

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs



NEWSLETTER August 2006

Letter from the President

Members and Friends -

Here we are at the month of August, and across Ohio it is time to enjoy the tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers and other vegetables from our gardens. Daylight still lasts long enough for great evening walks. Though the temperature, humidity, and insect population all feel more aggressive, it is a good time of year.

This is a good time to contemplate the coming season of Autumn; the season when changes begin. Nearly everyone who reads this newsletter has been aware that the Fellowship is considering some changes. Often any suggestion of change to the way we do what we do isn't welcomed, and often there is a discrepancy between the intended result and the method of implementation. Feelings are not acknowledged or honored. "Traditions" are not given full consideration, and neither are the possibilities. Just as there will never be a comfortable and unanimous change, there will never be an easy answer to the questions as to why change is necessary.

Okay, since we know that change is difficult for some of us, let's examine what makes it easy for us. Those things that enrich our experience are easier to accept. When our Fellowship expanded the schedule of Sunday programs to include the summer months, there were doubts, yet the services were heavily attended. When we changed the customary entrance from one end of the building to the other, and took the steps to allow wheelchair access, a few still used what was suddenly the "back door," though many complimented the change. Other examples could be cited, but the point I am making is that we do a great deal of work considering any change before making it happen, and the most important element is to

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August Program Calendar:

Sunday, August 6:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, “Defusing the population bomb.”

10:00 AM: “*A Person Will Worship Something*”, presented by Rev. Martha Hodges, interim minister at Miami Valley UU Fellowship.

11:30 AM: A potluck lunch follows the program.

Sunday, August 13:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, “Components of self, (ego, shadow and collective unconscious).”

10:00 AM: “*Universal Health Care: Cost, Quality and Justice*”, presented by Dr. Mary Jo Groves, Director of Wittenberg's Student Health Services. She is a member of Physicians for a National Health Plan, a group which is working to get universal health care nationally.

Sunday, August 20:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, “Aldous Huxley's, *The Perennial Philosophy*”

10:00 AM: “*U.S./Iran Relations: A Fresh Perspective*”, presented by Professor Mohsen Khani of the Sinclair Community College's Geography Department. Professor Khani will speak about the Iranian situation from a geographic point of view. He will try to increase our knowledge of Iran to help us understand the current political issues and their origins.

Sunday, August 27:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, “Hypotheses for spirituality.”

10:00 AM: “*The Sudan Crisis*”, presented by Sam Laki, of Central State's Department of Water Resources. Dr. Laki, was born in Yei, in southern Sudan. He has a Ph. D. in agricultural economics. He will discuss the history and context of the problems in Sudan. In addition to the Dafur region, he will discuss problems in the south and the east.

August 6th Speaker: Rev. Martha Hodges

Martha Hodges is currently half way through a two-year position as Interim Minister at Miami Valley UU Fellowship. She comes to Dayton after completing her Master of Divinity degree at Meadville Lombard Theological School, our UU seminary in Chicago, in 2004, and serving a one-year internship at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. She has come to ministry as a "late bloomer," having enjoyed previous careers as an archivist with a specialization in labor history and as a coordinator of an adult literacy program and teacher of English as a Second Language in her hometown of Ithaca, NY. Martha is a lifelong UU.

The title for Martha's August 6th presentation is “*A Person Will Worship Something*.”

She describes it as follows:

“Unitarian Universalists are not strong on what we'd call liturgy. "Liturgy" is defined as "the work of the people" and refers to the structural format of worship in which the listeners take an active role. It's what distinguishes a worship service from a lecture. Preaching on Emerson's assertion that “a person will worship something,” Martha will consider whether the concept of worship has any meaning to us as a non-creedal people holding diverse ideas about divinity. And what comes first—the what or the how of worship? What might a more worshipful” Sunday service feel like? Let's try it and see!”

Annual Treasurer's Report to UUFYS

By Louis S.

The primary job of treasurer is to protect and preserve the organization's assets. To this end, accounting systems and controls are usually put in place which provide for practical safeguards of these assets. The treasurer has oversight over collecting, banking and investing, and disbursing the organization's money.

Safeguarding, Protection, and Control:

Ron Seward did an excellent job at setting up two systems which account for the organization's assets. The first is a database management system used to track pledges and pledge income, which is installed on the computer we purchased for accounting tasks.

The second system set up by Ron S. is a complete accounting system using Peachtree software. This system tracks expenses, account balances including banking account balances, runs payroll, and provides for reporting. Again Ron did an outstanding job in setting up this system. In looking at it one doesn't see the countless hours that went into it. We need to give Ron a big UUFYS group hug for all the work he put into this.

One of the principles of safeguarding assets is the separation of duties. Since FinCom is thinly staffed, we have to concentrate on two areas: the one that is the most vulnerable and the one where we stand the potential of biggest loss.

Our most vulnerable area is in handling cash. Using cash does not create a paper trail and is where churches suffer survivable but continuing losses if they lack adequate controls and procedures. The board approved use of the members of the choir to count cash every Sunday morning. The members of FinCom will certainly appreciate their help. We have also separated the functions of recording and depositing money at the bank from that of entering the amount into Peachtree, which avoids one easy way of embezzling.

The second area is the area of biggest potential loss. The UUFYS has liquid assets in the neighborhood of \$77,200. Now, paying bills is recorded and printed by the software and our printed check form requires two signatures for checks over \$600. We are looking at other controls in this area.

Investing:

Another task of the treasurer is to see that assets are secure and are invested in financial instruments that match the reward/risk appetite of the UUFYS. The first step in investing is to create a cash needs / cash income budget (cash flow budget), which we now have with our approved budget and knowledge of the flow of income over the year from pledges, rentals and Tar Hollow. The second is to invest our assets in secure instruments with differing maturity dates, in case the income ebbs when the expenses rise. [This was done in early July.]

Year End Results:

INCOME / EXPENSE: The books were closed for the 2005 – 2006 fiscal year on June 28, 2006. Total revenue for the Fellowship was \$39,900. Pledges collected totaled \$33,700. All income sources were under

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Sunday September 3rd Program:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, "Emotional vs. rational arguments"

10:00 AM: *"Water Ceremony and In-gathering"* Presented by Mitzi Manny. Remember: When you are traveling this summer, remember to bring back a little vial of water. During the water ceremony there will be a time for you to talk whence came that water as you pour it into the communal bowl beside the fountain.

11:30 AM: A potluck lunch follows the program.

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their budgeted levels with the total shortfall being \$7,100 - i.e. \$39,900 in revenue compared to a budgeted hope of \$47,000. Thanks to mid-year spending cutbacks initiated by FinCom's new Chairman, Charlotte B., total spending was \$38,400 leaving a surplus of \$1,500.

BALANCE SHEET: As mentioned earlier, the liquid assets of UUFYS are \$77,200. Of the \$45,000 in pledges for the coming year \$5,200 has already been collected. This amount is represented within the \$77,200 in liquid assets and again on the balance sheet as a "Paid Ahead Pledge" liability which will disappear on July 1, 2006 as the amount is taken into income. Our major maintenance set-aside is \$14,600. This represents funds set aside for future maintenance and repair of the building or heating equipment.

NET WORTH: The UUFYS net worth is \$473,200. This is represented primarily by the value of the building and the liquid assets.

Summary

The accounting / record-keeping / reporting at UUFYS has taken a major leap forward as a result of the work initiated by Ron S. (along with his donations of software) and the help of Charlotte B. As treasurer I hope to provide timely reports to the committee chairs so they don't have to keep track of their own spending on the backs of envelopes, and to the board so they may be aware of any developing situations and take quick corrective action.

[A more detailed version of the report is available from the Finance Committee.]

Note to choir members:

From Mitzi M.: Choir practice will resume at 8:45 AM on September 3rd, and every Sunday thereafter. I hope to bring some new works back from the UUMN meeting in St. Paul MN (August 1 – 6).

OUR MICRO-CREDIT IN NIGER, AFRICA:

Here is a recent report from Niger on activities in the micro-credit organization we are supporting:

Care, International has provided two training sessions to the women in the micro-credit, teaching them about finances, saving, keeping records, and making money. The women have organized themselves into a number of small groups, and each group is buying a lamb to raise. When festival or holiday time comes (for instance, Ramadan in the fall), they will sell the lambs for a good profit and reinvest in other ventures. Sounds as though our investment is paying off in education, organization, and economics for the region and its women and families. — Jeanne B.

“Let us forgive each other - only then will we live in peace”

Leo Tolstoy

Democracy for America Miami Valley will present a forum on the Iraq war on Saturday, August 19 at 2 p.m. Professor Awad Halabi of the WSU History Department will give a brief history of the region. Prof. Liam Anderson of the WSU Political Science Dept., who has written a book on Iraq and has visited Iraq since the war began, will give an up to date picture. I need help with publicity. Call 767-8181 if you can spare a few hours for the cause of regime change. The venue is the Main Dayton Library on Third St.

Our Website Joins the 21st Century!

By Mary S.

We have a new look to our internet website - www.uufys.org! The old website our fellowship was using was created over five years ago by Nancy S. Our new site was designed and created by Joel S., who deserves our warmest thanks for an excellent job. Webmaster Joel has given the site a modern look and will be posting the calendar and activities regularly. In addition, he has removed the forums which were abused by people selling cigarettes, Russian brides, etc.

"Why do we need a website?" you ask. It is our face to the larger community – Yellow Springs and beyond - and allows new people to find us quickly and understand what we stand for and what we offer to them. Along with our monthly newsletter and the Directory, it ensures communication among ourselves and with the world. (In the last five years, the site received over 67,000 visits.)

Now comes the real prize – Joel has added a **members only** section where he will post the minutes from the Board and any committee which submits them, an always-up-to-date Directory and any other in-house matters we wish. You may access this section by clicking on "Members Area" in the menu and then "Enter Members Area." Then type "uulife" in the box at the top of the page. (Please resist the urge to type "uulife" in capital letters – it is case sensitive and must be in small letters.) The members area was created with a new type of software and is safe from Googling.

You are invited to look up www.uufys.org and mark it as a bookmark or favorite, for convenient regular viewing. With it, you can see what Sunday's program is, look up a member's phone number, or re-read a newsletter article. We also invite your comments about the website, praising or criticizing. Please send your comments both to Joel (geecool@sbcglobal.net) and to me (shbuzz2001@sbcglobal.org), as chair of the Communications committee. Submit

pictures for the photo gallery directly to Joel.

HAVE YOU RESPONDED?

Have you returned your pledge card? Your volunteer opportunities form?

If you've been "meaning to" fill them out but haven't "gotten around to it" yet -- ***now is the time!***

The Finance Committee and the Volunteer Coordinator depend on you to help us gear up for the new Fellowship year. When you respond, we can spend our time doing our jobs more creatively. While most Fellowship members have already returned their pledge cards, only a minority have completed the volunteer form.

If we missed you during the spring pledge drive or you misplaced the forms, you can pick up copies of both the pledge card and the volunteer form in the parlor. You may give completed cards to the Treasurer (Louis S.) or the Financial Secretary (Ron S.) and completed volunteer forms to Mary Cargan. Or you can mail either or both to UUFYS at PO Box 480.

Thanks, everyone.
Charlotte B

Ombudsman Observations

By Al S.

I had intended to place an Ombudsman Observation in the newsletter regularly just to remind people of this service. My trip to Rwanda and other activities resulted in a lapse.

I originally joined the Fellowship because of the caring, support and non-judgmental listening of the members. We trusted each other and worked hard to help each other and improve the Fellowship building and grounds.

We were successful. The building is now large and beautiful with new chairs, tables, furniture and even a microphone. The membership has grown from about 80 to well over 100.

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But, with these successes something else seems to have happened. Personal conflicts occur over and over. Trust of each other has eroded. I have been told that this is an inevitable result of becoming larger. I hope that this is not true!

Please consult the Fellowship Ombudsman immediately at the first sign of conflict or distrust. We can be an uncommon denomination of trust and loving support of each other.

ENDOWMENT FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

What is an Endowment?

An endowment is a fund from which the principal is never spent. Income from investment earnings (interest, dividends, and sometimes capital appreciation) may be spent, subject to policies adopted by the Fellowship. In our case the income will be spent on causes that advance social justice in Greene, Clark and Montgomery Counties.

Let us remember that the Covenant of our Fellowship states that “service is its law.” Here is a means for us as individuals and as a Fellowship to do **something lasting**.

The Endowment for Social Responsibility is separate from the Fellowship’s operating budget. It is managed by a committee of Fellowship members appointed by the Executive Board. Funds within the Endowment are managed by the Yellow Springs Community Foundation.

There are several ways you can contribute to the Endowment. One is to make an outright gift of cash or securities. Keep in mind that a gift of stock, which has increased in value, is a good way to gain an income tax deduction as well as a way to avoid capital gains taxes. Thus you have a potential double tax savings!

Giving through life income plans.

You can also make a gift of cash or securities and keep on earning income. The Endowment Committee in conjunction with the Yellow Springs Community Foundation and US Bank can help you make a “life-income” gift to support the Endowment. The primary types of life income gifts are the Charitable Gift Annuity and the Pooled Income Trust.

Life-income gifts are rewarding and simple to arrange. You make an irrevocable contribution of cash or securities and may claim a charitable deduction on your income tax. In addition you may generate a larger income stream from low yielding assets. You will receive periodic payments for the rest of your life, guaranteed. Payments may be fixed, or variable. When you die, you will create a wonderful legacy for our Fellowship as your gift is turned over to the Endowment.



Use your will to give to social justice.

Consider one of the simplest and most rewarding gifts you can make to the Fellowship: A bequest in your will or other estate plans. Many of us want to provide generously for the organizations we cherish, in addition to our loved ones. A bequest of any size in your estate plans can shape the future of this Fellowship and ensure its vitality for generations to come.

A bequest can be “specific,” for a particular dollar amount, or “residual,” after other obligations have been met. Bequests also differ in terms of how they may be used. An “unrestricted” bequest may be used for any purpose of the Fellowship, and “restricted” is limited in scope, for example, to the Endowment for Social Responsibility.

How to contribute to the Endowment for Social Responsibility

Forms are available at the Fellowship or contact Hardy B. at 767-7417.

My Week at Young Fun Camp in St. Louis

By Zyrian A.

If you go to Young Fun you will get to go on great field trips. Such as going to see the leading museum of the city. Maybe a great monument in the city. (If that city has one). We went to go see the Arch, the Exhibit Hall, the Zoo of Saint Louis, and the City museum. During the evening they have a nightly worship service (you don't actually worship, you just sing a song and have a general discussion about different things). You will probably stay in a apartment complex with several other kids your age. Yes there will be a counselor with you. But don't worry, all the counselors are fun to be around. When your not on a field trip you will be doing fun activities. Such as messy painting, yes your allowed to paint on yourself if you wish. There's also Creative Writing, swimming, Mud works, no you don't actually get to work with mud, but you will be able to make fun concoctions such as the newly discovered Saquid, created by one of the Young Fun campers. That's not all, there will be other activities, and they change depending on were Young Fun is located. There is always a talent show were you show of your talents, not to win a medal or trophy, but to have fun. The youth and the parents will be separated and will not see each other with the exception of emergencies. Unfortunately you have to be 8 years or older to come, and no older than 14, but there is another program for kids age 14 to 18 that is just as fun, I cant really tell you what they do though. Also there is yet another for ones age 18 to 35, once again I cant tell you what happens with this group. The next Young Fun program will be at Portland, Oregon. Each program is in late June. If you want to learn more visit the UUA website and search through the links for the next General Assembly. If you go I know you and whoever goes with you will have fun.

Zyrian attended the Young Fun Camp as an extension program of the UU General Assembly , this year held in St Louis, MO. While he was busy having fun with other UU youth, his Dad attended as many meetings, workshops, and worship services as possible with other adults at the General Assembly.

Religious Education

By Ann P.

- Ashanta R. and Helen R. will be caring for our youngest children in the nursery through the rest of the summer months.
- The younger and older groups will continue to learn about UU principals with the help of our generous and loyal fellowship volunteers.

Religious Education News

Thanks to the following RE volunteers for teaching during the month of July: Debbie D., Eliza W., Sylvia C.-D., and Stacy A.

Also, a big thanks to all of the volunteers who helped with the carwash fundraiser. Al S. did an excellent job organizing the younger and older groups. Proceeds from this endeavor went to the Rwanda project.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for **August 20th**. This is the date of our next RE committee meeting. The meeting will be held at noon in the older group classroom. We are looking for **anyone** who is interested in the youth of our fellowship. Even if you are not sure that you can commit to being on a committee please come by and learn what is new with RE and how you can help out!

Al S. will help to organize a luncheon fundraiser in early September. Our youth will prepare food, learn the value of service projects, and raise money for the Rwanda project. Look for more details in the coming weeks.

Our 2nd Annual UUFYS Youth Campout is coming up in September. Joy and Harold F. have offered to host the event again this year. We are looking forward to another great campout!!

With the help of Eliza W., the Religious Education committee is organizing a toy yard sale. If you have items that you would like to donate please contact Ann or Eliza. The proceeds from the sale will benefit the fellowship.

Also in September we are planning a dedication ceremony for our new basketball court. Plan on shooting some hoops with the fellowship youth.

September will be a month where many of our youth will return for the school year. We are looking forward to organizing some fun activities for all ages. Keep an eye out for further updates.

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know what you like/dislike about the proposal and what you might like/dislike about the possibilities. The disagreements are bound to happen but should not hold us back from the possibilities of discussion and pursuit of a greater goal. I will not suggest an answer, but request that we do our best to try and to be gentle with one another. Beginning in September, there will be some special events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Fellowship. This is going to be an important year for us, and should be recognized fully. Please contact me if (1) you have ideas to help us celebrate, (2) if you are a longtime member of this Fellowship, as your involvement is especially important, (3) if you know anyone who has been active with us previously, inactive for some time, and ought to be included. Let's include everyone, young and older, new and not so new, in this special occasion.

Thank you - Stacy A.

**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.**



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs

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