



February 14, 2010 -
February 28, 2010

Calendar

Sunday, February 14

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Bake/Craft Sale for Haiti
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 10:15 Video: "The Interim Opportunity"
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:15 Video: "The Interim Opportunity"
- 12:30 UU Burl. Animal Ministry
- 12:30 Spirit in Creativity SGM
- 3:00 Family Talent Cabaret
- 6:00 YUUth Group Meeting

Monday, February 15

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 9:00 Newsletter Deadline
- 9:00 Mondays at Martha's
- 10:00 Mondays at Martha's SGM

Tuesday, February 16

- 10:00 Seekers Small Group Ministry
- 12:00 Staff lunch
- 6:00 Assistant. Minister Relations Committee
- 7:00 Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 17

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

Thursday, February 18

- 9:00 Newsletter Crew
- 5:20 UUBF Zen Meditation
- 6:00 Practicing Your Faith

Friday, February 19

- 5:00 UU Dungeons & Dragons
- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, February 20

- 10:00 Wise Together SGM

Sunday, February 21

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 9:30 Care Network Ministry
- 10:00 Bake/Craft Sale for Haiti
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 Talkback
- 12:30 Gary's Committee on Ministry
- 12:30 Social Action Forum
- 7:00 Young Adult SGM

Monday, February 22

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

Tuesday, February 23

- 10:00 Wisdom Sprouts SGM
- 12:00 Staff Lunch

Wednesday, February 24

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 3:00 Psi Symposium
- 6:00 Sapere Aude SGM
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 25

- 5:20 UUBF Zen Meditation

Friday, February 26

- 6:00 Coffee House
- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, February 27

Sunday, February 28

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Bake/Craft Sale for Haiti
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 Spirit in Creativity SGM
- 7:00 Vist to Haiti Presentation

Current Notes

This edition's column is given over to the Board for their comments regarding Gary Kowalski's resignation after a long and fruitful ministry. For my part, these words by Jan Harmon come to mind as I contemplate the changes and constants before us: "...Let us sail the sea, good friend, and let us sing together. The singer lasts a season long, while the song, it lasts forever." - Elaine

Dear First UU Community,

First and foremost, the Board wants to thank Gary for all the energy, love and enthusiasm he has shared during his twenty years with us. We understand that making the decision to leave First UU must have been a difficult one. We share his excitement for the myriad opportunities that surely await him, and wish him all the best.

Life is full of change, adjustment, and transformation. Gary's recent letter announcing his resignation makes us realize how striking change can be. More than likely, many of us are feeling a full range of emotions, from grief and loss to anticipation and interest. Gary's departure will affect everyone in some capacity, whether we have been attending First UU for years or for just a few months. Be assured that wherever you find yourself on this continuum, many in the congregation share your feelings. Gary will join the wonderful group of former First UU Ministers whose kindness, wisdom, insight and grace stay with us.

At the January Board meeting, as is recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Board made the decision to hire an Interim Minister who will likely be in place by late summer. Interim Ministers are specifically trained to help congregations move successfully through the transition process and call a new settled Minister.

Our congregation is well-prepared for this journey. We have a new Mission Statement, clearly articulated goals about to be unveiled, a new Planned Giving Campaign designed to ensure our long-term financial stability, and a stellar staff who will help us bridge this transition. Be assured the Board is ready to take on the challenges ahead with optimism. Please share your feelings, concerns and ideas with us; your input is invaluable. We will keep you informed as the process unfolds.

And as we begin this journey, may Gary's words resonate: "Be guided by your faith and not your fear."

Most sincerely,
Linda Gross,
President, Board of Trustees

Upcoming Sundays

February Worship Theme:

Looking Backward

"The past is not yet over," William Faulkner famously remarked, "It's not even the past." Whether we know and understand our history or not, it haunts and undergirds the present in innumerable ways. Unitarian Universalists have tried to overcome the awful legacies of slavery, sexism and religious intolerance, while preserving what's good in our religious heritage. Look forward in coming Sundays to a variety of speakers who explore our complex roots and cast a vision for the future.

Sunday, February 14, 9am & 11am

"Abigail" Abigail Adams was more than our second First Lady. She was a forward-looking feminist every bit the intellectual and spiritual equal of her pugnacious husband and, like him, a staunch Unitarian with distinctly unorthodox opinions about religion. Their passionate lifelong romance provides the backdrop to this Valentine's Day service. The service will also include a Renewal of Vows for those who wish to participate (see the article included with this newsletter). Gary preaches and our Senior Choir will sing.

Sunday, February 21, 9am & 11am

"The DNA of Religion" Early man used drumming, trance, dance, and music to evoke strong communion with the "higher" powers. This primal form of religion likely evolved even before language, as part of our collective human survival instinct. This lay worship service is inspired by the new book, *The Faith Instinct* by New York Times science writer, Nicholas Wade. We will discuss how all humans respond to these most ancient forms of religion, and why it continues to play a powerful role in our evolution. Jeh Kulu drummers will supply music.

Sunday, February 28, 9am & 11am

"But What Do You People Believe?" The last thirty years have pretty well eradicated most memories of the theologically liberal Christianity of our forebears. But up until the 1960s, in this meetinghouse, the Bible was read, communion was served, and Old Hundred rang out every Sunday. Yet sermon snippets and Sunday School hymns show a few solid central threads of belief uniting the generations. UU Historian Elz Curtiss speaks.

Message From Martha

I spent two years in my late 20's as the assistant coach of a high school girls soccer team. The head coach was a few decades older than me. Highly experienced, he generally planned and led practices, focusing on skills and drills. The girls called me Martha, but they nicknamed him *Commander*.

One week, he alerted me that he would be out of town on Friday, so it was my responsibility to plan practice for that day. I focused on what came naturally to me, and what I felt had been lacking, as far as building the girls' sense of being part of a team: I led them in a series of unusual and cooperative games and team challenges. I was stunned by the fact that in the space of two hours of attention to inclusion, cooperation, silliness and pure fun – I had created a big goofy, giggling monster of sorts. From that day through the rest of the season, the girls shared a new level of camaraderie, trust, and respect for one another and I have no doubt it contributed to their success in subsequent matches.

In UU, I refer to our groups of RE teachers as *teams*, because of the *kind of group that a team is*, when at its best. Our RE program relies on its many steward-players, all with various levels and types of skill, to participate in the play. Communication with one another is key. As in soccer, letting each other know "I've got your back!" or "You've got me here!" allows the one carrying the ball to pass it off to someone else when the pressure's on. Few of us can sustain a dribble for long without losing the ball. And everyone's needed: the more experienced players provide wisdom and leadership to the rookies, and the new faces, in turn, bring fresh energy, ideas and skill to the play.

But teaching RE, even when the team is strong, can be hard! So lest it feel too much like work, I remind everyone to find ways to unleash the fun in it all! This past Sunday, for example, a number of UUs came together just for fun to the Family Cabaret and Talent Show. We laughed, hooted, clapped and cheered to witness the artful skill and courage in our midst. Some of us – children and adults – faced our own nervous performance jitters. We simply had fun and in so doing fed our UU Team Spirit.

Maybe it's time to replace the word "teamwork" with a new one: "teamfun!" Are you with me? Let the fun times roll! And "Go Team!"



Martha Dallas,
Director of Religious Education

Let's Dream Together!

The Stewardship committee is hard at work planning our pledge drive for the upcoming year. Our theme this year is "Let's Dream Together - Building our Next Century". Three fun and informative events will be held during the third week of March: an afternoon tea on Wednesday, March 23rd, an evening dinner on Thursday, March 25th and a brunch on Saturday, March 27th. All members are encouraged to attend one event. Mark your calendars and watch for your invitation and more details in the mail!

*The Stewardship Committee:
Co-chairs, Ken Swearingen and Bill West, Woody Fulton, Linda Gross, Janice Lange, Stephen Rainville, Bill Suiter*

Winding Up The Bicentennial Book

In anticipation of the society's 200th birthday, the Women's Alliance funded through the Board of Trustees, a book-length treatment of the society's life thus far. With the archives chock full and lovingly tended, it shouldn't have been a big deal. But in fact, if I had stuck to the archives, I would have had to call the book "The Mysteries of First UU" and not "The History of..." Our archives are part of the same puzzle as we are. Research has drawn in the UUA archives at Harvard, The Cheshire County Historical Society of Keene, New Hampshire, Bailey-Howe Library at UVM, and, of course, Fletcher Free Library's wonderful information on our town. Stubborn diligence has answered many a frequent question. I look forward to turning it over to Jerry Packard for editing around the bicentennial of the service at which Samuel Clark was installed as the society's first minister: April 19. I wish it had been ready for the party in January, but the first thing I learned is how many generations are going to consult it with full trust in my accuracy. They appreciate your patience. *Elz Curtiss*

Transitions

"Transitions," a group for people who are going through or have recently gone through divorce or separation, meets regularly at the Society. Childcare may be arranged upon request. If you would like to join this group for supportive, confidential sharing, facilitated by Care Network Ministry member Linda Ayer, please contact Linda or Reverend Elaine, elaine@uusociety.org.

VRRP Donations Needed

The Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program is in need of twin beds, full beds, cribs, and dining room chairs. If you would like to make a donation, they can be dropped off weekdays between 9:00 and 4:00 at 462 Hegeman Avenue, Colchester, VT, or contact Ashley Bahlkow at 802-338-4632, abahlkow@uscrv.org. Thank you for your support!

The Interim Minister Search Process

The UUA has a very informative video entitled "The Interim Opportunity" which outlines the process that we will be going through during the next few months in our search for an interim minister. This video features representatives from the UUA Transitions Office as well as members of other UUA congregations who have had the experience of hiring an interim minister. We plan to show the video on February 14 from 10:15 – 10:30 am in the parlor and from 12:15 – 12:30 pm in the Community Room downstairs. Please plan to join us. Members of the Board will attend and listen to your comments and concerns.

Linda Gross, Board President

Benefit Concert for the Peace & Justice Center

Singer/songwriter Catie Curtis at Higher Ground Saturday, February 20 at 7pm; \$20 or \$23 at the door. "Catie captures human kindness in her songs and shows us what the heart can do when it is used as an instrument of love...we admire her ability to see light where so many would see darkness..."

Hearts and Hands to Haiti

Teams of FAHC employees are leaving every Wednesday to work in a clinic in Jimani, Dominican Republic, right on the Haiti border. We are collecting NEW, UNOPENED medical supplies for them to bring in their luggage. Collection bins will be on top of the piano in the Sophia Fahs Community Room and in the back of the Sanctuary. Over the counter medications needed (all sizes and strengths): pain relievers, imodium, cortisone cream, bacitracin, neosporin. Supplies needed: all sizes gauze, bandaids, gloves, tegaderm, kerlix, duct tape, flashlights, batteries, hand sanitizer, insect repellent (DEET 30%). Questions? Melinda Lee 864-5793 or Jean Palmer 288-9566.

Talk Back

Join us for a discussion with our speakers for the DNA of Religion service on February 21, at 12:30PM. The roots of religion as practiced by early humans are disappearing, but still carefully studied and practiced according to ancient traditions by shamanic healers. Peter Clark is a long time practitioner of meditation, systemic balancing and shamanic healing. Sarah Finlay works with shamanic healing and counseling, integrating Jungian psychology. Both will be prepared to discuss with you the inner workings of ancient shamanic practices and how they seeded and integrated with religions.

Artist, Artist!

Barbara Goodman is a longtime member and former president of this Society with a flair for pastel. Her colorful, bold compositions will be on display in our upstairs UU gallery this month and next. Please visit and enjoy!

**First Unitarian Universalist
Society
862-5630**

Gary Kowalski, Minister

*Elaine Bomford,
Assistant Minister*

*Linda Gross,
Board President*

*Martha Dallas, Director
of Religious Education*

*David McFeeters,
Facilities Manager*

*Wayne Schneider,
Music Director
wayne.schneider@uvm.edu*

*Christina Fulton,
Society Administrator*

*Kathleen Kemp,
Administrative Assistant*

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Leave a Lasting Legacy!

With the birth of the First UU Legacy Society, this congregation now has the opportunity to perpetuate UU values into our third century and beyond. By helping to grow the First UU endowment and secure funds to safeguard our beautiful meetinghouse as well as continue our mission of social/economic justice, the Legacy Society's founding members are investing in the future of Unitarian Universalism in Burlington. Bequests or other planned gifts of any amount are welcome. We invite you to join us. If you have not yet been contacted about how to include the First UU in your will, call or e-mail: Sally Conrad, Chair, Planned Giving Campaign, (802) 658-1047 or dconrad@uvm.edu.

PSI Symposium

The newly-formed PSI group, welcoming folks who are interested in psychic, intuitive, spirituality will meet on Wednesday, February 24, at 3 p.m. Currently, we begin our gatherings with substantial time devoted to meditation and prayer, followed by a brief organizational discussion, then a presentation. If you would like to join an exploring, supportive, healing energy-focused circle here at FUUSB, please come! For more information about the general direction of the group, visit www.psi-symposium.org, or contact Stephen Gonzalez, stephengonzalez@watercourse.com or Reverend Elaine.

Spiritual Healing Circle Forming

Join us and participate in a Healing Circle based on the principles of Johrei, Kabala, Qi Gong, Reiki, Science of Mind, Tantra, Taoism, and Wicca. There will be lectures, discussions and practical applications. The Healing is for the body, mind and spirit, for ourselves, our loved ones and our community local and global. All are welcome. Prior knowledge of these subjects is not a requirement. Call Assunta at 802-399-2327 or E-mail her at vascadegamma@yahoo.com to reply. Namaste, Blessed Be!

JUMP Donations

The baby food shelves at JUMP are nearly empty! FUUSB is the sole provider of JUMP's supplies of Similac baby formula and stages 1 and 2 baby food. You may leave your donations in the cupboards in the back of the Sanctuary. There are shopping lists in the pews if you need a further reminder. Your donations are always appreciated! Thank you!

Ellen Wollensack

Renew Your Vows?

Couples who would like to publicly renew their vows of marriage or civil union are invited to do so on Valentine's Day during our Sunday morning services at 9:00 and 11:00 am. Gary will include a brief ritual including poetry and a solemn reaffirmation of commitment for those who wish to say "I Love You" to their partners right out loud. Please contact him, gary@uusociety.org, if you would like to be included in this ceremony.

Gary's Committee on Ministry

Gary's Committee on Ministry is charged with developing improved relations between our senior minister and the Society he serves. If you have comments, suggestions or concerns, please consider attending our next meeting, February 21, from 12:30-1:00 p.m., or contacting committee members Kathy Swartwout, Ron Bernard, Jan Abbott, or Bert Munger.

Book Project Volunteers Wanted

Phil Goodman is interested in creating a small, self-published volume of Gary's best sermons as a lasting memento of his twenty years of ministry. Many of Gary's homilies have already been published in Harper & Row's Best Sermons series and received honors like the Clarence Skinner Sermon Award and UUA Annual Program Fund Sermon Award, while others have been incorporated into the fabric of his many books. If you would like to help with a paper bound edition of some of the quality orations we've heard from our pulpit, please contact Phil at 985-9068 or pdgoodman3317@gmail.com.

Circus Ethics

UU's living in Essex and Essex Junction may want to sign a petition now on our Social Action bulletin board, urging the Champlain Fair to discontinue wild animal shows featuring big cats, elephants, bears and non-human primates. These types of acts are condemned as inherently abusive and cruel by the Humane Society of the United States, the ASPCA, and every other mainstream animal protection agency. Please see Gary Kowalski if you have questions or would like to help with the petition campaign.

Book Discussion Group

Please join us on Tuesday, March 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the UU as we discuss *When the Emperor Was Divine*, by Julie Otsuka. This is the story of one Japanese American family's internment in Utah during World War II. The mother and two children spend three years in filthy cramped internment camps; the father had been taken earlier to New Mexico. The family's post war reunion concludes this powerful story of inconceivable injustice. *Gerry Quinlan*

Young Adults

Are you between the ages of 18 and 35? Want to connect with your Generation Y cohorts in our congregation? Come to a gathering on Sunday, February 21, at 7 p.m. where we'll be exploring the creation of a Millennial Small Group Ministry. Small Groups are sharing circles of 8-10 participants, where trust and confidentiality enable a deeper sharing of life's struggles and celebrations. Questions? Contact Gary Kowalski, gary@uusociety.org.

A Post-Earthquake Visit to Haiti: Presentation and Discussion

Local Healthcare providers from Fletcher Allen and the community have been volunteering in hospitals and clinics in Haiti and along the border in the Dominican Republic. One such group was accompanied by a news team from WCAX-TV, photographer Bob Davis and reporter, Kate Duffy. Join them for a presentation about their visit on February 28 @7pm. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the UU Anti-Racism Action Committee (ARAC).

*Monica Sargent,
Anti-Racism Action Committee Co-chair*

Bake and Craft Sale

Haiti Benefit three Sundays in a row: February 14, 21, 28 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the UU. Kids particularly are welcome to bake or craft! Please sign up to donate baked and handcrafted items -- signup sheets will be on the bulletin board. Proceeds will go to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee for Haiti relief. Questions? Jean Palmer, 288-9566

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Splinters From the Board

Transitions seemed to be the theme of the January Board meeting. David Bardaglio became a new board member by taking on the role of Treasurer of the Society. He relieved Bill West of that duty so that Bill can serve as Co-chair of the Stewardship Committee. David promptly provided a budget report to the board, with the good news that we are currently projecting a surplus thanks primarily to the very successful fundraising auction, but also due to the austerity built into the budget this year. Bill West described a transition to a new type of Stewardship campaign, featuring social events and the theme: Let's Dream Together. As we make the transition to the third century of our society, the campaign invites members and friends to imagine what our Society can do in this new century. The final transition of the meeting was quite emotional, as Gary Kowalski informed us of his plans to conclude his ministry with us this summer. Board members expressed grief at Gary's departure, gratitude for his time with us, warm wishes for his future, and appreciation for the confidence he has placed in our ability to move forward. The board proceeded to do so by creating an interim task force, with Board Secretary Daniel Wilds as chair. The task force will facilitate the hiring of an interim minister via a standard process prescribed by the UUA.

Jonathan Sands, Trustee at Large

Loose Plate for Charity

On December 20th and December 27th, our congregation pledged to contribute 50% of our Sunday Loose Plate Collection to the Greater Burlington Multicultural Resource Center. I am proud to report that our congregation will be sending a check to them for \$547.29.

On January 3rd and January 10th, we pledged to contribute 50% of the loose plate collection to COTS. On these two dates we collected a total of \$860.17, and we will be sending them a check for \$430.08.

The Anti-Racism Action Committee's Scholarship Fund will received ½ of the collection on January 27th, or \$251.15.

We collected \$592.44 on January 24th. Half of that amount, or \$296.22 will be given to the Burlington High School Emergency Needs Fund.

On February 14th and 21st we will be collecting for Champlain Housing Trust, and on February 28th and March 7th we will be collecting for Vermont Refugee Resettlement. Please come prepared to be generous!

Our Loose Plate for Charity program benefits non-profit agencies that are located in or serve residents of the Old North End of Burlington. If you would like to nominate an agency to receive our collection, please contact Christina Fulton at xina@uusociety.org or 862-5630 ext. 22.

Spirit in Creativity SGM

The Spirit in Creativity Small Group Ministry will begin on February 14th @12:30 at the First UU. There is still room for a few more people. If you are interested, please sign up on bulletin board or call Susan Raimy, (872-9707) or email susanraimy@juno.com.

Next Newsletter Deadline

The next deadline is Monday, February 15, 2010 @9am covering events from February 28 - March 14, 2010.

Multi-Faith Calendar

February 14 (Taoist, Confucian) New Year for China, Tibet, Vietnam, Korea

February 17 (Christian) Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

February 19 (UU) Phoebe Hanaford ordained in Hingham, MA, in 1868, the first women minister in New England.

February 25 (Islam) Birthday of the Prophet Mohammed.

February 28 (Jewish) Holiday of Purim, celebrating victory over an oppressive ruler as recounted in the book of Esther.

February 27 (UU) Birthday of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, born 1807.

February 28 (Hindu) Holi, a festival dedicated to Krishna or Kama.
