar.

Since Beal and his late wife Peggy both have given such exemplary service to the First UU Society for more than 40 years, we are proud to nominate them for the Congregational Leadership Award.

Ethan Sims and his beloved late wife **Doro** have made extraordinary contributions to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington for more than 50 years. Ethan met Doro, whose father was a distinguished professor at Harvard, while an undergraduate student. Doro came from a famous family of Unitarians and soon convinced Ethan to become a Unitarian as well. They were married in Boston's King's Chapel. Their three children attended Religious Education classes at the First UU in Burlington where they moved when Ethan was appointed professor of medicine at the University of Vermont.

Ethan led an effort to replace the First UU meeting house steeple after it was destroyed by lightning in 1957, and later he served as Board president. Ethan has remained actively involved in the Society and in 2006 the Board of Trustees voted to honor his many contributions to the world by dedicating the annual report to his life, work and inquiring spirit.

After being diagnosed with insulin-dependent diabetes at age 35, Doro Sims became a national leader in diabetes education. At the First UU Society in the 1950s and 1960s she served as chair of the Music Committee as well as chair of the Church School and Worship committees for several years. After her death in 2001 at the age of 84, First UU minister Gary Kowalski noted that Doro was a source of "living history," adding that "She was valued as a source of wit and wisdom, someone we turned to for inspiration and guidance when we needed to be set on the right track."

Not only did Ethan and his late wife Doro collaborate in their professional work treating and educating people with diabetes, they worked together in an exemplary way to support their faith community. The First UU Society of Burlington is proud to nominate them for the Congregational Leadership Award.
