

# **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos**



## **FELLOWSHIP NEWS**

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April 2004 No.4; published 12 months each year. Glen Marchant, Editor

### **SUNDAY PROGRAMMING, April 2004**

**Sunday Services, 10:30-11:30am**

**Sunday Forums, 3rd & 4th Sundays, Noon - (see below)**

#### **4 April:**

##### **“Blessed Be! I’m a Unitarian Universalist and I’m Stickin’ to It!”**

Some of us were born into UU and others of us were lucky enough to find it on our own. Or more likely, with a little help from our friends. This program will feature four of our own members, new and old, who will tell us how they got here, who influenced them, and why they resonate with the UU story and principles. Hearing our members stories keeps us connected to our religion and to each other. These are the people and the memories we at Los Gatos tend to share for years to come. Come get to know our members and grow through the stories of how they have applied the UU religion in their lives.

***DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS! SET CLOCKS FORWARD ONE HOUR!***

#### **11 April: “To Die You Must First Have Lived”**

##### **Intergenerational Easter Service led by Minister Erika Hewitt**

The title of this service comes from 19<sup>th</sup> century Unitarian Henry David Thoreau, who had much to teach the world about living. As an Easter community of children, youth, and adults, we’ll explore metaphors for resurrection and new life, many of which come from the writing and ideas of Thoreau. This service will also include an Ingathering of new members.

#### **18 April: “There Is No Other” - Wendy Williams, guest Minister**

Today we will take a close look at our first Unitarian Universalist principle of “affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every living person” from a social justice perspective. Wendy Williams is the parish and campus ministry intern at the UU Davis Fellowship, formerly an attorney practicing law in Wisconsin. In the Fall, she completes her third year at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago.

#### **NOON to 12:30 PM FORUM**

**By-Laws Task Force** will hold a brief forum to explain the current and new possibilities concerning voting rights.

#### **25 April: “The Joke’s on (U)Us” – Erika Hewitt, Minister**

What do you get when you cross a UU with a Jehovah’s Witness? Why did the UU cross the road? Did you hear the one about the UU monastery? How about the one with the UU at the gates of heaven? At this service, we’ll laugh at ourselves – but we’ll also take a look at what happens when our UU faith becomes a punchline. Are people laughing with us, or at us?

#### **NOON to 1 PM FORUM**

##### **“First Hand News from Afghanistan.”**

Mountain View City Councilmember Rosemary Stasek has just returned from her third trip to Afghanistan where she works on reconstruction projects to assist women. She will be giving a slide show presentation and discussing the current situation, specifically the continuing challenges facing women during this time of dramatic transition.

## MINISTER'S CORNER

As much as I love Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion," I get tired of his constant jabs at Unitarians. Come to think of it, the same goes for "The Simpsons." Our beloved faith is too often caricatured as Religion-Lite™ for those who don't have sufficient time or backbone to reflect deeply about The Great Mysterious. I wonder what kind of impression PHC listeners form about our Unitarian Universalism through these shows? When people are invited to laugh at U.U.'ism, what does that say about us to the world?

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, our Sunday service will be full of jokes and musical parodies that explore the lighter side of our living Unitarian Universalist tradition. I hope that we all have a few good belly-laughs, but I also hope that you come away from the service with enough sobriety to reflect on the public face of our liberal religious faith. It IS possible to have a sense of humor and still take ourselves seriously. When our faith becomes a punchline, what does that say about us to the larger community?

Over the past two months, it's been bittersweet to see our comic role give way to much more pride-inspiring UU publicity. As I write this, two UU ministers are awaiting arraignment after being charged by the Ulster County (NY) District Attorney with solemnizing unlicensed civil marriages, rather than purely religious ceremonies, for gay and lesbian couples. The ministers, Rev. Kay Greenleaf and Rev. Dawn Sangrey, performed more than 20 civil marriages for same-sex couples in New Platz, NY; they now face up to a year in prison and a \$500 fine. That's the bitter part.

The sweetness is this: many Unitarian Universalist ministers, as well as clergy from a few other denominations, have been happily signing (legal) marriage licenses for same-sex couples in San Francisco and Oregon since mid-February. When other denominations reprimand and defrock their clergy for performing same-sex marriages, what does it say about Unitarian Universalism that our Association strongly supports marriage equality, and the ministers who advocate for it?

One Friday in late February, I leapt at the chance to take my ministry to San Francisco along with Rev. Vail Weller, the minister of our congregation in San Mateo. The two of us packed our stoles into our purses, BART'ed to San Francisco's City Hall, and cheerfully presented ourselves to the County Clerk as volunteer officiants for the scores of gay and lesbian couples who were still pouring into the office to request licenses. It turns out that they had enough help, thank you very much, so we took a seat on the floor of the enormous marble rotunda to simply bear witness. For over an hour we watched, and cheered, and prayed, and wiped away tears as couple after couple pronounced their vows to be partners for life. When our faith is known as an inclusive and welcoming home for gays, lesbians, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people, what does that say about us to the world?

Truth be told, I don't have much interest in legal arguments about the civil disobedience of violating California/Oregon/New York law. My ministerial sensibilities are much more captivated by the fluidity of our society's "tipping point" of acceptance. On one hand there are religious conservatives – including our unelected President – who have persistently tried to impose their dogmatic Biblical interpretations on our civil life and laws, and on the other hand there is growing agreement among "average Joe" Americans that marriage equality is a civil issue, not a religious one. Slowly, the majority of U.S. citizens are coming to believe that granting gays and lesbians the privileges of, say, health insurance and hospital visitation rights is... reasonable.

I believe that the tide is beginning to turn in the United States – not just the ushering in of marriage equality, but the strengthening of the ever-thinning membrane between civil rights and religious beliefs. In that turning, what will the world learn about Unitarian Universalism?

This is how the President of our UU Association, Rev. Bill Sinkford, responded to the gay marriage furor: "Unitarian Universalism honors ministerial independence in matters of conscience, and the Unitarian Universalist Association supports the right of our ministers... to act on their best judgment on these issues. Unitarian Universalists believe that equal marriage rights for all is a matter of justice. And in the long run, we have faith that justice will prevail. Unitarian Universalists are proud to stand on the side of love."

That's the message that every American should hear proclaimed from every radio station, newspaper, and television sitcom:

UU's have faith that justice will prevail, and we are proud to stand on the side of love.

Amen and hallelujah!

Shine on,

**Erika**

<b>Minister's office hours:</b>	Thursday 15 April: 4 - 5:30 p.m.
Thursday 1 April: 4 - 5:30 p.m.	Thursday 22 April: 4 - 5:30 p.m.
Thursday 8 April: 3 - 4:30 p.m.	Thursday 29 April: 4 - 5:30 p.m.

## To our Fellowship ~

It has been a whirlwind. I look over my notes from the last several weeks and we had a very full regular Board of Trustees meeting on top of a very full agenda at the Special Business Meeting on March 14. You all deserve special thanks for taking the time out of your lives to tend to ALL the business of the Fellowship. Thank you for participating as you have. It is so important that we all hear from one another.

Although Erika will be leaving us in too short of time, we are keeping her busy helping us prepare for the changes ahead.

During our March Board of Trustees meeting, we reviewed how the Fellowship gathering went on March 6 that was led by Jim Burneo of the Pacific Central District. At that gathering, the members who attended found space to talk about their fears, and their concerns, and their joys of being in the Fellowship in the last few months. Of note, there is significant interest in creating our Fellowship's vision for our future. With Erika's leadership, we will begin the planning stages for a congregation wide process for the future.

The experimental Small Group Ministry (SGM) sessions have gone swimmingly, and the Committee on Shared Ministry (COM) has organized a steering committee to help shape what our own SGM will look like. This is terrific news and you have a wonderful opportunity to bring this to fruition with your participation.

Significant to our continued learning on ministry, the COM is hosting an upcoming all-day workshop for all of us to explore questions about professional ministry (our commitment to a minister, our agreement on role of minister, our expectations of a minister). This will be held with Bev Smrha, of the Pacific Central District (PCD). So, please mark your calendar for April 24 from 10-4. This promises to be a rewarding event. We strongly encourage everyone to make an effort to attend as the answers to your questions on ministry directly affect how we move forward as this Fellowship.

Much of what passed in the Special Business Meeting on March 14 was a direct response to the PCD Conflict Management Team's (CMT) report presented in January. Most importantly it provides good boundaries for future business meetings – it closes the door to future abuse of proxy voting, gives the nominating committee a new governance structure to produce a slate for, and affirms our covenant of right relations. 3 Cheers!!

Everyone here deserves thanks for all the phone calls, emails, snacks, after hours meetings, childcare, paperwork, meeting prep, proposal writing, feedback gathering, parliamentary consultation and support that went into the success of the meeting and all the events that led up to it. It seems appropriate to thank everyone not only for showing up to vote, and sitting thru the 4 hour meeting, but for all aspects of the collective energy that made it happen so smoothly. And so, thanks to everyone!

Other items for your interest:

- The Annual Canvas has started - Kickoff Breakfast will be held on Sunday, March 28, followed by a Sunday Lunch on April 4 hosted by the Finance Committee. Let's hear it for the Finance Committee – these folks are working hard to show you what a difference you make.
- At the Special Spring Business meeting you clearly voted the direction we should move in, "No more Proxy voting". Now let's hear how that can be manifested - Bylaw Task Force will be holding a forum on voting methods April 18 Noon to Noon-thirty.
- Annual Auction is underway for May 1. Wonderful opportunity to donate a service, skill or item. Incredible opportunity to bid for events that allow us all to mingle in a different way (dinners, sailboat rides, wine tastings, to name a few events from times past) and to raise needed funds! This is always great fun and stay tuned for further updates from Sharon Graham and JJ Martin.
- And we are starting to plan for the annual retreat, tentative to be held August 20-22. This is real early in the planning stages, but if you have an interest in this please do contact me.
- The Board is looking to appoint a new chairperson to the Social Justice Committee for the remainder of the term which ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Julie Springer for more information.

A final note about April's Board of Trustees meeting. This will be a joint session of the Board and Council to review the recommendations of the Finance Committee and create next year's budget proposal to be presented at the May 23 Business Meeting of the membership. So please note – Special joint Board of Trustees and Council session 6 pm. April 8, 2004 followed by Regular Board of Trustees meeting at 7 pm (April 8, 2004).

Until then –

**Susan Parks**

## ***“All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today”***

From my early childhood spring has been my favorite season, probably because of the long, cold winters I had to endure in my birthplace, Edmonton, Alberta. When the days began to warm and lengthen I spent endless hours playing in the mud where snow and ice were melting, building dams and little ditches to direct the flow of water where I wanted it to go. As the season progressed I was able to walk across a field to a stream where everything was springing to life, and hunt for tadpoles. This play was my work as a child and gave me a deep appreciation of and connection to the natural world. As an adult I became an avid gardener, and also began my career as teacher in the garden of children.

“So often the forces of nature and all the natural phenomena of spring pass unnoticed. We take for granted and hardly look. Why should I not devise my garden deliberately as an act of appreciation to the forces which bring about this ardent growth?”

Though my real gardening days have diminished, I count it a privilege to still be able, along with you, to nurture your children “deliberately as an act of appreciation to the forces which bring about their ardent growth”. I’m thankful to our wonderful RE teachers- **Leslie Jones, Hsiao-in Wang, Mary Terra, Sabine Omvik and Joe Rafferty**, who are engaged in this important work with our K-8th classes. I also thank Joe again and **Kristin Pearson**, and **Kari and Jonathan Sparks** for their dedication to working with our YoUUth. A special thank you is also in order for **Edy Young**, who has spearheaded our “Sox for Tots” drive to aid families in the Homeless Shelter. She has organized everything so beautifully that it’s been an easy task to get both the adults from the AM women’s group, and Social Justice committee as well as the RE children involved. I hope all of us will do our part in making this community service work a resounding success.

The YoUUth group will be doing some important service work as well this spring. On May 23rd they will participate in a Habitat for Humanity work day from 10AM to 3PM. We have been asked to involve 5 Youth and at least 2 adults, so please try to encourage your teens (and their friends) to come. Let me know if you and/or your youth will join us.

During the next several weeks the grades classes and some of the youth will be rehearsing for a musical revue to be performed on May 16th. The revue is called “Every Day is Earth Day” and will tie in with our last UU principle, namely, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”. I’ve been busy getting music and scripts ready, and will be giving a tape of all the songs to the children so that they can practice at home. Please try to have your child come to rehearsals on Children’s Chapel and Music Sundays so that we can succeed in this endeavor.

Peace, Joy and a Happy Spring to you all!

**Phyllis Reid (Interim DRE)**

### ***Greetings from Massachusetts!***

It’s March 18th and Camille and Ben and I have been settling in to our new home here in Fairhaven. New England is beautiful! Our town’s incredible gothic-cathedral of a Unitarian Church is walking distance from our little house. (On our first visit Camille exclaimed “Wow it’s like some big CATHOLIC church or something!”) We had a snowstorm on Tuesday (it was beautiful Monday and Camille and I went to the ZOO) so we’ve been jumping around in the snow like maniacs, collecting icicles, etc. What a change from California! Many many thanks to all of you for the generous wedding/farwell gift! We are truly starting fresh here - I’ve had to buy all these romantic things like flour and laundry soap and a mop and lightbulbs and baking soda and a soup pot and silverware. We are buying a car today. We are expecting a new family member in August (wow!). I have been able to hire some great homebirth midwives and put some money aside for baby things. The infusion of financial support we have received from our families and friends have made all of this possible for us and we are very very grateful.

My new address is 34R Middle Street, Fairhaven MA 02719. We miss our Fellowship family and hope that you are all doing well. Have a joyful Spring!

Much Love from **Diana Humphrey Carlson, Camille and Ben** and baby-in-waiting.

Would you like to be a **Co-Chair for Social Justice Committee**? This Committee already has one Co-Chair (**Edy Young**) and looking for a second to help her identify and organize the type of activities reaching out to the bigger community beyond our Fellowship and fellow UU's.

**Social Justice** has a new plan for its activities - see the report by **Edy Young** below. Note the plan to have more action and fewer meetings. And, that the Committee can use your leadership.

If you are interested or want more information, contact **Jim Beebe** at 378-3521.

## **Soup Supper Success**

The Soup Supper held on Friday, March 12 was a great success. Thirty-four people enjoyed the cheerful company, and the simple, good food. A brief mention was made of Amnesty International and their work for human rights, world-wide. A photo and description of the plight of Aster Yohannes, who was imprisoned because of her husband's support of Democracy in Eritrea were presented. We raised \$306.00, for Amnesty International. **Lou and Irving Yabroff** matched the amount, as a donation from the Fellowship, to go directly to Aster's four children, ages four through fourteen.

We signed 68 letters to the president of Eritrea and the Chief of police, urging Aster's release, copies were sent to the Eritrean Embassy. \$75.50 dollars was donated to pay for postage and copies.

**Charlie Walton** received the first of the "Staff of Life" awards to be presented at future Soup Suppers for his service in support of Amnesty International. With your help, the Social Justice Committee plans more Soup Suppers featuring service agencies and individuals served by those agencies.

There was only one problem with the soup Supper. I hope my friends who, with me, exceed 70 years, will forgive me. Most of us at the supper were in the geriatric set. In the new plan for Social Justice activities, the tasks will be short, simple, direct, something a busy young parent or a teen can accomplish. You can make a pot of soup, duplicate a set of "flyers," or you can plan a simple, ten minute program with easy activities for one night's supper presentation. The activity can be a petition, or letter to sign. We look for greater participation from the younger generations. We plan events with a minimum of meetings. We need your ideas if they come with your help. Please call **Edy Young**, 268-5018 if you would be willing to plan and help. Please come to the next Soup Supper. Ask those who did. We had a good time. We made a difference in the lives of four children.

## **News from the Committee on Shared Ministry (Katie Rall, Doug Doughty, Julie Doyle, Bill Scarvie)**

On February 19th, 26th, and March 4th the COM hosted Small Group Ministry drop-in sessions so that you might get a taste of this process. We had about 10-12 people on each of the evenings and split up into two smaller groups so that every one could participate given the one-hour format. The topics were wide-ranging: fear, community, peak experiences, loss, moral conviction, and what we love. Where else in your lives can you find a forum to explore such a breadth of topics at a very personal level? And in the small group environment the depth can be endless. Although the time spent together was brief and the topics not necessarily easy -- many felt a sense of relaxation from the stress of the day -- it was almost meditative to contemplate and talk of these things -- and to experience the silence.

Where do we go from here? Your Board of Trustees has approved the formation of a **Small Group Ministry Planning Committee: Katie Rall, Doug Doughty, Julie Doyle, Bill Scarvie, Susan Parks, Walt Main, and Lida Kluzek**. They are in the process of crafting guidelines and recruiting and training facilitators. The Planning Committee has targeted late April for Group formation and a May Small Group Ministry start. And then it's your turn to create a stronger, larger Fellowship through small, intimate communities!

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING - Betty Feldheim**

In February I received e-mail re possibility our County Housing Authority might have to terminate 1200 families from Section 8 subsidized housing. In March San Jose Mercury reported that Center on Budget Policy Priorities, a non profit, non partisan research group issued a report after researching Bush's proposed budget for 2005 that Federal housing subsidies are at risk. Rep. Zoe Lofgren of San Jose said these cuts would affect not only renters but landlords as well as further depressing the economy. As of deadline time I have been unable to get follow up on this, but will keep you posted.

Silicon Valley Citizens for Affordable Homes reports economic impacts of Affordable Housing in Santa Clara County are: Residents pay too much for housing; deficit in affordable housing will increase; adequate affordable housing is much more cost effective than alternatives, i.e. emergency rooms, foster care; public sector costs are greatly reduced when homeless are adequately housed. The Collaborative on Housing and Homelessness is planning an Affordable Housing Week in June to increase public awareness about the need for affordable housing in California.

The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University reports that the most significant housing challenge faced by our country is affordability; one in 7 American households spend more than 50% of its total income on housing.

A report released by the National Housing Conference states that Los Gatos, Cupertino, Los Altos, Santa Clara, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Morgan Hill, East Palo Alto, Fremont, and Santa Cruz have passed inclusionary zoning policies requiring developers of market rate housing to designate a portion of their new units as affordable to low or moderate-income residents.

The Santa Clara County Association of Realtors are planning a free Affordable Housing Fair from 10 am to 4 pm Saturday, April 3 at Parkside Hall, 180 Park Avenue in downtown San Jose near the Convention Center light rail station. There will be 60 information tables and 30 educational seminars to learn about home ownership, below market rate opportunities, down payment assistant programs, credit repair, among lots of other subjects.

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### **Congregational Workshop**

**Who:** Beverly S. Smrha

**What:** A Workshop for all Fellowship Members & Friends

**Where:** At the Fellowship

**When:** Saturday, April 24, 2004  
10 AM – 3 PM

We will have a break for lunch – Please bring a potluck dish to share. Drinks will be provided.

**Why:** To Explore our Commitment to Shared & Professional Ministry at UUFLG

In January, the Conflict Management Team Report recommended that our Fellowship “as a whole needs to be in general agreement about what they want their minister to do and to be, and that before they can do that, they should become better informed about typical roles and responsibilities of Unitarian Universalist parish ministers.”

The Committee on Ministry has invited Beverly Smrha to lead a workshop for our Fellowship to help guide us towards our vision of ministry in the future. Beverly is the retired co-District Executive of the PCD, and in that capacity spent years working with this congregation and its growth towards professional ministry. She is currently an independent consultant who works with Unitarian Universalist and other congregations.

Please do some serious reflection prior to the workshop. Beverly has invited everyone to prepare in advance a paragraph that answers the following questions: “What am I yearning for in 10 years? What would this Fellowship's shared ministry look and feel like at that point in time? What do I want to pass down to my grandkids?” She requests that you email or snail mail your paragraphs to her prior to the workshop @ [beverlyss@earthlink.net](mailto:beverlyss@earthlink.net) or Beverly S. Smrha, 3200 Burdeck Drive, Oakland, CA 94602.

Items for the monthly newsletter are to be submitted (by the **20th** of the month) to **Glen Marchant** at: [UUFLGnews@att.net](mailto: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.

**Annual Auction & Wine Tasting, May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004**  
**Come all ye lads and lassies, Join in the festive scene,**  
**Come dance around the maypole, That will stand upon the green**

Mark your calendars! Preparations for the annual auction have begun. This year's theme will be May Day and will include a Wine Tasting with hors d'oeuvres. Volunteers are needed to help with decorations, set-up, food service, and clean up. Donations are also needed. In the past we've had antiques, vacation homes, home cooked dinners, professional services, events or excursions, hand made treasures and restaurant dinners donated. More details will be forthcoming – watch for flyer's and notices in the Order of Service. For more information contact: Sharon Graham 408-356-5532 [sharon.graham@comcast.net](mailto:sharon.graham@comcast.net) or J.J. Martin 408-353-3672 [martinjj@cablerocket.com](mailto:martinjj@cablerocket.com).

Did you enjoy our Retreat last August? Would you like to help make this summer's gathering even better? - You are invited to join the Planning Committee for the **UUFLG Retreat, August 20-22**. Bring yourself and your ideas.

To volunteer or for more information, please contact **Jim Beebe**. 408-378-3521, [james\\_e\\_beebe@yahoo.com](mailto:james_e_beebe@yahoo.com).

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**Deadline Extended for wUUrld's Alaska**

Five Alaska UU fellowships have extended to April 15 the early reservation deadline for their June, July & August eco-spirituality programs—seventh year!

Reservations close May 1. The groups stay in UU homes, enjoy services and parties with Alaskan UU's and travel by train, plane and ship. They travel throughout the state to see whales, sea otters, seals, bears, caribou, and arctic birds in the wild, Mt. McKinley and spectacular fjords with glaciers calving icebergs, native arts, & villages from the Arctic Ocean to the southeast. Come before or after the UUA-GA to cut travel expenses. Website [www.wuurld.org](http://www.wuurld.org), phone toll-free 1-888, 998-8753 or e-mail [info@wuurld.org](mailto:info@wuurld.org) for brochure. **Rev. Dick and Mary Weston-Jones**, guides.

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**CALENDAR ITEMS**

- Thursday, April 1 RUMS brown bag lunch at noon. All men with flexible time are welcome.
- Saturday, April 3 Affordable Housing Fair 10am - 4pm.  
-Game Nite
- Sunday, April 4 RECCY (Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth) will meet in Lounge, 9 to 10 AM. All interested people are welcome. Items for Agenda: Nan Bixler, 356-5697.
- Wednesday, April 7 FORUM committee meeting in East Room at 6 PM. Contact: Nan Bixler.
- Thursday, April 8 Special Joint Board of Trustees & Council session 6 pm.  
Board of Trustees meeting 7 pm.
- Wednesday, April 14 Sunday Services Committee at 5:30 pm in the lounge. All are welcome to attend.
- Sunday, April 18 Bylaws Task Force Forum on voting 12 - 12:30pm.
- Saturday, April 24 Congregational Workshop 10 - 3pm
- Sunday, April 25 Forum with Rosemary Stasek, Noon to 1 PM, returned from Afghanistan.
- Saturday, May 1 Annual Auction!

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos**  
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## **Return Service Requested**



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



**Fellowship News**

**April 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.lguf.org](http://www.lguf.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.