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# NUUSLETTER

NORTHWOODS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

*A Beacon of Light in the Northwoods*

P.O. Box 253, Minocqua, WI 54548, <http://www.newnorth.net/~beckratz/nuuf/>

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Volume 4, Number 9

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## 2001 **Coming Sundays**

### **Taking the Pulpit**

**Sunday**, 10 AM, December 30,

Terry Hoyt, "This is the End"

**Sunday**, 10 AM, January 13, Bob Kovar

**Sunday**, 10 AM, January 27,

Rev. Sydney Morris,

**Sunday**, 10 AM, February 10, TBA

**Sunday**, 10 AM, February 24,

Rev. Sydney Morris ▪

### **Adult Religious Education**

On alternate Sundays at 10:30 AM, when we do not have services, we discuss topics relating religious and ethical issues to current events and we consider things that contribute to the spirit and meaning of our group. Since November 25<sup>th</sup> we have been discussing Karen Armstrong's book, Islam, a short history. The book is available from <http://shop.barnesandnoble.com> for \$12. We are also viewing a videotape 'Islam: Empire of Faith' a recent PBS-TV special. ▪

## **Note from the President**

Tim Kratz will not be submitting his usual piece in this issue. We extend our heartfelt condolences on the death of his father. ▪

## **Joys & Concerns**

Congratulations to Jean Polfus for being named First Team All-Conference, Cross-Country for her fine performance on the LUHS cross-country team. ▪

Thanks to Katy Bruhy, Tom Graber, Myrle Wasko, Patty Buehler, Alan and Sharon

VanRaalte, who helped Paul Braunstein at the Food Pantry on December 1 and 4. ▪

From Jerry Buerer: "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow! The halo was unscrewed and removed from my head today, exactly 10 weeks from the time of the accident. I'm one happy cowboy, though I do now wear a support collar for three or four weeks. It is big relief--let me tell you. The removal was somewhat more painful than anticipated, but... who cares--it's over with. It will seem strange not to have little kids staring at me but I certainly won't miss that aspect, that's for sure. And the blood clotted leg is feeling better too--much, much better, in fact." ▪

According to a report at the North American Lake Management Society's annual conference, carbureted two-cycle jet ski engines release 20-30 percent of their fuel unburned. But at Lake Tahoe three months after these engines were ban gas constituents in the water were reduced by 80 to 95 percent. ▪

If everyone in the U.S. drove a hybrid instead of a traditional car, we would save roughly 1.6 billion barrels of oil a year – far more than we currently import from the Middle East. [NYTimes Dec 9] ▪

### **Announcements**

**Winter Extravaganza!!!** Let's go play in the snow after our service on Sunday, January 13, 2002 at Raven Trail! Bring your cross-country skis or snowshoes for the outdoor fun. For those who don't care to join us on skis or snowshoes, bring games, puzzles or mittens and have fun building snow sculptures at the Fellowship Hall. We'll reconvene to warm our bodies and souls at the Fellowship with a feast of chili and friendship. Please sign up to bring either chili, breads, dessert or beverage. (There will be a sign up sheet posted in the kitchen.) We hope you can join us...any questions, call or email: Kate Egan-Bruhy 356-5745, [eganbru@newnorth.net](mailto:eganbru@newnorth.net)

Bev Strauss, 715-547-3385, [bevjoest@newnorth.net](mailto:bevjoest@newnorth.net) ▪

If you would like to be included in (or removed from) the distribution by email of national news of special interest to NUUs including pending legislation, and editorials, selected by Jerry Woolpy. Let me know at [jerryw@earlham.edu](mailto:jerryw@earlham.edu). (The current distribution list includes ten NUU households.) ▪

**CIRCLE DINNERS:** It is time to sign up for Circle Dinners, a winter activity in the Fellowship for the past few years. Groups are kept to a size to encourage conversation, an opportunity to know each other better. Members are invited to sign up, anticipating a monthly dinner with eight to ten others, rotating homes from January to April. Groups will be assigned, a host identified for each dinner. Hosts will provide a place, an entree, and beverages. The assigned guests will bring the other courses.

It is anticipated groups would gather in mid to late January, continue monthly until spring.

Please call or email, [hauerj@newnorth.net](mailto:hauerj@newnorth.net), 356-6540 after 6PM, if you want to be

involved or have questions.      Joan Hauer      ▪

### **NUUF BOARD MEETING    9-24-01**

Present: Tim Kratz, Ruth Erbs, Dawn McCusker, Don Barnes, Paul Braunstein, Terry Hoyt, Joan Hauer, and Patty Buehler.

New Business:

Food Pantry Report: Don Barnes informed the board about the reorganization of the Food Pantry. A new

Procedures Manual was written, approved by the Lakeland Ministerial Association and representatives of local churches. The manual will be before the Howard Young Health Care Foundation board on October 26. Howard Young handles the finance and accounting and provides liability insurance for the Food Pantry.

Don suggested we appoint another member from our fellowship to work with Don. We agreed to ask Kathy Graber. Paul will give Don a list of all those who have helped with the food pantry, so Don can give the list to HY. December 4 is the next date we are responsible for the Food Pantry distribution. We agreed that the NUUSLETTER should publish this information. The Food Pantry needs donations now more than in the past. 75 bag were distributed in August, which is unusually high for that time of year.

The next Lakeland Ministerial Association will meet in our building on October 11.

Lakeland Times Articles: We agreed that we should continue to submit articles to the Lakeland Times. Last year Tim and Sydney wrote articles. We agreed to have Terry Hoyt write an article about Teaching Tolerance, and to ask Sydney to write another article. Joyce Barnes' name was mentioned as a potential author. Don said he could sign up at the Ministerial Association Meeting for Lakeland Times spots.

Bylaws:

Patty Buehler recommended changing our bylaws under Associate Member to better reflect our current policies about Associate Members. The current bylaws indicate no difference between associate members and those we consider friends. Patty reported information from the UUA indicating that only those whose dues are paid by our fellowship can vote. Therefore, Patty recommended that the bylaws consider associate members similar to members except that they can't vote, and their dues are paid by another congregation. Terry Hoyt was reluctant to change the bylaws, and suggested we consider current associate members to be members with all rights of full members. Tim felt that the UUA wouldn't expect us to pay dues for a member whose dues was already paid by another congregation, in order to allow that member to vote. Terry agreed to contact the UUA to try and get clarification of their policies.

Treasurer's Report: Aug 26-Sept 15

Expenses-\$1100.94

Revenue-\$3050.90

Bank balance-\$2509.80

More New Business:

All fellowship meeting: The date was changed to October 13. Tim said he wanted to get a consensus to either continue to pursue plans for an addition or to stop. Letters from those who can't attend can be read at the meeting.

Yoga class: Pat Lindner requested permission to use the building on Thursday nights. Terry said she'd need liability insurance. It was mentioned that Ascension Lutheran allows yoga classes. Terry will call Dave Jensen about their liability situation. We discussed asking for a donation from Pat for use of the building. Terry suggested we act consistent with our Building Use Guidelines.

Minutes of last meeting: approved

Next meeting: November 5, 5:30

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Buehler ▪

### **NUUF BOARD MEETING 11-5-01**

Present: Tim Kratz, Dawn McCusker, Patty Buehler

Minutes of last meeting: approved

Treasurer's Report: Sept 26-Nov 5

expenses--\$2024.82

revenue---\$9676.58

bank balance----\$10161.56

New Business: Use of building for yoga class: We would need a rider on our insurance policy costing \$20-50 per year. The instructor would need a \$500,000 liability policy also. This is what Ascension Lutheran Church requires. Our insurance company would want evidence of the instructor's insurance. Tim notified Tony Polfus, who was the contact for Pat Lindner, the yoga instructor. We agreed Pat would be charged the cost of our rider.

By-laws: We agreed to bring the issue up at the next annual meeting. We would recommend to the fellowship to eliminate the associate member paragraph, giving our current associate members full member status with voting rights. We discussed asking members who also belong to another UU church to decide which church should pay UUA dues. This could be indicated on their pledge card.

Part-time Minister: Tim summarized the events that took place over the last few months, culminating in an interest to call a minister, specifically, Sydney Morris. Dawn suggested we make an official statement about tabling the idea of a building addition. She also questioned the process by which the minister issue has been deliberated, that is

bypassing the board. Tim explained how the interest in a minister started at a lunch at the Braunstein's, fueled by Denise Tracy, and the desire by many not to pass up a golden opportunity. Tim detailed some of the next steps: a general discussion at the meeting on 11-11, asking for financial support, voting on a recommendation from the ad hoc committee set up to study the issue, and writing a covenant and contract.

Next Meeting: no date was set. We decided to wait until after the 11-11 meeting. Respectfully submitted,

Patty Buehler ▪

## **The Pledge of Allegiance**

Letter from Glenda Walker to the Wausau Daily Herald on 10/28/2001

It might be of interest to your readers to know that several Christian sects (Baptists, Quakers, Mennonites, perhaps Jehovah's Witnesses, among others) obey the words attributed to Jesus in Matthew 5:33-37:

"Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

A number of Christian sects consider the Pledge of Allegiance prohibited by Jesus' admonition. They know what the pledge to our flag means and what our national anthem stands for. Their primary allegiance is simply to Jesus and their religion. Let us respect that. ...

I recited the pledge throughout grade school and high school before "under God" was added to the pledge. As a lifelong church member and minister (now retired), I don't think "under God" must be [included] in the pledge [in a religiously plural nation]. (Last sentence edited by Glenda, published with her permission.) ▪

## **NUU Views**

**Question:** To engage in the work of justice, we need to cultivate an attitude of humility, not arrogance. To claim this, we need to know that what comfort we have is claimed at the disempowerment and oppression of so many. Pogo said, "we have seen the enemy and it is us." ... So let us cultivate gratitude together. Let us strive for humility as we work for justice. We will need to develop some new language for this work. Dick Gilbert

talks about 'distributive justice,' for equitable justice, but I prefer the language of 'restorative justice.' As a religious community, we are called to restore our relationships. As we struggle, I pray we will not invest all our energy in argument. We can argue about our work on race, on economic justice. Our work is not to debate, although debate we need to do, or about resolutions, although that too we will need to do. Our work is to help the universe bend toward justice, and there is not only one-way to do that. [Quoted from a Sermon by Rev. William G. Sinkford "Where Race and Class Unite," November 4, 2001, [www.uua.org/cde/largechurch2001/worshiptext011104.html](http://www.uua.org/cde/largechurch2001/worshiptext011104.html) Sinkford is President of the UUA.] Question: At the NUUF, what directions in particular ought we take to "help the universe bend toward justice"?

**Answer** from Julie Wambach: I am convinced every member of our Fellowship is committed to helping "the universe bend toward justice". How we do that is a group decision and it begins with a summary of responses to the Social Justice Committee questionnaire and recommendations from that committee. I wouldn't think of preempting their work.

**Answer** from Terry Hoyt: The problem we face right now is how do we define justice. To many, justice right now is to cause offenders to suffer the same fate they propagated on the people who were in the twin towers on September 11th.

To many, justice is to allow people to suffer hunger and starvation if they are not willing to work hard, find a job and strive for being a productive worker.

Right now we as NUUF members must invest our energy in argument because we must argue for what justice means by our beliefs. For many things there are many paths to the goal, but if the goal is wrong then it doesn't matter what path you take.

If we have an agreed upon goal then we can be humble and admit that we may have one of many alternatives to the goal. Right now we are not in that situation. We're caught up in trying to make the universe bend towards justice by making people understand what justice is.

**Answer** from Jerry Buerer: Oh boy, where to start? Like last time, this is a tough question, particularly due to such factors as the varying levels of injustice throughout the world and the matter of attempting restitution as part of the process of rectifying past injustices. At the local level, maybe we should drop more money at the local casinos as way of at least partially compensating Native Americans for historic land grabs. Probably in the eyes of some, that makes more sense, is more fun, and certainly is easier than honoring fishing and hunting treaties, for instance. I assume you know I'm being facetious.

Nationally, possibly we can help persuade leaders to "bend" a bit in our foreign

policies, particularly in places such as the Middle East where for more than half a century our anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian and blindly pro-Israeli policies helped lay the grounds for and nourish the anti-Americanism which culminated in the tragic events of September 11th.

My experience is that to maintain some semblance of sanity, given the magnitude of social problems involving injustice, one must pick and choose where to focus, which unfortunately often means ignoring other issues. Just how much can one person, or one fellowship do? The older I've grown, the more I've come to rely on selecting my causes, contributing my money (in ways other than the slot machines) and thus helping the younger idealists and professionals do the hands on, grubby work. It's not the best solution, but given my increasing age and decreasing energy, it's certainly better than doing nothing. And if enough people so act, the chances of witnessing some "bending toward justice" action might possibly be enhanced, little by little, step by step. Beyond this, I'm as perplexed as anyone as to what our little group can contribute.

**Answer** from Dick Fields: When we talk about bending the universe toward justice the task appears overwhelming and somewhat controversial. What is "just" depends on who defines it. For example, globalization benefits many nations and people living in third world countries but hurts many who lose their jobs in industrial nations. Is this just? Those that benefit would say yes while those who's lives are devastated would say no.

As to what the NUUF should do to bend the universe toward justice is a difficult question to answer as we are an opinionated group and do not always agree. We are now doing things to benefit our community through voluntarism (food pantry and road clean up) and financial support to various agencies. Most of us individually support causes in which we have a special interest. With professional leadership we may find direction on how best to involve our Fellowship to work for justice. Giving collective money to pet causes is an easy way to feel we are doing good, but I am not convinced that as a religious organization this is the best way to support our community.

As individuals I believe the most effective way to promote justice is to set a good example to your family and to those around you, including your friends, extended family and community. If you spend your efforts and finances trying to solve world (universe) problems and ignore those closest to you then I believe your efforts are misdirected and would not be just.

When I discussed the topic of how to bend the universe toward justice with some of my intellectual friends there were two answers. The first was "start at home". After further reflection they changed that to "stay at home". ▀

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NUUSLETTER by email. We give special thanks to the 44 out of 66 subscribers who, by use of email, have helped to reduce our NUUSLETTER budget by \$500.

**Next NUUSLETTER Deadline, Sunday, January 27, 2002.**



Northwoods UU Fellowship Newsletter  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
