



The First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont
“An Intentionally Diverse Community”

March 11, 2007 -
 March 24, 2007

Calendar

Sunday, March 11

- 8:45 Family Sing
- 9:00 Worship Service
- 9:00 Adult Programs Committee
- 10:00 Women’s Spirituality Group
- 10:30 Children’s Choir Rehearsal
- 11:00 RE Worship
- 11:15 Worship Service
- 12:30 Denominational Affairs Film
- 12:30 Interweave Potluck
- 1:30 OWL Class

Monday, March 12

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 9:30 Joyful Parenting SGM
- 6:00 Yoga
- 7:30 Society Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 13

- 10:00 Small Group Ministry
- 5:30 Property Committee Meeting
- 6:00 Quilt Group
- 7:00 Book Discussion Group

Wednesday, March 14

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 6:30 Building Your Own Theology
- 6:15 Music Committee Meeting
- 7:30 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 15

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 12:00 VIA Clergy Meeting
- 6:30 Feminist Theologies SGM

Friday, March 16

- 6:00 Social Action Film & Potluck
- 6:30 AA Men’s Group

Saturday, March 17

- 5:00 Burlington UU Circle
- 5:00 Jeopardy Night

Sunday, March 18

- 8:45 Family Sing
- 9:00 Worship Service
- 9:15 Lay Ministry Committee Mtg.
- 10:00 Women’s Spirituality Group
- 10:30 Children’s Choir Rehearsal
- 11:00 RE Worship
- 11:15 Worship Service
- 12:15 Nominating Committee Mtg.
- 12:30 Social Action Committee Mtg.
- 12:30 Anti-Racism Action Com. Mtg.
- 12:30 6th Grade Spaghetti Lunch
- 7:00 UU Principles Revisited

Monday, March 19

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 12:00 Monday Lunch Bunch
- 6:00 Yoga

Tuesday, March 20

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

Wednesday, March 21

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 5:30 Mysticism SGM
- 7:30 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 22

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 6:30 Building Your Own Theology

Friday, March 23

- 6:30 AA Men’s Group

Saturday, March 24

On My Mind

How far are the stars? Unimaginably distant. Global Surveyor has visited Mars, Cassini swung by Saturn, and Voyager is now headed beyond the solar system. But no spacecraft (and no human being) will ever visit Betelgeuse or Vega.

The light of faraway suns can still reach us long after the star itself has died, just as the influence of those we cherish radiates far beyond their lifetime. Even ashes can shine.

Along with my mother, I think of all the other bright women in our Unitarian Universalist galaxy: Doro Sims and Evie Carter, Dorrie Senghas, Louise Hirss, Grace Smith, Caroline MacDonald, Grace Anthony and others now passed to a realm as unattainable as the firmament. They were the generation who endured the Great Depression. They maintained the home front during World War Two. They pioneered feminism. They were gutsy, smart, warm, funny. Stellar.

And of course they gave us birth. Our bodies are literally built from the elements of now defunct stars. Somewhere I read that every hour, one ten thousandth of an ounce of starlight pours down on each acre of the earth, a gentle, never ending rain. All this gives me comfort.

But the stars are beyond contact, out-of-our touch if not out-of-our-thoughts. And some days, like E.T., all I want to do is phone home.

Gary

Revisiting UU Principles

What do the Seven Principles mean to you? The UUA’s Commission on Appraisal is inviting congregations to consider changes or improvements to our current statement of principles, adopted back in 1985. Gary Kowalski will lead a two hour workshop, enabling as many as would like to participate in this democratic process of defining our core values and the vision we share for our denomination, on Sunday, March 18, from 7-9 p.m.

Upcoming Sundays

March Worship Theme:
 Money and Commitment

What is the relationship between net worth and inner worth? Do your life commitments—how you spend your time, energy and cash—reflect your deepest values and priorities? How can money become our servant rather than our master? *“Money, which represents the prose of life, and which is hardly spoken of in parlors without an apology, is, in its effects and laws, as beautiful as roses.”*
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sunday, March 11, 9 & 11:15am

“Transcendental Wild Oats” Louisa May Alcott’s hilarious send-up of her father’s misguided adventures on the “Fruitlands” commune points to a lesson about money and commitment. Follow your dreams—but count the cash. Gary will preach and the choir will sing.

Sunday, March 18, 9 & 11:15am

“Tragedy of the Commons?” This sermon from Gary’s archival collection is newly updated and more relevant than ever for a world coping with the effects of global warming, overpopulation and loss of biodiversity. Unlike biologist Garrett Hardin’s essay of the same title, our minister finds reason to hope that human beings collectively may have a future.

Sunday, March 25, 9 & 11:15am

“The Faith That Chooses Us” For Celebration Sunday, marking the finale to our fundraising campaign for 2007-2008, Gary invites us to consider Unitarian Universalism from a new perspective—not a faith that we choose, but one that grabs and seizes us. The choir will sing.

Interweave Special Event

Please note that the April GLBTIQQA Interweave potluck will move to the third Sunday, April 15, due to Easter Sunday the week before.

At this April Interweave, there will be a creative activity after the potluck for those who wish to participate. We will be creating face masks (like one might wear to a masquerade ball) which will be used for decorating the sanctuary for the 20th Anniversary Coming Out Service in October, 2007.

The masks that we make at this event can represent who we are today or who we have been in the past, who we have hid, or who we pretend to be. Materials will be provided. (You can also bring your own materials – for example, a magazine photo or item you want to put on the mask.) Please come to this creative, welcoming event!

**Religious Education
News**

I returned recently from my vacation in Thailand. I experienced a wonderful blend of cultural richness, stimulation, and relaxation! Spending some time in another culture helps to freshen my perspective on our own.

Approximately 97% of Thais are Buddhist. Colorful, gold-glinting temples appear around seemingly every corner in the towns and villages. Their roofs are steep, with a concave slope, and the peaks are adorned with stylized "nagas," to remind one of the great cobra-like creature who protected the Buddha from rain as he was meditating.

Monks walk about, robed in hues ranging from saffron to orange to brown. In the morning, the young monks come barefoot into the open markets, begging for the day's food which they then take back to the temples and share with their brothers.

Every taxi we took had been blessed by the driver's special monk. The monk uses powder and gold leaf to make a patterned mark on the ceiling of the cab, as he says a blessing of protection for the cabbie and future passengers. The drivers keep photos of their monk hanging from the rear view mirror, along with good luck charms and Buddha amulets. As we zipped through lanes of urban traffic, I wondered how much my own additional prayers might help me feel safer!

What I experienced of Thai Buddhism has got me thinking about how we "show" our religion (or not) and how much that matters. For us, where UU's are a teensy minority religion in America, showing our "UU-ness" is a different proposition than it is for Thai Buddhists. Nationally, UUs represent one-twelfth of one percent of Americans. Here in Burlington, our relative population rises significantly to one-and one-half percent! But finding ways to express publicly who we are and what we believe, is important precisely because we are so small. If for no other reason, "being out" as a UU creates an open door for others who may be searching for us, whether they know it or not. We join one another in UU community because we find this brand of spiritual food so fulfilling and nourishing. And like love, if we give a bunch of it away, we'll all end up having more!

It's good to be home again,

Martha

Essex SGM

The Essex Small Group Spirituality group will meet on Wednesday, March 7, @7pm at 12 Debra drive in Essex. If interested, contact ej haack, 878-8236 or Jeanne Parsley, 878-4625. Community is the theme.

Your Fair Share Pledge is crucial to the well-being of our Society. Sustaining the amenities we all enjoy—from a beautiful building to quality childrens' programming to inspiring worship on Sunday morning—demands that each contribute their part. While financial circumstances differ, we rely upon all members and friends of our congregation to donate generously. Our annual canvass for 2007-2008 will conclude on March 25 and we ask that you return a pledge card indicating your financial commitment by that date. Thank you! *The Canvass Committee*

Book Discussion Group

You are invited to join us at any or all of the meetings of the Book Discussion Group. We will be discussing the following books: **March 13. The World is Flat** by *Thomas L. Friedman*. "In his latest book, *The World is Flat*, Friedman describes the unplanned cascade of technological and social shifts that effectively leveled the economic world,....." ---MIT World.

April 10. Year of Magical Thinking by *Joan Didion*. "An exact, candid, and penetrating account of personal terror and bereavement . . . sometimes quite funny because it dares to tell the truth." —Robert Pinsky, *The New York Times Book Review*

We meet at 7:00 pm at the UU church. Please call Bud or Alison Etherton at 658 -4126 for more details.

Experience "The Letter"

What happens when hundreds of Somali immigrants seek refuge from their war torn country in the safety of an old New England mill town? Lessons about latent racism hidden in Vermont's immigration debate emerge in Ziad Hamzeh's award-winning documentary, scheduled to be shown on Sunday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m. Gary Kowalski will facilitate the discussion of what the *New York Post* calls "a documentary thrill-ride... THE LETTER moves as breathlessly as a Hollywood thriller — only it's much more frightening, because it's true."

Guest at Your Table Thank You!

Many thanks to everyone who participated this year in Guest at Your Table to benefit the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Thanks to you, our congregation raised more than \$1600 through Guest at Your Table. Many additional membership contributions were sent directly to UUSC.

Your support of the good work of UUSC is deeply appreciated. If you have not yet had a chance to send your membership contribution to our denomination's Service Committee and you would like to do so, please pick up a postage-paid envelope on one of the tables in our meeting house, or send a check to UUSC, PO Box 835259, Boston, MA 02283-5259. Membership is \$40 regular, \$75 dual, \$20 senior, and \$10 student/youth. All contributions are tax-deductible, and gifts of \$75 or more will be matched dollar for dollar. Kindly identify our First UU Society, Burlington when you send a check.

With your help, our congregation can continue being honored by UUSC as a member of the Creating Justice Banner Society in recognition of our wide participation in the human rights/social justice work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Thanks again!
Dave Conrad, Denominational Affairs

Micro -Loan Opportunity

I'd like to call your attention to www.Kiva.org, which allows regular folks to loan \$25 or more through its website as micro-credit loans to deserving small businesses in the developing world, right now mostly in East Africa and Central America. I have made four such loans, and I encourage everyone at UU to look at the website. It is a wonderful way to invest in the future of the world - and you eventually get your money back and can roll it over to another loan! *Mark Pendergrast*

The Faith We Choose

The Faith We Choose is a bedrock of progressive values and a nurturing spiritual community. The addition of the 9:00 AM service has provided new opportunities for worship and social connection to families with children. Our members and committees continue to provide a beacon of hope to our community at large. There are so many reasons to support our Canvass, to increase your pledge this year and to give according to the Fair Share Guidelines. We ask for your support. If you have questions please contact us at xina@uusociety.org. Thanks.

WiseTogether Wants You!

Our Small Group Ministry combines spiritual exploration, community service, socializing...and fun. WiseTogether meets in Burlington every other Saturday morning from 9:30 to 11, and you're invited! Find out more: call Deborah DeLadurantaye at 999-3464.

**First Unitarian Universalist
Society**
862-5630

Gary Kowalski, Minister

*Roddy O'Neil Cleary,
Affiliate Minister*

*Brian Haas,
Board President*

*Martha Dallas, Interim
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UU/UNO Conference

I Hope you will consider attending this year's Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office Annual Intergenerational Spring Seminar scheduled for Thursday, April 12, through Saturday, April 14, in NYC across from the UN. This years seminar is called "Modern Day Slavery" Breaking the web of human trafficking." A tour of the UN is always an exciting and inspiring part of the seminar. I will be the music minister again this year and would love to see some of our congregation represented there. Adults and teens from all over the country attend. For more information, go to www.uu-uno.org. or contact office@uu-uno.org. *Dawna Hammers*

To Withhold is to Perish

"You have often heard it said, 'I would give, but only to the deserving.' The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks of your pasture. They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish." Quotation from Kahlil Gibran

A Canvass Update

The Canvass is off to a great start. So far, we have received 130 pledges for a total of \$180,000, representing a 17% increase over last year from the same group of members and friends. Thank you! Our goal is \$400,000, so we still have work ahead of us.

Peacemaking

Thanks to those who came together at a

forum on Sunday, January 28th to discuss a draft of the UUA Statement of Conscience on "Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society" and to begin discussion of the new Congregational Study Action Issue on Peacemaking. Our comments on these documents will be sent to the UUA Commission on Social Witness, as UU congregations are urged to do.

We decided to continue exploring the dynamic issue of Peacemaking at a future forum that is scheduled for Sunday, March 25 at 12:30 PM in the Susan B. Anthony Room. We warmly invite you to join us then to go deeper into this issue that impacts us all.

Perhaps you are wondering how this topic was chosen. Delegates at the 2006 General Assembly in St. Louis selected "Peacemaking" to be the 2006-2010 Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. UU congregations and districts are encouraged to begin programs of education and reflection, service, community organizing, advocacy, and public witness, and continue this process until November 2008 when a draft of the UUA Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking is drawn up and a Congregational Poll is taken. Then in February 2009 the Commission on Social Witness prepares a revised draft, taking into consideration comments received by the member congregations and districts. The General Assembly considers and votes on the Statement of Conscience in 2009, and if it passes with a 2/3rds vote, it is followed by a year of implementation.

So now is the time to get involved in this Congregational Study/Action Issue! If you want to take a look at the two-page text of "Peacemaking" and possible study questions that we'll consider on March 25, go to www.uua.org Also, you can find the rich and rewarding Resource Guide 2006-2010 on "Peacemaking." After opening the UUA home page at www.uua.org type Peacemaking in the "Search Our Site" box in the upper left hand corner. Then, if you wish, you can open (and download) the brief text and/or the 32 page Resource Guide that includes the brief text.

We hope you'll put Sunday, March 25 at 12:30 on your calendar for some great discussion!

*Dave Conrad,
Denominational Affairs*

Women & Religion Retreat

Ladies – Mark your calendars! June 8th-10th, Rockcraft Retreat Center, Sebago Lake, Maine - For 25 years, women in the Northeast District of the UUA have gathered together to learn, rest, play, grow, sing, dance and celebrate life's passages. We are happy to now extend our reach to the women of Vermont and New Hampshire! Keep on the lookout...retreat details and registration information will be in the churches late March. Leslie Lentz, coordinator, fblestie@maine.rr.com

Giving of Yourself

It is rare indeed that people give. Most people guard and keep; they suppose that it is they themselves and what they identify with themselves that they are guarding and keeping, whereas what they are actually guarding and keeping is their system of reality and what they assume themselves to be. One can give nothing whatever without giving oneself—that is to say, risking oneself. If one cannot risk oneself, then one is simply incapable of giving." Quotation from James Baldwin

6th Grade Pasta Lunch

*Sunday, March 18, 2007
A fund-raiser for the
June Boston trip!*

There will be an option for the 9:00 service to have take-out at 10:30 am. The cost is \$6.00 per serving which includes: pasta, salad, bread and desert Pick up will be in the RE kitchen downstairs. Please bring your own containers for the take-out option at 10:30. The sit-down lunch will be held at 12:30 after the second service downstairs in the RE area. Drinks will be available at the 12:30 lunch time.

Stand by This Faith

"There is nothing s to be loyal to this faith which has placed before us the loftiest ideals, which has comforted us in sorrow, strengthened us for noble duty and made the world beautiful. Do not demand immediate results but rejoice that we are worthy to be entrusted with this great message, that you are strong enough to work for a great true principle without counting the cost. Stand by this faith. Work for it and sacrifice for it." Quotation from Rev. Olympia Brown

Heroes of the Spirit

This fall UU Service Committee founders Waitstill and Martha Sharp were posthumously honored as *Righteous Among the Nations* by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel, for their work helping Jews escape Nazi persecution during World War II. The Sharps are only the second and third U.S. citizens to receive this international distinction; Martha Sharp is the first woman from the United States to be so honored.. "Heroes of the Spirit," a 25 minute documentary illuminating their courageous story will be shown on Sunday, March 11 at 12:30. Sponsored by Denominational Affairs.

UU Niagara Experience

July 15-18, 2007

If you have ever wanted to visit Niagara Falls or if it is already one of your favorite places, this is a chance to experience the wonder of Niagara Falls including some great educational opportunities while in the company of UUs from around the country. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four day UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every perspective, even safely riding beneath a tethered balloon. Spend four days with us exploring the rich history and natural wonders around the Falls. For information visit our web site : <http://www.uunex.net/>

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Practicing Your Faith: Finding Your Truth **An Adult Religious Education Course**

"Be guided by your faith and not your fear" has become the motto of this congregation. It begs the questions - Faith in what? What is Faith? Join us for a practical exploration of personal faith development drawing on the wisdom from the world's faith traditions. Faith is a way of being in the world rather than an intellectual posture or assertion. In this class we will both talk about and engage in the following practices: silence, meditation, journaling, presence and attention, reading poetry and sacred scriptures, worshiping, facing fear, being in nature, and creating art. We'll end with a sharing of a faith discovery by each class member who chooses to do so. Limited to 10 participants. We'll meet for seven sessions on the second and fourth and fifth Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 starting March 14, and ending May 30.

The teacher is M'ellen Kennedy, a Unitarian Universalist community minister and community psychologist. M'ellen is a member of this congregation and also serves as part-time, consulting minister with the Universalist Society of Strafford. She is cofounder and co-coordinator of the UU Small Group Ministry Network

The course is free, and pre-registration is required. Please register by adding your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board at the Society or by contacting M'ellen at mellenken@aol.com or 802-453-5469.

Viva la VIA!

VIA is on the move and we've been busy! To keep VIA's interest in closing the Inclusionary Zoning loophole on the Burlington City Council's radar screen, eight VIA members (Sue Brooks of Christ Church Presbyterian, and UUs: Richard Kemp, David Conrad, Kathy Bonilla, Mike Reed, Stephanie Potter, Don Mac Donald and Sally Conrad) testified at two evenings of hearings before the Planning Commission in response to the Commission's work on the zoning re-write. Other VIA members, Kathy and Tom Swartwout and Nick Nixon played support roles. Inclusionary Zoning produces some 10 new units of affordable housing per year and VIA wants to make sure developers can't easily avoid that responsibility when building units for the high-income market in Burlington. In the next few weeks, VIA will begin conversations with individual City Councilors to let them know our concerns.

Numerous VIA members continue to meet with administrators and staff and faculty groups at the University of Vermont about VIA's proposal to ask UVM to build affordable housing. VIA is asking the University to earmark a piece of its holdings and lease it to a non-profit developer to build affordable housing with low-income UVM employees given first priority. Sites in Essex and South Burlington are possibilities. Reaction from UVM employees has been enthusiastic and very supportive. We expect more action on this front soon, so stay tuned.

VIA work is also focused on expanding VIA to the suburbs. Realizing that the crisis in affordable housing is not just a Burlington issue, an energetic VIA committee is organizing an affordable housing "road show". The "road show" can help interested faith groups in other municipalities begin to work for affordable housing in their towns from a faith-based perspective. The "road show" strategy will also support congregation members who live outside of Burlington in work or affordable on their home turf.

On another issue, VIA members, primarily from Christ Church Presbyterian, recently made progress on their hopes for the Vermont National Guard Armory on Gosse Court in Burlington's New North End. VIA wants the aging building to be renovated and continued as a site for badly-needed youth programs. Despite a VIA meeting on the future of the armory in November 2005 attended by 200 people, the city has been dragging its feet. Several weeks ago, many VIA members went to a joint meeting of the City Council's Board of Finance and the City Council's Parks, Arts, and Culture Committee. The result was a charge to the City's Parks Commission to come up with a plan for the armory which is affordable for the City and answers the needs residents.

We need your good energy! We'd love to have you join us as we have fun making positive change! To learn, more contact Sally Conrad at dconrad@uvm.edu or 658-1047.
