



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs Newsletter August 2005

Love is the spirit of this Fellowship, and service is its law.
To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another,
this is our covenant.

August Calendar

Sunday, August 7:

- ✓ **8:30 a.m.:** Spiritual discussion group: "When Have You Experienced Atonement in Your Life?"
- ✓ **10:00 a.m.:** "From Fundamentalism to Unitarian Universalism—Part 2," Ron S. continues the saga of his personal spiritual journey. Don't miss it. Ron is an engaging speaker with a fascinating story to tell.
- ✓ **6:00 p.m.:** Potluck dinner at the Fellowship meetinghouse, hosted by your executive board, who will provide wine and appetizers. Bring a generous dish to share and your own table service.

Sunday, August 14:

- ✓ **8:30 a.m.:** Spiritual discussion group, "MyAdventures with Religious Organizations"
- ✓ **10:00 a.m.:** "The New World Order: Globalization, Trans-National Corporations, and the End of National Borders." Hassan R., Associate Professor of Management and Administration, Social and Global Studies, discusses the effect of globalization on trans-national corporations and the countries they operate in. Who makes the decisions affecting so many people worldwide, even though never elected by anyone?

Sunday, August 21:

- ✓ **8:30 a.m.:** Spiritual discussion group, "What Does Spirituality Do For Me?"
- ✓ **10:00 a.m.:** "Domestic Violence—Focus on Women." Guest speakers are two staff members from the Family Violence Prevention Center—Debbie M., social worker and Safe House Coordinator, and Cherie D., Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist.

Sunday, August 28:

- ✓ **8:30 a.m.:** Spiritual discussion group, "What Would a UU Catechism Look Like?"
- ✓ **10:00 a.m.:** "Take Time to Play," a program about the importance of play in the lives of adults and children, produced by Lindie K.

Coming in September

Sunday, September 3:

- ✓ **8:30 a.m.:** Adult spiritual discussion group, "Truth and Beauty"

- ✓ **10:00 a.m.:** "Water Communion and Ingathering," our annual September program featuring the mingling of waters from our various summer adventures. If you stayed home this summer, bring water from your faucet, your garden hose, or perhaps a local pond or stream. If you traveled, bring water from that distant location. Forget to collect water? No problem—using virtual or substitute water is perfectly acceptable. ●

Fellowship Hymn Sing

To a musician, music is, among other things, a service to the community. This service is directly observable in the faces of persons whose spirits have been uplifted and whose expressions reflect the joy that music brings to its listeners

At 2 pm on August 14, Mitzi M. will conduct a Hymn Sing at the Friends Care Center, extending this musical service of the Fellowship to the residents. Mitzi has asked for assistance from Fellowship members who would like to sing, distribute music to the residents, or perform other tasks that can enhance the event. Volunteers may contact Mitzi by phone or in person at a Sunday Fellowship meeting. ●

Abusive Men

Many UU's are aware of some, but not all, of the effects of abusive men on their wives, mothers, sisters, and children. Abuse is physical and psychological and leads to loss of self-worth in its victims. Some in our Fellowship have been victims of, observed, or perpetrated domestic violence.

We will have two programs on this subject: August 21, on violence against women, and Nov. 13 on that against children. Patricia O. is program producer; Ron S. is service leader. Ron was a member of Gov. Cuomo's Task Force on Domestic Violence, the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence, and the Commission on Child Support. Guest Speakers will include staff members of the Family Violence Prevention Center: Debbie M., Social Worker, Safe House Coordinator, and Cherie D., Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist, on August 21, and Cindy M., Director of Daybreak for Runaway Children on August 13. ●

Note: E-mail Newsletter items to Ron S.:
ronbear@sbcglobal.net. **Deadline: August 15.** ●

President's Column: News about the Board

The Executive Board of the Fellowship consists of seven members; a President, President-Elect, Past President, Treasurer, and three at-large members. You can find the names of these board members listed on the first page of your May 2005 Directory. However, there is one change—Tom O. recently resigned his position as Past President. On behalf of the Board and the congregation, I want to express gratitude for Tom's years of service to the Fellowship.

The by-laws of the Fellowship state that in case of a vacancy the Board may appoint a person to serve for the remainder of the of the unexpired term. The Board is pleased to announce that Martha G. will fulfill that role for us. Martha brings valuable experience to the Board, from her work as the Director of the Greene County Library System and from her long affiliation with our denomination. In addition to serving on the Board, Martha will be chair of the Leadership Development Committee, a position normally held by the Past President.

One of the main goals of the Board for the coming year is to promote harmony and right relations within the Fellowship. Our plan is to begin with the board, itself. The first step, taken June 15, was to engage in a two-hour exploratory session with a trained mediator from Yellow Springs Village Mediation. We found it to be a useful process for the discussion of sensitive issues. The next step was development of a Board covenant--an agreement stating how we intend to work together. The covenant, adopted on July 10, follows:

- We will endeavor to demonstrate our leadership and commitment to our congregation by our example, and we will treat our time as leaders as an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the Fellowship.
- We will work to support a process of decision-making that is best for our Fellowship as a whole, and we

will give ourselves time to make decisions so that the wisdom of the group emerges in our work.

- We will do our best to address and resolve difficult issues, as well as celebrate accomplishments and goals that have been reached.
- We will show respect and civility toward one another and will listen with an open mind to the words and ideas of those in our group. We will ask clarifying questions and try to understand opinions that are different from our own.
- We will keep the discussion focused, speak honestly, and avoid monopolizing the conversation.
- We will speak from our own experience and understanding. We will seek to use words and sentences that describe or clarify the situation and try to avoid using words and sentences that evaluate or judge the situation.
- If our dialogue becomes a debate with conflicts arising, we will keep the discussion to the topic at hand and seek the common ground rather than dwelling on differences. If an impasse occurs, we resolve to discuss the issue at a later time.
- We will do our best to follow through on our commitments to the work of the group and help one another fulfill our shared commitments.

This covenant sets a high standard for Board conduct. We hope that it will inspire us in the ongoing effort to develop a community in which everyone truly feels that "Love is the spirit of this Fellowship."

—Judy W., President

A call for volunteers

Volunteering your time and talents has a big impact on our Fellowship's commitment to service. We support one another and the community by teaching our children about cultural diversity, by educating ourselves and our community about important social justice issues, by bringing food and caring to those in need, and by sharing in the work. Our sincere thanks go to the 34 Fellowship members who have returned their volunteer forms. There still are forms in a box on the credenza at the Fellowship. We are missing your strengths and concern.

Use of everyone's skills and energy will mean that by September we will have stimulating programs in place, eager teachers for our children, and people willing to help with service and program activities like:

1. ideas/planning for fund raisers;
2. work within the denomination at the UUA or District level;
3. joining a committee or interest to you;
4. preparation for the annual telephone directory;
5. planning and presentation of educational forums for visitors and new members;
6. work toward planning the annual weekend at Tar Hollow State Park;
7. scheduling hosts for potlucks;
8. teaching a R.E. class; and
9. organizing actions addressing justice issues.

I hope to hear from you soon.

— Mary C.

Team drafts Public Statement Policy for UUFYS membership vetting

UUFYS needs a policy on public statements that will enable it to be visible in the community by means of responsible public statements by and on the part of the UUFYS as a group. Joel Goldberg and Stacy Arnett have drafted an articulate document, presented below. Now, we need input from you. Please read and carefully consider the implications and consequences arising from this policy and send your comments to Joel Goldberg..

Unitarian Universalists in general, and the UU Fellowship of Yellow Springs in particular, are actively interested in the public policy arena. We have opportunities guaranteed by our U.S. Constitution and our denomination's religious heritage to call attention to injustices of all forms, to demand changes in social attitudes and governmental programs, and to hold leaders and institutions accountable for their actions and policies.

To this end, the UUFYS Executive Board has developed the following guidelines for advocating for such things as, but not limited to, civil rights, peace, personal liberties, children's welfare, economic justice, health care, support for the arts, and protection of the environment.

But while such advocacy is an important ingredient of our congregation, we must also keep in mind the fact that not all members will necessarily agree with every position that is proposed, or be entirely satisfied with how a public statement is worded. There are also certain limitations on tax-exempt organizations to be considered.

Here are seven guidelines to follow as individuals, as a congregation, or as a subgroup of the congregation:

1. Any proposed public position, or public stance, taken by the congregation as a whole, one of its committees, or any other group of members, must be a good fit with the UUA seven principles. When we do public advocacy work as Unitarian Universalists, we do so as members of a values-based religious organization and without specifying any relation to a political party.

2. To whatever extent is practical, the topic and proposed action--the statement and its wording-- should

be discussed with the congregation. If the statement or position is to represent the entire congregation, it may be advisable to vote on it before it is released to the public. If the issue is particularly controversial or if the vote appears very close, members may request a "supermajority" vote--eg, three-quarters of those present and voting after a quorum has been established.

3. A vote generally will not be necessary when the UUFYS statement reflects established policy of the Unitarian Universalist Association, as previously enunciated, for example, in a Statement of Conscience, an action of Immediate Witness, a statement by the UUA president, or a publication of the UUA Washington Office for Advocacy. However, that source must be clearly acknowledged in the UUFYS statement.

4. When it is not practical to poll the entire congregation, UUFYS policy statements may be issued by, and over the name of, the Executive Board, a subgroup such as the Social Justice Committee, or any subgroup of three or more members--with the explicit understanding that the group making the statement be clearly identified.

5. During election campaigns, our Fellowship, along with all other religious organizations, may neither publicly endorse nor oppose any political candidate running for office. This applies to elections at all levels, whether it be for a local school board or for national office. Nor can our congregation as a group support candidates financially.

6. Despite these cautionary points, the Fellowship is encouraged to participate in public events such as political forums to which all candidates are invited, and in nonpartisan activities such as voter registration, as long as careful attention is paid to being objective. The test is whether the activity is educational rather than partisan.

7. The restrictions imposed on the congregation as a whole or its subgroups do not apply to individual members of the congregation. For example, a member may freely make a partisan statement in a letter to a newspaper, while making it clear that the member is speaking only in his or her own name."

Tom O. resigns

Earlier this month the Board received following e-mail message from Tom O. informing them of his resignation from the Board and the office of Past President. The board quickly chose Martha G., active Fellowship member and Director of the Greene County Library System, as his successor.

Dear UU Board Members,

This e-mail is to inform you of my resignation as Past President of the UUFYS, effective immediately. Thank you for the opportunity to serve this dynamic and ever-changing organization.

Tom O.

Committee drafts Mission Statement

The UUFYS Executive Committee has issued the following draft of the Fellowship's Mission Statement for consideration and comments:

The mission of the UUFYS is to be a community where people of diverse beliefs can come together to share religious freedom.

We nurture a spirit of reason, tolerance, and loving fellowship; promoting ethical values, lifelong spiritual development, social justice, and service to the wider world..

The committee would like your feedback about this draft of the Mission Statement. Please give us your comments any time before the end of September 2005. Send comments to

Note: To protect against computer viruses, e-mail programs may prevent sending or receiving certain types of file attachments. Check your e-mail security settings to determine how attachments are handled.

– Mary K.

The Newsletter staff (sic) invites UUF members to submit articles, notices, suggestions, complaints, and other items of communication for publication for any upcoming issue. Group meetings or conclusions, notices of items for sale, solicitations for help with projects, praise for members or non-members, suggestions for better ways to do things or for new things that need to be done — all are excellent fodder for publication. Help stamp out editorial fillers!

Ombudsman Observations (OO)

—by Al S.

Unitarians locally and nationally pride themselves on being tolerant and respectful of diversity. But are we, really?

We generally do well when dealing with the issue of same sex partnerships. On issues of race we have generally been progressive. But while we are tolerant and accepting of those of other races who come to us on our terms, how much do we reach out to them on their terms? How tolerant are we of those who hold conservative viewpoints politically and religiously? I know that my tolerance is frequently challenged by these groups. The challenge is not tolerance for those we agree with, it is tolerance for those with views very different from ours.

To bring the question closer to our Fellowship, how much tolerance do we have of members of our Fellowship who hold views different from ours, or members who make choices different than what we would make? I have observed aggressive reactions to those who merely question the present Board organizational model. We are all aware of serious personal fights between Fellowship members over things that, in the cosmic scheme of things, are not very important. Is this tolerance?

Consider the perennial Fellowship issue of spiritual or humanistic. After many programs I have heard members comment: "That program had no spiritual content at all!" or "That program was too touchy-feely for me." It seems to me that for some Fellowship members the standard is that ALL programs should be spiritual or ALL programs should be humanistic. Is this tolerance? Many in our fellowship are spiritually focused. Many in our Fellowship are humanistic focused. If we were tolerant wouldn't we appreciate the balancing act our program committee must perform? Wouldn't we graciously tolerate some programs focused on the interests of members with a different view of things?

It is my perception that our level of tolerance in the Fellowship is much lower now that it has been in the past. This is based upon the increasing number of conflicts and the higher level of intensity of those conflicts. It is based upon the number of members who have chosen to drop out or to seriously reduce their participation. It is based upon those who say that they have felt devalued at our Fellowship.

Are we tolerant? Can we commit to respect each other? Can we commit to avoiding personal attacks that devalue others? Can we rejoice in our diversity?

Friendly Calls

Anyone who would like a friendly call occasionally, just to chat and check on possible needs, is invited to let Patricia O. know. Betty W. and Esther H. have volunteered as callers.

Religious Education

August RE Schedule:

Sunday, August 7: Multicultural folktales with Patty O. (ages 6+). Nursery schoolers will be involved in sun, wind, and water activities.

Sunday, August 14: Multicultural folktales with Martha G. (ages 6+). Nursery schoolers will be involved in sun, wind, and water activities.

Sunday, August 21: Candle making and outdoor play with Al S. for children of all ages.

Sunday, August 28: Multicultural folktales with Chris K. Nursery schoolers will continue to be involved in sun, wind, and water activities.

RE News

Thanks to the following Fellowship members who helped out with RE during July: Lucille G., Martie J., Deb J., Chris K., and Patty O. We couldn't keep our program running over the summer without you!

Wanted – A Good Man! The RE program is looking for a male counterpart to teach “Our Whole Lives” (the holistic UU sexual health curriculum) along with Mindy M. this fall to our 11+ group of youth. The program will be open to the public, and the male instructor may come from the public. Training and materials will be provided. If interested or potentially interested, please talk to Mindy or Debbie D.

–Debbie D.
Director of RE for Youth

UUFYS cookbook

About a year ago I began asking for recipes to include in a special UUFYS cookbook that I have begun. Few responses appeared, but I suspect that I didn't promote the idea adequately.

That's history. Some of the dishes I've observed in the kitchens of UUFYS members have re-kindled my enthusiasm for the project. We can make this a culinary masterpiece!

Please send me your favorite recipes so that we can get the cookbook back on track. E-mail them to me at . Thanks.

Adult Spiritual Discussion Group

– by James B.

Try out the new adult spiritual discussion group that meets on Sunday mornings at 8:30. It is led by Jamie B., a new member of our Fellowship who started a similar group at MVUUF.

Goals

This is not a therapy group and I am not a teacher. I do this because it's exciting for me so it is sometimes hard for me to act as just any other member of the group and to keep my mouth shut. We come together to share our answers to the deep spiritual questions raised by our lives. How well you answer these questions is a measure of your own spiritual development. No one ever gets final answers, but your comfort with your answers should get better over time. In some sense, everyone is a spiritual being, coming together in a group allows us to compare answers and share a common language. This is not intended to be a hard sell for UU ideas, but an exercise in mutual teaching.

Suggested Topics

These topics are based on questions I have pondered in my life. The list is for Sundays ending at the end of October, when I hope someone else will take over. I expect to be in Florida between November and March and return in spring to rejoin you, but not necessarily as facilitator. I plan to start a similar wintertime activity in Florida at the UU congregations either in Port Charlotte or in Venice.

(Topics covered during June and most of July are omitted from this list.)

July 31: “How Much Love is Enough”

August 7: “When have You Experienced Atonement in Your Life?”

August 14: “My Adventures With Religious Organizations”

August 21: “What Does Spirituality Do For Me?”

August 22: “What Would a UU Catechism Look Like?”

September 4: Truth & Beauty

September 11: The boundary between Good & Evil?

September 18: What does the word “God” mean to you?

September 25: Am I free to choose my beliefs?

October 2: What motivates me?

October 9: Religion & the Unconscious;
Situation Ethics & Looseleaf Theology

October 23: What has my life taught me?

October 30: When do UUs act like Fundamentalists?

Ed note: Sound like dynamite topics!

Building and Grounds

Work Sessions

Summer is going fast, and we're looking ahead to cooler weather to plan a few small work bees. We need to apply some TLC to our building and grounds. The areas we need to work on are small for the most part and can be handled by only one or two people each.

Our basement storage room needs can use some folks who love to organize and clean. The old kitchen cabinet needs to be either donated or otherwise disposed of. The new shelving generously donated by the Battinos is ready to be assembled and organized.

The second area is the outside. We need to scrape and paint the soffit and do general touch-up on the east entrance. Several trees need to be trimmed and the brush then taken down to the brush pile.

We also need to have a cleanup and organization party in the kitchen. It's been over a year since we really paid the kind of attention it needs.

To make it fun for all involved, a lunch or brunch would be effective. This means an additional person to organize the food. Anyone interested in getting involved on any level can contact Chris K., B & G chair, at 767-1723 or his e-mail at

Future Plans for Building and Grounds

Sunday attendance has been growing and we are getting tight at the seams. With our limited space, a subcommittee is needed to look at all our possibilities for the most efficient way to use our space with foresight, vision, a clear understanding of what's needed, and a knack for planning the most efficient way to get the job done. We'll welcome anyone with ideas on how to address this issue. The next B&G meeting is Wednesday, Aug. 10, at 7:30 pm at the meeting house. Please join us! *—Chris K.*

Telephone Programs

Gordon C. has volunteered to coordinate telephoning people for any emergencies that affect the welfare and interests of the congregation.

New e-mail address

Stacy A. has asked that the Newsletter inform the membership of his new e-mail address, so here it is:

Potpourri of ideas for members

“Dinner for 8” groups

One of the tastiest and most popular ways to get to know other members of UUFYS is to sign up for “Dinner for 8” groups. These are monthly potluck dinners that travel from house to house from October to May each year. This past year, 55 members and friends joined in. Watch this space for details on where and when to sign up.

Complete office, comm center

Have you discovered that classroom 1 is now an office and committee meeting room, complete with phone and computer, plus white board for meetings, shelves full of administrative reference books, and mail boxes for the Board members and committee chairs? Feel free to use this communication center for all your committee needs.

Fellowship purchasing

Ordering a service or buying something for the Fellowship? Please get a blue “Payment Request” from the office, fill it in, get the signature of your committee chair, and send it to the Treasurer, Dick R. Simpler yet, leave it in the Treasurer's mailbox in room 1.

Telephone problem solved

The telephone that used to tumble off the platform in the lobby is now securely fastened on the wall of the cloakroom.

Sound system available

The sound amplification system has been installed in a secure cabinet and is much easier for the volunteer technician to operate now. If you want to rent the building, you can now rent the sound system also.

Training for newcomers

The Sunday morning newcomers are an important part of the warmth of our Fellowship. They bring smiles to members and give encouragement to newcomers! We now are recruiting couples and individuals for this year's schedule — people to work a whole month if possible. Please be prepared to sign up this month when our recruiters contact you. Member Services wants to get together to discuss the pitfalls and possibilities of this important task, in a meeting on Sunday, August 28. Please mark that date on your calendar.

—Mary K.

Pledges and kudos due

The Fellowship's finances are your finances. Here's the latest information on where to send your pledge payments and requests for reimbursement:

√ "Stewardship" pledge forms and payments should be sent or given to Ron S. as soon as possible.

Please remember that our fiscal year started July 1, so your pledge payments for 2005-06 are now due. The Finance committee is attempting to bring our financial records into compliance with best practices, and Ron S. has installed the *Peachtree* accounting system on the computer in room 1 and is inputting our data there.

A hearty thanks to you, Ron!

UU Yard Sale Pays Off

The 240-minute yard sale held Saturday, July 9 at the Rose residence on Marshall Street yielded approximately \$270.15, which will benefit the Fellowship's general fund, according to Jim and Judy R.

The sale began at precisely 10 a.m., even though a minithrong of customers had

gathered in the R. driveway much earlier. Jim says he began the practice of holding yard sale customers at bay about five years ago so that everybody has an equal chance at buying the bargains they spot before opening time.

The sale included donated items from about 10 members of the Fellowship, as well as other old friends of the Rs. Pat O. helped out as a cashier for part of the sale.

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