

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos

Fellowship News



March 2004. No. 3; published 12 months each year. Richard and Marnie Francisco, Editors

SUNDAY PROGRAMMING FOR MARCH

Sunday Services begin at 10:30 AM

***Please note: Sunday Forums for the month of March are on Hiatus**

March 7, 2004: "How Albert Einstein Turned My Life Around"

by Erika Hewitt, Minister

Many of us, sometimes without knowing it, allow our fears to control our lives. What shape do our fears have, and how do they shape *us*? In this sermon, we'll look at the places that scare us and examine the most important question (according to Albert Einstein) that any of us will ever have to answer.

March 14, 2004: "Voices from our Past – Pioneering Women Unitarian Leaders"

led by Hollie Dunham and others of the Fellowship

Come celebrate a cadre of women Unitarian ministers known alternately as the "Iowa Sisterhood" or the "Iowa Band," who founded many new Unitarian churches in Iowa, Illinois, and other middle Western frontier states. These women were undeterred by isolation and distance from the larger Unitarian communities on the East coast. Their motto - "Lengthen the cord, and strengthen the stakes!"

March 21, 2004: "Saving the World Ten People at a Time"

led by the Committee on Shared Ministry

Small Group Ministry is in the planning stages and the Committee on Shared Ministry hopes to have Board approval for this program at the March meeting.

March 28, 2004: "Getting Pumped Up for Social Justice"

by Tom Fink

The Interfaith Council (IFC) on Religions, Race, Economic and Social Justice has been a strong and moving force for "good" in our area for about five years. Tom will relate the stories of IFC and the ongoing need for people to get involved. Tom who is a member of First Unitarian Church in San Jose has served on the steering committee of the Interfaith Council on Religions, Race, Economic and Social Justice. Currently, he is on the Executive Board of the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council. In addition Tom has been a VTA bus driver for 26 years and is a fourth generation Californian.

The Committee on Shared Ministry wants to thank the Save Congregation Task Force for its commitment to "right relationships" in modeling open communication for the Fellowship in the Town Hall meeting. For some members the process seemed prolonged and for others, more time and discussion will be necessary. But it is the respect for all and the opportunity for open discussion that is essential.

As of this Newsletter, Richard and Marnie are resigning their positions as editors. Anyone interested in assuming the role of editor, please contact Tim Connelly.

Minister's Corner by Erika Hewitt



This winter has been a study of impermanence and change, hasn't it? We know that nothing stays the same, but change still takes us by surprise and brings many emotions to the surface.

Recently, I informed the Fellowship that I've chosen not to continue serving as UUFLG's Consulting Minister. It feels difficult and

sad for me to prepare to leave this congregation of open hearts and generous spirits, especially knowing how many other changes you've adjusted to in the past few months. I know it will be difficult and sad for many of you, too. I'm grateful to all of you whose love and support have shaped our shared ministry.

In my letter to members, I also shared my belief that the Fellowship needs to re-enter into conversation about several things, including your relationship *as a whole* with professional ministry, and your collective understanding about the roles and responsibility therein. You are a strong, loving, dedicated congregation. You also have many different – and at times disparate – ideas about how this Fellowship should grow into its future.

Some of you have asked me about searching for a new minister. I can hear the anxiety and hope mixed together in your questions, and I understand your desire to “fix” things. It feels frightening to think about going “back” to a lay-led system and not continuing the growth of the past couple of years. My experience, however, is that the Fellowship won't be able to support professional ministry *as a Fellowship* until you design a process of dialogue, learning, and growing around this, and other, issues. I encourage the congregation to attend to its growing edges – the same growing edges that both of your ministers have named – and take up the charge of addressing them.

I know that you can do it!

When **process** is honored – thoughtful, patient, vision-driven, and centered in relationship – then excellence results. This what I saw at the Town Hall meeting sponsored by the Safe Congregation Task Force on February 8. The meeting, although about a difficult topic, was extraordinary in its tone and ministry. This is not just another opportunity to thank the SCTF members (**Tim Connelly, Julie Doyle, Hollie Dunham, Sharon Graham, and Bob Shebesta** – yay, you!); it's an illustration of what can happen when meticulous attention is given to relationships, responsibilities, communication, and listening.

Just as you should be proud of yourselves for your participation in that meeting, you can be assured that you have the capacity for more of the same kind of work. As you

engage with questions about the Fellowship's relationship with ministry and whether “right relationship” is present among members, your leadership will follow a process that honors relationships and open, direct communication. They will be assisted by our Pacific Central District staff, who are skilled in these areas. Whatever the choices you make, you'll be in wise and capable hands.

There's another reason that I wanted to tell you of my departure so early: I will be away from you for much of March, and wanted us to have time to talk about my decision now, before those travels begin.

I will lead the Sunday service on March 7 and won't be back in the pulpit until our intergenerational Easter Sunday celebration. I've been called away on UU business in mid-March, and shortly thereafter will take some time to reconnect with family. Martin's parents have both undergone debilitating surgery this winter, so we're going to Germany to cheer on their recoveries. We'll also stop in Switzerland to see Martin's sister and young nephews, who haven't seen their “Onkel Martin” for three years. If our return trip doesn't encounter any delays, I'll be in my office on April 1. Please check the calendar below for my office hours during March.

On the weekend of April 2-4, I encourage you to join me at the Oakland City Center for our PCD District Assembly, where UU families, lay leaders, and ministers will spend the weekend celebrating our liberal faith and taking up the challenge of its growth. (See article later in this newsletter.)

Our connection to the wider UU worlds deepens our creativity and awareness.

Our commitment to this Fellowship will foster growth through difficult changes.

Our connection to each other is at the foundation of it all.

As we finish out our remaining months together, may we find ways to honor and nurture the many ways that we are connected.

Shine on,
Erika



Minister's Office Hours for March 2004

Thursday, March 4, 2004: 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Thursday, March 11, 2004: 3:00 - 4:30 PM

Thursday, March 18, 2004: 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Thursday, March 25, 2004: (No Office Hours)

President's Corner by Susan Parks



To our Fellowship,

I wanted to start out this column by updating you on many of the events that have occurred in the last several weeks. We have lots of good and progressive news in many areas. Instead, I echo the feelings of many of you. Simply put, it is with great sorrow to hear of

Erika's impending departure. I know this was a difficult decision to make and it is a difficult decision to accept. As we move through the remaining months with Erika, I urge every one of us to reflect on what we have received and what we have given in our relationship with our minister. And I urge you to *please share your feelings directly with Erika.*

The Board of Trustees met in a special meeting on January 27. We are pleased to announce the appointment of **Cal Clauer** and **Steve Springer** to the Nominating Committee. We thank them for their commitments.

Also at this meeting the Board spent considerable time discussing the Pacific Central District's (PCD) Conflict Management Team (CMT) report. This was the first meeting after the all-Fellowship meeting that we had an opportunity to do so as a group. From that meeting the Board has set these as initial priorities to start us in the "relationship healing mode." We set a time where we could meet in a Board Retreat (February 14) to discuss our future and our Board relationships. Also, we committed to a town hall gathering to give space for individuals in the Fellowship to process their feelings about the events of the past months, to get us back in a space for healing. **This will occur on Saturday, March 6.** Finally, we discussed avenues we could take to improve the Board's processes.

At our regular Board meeting in February we had a very full agenda as well. Please join us in congratulating our new interim Director of Religious Education (DRE), our own **Phyllis Reid**. As most of you know, our **Diana Humphrey** (and **Camille**) are moving on to a new adventure – getting married and moving back east. It is with great sadness that we see them go. And it is with great comfort that we see such a caring and deliberate person in Phyllis to lead in these coming months. Congratulations and a

big thanks are in order for Diana and family. And congratulations again to Phyllis for accepting our call into that role.

Milestones continued. For six years **Coralee Linton** has steadfastly volunteered her time and energy to the task of bookkeeper of our Fellowship. Coralee has provided such a consistent lifeblood to us. There has come a time in Coralee's life where she needs to devote her energies with her family. At the end of February Coralee stepped down from Fellowship bookkeeping. When you see her next, please take the time to thank Coralee for her good works over these last years. Or drop her a note to share your appreciation.

Significantly, a group of recent past presidents came to the February Board meeting and asked that we support them in bringing forward some very specific proposals for the membership to vote on at a special business meeting. **This special meeting has been scheduled for March 14.** This is in direct response to the Conflict Management Team's report. *Please watch for opportunities to discuss these proposals prior to the special meeting. And please make a commitment to attend the special business meeting at 12 PM that day.* We are all keepers of this Fellowship and your direct involvement is crucial to our democratic processes.

Finally, I want to leave with you the following: As stated earlier, on Saturday, March 6 we are offering you an opportunity to come together to share your feelings about the CMT report, and to hear others share as well. I encourage you to come join in this town hall gathering. In addition, I encourage you to support the continued development of the Small Group Ministry. Many of you have participated in information sessions and practice sessions surrounding SGM. These two events, town hall meeting and SGM, are part of a continuing thread of building and repairing relationships as we move through the coming months. I look forward to sharing our time together . . . Regards

Have you thought about joining this congregation? The Fellowship will be celebrating an Ingathering of new members during our service on Easter Sunday, April 11. If you are interested in signing our membership book and being welcomed at that service, please contact **Minister Erika Hewitt** (408/623-4484) or **Bob Shebesta** (408/203.6248).

Presidents' Initiative and Special March 14th Business Meeting.

In early February a group of four ex-presidents of UUFLG formed a group with the intention of creating a "Presidents' Initiative" which will include approximately five proposals to remedy several difficult issues recently addressed by the PCD Conflict Management Team. This group has met with many individuals and a few groups within the fellowship to obtain input and feedback relative to these proposals. This includes meeting with individual Board members, our consulting minister, members of the council, and holding a town hall meeting on Tuesday Feb 24, 2004.

This group, which includes JJ Martin, Julie Doyle, Tim Connelly, and Bob Shebesta, requested that the Board schedule a special business meeting on March 14, 2004, to allow the Presidents' Initiative to be put before the Fellowship for a vote and the Board has agreed to do so. This group would now like to invite everyone in the Fellowship to a special town hall style meeting on Sunday March 7, 2004 at 12:00 PM that allows members the opportunity to ask questions regarding the proposals. This meeting is intended to help members make an informed decision regarding the proposals. As a complete package we feel that these proposed changes are quite radical and will effect significant positive change in the fellowship. Please plan to attend both the March 7 town hall meeting and attend the March 14 special business meeting.

The Presidents' group believes that despite our recent progress toward becoming a more mainline UU fellowship which includes both spiritual and ethical concerns, our Fellowship still has a culture that promotes "individualism" over "building a strong community". Our historical culture and infrastructure also invites a distrust of both our lay leaders and our ministers. We believe there is a need for a better balance between the rights of individuals and what is best for our entire community.

The Presidents' Initiative proposal is intended to build on the progress already made in the last few years, to address some of these cultural, organizational, and structural problems that are impeding progress. Our proposal is intended to: 1) address the issue of improving **Right Relationship**; 2) to improve the democratic process using good parliamentarian and democratic process, 3) to improve the infrastructure of our leadership, and 4) to respond to the feedback from the PCD Conflict Management Team in setting direction consistent with their recommendations.

At a high level, the five proposals include:

1. Confirm the currently active "**Covenant of Good Relations**" by adding the covenant into Article II of the bylaws. Recommend bylaw changes to improve the democratic process during business meetings including 1) the required use of an independent parliamentarian at business meetings, 2) restricting super majority votes which dilute the will of the majority, and 3) eliminate the use of proxies which encourages direct involvement in the democratic process and eliminates the potential abuse of proxy power.
Combine the Board & Council and create a new nominating process.
2. Allow BOT closed sessions under special circumstances to deal with sensitive personnel, membership, and legal issues. (i.e. confirm the existing Bylaw Task Force recommended change on this subject)
3. Take a vote to obtain a reading from the members on continuing the current direction of professional ministry in the Fellowship. This would include approving the hiring of a minister on a minimum special six-month program beginning in July focused on providing two Sunday services each month. In parallel with the temporary minister being hired, it would include a proposal requesting the Board to follow the CMT Report recommendation and initiate a ministerial search committee to develop a long term ministerial plan with the objective of hiring an interim or consulting minister starting in January 2005.

It is our hope to re-energize the membership in an atmosphere of improved respect and having more fun. There is still the strong hope that we will continue to grow, and with this growth many elements of both the old and the new could thrive including having very good Sunday services, a strong forum program, a very good children's religious education program, and improvement in supporting social justice issues.

News from the Interim Director of Religious Education and Children's Programming
by Phyllis Reid, Interim DRE



What's in a Name

Dear Friends,

By now it will have sunk in that our beloved Goddess of young living things, Diana, is no longer with us. She and her daughter, Camille, have so many special gifts and will be greatly missed. I will not attempt to fill her shoes. However, if there's anything in a name, I want you to know Dianne is my middle name and I also have had a lifelong passion for nurturing children. My first name, "Phyllis," means "a green bough" and the preschool I operated out of the UU Fellowship in Aptos for a number of years was named "Greenbough Playhouse." Our motto was an old Chinese saying: "If I keep a green bough in my heart, the singing bird will come." For me the green bough symbolizes children. Being with them makes my heart sing and keeps me young.

I was also given a spiritual name, "Ariana," in a dream years ago and, when looking up the name, found the term "Arianism." As you may know this is a theological doctrine founded by Arius in about AD 318, challenging the idea that the three persons of the Christian Trinity were equal. So I consider myself a Unitarian Universalist to my very core. I will make every effort to live up to UU principles while I work as Interim DRE with you and your children.

We have an exciting term planned with excellent curricula chosen by **Diana Humphrey**. We welcome our new grades teachers, **Mary Terra** and **Sabine Omvik**, who will be teaching "Treasure Hunting" with the younger children and **Hsiao-In Wang** and **Leslie Jones** who will teach "A Stepping Stone-Year" with the older ones. I will be giving the teachers support in planning, as well as incorporating music into the program where possible.

I plan to be a YOUUTH Advisor along with **Kristin Pearson** and **Joe Rafferty** and will host meetings in my home once a month. The second meeting of the month will be special outings TBA.

Fellowship members are encouraged to sign up as substitutes and/or to assist where more help may be needed occasionally. I am so very happy to have been given the honor and privilege of working with your children this spring and know we will have a great time together.

UUSC's Guest at Your Table

Our UU Fellowship did a tremendous job this year in supporting the UUSC's *Guest at Your Table* program. A special offering was taken Christmas Eve raising \$325. Our Social Justice Committee donated \$250 for matching funds and the boxes brought in \$344 for a grand total of \$919. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has been a powerful voice for human rights in the United States and internationally since 1939. UUSC was founded during World War II to help the victims of Nazi oppression.

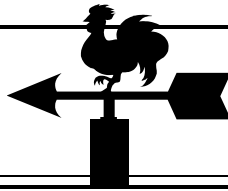
UUSC works for long term solutions to human rights and social justice issues through partnerships with grassroots, community-based and regional organizations in the United States, South and Southeast Asia, Central Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Thank you to all who gave so generously.

RECCY WELCOMES PHYLLIS REID, DRE

The Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth welcomes Phyllis Reid as Interim Director, following Diana Humphrey's marriage and move to Massachusetts. Phyllis worked with Diana during February to ensure a seamless transition. Phyllis is known to our children and parents for the musical classes and events she has led during the last year. She has an impressive resume outlining her work with children over the years. Her resume will be posted in the Fellowship hall. We give Phyllis our congratulations and support as she assumes this all important role.

A Message from Coralee Linton

Beginning March 1, 2004, **Irv Yabroff** has graciously offered to take over the bookkeeping for our Fellowship. It has been a rewarding experience for me and I feel special thanks are due **Bob Bixler**, **Tim Connelly**, **Ruseell Malley** and **Cal Clauer** for their excellent help.



Annual Auction & Wine Tasting, May 1st 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 flyers and notices in the Order of Service. For more information contact: Sharon Graham 408-356-5532 or J.J. Martin 408-353-3672.

Game Night & Potluck Dinner : March 6 Please bring a potluck dish & beverages to share. Don't forget to bring your favorite games! Dinner begins at 6 PM, games follow. Contact Katie Rall (369-0433) for questions.

The Morning Women's Group of the UUFLG met on February 12, 2004. We had a very good meeting sharing what is going on in our lives, working on our inside and outside projects for the Fellowship and discussing an article from the UU World, "The Fundamentalist Agenda." In March, we will meet on the 11th and will discuss "Jesus and the Modern Seeker" on page 27 of the Jan/Feb issue of UU World. The group is open to all women of the Fellowship. Contact Lou Yabroff: 377-6428.

Our **Pacific Central District** will hold its annual District Assembly the weekend of April 2-4, 2004, at the Oakland City Center. The theme is "**Turn the World Around: Committing Ourselves to Change, Challenge, and Growth.**" Billed as a gathering of 400 "fun and feisty" UU's from California, Nevada, and Hawaii, this weekend offers lots of workshops, recreation, worship, and learning for UU's of all ages. There is even a "Chalice Camp" for children and youth. This year's speakers and worship celebrants include Reverend Lindi Ramsden. If you've ever wondered about the UU world beyond our own walls, now this is a great chance to meet new friends and explore our faith in a new way! You can find more information at www.pcd-uua.org, or call the District office at 510/601-1437.

Do you like meeting new people, having fun, and showing care to those who need it? That's the focus of the Membership committee. The Committee Chair coordinates the activities of the people involved with these many activities. Currently the position is vacant. If you are interested or want more information about being Chair, please contact Jim Beebe (378-3521).

March 13, 6:30 -- Potluck at the Cranes. Remember when we used to cram ourselves into each other's houses and share our favorite foods? That's how we really got to know one another! Let's try it again. Bring a dish to share, a towel if you'd like to use the spa, and be prepared to squeeze into our place. Call us for directions: 408/268-2199.

Barbara Kalmoutis, a longtime friend and supporter of UUFLG, was inadvertently left out of the Fellowship's newest directory. We apologize for the oversight! Barbara has requested that her contact information be provided here. Her phone number is (408) 378-0813. Barbara's address is 250 Budd Ave -- Corinthian House; Campbell, CA 95008.

SUNDAY FORUM TAKES A BREAK

Our Fellowship has special needs during March to hold informational meetings during the usual Forum Noon to 1 PM hour. Therefore, the Forum Committee has volunteered to take a break during March and begin again on Sunday April 25, 2004. We plan to have several very good speakers/topics coming up so please stay tuned.

UUFLG Calendar for March 2004

- March 1: Life Stories Classes (9:30 AM -3 PM)
- March 3: No Sunday Forum Committee Meeting -- Contact: **Nan Bixler**, 356-5697 for information
- March 4: **RUMs** Noon brown bag lunch for Men with flexible time. Contact **Bob Bixler**, 356-5697.
In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held in the Lounge.
Office hours for **Minister Erika Hewitt** (4:00 – 5:30 PM)
- March 6: **Town Hall Meeting (time will be announced)**
Game Night & Potluck Dinner – Contact **Katie Rall**: (408) 369-0433
- March 7: RECCY (9-10 AM) meeting in the Lounge – Contact **Phyllis Reid**
***Note:** The Council meets at 9 AM, which is not its usual time
Sunday Service (10:30-11:30 AM): “How Albert Einstein Turned my life Around.” by **Minister Erika Hewitt**
Exploring UU Program (12 – 2 PM)
- March 9: Life Stories Classes (9:30 AM -- 3 PM)
Monday Mums (10:30 AM)
Women’s Spirituality Group (7:15 – 9 PM)
- March 11: UU Women’s “Morning” Group (10:15 AM-noon). Contact **Lou Yabroff**: (408)356-1921
Office hours for **Minister Erika Hewitt** (3-4:30 PM)
BOARD MEETING (7:00 -9:30 PM)
- March 13: Good Governance Committee Meeting (3-5 PM)
Potluck at the **Cranes** (6:30 PM)
- March 14: Sunday Service (10:30-11:30 AM): “Voices from our Past” led by **Hollie Dunham**
Exploring UU Program (12-2 PM)
Special Business Meeting (12 PM)
- March 15: *Monday Mums* (10:30 AM)
Life Stories Classes (9:30 AM -3 PM)
- March 17: **Saint Patrick’s Day**
- March 18: Office hours for **Minister Erika Hewitt** (4-5:30 PM)
- March 20: **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
- March 21: Sunday Service (10:30-11:30 AM): “Saving the World 10 people at a time”
led by **The CoM**
Exploring UU Program (12--2 PM)
- March 22: *Monday Mums* (10:30 AM)
Women’s Spirituality Group (7:15 PM)
- March 28: Sunday Service (10:30-11:30 AM): “Getting Pumped Up for Social Justice” by **Tom Fink**
Exploring UU Program (12-2 PM)

