

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos



FELLOWSHIP NEWS

July 2004 No.7; published 12 months each year. Glen Marchant, Editor

SUNDAY PROGRAMMING, July 2004

Sunday Services, 10:30-11:30am

No Sunday Forums this month

July 4: “A Declaration of Interdependence.” Bill Scarvie celebrates his first anniversary as a member of UUFLG with this Service. He is a member of the Committee on Shared Ministry. He and his wife, Karen, own and operate The Wooden Horse Toy Store.

In 1776, thirteen American colonies declared themselves to be free and independent of the rule of the British Crown, with all the rights and powers of sovereign states. At the same time, they wisely declared themselves to be interdependent, that is United States, pledging mutual support and protection with “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

About 200 years later the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association made another declaration of interdependence...our covenant of Principles and Purposes. On the day when we celebrate the birth of our country, let's pause for a moment to celebrate the birth of the intentional religious community, UU style. What might it be like to live our lives fully committed to these seven profound principles? What kind of a community might we have? What then would the Fellowship mean to us?

July 11: “Why Church?” Kate Kennedy, third year student at Starr King School for the Ministry, poses further questions: Do you ever feel a struggle between your desire to attend to other aspects of your life instead of going to church? Why do we go to church? Today's service explores some of the tensions between “American” individualism and religious community. Where do we find our “moral compass” and how do we express our spirituality?

Prior to Divinity School Kate completed two years of National Service through Americorps and VISTA as well as working in an adolescent group home in Colorado. Her primary focus in ministry is in anti-racism/anti oppression work and she is considering community ministry as her path after school.

July 18: “Practical Patriotism.” Rev. Dr. Pam Allen-Thompson

References to patriotic sentiment saturate today's society, and the word itself generally evokes strong feelings - whether a glowing pride in US accomplishments or repugnance at those practices that seem to be completely incompatible with what we say we stand for in this country. Acknowledging the patriotic fervor of the post-Nine-Eleven consciousness, this presentation explores a response grounded in the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Rev. Allen-Thompson is the UUA Trustee from the Pacific Central District and in August will become the Minister-Elect of the UU Congregation of Marin.

July 25: “To Savor the World or to Save It?” The Rev. Ben Kocs-Meyers, visiting UU minister and musician. He served as parish minister to the Mission Peak UU Congregation in Fremont from 1993-98. Currently he works in the land conservation field and enjoys providing itinerate preaching when possible.

The great American essayist, EB White, once wrote: “It's hard to know when to respond to the seductiveness of the world and when to respond to its challenges. If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between the desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.” This sermon addresses the dilemma that the quality of both our lives and the world depends on our daily plans.

To the Fellowship –

This is my final newsletter article, now, from the perspective of the former Board of Trustees President. I have a final two elements I want to cover and then will bid you well.

First. To thank every one of the outgoing board members – Jim Beebe, Tim Connelly, Audrey Freeman, Russell Malley, and Julie Springer. What an incredibly difficult year, but with much personal growth! And to congratulate all the incoming Board – Jim Beebe, Bob Bixler, Nan Bixler, Bill Crawford, Hollie Dunham, Walt Main, and Russell Malley. As I said last month, these folks deserve, and I am sure will receive, all the support that we as a Fellowship can give.

Second. On June 20, 2004 Erika Hewitt held her final service with our Fellowship, and afterwards we held a reception for her. I have been asked to post what I said at that final gathering.

Erika,

Since you have announced your departure, this day has come too soon. Back two years ago when you first appeared on our *chancel* as our minister you spoke words of caution that had been handed down to you. In effect – a minister can not be all, to all. A minister has to pick and choose those tasks that become most important for their church. And our Fellowship handed you some tremendous tasks to care take.

Over the past few years our Fellowship has struggled with what it means to grow. We have spoken about growth as if it means to increase our numbers, as if increasing numbers will decrease the tasks that each individual has been taking care of. As if, when we “grow”, we will automatically have more money to do more programs, or better yet, have more people to take over what “I” have been doing. And consistently one of your tasks has been to help us understand the many facets of ‘growth’ – growth in spirituality and the language surrounding spirituality, growth in maturity as a congregation, growth in self-awareness, growth in our connections with the larger Unitarian Universalist faith, and growth in the deepening of our relationships with one another.

I have been in a privileged position. I have been able to be a part of another aspect of ‘growth’; a part that not all of the Fellowship sees. I am talking about as a member of the Board of Trustees for the past two years, I have valued your guidance as you helped us ‘grow’ through asking us to consider anew our processes, to be intentional when we make decisions, to work in covenant with one another, to be accountable to one another and to be accountable to the Fellowship at large.

And yet, our Fellowship is again at a cross-roads, another leave taking. And I cannot help but know in my heart that it is this accountability, or rather *lack of accountability*, to one another that has led to your leave-taking. Our religion takes seriously its acceptance of people from all walks of life, and all religious experiences – and it should! From the earliest Unitarian experiences there were strong ties to liberal actions and faith became living these actions. We know how to express our outrage at a government’s actions; we mobilize forces to help the disadvantaged, we write letters of protest.

And yet, we are again at these cross-roads, this leave taking. It is somehow easier for us to shout out about injustice when it is *out there*, but it is woefully hard for us to consider how we, this collective we, treat each other here at our Fellowship. Long after you leave here today, we will still be sifting through our feelings about how we, as a community, held each other accountable for our part in your departure.

And so, we are finally at this cross-road, this particular leave taking. As the Board President, this is very personal for me of course. In my position, I feel the responsibility of considering myriad views. I feel the responsibility of facilitating “growth” – (not growth in numbers). I feel the responsibility of keeping the larger Unitarian Universalist teachings in the forefront of my actions. And I feel the responsibility of the collective actions that the Fellowship has taken in this last year that has led to this decision to leave.

Erika, it is with great regret, yet with great respect, that I stand here today honoring your decision. I thank you for expanding my depth of experience with the larger Unitarian Universalist movement. But more than that, I thank you for expanding my understanding of the depth of relationship that a Unitarian Universalist community owes to each other.

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None of us know what is in store for us. I do know this: you are a bright woman, with a large breadth of skills. This experience we have given you is just one of a thousand that you will accumulate. And it forges and shapes you, just as it shapes who we are as well – transforming us as we experience it.

Thank you once again Erika Hewitt, for all your service and your dedication and love you have brought to us in your ministry. Go in peace.

And with that, my dear UUFLG’ers and Friends –

Thank you for your all your well wishes and support this last year.

With love,

Susan Parks

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SUMMER PLANS FOR RE

By the time you read this, we will have said our good-byes to Erika Hewitt, our beloved Minister. Erika's gift for working with children will be sorely missed by all of us in RE. We're thankful for the time she was able to spend with us and wish her all the best in the future.

After spending time preparing for Erika's departure, we are now ready to embark on our summer curriculum. We will be developing the theme of "Building a Bridge to Africa" and through stories, art and music, will enhance our appreciation of African culture. The UU principles emphasized will be to affirm and promote; "The inherent worth and dignity of every person", "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations", and "The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all." I've found some excellent books of African stories, and a fascinating one from the series "Look What Came From..." by Miles Harvey describing some of the many influences African cultures have had on us. I have also found several children's books about Islam which should help us to understand and appreciate this religion and it's place in African life. Over the summer I will introduce the children to Madou Faye, my foster child in Senegal and will give them the opportunity to write to him. We'll do many art projects such as making masks, Kente cloths and Senegal hats and will have a cooking project using yams. We'll also sing African songs, drum and play Orff instruments.

I will be lead teacher on most Sundays and will work with one volunteer assistant. The younger and older children will be combined in one multi-age group. Nan Bixler will continue to be the lead teacher in the Preschool.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Hollie Dunham to her new role as chair of RECCY. She has shown such dedication to RE in the past and is a hard-working and highly creative person. I know she will be an outstanding RECCY chair and I look forward to being able to work with her. Sadly, we'll be saying good-bye to Nan Bixler as chair. All of us have deeply appreciated the role she has played, but I am personally extremely grateful for the understanding she has shown me as my "boss", and for her willingness to help me in whatever way necessary as I started out in my position as Acting DRE. For all her support and for the loving and giving person she is, Nan is my hero!

I'd also like to acknowledge the completion of the Preschool fence project and to once again thank Kristina and Brad Strand for their \$500 donation to fund the project. Brad and their son Benjamin also helped with the initial grunt work of digging post holes and their efforts are much appreciated. Bob Bixler then applied his considerable carpentry skills to the project and spent untold hours cutting and assembling all the pieces to perfection. Please take a moment to look over his workmanship and congratulate him on a job well done. The expanded Preschool yard will benefit the youngest children and their parents for years to come and we are most grateful for it!

July first marks the beginning of my one year contract as your official DRE. I'm so pleased and thankful that by the time you read this, I will have had the opportunity to attend the GA and "Professional Days" preceding it so I can start off my tenure with a bang. I'm sure to have gained a lot of knowledge and inspiration from the event and will also have had the opportunity to form ties with other DREs from our district and beyond. I plan on writing of my experiences in my August Newsletter Article.

In closing, let me remind you of a pool party at my house for children and their families after the service on July 18th. I'll be asking that those who plan on attending bring their own sack lunch or take-out food.

Blessings,

Phyllis Reid, DRE

Items for the monthly newsletter are to be submitted (by the **20th** of the month) to **Glen Marchant** at: **UUFLGnews@att.net**. Please submit articles and e-mail attachments as **single spaced MS Word documents, .rtf** (Rich Text format), or **plain text**, and limit to less than 200 words. The purpose of this newsletter is to foster communication and planning among friends and members. However, due to the size constraints of the printing, we regretfully cannot print opinion pieces.

Committee on Ministry

As a member of the Committee on Ministry, the question most frequently asked of me is "What does the Committee do?" In the words of Anne Odin Heller, author of Churchworks, "The heart of a congregation is ministry - how the congregation ministers to one another and how it is ministered to. . . . A Committee on ministry would . . . support, inform, advocate for, and evaluate the ministry of the congregation in its entire context." We do what we can, with the support of the board and the membership, to keep the heart of UUFLG balanced, vital, and healthy.

The second-most frequently asked question is, "How do you define ministry?" Ministry is service, no more no less. Because our guiding concept is shared ministry, we all are called to serve the needs of our fellow members and The Fellowship. We trust that the blessings of our shared ministry will ripple outward into the larger community and beyond.

In the past year the Committee accomplished a great deal in its effort to expand the scope of our shared ministry. At the annual retreat, we sponsored an afternoon of Cafe Conversations. Attendees talked about their relationship to The Fellowship and how it touches their lives, and we discussed how our transformation from a family-style fellowship to a more intentional religious community affected us. The conversations were lively, informative and in many cases surprising. We, the Committee, felt that this event was a great way to launch the new year. In the winter, we invited everyone to "CoM on In" to a series of informal gatherings, where we could discuss matters of concern about our shared ministry. Of course, the main topic was uncertainty about the future of The Fellowship, particularly about the future of our relationship with professional ministry. Finally, we successfully launched our Small Group Ministry program. So far, we have convened three groups, organized around teams of two trained facilitators. While the groups are still in the "getting to know you" phase, the future of this vital program is bright. The next time you see our retiring members, Katie Rall and Doug Doughty, please thank them sincerely for their commitment, vision, and leadership. They have served us well.

This year, the CoM has two returning members, Julie Doyle and myself. We welcome Robin Connelly and Irving Yabroff as new members, who will serve for the next two years. Our challenges are clear. We must continue our support of Small Group Ministry by ensuring that an effective steering committee is born, that existing groups thrive, that new groups form to satisfy the interest expressed by so many members, and that the corps of trained facilitators grows proportionately. We must see to it that membership unity is restored, that healing is supported wherever it is needed, and that the disaffected among us find cause to become fully engaged again. Our Universalist heritage teaches that all are welcome at the communal table: It is up to us to see to it that this ideal is realized. We must be advocates for our wonderful RE program, offering the gift of service to the children and the gift of community to their parents. Finally, we must celebrate our heritage. To grow our community, we must heed the lessons of the past while looking forward and building our future.

This summer, we want to continue the practice of Conversation Cafes, despite the cancellation of our annual retreat. We have set aside Sunday afternoon, August 22, for the next Cafe. It will be held at the home of Bill and Karen Scarvie, details to follow. Child care will be available.

In Fellowship,

Bill Scarvie, on behalf of the CoM

I bring you greeting from your new board, a board that is enthusiastic: enthusiastic about moving forward while building on the past, enthusiastic about its own strenghts and direction. I see this as a stewardship year - keep the doors open and the lights on, while supporting as best we can the ministry work of the COM. (See Bill Scarvie's article.)

A theme this year has to be accurate prioritization. That means two things. First, bringing the jobs that have the biggest payoff to the top of the list and getting them done. Second, not spending time and energy on things of less value or that we won't have capacity to complete. We have to keep an iron grip on expenditures of both money and people. We're out of cash, and need to start building back our cash reserves. We also have a list of burnt-out members who need a rest, and we shouldn't add to that list. If your favorite project isn't getting done, maybe it's your turn to contribute. Or maybe, it's already being done and you don't know about it. Did you know we had a "Monday Mums" group? I didn't, until last week. The Fellowship is diverse enough that very few know all that's going on, and the mechanisms we have now for spreading the word are weak. We are going to make available more bandwidth through the website, newsletter, and email groups. Bill Crawford joined the board explicitly to work on the web site. I can contribute by leaving more space in the newsletter for other people. Starting now.

Walt Main

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The morning **Women's Group** of the UUFLG met on June 10, 2004. Lou Yabroff asked for volunteers for new officers for the next six months.

They are:

Convener: Lida Kluzek

Scribe: Claire Steeley

Devotional Reader: Lynn O'Keefe

Project Chairmen

 Inside: Ruth Webb

 Outside: Pam Rhodes

Educational Leader: Robyn Connelly

Telephone Caller: Gratia Trevey

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The Monday night **Women's Spirituality Group** has just finished exploring the book Essential Spirituality by Roger Walsh. Now we play. All women are invited to come on the 2nd and 4th Monday night from 7:15 to 9:00Pm in the East Room to bring their own craft or photo album to work on or just come and visit. On Sept.13th we will start up, choose anew book to study. New members will be encourage to join. Please consider joining we all get a great deal out of this group. Sharon Graham.(408) 356-5532 for questions.

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UU Summer Camp in beautiful Colorado! Camp Laforet (July 25 - July 31) is an annual gathering of caring people who cherish community and life's profound experiences. The camp is held at Rocky Mountain School in Carbondale, Colorado where the beautiful Crystal and Roaring Fork Rivers converge. The area offers warm days, quiet, cool nights under glorious stars and the powerful presence of 13,000 ft Mt. Sopris. The camp is a member of the Council of Unitarian Universalist Camps and Conferences. Camp Laforet welcomes all persons interested in attending. The brochure and registration can be found at www.camplaforet.com. Print off the registration and send with a deposit to: Mary Lane, Laforet Registrar, 4937 Powell Ave., Kansas City, KS 66106.

Calendar Items

Thurs., July 1, RUMs Noon brown bag lunch on deck for men with flexible time.

Sun., July 4, Children's Chapel

Wed., July 7, 6 PM. NO regular Forum Committee meeting in July. Resumes in August.

Wed., July 14, 6 PM. NO regular Sunday Services Committee meeting in July. Resumes in August.

Sun., July 18, RE Pool Party @ Phyllis Reid's House, following the service. BYO Bag Lunch.

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Return Service Requested



*“Affirming the Inherent Worth and
Dignity of Every Person”*



Fellowship News

July 2004

The Newsletter is published monthly by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos (UUFLG). The Newsletter is available to everyone on the web at www.uuflg.org. Members may elect to receive a printed copy. Individual friends and visitors may receive the printed Newsletter free for three months. After three months, the suggested subscription rate for non-members is \$10 per year. (Send to: Newsletter, c/o Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos, 15980 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos, CA 95032.) The subscription expiration date appears on the name line of the mailing label.