
NUUSLETTER

NORTHWOODS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

A Beacon of Light in the Northwoods

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2001 **Coming Sundays**

Taking the Pulpit

Sunday, 10 AM, October 7, Rev. Denise Tracy.

Sunday, 10 AM, October 21, Rev. Sydney Morris.

Sunday, 10 AM, November 4, Dan Rondello, "A Critique On The Principles And Purposes."

Sunday, 10 AM, November 18, Guest at your Table Program.

Sunday, 10 AM, December 2, Tim Kratz. **Sunday**, Evening Program, December 16, Rev Sydney Morris. ▪

Adult Religious Education

On alternate Sundays at 10:30 AM, when we do not have services, we watch and discuss videotapes on religious and ethical topics or we discuss issues of spirit and meaning to our group. ▪

Note from the President

The fall equinox may be a time of astronomical balance with equal lengths of days and nights, but this year it doesn't seem a time of earthly balance. The beautiful fall colors we are starting to enjoy seem to me somehow discordant with the recent tragedies, the grief and anxiety all of us feel. The backlash against Arab-Americans clashes with our basic principles, and maybe for some of us thoughts of retribution and revenge are not in balance with how we usually think of ourselves. Personally, I find this a time of sadness, one in which I have trouble finding harmony in all of the discordant happenings.

On a more local note, because of recent changes in my travel schedule, we have found it necessary to postpone for one week our All-Fellowship meeting to discuss the potential building addition. The meeting is now scheduled for Saturday, October 13, 2001 at 6:30 PM. I am sorry for any inconvenience this may cause and I hope you will all be able to attend and express your thoughts. If you are unable to attend, I welcome you to share your

thoughts with me via email, letter, or conversation.

I usually end this column with a single word. Sometimes it seems corny, but not today.

Peace.

Tim Kratz ▪

Joys & Concerns

While a small group of Adult RE NUUs were discussing how our country might respond to terrorism with policies of containment and defense, at the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee - where the Rev. Andrew Kennedy and intern minister Matthew Cockrum spoke against rushing to war - a standing-room-only crowd sang all four verses of "We Shall Overcome." Children made white paper doves and hung them from the branches of a crab apple tree at the church. "Let us not quickly go to war as a nation, but let wisdom prevail," Kennedy said. "Let us seek justice, yes, but not vengeance, not revenge, not vindictiveness. For as Martin Luther King said, 'The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind.' " [Paul Braunstein from Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 9/17/01] ▪

Announcements

Jeanine Semon invites all to an exhibit of sixteen of her paintings at the LRC building, Nicolet College (third building on the left) and to a reception Monday evening, October 1, from 6:00 to 7:30 P.M. The show, entitled "Creation, A Dawning," will run from September 19th to October 14th. See also her website: jeaninesdream.com and ask her about her exhibit in Oshkosh. ▪

There will be a workshop on The Biology and Philosophy of Stems Cells, Wednesday, October 3rd from 1-3 PM, at the Rhinelander Airport, sponsored by The Institute for Learning in Retirement and taught by Jerry Woolpy. See Ruth Erbs for details. Seventy-six people have already signed up. ▪

There will be an all congregation meeting for further discussion about a possible building addition, Saturday, October 13, at 6:30 PM. ▪

NUUF BOARD MEETING 8-21-01

Present: Tim Kratz, Joan Hauer, Dawn McCusker, Ruth Erbs, and Patty Buehler.

Minutes of last meeting: approved.

Treasurer's report:

7-28-01--8-19-01: expenses-\$3249.06

revenue-\$891.56.

Checking account balance-\$559.84. Paul Braunstein renewed our bank note at the same interest rate.

New Business: The board agreed that fellowship members must receive

board approval to hang anything on the fellowship walls upstairs.

The board will meet with Angela Merkert, CMD director on September 9, at 11:30. [Notes from this meeting follow these minutes.]

The all fellowship meeting to continue discussion about a building addition will be Saturday, October 6, at 6:30. Our goal for the October 6 all fellowship meeting is to come to consensus. If we can't achieve consensus, we will table discussion or proceed with consideration for the dissenters.

We discussed the need for committee chairpersons and for the board to monitor committees. Discussion about the Children's RE committee and Social Justice followed. A suggestion was made to ask Liesa Nesta to join the Social Justice committee. We decided to talk about committees and bylaws at the next meeting. We will get information about committees in the next NUUSLETTER. Next Meeting: Monday, September 24, 5:30.

Respectfully submitted:

Patty Buehler ▪

MEETING WITH ANGELA MERKERT 9-9-01

Angela advised us to have a vision 5-7 years out. What do we want to achieve? What is the best way to achieve our vision?

There are others ways to grow in addition to increasing membership or the size of our building.

A room 80% full feels full, Angela reported.

If we decided to proceed with plans to add on to the building, there would be the possibility of receiving a low cost loan from the UUA. \$10,000 from Chalice Lighters was another possibility. We discussed the need to get more chalice lighters within the fellowship.

Angela applauded our use of a talking circle. She suggested that 85-90% approval for a plan is good. We shouldn't expect 100%. We should talk to dissenters and ask if they'll stay in community if we proceed against their point of view. But we must be mindful that not proceeding due to opposition from a small minority will cause resentment with some of the majority.

Angela will send a copy of her sermon about growth to Patty Buehler.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Buehler ▪

NUU Views

Question: In a major address on evil, at this summer's General Assembly, Paul Razor said, "We might say that evil is that which destroys life or that prevents or inhibits life from flourishing. It is dehumanizing - preventing the full unfolding of the powers of human life... To resist evil is the work of religious practice and religious community... Much of our social justice work makes only a political statement, not a faith statement. It can speak only to the intellect, and seeks a political response. But when we deal with the spiritual aspect, we are making a faith claim, and what we seek is a spiritual response." Homophobia is one of the evils widespread in our society. We see it in the discriminatory practices of the Boy Scouts and of the Salvation Army. As a small but mighty group of Northwoods UUs, taking account of Paul Razor's insights, how ought we respond to the evils perpetrated by these organizations? [uua.org/ga/ga01/3088.html]

Answer from Julie Wambach: Paul Razor's attempt to nudge discussion of several liberal causes from the social and political to the religious is commendable, and I regret that he has not yet accomplished his goal. With all respect to Mr. Razor, his choice of the term "evil" to describe individuals, groups and ideologies with which we UU's disagree does not improve public discourse. Some words, such as "evil," are invectives. They so inflame listeners that the original discussion is overshadowed by a new set of disagreements--and hurts.

Remember the public rhetoric following the attack on New York and Washington, D.C.? Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda political group, as well as the conservative Muslim Taliban were designated "evil." Remember when Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini labeled America "The Great Satan" and we U. S. citizens "The Infidels?" Remember the Irish Republic Army calling England evil? These are calls to holy war. It does not work for Razor to simply redefine the term evil. Neither its history nor continuing context can be whisked away. Evil assumes a world of duality where an omnipotent God endows humans with free choice. Those who choose good are like us; those who choose evil are outside the

sacred fold. To me, none of this rings of UUism.

The public disagreement between the Unitarian Universalist Association and the national officials of the Boy Scouts of America began when the UUA defended boys who professed themselves atheists, boys who were being excluded from the BSA. Then, the UUA defended boys who declared themselves gay. I was proud of the UUA leadership that opposed BSA's national officials. (Keep in mind, not all Scout leaders agree with their national officers on these points.) The UUA first tried persuasion, even compromise. When nothing worked, the UUA took a firm public position against the national BSA policy. Our UUA leaders, especially John Buehrens, wrote editorials and participated in community debates. Not once did any representative of the UUA call any person, their actions or their beliefs "evil." Rather, they continued to repeat our UUA principles in a very firm and respectful manner. The BSA never relented, but the UUA leadership was supported by several Protestant denominations and liberal Jews.

That is the approach I suggest for our Northwoods UU Fellowship. Each boy and his family has to decide if he wants to leave or bring about changes from within the Boy Scouts. Whenever any of us is confronted with discrimination against Gays, Bisexuals, Lesbians, and Transgender persons, our UU responsibility is to speak against such practices. Repeat our UU principles. But, leave words such as evil, sinful, wicked, and immoral out of it. We may not convince everyone, but name-calling will only hurt us and those we wish to help.

Answer from Terry Hoyt: So little gets reported about the Salvation Army "evil" because of the good they do. I can't support their efforts anymore because to do so gives them the power to continue to do the evil that they do. The September issue of Church and State tells the story. In 1987 they fired a woman in Pascagoula, Mississippi from her job as a victims' assistant coordinator at a domestic violence center. She believed she was fired because of her Wiccan religious beliefs. She brought a successful lawsuit against the Salvation Army reportedly receiving a settlement of 1.25 million dollars. The article goes on to describe how the Army has been working hand in hand with the Bush administration to make it possible for religious organizations to discriminate even though they would receive money from the faith-based initiatives.

They are using the same theories the Supreme Court used in the Boy Scout case. What the Army is proposing is to alter an Office and Management and Budget regulation to forbid federal agencies from awarding money to local governments that require religious groups to adopt policies that "are inconsistent with the beliefs and practices" of the organizations. The Army planned on spending \$1 million dollars to lobby for these changes. I recommend that you read the article in its entirety. I also recommend that we stop supporting the Salvation Army. I will not be ringing their bells or donating to them so that they can hire lobbyists to push the agenda of the Religious Right.

Answer from Jerry Buerer: The policies of groups such as the Boy Scouts and the Salvation Army certainly need to be challenged, and they are. One of our members has opted out of coordinating the SA holiday fund raising drive in this community, after nearly two decades of doing so. That's quite a statement; he's to be commended. My response, at least with respect to the SA is somewhat different than it would have been prior to Sept 11th. Rather than refusing to contribute financially, given the gravity of the circumstances, I will give, but with a clear message, noting that unless their policies change, future contributions will not be forthcoming. It's a dilemma, but much of UUism is about how to deal with dilemmas and social complexities which require more than knee jerk solutions. The Boy Scouts? They're in denial--what more can I say? Falwell and Robertson? I guess that's why, as one who tries to base my life on many of the teachings of the Galilean Sage, fellows like this help explain why, when push comes to shove, I prefer to refer to myself as a "Yeshuite" as opposed to a "Christian." I want some distance there, believe you me! And for the really disheartened, keep in mind, the war against homophobia is being won, small step by small step. That may be of small solace to victims of discrimination today, but on the brighter side, one can look at the progress of the last three decades and take considerable comfort. Maybe, as UUs, we could make quite a statement by taking over where Paul left off--we'll coordinate the SA's Christmas drive this year-- but this year only, unless they change their policies. Be interesting to see how the Lakeland Times would handle that story!

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Perspective on Aging

From Beloit College

The people who are starting college this fall across the nation were born in 1982.

They have no meaningful recollection of the Reagan Era and probably did not know he had ever been shot.

There has been only one Pope.

They were 11 when the Soviet Union broke apart and do not remember the Cold War.

They have never feared a nuclear war.

They are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up.

Tianamen Square means nothing to them.

Their lifetime has always included AIDS.

The expression you sound like a broken record means nothing to them since they have never owned a record player.

As far as they know, stamps have always cost about 33 cents.

They have always had an answering machine.

Most have never seen a black-and-white TV.

Roller-skating has always meant inline for them.

Jay Leno has always been on the Tonight Show.

Popcorn has always been cooked in the microwave.

The Vietnam War is as ancient history to them as WWI, WWII, and the Civil War.

They have no idea that Americans were ever held hostage in Iran.

They can't imagine what hard contact lenses are.

They don't have a clue how to use a typewriter. ▀

Attention NUUSLETTER readers

Those who are not members may receive the NUUSLETTER by email free of charge or may opt to pay \$12 per year to have it mailed to them through the US Postal Service. Members are encouraged to receive the NUUSLETTER by email or they may have it posted to them. Notify jerryw@earlham.edu to receive the NUUSLETTER by email. We give special thanks to the 28 out of 55 subscribers who, by use of email, have helped to reduce our NUUSLETTER budget by \$500.

Next NUUSLETTER Deadline, Sunday, November 4, 2001.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
