



February 1, 2009 -
February 14, 2009

Calendar

Sunday, February 1

- 9:00 Social Action Committee
- 9:00 Worship Service
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 Social Action Forum

Monday, February 2

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

Tuesday, February 3

- 10:00 Wisdom Wanderers
- 12:00 Staff Lunch
- 7:00 Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 4

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 6:30 RE Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 5

- 9:00 Newsletter Crew

Friday, February 6

- 10:30 Women's Alliance
- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, February 7

Sunday, February 8

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 VT Freedom to Marry Forum
- 12:30 ARAC: New Orleans Trip Plan
- 7:00 Yuuth Group Evening Meeting

Monday, February 9

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

Tuesday, February 10

- 12:00 Staff Lunch
- 12:30 Library Committee Meeting
- 5:30 Property Committee Meeting
- 6:00 Assist. Minister Rel. Com.

Wednesday, February 11

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 5:00 DRE Relations Committee
- 6:15 Music Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 12

- 10:00 SGM Steering Committee

Friday, February 13

- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, February 14

- 6:00 Second Saturday Potluck

Next Newsletter

Deadline:

Monday, February 2, 2009 @9am covering February 15 - February 28, 2009. Articles gladly accepted before this deadline! You can view the newsletter and current year schedule on our website: www.uusociety.org.

On My Mind

The Virgin Islands have many charms, but the prevailing political culture is not one of the attractions. We were shocked to read newspaper accounts, the first time we visited, of the Governor's awarding a \$3 million water treatment project to his brother-in-law, whose shell corporation had no employees and no experience with civil engineering or construction. The local school looks more like a low security prison than an educational facility and is not even accredited. In a territory crawling with rich people (where new homes routinely sell for a million dollars), you would think the town might be able to operate a local school, but you'd be wrong. Cronyism and corruption seem endemic.

Which makes Dori and me appreciate our home-sweet-home all the more. It may be freezing outside, but still people turn out on town meeting day to mind the people's business. It's an old-fashioned kind of civic community, where state legislators and city councilors actually return phone calls, and you might even talk to your U.S. Senator on Church Street. At tax time, or applying for a permit, citizens may complain about too much government. But travel to a place where government actually is the biggest employer (like the Virgin Islands) and you gain a new respect for a public sector that is transparent, well managed, and accessible to the voters.

We'll have a chance to participate in a little grassroots self-governance on Sunday, February 15th, at 3:30 p.m., when Vermont Interfaith Action will be hosting a mayoral forum in our Sanctuary. Unlike many debates, where pundits moderate and ask the questions, this will be a true people's event, where the questions and issues are framed by our recent "listening campaign" in the Old North End, talking to neighbors about everyday problems. And whether you live in Burlington or a surrounding town, you have a stake in what happens in Vermont's largest city—the home of our First Unitarian Universalist Society, the home of JUMP, the urban core that makes Chittenden County such a great place to live!

So come hear the candidates. Hold them accountable. What could be more important for a Sunday afternoon?

**Gary
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 1, 9 & 11 am
"Lincoln's Bible" Barack Obama took his oath of office on the Bible last used in March, 1861, at Lincoln's first inaugural. Was he aware of the religious significance of his choice? Gary explores the complex spirituality of America's greatest president.

Sunday, February 8, 9 & 11 am
"What Is Marriage For?" Over ten years ago, our congregation formally voted its support for same sex marriage. Is it time to move beyond Civil Unions, toward the next step? Gary shares a father's thoughts, with an informational forum featuring representatives from the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force to follow the 11 am service.

Sunday, February 15, 9 & 11am
Guest Speaker: Gaye Symington
A longtime member of the Mount Mansfield UU Fellowship, Vermont's former Speaker of the House shares reflections on the spiritual principles that have guided her in private and public life.

Message From Martha

A couple weeks ago, I made a move to "catch up" with most of you: I bought a new computer and installed internet access at home. Since I moved to Vermont in 2000, I've met my personal online needs around the edges of my work life, using my office computer. Beyond that, I've used second-hand computers at home, and only on an occasional basis.

So, may I ask: why do we still call these things "computers?" I'm sure this creature can compute beyond my needs and certainly way beyond my understanding, but calling it a computer is a laughable understatement. As I make its acquaintance, it seems there are few things it does NOT do. It is one thing to hear about computers' capabilities these days; it is another to experience this myself, AND in my home.

First, I likened the new computer to a window, a window that allows me to peer through and see just about anything I want to see. I reflected on the difference between this window and my plain glass window, which lets in daylight and gives me an ice-filmed view to the houses of my neighbors across the street. Then, a friend reminded me of the computer's sucking power. More than just a window, its very presence teases and seduces mortals like me to wander up and peer inside for a while. Will it suck me in or suck me out? It's hard to know. All that keeps me away is a short flight of stairs, the push of a button, and the click of a mouse.

It's no wonder we use terms like "the internet world." We humans have not yet populated the moon or Mars, but in a way, we now can prance back and forth between the virtual world and the "real" one. In this sense, there are truly two (or maybe more!) worlds we inhabit.

I'm not aware that they've figured out how to put computers in our brains, but millions of people have been putting their brains, and even their hearts and souls into computers and the fleet of gadget-gizmos that has evolved along with them. So far, it seems the clues are few and fuzzy about what this is doing to us culturally. A generation or two down the road, we'll know more clearly.

As it has been with other scientific and technological developments, ethics and etiquette in the digital age are not well-developed. How to use technology well and for the good is not simple to define.

For now, I will try to navigate my relationship with this new home-dwelling creature slowly and intentionally. I will do my best to control myself in its seductive presence, remembering that only one of us has a soul and free will. Only one of us can sing and dance, laugh and cry, wonder and love. As such, I'm relieved to know that whatever "relationship" we develop, we can never, ever be friends. Thank goodness!

Martha

Second Saturday Potluck

This month, we are planning a Valentines Day Potluck on February 14. We gather at 6pm for wine, appetizers, conversation, and the option of singing along with Bill Cleary. At 6:30, the music stops, we help ourselves to the great food that has shown up, and the conversation continues. If this sounds like a good evening for you, we'd love to have you join us. Please call Julia Kimball at 951-1646 and leave a message. Questions to be answered: Are you bringing an appetizer, salad, main dish, or dessert? Do you need child care? How many adults? You may call up to the last minute, unless you need child care. We ask for a \$2 donation to cover the cost of the beverages (wine, cider, soda, coffee). If you want to cut down on the use of disposables, please bring your own place settings. Hope to see you there.

Foster Care Discussion

Did you ever wonder what you could do to help some of Vermont's most vulnerable children? Come to a foster care discussion at the First UU Society on February 1st at 12:30 pm.

Ron and Miguel Bernard-Rivera, UU members of this congregation, would like to talk with you about what it has been like to be foster parents. Most often these kids are in care due to no fault of their own. These kids need love, acceptance, respect, and dignity. Michelle Turbide from Casey Family Services will be available to answer questions about foster parenting. Foster parenting can take many forms, from full-time foster parenting to weekend or short term respite care.

Save the Date!

On Tuesday evening, February 24, 2008, Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) will have a fundraising concert, "Hallelujah!", featuring the St. Michael's College Chorale and Chamber Singers at 7pm at the First Unitarian Universalist Society in Burlington. Please save this date and help VIA by telling your friends and family.

The program will include variations of Hallelujah, Alleluia, and Psalm 150 by composers from several centuries, including contemporary compositions. Suggested donation for tickets will be \$15.00 for adults and \$7.50 for children 12 and under. Tickets will be available through all VIA member congregations.

On February 24, the St. Michael's College Chorale will have just returned from a tour of Greater New York, with concerts and masses in Manhattan, New Rochelle, and Fairfield, CT.

For more information, call the VIA office @651-8889.

Fair Trade Town

Want to help make Burlington the next Fair Trade Town in the U.S.? We are hoping to get at least 10-15 folks who are willing to be on a committee to start this process. Our goal is to have everything done by October, Fair Trade Month in the U.S. Recognizing that everyone is busy, the hope is to meet mostly via email and conference calls, with just a few physical meetings, and to keep everyone's workload to a minimum. We want to encourage certified, fairly traded and local products. Our campaign motto is "Buy Fair Buy Local".

There are 5 minimal criteria that we need to meet. This is based on the "honest system". There is no outsider who verifies our work. Once we have met those 5 basic criteria, we will declare Burlington a Fair Trade Town. With many involved, the work load will be fun and easy for everyone. Check out www.fairtradetownsusa.org for more information.

Currently there are only 8 Fair Trade Towns in the U.S. (There are hundreds in the UK and Europe) Brattleboro VT was the 2nd U.S. Fair Trade Town. Let's make Burlington the next one. Please contact Sandy Wynne with your questions and/or interest at sandywynne@comcast.net or 802-343-9289. Thank you!

Fair Trade empowers farmers and farm workers to invest in their communities, protect the environment, and develop the business skills to compete in the global marketplace.

UU're Home

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and are happy to provide directions and advice for their area?

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) can fulfill your dream. For 29 years, we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at info@uurehome.com, or at 828-281-3253, and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

Host listings on the *UU're Home* website at www.UUreHome.com are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The paper edition is published once a year in April. For a copy of the 2009 directory and a year's access to the website listings, please click on "become a member" to pay by credit card or send a check for \$25 and your e-mail address to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.

**First Unitarian Universalist
Society**
862-5630

Rev. Gary Kowalski, Minister

*Rev. Elaine Bomford,
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*Jerrold Packard,
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Administrative Assistant*

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LGBTQ Visibility Day

Come OUT! Be Visible at the State House on Friday, February 6, 2009! Friday, February 6th is the Annual LGBTQ Visibility Day at the State House in Montpelier. Help us spread the word! Join us to meet fellow LGBTQ Vermonters and allies, connect with LGBTQ organizations, and to connect with your legislators about important issues facing our community today! For more information and a schedule, contact kara@ru12.org.

Book Group

You are invited to join us on February 10, 7pm at the First UU Society as we discuss Gary Kowalski's newest book, Revolutionary Spirits. This book is a portrait of Franklin, Washington, Paine, Adams, Jefferson and Madison that illuminates their efforts as religious reformers and free-thinkers. The author will be present to enliven our discussion! Please call Gerry Quinlan, 893-7587 with questions.

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, the minister will not read it aloud. Thank you for helping to make this tradition a wonderful and respectful experience for everyone.

New Orleans

Volunteer Meeting

An Organizational meeting for those interested in participating in the New Orleans volunteer trip (March 29 - April 4) is scheduled for February 8, @12:30 at First UU. Limited funds are available to support travel if needed. For more information, please contact Susan Schoenfeld at 863-6299.

What is CCAN?

The Center for Community and Neighborhoods (CCAN), the Community Development Division of the City of Burlington's Community & Economic Development Office is home to a broad spectrum of initiatives that inspire and support community participation, direct citizen action, and responsive local government. CCAN is built on the premise that social capital is as valuable as economic capital and that sustainable community development requires both.

CCAN works to engage residents in partnership with the public and private sector. We work together to shape municipal plans, allocate resources, respond to crime, resolve conflict and improve neighborhoods. Each year, over 4,000 residents are involved in innovative activities from neighborhood planning and problem solving to restorative justice panels and graffiti removal. Directions to CCAN: CCAN is located at 125 College Street, Burlington, on the 2nd Floor of the Wells-Richardson Building (above the Daily News).

For more information or to get involved with any of our programs, please the Center for Community and Neighborhoods. All CCAN programs are accessible and available in alternative formats. Contact Us: Phone (802) 865-7155 Fax (802) 865-7117 TTY (802) 865-7142 www.cedoburlington.org

Now Available from the Main Office!

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) and we can either mail you a CD of the service or a written copy of the sermon while you are away. Also, most sermons are available on our website www.uusociety.org.

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Property Corner

Electrical Energy Savings

"David, you are now on the SG (Small General Service) rate. Congratulations. You should notice a considerable cost decrease in the January bill. I estimated that it should reduce your annual costs by 30-35%."

The quote above is from an email recently received by David McFeeters, our Society's Facilities Manager, sent by a Burlington Electric Commercial Energy Services Specialist. It confirmed a major reduction in the electrical rate that will now be charged to our Society and was the result of many small energy conservation improvements and the installation of phase one of a new energy management system. This system was the direct result of a gratuitous analysis from Salem Engineering and a great deal of hard work by David McFeeters and John Lincoln, a member of the Property Committee.

One of the major changes of the phase one system was to install variable speed pump motors with electronic controllers to circulate the hot water in the Meetinghouse heating system. This has significantly reduced the amount of electricity used by our Society in the past couple of months, and has allowed us to move from a Large General Service rate to the SG rate, a significant reduction. We expect to see an annual reduction of around \$2,800, which will give a four year payback for the cost of the phase one installation.

We still have more to do with electrical savings. Motion sensors and "smart power strips" to automatically shut down computer peripherals are next on the list. Though the overall cost of electricity will go down because of no demand charge, the cost per kilowatt hour will actually double from 7 to 14 cents. This means that every kilowatt hour we save will yield a higher return than before our rate status changed.

When you see David or John, please congratulate them for the incredible amount of time and energy they have put into reducing the electrical consumption of our Society's Meetinghouse. Not only will it ultimately save us money, but it is a step in the right direction toward reducing the energy consumption of our planet. *Tom Patterson, Property Committee*

Wonder – Connecting –Transformation

These three words form the base for a great partnership,
Representing the best of a true fellowship.
Yet the cost to keep this means we just cannot skip
All the efforts required for a planned stewardship!

Our campaign in late March for four weeks will begin,
Chance to pledge every week can make all of us win.
Early pledging won't fully absolve you from sin,
But will surely save you from us calling again!

Bill Suiter, Stewardship Committee

2009 Newsletter Schedule

Items are due in the office by 9am Monday morning. Articles may be emailed to Kathleen at office@uusociety.org.

Deadline Date	Period Covered	Volunteer Crew Meets
February 2, 2009	February 15, 2009 - February 28, 2009	Thursday, February 5, 2009
February 16, 2009	March 1, 2009 - March 14, 2009	Thursday, February 19, 2009
March 2, 2009	March 15, 2009 - March 28, 2009	Thursday, March 5, 2009
March 16, 2009	March 29, 2009 - April 11, 2009	Thursday, March 19, 2009
March 30, 2009	April 12, 2009 - April 25, 2009	Thursday, April 2, 2009
April 13, 2009	April 26, 2009 - May 9, 2009	Thursday, April 16, 2009
April 27, 2009	May 10, 2009 - May 23, 2009	Thursday, April 30, 2009
May 11, 2009	May 24, 2009 - June 6, 2009	Thursday, May 14, 2009
May 25, 2009	June 7, 2009 - Entire Summer	Thursday, May 28, 2009
