



November 16, 2008 -
November 29, 2008

Calendar

Sunday, November 16

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 9:30 Nominating Committee
- 10:00 Alternative Gift Fair
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 7:00 UU Buddhist Fellowship

Monday, November 17

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 9:00 Newsletter deadline
- 6:00 Anti-Racism Action Committee

Tuesday, November 18

- 12:00 Staff Lunch
- 7:00 Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 19

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

Thursday, November 20

- 9:00 Newsletter Crew

Friday, November 21

- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, November 22

- Sunday, November 23
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 SAC Film: Consuming Kids
- 7:00 Young Adult BYOT

Monday, November 24

- Office Closed
- ***** Zen (Call office for time.)

Tuesday, November 25

- Office Closed
- 10:00 Wisdom Wanderers
- 12:00 Staff Lunch

Wednesday, November 26

- Office Closed
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 27

- Office Closed
- 5:00 Thanksgiving Potluck

Friday, November 28

- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, November 29

Grief Group

Loss can be lonely. Gary Kowalski and Judy Brook will facilitate a bereavement group over the holidays, Mondays in December from 7-8:30 p.m., starting 12/1/08 and continuing through 12/29/08. Participants will have a chance to talk about their loved ones, share memories, regrets and joys, and map strategies for coping with holiday ups and downs. Judy is a VNA trained hospice volunteer. Please contact her at 865-0557 (email: brook.judy@gmail.com) or let Gary know (862-5630 ex. 24) if you'd like to be part of the group.

Newsletter News

Next deadline: Monday, November 17, @9am sharp, covering November 30 - December 13, 2008. Articles gratefully accepted before this deadline!

Current Notes

There are still a few flowers left in the gardens. Next to my front door, a single purple pansy nods a greeting. It was originally planted in a 3" pot by a child in an RE class. Perhaps it was forgotten and left behind, or maybe the child left it as a decoration, but for whatever reason, it turned up in the Society as an "orphan."

No one on staff really wanted the pansy, but no one wanted to just let it die. Even a small flower evokes compassion. When I came to the Society, the pansy became "mine." I brought it home and planted it outside. All summer and fall I enjoyed its violet bouquet. Now each morning I look to see if the pansy made it through the night. If we enjoy the flowers in summer, is it silly to feel for them when freezing temperatures come? Can we admire their hardiness and "courage," and mourn their loss?

Around the 4th century B.C., as the history goes, this wildflower was noticed and named - it was seen growing in alpine meadows and along rocky ledges; thriving in open sunlight, pansies are cousins to the violet blossoms which grow in shady, damp forest places. Early on, people remarked how the blossom resembles a human face, and perhaps for this reason, it was named "pansy," which comes from the french word "pensee," for "thought." In keeping with this nomenclature, in the late 1800's the Freethought movement adopted the pansy as its symbol. A brochure from the American Secular Union reads:

"There is...need of a badge which shall express at first glance, without complexity of detail, that basic principle of freedom of thought for which Liberals of all isms are contending. [We recommend] this flower as a simple and inexpensive badge of Freethought. Let every patriot who is a Freethinker...adopt the pansy as his badge, to be worn at all times, as a silent and unobtrusive testimony of his principles. In this way we shall recognize our brethren in the cause, and the enthusiasm will spread; until, before long, the uplifted standard of the pansy, beneath the sheltering folds of the United States flag, shall everywhere thrill men's hearts as the symbol of religious liberty and freedom of conscience."

In contemporary times, the power of the pansy has been claimed by artist Paul Harfleet. He "revisits locations where homophobia has been experienced and plants pansies. These self seeding pansies act as a living memorial to this abuse and operate as an antidote to it; some pansies wither whilst others thrive in car park borders and windswept road verges. Each Pansy's location is named after the abuse received." A visit to his website, www.thepansyproject.com, is an empowering inspiration.

Here's to the common multicolored blossom which fades and blooms again through the seasons and symbols!

Elaine

Upcoming Sundays

November Worship Theme: Compassion

Jesus said, "Be compassionate as God is compassionate." (Lk 6.27) The Dalai Lama has said, "If you want to be happy, practice compassion." And our own UU Principles recommend "justice, equity and compassion in human relations." But how do we balance the goal of mercy with the demand for justice? How do we avoid compassion fatigue? Can we really love everyone?

Sunday, November 16, 9 am & 11 am
"There but for fortune..." With winter coming and economic distress on the rise, how do we keep our spirits up and find the wherewithal to respond in practical, effective ways? Guitarist Keith Penniman joins Reverend Elaine for a service of songs, stories and news concerning poverty, hope, and compassionate action.

Sunday, November 23, 11:00am

"Thanksgiving from the Heart"

Children, youth and adults come together for a service of Thanksgiving, celebrating the giving and receiving of the season through donations of food to the Joint Urban Ministry Project, the annual Guest at Your Table program of the UU Service Committee, words from Gary and songs of gratitude by the adult and children's choirs, Martha and Elaine.

Sunday, November 30 9 am & 11 am
"Dr. Charlie Clements" Now Executive Director of the UU Service Committee, Charlie Clements has faced moral dilemmas that shaped his life. As a graduate of the Air Force Academy who had flown more than 50 missions in Vietnam, he decided the war was immoral and refused to fly missions after the invasion of Cambodia. Later, as a newly trained physician, he chose to work in the midst of El Salvador's civil war, where the villages he served were bombed, rocketed, or strafed by some of the same aircraft in which he had previously trained, a story told in his 1984 book *Witness to War* (Bantam) which became the subject of an Academy Award-winning documentary of the same title. For two years in the late 1980s, Clements served as director of human rights education at UUSC, leading a number of congressional fact-finding delegations to Central America. In 1997, as president of Physicians for Human Rights, he participated both in the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony and the treaty signing for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Today the UUSC continues to promote human rights and environmental justice, from the U.S. Gulf Coast to Darfur.



Message from Martha



Twenty years ago I was a summer intern at a place called *The Windfarm Museum*. We displayed a variety of windmills, plus other simple technologies for pumping water, collecting solar energy and living lightly and simply. We grew vegetables organically and had some farm animals, including fish, chickens, rabbits, goats, sheep, and a pig named Katherine.

The directors of the museum believed that most Americans' casual and regular consumption of meat is largely a result of their disconnection from the slaughtering process. As a meat-eater, I was encouraged to try my hand at slaughtering a rabbit, and if I couldn't bear that, to at least witness a slaughter. The latter I did, and I will never forget it. That summer, I became a vegetarian and swore off eating fast food.

Over the last twenty years, I've drifted away from committed vegetarianism, and I eat my share of junk food and fast food. Over time, those *Windfarm*-inspired fact-filled struts that supported my convictions and food choices gradually weakened and gave way. However, awareness of my food-shopping and eating habits has been recently re-examined through my participation in a reading/discussion group here at the UU. It's called, *Menu for the Future*. This mini-course and the facts it dishes out, is inspiring me to re-commit to eating towards my own health and that of my planet. I'm waking up more fully to the political, economic, ethical, health and environmental consequences of each bite purchased and consumed. Until now, I haven't experienced anything with such comprehensive strength and clarity to reinforce, re-inform, and reinvigorate those struts of understanding about food.

My experience in this course reminds me why we need a UU community, and what we mean when we refer to "faith practice." (Where was the church of Responsible, Informed Eating these last twenty years?) As religious liberals, we often find ourselves moving against the mainstream, and that takes a lot of muscle. It's easy to lose strength and just "go with the flow." That's why making regular attendance a *practice* is so important. Whenever we gather, we can support one another in the struggle, compare notes, and share the work of uncovering truths. We can offer one another reinforcement and enlightenment on a continuing basis, so our collective strength is maintained.

Whether it's food for the body or the spirit, may we feast in truth, in light, and in health.

Martha

Paying Your Pledge

As many of you know, there are several ways to pay your pledge: you may put your check into the basket on Sunday mornings (all checks that are not marked otherwise will be applied to the current year pledge), you may put cash into a purple envelope found in the pew rack and mark the envelope with your name and address, you can have your payments charged to your credit card, you may have your pledge payments come directly out of your bank account or you may pay your pledge by donating stock to the society. If you would like more information on any of these payment methods, please feel free to give me a call.

A special note to anyone who plans to pay their pledge by donating stock. As of December 1, 2008 there will be new instructions on how to do this, do not automatically have your stock contribution sent to Banknorth. Please contact Christina at 802-862-5630 ext. 22 or email at xina@uusociety.org to get the instructions.

Alternative Gift Registry

It's not too early to start planning the type of holiday you want to celebrate this year, and the Alternative Gift Registry from the Center for a New American Dream can help. Suitable for individuals, families, or offices, the registry lists the material, nonmaterial, and charitable gifts that will fill your season.

<http://www.alternativegiftregistry.org/index.php> Suzie DeBrosse

Transitional Housing?

The need for housing in our community is urgent. So many homeless people need temporary rentals as they transition from a shelter toward a more permanent residence. Young people aging out of state custody need low cost housing as they seek to gain personal independence. Our Society owns two old brick houses on Elmwood Avenue. Currently, we rent these buildings to outside tenants. But a committee is now looking at options for turning at least one of our properties into transitional shelter. Many questions about financing and logistics need to be answered. But it's clear this would be a big project, requiring support from the whole congregation. Our Administrator Christina Fulton, Treasurer Bill West, Assistant Treasurer David Bardaglio, attorney Gene Bergman, Social Action chair Maggi Hayes, housing specialist Liz Curry, and Property Chair Nick Meyer have been meeting with Rita Markley of COTS and Mark Redmond of Spectrum for exploratory talks. If you'd like to help, know more or get involved in the planning, please contact Gary Kowalski.

Meditation and Prayer!

You are invited to a discussion on Prayer and Meditation on Sunday evening, November 16, in the Parlors at 7pm. At first, prayer and meditation may seem to differ in focus - one directed outward toward another, the other directed inward toward the Self. But as we move to more subtle and profound levels of experience, we discover that each spiritual discipline can inform the other in surprising and fulfilling ways. Come join us to explore ways in which different varieties of ways in which Buddhist meditation can deepen our spiritual experience. This discussion will be led by Michael Atkinson, a Buddhist teacher trained in the Zen, Vipassana and Tibetan traditions. He is Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature, specializing in Eastern and Western mythologies. This event is sponsored by the UU Buddhist Fellowship. *Richard Swanson*

Charitable IRA Rollover Information

Individuals over the age of 70 ½ can make annual tax-free deductions in 2008 and 2009 of up to \$100,000 from their IRAs directly to their congregation, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), or other Unitarian Universalist (UU) entity. This is a limited time opportunity. Previously, individuals would have had to report any amount taken from an IRA as taxable income before taking a charitable deduction for the gift. The charitable gift deduction is limited to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income, which caused some donors to pay more in income taxes than if they didn't make a gift at all. Fortunately, IRA gifts now can be accomplished simply and without tax complications. Plus, you can make the gift now—while you are living and able to witness the benefits of your generosity. You may contribute from your IRA if:

- You are age 70½ or older
- The gift is \$100,000 or less each year
- You make the gift on or before Dec. 31, 2009
- You transfer funds directly from an IRA or Rollover IRA
- You transfer the gift outright to the UUA, your congregation or other UU entities of your choosing.

Christina Fulton

Book Discussion Group

You are invited to join us on Tuesday, December 9, (First UU Society @7pm) as we discuss [The World Without Us](#), by Alan Weisman. Part Science, part ghost story, Weisman ponders what would happen if the human species were suddenly extinguished. Weeds and trees would retake buckled streets, anything made of bronze plus one billion pounds of plastic would survive. This is an imaginative effort to make us think about our impact on the earth. Please call Gerry Quinlan, 893-7587 with questions.

**First Unitarian Universalist
Society
862-5630**

Gary Kowalski, Minister

*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 Kemp,
Administrative Assistant*

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

Unitarian Universalist Sources

A discussion group for UUs at Wake Robin, led by Reverend Elaine. We meet every other Wednesday afternoon to discuss the Sources of our Living Tradition, and welcome the participation of any Unitarian Universalist FUUSB members or friends. Please speak with a Wake Robin participant or Rev. Elaine if you would like to join the conversation.

"Consolations and Congratulations"

Last call for folks to join the "Consolations and Congratulations" Small Group for people who have recently gone through divorce or separation, or are currently in the midst of this transition. Together we will practice speaking our truths and listening with care, share insights, resources, laughs and questions. If you'd like to learn more or join, please e-mail elaine@uusociety.org or call Rev. Elaine at the Society, 862-5630 ext. 25.

New Address

Dawna Hammers, former Children's Choir Director, has moved and wants us all to know how to reach her. Contact info is: snail mail -46 Highland Ave, #1A Somerville, MA, 02143, email - dawnah@earthlink.net, phone - (802) 236-2528, or www.dawnahammers.net. Half the proceeds of her new CD, *One Spirit*, go to UNICEF.

Bazaar Wreath and Greens Orders

Wreath Orders - Sign up on the bulletin board to order a memorial wreath or poinsettia which decorate our Sanctuary during December & January. Also order plain or decorated wreaths for your home or office. Wreaths are made on a 12" frame. To order larger sizes: 14", 16", 18", 24" 30" or 36", make a note on the sheet or contact Sarah Forbes by November 21st at 872-8743, sarahforbesdesign@comcast.net. Prices will be listed. Wreaths will be ready for pickup at the Bazaar.

Workers/Decorators Needed - Helpers are needed to decorate wreaths, make swags, table decorations & bows on Thursday & Friday Dec 4 & 5. No experience is needed! Sign up on the bulletin board and join the fun! We also need a few sales people to sell wreaths at the Bazaar on the 6th. Please bring donations of natural materials like milkweed pods, nice pine cones, white pine boughs, bittersweet, red bark dogwood, cedar with berries, holly etc. **These donations can only be dropped off between Monday, December 1 and Thursday, December 4.** Contact Sarah Forbes with questions or a materials donation. Thank you!

Consuming Kids Film

Please join Suzie DeBrosse for a pre-holiday season look at our American culture of consumption and its effects on kids. "Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood" will be shown on Sunday, 11/23 @ 12:30. See the Social Action bulletin board for more info.

Meatless Thanksgiving

Gary and Dori will host a veggie potluck on Thanksgiving Day, November 27 at 5 p.m. at the meetinghouse. We'll eat hearty, play charades, and say a grace for the gift of a community where all have a place at the table. Please consider bringing a dish that vegans can share and enjoy--no eggs or dairy. Wondering what to cook? Ask Gary for a recipe, or google "Vegan Thanksgiving Recipes" online for a host of ideas. Please sign up on the bulletin board for a seat at the banquet.

"Spirituality Is Attention To Existence. Spirituality means taking notice you're not the center of the world. Spirituality is the humility to keep asking questions and the creativity to keep telling stories. Spirituality is the belief that we are connected to something beyond our physical being. Spirituality is a heart increasingly open to inquiry. Spirituality is the self's integration within a larger, living whole."

Young Adult Building Your Own Theology

Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service

The Burlington Area Minister's Association invites you to join in a multi-faith celebration on Sunday, November 23 at 7:30 p.m. with representatives from congregational choirs and a message from JUMP's director Reverend Keri Aubert. The service is at Burlington's First Baptist Church on St. Paul Street. All are invited!

Jump Bags

They will need to be filled -- by you -- and returned at the 11am Intergenerational Thanksgiving Service on November 23. Empty labeled bags are still available in the Sanctuary and Sophia Fahs Community Room.

For those of you unfamiliar with this annual ritual...the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington is a member of a consortium of churches -- called the Joint Urban Ministry Project or JUMP -- that staff a daily food bank and counseling service that is housed at one of our neighboring churches, the First Congregational Church on So. Winooski Ave. This program is open to people in the greater Burlington community who need assistance in a myriad of ways: money to pay part of a utility bill; a voucher to buy clothing at one of the local church thrift stores; a bus pass to get to doctor's appointments; a listening ear to the many problems that poverty creates; a bag of food to take home to the family.

Each church is responsible for providing different household items each month to be given to the JUMP clients. For example, one church provides shampoo, another provides laundry detergent; FUUSB provides Similac baby formula and baby food on a monthly basis.

In addition to these donations of goods, each church provides as many food bags as it can throughout the year. Each church provides them for a specific month; the FUUSB month is always November and then the bags are donated to JUMP just before Thanksgiving.

If you haven't done so already, please take a bag and fill it either with toiletries, canned food items or foods for African refugees. A list of items to be included will be attached to each shopping bag so that you will know exactly what to buy. If you can take and fill more than one bag, that would be greatly appreciated.

Questions about JUMP or this particular project, can be directed to Ellen Wollensack, 864-5523. Thank you for your generosity!

First Unitarian Universalist Society
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Welcoming a Guest at Your Table

Each year at this time, friends and families in our congregation participate in the UU tradition of Guest at Your Table.

By bringing home a beautiful Guest at Your Table box, families and individuals learn about how the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee puts our shared principles into action in the United States and around the world. Through a potent combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with grassroots organizations, UUSC promotes economic rights, advances environmental justice, defends civil liberties, and preserves the rights of people in times of humanitarian crisis.

Sharing our blessings through Guest at Your Table ensures that UUSC's human-rights work continues, while building UUSC membership. UUSC members are vitally important, as UUSC is an independent, membership-based organization that receives no funding from the UUA or the U.S. government.

Our congregation has made good progress in terms of UUSC membership during the past four years, going from 14% to 27% membership since 2004 and making us qualify for the Creating Justice Banner Society. But we can increase our participation to 30 or 40% if you join for the first time or renew your membership in UUSC.

Through the booklet *Stories of Hope* we connect with people in the United States and around the world who are working hard to advance human rights - and protect their own rights - in partnership with UUSC.

In each household, the Guest at Your Table box is placed in a prominent spot, often at the family meal table. When family and friends gather to enjoy their blessings, they can reflect on the contributions of their Guests and share generously. Each week, we can choose a different story to read, bringing our Guests to life and helping to celebrate our own rights.

If you would prefer not to bring home a box, you can take a donation envelope or support UUSC directly online at www.uusc.org. We will open our Guest at Your Table program with an intergenerational worship celebration on November 23. *David Conrad*

Children's Choir Director Sought

Seeking dynamic leader to support the spiritual and musical development of the children of the First UU Society of Burlington.

The qualified person will have a familiarity with a range of styles of songs appropriate for both children and adults and consistent with the values of liberal religion; ability to work effectively with people of all ages; ability to provide instrumental accompaniment for singing; and the ability to inspire, recruit and direct a choir of young singers.

The choir rehearses on Sunday mornings from September through mid-June and performs at services throughout the church year.

For a detailed job description, please check out our website at www.uusociety.org. Please send your resume, references and letter of interest to: xina@uusociety.org or Children's Choir Director, 152 Pearl St., Burlington, Vermont 05401.

Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, December 6, 2008 10:00am to 2:00pm

Beautiful live greens. Gorgeous homemade crafts. Gifts from around the world. Attic treasures, toys, books and one-of-a-kind finds. Our Annual Holiday Bazaar is the ideal place to shop for your holiday gifts this year! The fresh scent of holiday greenery, the great variety of baked goods and the delicious hot lunch - - all combine to make a wonderful shopping experience. Plus, you can contribute to our success: Please contribute your treasures, crafts and baked goods to the sale. **You can drop off your donations between Monday, December 1 and Thursday, December 4 only.** Bring in your food items on the day of the sale. See you there! *Elizabeth Hern*

Annual Giving Tree

Through the month of November, the Youth Group will be taking pictures of our RE children to decorate their annual Giving Tree. The Giving Tree will also include requested donations for local non-profit organizations in the form of tree decorations, and it will be located in the Sanctuary during the month of December. More information about the donation aspect of the Giving Tree is TBA. *George Rutherford*
