

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs...



NEWSLETTER May 2008

Dear Fellowship Community:

It's spring again and a time of hope and renewal. This morning I stood with a fistful of daffodils from my garden and watched the sparrows gather tufts of grass to make their nests. Last afternoon a doe and her two yearlings came to our pond for a drink, and tonight the tree toads are trilling their love songs nonstop. It's as if nature is grateful to have survived winter once again and is celebrating. I'm grateful, too, especially for our Unitarian Fellowship, for the spirit I feel here of hope and caring—for our families, community, and our world.

Now is a time of renewal for our fellowship, too. On May 11th we will celebrate Stewardship Sunday once again. A steward is responsible for the resources of a community. In our fellowship, each of us is a steward. In our fellowship, the main resources are us. The annual pledges we each make determine whether or not our fellowship can realize our hopes for the future. We hope to expand our social justice work, religious education program, outreach to the community, grow in space and size, become a green sanctuary, improve our building and grounds, fund our staff and employees, achieve our dreams. As your president, I believe that, working together, we can do this and so much more.

I ask each of you to begin now to think about pledging all you can toward the realization of these and many other goals we have identified this last fiscal year. We can only be as great as our stewardship is great. As spring grows to fullness, let us renew our commitment to our Fellowship, and let us work together to realize our hopes for the future.

Mary D.
Interim President

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs is published monthly. To submit material for the newsletter please do so by the 15th of each month. Please submit material as **non-formatted text** in your e-mail or as an MS Word attachment in 12 pt New Times Roman with no formatting (bold, italic, etc...). Send material to David K. at: **tau.athanasios@gmail.com**

May Program Calendar:

Sunday, May 4

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, “The Problem of Evil.”

10:00 a.m.: “Revamping our Energy Systems, in Yellow Springs and Beyond”, presented by Robert J. Brecha, Ph.D., Professor of Physics and Electro-Optics at the University of Dayton and a member of the Yellow Springs Energy Task Force. Dr. Brecha will lead us in considering energy efficiency and alternative sources of energy, including the larger global impact on intertwined natural ecosystems. As daunting as the challenges of possible energy shortages and global climate change may be, positive outcomes for the future could result from proactively addressing the challenges. These challenges are worthy of our pursuit as UU’s who affirm respect for the interdependent web of life.

Sunday, May 11

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, “Unitarianism & Universalism for our time.”

10:00 a.m.: "Stewardship Sunday", a program in which the Executive Board presents the proposed Fellowship budget for 2008-09 Find out where the money comes from, how it is spent, and how the congregation’s generosity (in time, talent, and money) keeps this special community functioning.

The program will also include a “Flower Communion”, the ritual celebrated each spring in Unitarian Universalist churches all over the world. Please bring a flower to place in the communal bowl, and take one home at the end of the service.

Sunday, May 18

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, “Introductions & Open Discussion.”

10:00 a.m.: Informal discussion program--come share in a spirited exchange of ideas. Because this is the Sunday that many Fellowship members will be attending our annual weekend at Tar Hollow State Park, there will be no classes for children and youth. Child care will be provided.

Sunday, May 25

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, “UU past, present, and future.”

10:00 a.m.: “A People of Promises, A Community of Covenant,” presented by Rev. Adam Robersmith, associate minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva.

Among Unitarian Universalists, there is an ongoing discussion: What is it that holds us together? What is our central theology? Our unifying belief? How can we be a religion if we don't all believe the universe works in the same way? In order to answer these questions, we need to return to the idea that we are not a community based in a creed. Instead, we are a people of promises, a community of covenant.

It's "Souper Sunday". Plan to stay for soup, bread and conversation.

Coming in June Sunday, June 1

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, "Prayer, meditation, and contemplation."

10:00 a.m.: "God-Talk in Genesis," by Rabbi Mark Verman. The opening chapters of Genesis introduce the two Divine epithets that are usually rendered in English as God and LORD. The origins of these English terms will be discussed in relationship to their original Hebrew phrasing. We will discover that the Hebrew terms, Elohim and YHVH are richly evocative and multi-valent. They are far more dynamic than the static English terminology. Awareness of diverse meanings of Elohim and YHVH can provide an important gateway to promoting personal spirituality.

11:30 a.m.: A potluck lunch follows the program. Please bring your own table service and a generous dish to share.

Professor Mark Verman is the inaugural occupant of the Larry and Leonore Zusman Chair of Judaic Studies at Wright State University, where he has taught for 8 years. He previously held the Jay Phillips Chair of Jewish Studies at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. Professor Verman received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in medieval Jewish studies, specializing in Jewish mysticism. In 1974 he was accorded Rabbinical ordination from the head of the Council of Orthodox Rabbis, Toronto, Canada. Professor Verman's numerous publications include *The Books of Contemplation* and *The History and Varieties of Jewish Meditation*.

Announcements:

Mark your calendars: Sunday June 22 at noon. Annual meeting and luncheon. Details to follow -- please plan to attend this important fellowship meeting!

WANTED: Slides, photographs, reminiscences and memorabilia of UUFYS folks and activities. Of particular interest are items from the 1950s through the 1980s needed for the fellowship's 50th anniversary scrapbook/photo album. Contact Debbie D., 767-7849 about any items you have to share.

New Parents' Group: In order to support parents and help them connect with each other, the board is initiating the formation of

a UUFYS parents' group. The first gathering was on 4/27 for an informal potluck luncheon at which parents enjoyed each others' company, and discussed the purpose of such a group, how often to meet, and other details. Childcare was provided. The idea for this luncheon came to board members from another church during a recent Heartland District meeting. Details about future meetings will follow. Debbie D., Parent and Board Secretary

Work Bee on May 3: If you love the meetinghouse and its garden, please join the work bee on Saturday, May 3, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Buildings and Grounds has many tasks which need your help -- from washing windows to removing storm windows to cleaning out the basement storage room to cleaning up the

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grounds. There's something for everyone, and many hands make light work! Bring your spirit of fun and come along!

Are You a People Person? Are you more interested in taking care of the people of the UU-FYS, rather than administration -- the "pastoral" function as contrasted to the "corporate"? In volunteer organizations like ours, this human relations area is sometimes a weak point. In the absence of a minister, when members struggle with personal problems and concerns, it's hard for volunteers to know who has the authority and responsibility to act to help them. But UUFYS does have a group of concerned, helpful people who undertake to help our members the Member Services committee. These men and women work to: (a) Welcome new people, help them follow the path to membership and then find a place to use their talents; (b) Provide "neighborly" help for members who are ill; (c) Offer ways to continue our personal spiritual growth, such as evening discussion and covenant groups; and, (d) Organize a Street Fair booth and prepare written materials to educate the community on what UUFYS stands for and how to find us. If you are interested in helping with one or all of these tasks, please join this group of amiable members and lend a hand -- pick up the phone and call Mary S. at 767-1603. We meet once a month at the meeting house -- the next will be Sunday, May 4, after the potluck lunch. We will discuss the booth at the Street Fair June 14 and other ongoing projects and member needs. Please lend your ideas and talents to this!

Tar Hollow is Coming! The weekend in the woods at Tar Hollow State Park is May 16-18. Sign up now to reserve a bunk bed or tenting spot, and to enjoy guided hikes, Saturday's Talent Night, puzzles and board games, kayaking and canoeing and catching up on reading around the two fireplaces. Pick up registration forms at the meeting house or from Mary S., 767-1603. Return forms to Toby in the office. The Yellow Springs community is invited -- don't

miss it!

It's Time for Spring Cleaning - May 3

Saturday, May 3, is the date to beautify and maintain the meeting house -- please join in the spring Work Bee! Projects include removing the storm windows, washing windows, cleaning and re-touching wall paint, working in the garden and improving the parking lot. For more info, contact chairman Hank L., at 767-2708. A special project is cleaning out the store room in the basement -- every committee is requested to designate a member to attend the work bee at 10:00 a.m. and decide whether to dispose or keep the committee's items now in storage. The downstairs room is too junked up -- if your committee does not show up, by default B&G committee will decide what stays and what goes. Please give a few minutes of your Saturday morning to this important project -- many hands will make light work for all.

The next Board meeting will be held on Sunday, 5/4/08 at noon at the Fellowship. Please note that this meeting has been moved from the second Sunday of the month because of Mother's Day. Prior to the meeting the Board will meet with congregation members and friends to address any concerns. Agenda items will include:

- Chalice lighting and check-in
- Review of the March minutes
- Treasurer's report
- Board vision and follow-up survey
- Space usage and B&G
- Stewardship Committee and upcoming pledge drive
- Leadership Development and bylaw change
- Committee oversight & Coordinating Council
- Building rental
- Personnel
- Fellowship behavioral standards
- Conflict resolution guidelines
- Tar Hollow
- Purchase of a defibrillator
- Review of 7/07 board retreat goals
- 50th Anniversary photo album project
- Green Sanctuary Committee

Report on Heartland UU District Annual Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky

Our Fellowship here in Yellow Springs belongs to the Heartland District of the UUA. This district covers Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, and the Western part of Ohio encompassing 54 Unitarian Universalist congregations with a total of over 8,000 members. The Heartland UU District offices are in Indianapolis and are supported by a by these congregations allowing a quarter of a million dollar budget each year. The Heartland UU District office in turn supports their member congregations with training and other programs, and consulting, as well as with grants and awards.

The theme of the meeting this year was “Sustainable Stewardship” with the keynote speaker being Wayne Clark. Mr. Clark has written a book on this subject and may be reached at wclark@uua.org. He is the Director of the UUA Office of Congregational Stewardship Services. This office provides consultants to congregations to help them create and manage their stewardship and pledge campaigns.

At the business meeting, our out-going Treasurer, Louis S., was elected HUUD Treasurer for two years. This position is one of the four HUUD board member positions. The HUUD Board members are:

Miren B.	VP Admin.
Louis S.	Treasurer
Rae Jane A.	Member-at-Large
Kathy S.	Member-at-Large

Social Justice News

Ending the year with energy and action Social Justice Committee invites all members to help organize, participate, or just enjoy the last 3 activities we planned for the 2007-2008 year.

- A Community Conversation with Jewel G. Saturday, June 7th at 2pm at the Senior Citizens Center. A discussion will follow Jewel’s talk: “The Elimination of Racism and the Empowerment of Women”.
- The Annual Inter-spiritual Sing. Sunday, June 8th 2:00 – 4:00 PM at the Methodist Church in YS (on Dayton Street). Our own choir will be participating.
- Voter Registration at the Yellow Springs Street Fair, Saturday, June 14th from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. We will need 2-3 people for each shift at the UU Booth. Sign up with Mary S. Get training in helping people register correctly.

Additionally, SoJus will organize at least one activity at Tar Hollow for your enjoyment and/or amusement. Thank you all for a huge year in social justice and activism. We have had more Unitarian Universalists walk the walk gently and assertively than ever before. The Fellowship members have advocated for safe and clean energy, taken up new lifestyles of conservation at home and locally, advocated for keeping Antioch College open, sent pleas to legislators to end the genocide in Darfur, and began the conversations on Race and Class that are courageous and needed. Thank you UUF. Joan C., Chair.

Summary of Minutes 3/10/08 UUFYS Board Meeting

Present: Mary D., Debbie D., Martha G., Marianne W., and Judy W.

Absent: Louis S. and Blythe P.

This meeting was postponed from 3/9/08 due to a snow emergency. The meeting began at 7:10 p.m. at Martha's house with check-in and agenda review.

Meeting minutes: The 2/10/08 board meeting minutes as revised were unanimously passed with one abstention.

Treasurer's report: The Jan. treasurer's report was unanimously accepted, as this was not done at the Feb. board meeting. The Feb. treasurer's report was also unanimously accepted. Social Justice was concerned about the possibility of paying for service speakers out of their budget. Members reviewed a memo from Hardy B. regarding the Social Justice Endowment Fund. Efforts will be made to fill two committee seats that expired 12/31/07. Discussion of 2007 fund income was postponed until April when Louis is expected to be present.

Old Business

Space Usage and Building & Grounds Program: Debbie suggested that board and B&G committee members meet with the congregation on 3/16 to address questions or concerns about building renovation, etc. as a follow-up to the 2/24 B&G presentation. This idea was nixed because key members of B&G will not be available. A possible date for this activity was discussed.

Board vision and report to the congregation: The 3/30 board presentation will include the following elements – 1) Board accomplishments over the past year; 2) Highlights of committee accomplishments over the past year; 3) Future challenges for UUFYS; 4) Our vision for the future; & 5) Small group discussion. Marianne, Blythe and Debbie will follow up with committees. A special meeting was set for 3/18 to continue working on this program.

Stewardship Committee: Due to a lack of response by the congregation, the board is undertaking the pledge drive. Blythe is working on a slide show for this 4/20 presentation. Mary will write a president's message for the brochure, and Debbie will update other elements. The board is about one month behind schedule. Judy will check the program calendar for other available dates.

The annual meeting might be moved to a later June date so the Leadership Development Committee will have additional time for recruiting nominees.

Members expressed concern about the lack of involvement by congregants in fellowship functions. Martha indicated that participation has increased from 2004. Fellowship leaders need to do a better job of orienting new (and reminding old) members that UUFYS needs member time and energy as well as financial support in order to continue operations.

Leadership Development Committee: This committee consists of Judy, Mary C. and Peter W. Positions that need to be filled as of 7/1/08 include:

President-elect (3 year term); Treasurer (2 year term); Member at Large (2 year term); Member at Large (1 year term). The board would like to eliminate the past president position. Such a bylaw change would require a congregational vote and re-allocation of current responsibilities.

Committee Oversight and Coordinating Council: Debbie chaired the very productive 2/24 Coordi-

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nating Council meeting. The next CC meeting is 3/30.

Building Rental: Martha distributed a draft building rental contract, which will reviewed for next meeting.

Personnel: A congregant had expressed concern about the janitor's treatment; Martha explained the board's actions and this individual was mollified.

New Business

Purchase of a Defibrillator: Members discussed grant information Louis had shared. Judy will follow up with the granting agency. A fellowship member has offered to pay for a defibrillator. Possible trainers in its use were discussed.

Executive Session (The following topics were tabled until a future meeting):

Board Transitions and Responsibilities; Behavioral standards; Tar Hollow; 50th Anniversary photo album; Green Sanctuary; Review of 7/07 board retreat goals.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie D., Secretary

Leadership Training Opportunities

Are you wanting to be more involved in the activities of the UU Fellowship, but feel you lack training and experience? Do we have a solution for you! Two significant and breath-taking training opportunities are coming up soon, and we urge you to sign up for one of them. The Leadership Development committee, headed by Judy W., has money for this training.

First is the annual General Meeting of the UU Association. It takes place June 25-29 in Ft Lauderdale, Florida. It is first an opportunity for each congregation to vote on the Association's official business – such as a new president – and on the social justice issues the Association will concentrate on for the next two years. More importantly, it is four days jam-packed with workshops that offer mind-blowing topics and speakers – from war to polyamory, from rabbi Harold Kushner and Robert Fulgham to experts on the middle east. From 3000 to 7000 UUs attend the conference, both youth and adults – the energy is enormous. Talk with last year's attendees, Judy and Lowell W. and Louis and Mary S.

Second is the annual Midwest Leadership

School, held July 20-26 at Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin. It offers about 50 people a concentrated course in UU theology and history, management techniques, how to prepare fascinating worship services and an understanding of your interpersonal style. Last year's attendees were Blythe P. and David K. – ask them about their experience at Beloit.

Calling All Singles

Have you heard of Adult Midwest Unitarian Universalist Singles Enrichment? More commonly seen as "AMUUSE," it organizes one-week group vacations for UUs of all ages, providing community recreation, friendship, fun, fellowship and personal and spiritual growth. This summer's schedule is: (a) June 15-20, Saugatuck, Michigan – sand dunes of Lake Michigan. (b) July 13-19, Lake Geneva, Williams Bay, Wisconsin. (c) August 10-16, Saugatuck. For details, see the brochure under the name tags, go to www.amuuse.org, or get a rating from Byron D. or Sylvia D. Register soon – they fill up fast.

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.



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