



CUF Links

The Monthly Newsletter of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship
A Welcoming Congregation

a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association
November 2008

THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

In the Season of Thanksgiving



As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, I feel drawn to consider some of the aspects of my life for which I feel most thankful. Sometimes it feels like a stretch to do this, in all the busy-ness of the holiday preparations, travel, celebrations, and festivities. Amidst all of that, I sometimes ask myself whether I really need one more thing to do. And the answer is yes, I really do need to think about what I value most. I really do need to connect with that which is most central to me, that which I treasure and hold sacred.

Sometimes it is quite clear to me what I am grateful for: the love that I feel in my family, the respect and support of colleagues, the deep work that we enter in covenant within this Fellowship, and our efforts to transform the world around us (and ourselves in the process). I am grateful for the examples of committed men and women whose lives have inspired me, and for the opportunities that are present to us in our southern Illinois community. As I focus on these aspects of my life, it is easy to remember to feel thankful.

But sometimes it's not so easy to feel thanks. Sometimes I encounter the pain that life can bring us, or the unfairness with which we can treat each other, or the distrust that breeds upon itself. Sometimes I encounter examples of humans behaving at their worst, or I recognize (and resent) that some have

opportunities that I do not have. When I turn my attention to these dimensions of my life, it becomes positively hard – almost impossible! – to feel a sense of thankfulness.

But it would not be true to say, even among these difficulties, that I have nothing to be grateful for. In the midst of pain, unfairness, or distrust, I feel real gratitude that I am not alone, and that I know that I am not alone. At these times, I am especially grateful for the presence of family, friends, and community in my life. I know that they will be there to support me in my moments of weakness, and they know I would do the same for them. I know that I can trust them with my heart, and they know that they can trust me in the same way. Over time, with trust, I have come to know this about some of those close to me.

Perhaps this is one of the central tasks of thanksgiving – to connect ourselves and our authenticity with whatever in our lives we are most thankful for. It will not be the same thing for each one of us, for we are unique human beings, each in our own situation. Yet I believe that, in spite of our uniqueness, we each have something for which we can give thanks.

In all the hectic activity of this holiday season, and more holidays to come close on its heels, I wish you a moment of peace. In that moment of peace, may you find and connect with those parts of your own life for which you feel deep gratitude.

Yours in the spirit of Thanksgiving,

Bill S



President's Column for CUF LINKS

November 2008 by George Feldhamer

A common theme in this column has been—and will no doubt continue to be—celebrating the extraordinary amount of time and effort so many of our members devote to the Fellowship. Most of the programs and events that help to shape CUF and make it what it is result from the selfless efforts of our members. Some of these members have been here for a years whereas others are relative newcomers. Allow me to point out just a couple of good examples. From the “newcomer” category, this issue of CUF Links—which you are eagerly reading—would not be coming to us without the efforts of Joe Robbie. Joe has stepped in as the new editor, taking over this important task from Yo Presley. Many thanks to Joe for agreeing to get involved and to Yo for her past efforts with CUF Links (and her continued service in other areas of the fellowship). In the “relative old-timer” category, a huge thank-you to Stan Ayd, Dave Christensen, Jerry Molumby, Kathy O’Laughlin, and Natalie Trimble. They are the inaugural members of the newly established Endowment Committee. If you might be interested in exploring an endowment to the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship as part of a lasting legacy to liberal religion, you will want to talk to one of these folks.

As always, thanks to all the members of our standing committees for your efforts. Want to check out committee activities this past year? Take a look at the hot-off-the-press 2007-2008 Annual Report on the CUF website (www.cuuf.net). Printed copies are available at the fellowship. Finally, please plan to attend the upcoming Congregational Meeting following the Sunday service December 7, 2008. We will look at progress toward achieving last years 8 priority items, and get input on new priorities for the upcoming year.

New Editor *By Joe Robbie*

Hello everyone. I’m the new editor of this CUF Links newsletter. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Yo Presley for the fine job she has done during her tenure as editor. I feel honored to be entrusted with this duty and will do my best to validate that trust.

Why me? Well, first of all, someone was needed to step up and take on the position. Secondly, I might even be qualified. I’m an English teacher by trade. Thus, I’m pretty good at writing, grammar and proofreading. For what I may lack in ability, I rely on my editorial mentors: Yo Presley (outgoing editor), Melanie Bray (UU office honcho), and Bill Sasso (our guiding light). Thanks, you guys!

Don’t expect any radical changes (sorry to the radicals among us). I plan to keep the format and content essentially the same, initially. Yet, I do hope to put my own stamp on this endeavor, in a limited, responsible kind of way. I hope that you find this month’s newsletter acceptable, informative and perhaps even entertaining.

Contacts

For suggestions, advice and compliments:

jsphrobbie@yahoo.com

For complaints and refunds:

bsasso@juno.com



"Do it! Move it! Make it happen! No one ever sat their way to success." – Dad.

"Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go." –William Feather.

"A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds." –Francis Bacon.

"Self-reliance is the greatest gift a parent can give a child." –Dad.

The above quotes come from a book I was given 15 years ago. It's the result of the discovery of a collection of quotes, some written by others, some written by Dad, left behind after the death of Dad. His children found scores of quotes he'd saved or written over his lifetime, and they put them into a book, *"A Father's Book Of Wisdom."*

I have relied on this book many times over the years. It has offered me inspiration, comfort, and insights into how others view life's journey. I noticed that what was common in each offering was that they invoked action over inaction, and they were positive in tone. That hope for change came from within.

I sometimes refer to this book when things personally, or in the nation or world at large, don't go according to wishes or plans. I refer to it with the realization that fear so often seeks to insert itself when decisions need to be made, and that fear is not always the best motivation for making the best decision, or taking the best action. That fear can keep us from growing, from changing stifling patterns, from making a positive difference.

"Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." – John Wooden.

"Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out." –James B. Conant.

"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention." – Dad.

I'd like to believe that our Fellowship is a place where we can encourage each other, and truly embrace our diversity. How we talk, what we're willing to share, how much we chance to participate, are all opportunities to learn, be vulnerable, and grow. But like the above quotes, I also think that it takes action. It takes being intentional to accept an invitation to take responsibility to accomplish a task, and to risk failing.

Our children learn much from just watching us. They discern our tone and attitude with great clarity. They notice who acts, and who doesn't. I'm grateful that they have such a huge, and diverse, assembly of people who act on their beliefs that the world can be better, and then do something about it. I'm very proud, and comforted, to spend time with people who "Do it! Move it! Make it happen!"

Sincerely,
Roy Sumner, DRE



FROM THE OFFICE *by Melanie Bray*

I hope that this month's newsletter finds all of you busy enjoying the incredible Fall weather and scenic colors.

I am very excited about working with our new CUF Links editor, Joe Robbie. I find it very encouraging that our newest member has jumped right into such a needed and time-consuming position. We need to offer him a generous amount of support and productive feedback. I also want to take this time to thank Yo Presley for her impressive years of service as our CUF Links newsletter editor and I know that she is working hard to make this transition a success.

As most of you know, we offer our beautiful facility for rent to our members and also to the general public. We have had birthday parties, baby showers, weddings, memorial services, Girl Scout meetings, yoga classes, business retreats, community fundraisers and many other activities and events. Many times when we rent to a non-member we need a representative to be a liaison for our fellowship. Here are some examples of how you could be of help and service to users of our facility:

- Explaining the procedure for moving and/or relocating the podium for weddings
- Training users on how to use sound system, fireplace, audio and visual equipment
- Offering assistance with location of lighting and use of heating and air
- Explaining simple tasks of cleaning kitchen, location of dumpster and restating our philosophy of recycling and reusing
- Helping users locate additional chairs and tables for events
- Checking building after use to make sure fellowship is in order and ready for use the next day and that the building is properly secured.

We are not expecting or asking our members to help set-up for an event or cleanup after events. What we need are a few available volunteers to help private renters with some simple tasks to make sure that our facility is being used and cared for correctly. We have a large event scheduled in December that would benefit from such a volunteer. If you are interested in being contacted when we need a volunteer, please let me know. You can call the office at 529-2439 or email me at carbondaleuu@verizon.net. This service is normally needed only a few times a year and will require very little of your time.

Reminders: The CUF Annual Report and updated member directories are now available in the sermon racks. Please update the office with any changes in your mailing and/or email address.

Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday.

SEPTEMBER SOCIAL ACTION UPDATE

by Jess Jobe

Social Action Sunday Collections: The November Social Action Sunday Collection is set for Sunday, November 16 and will benefit the AIDS Christmas Project. Project coordinator Wally Paynter shares this about the AIDS Christmas Project: The Southern Illinois AIDS Christmas Project is working to meet the needs of low-income households impacted by HIV and AIDS throughout Southern Illinois. Last year the project served 140 households. Cash donations and checks will be utilized to purchase grocery store gift cards for these low-income families. Last year the project raised \$2,800. The project purchased \$20 grocery store gift cards for these 140 households. Check contributions may be made payable to: AIDS Christmas Project.

Upcoming Social Action Sunday collections are:

December 21: Family Crisis Center of Herrin-homeless shelter

January 18: Little Egypt Chapter of American Red Cross-emergency/disaster services

February 1: Souper Bowl of Caring-to benefit Good Samaritan Ministries

Fall Food and Folk Festival: Mark your calendars for an evening of fun on **Saturday, November 15.** The Fellowship will host the Fall Food and Folk Festival from 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m. A chili supper with cook-off competition will start the evening, with a great bowl of chili and sides available for \$5 for adults, \$2 for kids 12 and under. Signup sheets to bring chili or other food items are located in the Fellowship Commons. Attendees can also "vote" for their favorite chili by making small change (or big change!) votes for their favorite. At 7p.m., we'll be entertained by Chicago area celtic-folk band February Sky and local folk group Parsley and Sagebrush Band. The cost for the concert is \$10. Advance tickets for the supper and/or the concert are available now (contact Kris Summers for info, krissysummers@hotmail.com) or at the door. Proceeds from this great family event will benefit the Ranchhod Hospice and Orphan Care Center, in Zambia.

Two Holiday Giving Opportunities Coming Soon... Watch future Sunday Service bulletins for announcements about the annual Interfaith Council **Spirit of Christmas** program. Fellowship members will again have the opportunity to "adopt" a client from a local social service agency and purchase a nice gift for them--clients adopted include children, seniors, people with disabilities, residents of the Women's Center and Good Sam. shelter. Angela Chen and Matt Schlesinger have agreed to coordinate this effort again this year and details will be announced as soon as they are available-usually in early November.

Looking for a gift with real meaning or something for that person that has everything? Come to the **4th Annual Alternative Gift Fair,** on **Sunday, December 7** at the Carbondale Civic Center. CUF is a co-sponsor of this annual event designed to take some of the excessive consumerism out of the holidays. Shoppers can purchase real fair trade gifts or can adopt Heifer animals, sponsor a homeless animal or contribute funds for homeless families or battered women, to name a few. Vendors typically include Boys and Girls Club of Carbondale, Heifer, Habitat for Humanity, Good Samaritan Ministries, PAWS, The Women's Center and several other great local or international causes.

CUF's Service to Feed My Sheep Community Kitchen begins this month! CUF is embarking on a new, ongoing local service project. On the 1st Tuesday of each month, we'll be responsible for preparing and serving the lunch meal at Feed My Sheep Community Kitchen, located at Bethel AME Church in Carbondale. We will also be purchasing the food for this meal, using funds from the social action account. Thanks so much to everyone who has signed up to prepare and serve meals at Feed My Sheep (located at Bethel AME Church) for the next few months. The response from Fellowship members has been great. We will prepare and serve our first meal on **Tuesday, November 4**. Al Babbitt has agreed to be our "executive chef" that day and lead the rest of the volunteers in meal prep. If you have questions, contact Jess at jesj62901@yahoo.com

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Cathy Kline

The Orientation Program held Saturday, October 4, was a success. Six new members attended plus, a plethora of seasoned members. Some of the participants are telling me that one long afternoon is too much info all at one time, and two shorter afternoons would be a better way to organize this program. Consider this - would you rather spend one weekend afternoon learning about your new spiritual home and meeting others, or you would rather spend two? Keep in mind that we must consider the following when scheduling any program at the Fellowship:

- availability of the commons area
- availability of the pastor and seasoned members
- availability of childcare provider.

The next Orientation Program will be scheduled in February. I am very interested in your point of view and encourage you to email your opinion to klinejc@earthlink.net.

The committee has started making plans for our Annual Potluck, which will be scheduled in February. The date and theme will be announced soon. Get your dancing shoes ready!

NEW DAY PRISON MINISTRIES

by Lois Hayward

The next Ralph Anderson Interfaith Dialogues will be on "American Prison Systems & Faith Perspectives". The event will be held on Monday, Dec. 1 - 7:30 PM at the Carbondale Mosque (530 N. Wall Street). Lois Hayward will talk about some of her experiences in visits with men at the Tamm's State Penitentiary and her faith perspective on prison policies and humane treatment. Members of the panel will be Imam Haqq, Sam Goldman, and the Rev. Randy Johnson. Ken Starbuck will be the moderator. The dialogues are sponsored by the Carbondale Interfaith Council. Everyone is welcome and attendance is free. Contact Ken Starbuck for more information: e-mail (cubrads@verizon.net) or phone 942-3986.

CUF MONTHLY MEETINGS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming:

MLK EVENT PLANNING MEETING: All who would like to help plan the January, 2009, joint Carbondale/Murphysboro MLK event are encouraged to join in the planning process. For more information, contact Bill Sasso at bsasso@juno.com or 618-529-2439.

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday evening, November 15th! That's when the Fellowship will host a folk music coffeehouse fundraiser for the AIDS/Africa, featuring both local musicians and special guests from out of town! Mark it on your calendar, and watch for more details!

Ongoing:

BUDDHISM STUDY & PRACTICE GROUP *This group meets on the first and third Sundays in the Fellowship Commons at 7:30 PM. For more information: www.shawnee-dharma.org or Judy Carter at 529-3110. November 2 & November 16.* Meditation, Chanting, Study, Discussion in a free flowing format. Everyone welcome.

CIRCLES OF RENEWAL, *third Wednesday evenings, from 7:30 to 9 pm, next meeting November 19th.* Each month we will 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

DREAMWORKS. *This group meets the first Sunday of each month in 06 (RE wing) at 12:00ish.* We invite everyone who is interested in sharing their dreams in a warm and supportive atmosphere to join us.

HUMANIST GROUP. *This group meets on the second Wednesday of each month in the Fellowship Commons at 2:00 PM. Next meeting November 12th, TBA*

HUMANIST ROUND TABLE. *This group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Fellowship Commons at 2:00 PM. Next meeting November 26th, TBA* Call Bob Camp for additional information.

PSI SYMPOSIUM. *This group meets the second Sunday of the Month in Room 06 at Noon November 9th.* We will start with pot luck at noon and the program will begin at 12:30pm.

ROUNDTABLE READERS. This group meets on the fourth Sunday of the month in Room 05 after the Sunday Service at Noon next meeting is **November 23rd.** *Discussing books of our own choosing, whether fiction or nonfiction. All interested are welcome. The meeting on September 28 will be to select books to read in upcoming months, from a list of titles proposed by members and friends of the group. For more information, contact Janet Levie (phone 618-833-4971).*

SISTERHOOD OF STITCHERS. Meets every Tuesday afternoon at noon in the fellowship commons. Next meeting is November 4th.

SOUTHERN IL TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP. This group meets the second Monday of the month in the Fellowship Commons at 7:30 PM. Next Meeting **November 10.** *Contact Krissy Summers at krissysummers@hotmail.com for more information.*

SUICIDE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP: Judy Ashby, MS, LCPC, will facilitate a group for those who have lost a loved one to suicide at the Fellowship on the second Tuesday of each month; next meeting is Nov. 11th, at 7:30 pm. This group will offer safe and understanding conversation about loss and healing, as participants open their hearts to grief. For more information, contact Bill Sasso at 529-2439 or bsasso@juno.com.

VIDEO CIRCLE. Video Circle has been meeting the 3rd Friday of each month. The next meeting will be November 21st.

CUF MEN'S ALLIANCE

There's a new guy in town, in the CUF community, that is! Following the Men's Retreat, a consensus emerged that there was an interest in developing an ongoing focus group on men's issues at CUF. The Men's Retreat planning committee met and, based on a review of the Men's Retreat, feedback from individual men and from the Retreat debriefing meeting, planning has begun. "CUF Men's Alliance" was selected as a name for the group, as it evokes elements of unity, commitment and covenant among the men of the CUF community. *The group is open to all men who are either members of CUF or who are friends of the CUF community.* Bi-monthly meetings will combine educational and experiential activities and guided discussions on topics specific to men and men's issues. A schedule will be announced soon. For more information contact Bill Rose, 618-351-1474, or Charles Ruffner, 618-528-9761.

OPEN MINDS

This Sunday, November 2, at 8:45 AM. Open Minds program of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship will be "The Culture of Fear" presented by R. Michael Fisher PhD. A central question is what happens when fear meets fearlessness. Fisher will explain his approach to the study of fear as a controlling mechanism in our society. How is it used in the culture, media, politically, environmentally, and education? Violence, oppression, environmental, toxification and sexual exploitation all have their cause based in a world view driven by individual and collective fear. One of Fisher's main goals in his research is to understand the dynamics of fear and how to teach others to best handle it to minimize its damaging effects. Learn how and why the "war on terror" and a war without end is the drumbeat most used by the power elite in our country and the world as we know it. Open discussion will follow his remarks. We are located at 105 N. Parrish Lane at Sunset Drive. All welcome! Call Bob Camp for additional information 351-0083.

NEW MEMBER INFO

5 Things to Know About Me - Joe Robbie

1. I was born German and moved to the States at age 12.
2. My hobbies are: live music, writing and public speaking.
3. I am ex-hippie, ex-army, ex-Methodist, and ex-asperated.
4. I have an MA degree in English as a Second Language.
5. I believe strongly in the future of Unitarian Universalism.

6 Things to Know About Me – Bill Rose

1. I was born in Murphysboro, left in 1962 when I was 19 y.o., returned to the area in 2005 as a result of Katrina.
 2. I enjoy fly fishing, cooking, and bread making, and I'm an artist in jewelry.
 3. I collect art, with special interests in Canadian Inuit art, Southern folk art & Native American art.
 4. I have traveled twice through Arctic Canada.
 5. I am a retired clinical social worker, having specialized in marital and family therapy and men's issues.
 6. CUF and Unitarian Universalism are organizing forces in my life and have helped me heal from major losses I experienced before coming here.
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UU Joke of the Month:

Why did the Unitarian-Universalist cross the road?
To support the chicken in its search for its own path.

UU Trivia Quiz (Select the best answer)

What do Dracula and the Unitarians have in common?

- A. They both have fangs and suck blood.
- B. They are both known for dressing well.
- C. They both have historical roots in Transylvania.
- D. They both avoid garlic, sunlight and crosses.

SUNDAY SERVICES SCHEDULE

*Our Sunday Services and Religious Education are at 10:30 a.m.
They are open to all. Infant and toddler care are available.*

November 2 **Bill Sasso: "A Theology of All Souls"**

Universalism, one of our heritage theologies, saw itself as speaking to all people about the salvation of all people. Today, when salvation itself is a proposition we understand differently, can we claim speak with a message for all? And if so, what could that message be? Join Bill as he revisits the concept of Universalism for the 21st century, and beyond!

November 9 **Bill Sasso: "Where Do We Go From Here?"**

With the election results in (whatever they may be), we'll look at future directions the next steps that lie before us, as individuals and within our larger society. As we identify the sources of hope for a better future, we begin to respond to the question in so many of our minds.

November 16 **Charles Ruffner: "Perspective on Transcendentalism"**

Charles, a faculty member in Southern Illinois University's Forestry Department, will consider the insights of the transcendentalist movement in relation to his own experiences in Nature, and offer his own reflections as well. Bill Sasso will coordinate this service.

November 23 **Thanksgiving Bread Service**

This annual Fellowship tradition continues, as our children join us for our pre-Thanksgiving Sunday service. Come and be part of the celebration, as we share bread that has some form of special meaning to us in the spirit of the Thanksgiving holiday. If you would like to volunteer to bring bread, please contact Astrid Mosely. No live announcements – make sure to get your announcements to Russ Trimble so they can be printed in the order of service. Bill Sasso will coordinate this service.

November 30 **Image Spinners "Readings on Thanksgiving"**

The Image Spinners, a group of writers within the Fellowship, will offer share readings on the general topic of Thanksgiving and its presence in their own lives. Lois Hayward will coordinate this service.

and coming up . . .

December 7 **Carla Feldhamer: "Remembering World AIDS Day"**