



# CUF Links

The Monthly Newsletter of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship  
*A Welcoming Congregation*

- a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist association -

**MAY 2010**

## SUNDAY SERVICES

held in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 a.m.

### **5/2 “Depression and Spirituality: An Intersection of Faith” – Kim Asner-Self**

Kim Asner-Self will explore the intersection of major Depression and questions about the nature of the Divine, the purpose of Life, and the quality of Fair Trade Coffee.

### **5/9 Mother’s Day Flower Communion**

This favorite annual intergenerational service will combine two themes: the impact of motherhood and the sharing of flowers as an act of community. Roy Sumner and Bill Sasso will coordinate this service, with Carrie Vine assisting in the coordination of music. Please note: there will be no “live” announcements at this service, so please get your info to Russ Trimble so it can be included in the order of service!

### **5/16 “Leadership and Liberal Religion” – Bill Sasso**

What is leadership? How does it happen? How do leaders learn to lead? Can one be both a leader and a follower? Can those two roles be present together? How does leadership connect with religion, and especially with a liberal religion like Unitarian Universalism? Bill brings many question to this service, so be sure to be there in case he brings an answer or two as well!

### **5/23 Membership Recognition Sunday**

Have you “signed the book” and become a member during the past year? Or did you do so sometime in 2005, 2000, or 1990? If so, please plan to attend this service because we’ll be celebrating your presence as part of the Fellowship! Whether you’re a member or not, you’ll enjoy hearing two of our valued members comment on the Fellowship’s changes over the years. Bill Sasso will coordinate this service, which will be followed by our congregational business meeting.

### **5/30 In Memory of Those We Have Lost**

On the Sunday of the Memorial Day weekend, we will remember and celebrate those whom we have lost as members and friends of the Fellowship over the past year. If there is someone you would like to recognize in this service, please contact service coordinator Bill Sasso no later than Sunday, May 23rd.

**OPEN MINDS** meets at 8:45 AM each Sunday in the Commons Area. Topics To Be Announced in weekly bulletins this month. Contact Terry Elliot at [elliott1@wildblue.net](mailto:elliott1@wildblue.net) if you would like to lead one of these Sunday discussions, or for more information.

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## THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

### At the Growing Edge



Sometimes it can seem hard to explain what this Fellowship is. It's a religious community, but it's a different kind of religious community. To a large extent, our focus is on questions rather than answers, differences rather than similarities, freedom to explore rather than

conformance to proclaimed truth. We don't happen to fit the standard model of a religious community, and when we fall into the habit of explaining what we are not, we can sometimes lose sight of what we are.

Because it's hard to explain the nature of this community, it can seem intangible or even ephemeral. It might seem like it's really not that important – but it is! There's something precious here – perhaps even something unique! It's tangible, and if it's temporary, that's true in part because it's alive and dynamic. What is it, you ask? For many of us, I believe this Fellowship is our “growing edge.” It's the opportunity to deepen as a human and become your true self, unconstrained by the strictures of conventional religion. It's the opportunity to travel the byways of life and self-discovery in authentic community with a complex and wonderful set of companions. It's the opportunity to listen to many different voices, and to construct from their disparate wisdoms the elemental truths that give meaning to your own life experiences. It's the call to the free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and it's more than that. It's the strong conviction that your life is not only about you, but also about the way that your life can make a difference in the lives of others. It's the presence of caring friends and the touch of human compassion when you face the

trials that every human life includes. Whatever else may be true of your life, I hope that the Fellowship is one place in your life where you find these opportunities, these challenges, and these resources.

We are now in the midst of our Fellowship's annual stewardship campaign, in which we are asked to support the congregation in the coming year. Many of us have begun to think about our resources and our ability to contribute in support of the Fellowship. It's natural, as part of that process, to think about how the Fellowship has supported your growth and been present in the lives of those you love. I am confident that you will think about those questions, but I encourage you to consider some other questions as well.

How important is the community of this Fellowship not only to you, but to all of its members?  
How important is the future of this congregation to our children, and to the children yet to visit us?  
How important is the visible presence of this community to those who yearn for a liberal religious home, and have yet to find us?  
How important is the voice and the work of the Fellowship to Carbondale, to southern Illinois, and to all those touched by our efforts?  
And, finally, how important is example of this congregation to our larger Unitarian Universalist movement, including our neighbors in Mount Vernon and Cape Girardeau?

Our collective generosity makes this Fellowship possible, and this Fellowship makes a difference. It makes many differences – a difference in each one of our lives, and in the lives of many, many other people. One of our offering readings expresses the impact of our support in these words: “In contributing to the life of this

community, we support our own growth, we affirm this Fellowship, and we make possible its efforts beyond these walls.”

Please accept my sincere thanks, in advance, for your generosity in support of the Fellowship and

the complex, wonderful, and important work that we undertake together!

In gratitude, Bill Sasso

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## FROM THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR



I'm still re-living Graduation Sunday. Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates are Riley, Nic, Lily, Gus, Cory and Helen, and the seniors are Katie, Hannah, Kendall, and Brittany. Wow, this is the most graduates I can remember. To witness

these seniors, who I knew as babies, now grown up, intelligent, funny, articulate, happy, hardworking, caring, and successful was a thrill.

And to hear each of them state they are grateful to have had a religious community that supported them, and accepted them just as they were, is very satisfying and humbling. We, the Fellowship, accept a huge responsibility to provide the environment that nurtures growing, questioning, shy as well as strong-willed, children and youth.

Then I compare the environment these seniors experienced, with the story that unfolds in the book I'm reading, "Stones into Schools," by Greg Mortensen. He and his organization have built more than 130 schools in the most totally remote reaches of Pakistan and Afghanistan. He believes that education is the most effective means of countering terrorism and extremism. His experience is that in these poor, isolated, regions where the people have so very little, the thing they all value deeply is a school and the education it brings. And with an education, opportunities increase, health improves, and progress and tolerance increase.

Which reminds me of a newspaper column I read by Jim Davidson. He was telling the story of a luncheon attended by a CEO who directed a

question toward a teacher that was present. The CEO began by stating the problem with education was that kids can't learn from someone who decided teaching was their best career option. "Remember, those that can do, those that can't, teach." He says, so Bonnie, you're a teacher, what do teachers make? Bonnie's response was immediate.

Well, says Bonnie, "I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them apologize and mean it. I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions. I make my classroom a place where all my students feel safe. I make them understand that if they use the gifts they were given, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life. You want to know what I make? I make a difference."

Providing a successful religious education program takes a lot of pieces coming together. I am grateful we have had the resources (money, planning and effort) to provide the infrastructure that is conducive to learning. I am happy we continue to have parents who believe the experiences their children have with us are worth the effort to come. I am also happy that we have students that avail themselves of these resources, succeed, and move on to become productive adults. And I am sincerely appreciative of all the teachers that have given of their time, and made a difference. I look forward to working with all of you, with the same determination of the Pakistan and Afghan villagers, to continue to provide a place where our children and youth learn and grow, and where adults can feel the satisfaction of having made a difference.

Sincerely, Roy Sumner

## FROM THE OFFICE

### Updates from the CUF Office:

**New Software Update:** I have almost completed the inputting of all of the CUF membership data into the new software program. It took longer than I had anticipated, and after the inputted data is complete, I will need to fine tune some of the member's information with a questionnaire or additional information sheet for members to fill out. Once I have the "Servant Keeper" software up and running I will provide the members with a new updated directory. We also would like to photograph all members for this new software so that we can publish a photo directory of our members in the near future.

**Building Use:** As many of you know, we rent out our building for people in our community to use. Many of these rentals are to private groups or individuals that have no affiliation with the fellowship. We had a very large wedding here in March that caused some issues because the fellowship was not put back to its original condition before our Sunday Services. Along with making it clear to private renters what our expectations are – I believe it would be very helpful when a large group rents our fellowship that we provide a

"liaison" from the fellowship that will help a large group that rents the facility to "take care" of our building and monitor the efforts of the renters to return everything to the original condition. This does not mean that we need a "Party Planner", just a member that can show up at large events and answer questions, give the renters gentle reminders on where things are stored, and check to see that the building is properly secured at the end of the event. If you might be interested in such a service, please let me know that I can call on you when larger events are scheduled. On average there are only 6 – 8 larger events scheduled every year.

**Fellowship Building Scheduling:** When you schedule something on the building schedule (big white book) please be considerate of the groups that are already scheduled in the building at or around the same time. When you schedule a meeting time in the Big White Building Book, please let me know what you have reserved – a simple note on my desk or email will be fine – this way I can better serve all that use our fellowship week after week.

Sincerely, Melanie Bray

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## NEW WORKSHOP BEGINNING IN MAY

Exploring the Possibility Within: This workshop is based on Parker J. Palmer's book Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation (Jossey-Bass, 2000). Workshop participants will form a supportive group, assisting each other in the self-exploration Palmer describes in this work. We'll meet Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to about 9 pm. Each week we will read a chapter of the book:

May 11th: "Listening to Life," encouraging us to deepen our self-understanding, rather than trying to will ourselves to be what we would choose to be.

May 18th: "Now I Become Myself," offering the insight that vocation in life is not an accomplishment, but rather a gift that we must be open to receive.

May 25th: "When Way Closes," relating events in Palmer's own life when his sense of purpose in life ran into brick walls, and his learnings from those events.

June 1st: "All the Way Down," describing Palmer's experiences with clinical depression, and the ways in which his 'hitting bottom" may be part of a larger journey to self-understanding.

June 8th: "Leading from Within," using the sense of direction we have found to focus the energy of our hearts and souls in action.

June 15th: "There Is a Season," presenting the image of seasons as a model for better understanding the cycles of energy and direction in our own lives.

Contact Bill Sasso (529-2439 or [bsasso@juno.com](mailto:bsasso@juno.com)) for more information, and/or to register for the program. The registration deadline is noon, Sunday, May 9th.

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## BENEFIT TO BE HELD AT FELLOWSHIP IN JUNE

Nicholas Ginsburg is the extremely musically talented youngster who often plays for us during our services – the piano, French horn, etc. He is also the son of one of our newest members, Nan Sorrels. There will be a benefit for Nicholas Ginsburg to attend the summer program at Interlochen Fine Arts Academy (in Interlochen, MI) on Thursday, June 10th at the fellowship, from 7-9PM. It will be an evening of entertainment and fun featuring adults (Nicholas' teachers) and youth (Nicholas and friends) as they showcase their talents and display their art! Hors d'oeuvres will be served. If you are able to attend, you can show Nicholas your support, encouragement, and appreciation, as well as enjoy an evening of great entertainment. Most CUF members have seen him perform, and if any young person deserves to further his musical talents by attending the summer program at Interlochen, it is Nicholas!

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## CUF REGULAR PROGRAMS & MEETINGS

**SUICIDE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP** *This group meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Fellowship, at 7:30 pm.* Judy Ashby, MS, LCPC, facilitator. This group, serving those who have lost a loved one to suicide, is open to parents, children, spouses, partners, siblings, grandparents, relatives, friends, co-workers, and others. This supportive experience will offer safe and understanding conversation about loss and healing as participants open their hearts to grief and growth. **Meets next on May 11.** For more information, contact Bill Sasso at 529-2439 or [bsasso@juno.com](mailto:bsasso@juno.com).

**WOMEN'S GATHERING** The May Women's Gathering **meets next on Wed., May 5, at 7:00 p.m. at CUF.** Contact Cathy Kline at [klinejc@earthlink.net](mailto:klinejc@earthlink.net) for more information.

**SISTERHOOD OF STITCHERS** *This group meets weekly on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m., in the Commons area.* All are welcome, from persons learning knitting or stitching crafts to those well practiced and knowledgeable. Come to work on your projects, learn from others, share your ideas, and enjoy the camaraderie! For more info, contact Pam Jacobini at [PJacobini@siu.edu](mailto:PJacobini@siu.edu) or Gloria Smiley at [smileyspins@yahoo.com](mailto:smileyspins@yahoo.com).

**MINDFULNESS MEDITATION** *This group meets every Saturday in the Fellowship Commons from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.* If there are other activities scheduled in the Commons, we meet in the RE area. For more information, contact Joy Price at 457-2405 or [joyfully2356@yahoo.com](mailto:joyfully2356@yahoo.com).

**BUDDHISM STUDY & PRACTICE GROUP** *This group meets on the first and third Sundays in the Fellowship Commons at 7:30 PM.* **Meets this month on May 2 and May 16.** Meditation, Chanting, Study, Discussion in a free flowing format. Everyone welcome. For more info, visit [www.shawnee-dharma.org](http://www.shawnee-dharma.org) or contact Judy Carter at 529-3110.

**DREAMWORKS** *This group meets the first Sunday of each month in 06 (RE wing) at 12:00.*

**Meets next on May 2.** Using Jeremy Taylor's technique, we share and discuss our dreams in a respectful, safe, and comfortable environment. For more information, contact Nillofur at [cadfael07@yahoo.com](mailto:cadfael07@yahoo.com) or Janet at [jea49@Care2.com](mailto:jea49@Care2.com).

**PSI SYMPOSIUM** *This group meets the second Sunday of the Month in Room 06 at Noon. Meets next on on May 9.* We start at noon with light refreshments. Please bring a dish to share. For more info, contact Mary Campbell at 521-0851 or [mpurple1999@yahoo.com](mailto:mpurple1999@yahoo.com).

**ROUNDTABLE READERS** *This group meets on the fourth Sunday of the month after the Sunday Service at Noon. Meets this month on May 23.* Round Table Readers will meet to discuss Michael Dorris' National Book Critics Circle Award-winning novel, [A Yellow Raft in Blue Water](#), which is available through the Southern Illinois Library Network. The book is narrated by three women: 15-year old part-black Rayona; her American Indian mother, Christine; and the fierce and mysterious Ida, the mother and grandmother. Reviewers have praised the book, on the one hand stressing Dorris' original vision of Native American lives on the reservation, and on the other hand the humanity of the characters, whose story is "more just plain American than American Indian, more just plain human than American." (Denver Rocky Mountain News. All interested are welcome! For more info, contact Janet Levie at [jmlevie@verizon.net](mailto:jmlevie@verizon.net).

**SCIENCE IN SOCIETY** *This group meets some Fridays of the Month in the Fellowship Commons at 5:00 PM.* Contact Gina Paul at 351-1064 or [rpaul@siumed.edu](mailto:rpaul@siumed.edu) if you have questions.

**VIDEO CIRCLE** *This group meets on the third Friday of each month in the Fellowship Commons at 7:15 PM. Meets next on May 21,* to watch, "No Impact Man: The Documentary" (2009, No Rating, 90 minutes). A Fifth Avenue family goes very green when writer Colin Beavan leads his wife, Michelle Conlin, and their baby daughter on a yearlong crusade to make no net impact on the environment in this engaging documentary. Among their activities: eating only locally grown organic food, generating no trash except for compost and using no carbon-fueled transportation. Laura Gabbert and Justin Schein's film premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival. Free popcorn! Contact person is Amy Weber at [amyweber1@msn.com](mailto:amyweber1@msn.com).

**UNITARIAN FOLK ORCHESTRA** practices at 10:00 a.m. Saturdays, at the Fellowship. For info contact Charles Maxwell at [cmaxwell@siu.edu](mailto:cmaxwell@siu.edu).

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## NEW MEMBER NEWS...

**Our Newest CUF Members:** We have two new members since our last newsletter, both of whom happen to be from Carbondale!! When you meet them after service or see them wearing their new nametags, please welcome:

[Nan Sorrels](#)

[BJ \(Betsy\) Carr](#)

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## Dispatch from Arabia

Part Nine  
by Joseph Robbie

I wonder if there are any U.U. witches. I'll bet there are. Maybe an ex-wiccan? Perhaps a reformed sorcerer? A palm reader? A crystal ball gazer? A tarot card specialist? Tea leaves anyone? Well, just so you know, over here all of you would be eligible for a **public beheading!**

From the *Arab News* here:

RIYADH - Saudi Arabia's morality police are launching a programme to combat witchcraft and sorcery, the official SPA news agency reported on Saturday. The Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, also known as the muttawa, will create teams especially trained to eradicate the practices, deputy commission president Ibrahim al-Hoimi told SPA.

"The plan is aimed at developing people to work in the field on cases of witchcraft and sorcery to protect the society and raise public awareness," he said. Saudi clerics are concerned about the operations of self-described fortune-tellers, mystics, magicians and others who operate outside the rules of the country's conservative Wahhabi Islam."

Yes, this stuff is a big deal in Saudi Arabia, and taken very seriously in some quarters. Witches, predominantly from Africa and Indonesia, ply their trade mostly with women here who wish to cast spells on men, often to prevent a husband from taking an additional wife or to make themselves more alluring. Other common wishes include desire for childbirth or relief from disease, not to mention predictions of what is to come. Some underground witches are immensely popular, counting their fans in the thousands. But they all run the risk of decapitation by sword. Here are a few interesting blips I've collected for your edification and entertainment:

- A sorcerer who was arrested in the Hail region had covered the walls of his home with more than 100,000 magic inscriptions, including some written in blood, according to press reports. Some officials urged the government to destroy the dwelling rather than paint over the walls, to make sure the inscriptions would not retain any potency.

- In Makkah (Mecca) a 40-year-old African woman was arrested for "dabbling in the black arts". The religious police sent an undercover female agent to the witch claiming she needed help to stop her husband from marrying another woman (four wives are allowed). The magician promised that she could cast a spell to cause hatred between the husband and the other woman, and make him forever love only the first wife. After receiving \$533, the witch asked for the mother-in-law's name and told the wife to bring an unwashed shirt with the husband's sweat still on it. The next day, after receiving these items, the witch demanded another \$267. She promised that her spell would make the husband submissive to the wife's orders. When the cops burst in, the witch was dusting the wife with a special incense known as 'Ain Al-Afrit' (Eye of the Devil). Totally busted.

- The most recent case, which has caused an international outcry, involves a popular Lebanese TV personality. A practicing Muslim, a father of four, he regularly made predictions about the future on a television talk show that is watched by the masses. He is very well known in Beirut. So, one day, he decided to come to Saudi Arabia to perform an important Islamic religious ritual in Makkah. You'll never guess what happened next!!!

Well, to find out, tune in next month for another exciting edition of: **Dispatch from Arabia**

To be continued...

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## **Members' Personal Ads**

CUF member Carolyn Davis, who will move into her own small house in late June/early July (after living with her sister since her move here from San Diego in 2007), would love to hear from anyone willing to sell or donate these used items to help her set up housekeeping (esp. if you have access to a pickup truck!):

- 1) a lawnmower (pref. electric), trimmer/edger, other lawn, garden & driveway-care tools/items
- 2) outdoor/screened-porch items: dining table & chairs, sm. tables, light chaise lounges, folding chairs
- 3) an office desk, esp. one with lots of legroom &/or L- or U-shaped; a good rolling desk chair
- 4) indoor or garage cabinets, free-standing shelving, etc.
- 5) tablecloths/place mats, etc., for seating 4 to 12
- 6) occasional tables, indoor folding chairs;
- 7) neat but unwanted wall/other art

She also hopes for a few potential volunteers (free food & drink for all!) for moving day (not yet set). Carolyn can be contacted at [cdalecarolyn@yahoo.com](mailto:cdalecarolyn@yahoo.com) or 201-2527. Thanks in advance!

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**CUF LINKS HARD COPIES** are available at the Fellowship on the visitor table.  
**Deadline for June CUF Links: Wednesday, May 26.** Please honor this deadline!  
Send your articles to Cheryl Robinson at [cherrob1@msn.com](mailto:cherrob1@msn.com) or to Melanie Bray at [cufvolunteers@verizon.net](mailto:cufvolunteers@verizon.net) **on or before Wednesday, May 26.**

Thanks! – Cheryl Robinson, Editor

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The Rev. William Sasso, Minister

An inspirational thought:

*“The test of courage comes when we are in the minority.  
The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority. – Ralph W. Sockman*