
NUUSLETTER

NORTHWOODS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

A Beacon of Light in the Northwoods

P.O. Box 253, Minocqua, WI 54548, <http://nuuf.com>

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July 12,

2004 Coming Sundays

Taking the Pulpit

Sunday, July 25, 10 AM, Rossanor Geiser, "Healing Body, Mind and Spirit"

Sunday, August 8, 10 AM, Rev. Barbara Kellett, "Dwelling Within Our Spiritual Differences"

Sunday, August 22, 10 AM Sharon VanRaalte, "Our Fellowship History" celebrating the 15th anniversary of NUUF.

Each member household will receive an history booklet. Additional booklets will be available at \$3 each. A potluck follows the service.

Sunday, September 5, 10 AM, Jonathon Patz "Health Effects of Global Warming"

Adult Religious Education

On alternate Sundays we meet at 10 AM to discuss topics relating religious and ethical issues to current events and considering things that contribute to the spirit and meaning of our group.

President's Report

This has been a really busy time for us. Our going away party for Rev. Morris was very nice. We all wish her the best. The Board met this past week and considered all of our important committees. I am attaching to this report a roster of all of our committees. Please feel free to participate on committees that you are interested in by letting the Chair of the committee know of your interest. There are some committees that could use some help. If you no longer wish to be a part of a committee it's nice if you let the Chair know.

We're all looking forward to the celebration of our 15 years as a Fellowship on August 22. Plan on being there for that observance. Without our minister we are also looking for people willing to do a service. Remember the sign up sheets in the kitchen or took to committee chair, Joe Strauss.

If you have a concern about anything (or a suggestion), please don't hesitate to let me or any of our Board members know. In the meantime enjoy our summer weather and the beauty of our Northwoods. Terry Hoyt

BOARD of DIRECTORS

President Terry Hoyt
Secretary Mark Bruhy
Treasurer Tom Sommerfeld
Directors at Large Joan Hauer
Alan VanRaalte

STANDING COMMITTEES

These committees are in the By-laws of the Fellowship.

Spirituality (Program) Committee The Program Committee facilitates Sunday programming, including both fellowship and outside presentations; serves as a resource for program ideas and formats; selects and arranges dates for visiting ministers/speakers; seating arrangements, cassette tape recording of the service and other supplies and items needed for the Sunday program; and coordinates with the treasurer the payment of the speakers and with the Publicity Committee to publicize the program. Joe Strauss, Chair, Joyce Barnes, Dan Rondello, Jim Williams, Joan Hauer, Dick Fields, Jerry Buerer, Paul Braunstein, Terry Hoyt, Charmaine Winters, and Tom Sommerfeld.

Religious Education Committee (Adult and Children) This committee is responsible for setting up programs to help the children of the fellowship to develop their own spiritual beliefs and ethics. The committee recruits teachers, adopts curricula, budgets and orders supplies and equipment for classrooms and coordinates childcare for religious services. The committee is also responsible for the adult religious education program that runs on the alternate Sundays from our regular services. Susan Knight, Co Chair, Andrea Billings, Co-Chair, Terry Hoyt, Joan Hauer, Julie Wambach.

Membership Committee This committee welcomes newcomers and visitors, providing them with information on the fellowship and Unitarian-Universalism. The committee also provides new member orientation, maintains the stock of literature and name tags, recruits Sunday greeters, and maintains the visitor's book and fellowship member's book. It is also responsible for updating the membership and friend's list.

Sharon VanRaalte, Chair, Doris Eberlein, Mary Ann Fields, Joan Hauer, Paul Braunstein, Patty Buehler, and Jerry Buerer.

Social Justice Committee This committee provides leadership in the membership in expressing liberal religious ethics in action. The committee promotes community action on social issues to help support the principles, purposes and resolutions of Unitarian-Universalism makes information available to the fellowship and surrounding community about social justice issues, and encourages social action at local, state, national and international levels. Audrey Williams, Dan Rondello, Charmaine Winters, Beverly Strauss, Joe Strauss, Diane Reupert, Ruth Erbs, Tim Kratz, Candace Zahn Cain, Alan VanRaalte, Catherine Parker, Joyce Barnes. There is no chair of this committee at the present time.

Nomination Committee This committee of three members is selected at the annual meeting and is responsible for selecting candidates for Board positions at the following year's meeting. Elinor Sommerfeld, Bev Strauss, and Harley Erbs.

Memorial Garden Committee This committee is responsible for the maintenance of

the Memorial Garden. The committee develops landscaping, prepares a budget, maintains the records of the garden, and arranges for the memorial plaques. There are three members of the committee serving three-year terms. One member is elected each year at the annual meeting. Members of the committee cannot succeed themselves according to the provisions adopted by the membership when the committee was established. Don Barnes, Jim Williams, Chair, and Barbara Beutler

OTHERS COMMITTEES

These committee are created under the authority of the Board.

Social Activity Committee This committee initiates and arranges indoor and outdoor social events for the membership. Mary Ann Fields, Audrey Williams, and Paul Braunstein.

Hospitality Committee This committee is responsible for Sunday coffee hour, volunteer sign ups, coffee hour supplies, coordination of the potluck at the annual meeting, other fellowship potlucks and arranging housing for visiting ministers and speakers. Beverly Strauss, and Harley Erbs.

Publicity Committee This committee produces the fellowship newsletter for members and friends, provides local newspapers with timely articles about the fellowship and its activities and develops and implements an annual advertising campaign. Jerry Woolpy, Chair, Ruth Erbs, and Alan VanRaalte

Finance Committee This committee aids the treasurer in monitoring incomes, expenses, cash flow, assets and financial records keeping of the fellowship, makes recommendations on investments and payments of long term debts, directs the annual budget process, sends periodic pledge statements to members and oversees the annual canvass. Patty Buehler, Chair, Ruth Erbs, Terri Hoyt, Dick Fields, Joe Strauss.

Building and Grounds Committee This committee oversees the basic upkeep and repair of the fellowship building and exterior property, including landscaping, snow plowing, cleaning, painting and minor equipment repairs, coordinates volunteer custodial work and maintains cleaning supplies. Alan VanRaalte, Chair, Patty Buehler, Dick Fields, Charles Reed, Katie Egan-Bruhy, Terri Hoyt, Sharon VanRaalte, Dan Padberg and Sally O'Brien.

Long Range Planning (Building Committee is replaced by this) This committee is involved with long range planning for growth and assuring a sound future for the fellowship. Doris Eberlein, Chair, Don Barnes, Rick Wambach, Alan VanRaalte, Jerry Buerer, and Dick Fields.

Endowment Committee This committee is responsible for developing an endowment program for the fellowship. Paul Braunstein, Terry Hoyt, Jerry Woolpy.

Building Expansion Committee This committee is responsible for planning for the contingency that there would be a building expansion. Dick Fields, Chair, Mary Ann Fields, Don and Joyce Barnes, Sharon Van Raalte, Doris Eberlein, and Charles Reed.

Pastoral Care Committee This committees exact responsibilities are still under consideration.

Committee on Ministry This committees exact responsibilities are still under consideration. Julie Wambach, Tim Kratz, and Joe Strauss.

Announcements

Just saw "**Fahrenheit 9/11**" yesterday. It's powerful, funny, intense, and vital. Did I mention funny? I am grateful to the Rouman Cinema for bringing it to the Northwoods. I encourage everyone to see it.

Catherine Parker

PS: It's also in Woodruff. 4:45, 7:02, and 9:40 PM.

Archaeological Study, Public invited to visit: The Forest Service, in cooperation with Northland College is conducting an archaeological investigation along the Northeast shore of Butternut Lake, east of Eagle River, WI. The study focuses on a hunting and processing camp occupied between the 7th and 11th centuries A.D. Wednesday July 21 through Wednesday July 28, 2004, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (closed in the event of rain). From Eagle River, take 70 east 12 miles to Divide Road (FR 2176), turn right proceed south 3.5 miles. Turn right on FR 2140 proceed 1.5 miles west to boat landing parking lot – parking not allowed along the road. From the parking lot, visitors will walk a half mile to the study area along a well marked road and trail. Hiking apparel and insect repellent are advised. For additional information contact Mark Bruhy or Kim Potaracke at 715-362-1300 or the Eagle River-Florence District Office at : 715-479-2827.

Building & Grounds Work Day, The Building & Grounds Committee will be having a work day, Sunday, July 25 after the service and following Tom & Elinore Sommerfeld's sharing of their **GA experiences**. Bring your own lunch. Work clothes are advised. Cleaning supplies and equipment will be provided. The committee is developing a list of tasks and anyone who has noticed anything around the building or grounds that may have eluded the attention of the committee can contact me about adding more tasks to the list.
Alan VanRaalte

Please join Joan Hauer and others on the **Walk for Life**, Friday, July 30.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee: On November 21, 2004, the Sunday before Thanksgiving, UUs will gather to celebrate Guest at Your Table. On March 27, 2005, Justice Sunday, using UUSC materials as your guide, congregations can learn how to make a significant difference on an important human rights issue. Call 800 388 3920 or volunteerservices@uusc.org

Joys & Concerns

Claire Polfus gets the Daniel R. Regan \$4500 renewable Award toward her attendance at Middlebury College where she expected to study creative writing. **Amy Kratz** gets the award of \$3500 from the Lakeland High School Scholarship Fund toward her attendance at McGill University where she will study Criminal Psychology. **Melanie Cyra** gets the award of \$3500 from the Lakeland High School Scholarship Fund toward her attendance at UW-Madison where she will study health and fitness. Thus NUUs got three of the seventeen scholarship awards to this year's graduates of LUHS including the largest and only renewable one.

Postseason Honors also go to NUUs on the Lakeland soccer team for their

domination of the Northern Lights Conference. **Cora Holt** was named to the all-conference team and **Amy Kratz** received honorable mention. Cora and Amy also made the list of “brainy booters” for their academic achievements.

The Congregation expresses its condolence to **Jerry Buerer** upon the death of his sister. Jerry wrote this:

Well, the Duchess of Duchess Island left us today. My sister, Carol Ann, has died and though her death was not unexpected, of course it hurts. She was a good person. We teased one another. I said she was my favorite sister, while she in turn said I was always her favorite brother. That's easy to do in a two-child family, of course, but all things considered, we were pretty close through the years. ... Like the rest of us, Carol had her likes and dislikes. One thing on the dislike list: she detested that part of funeral services where family members attempt to eulogize a loved one. What bothered her was that so few can do it without losing composure, and when they did lose it, it made her very uncomfortable. I sympathize with her position. I don't think I would be able to speak at the service for a relative or good friend without choking up, but if I were to speak at my sister's service, to give you just a glimpse in to what she was like, here is what I would say:

It would not be truthful to indicate that my sister and I never irritated one another. But it was never enough that people would have mistaken us for a married couple or anything like that. Like most other people, we each had our idiosyncrasies, but overall we got along pretty well. One area where we did differ, and where she would challenge me, had to do with our memories. The last part of the second verse of Hymn 495 in the hymn book of my sister's church, reads, "For not with swords loud clashing, Nor roll of stirring drums, But deeds of love and mercy, The heavenly kingdom comes." I think the same holds true for the earthly kingdom, the one referred to when people pray, "Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven." Carol's faith was such that she didn't have to knock people over the head and point out to them how brightly her light was shining. If they cared to see her little light, they could see it for themselves. There was no need of clashing swords nor stirring drum rolls. And many did see it....

Minutes of NUUF Board Meeting,

May 17, 2004

In attendance: Terry Hoyt,
Reverend Sydney Morris, Joan Hauer, Alan VanRaalte, Tom Sommerfeld,
Patty Buehler, and Mark Bruhy

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Terry Hoyt at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of April Minutes: Alan VanRaalte moved that the April Board Meeting notes be approved, Joan Hauer seconded, and the motion carried.

Membership Committee Issue – budget overrun: It was agreed to utilize \$30.74 of the Board's discretionary funds to cover a Membership Committee budget over-run.

Budget Process: Patty Buehler presented the 2004-05 operating budget. As it was noted, 2004-05 pledges are approximately \$5,500. less than those of last year. With regard to the “building reserve fund,” it was asked if the Board should continue to keep \$6,611. in this

budget line item, or if it should be re-designated, e.g., reserve fund. As a point of clarification, it was noted that “building reserve” means funds are kept for necessary and periodic maintenance, which could include major capital expenses such as septic system replacement. Upon explanation, the Board was comfortable with the budget line item as defined. As an additional discussion topic, it was asked if all those who are listed in the membership roles be considered voting members in fiscal year 2004-05 if they have not yet submitted a pledge. It is the opinion of the Board that even if a pledge has not yet been received, those who were members in 2003-04 are allowed to participate in congregational votes. Allan moved that the budget be presented to the membership at the Annual Meeting, Tom seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: Tom Sommerfeld presented a summary of the current budget (expenses/balances) as of April 30, 2004 (attached to Secretary’s notes). As a point of discussion, an explanation of the “gift” budget line item was requested. Tom explained that gift includes, among other receipts, offerings from non-members. Alan moved that the report be accepted, Joan seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Minister’s Report: Reverend Morris reported that she participated in the recent Midwest District meeting which was held in the Chicago area. Agenda topics included discussion of by-laws and area councils, and she noted that participated in several workshops.

Annual Meeting Agenda/Proposed By-law Changes: Terry asked the Board if there are questions regarding the agenda for the annual meeting, and there were none. He mentioned that some committee reports have been received, and more are to be expected. Terry mentioned that a proposed “endowment funds” by-law will be distributed (attached to notes) will be distributed among the membership at the Annual Meeting, but this will be for Congregational review, rather than for vote. The proposed “marriage ceremony authorization” by-law amendment will be presented at the Annual meeting. The Board agreed that it is appropriate to request a vote on this proposal (attached to notes).

Other Business - Survey on the Ministry: On April 18, 2004, 61 postcards were mailed to each congregational member, and 45 members responded. Following are the questions asked, and the responses.

- (1) Do you want a paid minister to serve the Northwoods UU Fellowship:
Yes = 23 No = 14 Undecided/No Reply = 9
- (2) Should we have a part-time minister?
Yes = 22 No = 13 Undecided/No Reply = 10
- (3) Should we have full time minister?
Yes = 4 No = 28 Undecided/No Reply =
- (4) Should we wait before putting in action a process to determine the position of the Minister?
Yes = 28 No = 12 Undecided/No Reply = 5
If yes, how long?
6 months = 17 1 year = 8 Either/Or = 3

Next Meeting Date: A June meeting has not yet been scheduled, and only will be if the Board deems it necessary. The July Board meeting will take place at the Fellowship on July 9th at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was **adjourned** at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bruhy, Secretary

Report on General Assembly

On behalf of the congregation, we attended the General Assembly (GA) held in Long Beach late last month. About 4500 UU's attended. This is the annual meeting of the congregations to conduct the business of the denomination. We honor those ministers entering fellowship, retiring or who have died this past year at a special ceremony called the Service of the Living Tradition. The Sunday morning service is a show piece for UU's and is open to the public. Joining us were UU's from southern California and the general public, swelling the ranks of the congregation by thousands more. At the Opening Ceremony, we had the pleasure of carrying the NUUF banner. We were very near the front of the procession, so we were also able to get back into seats and experience the last of the parade as spectators. There were about 300 banners this year. It is a very colorful, impressive sight. The Ware Lecture this year was by singer and social activist, Holly Near ("We are a Gentle, Angry People"). It was a very special evening. At the Closing Ceremony, Tom sang with the GA choir and got to experience the proceedings from the other side of the lights.

There were also literally hundreds of workshops one can attend. We attended as many different workshops as we reasonably (or unreasonably) could. Tom focused on ones related to congregational finances, including ones on endowment funds, capital campaigns and proposed new accounting laws. These should prove to be very useful to him as Treasurer. He also attended as many music workshops as he could. Not only were these a lot of fun, but we hope they will provide the resources and material to reinvent our music program.. You will be hearing more about this from Joyce and us in the near future. He has joined the UU Musicians Network, which we hope will be both useful and enjoyable for him. Elinore attended workshops related to social justice activities. She will be meeting with the Social Justice Committee this summer to share some possible projects and talk about the new study and action topic. She also attended sessions related to long range planning, small congregational growth and change. These provided a lot of food for thought. Probably the two most unusual workshops we attended were entitled, "The Big Voice, God or Merman" and "Queer Latina Media Art". The programs were just as interesting as the titles! In addition, Tom got some contacts for arranging possible concerts/performances locally by UU's. We plan to order some audio and video tapes to share with the congregation and use for special programs during the year.

It is a very special time to be among 4500 of your closest UU friends. We encourage you to consider attending a GA yourself. Mark your calendars now; in 2006 GA will be in St. Louis! After the service on Sunday, July 25, we will discuss and share our material and experiences with you. Please plan to stay and talk with us. If you have questions before then, feel free to call us at 385-2407. Tom and Elinore Sommerfeld

NUU Views

Question: “The Texas Comptroller challenges the tax exempt status of UUs. This is clearly unequal treatment under the law. But should any churches actually be tax exempt? Why or why not?”

Answer from Elinore Sommerfeld: In order to answer this question, I needed to do some research into the rationale for the tax exempt status of churches. I found that the combination of constitutional issues, churches and taxes is, well, murky. What a surprise! The thinking that prevailed at the time the Constitution was written went along the lines that "... the Constitution clearly prohibits the government from making any law restricting religion, Does not the ability to tax actually mean the ability to control or destroy?" (cstnews.com) But even at that time, there was no consensus on this issue. Some considered this as government subsidy of religion. "People who may not share a particular faith, or any faith, are thus forced to contribute to ideas with which they might disagree. Thomas Jefferson said of such a practice: ‘Almighty God has created the mind free. ...to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical.’" (Bristol Herald Courier, 2/8/02). James Madison was concerned about establishing a precedent and what the long term outcome of such would be. ("Should the Churches be Taxed" Leiland W. Ruble)

Current rationale has moved away from Constitutional discussion. Some argue along religious lines that you can't "tax God" and you can't put the government "above" churches. (cstnews.com) Others argue that churches are no more than big profit making corporations and/or fronts for political operations and are, therefore, not deserving of tax exempt status. (Bristol Herald Courier, 2/8/02 and "Should the Churches be Taxed?" Leiland W. Ruble)

In fact, churches today DO pay taxes, specifically payroll and utility taxes. (mmccpa.com) Some churches also pay sales taxes because they fail, intentionally or not, to claim tax exempt status on retail purchases. Some jurisdictions, including Berkeley CA. and North Carolina, are attempting to create de facto property and/or income tax. ("Should Churches Pay Taxes" Dr. Don Boys and mmccpa.com) Some argue that churches indirectly pay taxes for police/fire and other services through the taxes paid by members.

I think the point of the Constitution is to stay out of religion's way, period. I agree that the authority to tax a religious organization creates the ability to control/promote/destroy a given institution and, therefore, is inappropriate. But I also agree that some religious organizations cross the line in entering the political arena and, therefore, should be liable to have their tax exempt status revoked. Similarly, some churches undoubtedly engage in business practices that defeat the intent, if not the letter of the law in this regard. It strikes me that vigorous, but even-handed, enforcement of existing regulations might go a long ways towards cleaning up the excesses. But overall, I say "Hands off!" In an analogy related to free speech, I'm reminded of the heat the ACLU took for defending the right of the KKK to demonstrate. Threatening the right of all to free speech because some are despicable is just as inappropriate as threatening the right to religious freedom because some are unethical.

Answer from Alan VanRaalte: I am ambivalent about whether churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, etc. should be afforded tax-exempt status. My initial reaction is to say, “Yes, they should be tax-exempt.” However, when I reflect on the resent promulgations of the Archbishop of St. Louis (formerly the bishop of La Crosse) as well as the push by fundamentalist, Christian Evangelicals into the political arena (and indeed the historical activism of UUs) I must reconsider that position. If you want to get into the game, then you should have to pay the entry fee - taxes. Therefore, I don’t have a problem with churches, etc. paying taxes. And I think they should, just as soon as corporations that create PACs and contribute to political campaigns - while at the same time creating off shore tax shelters - begin paying their fair share.

Answer from Jerry Buerer: I oppose the church tax exemption for two major reasons. First, if church uses services such as police and fire protection, if they want sewer and water services, streets, curbs, snow removal, etc., if they don’t pay for them, it means non-church going people are subsidizing them, and that seems to be a violation of separation of church and state as well as possible a form of taxation without representation.

Secondly, the present arrangement provides a loop hole for those who want to push the boundaries and basically fake being a religious institution. Why, even someone as upright and ethical as I on occasion has thought of sending in my ten dollars, being “ordained” in Church of the Whatever and turning my summer home into a church mini-camp. Actually, the more I think about it.....

On a related point, I think it disgusting that ministers can deduct housing costs when filing federal tax forms, and I’m disappointed that the UUs evidently haven’t led any significant fight to abolish such a practice. I know there is abuse there since in one or two places I’ve taught, ordained clergy who basically are full time faculty in the theology department, but preach occasionally, and thus avail themselves of this deduction which is another reason I should maybe quit buying lottery tickets and direct ten to twenty dollars of that money to a mail order ordination certificate.

Answer from Jerry Woolpy: Loop holes, deductions, credits, and exemptions make a mockery of our tax system and create unnecessary opportunities for artful professionals to circumvent equity and the good intent of the law. David Cay Johnston makes this point thoroughly in his recent book, “Perfectly Legal--the covert campaign to rig our tax system to benefit the super rich--and cheat everybody else.” What we need is an equitable and progressive tax system universally applied with NO exceptions for favored individuals, groups, or corporations.

The exceptions provide government with an opportunity to promote special interests and give authorities, like the Texas Controller, the chance to abuse. The church is no exception. Think of the extraordinary wealth tied up in religious coffers across the US and around the world. Imagine the untaxed real estate alone that shifts tax burden on to others many of whom can ill afford it. I have no fear that taxes will destroy churches any more than they have destroyed the rest of us. Distributing the cost of government as widely as possible is entirely consistent with democratic principles. We ought not have any sacred cows. If we want to have a church we ought to be willing to pay for it including the real estate upon which it sits and the sales tax on things we buy and sell. For every tax dollar

that we do not pay has to be made up by someone who does. More often than not this is a relatively poor person less well represented and paying at a higher than average rate.

Johnson reports: “If you tally the economic benefits to the top 1 percent that do not show up in income statistics--for reasons of written law and because the tax tricks fashioned by lawyers...then the richest 1 percent are taxed more lightly than the middle class. The same data show that the poor are taxed almost as heavily as the rich are--and even more heavily than the super rich. If we can afford to have a church we can afford to pay the tax on it. Do you really suppose this “benefit” helps us when compared to what would happen if every church paid their fair share?”

The **question for the next NUUsletter** is “Republican Party operatives are forcing the country toward religious wars between Christian fundamentalist evangelicals, who want a Christian state with a Christian curriculum and laws informed by their values, and those who would maintain the diversity of our essentially secular society. Hoping not to engage in a religious civil war, the likes of which we escaped from when we migrated to this country, how best ought we to confront this political strategy.”

Send answers by Sunday, August 21, to jerryw@earlham.edu. ▪

Getting the NUUsletter

In addition to the usual Microsoft Word format, the NUUsletter is now available in Adobe PDF format that is readable by any computer, Mac or PC. If you do not have an Adobe Reader you can download one free at

Place
Stamp
Here

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

With this software the NUUsletter will be formatted as it is in Microsoft Word and the Word program will not be required. Let me know if you want it sent to you in PDF format, jerryw@earlham.edu.

Previous NUUsletters and the congregation directory are available at nuuf.com. Click on "Members Only." The user name is NUUF. But you need to remember the secret password. If you have forgotten it, contact me.

Next NUUsletter Deadline, Sunday, August 21, 2004

NUUsletter
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