



# THE NUUSLETTER

NORTHWOODS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

We are a Welcoming Congregation.

*A Beacon of Light in the Northwoods*

Volume 6, Number 11

May 2,

**2005 Coming Sundays**

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## **Taking the Pulpit**

**May 15:** Coming of Age/Person Journey, Youth RE

**May 29:** Jerry Buerer

**June 12:** Laura Erickson

**June 26:** Rev. Jane Moore Schmaltz

**July 10:** Rev. Bob Eddy

**July 24:** Rev. Bob Eddy

**August 8:** Wenda Sheard

## **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.

## **From the President**

Here it is the beginning of May. We have made it through another winter and are waiting for the snow to quit falling so we can seriously think about summer and flowers and fishing. As a Fellowship, we are also facing serious questions about expanding our building.

It seems like only yesterday that we were undertaking the building of our present facility. Back in 1989 we started with 21 members. When we first built, our membership was just over 40 members. Our membership now stands at 64 members. I know as we continue to represent liberal religious values in our communities that there will be more who wish to join us. I believe we need to expand our building, but I know that some of us are worried about overextending ourselves financially. I also believe that we can afford to do this.

When we make this decision, I would really like us to reach a consensus, not just a bare majority. This should be a decision that we can all support, not something that would drive us apart. If you can't be at the meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup> when we will be taking a vote on

proceeding, then please let someone have your proxy, or make your wishes known as to your support or opposition to this project.

And lastly, I look forward to everyone being able to attend our Annual Meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Terry Hoyt

## **News and Announcements**

### **Fellowship Email List**

As of the May 1, 2005, Jerry Woolpy will no longer be distributing the newsletter and other fellowship information, nor will he be maintaining the membership address and email lists. I will be assuming that responsibility. Please send changes to your email addresses, home addresses and telephone numbers to me at [vanraalte@klinktech.net](mailto:vanraalte@klinktech.net) . If you want me to distribute fellowship news (joys and concerns, committee meetings, minutes, and other information related to the business of the fellowship, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Central Midwest District (CMwD)) you may send that to me also and I will forward it to our members, associates and friends.

If you have information other than that which relates directly to the fellowship, the UUA or the CMwD (political rallies and meetings, club news, Op-Eds, etc.) please do not send them to me to be forwarded. We are a diverse group of people who do not all share the same views and I do not want to be put into the position of offending anyone who does not agree with the messages forwarded or give the appearance that the fellowship is taking a position not appropriate for a non-profit organization to take.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Alan VanRaalte

### **RE Planning Meeting for Next Year**

The Children's RE Committee will meet after the service on May 15<sup>th</sup>. All those willing to teach periodically next year are encouraged to attend as well as parents of participating children. We will select curriculum for next year. Please let me know if your children will probably participate next year, even if you are unable to attend this meeting. It is important that we know which children will most likely participate in RE next year so that we can match our resources to the needs of the children. Andrea Billings

### **Congregational Meeting**

There will be a congregational meeting after the service on May 15 to vote on the proposal to expand the building. Please plan to attend. Contact Dick Fields, if you have questions.

### **Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting will be Saturday, May 21, beginning at 10:00 am. A potluck lunch

will follow. Please plan to attend and participate in the democratic process of governing our Fellowship. Contact Terry Hoyt, if you have questions.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Service Auction**

Please plan to attend and contribute services and goods for our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual service auction to be held the evening of June 17, 2005 (Note the change of date from previous announcements.) Join in the fun of socializing with your friends and a chance to win an auction item. "Colonel" Jerry Buerer will again be our auctioneer. Auction donation forms will be available May 1 at the Fellowship and will be sent by email. If you wish forms to be snail mailed to you, let Mary Ann know. Suggestions for donation items will be listed on the form. A preliminary catalog of auction items will be available at the fellowship starting late May, so send in your contributions early to Mary Ann. We will gather at 5:30 for a light supper. The service auction will begin at 6:30. Refreshments and snacks will be available during the evening. Please remember that you need to pay for your auction items the night of the auction. If you can't attend the auction, you may appoint someone to bid for you. Auction rules will be available in late May and will also be available at the time of the auction. Contact Mary Ann Fields after May 1 at 385-2975 or [dmafields@yahoo.com](mailto:dmafields@yahoo.com) if you have questions, suggestions or would like to help.

### **Manitowish River Canoe Trip**

Jim Williams is organizing a family canoe/kayak trip on the Manitowish River for Saturday, July 23. Plans are to meet at the wayside located about three miles east of the town of Manitowish on Hwy 51 at 10:00 a.m. You can leave your car at the wayside. A shuttle will be available to take you and your canoe upstream to the put-in point near the town of Manitowish Waters. You must provide your own canoe or kayak, but if you don't have one, let Jim know and he will try and find one for you. Everyone should bring lunch, drinks, and the other items needed for a fun day on the water. After putting in, we will canoe back down river to the wayside and enjoy a leisurely lunch. For those who wish to continue further after lunch, there is a convenient takeout point at the Hwy 47 bridge about an hour or so downstream from the wayside. The Manitowish is a lazy, slow-moving river that abounds with many varieties of fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife. Everyone is welcome, so plan on joining us on July 23. Call Jim at 715-762-3434 for further details, or e-mail him at [williajm@direcway.com](mailto:williajm@direcway.com).

### **Summer RE Program**

**From Jerry Buerer:** This summer I'm thinking of offering an adult education seminar on the subject of the Bible, covering subjects such as how the Bible came into existence, who wrote the various books, when were they written, how do they differ, and who decided they should be included in the canon. As envisioned, we'd meet one evening a week for several weeks, or we'd meet on Saturday mornings for fewer, but longer, sessions. Most likely we'd use a paperback such as Bishop Spong's "Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism" plus some

other readings. In a gesture of ecumenicism, if possible, I would like to open such a course to people from the community who are not members of our Fellowship. Plans are in the preliminary stage but I would like to know if there is enough interest in something like this to pursue things. If interested, contact me at [jaybeedi@yahoo.com](mailto:jaybeedi@yahoo.com), write me at 503 1/2 Third, St., Wausau 54403, or phone me at 715-843-6994.

### **Big Top Show**

Terry Hoyt has ordered tickets for a show at Big Top on August 18. The cost is \$32. The show will feature an 8-member brother/sister act, performing Irish music and dance. Contact Terry for more information or to reserve tickets.

### **Seder**

More than 50 members of the community participated in the Seder at the Fellowship on Saturday, April 23. Special thanks go to Tara Reed and Jerry Woolpy for hosting the event. Thanks also to all those who brought food, helped set-up and clean up. It was a memorable evening for all.

### **Food Pantry News**

We are in the midst of working at the food pantry right now. A team consisting of Patty Buehler, Terri and Terry Hoyt, Mel Huff, Kayla Norris, Tim Richardson and Tom and Elinore Sommerfeld prepared bags for distribution this past Saturday. On Tuesday, Mel Huff, Tom and Elinore Sommerfeld, Bev and Joe Strauss, Sharon and Alan Van Raalte, will complete the task. We also collected diapers and personal care items for the food pantry. Thanks to all who helped and contributed items. Elinore Sommerfeld

### **Highway Clean Up**

Our spring/Earth Day highway clean up took place on Saturday, April 17th. With short notice our turn out was low. Nonetheless, six of us were able to pick up trash along the two-mile segment of Highway 47 between Matke Road and County Highway F. Those hardy participants included Terry Hoyt, Paul Braunstein, Elinore and Tom Sommerfeld, Katie and Mark Bruhy. In all we collected 29 bags of garbage and 15 bags of recyclables. In seeing the huge amounts of refuse discarded and lost from the backs of open pick-ups, boats and trailers, we were sorely disheartened to acknowledge that in the home state of Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day, we have no bottle return law. Further, it is frustrating to know that fast food vendors who are making huge profits are not sending out staff to assist in highway clean up. So perhaps in honor of Earth Day, we should consider writing your representatives about mandating a bottle return and dropping a note in the comments box at fast food vendors about assisting with highway cleanup. Mark and Katy Egan-Bruhy

## UUWF-CMwD Conference

The spring conference will be held June 3-5 at Kings House in Henry IL. The theme of this year's conference is Building Bridges Among Religious Women. If interested, contact Elinore for the brochure.

## Minutes of NUUF Board Meeting, 2005

There was no April board meeting.

### Aphorisms

In keeping with Rev. Glenda Walker's recent sermon on aphorisms, here are some others to consider:

- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.

### News from Afar

**From Brad Toberman:** Nancy and I are proud to announce the birth of our daughter, Josephine Diane. Josephine was born Thursday, 31 Mar 2005 in Baraboo, WI. She weighed 8 pounds 7 ounces. She was 20" long. We were hoping for a Wednesday birth as Nancy's birthday is the 30th. Both mom and baby are doing well. She has reddish brown hair (very little) and blue eyes.

We couldn't be happier. I will have a website of pictures up shortly:

<http://josephine.toberman.com>

Feel free to send Josephine an email: [josephine@toberman.com](mailto:josephine@toberman.com). Brad

### Meet Our (Founding) Members

**From Irma Braunstein:** I was born in Bessemer, Michigan to agnostic parents from Finland. My father was an iron miner. My parents were both members of the Industrial Workers of the World, the members called Wobblies. It was the most radical of the labor

movements. They were fighting for safety in the mines, shorter hours, health care, a living wage and more. My father was eventually able to open a shoe repair business, which was the trade he learned in Finland. They prospered and were able to send me to Michigan State University, where I studied dietetics. They were strong believers in women's education. From there I went to the University Hospitals of Cleveland for my internship and a masters degree from Western Reserve University in nutrition. I had several job offers and chose the one closest to the Northwoods, in Eau Claire at Luther Hospital. I was married in 1949 to a man who had three children, ages 10, 5 and 2. I soon realized that my atheistic views were not enough to offer these children. A friend of mine from the local branch of AAUW saw me as a prospective member of the local Universalist Church and told me much about their principles and beliefs. I attended with my children and before long I joined, one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. Almost 40 years later at the Northwoods AAUW, I found 2 UU's, who with their husbands helped found this congregation.

In 1971, I married Paul, who I had met at the Farmington Universalist Church. Everyone at the church said "Mazeltov!" when we married. We retired to Minocqua in 1978. World travel has been a huge part of my life. Once I traveled for 6 months.

The most important part of the Fellowship for me is the traditional service and the alternate adult R.E. Also very important to me are all the wonderful and interesting people I have met and socialized with. I see my role in the Fellowship as historian, both national and local.

One of my greatest joys has been to see this Fellowship grow way beyond my dreams to become a Beacon of Light in the Northwoods and a force in the community.

## **Closing Thoughts**

### **A Mom's Guide to Dealing with a Little Boy's Life**

**By Emily Hauser**

My kindergartner was on the computer the other day, doing his thing on disney.com. I walked in looking for something, and he immediately shooed me away. I glanced at the screen as he tried to hide it: princesses as far as the eye could see, and a great deal of pink. I said, "I'm just getting something. Bye!" and there it ended. But I thought "Hunh."

This is the boy who had a pink backpack for two solid years of preschool. The walls of his room are lavender, because he wants them that way, and he has a heart-shaped plate in the cupboard, featuring three of those very princessi. About a year ago, he said to me that he sometimes wishes he were a girl "because they get to wear pretty clothes," and, given half a chance, he loves to play Barbies at his friend Stephanie's house.

As you might have guessed, this is a boy who has never in his home heard the words "boys don't fill-in-the-blank." In fact, the "pretty clothes" comment led to a typically tortured, early-21st Century maternal response: "Well, you know, most boys and men don't wear skirts and dresses, but some do, sometimes, and if you really want to, you can"--a

response, it should be noted, that later won full approval from his father, as well. We are very clear on this: He can love whomever he wants, wear whatever he wants, do whatever he wants. A transvestite nurse who dates transgendered men? Sure! As long as he's home for the holidays.

Or, more to the point, as long as he's happy. And there's the rub. If pink makes him happy, even if only now and then (because mostly he plays superheroes and builds with Legos and reads), then I want him to have access to it. I am not, however, the only one in his life, and neither is his dad.

He goes to a public school, and while this is the kind of public school where some of the coolest 8-year-old boys come to class with their Beanie Babies every day, it is still public, which is to say, in the world. The real world, not the world as his father and I would shape it, but the world that struggles daily and mightily with the push and pull between individuality and collective consciousness, between political correctness and political neanderthalism, between what really matters and what we only think matters.

Ultimately, that's where I would have him, right in the thick of it. To me, this is human, to be in society, slogging away at these questions, wringing out what is best for oneself while fighting that which would diminish us all. The trouble is, he's 5.

He doesn't know he's part of the grand arc of civilization, carving the shape of humanity with the very act of living. No, he's in kindergarten. He wants the kids he likes to like him; he wants them to think him "awesome." He wants to be safe. Gender identity, I would wager, is pretty low on his list.

So when he chides me, as he has, for not dressing his little sister in pink, I know that what he's really doing is figuring out how to be a boy. And that's fine. We all have to do that kind of figuring out, and it never really ends.

The question for me is: How do I allow him the space to do that in the real world, while still teaching him to blaze the trail that he needs? Today it's pink, but later there may be tattoos to assay, or a popular war to protest.

I don't want to tell him that what other kids might "say" doesn't matter--it does, it matters a very great deal, to him if not to me. At the same time, neither do I want to teach him to hide himself away, protect his less conventional faces through subterfuge. If I have one child-rearing motto, it might be: "No closets, ever."

So how do you teach a very small boy that the only way to love yourself is to be yourself, in the full knowledge that some people might not like you at all? That sometimes you don't know who you are until someone laughs at you--that sometimes being yourself requires courage, and there is no courage without fear.

Personally, I fake it. I respond as things come up, hoping that in his little head, my bon mots are being knit together in some sort of cohesive, butt kicking whole. Hoping that he will see in his parents' lives a decently maintained balance between enjoying the group and striking out on our own, and that he will know that, no matter what, he will always have us. Even if he grows up to be a pants-wearing, woman-marrying surgeon or something.

The other day, out of nowhere, he asked me why he has that princess plate. "Uh, you wanted it," I said, swiftly riffling through my mental files for just the right response to the impending machoization of my firstborn, "so we gave it to you." He looked past his pizza to the pink, the ribbons, the fluttery eyelashes and the birdies and said, "I shouldn't have this!"

And then, before I could even begin to react, he said, "But I still like eating off it," and did. Ah, hope.

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