



CUF Links

The Monthly Newsletter of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship
A Welcoming Congregation
- a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist association -

January 2010

SUNDAY SERVICES

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

1/3 "A Burning Bowl Ceremony" – Cheryl Robinson

Join us in this intentional mental and behavioral exercise. It is meant to help each of us lose some mental/emotional "weight", by making a conscious effort to "let go" of negative experiences, limiting thoughts, or unwanted habits, in order to go into the New Year with renewed optimism and hope.

1/10 "Embracing the Coming Energy Revolution" – Chris Lant

Famous historian AJP Taylor once said that history can be summarized in two words: challenge and response. How will we face the twin challenges of peak oil and global warming that make our current energy system unsustainable?

1/17 "Bombingham, Growing Up in the Heart of Racism" – Vern Farnum

In recognition of MLK Sunday, Chaplain Vern Farnum, who now serves at Memorial Hospital, Carbondale, and who grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, during the height of the civil rights movement, will share from his personal experiences at the time, in terms of their impact on him personally and what we all might learn from them. Ken Starbuck will coordinate this service.

Please plan to participate in the Southern Illinois Celebration of the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at the Carbondale Civic Center at 4 p.m. (doors open and refreshments served at 3:30 pm)!

1/24 "To be Announced" – Father Joseph Brown

Father Brown, Professor and Chair of Black American Studies at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, will be our guest speaker, on a topic to be announced at a later date. Astrid Mosely will coordinate this service.

1/31 Religious Education Sunday

Since last September, the children of our Fellowship have been learning about Unitarians and Universalists, about other faith traditions, and about how to make a difference in our world. In this intergenerational service, each of our classes will share its insights and challenge us on these topics. Roy Sumner will coordinate this service. Due to the intergenerational nature of this service, it will not include spoken announcements.

And coming up . . .

2/7 Joy Price: "The Spirituality of the Negro Spiritual"

OPEN MINDS

meets at 8:45 AM each Sunday in the Commons Area

Important! Open Minds is seeking a replacement(s) for retiring original co-founder Bob Lembcke. He has agreed to continue until January 31. His decision is final. If you are interested in assuming leadership for this popular and worthwhile program, please contact Bob Lembcke at lobob1@mchsi.com.

January 3 - "9/11 Blueprint for Truth" by Richard Gage (DVD excerpts). Why have 740 architects and professional engineers signed a petition demanding a new investigation of 9/11? Were thermite and thermate used to make steel and iron flow like a river...a professional demolitions project? Why are the findings of the delegated "Truth Commission" in such dispute? What the 9/11 "truth movement" is all about! Richard Whitney, Civil and Human Rights Attorney, will coordinate the program and discussion.

January 10 - "Another View of Spirituality"- Is spirituality exclusively an earth-based homo sapiens mammalian concept? Aren't all life forms and geological features throughout the universe, as we know it, interrelated and connected by this indescribable, unmeasurable force? Dave Christensen will present his view and coordinate discussion.

January 17 - "Makarenko Collective" - An educational community was founded by a Russian educator for the rehabilitation of homeless children who, after the Russian Revolution, roamed the countryside in criminal gangs. The settlement was known as "Gorky Colony". Our present criminal justice system provides a "graduate school" system and very little rehabilitation. Could Anton Makarenko's program help change this? CUF member Kris Juul has seen this program in action. Slides and narratives of Kris' experiences, followed by discussion.

January 24 - "A UU Protestant In Turkey" - Karen Swenson, Bob Swenson and Kemal Akkaya. Reflections of an American Unitarian/Protestant and others on visiting/touring the Muslim nation of Turkey. With lots of digital photos. This presentation was developed as a result of the Swensons' tour of western Turkey in May of 2009, as a guest of Kemal Akkaya of Carbondale, the Niagara Foundation, and the Gulen Movement.

January 31 - "Frontiers for RE; Growth: Reflections and Insights on 2009", by Roy Sumner, CUF religious Education Director. In 2009, our Fellowship RE personnel and parents participated in a workshop to upgrade our children's curriculum and to continue our leading edge children's programming. Roy will reflect on the observable results, and possible new directions. He will also offer his insights for the present and future success of our children's programs. Discussion will follow.

THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

"The Sabbatical Has Arrived!"

I hope that hardly anyone will be surprised as my three-month sabbatical begins on New Year's Day and continues through the end of March. That means I won't be present at the Fellowship very much at all, even though I will be here in Carbondale during much of that three-month period.



According to my agreement with the Fellowship, I accrue a month of sabbatical time each year that I serve, up to a maximum of six months. At this point, having served here for ten years and taken one three-month sabbatical in 2005, I've accrued up to the maximum of six months, so it's a good time for me to take some time away from my day-to-day responsibilities here and step back.

You might be wondering, "What do I hope to accomplish?" What I most hope to accomplish is to refresh and renew myself, such that I come back in April with new energy to serve our Fellowship, our community, and our larger UU movement. I hope to come back with "fresh eyes" to see our strengths and our opportunities, and with a sense of excitement and enthusiasm about our ability to apply our strengths to our opportunities.

Now you might be wondering "How is that going to happen?" The short answer is that three months away will give me a sense of distance from many of the ongoing aspects of the Fellowship's life. A slightly longer answer is that I plan a study of my

ten years of ministry. I have several different forms of chronological files, and as I revisit the history we share, I will try to understand "what has changed" in me and my ministry over that period of time. I look forward to understanding myself better as a minister as a result of that process.

I also plan to "finish" the history project that I began in 2005, trying to find and tell as much as I can of the stories of the forty or so Universalist and Unitarian congregations that once existed here in southern Illinois. I know that history is never "finished," but I can achieve some sense of closure by returning the materials that I borrowed from my theological school's archives in 2005. Finishing a project that has felt unfinished for a long time will be another way that I can refresh myself.

I will mention one more part of my sabbatical activity. Two times in each of these three months, I will lead a Sunday service for the Mt. Vernon UU Fellowship. With ten years worth of Sunday services to look over, I am confident that at least six of them will seem worthy of a "reprise."

I am grateful to have this opportunity for self-renewal, and I appreciate all of you who will take on added responsibilities during this time. I hope this three-month period will be a time of refreshment and renewal for all of us. May we all learn, grow, and extend ourselves in this special period of time!

With best wishes to each of you for the New Year,

- Bill Sasso

FROM THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR

The book [Essex Conversations](#) was published in 2001. It is a collection of visions for Lifespan Religious Education by some of the prominent practitioners of the time in the Unitarian

Universalist Association. It can basically be divided into the following categories: When does Religious Education take place?; Who Influences religious education?; Where does religious

education occur?; How do we go about it?; and, Why do we do it?



Gary Smith, in his offering, "Taking Our Children Seriously," states he believes that religious education is about mutual respect. He believes we offer one of the last places of multigenerational contact in our culture. Our congregations provide a place to live out the Principle "that we learn as much from *who* teaches us as we do from *what* we are taught." When we offer a place where children feel loved, welcomed, and safe, this is "the imprint we leave for that later year, after the inevitable rebellion has taken place, when they return with their own children."

Gary Smith's comment about our children returning with their own children was expanded on by another contributor in Essex. The Rev. Dr. Tom Yondoft speaks of "Outcome-Based Religious Education." He mentions that "at every stage I have met in our movement people whom I admire tremendously. Good people. Marvelous ideals. Good causes. Fine curricula. But our children leave our faith."

Reverend Yondoft says the measure of education is not whether or not a student has been in class

or whether or not the teacher has addressed the topic. "The measure of success of education is whether or not at the end of the day the student has mastered tasks. On a regular basis we should also ask: Show me your portfolio of accomplished human being." He offers the following as good outcomes of UU lifespan religious education: 1) We live simply on the earth; 2) We treat one another with dignity and respect; 3) We lead mildly spiritual lives; 4) We participate in the institutions of freedom; and, 5) We tell others the story of the earth and of our own evolution, using diverse arts to make clear why the preceding accomplishments, with the associated ideas, skills, and habits, are essential.

We can heed the wisdom and suggestions offered by Smith and Yondoft. We can recognize that all the members of our Fellowship have something to teach and offer our children, along with the responsibility to do so. And we can heed Yondoft's guidance that we pay more attention to the ends than the means, if indeed we wish to see our children remain in the faith. To a degree we do these things now, if we look closely at what takes place under our roof and in our homes. Let us together continue to offer our children love, safety, and respect, and to teach to the test of accomplished human being.

Sincerely, Roy Sumner

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

The Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship is an extraordinary organization. We have competent, experienced and dedicated staff providing outstanding leadership and support for the Fellowship. We have a committed congregation providing social service at the local, state and international level. We have a beautiful and functional building that meets our needs well. We have been recognized as a Breakthrough Congregation by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

How did we do this? We built a community that recognizes that every individual has a voice and deserves to be heard. We use the democratic

process in our decision making. We are very generous in time, talent and money.

I've often wondered how many hours of leadership and service are provided each month by members. Most of the activities taking place at the Fellowship are led by members. Someone feels a call, initiates a discussion and interested members participate. The focus can be discussion, books, music, social action or anything that motivates a member to action. It is the generous sharing of time and talent that enriches all who choose to participate.

The Fellowship members have also been generous in financial support. We have given to call and support a minister 10 years ago. We have given to build a building for our community. We give to support our minister, our RE director, our Office Manager and baby sitters.

Over the next few months, we will be asking for your ongoing support of the Fellowship. The board will define our financial needs for the coming year. The Stewardship committee will provide this information to the members in a variety of

formats. Finally, you will be asked to make a financial pledge to support the Fellowship in the coming year.

We ask that you thoroughly understand the needs of the Fellowship and make a decision to contribute at a level that assures the ongoing health and vitality of the Fellowship. We ask that you consider this as an investment in your spiritual home.

Jerry Molumby, Stewardship Chair

CUF MONTHLY MEETINGS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 Jan. 12.** For more information, contact Bill Sasso at 529-2439 or bsasso@juno.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.

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 Jan. 3 and Jan. 17.** Meditation, Chanting, Study, Discussion in a free flowing format. Everyone welcome. For more info, visit www.shawnee-dharma.org or contact Judy Carter at 529-3110.

THE DREAM WORKSHOP. *This group meets the first Sunday of each month in 06 (RE wing) at 12:00.* **Meets next on Jan 3.**

HUMANIST ROUND TABLE. Humanist Round Table is on furlough effective December 31, 2009, pending its restructuring and reorganization should sufficient interest and support evolve. If you are willing to take leadership in this endeavor, please contact David Christensen at davechris@mchsi.com.

PSI SYMPOSIUM. *This group meets the second Sunday of the Month in Room 06 at Noon.* **Meets next on Jan. 10.** Please bring a dish to share. The program starts at 12:30pm. For more info, contact Mary Campbell at 521-0851 or mspurple1999@yahoo.com.

ROUNDTABLE READERS. *This group meets on the fourth Sunday of the month in Room 05 after the Sunday Service at Noon.* **Meets this month on Jan. 24.** Round Table Readers will meet to discuss [My Stroke of Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey](#), by Jill Bolte Taylor, Ph.D. For more info, contact Janet Levie at jlevie@onemain.com.

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 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 Jan. 15. Free Movie, Free Popcorn and Free Drinks!! Please plan to join us. Contact Amy Weber at amyweber1@msn.com with questions.

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

Request from the office: Please send any address, phone number, and/or email address updates to the office ASAP! We are starting to enter information into the new data system, and need the most updated information on all of our members! Thank you. - Melanie

Welcome to Our Very Newest CUF Member:

Richard Norman, 47 Spring Arbor Dr., Carbondale, IL 62902, 618-529-8334, rnorman263@aol.com.

Dispatch from Arabia

Part Five
by Joseph Robbie

The practice of Unitarian Universalism is illegal here and is punishable under Sharia law by caning, imprisonment, or in the case of Westerners, instant deportation. But it's not just us. Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Wicca, etc. are all banned. If you are born a Saudi, your religion is Islam – end of story. This may sound strange, but not so much so when one considers the fact that a person born in Europe or the USA is almost always a Christian, while one born in Laos is most likely a Buddhist. Where we happen to have been born largely determines our religion. After all, don't most people adopt the faith of their parents? The major difference here is that you're not allowed to convert, upon pain of death.

As I write this, the country has just observed the arrival of New Year's Day, on December 19th this year. It's now 1431 under the Islamic calendar. There's not much in the way of celebrations and such.

Next Friday is Christmas Day, but you couldn't tell it from looking around here. All things Christmas are illegal. If you want a Christmas tree, you have to purchase one that has somehow been smuggled into the country, on the underground black market – probably from the same guy you get your booze from. Want to go caroling? Forget it. All music is considered "haram", or forbidden, under the strict Islamic code. The exceptions are military music, for marching, and the use of pure percussion.

So it's tough to get into the holiday spirit if you're staying in-country. Therefore, a couple of coworkers and I will fly over to the nearby island nation of Bahrain, or as we call it, "BAR-rain", for a couple of days to escape the oppression, see some Santas and decorations, drink real beer and flirt with women who reveal more than just their eyes.

Such is the life of a lonely bachelor in this far-away land. Tune in next month for more details on the pros and cons of my daily existence away from work here.

To be continued...

CUF LINKS HARD COPIES are available at the Fellowship on the visitor table.

Deadline for February CUF Links: Wednesday, January 27. Please honor this deadline.

Send your articles to Cheryl Robinson at cherrob1@msn.com or to Melanie Bray at cufvolunteers@verizon.net **on or before Wednesday, January 27.** Thanks! – Cheryl Robinson, Editor

Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship,
105 N. Parrish Lane, Carbondale, IL 62901
618-529-2439 www.cuuf.net, carbandleuu@verizon.net
The Rev. William Sasso, Minister

An inspirational thought:

*“Flatter me and I may not believe you. Criticize me and I may not like you.
Ignore me and I may not forgive you.
Encourage me and I may not forget you.” – Sir William Arthur*