



January 18, 2009 -
January 31, 2009

Calendar

Sunday, January 18
9:00 Worship Service
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
11:00 Worship Service
12:30 Social Action Forum
Monday, January 19
Office Closed
***** Zen (Call office for time)
8:45 VIA Listening Campaign
9:00 Newsletter Deadline
Tuesday, January 20
10:00 Wisdom Wanderers
12:00 Staff Lunch
7:00 Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 21
9:00 Staff Meeting
12:00
7:00 Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, January 22
9:00 Newsletter Crew
Friday, January 23
10:30 Women's Alliance
6:30 AA Men's Group
7:30 Voices From Chernobyl
Saturday, January 24
6:00 Youth Group Overnight
Sunday, January 25
9:00 Worship Service
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
11:00 Worship Service
Monday, January 26
***** Zen (Call office for time.)
7:00 Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 27
12:00 Staff Lunch
Wednesday, January 28
9:00 Staff Meeting
7:00 Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, January 29
Friday, January 30
6:30 AA Men's Group
Saturday, January 31

Inauguration Gala Benefit Dance

Swing with jazz vocalist Jenni Johnson and her live band on Saturday, January 17, from 8:00-10:30 p.m. at Burlington's Champlain Club, located at 20 Crowley Street in the Old North End. A \$15 admission at the door will benefit New Orleans rebuilding and fund grants for diversity education in Vermont public schools, administered through the First Unitarian Universalist Society's Anti-Racism Action Committee. Vermont Swings teachers Shirley McAdam and Chris Nickl offer a free half hour lesson from 7:30-8:00 p.m. prior to the dance. Celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday and our country's first African American presidency! Gary

Current Notes

I recently came across a jubilant, irreverent song, "Jefferson and Liberty." In 1798, the Alien and Sedition Acts were passed. These Acts penalized any "who might utter false, scandalous, or malicious words against the government." Shortly after his inauguration in 1801, Unitarian President Thomas Jefferson pardoned the people who had been imprisoned under these Acts.

I imagine celebrations in the early days of Jefferson's Presidency. To the tune of a popular Scottish Reel, the people danced and sang the following in waltz time:

"The gloomy night before us flies,
The reign of terror now is o'er,
No gags, inquisitors, and spies,
The herds of harpies are no more!"

After a raucous repeat, "The herds of harpies are no more!" the second verse continues:

"No lordlings here with gorging jaws,
Shall wring from industry the food,
No bigots, with their holy laws,
Lay waste our fields and streets in blood."

In the chorus below, I have taken the liberty of updating "Columbia's sons" to "Columbia's folk." "Folk" is more user-friendly for diverse beings who celebrate freedom, I trust. "Columbia," a poetic name for the U.S.A., has often been personified as a goddess wrapped in the American flag; she is an elder sister to the Statue of Liberty.

CHORUS

"Rejoice, Columbia's folk, rejoice;
To tyrants never bend the knee,
But join with heart, with soul, with voice,
For Jefferson and liberty!"

In order to stay in waltz time in the last line of the chorus, in 1801 they had to stretch out the name "Jefferson" into 5 syllables, or beats. Serendipitously, inaugural celebrants in 2009 may be pleased to note our new President's name, Barack Obama, has 5 beats naturally and fits handily into the scheme.

Elaine

Upcoming Sundays

January Worship Theme:

Humor

"How is it possible to find meaning in a finite world, given my waist and shirt size?" (Woody Allen) Where would we be without humor? How does humor spark our spirits, renew perspective, and subvert the best-laid plans?

Sunday, January 18, 9am and 11 am
"What We Teach and Why" What have we taught our children in UU Sunday School over the decades of the last century? What teaching methods and philosophies have stood behind that content? Who were the visionaries that shaped the programming we deliver today? This morning, Martha Dallas, our Director of Religious Education, will pursue her own curiosity in this area, both to illuminate the context of our current liberal religious education, and to suggest its future possibilities.

Sunday, January 25, 9 am and 11 am
Humor is a Saving Grace A morning devoted to taking ourselves and life less seriously. Rev. Elaine Bomford leads and the adult choir sings at the later service.

Sunday, February 1, 9am & 11am
Gary Kowalski will speak.

COTS Phonathon

The FUUSB had an overwhelming response to the "call" for help at the COTS Phonathon on December 10. So much so, that they couldn't handle all of us and asked if some would be willing to drop out and help next year instead. Thank you to those who volunteered but graciously stepped aside: Jan Abbott, Marilyn Abbott, Jeanne Parsley, and Shannon Carstairs. Thanks to the following people who did help out: Steve Silverman, Mary Silverman, Dave Sobel, Polly Sobel, Andrea Ogden, Brianna Defaunt, Mike Reed, Janice Lange, Rev. Elaine Bomford and Bruce Brown.

*Bruce Brown,
Social Action Committee*

UU Wish List . . .

- A digital projector to use for PowerPoint type presentations.

- A digital recorder to record worship services for members who cannot make it to church due to illness or injury.

Christina Fulton, xina@uusociety.org

**Message From
Martha**

I'm a nut for words: their sounds, their patterns, their playful potential, and their root meanings. Getting to the root of a word helps me grasp a piece of the meaning of the human experience of being alive on this planet.

Another thing about me: I struggle to make decisions. It doesn't matter whether they're small, like where I will take myself out to breakfast on a day off; or whether they're big, like what I will write in my Living Will. At its worst, my indecision can lead naturally to procrastination of embarrassing proportions.

So when a friend recently pointed out that *to decide* literally means to "kill or cut off" one option in favor of another, I understood more deeply why decisions can be so agonizing for me. The word, *decide* shares its root meaning with *suicide* and *homicide*, as well as with *scissors*, a cutting tool used to separate that which is kept from that which is thrown away. Simply put, I can't bear having to dispose of something, to kill it. I'm uncomfortable with such ultimate finality. I want to keep my options on the table, not sweep some to the cutting room floor!

But I am finding that this deeper understanding of the meaning of a *decision* is exciting and promising. You see, at New Year's, many of us make *resolutions*, but I know that mine almost inevitably flop before springtime. Resolutions alone are clearly not enough for me. I need New Year's *Decisions!* "Out with the old and in with the new," right? Anything new in our lives, like a young plant, needs space and light. First we must prune out some of those parts of our lives which we've let run wild. We must uproot; we must cut; we must, in the end, kill. This killing helps ensure a good chance that the new life will survive!

This month, while 2009 still feels fresh, I encourage you to embrace decisiveness and further, to create rituals around your New Year's Decisions. After all, you are at once giving birth to new things and killing off old things. Bless the Beginnings! Mourn the Endings. With your family and friends, gather, share, and commit to support one another to be that change you wish for, both in your self and in your world! Tend your soul's garden with careful intention and a reverence for life that comes from an acceptance of death's necessity.

May it be so, and a Blessed, Decision-filled New Year to us all!

Martha

Thank you First Night Volunteers

Many thanks to all of you who volunteered on a very cold but successful First Night! With your help, the First UU Society hosted eleven performances from 12:00 noon until 11:00 pm. Almost 2,000 visitors passed through our sanctuary during this time. Have a wonderful New Year and perhaps we'll see you again on First Night 2010.

*David McFeeters,
Facilities Manager*

Christmas Breakfast

We had a wonderful crowd-many neighbors, friends and folks from FUUSB! The strata were delicious, the pancakes well-flipped and the conversations welcoming! Special thanks to those who hung posters, kept the hot coffee coming, came even though they had been up all night helping at a fire (and brought food), stayed to clean up, and helped with the early set-up! Hope your New Year is good. See you next year!

Lynn Douglas

Book Group

You are invited to join us on February 10, 7:00 pm at the First UU Society, as we discuss Revolutionary Spirits, by Gary Kowalski. To quote from one of the many positive reviews, "A fascinating portrait of Franklin, Washington, Paine, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison that sheds light on their efforts as religious reformers and free thinkers." Gary has agreed to be with us that night to enlighten our discussion. Please call Gerry Quinlan, 893-7587, with questions.

Giving Statements

Please be aware that soon you will be receiving two sets of Giving Statements from the Society. One Statement will be your 2nd Quarter Giving Statement which represents how much you have paid on your current fiscal year (2008/2009) pledge. The second Statement will be your 2008 Calendar Year Tax Statement. This statement will show how much you have contributed to the Society in the calendar year 2008. On this statement, do not pay any attention to the amount listed under "amount pledged." This column gets confused when I print a calendar year instead of a fiscal year and is not correct. The column that is important on the Tax Statement is the "Amount Given" column. This will correctly indicate the total amount of contributions for the calendar year 2008. If you have any questions and/or concerns about your statements, or if you would like to have your pledge payments taken directly from your bank account or charged to your credit card please contact Christina at 802-862-5630 ext. 22 or xina@uusociety.org.

UU Volunteer Trip to New Orleans

We're organizing our second group to spend a week volunteering at the UU New Orleans Rebirth Volunteer Center. The group helps continue the post-Hurricane Katrina rebuilding and recovery work. Our group is scheduled for March 29 through April 4. Anyone interested in participating, please contact Susan Schoenfeld 863-6299. More information about the program is available on line at www.uusc.org/gulfcoastvolunteerprogram/rebirthvolunteer.html.

Giving Tree Update

The Yuuth Group would like to thank the congregation for their extraordinary generosity in the Giving Tree Project. Donations went to COTS, the Humane Society, Socially Responsible Santa and Spectrum. The children's pictures that adorned the tree are now available for pick-up on the Family picture bulletin board in the Community Room. Any unclaimed photos will be recycled after January 18.

*Sarah Gliech,
Yuuth Group member*

Lasagna Dinner Update

Many, many thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who baked, set-up, served, cleaned up and otherwise made our First Night Lasagna dinner run smoothly. We served approximately 300 hungry and very chilly First Night revelers and earned about \$1000 which will be distributed to area service organizations. Special kudos to David McFeeters who helped make our society the first in the area to go "completely green" with all compostable serving ware. In addition to the compliments about our yummy dinners, we received many high marks for our "green" evening.

Happy New Year, *Maggi Hayes*

R U An Enthusiastic UU?

Looking for a few enthusiastic outgoing UUs to greet new faces who pass through our doors. No experience or long time membership required - just the joy of sharing who we are. Contact Ken Swearingen for more information, 802-419-0813.

Mystical Healing

On January 21, @12 noon in our Parlors, UU member Stephen Gonzalez will lead a guided process entitled "Entering Mystical Experience for the Purpose of Healing." Those who attend may choose to focus on healing their own physical ailments, simply observe the process, or, with permission, enter into mystical experience on behalf of another's healing. Approx 90 min. For Stephen's bio, visit www.watercourse.com.

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*

*Christina Fulton,
Society Administrator*

*Kathleen Ingram,
Administrative Assistant*

*Email: office@uusociety.org
Web Page: www.uusociety.org*

Newsletter News

Next deadline: Monday, January 19, 2009 @9am covering February 1 - February 14, 2009. Articles gladly accepted before this deadline! You can view the newsletter and this year's schedule on our website: www.uusociety.org.

A New Small Group Ministry is Forming

The group will begin on January 11, 2009 and meet each month on the second and fourth Sundays from 12:30-2:30, here at First UU. The group is limited to ten members, and there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. This is our first Sunday group, and it will have no specific theme, only time for reflection on the service and yourself in a structured atmosphere. Small Group Ministry requires a commitment to attend as regularly as possible and actively listen and share. If you have questions, call Barbara Heeter at 864-4622.

Christmas Eve Collection

At our three beautiful Christmas Eve Worship Services this year, we collected a total of \$5,289.74. This generous collection will be divided between four groups that are very close to our hearts. Joint Urban Ministry Project (JUMP), Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA), Partner Church and the Church Family Fund will each receive a contribution of \$1,322.43. Your generosity will put our faith into action! Thank you.

Nonprofit Consultant Directory

The Vermont Community Foundation is pleased to announce that we have created a free online Vermont Nonprofit Consultant Directory. Before we debut the site to the general public, we would like to ask for your help in identifying consultants who might be interested in creating a profile for inclusion in the Directory.

To create a free profile, consultants and businesses who provide services for Vermont nonprofits should visit www.vtnonprofitconsultants.org and click on the icon that says Consultants: Create/edit your profile.

We anticipate sending an email to the Vermont nonprofit community about this new and valuable resource by mid-January. Our hope is that the Directory will help nonprofits identify prospective consultants to aid them with their work and help consultants get the word out about their services.

Celebrate 30 Years of the Peace and Justice Center

The Peace and Justice Center is celebrating its 30th birthday with a 30 Cake Parade on Church St. at noon on January 30, followed at 7 that evening with a party and dance at City Hall featuring the Starline Rhythm Boys. You can participate in this special event by attending the party, carrying a cake in the parade, volunteering for setup or clean up, or by baking and donating a delicious homemade cake. The party is free and all are welcome! Call Anise at the Peace and Justice Center, 863-2345 ext. 6 for more info.

If you have any questions or encounter any technical difficulties, please feel free to contact Paige Pierson at 802-388-3355 or pperson@vermontcf.org.

Kind Regards,

*Paige Pierson,
Communications Manager*

Sunday Cancellation Policy

We will hold regular Sunday worship services regardless of snow, ice, blizzard, earthquake or volcano. Join us in braving the elements each week, knowing the show will go on! Gary

New Member

Mike Reed came to Burlington from Montpelier. He works as a mental health/substance abuse clinician. Within our Society, he has become active in a Small Group, Vermont Interfaith Action, and the Social Action Committee. Mike finds UU a kinder, gentler place to be a joiner.

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 7:00 PM 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 to Greater New York, with concerts and masses in Manhattan, New Rochelle, and Fairfield, CT.

Loose Plate for Charity

On December 14th and December 21st we collected a total of \$1599.87. One half of that amount, or \$799.93 will go to the Boys and Girls Club of Burlington. On December 28th we collected \$520.75, half of which will go to COTS Firehouse Shelter. These amounts are truly amazing and will benefit people in our community during this coming winter. Which agencies are next on our list? On January 18th & 25th we will be collecting for Mercy Connections and on February 1st & 8th we will be collecting for the Greater Burlington Multicultural 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.

First Unitarian Universalist Society

152 Pearl Street

Burlington, Vermont 05401

(802)862-5630

www.uusociety.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
Organization
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 119
Burlington, VT

Forums on the Ethics of Good Citizenship

Have you heard someone in a position of power admit that an action was perhaps not right but since it wasn't illegal it was okay? Or have you heard of someone using her power to try to settle a family vendetta and get a state trooper fired? Or have you despaired at the huge amounts of money lobbyists distribute to get government officials to vote their way, or been outraged at governors who try to sell senate seats to the highest bidder? Do you wonder how Ponzi schemes can flourish under the supposedly watchful eyes of federal inspectors and then fall apart with a huge loss of money to those whose investments were caught in the bubble? Do you ask when you cast your vote if you are buying into the corruption that seems so rampant in our country?

Has greed become the characteristic that best describes us? Has there been a change in the way people look at public service? Is public service a way to work for the good of all or only for the good of the few? Has it always been this way or has there been a seismic shift in the ethical and moral values by which we as a people lead our lives? What can be done?

The Social Action Committee is going to examine some of these questions in a series of forums with speakers who are knowledgeable about these issues. There will be lots of time for discussion afterwards and perhaps even the discovery of some ways we at First UU can help work to restore civic morality in our community and in our nation.

The forums will be held at 12:30 on the third Sunday of each month. We hope you will save these times and come help us explore these issues that are at the heart of our democratic system.

January 18: *Ethics and Economics.* Presenter: Elaine McCrate, Chairperson of the Department of Economics, University of Vermont

February 15: *Ethics and Nuclear Proliferation.* Presenter: Roseanne Greco, Retired Air Force Colonel Specializing in Nuclear Arms Control

March 15: *The Economy and Economic Development: Debunking Myths.* Presenter: Doug Hoffer, Independent Policy Analyst

April 19: *Ethics and the Justice System.* Presenter: Karen Vastine, Director of the Community Justice Center (Reparative Justice)

Voices from Chernobyl

A Readers' Theatre Play, Friday, January 23, 2009, 7:30pm, Unitarian Universalist Society
(Donations suggested to cover costs) Cast: Peter Clavelle, Roddy Cleary, David Connor, Donny Osman, Susan Palmer, Wes Sanders, Mary Wheeler

The Chernobyl Disaster: On April 26, 1986, the worst nuclear reactor accident in history occurred in Chernobyl, Ukraine, only 40 miles North of Kiev, the capital city of three million people. This disaster contaminated as much as three-quarters of Europe with radioactivity that even reached the milk of Vermont cows.

The Book and Play: Ukrainian-born journalist, Svetlana Alexievich, interviewed hundreds of survivors of the Chernobyl disaster and in 1997 published some of their stories in a book, *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster*. Burlington resident, Spencer Smith, has made a play from portions of these testimonies. Since 2007, the play has been performed in communities throughout Vermont.

Relevance of Chernobyl to Vermonters:

1. Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant regularly spews radioactive gas into the atmosphere. The county in which it is located has a higher death toll than the rest of the state even though it is a rural agricultural area like the surrounding counties.
 2. The site contains hundreds of tons of radioactive waste.
 3. The use of the Connecticut River to cool the reactor is raising the temperature of the river, reducing the ability of fish to spawn.
 4. The cost of decommissioning this reactor may be a future financial disaster for the state of Vermont.
 5. The reactor, completed in 1973, now has many problems that force it to shut down regularly.
 6. If there should be a core meltdown or a terrorist attack on the spent fuel stored on the roof of Vermont Yankee, all of New England would be contaminated and a large area would become uninhabitable.
-