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# 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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## 2003 Coming Sundays

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### Taking the Pulpit

**Sunday**, 10 AM, November 16, Karen Isebrands Brown, ["The Interconnected Environment"](#)

**Sunday**, 10 AM, November 30, Terry Hoyt, ["The UUSC Guest at Your Table Program"](#)

**Sunday**, 10 AM, December 14, Rev. Sydney Morris and Chaplain Bob Barnes, "Advent."

**Saturday**, December 20, 5 PM, Rev. Sydney Morris, "A Winter Solstice Celebration." (Potluck following service)

**Sunday**, December 28, 10 AM, Kate Egan-Bruhy and Mark Bruhy, "Ghana: Communities in Continuity and Change."

**Sunday**, January 11, 10 AM, Bob Kovar.

### Adult Religious Education

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

## Announcements

There will be a Membership Committee meeting at the fellowship on Thursday, November 6 at 2:00 P. M. ▪

The Fellowship will hold its annual **Thanksgiving dinner**, Thursday, November 27, call Alan or Sharon VanRaalte, 715 453 8083, for details of time and what to bring. ▪

**Refrigerator blues and greens:** If you bring food items (salad dressings, butter, condiments, etc.) to pot lucks or other fellowship functions please take them home with you. Else they end up getting moldy in our refrigerator and leave a terrible odor in our kitchen. Thank you, Beverly Strauss, Hospitality Committee ▪

**Building Expansion Committee Meeting**, October 10<sup>th</sup>, minutes: With board

approval the Building Expansion Committee will function as a steering committee and as needs arise will form task forces to assist in this project. This will include such areas as design and furnishings, finance and construction. The Strategic Plan was reviewed and updated with the purpose of developing a physical and fiscal plan to present to the board. We discussed various options on how to expand and improve our building. We will have preliminary drafts on possible changes after the first of the year and with direction from the board will host a membership meeting during the summer of 2004 to present our ideas. Dick Fields ▪

The UUA announces the creation of the **Pacific Southwest District, Fire Relief Fund** to help our congregations, their members, and their communities. At this time our congregations in Poway and La Mesa have been most affected by the fires with at least three people having lost their homes and three dozen families having been evacuated from their homes. The ten wild fires blazing across southern California have impacted at least a dozen of our congregations. In addition the staff of our Camp deBenneville Pines has been evacuated as a precautionary step. Checks to support the fund should be sent to the PSWD at 12355 Moorpark Street, Studio City, CA 91604. For more information contact the Rev. Ken Brown at kbrown@uua.org or 818-769-5917. ▪

The Southeast Unitarian Universalist Winter Institute, Inc. in Miami is all about having fun in the warm Miami sunshine! S.W.I.M.'s annual **intergenerational retreat for UUs and like-minded kids of all ages** happens every year from Dec 26th through Jan 1st. Play, laugh, sing, and celebrate New Year's Eve at S.W.I.M.! S.W.I.M. is a member of the Council of Unitarian Universalist Camps & Conferences. For more information, see <http://www.swimuu.org> ▪

The Social Justice Committee is sponsoring a **Citizenship Activity night on Friday, November 14, 2003 at 7:00 PM** at the Fellowship. Jerry Woolpy will outline the expansion of the USA Patriot Act that is now before Congress and anyone with a cause they would like to present is invited to make a short presentation. Bring any petitions you want signed. Paper, envelopes, and stamps will be available for letter writing. There will be a couple of short tributes to past activists to get everyone in the mood and desserts, coffee and tea to keep us going. Friends are always welcome too. ▪

## Joys & Concerns

**Claire Polfus** was pictured in the Lakeland Times commemorating her rank among the top 34,000 high school student test scores nationwide in the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Program. ▪

On Sunday, November 2, we collected \$330 for the **Lakeland Area Food Pantry**. Way to go Fellowship, thanks Elinore Sommerfeld for her fine leadership in this endeavor. Earlier, on October 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, Elinore led us in packing and distributing food at the Lakeland Area Food Pantry. A big thanks to Don and Joyce Barnes, Barbara and Jon Beutler and his friend, Maya, Paul Braunstein, Harley and Ruth Erbs, Sydney Morris and her young friend, Patrick and Tom Sommerfeld. We distributed nearly 120 bags of food to individuals and families in our community. ▪

Thanks to all who assisted in the **highway clean-up**. We had a good turn out. The work went quickly and we had a good time, despite the job at hand.

Katie and Mark ▪

**Dan Padberg** writes in a letter sent 10/06/03: This morning, with the careful monitoring of the Physical Therapist I walked a couple of blocks. The doctor has taken off the weight restrictions allowing full weight on my new hip. The period of rehabilitation is not over, but it is coming to completion. During the last few weeks, many people have expressed interest and concern about my surgery and sent their love, prayers, and best wishes. Those cards, calls, and emails were a great help in keeping a "healthy attitude" and they were certainly enjoyed and appreciated. Thank you. ▪

The Oakland, CA, UU Church has a special project (Project Harvest Hope) to support **Transylvanian Unitarian villages** as they move from what is essentially subsistence farming to producing products for sale. One of the villages is starting a dairy farm. At the joint service with Houghton and Marquette in August, we had a special collection to support this village. Final totals are now in and, thanks to late contributions and another special collection at Houghton, we have sent \$500 to Project Harvest Hope. This \$500 will keep one cow fed for 6 months of the year it will take until it becomes productive. For more information or to make a contribution of your own, check the internet at [www.harvesthope.uua.org](http://www.harvesthope.uua.org)

Tom Sommerfeld ▪

Our Alzheimer Walk team raised the most money of any team in the **Alzheimer Walk** this fall in Minocqua. And Dan Randello raised the most as an individual. Thanks to Dan and the rest who got out and undertook this. Dan and Charmaine have the plaques that were awarded to us for our effort. Nice work Dan and Charmaine! ▪

## Notes from the President

As almost everyone in the fellowship knows a number of us participated in the Welcoming Congregation curriculum. At the conclusion of that study course the group unanimously recommended that the Fellowship become a welcoming congregation. This is done by taking a congregational vote and would entail adding language to our by-laws that emphasize that we are a welcoming congregation. The Board has discussed this at their October meeting and decided to hold a vote on our by-laws after the service on Sunday, December 14th. The proposed by-law change would add the following sentence to the "Purpose" section of our by-laws, "As a Welcoming Congregation, we promote the full participation of persons in all our activities without regard to race, color, sex, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age or national origin, and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or any particular religious belief or creed." We would also add to the last sentence of our membership section the language in quotations as follows: It is specifically understood that membership is open to all qualified persons regardless of race, color, sex, "disability", affectional or sexual orientation, age or national

origin, "and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or any particular religious belief or creed."

The Adult RE committee (made up of those who attend the regular Adult RE Sunday session) talked about what they would like to see as additional adult RE. They liked the idea of Rev. Morris' after service programs and unanimously endorsed the idea of pursuing the Study/Action Issue selected by delegates at the 2003 General Assembly in Boston. This year's selected issue is "Criminal Justice and Prison Reform". Congregations are invited to engage themselves in a two year of study and action on the issue with programs of discussion, public fitness, service, education, advocacy, and community organization.

We are looking forward to our getting together on Thanksgiving for our dinner at the Fellowship. Everyone is invited to come. Please contact Sharon VanRaalte at 453-8083 if you want to come.

In closing with winter soon upon us it is a time to reflect on the season many of us really enjoy. It's a time when peace comes over the Northwoods. Buried in a blanket of snow it is a time for renewal. As Irma Braunstein brought up at our recent talking circle we need to slow down and smell the roses. Curling up in front of a fire, listening to the snowfall--who needs all that summer traffic?

Terry Hoyt

## **NUUF BOARD MEETING NOTES** (approved)

October 10, 2003

Present: Terry Hoyt, Reverend Sydney Morris, Tom Sommerfeld, Alan VanRaalte, and Mark Bruhy

Minutes from last meeting: Terry moved that the minutes from the last meeting be approved, Tom seconded, and the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Tom Sommerfeld distributed the monthly treasurer's report, which has been filed with the monthly meeting notes. Alan moved to approve the treasurer's report, Terry seconded, and the motion carried. Sydney asked if a "committee spending request form" has been completed, and Tom said that it had, and copies will soon be distributed to committee chairs.

### **New Business**

Board Policy on committee spending - Terry asked how the Board should handle committee expenditures? That is, should the Board review and approve each and every request - what is the policy? Alan suggested that if a committee is within budget, the Treasurer can approve a request, and if the committee is over budget, the request should go to the Board. Tom agreed with this suggested approach, though another suggestion was to put a dollar limit on each requested expenditure. Terry suggested expenditures should be left to the discretion of the treasurer. Terry moved that the Board approve this approach, Tom seconded, and the motion carried. Additionally, Alan suggested it would be helpful to have a report of the monthly pledges received, to review in comparison to what has been pledged. Tom said that this will be included in his new reporting format.

Social Responsibility Committee - In a related matter, Terry said the board must address “social responsibility committee” spending. Alan suggested that there are legal responsibilities regarding our tax-exempt status, and Terry suggested that this has been discussed at the past annual meeting. Terry said that the real question is to whom the committee should give money. Alan suggested that the committee should, in the budget development process, define who they plan to give money to, so that the proposed budget can be approved at the annual meeting. At present, the committee has a budget without specification, but when recipients are defined, the Board will ask that the proposal go to the congregation for approval. The method of approval will be later determined.

Finance Committee Responsibilities - Finance Committee (FC) responsibilities were discussed at the last meeting, and deferred to this meeting. The FC is not a standing committee, and the Board has taken over many of its responsibilities because the FC really hasn't done what it has been assigned to do. To clarify, Terry read the description of the FC's responsibilities. Sydney expressed concern at the idea of a Board-run Canvass, due to wanting to protect the Board from overload. Terry said that he felt that the Board should become more involved with this committee, as well as other committees. He suggested that the Board should become more familiar with how the FC works, so the Board can instruct others how they too can become more involved. It was suggested that the Board have a meeting dedicated to this issue, that is, achieving a better understanding of the functions. The FC is essentially inactive, and its members include Dick Fields and Patty Buehler. If the Finance Committee is to address its responsibilities, it should meet quarterly. Tom said that it might be helpful to have the support of the FC in conducting his responsibilities as Treasurer, but he needs a little more time in his position to know for sure. Terry suggested that is why the Board should, at least for now, should take more responsibility in addressing the FC's responsibilities, and assist Tom in his duties. Sydney added that the Board can facilitate effective communication between the FC, the Board, and the congregation. It was noted that Dick will soon leave for the winter, and Patty has asked that, for the mean time, she be less involved because of personal responsibilities. Sydney suggested it would be productive to discuss the canvass, among other FC responsibilities, at a future Board meeting). She said she would distribute a publication entitled “Ten Ways to Run a Canvass for Fellowships” to the Board as a means of addressing the canvass. For instance, one model recommends that the canvass committee can collate the committee requests, but the Board would then make the hard decisions regarding what should be funded at what level. Regarding committee budget requests, some congregation have a process in which the chair of each committee attends a meeting with the Board, in February or March, to discuss budget requests in preparation for the annual meeting.

In summary, regarding the FC's responsibilities, the Board agreed that it meet with the FC in November (Dick Fields through a conference call link), go through the FC's responsibilities. In preparation for such a meeting, the Board will develop an agenda that includes discussion of the canvass, the budget process, and what they've done in the past. Terry will speak with the FC membership, and arrange a time to meet. This meeting will serve as the Board's monthly meeting for November, and will take place on a Monday,

Friday or Saturday night, preferably a late Saturday afternoon, perhaps combined with dinner.

Children's RE Committee - Sydney requested that the President formally write a letter to Charmaine Winters, and in the letter state her responsibilities, the time parameters and her remuneration of \$500.00 for services rendered. It was agreed that she should be paid monthly at \$50 per month for 10 months. Terry suggested it should also be noted that Charmaine must complete a W9 form for tax purposes, which he will be able to provide. Sydney agreed to send the details of such a letter to Terry after phoning Andrea. Terry said he is prepared to write such a letter, and the Board agreed that he should do so.

Building Use Requests - Terry stated that there are no new building use requests. He added that there have been no problems with those who are currently using the facility, and noted that the "drumming group" is continuing to leave a donation each time they meet at the Fellowship.

Minister's Report - With regard to her four primary responsibilities, in this month's report Sydney focused on adult religious education. She first asked about the Religious Education committee, and her responsibilities and relationship with that committee. Specifically, she expressed a desire to work more closely with that committee in determining what courses should be offered to the benefit of the congregation. Alan suggested that it might be helpful to have something on RE Sundays that relates to the scope of UU ministry, such as the curriculum that Julie Wambach presented last year. It was also noted that some curricula require considerable work, such as Julie's program.

During the discussion, Sydney asked the Board how she can better serve the Fellowship through working with the RE process. Terry asked Sydney if she felt there is a need in this regard not currently being met. In response, she said that one of her responsibilities is to enhance the Fellowship's connection with the broader UU movement, its history as well as its current range. In addressing this responsibility, Alan commented that at his past UU Church, he and Sharon participated in a series that was called "fireside chats with the minister," done six or so times during the year. The Board found this suggestion of interest. Further, Sydney noted that she is interested in conducting the "Safe Congregation" curriculum as well as the "UU identify identity" curriculum, both of which would focus on providing participants a clearer understanding of Unitarian Universalism. Sydney said she recently attended the UUMA retreat and meeting, and has ordered a poster she saw there. Specifically, the poster displays famous UUs, and she thought such a poster could contribute to discussion topics for the UU identity curriculum. In conclusion, Sydney said that she would like to invite congregation members, such as Joyce Barnes, Candace Zahn Kane, Jerry Woolpy and others, to an Adult RE meeting to discuss how she can work more effectively in ways that would be of interest and benefit to congregation. In order to coordinate this year's AE activities, she asked that a meeting be scheduled, though not on the normal AE Sunday since she would not be able to participate. It was suggested that such a meeting be held in conjunction with the November 2nd Adult RE committee meeting. In other matters, Sydney announced a youth overnight lock-in on Nov. 1st with youth from Houghton, Minocqua and Conserve School. Three mothers from Houghton will attend. There will be a tour of Conserve school at 1PM that day for anyone who wants to

come.

Welcoming Congregation Vote - it was the recommendation of the “Welcoming Congregation” (WE) participants that a vote be taken, by the congregation, regarding becoming a WE (a UUA designation that includes the presentation of a plaque and the Board agrees that WE become a standing Board agenda item. It was suggested that a congregational vote, advertised 15 days in advance, might take place immediately following a service. The notice of such a vote would be advertised through the newsletter, with a specific description of responsibilities associated with WE status. It was suggested that the vote could take place on a service Sunday, i.e., at a special meeting immediately following the service. The Board agreed, and it was suggested that the special meeting take place on a Sunday in December, the 14th is preferred. The announcement will be placed in the Newsletter, and will be sent out both email and hard mail to ensure fair notice.

Talking Circle - Terry stated that the recent “Talking Circle on Congregation Growth” had been recorded. It was suggested that each Board member listen to the recording (particularly those who did not attend), and after doing so, the proceedings should be discussed at a future Board meeting. Doris Eberlein currently has the tape, and it was agreed that Alan contact Doris and ask if we could receive the tape for duplication and distribution to the Board.

Secretary’s Notes - Mark Bruhy mentioned that he has placed all the Board’s meeting notes, associated documents and records, in six three-inch binders. The binders are referenced as follows: 1989-1995, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2003-2004 and 2005-2005. They have been placed on a bookshelf in the Fellows’ office, until a more secure method of storage can be determined. It was recommended that the security of these records be addressed. Recommendations included duplicating all records, either by making hard copies, or scanning and copying on CD Rom. Another suggestion was to secure a large fire-proof box, or safe, for secure storage. Whatever method is selected, expenses associated with implementation must be addressed in planning for the next fiscal year.

Next Meeting - The date of the November Board meeting will be determined based on the availability of the Finance Committee to meet with the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bruhy ▪

## **Social Justice Committee Meeting**

October 2, 2003

The meeting was called to order by Audrey Williams, Chair. Members present were Audrey, Alan, Sharon, Sydney and Joe.

The event being planned for October 25 was discussed at length. It was concluded that

the best course of action would be to postpone until Friday, November 14. The tentative plan for that evening is to begin at 7:00P.M. with a promotion of Active Citizenship. Everyone will be welcome to attend but the publicity will be directed to those that come to the Fellowship.

We will hear a brief review of models set by favorite heroic revolutionaries and discuss the lessons to be learned from them. There will be readings from Patriot Act II and all will be encouraged to freely express various opinions (pro and con) as to what the appropriate response of an Active Citizen should be toward it. There will be an opportunity for attendees to appeal for letters to be written in support of their favorite cause. There will then be time to write such letters.

The meeting will close with a dessert pot luck.

We will attempt to book Professor Zolton Grossman for a Martin Luther King birthday celebration for the community at large at the Fellowship Hall on January 18, 2004. Joe Strauss ▪

## **Growth Workshop Summary**

Tony Zoars

October 25, 2003

First Unitarian Church

Wausau, Wisconsin

One prime point stressed by the workshop was that sustained growth results from a conscious congregational decision. Not only must the congregation reach out for new members, it must also strive to retain existing members. Growth is not a byproduct of planning, it must be planned.

Churches are “living” institutions that are constantly changing. In general churches fall into four categories:

Family Style Church. Membership is usually less than 60. All the members know each other. Clergy is usually part-time and short term. Real leadership rests with matriarchs or patriarchs.

Pastoral Style Church. Membership is 60 - 150. There exists a family-friendship network which is unified around the role of the minister / pastor. The church is big enough to look and feel like a real church, but small enough to retail a personal feel.

Program Based Church Membership is 150 – 500, larger and more diverse. The membership consists of several interest groups and spans several generations. There is a full time minister, larger staff, more programs, and lay ministry.

Corporate or Institutional Church: Membership is over 500. The church plays a significant role in the community. There is a large professional staff. Programs are diverse with a variety of worship / spiritual opportunities, educational programs, and social outreach.

Transition between these categories is not necessarily easy or guaranteed. With growth comes tension and conflict within the congregation. Churches have been known to vacillate, unable to sustain the move to the next level.

### **First steps**

An important first step in the growth process is the articulation of a mission statement. This statement addresses why the congregation exists. What does it mean to be a Unitarian Universalist congregation in your community? How does your congregation support individual faith development people of all ages? What is its Covenant – how do you, as people of faith, agree to be together in good times and in challenging times?

What is your congregation's vision? Where is the congregation going? Do you perceive numerical growth? Will the congregation grow in maturity and broaden its role in the community? How does the congregation react to new ideas, new programs, or new ideas? Is the congregation open and attentive?

### **Important Actions**

Is the congregation easy to find for the first time visitor? Review signs and directions as if you were a first time visitor. Websites are very good for providing information and directions to visitors and potential members.

How are guests and visitors welcomed into your congregation? What do you do with guests? Are there specified greeters? Are greeters knowledgeable about the congregation? Do they know the congregation mission? Can they provide information about the congregation, UU-ism, congregational history? What do we do for families with children? Is the building handicapped accessible? Is there a plan to help those in wheel chairs or crutches? Is there greeter training?

Are members of the congregation coached to seek out visitors during coffee hour? Is there a plan to involve board members and committee members in greeting visitors?

How do you follow up? Who is tasked with contacting visitors? A phone call from a current member is an excellent way to keep in contact with visitors. Current members can be matched with visitors by location, interests, and children. ▀

## **NUU Views**

**Question:** Do we, as a UU congregation, have a responsibility to grow:

**Answer** from Wenda Sheard: Let me start by asking the question to: “Do we, as a UU congregation, have a responsibility to welcome new members into our congregation?” My answer to this question is an emphatic “yes!”

Just as we would never tell someone who sincerely wishes to join our congregation “no you can't join us,” we should avoid “putting off” potential new members. We have responsibility, pursuant to both the letter and spirit of our UU principles, to do whatever is reasonable to help people in sympathy with our principles to feel welcome to join our congregation.

In my view, we also have a responsibility to “share the good news” about our congregation and about our religion. We ought not shy away from advertising. How can

we fulfill our mission as a beacon in the Northwoods unless we do some advertising and some evangelizing?

Yes, I used the “e” word. I recognize that many UUs have bad “other religion” memories about evangelism, but such bad memories can be cured.

If you ever get a chance to read Rev. John Morgan about UU evangelism, please do. He was our first minister ever at the Unitarian Fellowship of Athens, Ohio. His evangelistic writings and sermons convinced me that we all have a responsibility to share our good news---the news that there’s a religion that lets individuals embark on their own free and responsible searches for truth and meaning.

That one principle, alone, is enough reason to shout from a mountain top about UUism. People in pain inside other religions, or in pain inside their own heads, need to hear what we have to offer. We have a responsibility to let others know about UUism.

Now, back to the original question: do we have a responsibility to grow? Nope. We have no bald responsibility to grow. But we have a rich responsibility to do all the things that typically cause UU congregations to grow.

**Answer** from Jerry Buerer: Today I attended the talking circle at the Fellowship where growth was the topic of discussion.

Early on it was pointed out that there are several types of growth, size being just one of them.

Visibility in the community is another. I would like to make a few comments regarding an aspect of size that is not that easy to face.

The Icelandic-American writer from Minnesota, Bill Holm, writes about the notion of generational turnover--his phrase being the "conscious awareness of generational turnover." By this he means that somewhere along the line, as people age, they become aware of how members of given age cohorts have a tendency to drop off life's radar screen. As children, typically we first see our great-grandparents or grandparents leave us.

Eventually it's our parents cohort. And then one day we wake up and say, "Holy cow--now it's members of my own cohort!"

We have to face the fact that we are an aging congregation. Many of us--myself included--are on Medicare which means we're sixty-five or older. What I am saying, as tactfully as possible, is that apart from simply growing in number, we sooner or later, will be facing the challenge of simply replacing members. Generational turnover is a part of life.

It's not something over which we should lose sleep, and hopefully it's not something we'll need to face for quite some time, but it is something we need to think about when discussing the issue of growth.

**Answer** from Dick Fields: We periodically lose members for various reason, such as, move to another area, death, dissatisfaction or lack of interest. In order to survive as a Fellowship it is vital that we attract and keep new members for no other reason that to replace those that we lose. As a denomination it is our duty to make our presence know in the community so that others who have a similar liberal religious philosophy can find a place where they will feel welcomed and can expand their spiritual development. There is no better place to develop friends, socialize, express and

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expand your liberal religious views, be on committees that support your interests and have an impact on the community that the Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

The question for the next NUUSLETTER is: Mark Shields said recently that there are three enduring issues in American politics. They are peace, prosperity and the subtext of race. As UUs we have expressed ourselves repeatedly about peace, we enjoy prosperity, but we are puzzled by the continuing issues surrounding race. How might we act to remove race as a subtext here and around the world? Send answers to [jerryw@earlham.edu](mailto:jerryw@earlham.edu) by December 14. ▀

### **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

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

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

Previous NUUsletters and the congregation directory are available at [nuuf.com](http://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, December 14, 2003

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