



CUF Links

The Monthly Newsletter of the
Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship

A Welcoming Congregation

A member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association
February 2009

The Minister's Message



Our Growing Edges

This past Sunday, January 25th, the words of our spoken meditation came from Howard Thurman's text "The Growing Edge." Since you may not recall the meditation, here is its

text:

*Look well to the growing edge.
All around us worlds are dying and new worlds
are being born; all around us life is dying and
life is being born.
The fruit ripens on the tree; the roots are
silently at work in the darkness of the earth
against a time when there shall be new leaves,
fresh blossoms, green fruit.
Such is the growing edge!
It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung,
the one more thing to try when all else has
failed, the upward reach of life when weariness
closes in upon all endeavor.
This is the basis of hope in moments of despair,
the incentive to carry on when times are out of
joint and [humans] have lost their reason, the
source of confidence when worlds crash and
dreams whiten into ash.
The birth of the child – life's most dramatic
answer to death – this is the growing edge
incarnate.
Look well to the growing edge!*

Thurman's words remind us that growth is always present, so long as life is present within us. We may not always see the growth – it may be in the silent roots, working in the darkness and cold of the winter soil. It may be internal, coiling itself, ready to spring into the joy and frenzy of spring leaves, buds, and flowers! Or it may be the courage that the soul finds in the most trying times, the courage that leads us to take one more step, and then another, and then still another, to the point where our destination appears in the distance. We can grow in so many different ways!

Speaking personally, my hope is that I continue to grow. I hope that I am open both to growth I intend to achieve and to that which comes as a gift. The latter, the growth that we do not anticipate, and have not intended, may sometimes be uncomfortable. But it we can only learn what it may offer us by tasting of it. We owe it to ourselves, and to those around us, to hold ourselves open to the possibilities!

In this new season of promise, as we see the close of winter on the horizon, as our nation enters a time filled with both challenge and opportunity, may we sense the growing edge within us! May we find it, and connect it! May its courage and its energy flow through us! May we use them well, not only for ourselves, but for the good of all!

Yours in the spirit of growth,
Bill S.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Yikes almighty, I am so looking forward to spring. By now I am well aware of how the loss of sunlight affects me emotionally. Sights, insults, and disappointments that used to roll off me, like a ring down a sink, now seem to stick a little longer and sting a little sharper. I know it's just me, and that sunlight is going to right my boat, but it gets me thinking about how others deal with hardship. How do they turn the other cheek, to simply shrug their shoulders after having been disrespected, just give the other the benefit of the doubt and offer understanding? - - "Ah, you know, they're probably just having a bad day!"

Then as usually happens, my question is answered when I'm not looking for it. Sitting in a doctor's office I was flipping through a Newsweek, and I learned something about having a bad day. It was a letter from Chris Buice, minister of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist church in Knoxville. Last July two members of his church were killed, six others were injured, and everyone, including the children present was traumatized by a crazed gunman. The healing, the insight, and the sorting out, takes time, and it takes intention to recover and overcome. His words offered me an answer, and since I can't find a way to paraphrase them adequately, the last paragraph of his letter appears next. - - "Members of my congregation have been hurt. But we have also been healed by the feeling that there is a love greater than our theological differences, a compassion that is not limited by the boundaries of any creed. I firmly believe, now more than ever, that love is stronger than death. Love is more powerful than hate."

Ours is not an easy religion. I really had this driven home when teaching the "We Believe" curriculum some years ago. The curriculum focuses on the 7 Unitarian Universalist Principles, and these children could come up with endless situations when one could see a good reason for taking a pass on a principle. Yes, it takes strength, determination, kindness, understanding, and forgiveness to practice these principles.

And I believe, more firmly than ever, that raising children who value and practice these principles takes all of us. To have a better tomorrow we have to do the work today. This is one reason that the Religious Education committee is hosting a "Goal Setting" workshop on February 21. You, all of you, are invited to help chart our course for the future. The workshop will meet at the Fellowship from 10AM until noon, break for an hour lunch, then finish from 1PM to 3PM. We will have the nursery open, and other activities (more than childcare) for the older children present. We will provide sandwiches, salad, soup and dessert for lunch. We hope you will plan to join us.

Sincerely,
Roy Sumner, DRE

CUF Sunday Services **February, 2009**

2/1 **Rev. Elizabeth Harding: "Whole Stories, Whole Lives"**

Come explore matters of the heart and head this Sunday as we talk about race in relation to our faith. To have these hard conversations is necessary if we are to make our beliefs real in the world. Our political climate has changed how we might view these conversations in the future, too. On Friday, January 30th, we will have an opportunity to watch the movie 'Traces of the Trade,' one woman's exploration of her family and

its connection to the slave trade prior to Sunday; her family's experience will frame how we as Unitarian Universalists talk about race among ourselves and folks outside of our churches.

2/8 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. Bill Sasso and Roy Sumner will coordinate this service. Due to the intergenerational nature of this service, it will not include announcements.

2/15 Rich Whitney and Bill Sasso: “How Torture Hurts Us All”

It's been said that “The greatest evils have always found their way into the life of men under the semblance of good.” Our nation's use of torture over the past eight years might well be an example. Join Rich and Bill as they consider torture and its implications in light of Unitarian Universalist principles and values.

2/22 Bill Sasso: “Lincoln’s Humor (and His Sanity)”

What difference did humor make as Abe faced challenges as great as any U.S. president? Continuing our series on Lincoln, we'll examine the role that wit and humor played as part of Abe's life. If you have a favorite story about Abe's wit, please share it with Bill before no later than 2/19!

and coming up . . .

3/1 Kathy O’Laughlin: “Eleanor Roosevelt’s Ethic”

As we celebrate Women's History Month, Kathy will explore the ethical values of Eleanor Roosevelt, a significant figure in our national history. We will review Eleanor's life and work, culminating in her leadership in the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Evolve with us with games and fun at **Darwin Day 200th Birthday Bash!** Go to the Galapagos Islands (vicariously) with Don Lawrence! Play Darwinian Games and activities for kids of all ages! Win prizes! Be Charles Darwin in a Look-alike Contest! (3 Darwin age categories) Darwin Dessert Contest! Darwin's Birthday Cake! Evolution in Song with Parsley & Sagebrush Band and friends! . . . and other stuff—be surprised! (We will be.) Saturday February 7th 2-5pm. For more info, contact Janet Harris, 687-2155 or JoAnn Nelson, 529-1884.

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The **Suicide Grief Support 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. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, and will meet next on Tuesday, February 10th, at 7:30 p.m. at the Fellowship.
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Our "Circle of Renewal" will meet Wednesday evening, February 18, from 7:30 to 9 pm. Each 3rd Wednesday evening, we use music, prayer, readings, and silence together to create a spiritual focus. This intentional experience is open to all who come in respect and trust. For more information, contact Bill Sasso at bsasso@juno.com or 618-529-2439.

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The Fellowship regrets to announce that beloved longtime member **Lillian Adams** died peacefully the morning of Saturday, January 24th. Lillian had entered hospice care a week earlier, and many members of her family were able to be with her through much of this week. A memorial service will be held at the Fellowship at 2 pm Sunday, February 8th. Those with special memories of Lillian are encouraged to share those memories at <http://lillianadams.blogspot.com/>

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Round Table Readers will meet on Sunday, February 22 at noon to discuss the novel People of the Book by Gertrude Brooks, Pulitzer Prize winning author of March. People of the Book is a combination historical novel and mystery story, as a young Australian rare book expert and conservator unravels the journey of the Sarajevo Haggadah, a rare and priceless illuminated manuscript for the Jewish Passover Seder, beginning in Seville, Spain, in 1480; to Tarragona, in 1492; to Venice, in 1609; to Vienna, in 1894; and finally to Sarajevo, in 1940 and 1996. The book is available in paperback and from the public library system, in print and audio versions. The Fellowship library also has a copy.

GETTING TO KNOW THE CARBONDALE UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

(date and time to be announced)

Getting to Know the CUF Program (a new and less serious title), was previously known as the Orientation Program. The length of this program will be approximately 2 hours.

This program is intended for anyone who has joined the Fellowship recently or those who might be thinking about becoming a member.

Our goal is to help you learn more about what Unitarian Universalism is, how this particular congregation works, what we offer in our programming for adults and children and to answer your questions about the Fellowship.

Program Outline:

- Introductions
- UU History
- The Seven Principles
- Break
- Democratic Governance
- Sunday Services
- How We Communicate
- RE for Children
- Education and Programs for Adults
- What it Means to Be a Member
- How to Become a Member
- Questions
- Adjourn

Contact Melanie Bray, CUF Office Assistant, to put your name on the list. Childcare will be provided with advance notice.

February Social Action Update

By Jess Jobe

February's Social Action Sunday collection is set for Sunday, February 1 and is the Souper Bowl Sunday collection for Good Samaritan Ministries. The Souper Bowl of Caring is held annually, nationwide on Super Bowl Sunday to benefit homeless shelters around the country. The local Souper Bowl of Caring collections benefit Good Samaritan Ministries. This collection, conducted in area stores and in area churches, is a significant source of funding for Good Samaritan Ministries which operates Carbondale's homeless shelter, a food pantry and soup kitchen and provides myriad other case management supports to those who are homeless or at-risk in the Carbondale area. Please make checks payable to Good Samaritan Ministries.

Upcoming Social Action Sunday collections: The social action committee decided on the following collections for Winter/Spring 2009:

March 15-Rainbow Café

April 19-Green Earth

May 17-Boys and Girls Club of Carbondale

June 21-Murphysboro Food Pantry

Feed My Sheep, February 3 Schedule: Our volunteers for Feb. 3 at Feed My Sheep soup kitchen are: Frank Nall, Cathy Kline, Vennie Anderson, Al Babbitt (CHEF AL), Judy Aydt, Joyce Daisy, Bob White and Jess Jobe. Thank you to everyone who has been volunteering to help at the soup kitchen—we are starting to really know how everything works! In the near future, we hope to meet with Pastor Rick Jackson from Bethel AME to discuss ways we might be able to help make the kitchen operations run more efficiently and environmentally friendly—perhaps by doing a thorough organizing of the pantries on a Saturday and by purchasing some green cleaning products for the kitchen—this may present ways other CUF members can get involved with Feed My Sheep, even if you cannot help on the first Tuesday of each month.

Rural King easy fundraising opportunity: Again this year, Rural King stores are offering churches a way to earn a little extra money. Just bring in Rural King receipts for purchases made between February 16-22 and Rural King will give CUF 5% of the net total of all CUF member Rural King purchases from that period. Please turn in Rural King Receipts to Jess Jobe by March 1!

WE ARE ALL SOCIAL ACTION! I have said this many times, and it really is true—regardless of whether you have ever been to a social action committee meeting, if you are a CUF member, you really are a social action committee member! Do you have an idea for a social action service project or ongoing activity? Do you have a request for social action funding to benefit a local or national organization or an upcoming social action event (a lecture, movie series etc). Feel free to bring your ideas to a social action meeting or to email Jess Jobe at jesj62901@yahoo.com. Please do note that when an idea for a project is presented to "the social action committee" the assumption is that the person or people bringing the idea will be actively involved in the planning and implementation of that project, with the assistance of others who are interested. In other words, when one says "someone really should do X" –you're probably right... and maybe YOU are at least one of those someones!

Stewardship at the Fellowship by *Jerry M.*

What does the Fellowship mean to you? Why are you a member? Why do you come on Sunday, or at any other time? Most of us were attracted to the Fellowship because it was an organization that most closely reflected our values. We joined when we saw that the Fellowship would reflect, reinforce, and provide an opportunity to put our values into action. And, we could magnify the impact of those actions by doing it as part of a group. Finally, we stay because the Fellowship meets these needs.

The Fellowship has worked hard over the years to provide opportunities for a vibrant community to grow. It provides forums for discussion, education and reflection. It provides a supportive environment where a group of individuals, large or small, can explore a variety of avenues leading to insight, enlightenment or fulfillment. But most of all, it provides a community that supports, cares for and nourishes its members. It feels good and right to belong.

Stewardship is about taking care of those things that we value. Many of us try to be good stewards of the land, leaving it better than we found it. Those entrusted with financial responsibility are good stewards of the funds entrusted to them. Everyone in a leadership spot is a good steward who assures that they act in the best interest of the larger community.

But, we are all stewards of the Fellowship. We provide time, talent and money, to make sure that the Fellowship not only survives, but thrives. We give our time and talents to specific activities within the Fellowship, but we give our money to make sure the organizational base for these activities is adequately supported.

The Fellowship has worked hard at building an organizational base from which so many activities can emerge. It has hired and retained outstanding staff. It has built a beautiful and functional building. It has exercised an exceptional fiscal discipline to assure for current operations, future contingencies and future growth. With a sound financial base, especially in these troubled times, the members can focus on acting on our values and not be consumed facing financial crises. This is a gift to us from past stewards of the Fellowship.

In the coming months, the Fellowship will conduct the annual Stewardship Drive. The goals expressed in the congregational meeting last December have been prioritized and incorporated into a projected budget for the next Fellowship year. The prioritized goals will be shared with the congregation in a variety of ways (Ex. Brochures, articles, Case Statement, etc.).

You will be asked to think about what the Fellowship means to you, what the needs of the Fellowship are in the coming year and the amount you wish to pledge to make it happen. You will be asked to be stewards of the Fellowship. More to come...

☆Top 10 Reasons to Come to the Old-Time Contra Dance & Potluck☆

Saturday, Feb. 28, 5:30 pm to 9:30 p.m., at the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship.

10. Bring one covered dish and you get a whole meal plus dessert in return. It's best if the covered dish has food in it. A note card with the name of the dish and some of the ingredients is also nice.
9. You don't need a babysitter. Kids seven and older are invited to dance. Kids too young to dance will be gently nurtured in our RE area. Contact Melanie (529-2439) or carbondaleuu@verizon.net to make arrangements.)
8. If you don't have kids you can enjoy someone else's for the evening and then go home to peace and quiet.

7. You get to play fun get-acquainted games like People Bingo.
6. If you have an unusual skill, talent or accomplishment email aydt@siu.edu and you can become an item on our People Bingo.
5. You don't have to dress up. Just wear comfortable clothes, tennis shoes and a big grin.
4. You can learn how to contra dance. We'll have a caller to run you through the steps and toe-tapping live music to get you going. (For a demonstration just Google: You Tube contra-dancing.)
3. You don't have to bring a partner or even make your spouse dance. Sets are continually changing and new sets formed.
2. You don't even have to dance. Just listening to the music, enjoying the good company and watching fellow UUs trip over their feet can be just as much fun.

And the #1 reason...

1. You can see your picture at the dance on the Membership Committee bulletin board display. (Or for a small donation to the Fellowship you can have the picture of you contra-dancing at the party omitted from the bulletin board display.)

Judy Aydt for the CUF Membership Committee

EXCITING NEWS!!!! Mary Chidgey, the founder and manager of Ranchod AIDS hospice and orphan care program in Kabwe, Zambia, will be in Carbondale from March 1st-March 8th 2009. On Saturday evening, March 7th there will be an open house reception at the home of Carla and George Feldhamer in honor of Mary. Hospice of Southern Illinois and the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship have been involved in a partnership with Ranchod since 2003. The partnership has involved fundraising for medicines and other supplies, starting a program to pay school fees for the orphans, several visits by persons from HSI and The Fellowship, sewing nightgowns, collecting and sending supplies and speaking locally to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic globally as well as here in Southern Illinois. Mary is an amazing Irish nurse who has lived in Kabwe with her husband, David, a farmer. She has devoted the past 7 years to insuring that persons affected by HIV/AIDS in her community receive adequate testing, education, treatment, food and love and comfort. She has helped to lessen the stigma that goes along with the diagnosis of HIV/AIDS. She has set up a family planning clinic so that the women of Kabwe have a choice regarding childbearing. She has done fundraising to build a clinic and pre-school in one of the outlying villages. She has reached out to donors to help pay the staff and caregivers that work at the hospice. Mary has been THE ADVOCATE for HIV/AIDS in Kabwe. She has been involved with the African Palliative Care Association speaking at national conferences. I could go on and on...I hope that you will be able to visit with Mary while she is in Carbondale and to attend the Saturday evening reception.

Drinks will be provided... if possible please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

Time: 7:00 pm-10:00pm

Address: 623 South Wedgewood Lane Carbondale, Illinois

Please RSVP Carla Feldhamer at 618-457-8606 (Home) 618-201-4947 (Cell) hospice88@aol.com

Prior to her visit she will be a guest speaker at The International Unitarian Universalist Women's Convocation in Houston.

New Day Prison Ministries by Lois Hayward

After seven years of doing prison ministries work I think I have come to a tipping point. I have passed from the experimental and project-oriented point to the point of being more explicitly purpose-driven. That's not to say that we will discontinue the projects we have undertaken in the last few years. At the same time, I hope we can move into a very serious attack on the lack of education in our prison system.

My letters to men at Tamms began as offers of friendship and contact with someone on the outside. Then I began to see that I was also serving as a mentor. I love this work. The rewards are great in a quiet, deep way. I am helping to put lives back together, and in some cases bringing a sense of order to lives that never had much of that.

The most important thing I do is to treat each person as an individual. No canned messages, no generic greetings, no pontificating. Helping an inmate discover worth and dignity in himself comes next. To do that I have to pick up on all the hints he gives about his past, his interests, his concerns. I am constantly honing my listening skills and I value insights that I would have no other way of getting.

Now comes my exciting new dream. I am going to make an attempt at designing an individual "curriculum" for some of the men I have gotten to know well. I already try to make each letter a model of good grammar and acceptable syntax, and in each I consciously refrain from limiting myself to words I think they might know. Anyone who asks me for a dictionary gets one. I also try to develop an ear for their style and syntax.

There is a library at Tamms, but the prisoners are not allowed to go there to browse. Instead, the custodian of the library, not a trained librarian or educator, comes around to each housing unit every so often and asks if anybody wants anything. Now how is a person with almost no education beyond elementary school supposed to know what he wants to know? I use magazine articles and donated books to give the men an idea of the manifold possibilities. Next I plan to develop individualized reading lists for each person, even those who have no aspirations for more formal education. Education is life-enhancing even for people with such meager opportunities, even for lifers.

We have also begun sponsoring inmates who do aspire to a high school diploma, something the Department of Corrections refuses to do at Tamms. It costs about \$1200 for an inmate to complete his high school work at an accredited correspondence school. The first inmate we have sponsored is about to complete his work and is ecstatic. The second is just starting. Even if we can only put one person through this program every two years, it is better than the nothing that now exists. Some of these men were young when they came into the system and will be going home in the not-too-distant future. Education and self-confidence are big factors in reducing recidivism

I have high hopes. Maybe this is the year to develop an elite corps of mentors. Please stay tuned!

National School Climate Survey from Bill Rose

The most recent report, (2007), from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools recently published these key findings:

- Three-fourths of students heard homophobic or sexist remarks often or frequently at school.
- 9 out of 10 students heard the word "gay" used in a negative way often or frequently at school.
- 4 out of 10 students heard students make racist remarks often or frequently at school.
- Remarks about students not acting "masculine" enough were more common than remarks about students not acting "feminine" enough.
- Nearly two-thirds of students heard homophobic remarks from school personnel.
- Less than a fifth of students reported that school personnel frequently intervened when hearing homophobic remarks or negative remarks about gender expression.

New Member Info - 4 Things About:

Carol Wingate

1. I was born on the north side of Chicago and came to Southern Illinois when I graduated from Vet School, first to Metropolis and then to Marion. I own a small animal practice in Marion.
 2. My hobbies include reading, riding horses, training dogs, wine, and harassing my Grand kids. In the past I have also raised and shown cats--Maine Coons. Dogs and cats are really a part of my life.
 3. As a child I was confirmed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church but have not continued in that faith or any other. My doubts about the dogmas of organized religions were the major factor in my loss of interest. In the Unitarian Fellowship I have found that is not necessary to leave my reason at the door of the Fellowship. The people in the Fellowship are welcoming, intelligent and interesting to talk to. Topics of conversation are varied and fun!
 4. I have not traveled very much due to my work. In 2003 I went to Northern Spain and traveled on horseback for 8 days. We stayed in local inns and actually rode our horses along the Mediterranean Coast for a few miles. A great adventure. I also went to Canada one year and was on the support team for the British Endurance Team.
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From the Editor: *Joseph Robbie*

UU Joke of the Month

A man was being given a tour of Hell by the Devil. "This is the area where we keep people who have violated the food taboos of their religion", the Devil said. "Behind this first door are the Catholics. These are the ones who ate meat on Friday. Behind the second door are the Muslims. They all ate pork. Behind the third door are the Unitarians." The man looked puzzled. The Devil clarified, "They didn't partake of tofu, hummus, or free-trade coffee."

UU Trivia Quiz - History

True or False? (only one is false)

1. T F 1553 = Michael Servetus, author of 'On the Errors of the Trinity', is burned at the stake.
2. T F 1600 = first official use of Unitarian name.
3. T F 1791 = riots against Unitarians in Birmingham, Alabama.
4. T F 1684 = Joseph Gatchell has his tongue pierced with a red-hot iron for his statement, "All men should be saved."
5. T F 1811 = Maria Cook becomes first woman to preach from a Universalist pulpit.

Deadline for March CUF LINKS is February 24th!

Contacts

For suggestions, advice and compliments: jsphrobbie@yahoo.com

For complaints and refunds: bsasso@juno.com