



February 15, 2009 -  
February 28, 2009

## Calendar

### Sunday, February 15

9:00 Worship Service  
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group  
11:00 Worship Service  
12:30 Social Action Forum  
3:30 VIA Mayoral Candidate Forum

### Monday, February 16

\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time)  
9:00 Newsletter Deadline

### Tuesday, February 17

10:00 Wisdom Wanderers  
12:00 Staff Lunch  
7:00 Board Meeting  
7:00 UU Kids Fun Group Planning

### Wednesday, February 18

9:00 Staff Meeting  
6:30 UU Knitting Group  
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

### Thursday, February 19

9:00 Newsletter Crew  
7:00 Denominational Affairs Film:  
Encounter Point

### Friday, February 20

6:30 AA Men's Group

### Saturday, February 21

### Sunday, February 22

9:00 Worship Service  
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group  
11:00 Worship Service  
7:00 Young Adult SGM

### Monday, February 23

\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time.)  
5:00 All Committee Night

### Tuesday, February 24

12:00 Staff Lunch  
7:00 VIA Benefit Concert

### Wednesday, February 25

9:00 Staff Meeting  
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

### Thursday, February 26

10:00 SGM Steering Committee

### Friday, February 27

6:30 AA Men's Group

### Saturday, February 28

9:30 Couples Workshop

## VIA Mayoral Candidates Forum

Join Vermont Interfaith Action on Sunday, February 15 from 3:30-5pm at the First UU Society in Burlington for a Mayoral Candidates Forum. VIA will present research and personal stories, and ask questions of the candidates, on issues of public safety, affordable housing, and youth issues. All four candidates have agreed to participate. Please come and join us as we put our faith into action!

## Current Notes

So, what about the Super Bowl? Was that a great game? Springsteen and the E-Street band weren't bad either.

On Super Bowl Sunday afternoon, I was walking up the cellar stairs with a load of clean laundry when I heard Keith's incredulous exclamations. He was watching the last play of the first half. The Cardinals were two yards away from a touchdown, with three chances to get there. The Cardinal quarterback fumbled and Steeler James Harrison, a linebacker (a guy whose main job is to tackle and block, not a lithe runner), captured the ball. Millions watched as Harrison, #92, plowed his way 100 yards up the field from one end zone to the other. He made the longest run in Super Bowl history, ending with a dramatic barely-in-bounds touchdown. For a bonus, since there are only 100 yards in the field to begin with, no one will ever top his record.

In that roaring arena, James Harrison had what must be one of the most amazing experiences a mortal can enjoy. Steelers were up 10 points going into halftime.

It was shocking and sad when Harrison was shown in another significant event in the second half. A Cardinal was down on the field, and #92 was punching him repeatedly. After the other player staggered to his feet, Harrison continued at him with powerful, deliberate jabs and quick swings. James Harrison got a penalty, but he wasn't removed from the game. In the space of one hour, he had exposed his gold and bilge to the world. What a lesson.

At half time, did you take up the Boss' invitation to "push back the guacamole and turn up the TV"? I was moved by words from Springsteen's song "I'm working on a dream."

"Rain pourin' down, I swing my hammer  
My hands are rough from working on a dream...  
The sun rise up, I climb the ladder  
The new day breaks and I'm working on a dream."

Ditto.

**Elaine**

## Upcoming Sundays

### February Worship Theme: Equality

This month we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin—both religious seekers and liberal thinkers whose legacies shaped the modern world. If all people are equal, who counts as a person? Why are some born with greater privileges than others (and what special privileges do you enjoy)? What reparations do we owe to victims of discrimination and past injustice? What would a society with genuinely equal opportunity look like?

**Sunday, February 15, 9 & 11am**  
**"Staying Mindful When You're Out on a Limb, Observations from a Decade of Trying"** Our special guest this morning is Gaye Symington of the Mount Mansfield Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, former Speaker of the Vermont House of Representatives. Symington is married to Chuck Lacy, former president of Ben and Jerry's ice cream. The couple have three teenage children. Symington attended Williams College as an undergraduate, and holds a master's degree in business administration from Cornell University.

**Sunday, February 22, 9 & 11 am**  
**"Holding Hands with Eve"** In a legendary exchange, the year after the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, Thomas Henry Huxley met Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, at a gathering of the British Association called to debate the startling new theory that all living beings derived from a common ancestor. Famously, the Bishop spoke with a "light, scoffing tone" as he turned a smile on his antagonist and begged to learn, whether it was on his grandmother' or grandfather's side that Mr. Huxley claimed to be descended from an ape? This morning, Gary reflects on how Huxley might have answered, in the light of new anthropological and genetic research.

**Sunday, March 1, 9 & 11 am**  
**"Addiction"** Families in Vermont are being torn apart by addiction, and there is a growing number of addictive drugs being circulated even in our most rural communities. Recent research indicates that spiritual communities have a very important role to play in helping individuals and families to address the problem. More than ever, we are in this together! This worship committee lay-led service will explore how to support a recovering addict, how addiction is treated, and the role of our UU community in coping with this societal problem.



## Message From Martha



I've been struggling recently with my physical life. My health would be more vibrant if I could stick with a cardiovascular workout routine, if I stretched my body more, maybe even if I did some strength training. But my darn will is weak these days. My well-informed mind keeps losing out to my body's procrastination and laziness.

When I am physically active, I tend to prefer solo activities. I'll take a long walk or go for a hike or a bike ride. And the simplest cardio routine in my repertoire is running (okay, jogging), which I've enjoyed on and off most of my life. Many times I've found myself in that easy groove, feeling bright, strong, and alive... experiencing a true healthy high. One of the surest ways, I find, to set the stage for a spiritual moment or insight, is to take your physical self to places it doesn't go most of the time. Push it, stretch it, challenge it, work it, test it... and that bigger You may suddenly happen, and you may smile at your awareness in that moment.

Some people, familiar with these kinds of experiences, consider themselves spiritual, but not religious. Their quest for meaning is independent and free, not bound by the fetters of a particular religion, some of which might seem meaningless, irrational, or simply disagreeable. But I'd argue there's good reason to "nest" one's spiritual life in religion. Many (not all!) of the old roots bear wisdom and treasure. And religion offers community, a group of buddies to share in the quest.

I guess my physical life, which I like to practice in a solo manner, is as such somewhat like an individual spiritual practice. Maybe what I think about how spirituality fits into religion can apply to my physical life too. Perhaps somehow "nesting" my best physical intentions in a wider community of physically active folks would give me that support, accountability, encouragement, and inspiration to continue when the going gets rough.

Some of you are thinking: Just join a gym! Maybe for you, a gym is the perfect place to worship the body temple. Not for me. Forking over money for a chance to pant away on a machine in a room with a bunch of other sweating people is a mix of public and private that I can't relate to.

I need a workout community (is that what to call it?) that's a match for me, physically, the way Unitarian Universalism fits me spiritually and religiously. I need something that is liberating, but challenging; that leaves me alone, yet provides support, encouragement, and hope. If you've got recommendations, let me know!

Meanwhile, I'll hope to respond to the call of that healthy high... maybe that will get me up and at 'em!

Martha Dallas,

Director of Religious Education

## Thank you, Thank you!

Your participation in this year's Guest at Your Table was much appreciated! Many of you joined the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee for the first time, or renewed your membership. We are most appreciative of your support of the wonderful work being done by our denomination's service committee.

If you have not sent your UUSC membership contribution recently, we hope that you will do so now. Last year 24% of our First UU Society of Burlington members were UUSC members, but we are hoping that this year 30% or possibly even 40% of our congregational membership will join the UUSC. Won't you help by renewing your membership, or by joining UUSC for the first time? Membership levels are: \$40 Regular, \$75 Dual(2 adults), \$20 Senior (65+), \$10 Student and Youth. Gifts of \$100 or more are matched dollar-for-dollar by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY. Membership contribution envelopes are available on the tables in the back of the Sanctuary and in the Parlors, or you can go to [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) and send your contribution online. Please be sure to mention our First UU Society of Burlington when you respond. Thank you again for your support of the UUSC!

*Dave Conrad,  
Denominational Affairs*

## Loose Plate for Charity

On January 4th and January 11th we collected a total of \$1,333.95. One half of that amount, or \$666.97 will go to the Association of Africans Living in Vermont. On January 18th and January 25th we collected \$970.29, half of which will go to Mercy Connections. These amounts are truly amazing and will benefit people in our community during this coming winter. Which agencies are next on our list? On February 15th & 22nd we will be collecting for Vermont Refugee Resettlement and on March 1st and March 8th we will be collecting for RU12? Community Center. Please come prepared to be generous!

Loose Plate for Charity collections go to non-profit agencies that serve residents of the Old North End. If you would like to nominate an agency, please contact Christina at 862-5630 ext. 22 or email at [xina@uusociety.org](mailto:xina@uusociety.org).

## Picture This

In preparation for our bicentennial celebration we are looking for photography buffs:

- 1) We need a photographer (or a small team) to take digital pictures of events at the UU throughout the next year with the goal of a slide show to be shown in 2010.
- 2) We need a photographer/PhotoShop techie to copy/scan old photographs in our archives to preserve them and to facilitate their inclusion in the bicentennial celebration slide show.

Please contact Judy Brook at 865-0557

or [jbrook@gmail.com](mailto:jbrook@gmail.com).

## Couples Workshop

On Saturday, February 28, Gary will offer a workshop/playshop for married, unionized and committed partners from 9:30 am to 1:30 p.m. Using fun, non-threatening communication exercises, participants will revisit their reasons for valuing their partners and work together on mutual strategies for enhancing their relationship. The session is free. You need bring only a brown bag lunch. But because the group is limited to ten couples, you must pre-register and agree to attend the entire half day. Please contact Gary at 862-5630 ex. 24 ([gary@uusociety.org](mailto:gary@uusociety.org)) to reserve your spot.

## Ethics of Good Citizenship

The Social Action Committee is sponsoring a series of forums on the Ethics of Good Citizenship. Our first forum featured economist Dr. Elaine McCrate as presenter and resulted in much good discussion. Our second forum will be held on Sunday, February 15 at 12:30. Our presenter will be Roseanne Greco, a retired Air Force Colonel who specialized in nuclear arms control. We expect lively discussion after her presentation. Bring your cup of coffee from the Parlors or the Community Room to go with the light refreshments that we will serve.

*Jeanne Parsley,  
Social Action Committee*

## A Message from the Nominating Committee

The UU Nominating Committee is the group of volunteers who put together a slate of candidates for vacancies as they come up on the Board of Trustees and on the Council. This year the 6 members on the committee are Claire Graham-Smith, Terry Jeroloman, John Lincoln, Bill Klock, Bill Suiter, and Pat Allen. We have filled some vacancies and we have other available positions. Are you ready to take on more responsibility in your personal stewardship plan? Would you like to be more involved in the UU and the work of the Board or various committees? If your answer is yes, give one of us a call or send an email message to one of the committee members. Tell us of your interests and we'll find a match for you! (We're all in the UU Directory.)

The Board has asked the Nominating Committee to form a new committee, a Fundraising Committee. Its purpose is to plan a fundraiser that will help meet the expenses of the UU. Hopefully, a fundraiser can be planned for this spring or early summer. Past fund raisers have included a service auction, a silent auction, prepared food for the annual city jazz festival, plays, etc. Plans are to create an ongoing committee. Would you like to be part of it? Contact us on the Nominating Committee. We're all ears.

*Pat Allen for the Nominating*

**First Unitarian Universalist  
Society**  
862-5630

*Rev. Gary Kowalski, Minister*

*Rev. Elaine Bomford,  
Assistant Minister*

*Jerrold Packard,  
Board President*

*Martha Dallas, Director  
of Religious Education*

*David McFeeters,  
Facilities Manager*

*Wayne Schneider,  
Music Director*  
[wayne.schneider@uvm.edu](mailto:wayne.schneider@uvm.edu)

*Christina Fulton,  
Society Administrator*

*Kathleen Kemp,  
Administrative Assistant*

Email: [office@uusociety.org](mailto:office@uusociety.org)  
Web Page: [www.uusociety.org](http://www.uusociety.org)

#### Committee

### Quilt Making

Would you like to spend a Saturday making quick quilts for the COTS Family Shelters? I have lots of pre-cut six-inch blocks of fabric. We will each bring our sewing machines, shears, bag lunch to the First UU Sophia Fahs Community Room and I will show you how to put together some very easy quilts. But, I need to know how many people are interested before I finalize this project. Call me (864-3516) or email me ([ritabortz@aol.com](mailto:ritabortz@aol.com)) and I will set this up. It is lots of fun! *Rita Bortz, 864-3516*

### Piano Angels

Our Music Committee is seeking a fine piano to complement our sanctuary. The electronic Kurzweil keyboard that we purchased with our organ restoration has proven less than satisfactory for concert level play. A better piano would allow the Society to attract recitals and be a musical resource to the community, as well as providing enjoyment for our own members on Sunday mornings. If you have a suitable instrument that you would like to donate—or if you would like to contribute to the purchase of a quality piano worthy of the value our congregation places on good music—please speak to Music Chair Woody Fulton or our Music Director Wayne Schneider.

### Now Available!

For your convenience, you may check out a CD of any worship service. If you cannot attend services for any length of time due to illness or injury, let us know (862-5630, [office@uusociety.org](mailto:office@uusociety.org)) and we can either mail you a CD of the service or a written copy of the sermon while you are away. Most sermons are available on our website [www.uusociety.org](http://www.uusociety.org).

## First International Convocation of UU Women

Join liberal religious women from around the world in Houston, Texas, February 26-March 1 for a conference on "Weaving Global Partnerships to Enrich Women's Lives." Hear outstanding speakers like Rebecca Parker, Dean of Starr King School for Ministry and Sharon Welch, Provost of Meadville Lombard Theological School. Experience musicians like Carolyn McDade, composer of "Spirit of Life." Find sisterhood for the journey! Program and registration details are available at [www.icuuw.com](http://www.icuuw.com).

## Wine Country Holiday

*"Napa was as delightful as I had expected. What was equally important and somewhat unexpected was the profound connections I felt with my hosts and hostesses."*

Carol Lim, Los Angeles

The UUs of Napa, California proudly announce an addition to our successful Wine Country Excursion program which we have offered the past 3 years.

In a year when overseas vacations are harder on the budget, why not plan a trip here in America? There is so much to see and do in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, e.g. wine education and tasting, art, history of the regions, gourmet dining, bicycling and hiking to explore the natural beauty of our hills and valleys and only an hour to San Francisco!

Sites of particular interest include Jack London's home; renowned and boutique wineries; numerous fine restaurants including the Culinary Institute of America; the diRosa Art and Nature Preserve; many museums and galleries; miles of bicycling and hiking trails, etc.

We offer two choices: Comfortable lodging in members' homes with full breakfast (up to 3 nights), or lodging plus our renowned Wine Country Excursion 2-day tour package.

In 2009 our program will run from April through October. Our fees for lodging are at least 25% below market rate (and include a scrumptious breakfast!) and tours are about 50% below commercial rates. All proceeds go to our small fellowship. We have limited openings, so contact us now for details. Tom Wilson (707.254-7443) or [2wilsons1dog@comcast.net](mailto:2wilsons1dog@comcast.net) - Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of North Bay

## Next Newsletter Deadline:

Monday, February 16, 2009 @9am covering March 1 - March 14, 2009. Articles gladly accepted before this deadline! You can view the newsletter and current year schedule on our

website: [www.uusociety.org](http://www.uusociety.org).

## Lincoln's Bible?

Several people asked about the sources for my sermon about Abraham Lincoln's religious beliefs. The primary reference used was Allen Guelzo's *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President*, winner of the 2000 Lincoln Prize. Thanks to our own resident Lincoln scholar Jerrold Packard, author of *Lincoln in the White House: Four Years That Shattered A Family*, for suggesting this and other biographies. *Gary Kowalski*

## Joys and Sorrows

The tradition of sharing "Joys and Sorrows" during Sunday morning worship has a long and cherished history in many UU Congregations. Here in Burlington, Joys and Sorrows made a comeback after an absence of many years. There was a time when members would stand up and share their joy or sorrow with the entire congregation. As our membership grew, this practice became impractical and very time consuming. That is when Gary decided to try a new method, and introduced the Joys and Sorrows Book.

My concern today is, "How do we share our Joys and Sorrows in a way that is appropriate and respectful?" It is important to remember that Joys and Sorrows should be about yourself. Make sure that you are telling your own story and not someone else's. It is very natural to want to let people know about another member who is ill. However, unless you have their explicit permission to share this information, it is not your story to tell. We would never want to "out" someone who does not wish to be "outed." Let me provide an example:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Not OK: | I have a concern that Jane Doe was just diagnosed with cancer.   |
| OK:     | I have a concern that my good friend was just diagnosed with cancer.   |
| OK:     | Of course if you are Jane Doe and wish to let everyone know that you have cancer, then by all means feel free to share that information. |

Remember that not everyone wishes to share their personal situation with the entire congregation. If inappropriate information is written in the Joys and Sorrows Book, it will not be read aloud. Thank you for helping to make this tradition a wonderful and respectful experience for everyone.

## Connection, Wonder, Transformation

How do we become our most generous selves, find our "G spot" as it were? Perhaps when we find a group of people who gather to support one another freely on our journey to self and selflessness, compassion, and caring. Maybe then we can reach the point of ecstatic giving in support of what we say we believe. Please consider this thought as we pledge in support of our UU home and all that it provides us.

*Stephen Rainville,*

**First Unitarian Universalist Society**  
**152 Pearl Street**  
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**(802)862-5630**  
**www.uusociety.org**

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## Vermont Least Religious?

A recent Gallup Poll asked 35,000 Americans the question, "Does religion play an important role in your life?" Based on the answers, Mississippi turned out to be the most religious state in the Union (where over 85% of respondents answered yes), while little Vermont was the least godly, with less than half answering in the affirmative.

But opinion polls don't tell the whole story. If the Magnolia State is the most pious, why does it have the highest statistics for child poverty (32.8%) while the Green Mountain State has the lowest (under 11%)? Why does Mississippi guarantee workers a minimum wage of just \$6.55 per hour, while Vermont is well above federal standards at \$8.06? And why does the Southern Poverty Law Center list twenty-seven active hate groups in that southern state, ranging from the Ku Klux Klan to the National Association for the Advancement of White People, while the state Gallup calls "least religious" has exactly zero hate groups within its borders?

I don't want to bash Mississippi. But maybe practicing tolerance, caring for your neighbor, and creating jobs that pay a just wage are just as important as paying lip service to the divine.

Garrison Keillor once said that if sitting in church makes you a Christian, then sitting in a garage must make you a car. Faith isn't just about opinion polls or professing your beliefs. It's about how you live your life. By that test, Vermonters do okay.

Does religion play an important role in your life? Ask yourself, what portion of your income you give to charity? What volunteer commitments have you made to your community? When was the last time you performed some generous action—without expecting a payback or recognition for your efforts? *Gary Kowalski*

## Performance Review Process

The annual Society performance review process of our ministerial team and staff is underway. A strength-based approach is an underlying principle for ministers and staff performance appraisals. We are looking for constructive feedback to help improve how each minister and staff can advance their performance. Also if someone is doing an outstanding job in your opinion we would love to hear about it. All of this information will feed into individual performance appraisals done by supervisors with staff with the one exception: Gary Kowalski, Senior Minister who receives his performance appraisal directly from you!

In order to receive the most robust level of information a number of different vehicles will be used to gather your thoughts and ideas. We will hold public forums on the dates, times and places listed below.

### **Sunday, March 1 (for operations staff)**

10:00 a.m. in Parlors - 12:00 p.m. in Sanctuary

### **Sunday, March 22 (ministers, DRE, music director)**

10:00 a.m. in Parlors - 12:00 p.m. in Sanctuary

**Surveys** will be sent to select groups of people to gather thoughts and ideas on individual staff members. If you receive one of these surveys your thoughtful and timely response is greatly appreciated. *Gary DeCarolis, Personnel Committee*

## Is Mideast Peace Possible?

It's easy to become discouraged when it comes to achieving peace in the Middle East. But some Israelis and Palestinians who have lost loved ones are working hard to connect with each other.

As part of our congregation's ongoing exploration of "Peacemaking," the Denominational Affairs Committee is sponsoring an outstanding film called "Encounter Point" on Thursday evening, February 19 at 7:00 PM in the First UU Society Parlors.

Made in 2006, "Encounter Point" was produced and directed by Ronit Avni. Here is a short description of this one and a half hour film: "As violence continues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some of those touched by the bloodshed become advocates for peace. This documentary introduces citizens on both sides for whom an end to conflict has become a personal crusade. Family members of slain Palestinians and Israelis, both military and civilian, share their stories and how they've turned their grief into a force for change in the region through an organization called Bereaved Families Forum." Please join us on February 19 to view and discuss this inspiring film. *Dave Conrad, Denominational Affairs*

## UU Group Fun for Elementary Kids

Parents, do you want your kids to make friends here and feel more deeply connected to the UU community? Perhaps this is

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one of the reasons you bring your child to RE? I think these connections could be facilitated by regular FUN activities here at the church – maybe one or two Saturday evenings per month. A group of us met on 2/1 to begin the planning but we need your ideas and energy! Meet in the Community Room Tuesday night 2/17 at 7 p.m. to finalize plans. Contact Jean Palmer for info or to volunteer. 288-9566 or [jeanpa@pshift.com](mailto:jeanpa@pshift.com)

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