
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

Taking the Pulpit

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, Project Coordinator, Intercultural Leadership Initiative, "Cultural Acceptance in Schools and Communities"

Sunday, January 25, 10 AM, Rev. Roger Brewin "Visitation From the Past"

Sunday, February 8, 10 AM, Rev. Sydney Morris "Continuing Series - UU Identity - Unitarian Universalist History - Its Scope and Range"

Sunday, February 22, 10 AM, TBA

Sunday, March 7, 10 AM, Rev. Sydney Morris, "Continuing Series - UU Identity - Unitarian Universalist History - Its Scope and Range" Afternoon Workshop to follow.

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

A **New Years Eve** Chili Supper, appetizers at 6:00 and eat at 7:00. With a bon fire, shared readings and burden burnings. Call Elinore Sommerfeld at 1-715-385-2407. ▪

Hear The Roar! Feel The Mist!!

Come experience the wonder of **Niagara Falls**, including some great educational opportunities while being taken care of like royalty. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four-day (July 18-21, 2004) UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every prospective, even safely riding beneath a tethered balloon. Spend four days with us exploring the rich historical and natural wonders around the Falls. For information, visit their Web site. (www.uunex.net) ▪

Joys & Concerns

Author! Author! **Alan VanRaaltes** placed third in the Writers Journal poetry contest. One of his poems and a critique appear in the November/December issue of that magazine. This weekend he gives a poetry reading to the oldest literary group in Beloit. The chapbook he just self-published is called A Well Seasoned North. It has a Northwood's, seasonal theme. ▪

Notes from the President

Today the members present unanimously voted us to be a "Welcoming Congregation". There was never a doubt in my mind as to what the outcome of our vote would be. It is certainly good for us to take this step and express our belief in the worth of every individual. Thanks to all who worked to bring us to this point. I wanted to include the words of Alan VanRaalte regarding our action: "We do not become a welcoming congregation simply by voting in favor of this resolution because it makes us feel good and is the politically correct thing to do. We become a welcoming congregation by being open and receptive to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders joining our UU family. Anyone who comes through the doors of a welcoming congregation must be made to feel welcome and, above all, safe. No one should be made to feel different. No one should be made to feel merely tolerated. Unless a substantial majority of the congregation feels comfortable with this, then I would rather the resolution fail than to call ourselves a welcoming congregation and not act like it. If we are to be a welcoming congregation, we must feel it; we must believe it; we must act it; then, and only then, can we ever claim it." Thank you Alan for those words.

Now I am looking forward to our observance of the Martin Luther King holiday. We are a beacon of light and our providing a visible observance of this important holiday is a very positive influence upon our larger community. This year we are extremely fortunate to have available to us Zoltan Grossman. Zoltan Grossman is a university professor from UW Eau Claire. He will be talking about communities coming together to make peace with an emphasis of the historic resolution of the Crandon mine controversy. The observance and presentation will be taking place on January 19th so make room for it on your calendar.

Our next Board meeting is on Friday, January 9th at 9:00. Items on the agenda will include the January 19th observance and a discussion of a possible retreat in February. And its hard to believe, but we will be looking at budgets for the coming year and all those other business things that boards are called upon to oversee.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the special service that Rev. Morris will be leading on December 20th. Remember this is a family potluck event as well. May the peace and tranquility of the winter season bring comfort to you and your families.

Terry Hoyt

NUUF BOARD MEETING NOTES, November 21, 2003

Present: Terry Hoyt, Tom Sommerfeld, Alan VanRaalte, Joan Hauer, Joe Strauss, Patty Buehler, Tim Kratz, Julie Wambach (via telephone), Dick Fields (via telephone), and Mark Bruhy

Old Business

Meeting Notes: The October Board meeting notes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Tom presented the treasurer's report, and distributed the Fellowship's most recent transaction registers (report of deposits and expenditures), which have been filed with the Secretary's monthly notes.

New Business

Finance Committee (FC) Report: FC includes Patty Buehler (chair), Dick Fields, Joe Strauss and Tom Sommerfeld (as Treasurer). Patty distributed a summary of FC responsibilities, entitled "Finance Committee Procedure 11-21-2003." This statement (filed with the Board's monthly meeting notes) presents a summary of FC responsibilities and activities. The Board asked if there are other functions not addressed in the summary, and Patty responded by noting the summary is complete. Terry asked how often the FC meets, and Dick responded by stating that normally the FC meets several times a year (Feb, March and April). Dick noted that in late May or early June the FC notifies people of where they stand with their pledge.

It was asked when the chair is selected, and FC members responded that the chair is selected at the first meeting in the new fiscal year. It was then asked how new members are selected – and FC members responded by stating that the Board selects those in the Fellowship who express an interest. Terry asked what the FC feels is the optimal number of FC members, and FC members suggested 3 to 5, including the Treasurer. FC responsibilities include overseeing and assessing bills, and it was asked if this should be FC or a Board responsibility – FC members agreed this should be a Board function, with the Board reviewing, and recommending payment, at monthly Board meetings.

With regard to budget development – the Board asked the FC to explain the process. In response, the FC stated that it informs the Board of a tentative budget based on committee requests, and this tentative budget is then presented to the Board. The proposed budget is summarized in a brochure, accompanied by a pledge card that is then distributed to Fellowship members. Noting that the brochure/pledge cards don't go out until March, Tim asked if we might be able to move the process back a bit. That is, if the Board were to know the results of the canvass a bit earlier, a budget could be presented in late February, or at the latest, in early March. Based on this discussion, the FC and the Board agreed that the budget development process will be moved up by a month.

With regard to the canvass, it was asked if the FC feels there's a problem with the canvassing procedure, and FC membership responded by stating that they feel that it has been relatively successful. It was noted that more success might be achieved through one-on-one meetings, i.e., between an FC member and each congregant, but to do so, canvassers would require training, along with a considerable commitment of time. Instead of one-on-one meetings of this nature, it was suggested that during, or after, one of the services, the budget situation could be briefly presented, summarizing the budgetary needs of the Fellowship, and both FC and Board members seemed receptive to this suggestion. In a related matter, Tom asked if the summary (status) of congregants' pledges should come from the Treasurer, or from the FC. The FC stated that they feel these notices should come from the FC. Tom then suggested that he will provide the FC with the status of each

congregant's pledge for FC distribution. The FC affirmed this suggestion, noting that this is the process that has been followed in the past.

Committee on Ministry Report (CM): CM membership includes Tim Kratz, Joe Strauss and Julie Wambach. The purpose of this discussion is the review the CM's responsibilities. With regard to the history of the CM, Tim noted that the formation of the CM was stipulated in Reverend Sydney Morris's contract. Each of the current members were recommended by Sydney at the time she assumed her position. With regard to CM responsibilities, Tim noted that the CM has reviewed the UUMA Guidelines relative to the CM (Chapter II, pages 17-18), and based on that review, concluded that the CM is only willing to perform two primary roles:

1. To aid the minister in carrying on an effective ministry by being available for counsel; and
2. To keep advised of relations between the congregation and the minister in order to interpret one to another, for the purpose of strengthening and improving their mutual ministry.

The CM stated that they have shared this description of roles with Reverend Morris, and she was comfortable with the roles as defined. Tim noted that CM unanimously agreed that it is inappropriate for the CM to address item 4, i.e., ministerial compensation. Rather, the CM recommends that the Board should assume this responsibility. Further, regarding point five – assisting the minister with her continuing education program, sabbatical planning, etc. – the CM feels this too should not be within the purview of the CM.

The Board asked why the CM doesn't want to assume the responsibility of ministerial compensation, and the FC responded that assuming such a role might compromise the level of communication between the CM and the minister. The Board then asked how the CM would feel about having a Board member work with the CM in addressing compensation, and the CM membership was not receptive to this idea. That is, the CM feels strongly that they feel it inappropriate to have any involvement in ministerial compensation. The Board, in response, noted that there may be some misunderstanding of the intention of this UUMA guideline. That is, Terry suggested that the CM should serve as the intermediary between the minister and the Board, in a friendly environment, and represent the minister in presenting to the board the minister's request for compensation. In response, the CM noted that they understood the intention, but still felt it may be inferred that they have influenced the nature of compensation, compromising the element of support to the minister.

The Board asked how often the CM meets, and the CM membership responded by stating that they meet about four times a year. They noted that when they meet, they generally discuss timely issues, raised by Sydney or CM members, as well as having a free-ranging discussion of other issues of the ministry. Further, each member of the CM stated that that they speak with Sydney on a regular basis, by phone or in person, to address CM issues, such as matters that support the ministry.

In the interest of addressing the responsibilities of the CM, and Fellowship support to the ministry, the Board and CM agreed that they will work together to develop a "retreat on

the future of the ministry.” The purpose of this retreat will be to define the Fellowship’s expectation of the ministry and to determine where the Fellowship is heading regarding the ministry. Further, the CM and Board agreed that such a retreat would benefit by the facilitation of someone from Central Midwest District Office, such as Angela Merkert. Terry suggested having the Reverend Jane Moore participate in a panel presentation on the ministry and small Fellowships. With this, discussion of CM responsibilities closed. Terry asked if the Board would accept the CM’s interpretation of their responsibilities (as presented above), Mark moved that the Board accept, Alan seconded, and the motion carried.

Welcoming Congregation: With regard to the matter of a by-law amendment that defines the NUUF as a “Welcoming Congregation,” the Board agreed that this matter should be presented to the congregation immediately after the December 14th service.

Next Meeting: The next Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 9th at 9:00 a.m., at the Fellowship.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Bruhy, Secretary

NUU Views

Question: 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?

Answer from Wenda Sheard: The word “sub-text” implies that something is buried, kept quiet, not spoken. Thus, our first task is to raise race from sub-text status to text status. We need to speak the obvious---say out loud that racism still exists in our minds, in our language, in our politics, in our media, in our institutions.

In the November 2003 issue of the American Political Science Review, Clarissa Rile Hayward wrote that although up to this point political and social theorists have stressed reactive strategies for ameliorating racial inequities, political and social theorists should instead stop overlooking “the role that democratic states play in helping shape and reinforce social definitions of difference.”

Off the top of my head, I’ll note that one of the biggest differences by which we define race on our political landscape has been our drawing of city/suburban lines over the last 50 years. Yes, much of the line-drawing is now buried in years of annexation fights, but the end result is that our big cities and their suburbs have schools more segregated by race than they were in 1954 when the U.S. Supreme Court decided Brown v. Board of Education.

I agree with Hayward that we must go beyond the obvious “fixing of the

differences.” Instead we must look at how our government, how our religious movement, and how we ourselves, “shape and reinforce the definitions of difference.” Hayward urges people who seek “to deal with differences democratically” to “target the points at which it gets produced, aiming not to simply modify the effects of social definitions of identify and difference—but to democratize the process through which these are defined and redefined.”

We must not bury our heads and claim that the annexation fights were merely economic or political, when in fact they were the points through which black-white differences were defined. We must not claim that election methods (at-large or by district) are devoid of difference-making. We must not ignore that different representatives come to different conclusions when serving in politics.

Answer from Jerry Buerer: Actually, I’d add another, particularly this day in age: religion. But back to race. Let’s distinguish between two concepts: (1) what we can do and (2) what we can realistically expect to accomplish. If history teaches us much of anything, it’s that we probably can’t expect gigantic steps forward. Probably only baby steps. While considerable progress in racial matters has been made in this country during my adult lifetime, when I’m honest, much is at the top level.

Mainly in various entertainment fields. On those rare occasions I view part of a Packer game, I shake my head in amazement about all those fans cheering on the African American players, whom they idolize, especially when I recall the fate of a Black mother who tried to make it in Green Bay after life in Chicago but who finally tossed in the towel due to discrimination.

What I’m saying, I guess, is that removing race as a subtext here and around the world is a lofty goal. Achievable? No. Worth pursuing?

Obviously, yes. Suggestion for plodding toward the laudable goal? Other than the numerous projects, programs and actions now in place, I unfortunately have no expert advice to offer. I wish I did, but the well is dry.

Answer from Alan VanRaaltes: I think that, for the most part, UUs - both individually and collectively - are doing the things that will eventually render racial subtext irrelevant as a political issue in this country. However, until real equality is achieved; until racial profiling is no longer practiced; until we, as a society, are truly colorblind, race will and ought to remain a part of our political and social discourse.

We cannot allow those who talk about colorblindness to highjack the term and use it as a screen behind which to hide policies intended to roll back the progress that has been achieved so far.

While election officials can arbitrarily remove African-Americans from voter rosters in Florida; as long as police stop people for “driving while black”; while affirmative action is under attack a scant 35 years after becoming law and has not had the chance to rectify all the ills wrought by 365 years of slavery and another 65 years of Jim Crow; while racial epithets are still a part of the American vernacular; while the poorest Americans are minorities; while colleges and universities recruit athletes to fill the football stadiums with paying fans while failing to graduate those athletes; while so-called think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute employee pseudo-scientists like Charles Murray to write

thinly veiled racial slanders like *The Bell Curve* and pass them off as serious scientific dissertations; while drug convictions among African-Americans and Latinos is disproportionately higher than among whites and the prison sentences more severe; while those who sit on death row, as well as the general prison population itself, are mostly people of color; while we still have to ask the question, we cannot allow political discourse without racial subtext. To do otherwise will only invite the “compassionate conservatives” to make further attacks on the progress made over the last 35 years. Until people’s hearts change; until colorblindness is a fact and not a misapplied term; until wealth is more evenly distributed among all who are willing to work; until all those who are employed are paid a living wage; UUs must continue to work, as we have in the past, for racial equality and social justice. Then, and only then, dare we allow race to be removed from the political arena.

The question for the next NUUSLETTER is: Christmas is certainly a national holiday and a important religious holiday for many Christians. Does Christmas have a special significance in a UU congregation? And if so what is it and if not why not? Send answers to jerryw@earlham.edu by January 25th. ▪

No Pun In Ten Did

- A backward poet writes inverse.
- A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.
- Dijon vu -- the same mustard as before.
- Shotgun wedding: A case of wife or death. .
- A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
- Sea captains don't like crew cuts.
 - Reading while sunbathing makes you well red.
- When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.
- A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two tired.
- What's the definition of a will? (It's a dead giveaway.)
- Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- In democracy your vote counts. In feudalism your count votes.
- She was engaged to a boyfriend with a wooden leg, but broke it off.
- A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
- If you don't pay your exorcist, you get repossessed.
- With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.
- When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds.
- The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.
- You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
- Local Area Network in Australia: the LAN down under.
- He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
- Every calendar's days are numbered.
- A lot of money is tainted -- It taint yours and it taint mine.

Place
Stamp
Here

- A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.
- He had a photographic memory that was never developed.
- A plateau is a high form of flattery.
- A midget fortune-teller who escapes from prison is a small medium at large.
- Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
- Once you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.
- Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine.
- Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.
- Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
- Acupuncture is a jab well done. ▪

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.

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, January 25, 2003

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