

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs...



NEWSLETTER March 2007

Letter from the President

Members and Friends -

Welcome to an exciting time for our Fellowship! Why is it so exciting? Because as a result of the information gathered in the recent congregational survey, and due to the conversations that have begun, we are moving ahead on a few key issues. There were clear messages in some areas, notably these: a need for a staff person, concerns about the facility (building), a sense of internal community, becoming a "green sanctuary", and the need for a minister (not at this time). Because of the responses to the survey, the Board has moved to appoint a committee to determine the job description for a part time staff person and then begin the search. The Board is looking at establishing a designated fund for future building and expansion needs. More will follow to encourage and develop a strong sense of internal community. Additionally, people are taking the initiative to direct us toward the goal of being a sustainable, environmentally friendly Fellowship. This gets us

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Announcement:

WHO YA GONNA CALL ??!

The Help One Another Committee includes a group of people who assist our Fellowship members in times of need. The co-chairpersons for March and April are Elizabeth D. and Martie J.

If you're sick and need help with errands, groceries, etc., or perhaps a meal or two--or if you need transportation to the doctor or to the Fellowship, we can help.

If you'd like your name added as a volunteer on this wonderful committee, call any member of our group: Sylvia C .
Donna C., Elizabeth D.
Harold and Joy F., Martie J.
Mitzi M., Al S. or Judy W.

Joy F., chair

March Programming...at a glance:

March 4:

"Bury Me in a Free Land."

March 11:

"The Challenges and Possibilities Entailed in the Current Encounters between European Feminisms and Muslim Integration in Western Europe."

March 18:

"Using Your Own Life Story to Create a New Life Story."

March 25:

"Drumbeat for Darfur."

March Program Calendar:

Sunday, March 4:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, *"Is there a connection between Feminism and Unitarian Universalism?"*

10:00 AM: *"Bury Me in a Free Land."* With March 4th serving as a Sunday threshold between Black History Month and Women's History month, guest speaker Eliza Galaher will explore the presence and voices of African American women in the history and theology of Unitarian Universalism.

A potluck lunch follows the program. Bring your own table service and a generous dish to share.

Sunday, March 11:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, *"Gender & Equality."*

10:00 AM: *"The Challenges and Possibilities Entailed in the Current Encounters between European Feminisms and Muslim Integration in Western Europe."* The speaker for this International Women's Day program is Yveta Jusova, Professor of Women's Studies at Antioch College and Director of the College's Comparative Women's Studies Program in Europe. For the past three fall sessions she has led the European program, in which students meet and study with feminists and activists in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Poland, and Germany. Jusova will speak from her current research and extensive personal experience in Europe.

Sunday, February 18:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, *"The Divine Feminine within Spirituality."*

10:00 AM: *"Using Your Own Life Story to Create a New Life Story."* Rubin B. will lead us in a process called "Guided Metaphor." After writing about our life stories as we would tell them briefly to others, we'll each be empowered to create a new life story--as we wish our story would have been. Then we write about how this new story will have

changed our future.

Sunday, March 25:

8:30 AM: Spiritual discussion group, *"Forgiveness & Renewal."*

10:00 AM: *"Drumbeat for Darfur,"* UUSC Justice Sunday. Veteran journalist and former anchorman, Nick Clooney, will speak on genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan and about the actions that individuals and the international community should take in response to this genocide. Clooney and his actor/director son, George Clooney, have chronicled their on-site experience of the crisis which involves the forced displacement, killing and rape of thousands of Sudanese civilians. Nick and his wife Nina are currently devoting their lives to telling the Darfur story.

Coming in April

Sunday, April 1: 10:00 AM: *"Taking Care of Business (No Foolin)"* This will be a two-part program featuring a presentation from the Conflict Resolution Team and a presentation from the Stewardship Committee to kick off the 2007-2008 Pledge Drive. A catered lunch will follow the program. All Fellowship members and potential members are strongly encouraged to be there.

PLEASE READ

Newsletter Guidelines

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs is published monthly. **To submit material for the newsletter please do so by the 20th of each month.** Please submit material as non-formatted text in your e-mail or as an MS Word attachment in 12 point font with no formatting (bold, italic, etc...).

Send material to David K.

Religious Education

Youth Religious Education in March

- Childcare will be provided for our youngest children in the Nursery by Ashante R. and Lauren W. using the “Celebrating Me and My World” curriculum.
- The Younger Group will be finishing up the Old Testament and starting the New Testament.
- Blythe P. continues to lead the youth in a Coming of Age program using nature activities, crafts and ritual to help them continue developing values and a strong sense of identity.



Photo by Peter Whitson

Adult Religious Education in March

The **8:30 AM Sunday** Spiritual Discussion Group will be focusing its February discussion on Unitarian Universalist spirituality. The 8:30 AM Spiritual Discussion Group is a great opportunity for anyone interested in discussion and dialogue on various topics of interest to the members of the Fellowship. The topics for March are:

- **March 4th:** Is there a connection between Feminism and Unitarian Universalism?
- **March 11th:** Gender & Equality.
- **March 18th:** The Divine Feminine within Spirituality.
- **March 25th:** Forgiveness & Renewal.

Plans to add additional Adult Religious Education programs are in the works. If you have any ideas please send them to: David K.

Religious Education News

We would like to thank the many people at the Fellowship who help make Religious Education a reality. It is a pleasure working with everyone in making Religious Education an important aspect of the Yellow Springs UU Fellowship experience.

On February 18th of this year Jo W. resumed teaching The Younger Group of RE students, and the children seemed very eager to have her back.

The Religious Education meeting for March is scheduled for March 4th at 11:45 AM. If you are interested in attending please see David or Kathy.

David K. & Kathy R.
Co-Directors of Religious Education

UUFYS Executive Board

President: Stacy A.

President-Elect: George K.

Past President: Judy W.

Treasurer: Louis S.

Secretary: Kathryn V.

Members-At-Large: Joy F. & Debbie D.

Announcements

Environmental News:

The Nature Conservancy informs us that a major retailer in our area is making it easy for gardeners to choose plants for their flower beds and front lawns that aren't a threat to local, native ecosystems. Starting this spring, **Meijer** home and garden centers will offer regionally native plants such as purple coneflowers, red bud and silver maple. The Nature Conservancy helped Meijer select 119 trees, shrubs and perennials that will carry a new "Recommended Non-Invasive" tag. Meijer will also remove two invasive trees from their inventory: the Norway maple and Lombardy poplar. Meijer is launching an in-store campaign to help prevent the spread of invasive plants from back yards to natural areas, and will educate shoppers on the benefits of native and noninvasive plants. Go Meijer!

The Darfur Project

After three long, arduous and desperate years, the genocide in Darfur continues. "Yellow Springs Citizens for Darfur" has as its goal to educate and activate. UUFYS, acting through the Social Justice committee is a major promoter of the project.

"What is our felt connection with Darfur? Do we care? How can we help?" In the month of March, the community will provide several events that will begin the process of answering these questions. A poetry reading, sermons, prayers, a candlelight vigil, Buddhist chants for Darfur and meditations, music, dances for peace, and drumming--all performed on the basis of contributing what you love doing. Always the desire for inward spiritual contemplation will be honored. Watch the paper for dates and times. Join the evolving process, call Sylvia.

TAR HOLLOW

Registration forms for the Fellowship's annual weekend at Tar Hollow State Park will be attached to the April Newsletter and will be available on line at the Fellowship's web site. The dates for our Tar Hollow weekend are Friday, May 18 to Sunday, May 20. This is the weekend before Memorial Day weekend, the third weekend of May. This event is open to all, not just members of the Fellowship, so invite your friends and neighbors.

For further information, contact Hardy B.

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ENDOWMENT FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Endowment Committee met on Sunday January 28 to receive the report for 2006. As of December 31 the balance in our account, which is managed by the Yellow Springs Community Foundation, was \$11,297.70. We would like to thank all those who have supported the Endowment in its first year and encourage other donors to give generously to help support the Endowment's efforts to support socially responsible projects.

The income from our investments during 2006 was \$198.34. The Committee voted to turn this money over to the Fellowship's Social Justice Committee.

Members of the Endowment Committee are Hardy B., George K., Sandy L., Dick R., and Judy R. Anyone interested in advice or information about the Endowment can speak with any of the Committee members.

Act Now to Attend Heartland Annual Meeting or UUA General Assembly

The Leadership Development committee dispenses funds for Fellowship member who participate in UU training seminars and meetings. Our policy is to cover the cost of registration fees, while participants pay their own travel, lodging and dining expenses. Two opportunities to consider are:

- The Heartland District 2007 Spring Conference and Annual Meeting, March 30-31, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI. Early bird registration of \$125 is due by March 9 for this event, which consists of Friday evening programming from 7:00 – 10:15 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Features include three 1-hour workshops, a keynote address by UUA Moderator Gini Courter, awards luncheon, and worship services. Unfortunately, it's a five-hour drive from Yellow Springs to Grand Rapids. For more information contact Judy W. or visit the Heartland website www.heartland.org.
- The UUA General Assembly 2007, June 20-24, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, OR. Early bird registration of \$280 is due by April 30, but registration for housing opens March 1st and the most economical and closest hotel rooms go fast! To help with costs the UUA offers some scholarship aid and volunteer opportunities, and Portland State University dormitory housing is available at \$225/person for a five-night stay. See the UUA website for more information, www.uua.org.

If you are interested in attending either of these events, contact a member of the Leadership Development committee—Chris K., Judy R., or Judy W.

UU NIAGARA EXPERIENCE July 15-18, 2007

If you have ever wanted to visit Niagara Falls or if it is already one of your favorite places, this is a chance to experience the wonder of Niagara Falls including some great educational opportunities while in the company of UUs from around the country. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four day UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every perspective, even safely riding beneath a tethered balloon. Spend four days with us exploring the rich history and natural wonders around the Falls. For information visit our web site :

<http://www.uunex.net/>

Email : info@uunex.net

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Joint Board/RE Committee

What a great time we had at the February Birthday Bash! The decorations were creative and festive, the songs and door prizes were fun, and the food was wonderful. We sang happy birthday to ourselves and to our Fellowship, and celebrated with delicious birthday cake. Thanks to Blythe P., Joy F., Jim O., Kathy R., Mitzi M., Debbie D., David T., Alex T.r, Chris K., and the many other volunteers who helped make this a very special event. And additional thanks to all the kids who helped in so many ways. HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL! AND MAY WE HAVE MANY MORE!

--Sponsored by the YSUUF Board and Religious Education Committee: Stacy A., Judy W. George K., Debbie D., Joy F., Louis S., Kathryn V., Kathy R., David K., Debbie J., Jim O., and Blythe P.

Board Announcement

Conflict Resolution: The Board has accepted changes to the draft policy on conflict resolution and would like to solicit additional feedback from congregation members and friends. The final draft will be voted on at the April board meeting. This policy replaces the ombudsman role previously in place, creates a Conflict Resolution Team, and provides guidelines about how we can resolve the inevitable tensions that arise in any group of people. Our policy is based on that of other UU congregations, but the Board would like feedback to make the YSUUF policy uniquely our own. Copies are available for review at the Fellowship.

wUUrld's 2007 WhaleCoast Alaska

Deadline Moved Back for wUUrld's 2007 Alaska Programs

Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to eco-cultural programs in "The Great Land" in June right after the Portland UUA General Assembly and in July, 2007. A brochure has just been received by our office, and the 2007 website, www.wuurld.org has been updated. The leaders, the Rev. Dick and Mary Weston-Jones have announced that because of the delay in getting information to UU congregations and since this is the **final year** of the program that started in 1994, the deadline for reservations has been moved back to March 31. The innovative eco-cultural programs include homestays and parties with UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Seward, Juneau and Sitka, and travel throughout Alaska to see wildlife, the magnificent country and meet Alaska Native groups. For more info go to www.wuurld.org, E-mail alaska@wuurld.org or phone toll-free 1-888, 998-8753 for a brochure.

Special Friends Program

Looking for Secret Friends: We're continuing the Secret Friends program in which older and younger Fellowship members are paired up, only they don't know it! Part of the fun is the mystery of learning about each other and guessing who the friend is. At the conclusion of Secret Friends we'll share a festive lunch. Please volunteer for this interesting activity, which is designed to help us get to know each other better.

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moving ahead on the issues that you have chosen as important. I want to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the survey - it means so much to have members and friends recognize the potential we have as the voice and active element of liberal religion in our community.

On a related note, we will soon begin the Pledge Drive for your next fiscal year (it begins in June, 2007). On Sunday, April 1st, we will have a special program featuring presentations from the Conflict Resolution Team and the Stewardship Committee. The proposed budget will be ready for your review, and I encourage you to attend. Although it is an uninteresting subject for some, talking about the money we need to raise and what it will be used for is vitally important and needs your attention. How we accomplish the proposed budget will directly affect every aspect of the Fellowship for the next year. Please consider the value of the Fellowship to yourself, to the children and youth, to the social justice projects we love to support, and to the difference we can make together. Oh, lest I forget another important point, following the program there will be a special catered lunch! So, in true Unitarian Universalist style and tradition, we will combine food, fun, and fundraising! I'll see you all there on April 1st.

In faith and Fellowship - Stacy

Results of Small Group Discussion Session

Dear Fellowship Members and Friends -

On Feb 18th we had a small group discussion session featuring three questions. I have compiled the results from each group and wish to present them to you.

Question 1: Your feelings about where we are now as a Fellowship, and suggestions and ideas for what we should be doing right now and over the next 1 or 2 years.

Responses: Consider a different or expanded space due to attendance numbers.

Financially we are stable. Since we are an expanding congregation, do we encourage growth or manage growth? How do we preserve friendly feelings? We want to keep the diversity of beliefs and their exploration. We have good Sunday programs. Hire a part time staff person. We are doing well with social justice and social action. Religious Education program is doing well. Need a planning committee. What is vital is to attract new adults and youth. Two Sunday services has pros and cons. What about carpooling?

Question 2: Your hopes and dreams for the future of our Fellowship in the next 5-10 years.

Responses: We need paid staff. More young families with children. More community outreach. More interfaith activities. Become a green sanctuary. Keep RE innovative. Solve parking problems. How do we ensure that people really get to know one another as we grow? More presence in Y. S. with emphasis on RE.

Question 3: Your concerns about the Fellowship's future over the next 5-10 years:

Responses: Be more proactive about environmental issues. How do we balance predictions about numerical growth with possible ups/downs and how does it affect financial picture? Can we afford a land purchase? What interest do we take in Village of Yellow Springs planning? How do we maintain a space that is welcoming as we change? Where will we be located? Social Justice will not be given enough energy if we concentrate on a new building. How do we continue without a project/vision?

All of these are relevant, important, and will be addressed. I ask that you pay special attention to the last one, "How do we continue without a project/vision?" If we identify a Vision for our Fellowship, then so many things can follow and we can collectively take action.

Thank you - Stacy

The Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs

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