
NUUSLETTER

NORTHWOODS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

A Beacon of Light in the Northwoods

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January 5,

Coming Sundays

Sunday, January 10, 10:30 AM, Bible and Western Culture Video Lecture 10: Revelation and the Eschaton.

Sunday, January 17, 10 AM, Denise Tracy.

Sunday, January 24, 10:30 AM, Bible and Western Culture Video Lecture 11: Augustine and the Christian Self.

Sunday, January 31, 10 AM, Pat Harrington, Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow.

Sunday, February 7, 10:30 AM, Bible and Western Culture Video Lecture 12: Meister Eckhart: From Whom God Hid Nothing.

Sunday, February 14, 10 AM, TBA.

Sunday, February 21, 10:30 AM, Bible and Western Culture Video Lecture 13: Justice and Poetry: Dante's Book of the Dead.

Sunday, February 28, 10 AM, Joan Hauer, Bio-Medical Ethics continued.

Sunday, March 7, 10:30 AM, Bible and Western Culture Video Lecture 14: Ugolino: Dante's Last "Sympathetic Sinner."

Note from the President

Happy New Year! I have such a feeling of pride whenever I look at this congregation! We have come so far and done so much together. One doesn't want to just sit smugly and coast, of course, but it doesn't hurt to stop and look back once in a while.

Having started as an idea, and having progressed through the formation of a Fellowship and affiliation with the UUA, from a living room to our own building, from a scattering of individuals to a focused, committed and active Fellowship--these are mighty changes. And we made these changes together.

"Together" is my theme for today. I am constantly amazed at the responsibility taken by individuals in the group, as well as by the care each one takes to perform for the good of the

group. No ants here, though. Instead we have separate personalities and separate perceptions all gathered because of a common respect for the individual, a common wish to be in the company of others who share this respect, and a wish to be of service to both this and the larger community. I see us liking each other and developing increased tolerance for the differences among us and increased understanding of our differences.

So where shall we go in the new year? Now that we have made this much progress, what next? I am scheduled for the homily on January 31, and I propose that we include a Talking Circle in that session so that we can talk to each other about our hopes for ourselves and for the Fellowship for the coming year--or anything else that's on our minds in that connection.

As I said: Happy New Year!

Pat Harrington

Getting to know UU's

Irma was born to Finnish immigrant parents in Bessemer Michigan in 1920. Her mother worked as cook in a boarding house for Finnish mine workers. Her father was an iron miner. Both were members of the "Wobblies," Industrial Workers of the World. One of the main goals of this group was to abolish capitalism and give the control of production to workers.

The family moved to Detroit in 1922 to take advantage of Henry Ford's \$5 a day wages. However, few got those wages because so many were laid off. Her father actually worked for Packard long enough to earn the capital to open a shoemaker shop in keeping with the training he had gotten in Finland before coming the U.S. The business was successful. It won national prizes and earned him enough to open a second shop for Irma's brother to run. In 1932, when Irma was in sixth grade, her father's ulcers caused them to return to a simpler life in Ironwood, where he opened a smaller shoemaker shop and where Irma eventually graduated from high school.

Despite always having been a very good student, Irma notes in retrospect that she never made the National Honor Society because she was not a WASP.

After high school, Irma went to Michigan State University to study dietetics and chemistry, then to an internship as a dietician at University Hospital in Cleveland. After the internship, she continued work at the hospital in various positions. Meanwhile she went to night school to earn a Master degree in foods and nutrition and then from 1945 to 1948 was a dietician at Luther Hospital in Eau Claire.

In 1949, Irma and three of her girlfriends quit their jobs and traveled together for six months through the Western states, Mexico, up the West Coast to British Columbia, and back home through Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. Refreshed from their travels, these "old maids," then twenty-eight to thirty-four, all got married within the next two years.

Irma married a widower with three children, ages two, five, and ten. They lived in

Farmington, Michigan, where Irma became an active volunteer with the Well Baby Clinic, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, PTA, Community Center, and the AAUW. She won awards for her work and even had a scholarship named after her. From 1952 to 1971, she had a second career as treasurer of The Control Design Company that she and her husband owned. The company made electrical controls for automation of conveyors in warehouses, airports, and United States Post Offices across the country.

At the Control Design Company Irma is especially proud of giving opportunities of employment to two men. "One hired as a worker, black, who became part of our management and later left us to become a Vice President at Ryder trucks. He was featured in Ebony Magazine. A second we hired as a shipping clerk, gay, who became our purchasing agent and one of our most trusted employees."

Also, in 1952 her friend Ethel first took her to visit the Universalist Church in Farmington, where, given a year's time to observe without being actively proselytized, she decided to join.

(See Forty Year Members below.) Despite her life-long atheism, Irma's association with Universalists and now Unitarian Universalists has become a large part of her life. "It provides new meaning to life, gets me outside of my own self-interest, puts me around good people who care about each other with whom I can say what I think."

Irma was divorced in 1969 and married Paul Braunstein in 1971. Together they won the Michigan District UU Unsung Heroes Award in 1978 for their work in the Farmington community and in the Michigan District of the UUA. After several trips to the Northwoods, Irma prevailed on "city-boy" Paul to move to Minocqua where he could both enjoy people and perhaps learn to fish.

By 1989, local UUs Braunsteins, Haskells, Hafners, Pat Harrington, and Terry Hoyt gathered more than the twenty people necessary to found the Northwoods UU Fellowship and begin what Irma describes as the most exciting and satisfying part of her life. Her advice: "I like the directions the fellowship is taking and want to see it continue. It's the best thing I've ever done."

Forty Year Members Honored

Irma and Paul Braunstein received a certificate and commemorative pin for their 40+ years of UUCF Membership.

Meet Our UU Youth

My name is Megan Kratz. I am a freshman at Lakeland High School. I enjoy playing piano, and I play saxophone in the school band. I also enjoy playing soccer and tennis.

My name is Minetta Koblings. I will be 12 on January 5. This past year I have started playing the flute, and am really enjoying it. I was just able to play a duet in my school's middle school winter program. I am also participating in a small 4-H group. I am

the secretary of the club. This year I was on a soccer team. My team was undefeated in the regular season. I like to learn anything that involves education, with an exception to math. I love reading. Recently I have read Little Women, Ann of Green Gables, and many other good books. As long as people keep publishing books, I'll keep on reading them.

Hi! My name is Kayla Norris, I am in 3rd grade. We learn cursive in our school and we are working on our sentences in cursive. I like reading and telling scary stories to little kids. I like to play pretend like school or store. My favorite sport is soccer. I have played for 2 years. Both years my team was undefeated. I like living in Madison because there is a lot of things to do. When I was 3 or 4 years old, my mom and I looked in the woods for animals that needed a home and we raised them.

Children's RE News

Andrea Billings

1st through 5th Grade

The children began their "Stepping-Stone Year" by discovering different stories about how the first people came to the earth as explained by the Miwok Indians of California and the early Greeks. In a more scientific approach, the children looked for the stories people have used to explain the stars and how and what kind of life can be found in a drop of water. Recently the children explored questions about birth through the birth stories of Jesus and Buddha.

In the second half of the year, the children will learn about Unitarians in a variety of walks of life, including Arthur Lismer, an artist; Lewis Latimer, an inventor and engineer; and Clara Barton, to name a few. In one of the last sessions, the children will search for answers to some of their questions about death. The religious education year will end with the children learning ways to explain to their friends what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

We are in need of many teachers for the remaining lessons. A sign up list is on the bulletin board in the basement. If you don't know already, one morning with the children will show you that they are a fun group to work with.

Social Activities

Marie Adams

LET'S CELEBRATE! January 16 is the date to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of our Fellowship! The party will begin at 5:00 PM with a social hour followed by with a pot luck dinner, music and more socializing. Denise Tracy and her family will be our guests that evening and will be sharing music and song with us. Denise played a big part in the beginning of our Fellowship, and we're happy to have her celebrate with us. Of course, everyone's welcome--members and guests. Bring along things to share: hors d'oeuvres, beverages, dinner foods, desserts, snacks or ?? Call Marie for information, 479-9886.

NUUs Travel

Joan Hauer, Travel Editor

Marie Adams

Thinking about all of the places George and I get to visit while exhibiting at Art Fairs, one of our favorite areas is Stillwater, Minnesota. From here you take highway 8 west to the St. Croix River.

Stillwater has two parts, the newly developed section along the highway and the old, historic village. The older town has beautiful old buildings housing some modern businesses, but mainly quaint shops, coffeehouses, restaurants, and homemade ice cream!

The residential section--high in the hills has many restored mansion-like homes. The riverfront has a park and walkway with an old-time drawbridge crossing the river. Most of the residents are dedicated to preserving the atmosphere of the town, but too many people wanting to use it a bedroom community are creating some controversy. A movement to eliminate the drawbridge (which holds up traffic!) has strong support on both sides. Of course, we hope they are able to save it.

About 12 miles north of Stillwater is Marine on St. Croix, a picturesque little village with a few small shops and restaurants.

Salvation Army Bell Ringers

Paul Braunstein

Thanks to Don Barnes, Pat Buehler, Bob & Joey Dallapiazza, Joan Hauer, Dawn, Amy, & Cora Holt, Tim, Megan & Amy Kratz, Annamarie Beckel, Toni Lieppert, Jean & Claire Polfus, Myrle Wasko, Jerry Woolpy, Chip Wulff, Candace Zahn & her parents, we collected \$4000 of the over \$9000 that the Salvation Army collected in Minocqua through the winter holidays!

Wisconsin Sesquicentennial

Marie Adams

"The 30th Star", the Big Top Chautauqua Sesquicentennial show was thoroughly enjoyed by a group of our members on November 18 in Rhinelander. The group included Don & Joyce Barnes, Pat Buehler, Ruth & Harley Erbs, Joan Hauer, Dawn McClusker & Myrle Wasko, and George & Marie Adams. Everyone agreed that it was an outstanding performance.

Arlo Guthrie Concert

On December 12, Arlo Guthrie and his children Abe 28, and Sara 19, provided a wonderful evening of music and inspiration at Nicolet College. Coincidentally, a number of

us ended up at the concert. Included were Joyce Barnes, Paul & Irma Braunstein, Jerry Woolpy, Joan Hauer, Lee & Betty Zausner, Tony & Bob Dallapiazza. Next time, let's notify the whole fellowship about these kinds of events. Among other accounts, Arlo told the story of the slave ship captain who authored *Amazing Grace* saying that it's never too late to change. He added that had Moses asked God one more time to get into the Promise Land, God might have let him.

So we can keep dreaming impossible dreams and trying to make them happen. "If you think you remember the 60s," says Arlo, "you probably weren't there."

Deck The Halls

Marie Adams

Myrle and Dawn, and George and Marie decorated our new artificial Christmas tree on December 13. In a round-about way, the tree was donated by the Urbans--many of their possessions that they decided to leave behind were given to friends or needy individuals or organizations. A few items will be sold, and they have chosen to give the money to the Fellowship. We decided to start spending it and buy a re-usable tree! Thanks Fred and Martha! (We always appreciate new decorations to add to our collection.)

NUU Views

Question: Free will is something we all think we have and yet we are clearly biased before most of the choices that we make. To what extent does our Unitarian Universalism contribute to or detract from our free will?

Answer: Free will is about whether individuals have a choice about what they do or whether their acts are preordained by God. Being "biased" or influenced by "Unitarian Universalist" beliefs is part of our exercise of free will. The concept of "free will" was controversial in the development of Christianity in New England during the 1700's.

In the excellent book on the history of Unitarian Universalism, "The Unitarians and the Universalists," David Robinson points out that Unitarians and Universalists at their inception shared a common theological enemy. The enemy was "Calvinism." Part of this enemy was the doctrine pertaining to the inviolability of the "will of God." Early Unitarians and Universalists refused to accept that humanity had no will. The doctrine of "election" to grace was rejected by early Universalists such as John Murray. Murray preached "universal" salvation.

At the same time Unitarians rejected the doctrines of Calvinism and preached about God's benevolence and humankind's free will. During the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, many of the Puritan Congregational churches began calling themselves Unitarian.

Another leader in the development of Universalism was Hosea Ballou. Ballou wrote in his *Treatise* that if humankind enjoyed absolute free will that God's omnipotence would

be called into question. He explained that humans are restricted in their choices by the objects from which they must choose.

Certainly, our Unitarian Universalist beliefs encourage us to accept responsibility for what we do and say. We do not have a free hand to loot and plunder at will. We are also free to find comfort (if comfort can be had) in saying that ill fortune is not our fault, but an act of fate or God's will. Yes, we are restricted in our choices by the objects from which we must choose, and we are also restricted in our choices by the thought processes that guide us in making our decisions. This author would say that our moral standards guide us in our exercise of our free will. The standards do not deny us free will. Terry Hoyt

In this column, NUUs are invited to answer questions of a religious and spiritual nature. If you are willing to share your opinion on these kinds of questions please let the editor know.

Letter from Fred & Martha

Dear `Northwoods UU Friends:

After a 3-hour delay at Central Wisconsin Airport and a missed connection at O'Hare, we finally arrived in Boston around 7:30 p.m. Sunday (12/20). Our five bags were distributed between the two following flights. But we made it!

It's hard to believe that in 2 weeks' time we signed the contract with Coldwell Banker, negotiated a sale with our neighbor to the west, lined up a moving company, and got the household goods into the van before the first significant snowfall of the season. We attribute these miraculous events to a mix of blind luck and the power of the many prayers people have been offering on our behalf. But the actual physical moving couldn't have been accomplished without the caring concern and muscle power of our fellow UUs (prayers are fine but they are no substitute for a strong back).

Special thanks go to Pat Harrington, who agreed to store hundreds of books in her garage until the AAUW Book Sale in July; Bev and Joe Strauss, who carted and carried wherever and whenever needed; Greg Holt, Bob Dallapiazza, Bob's friend Margaret, son Tony, and Tony's friend Joe, who lugged boxes and furniture from the house to the garage and offered a home to still useful but we-just-can't-take-it-with-us household items. And most of all, thanks to George and Marie Adams who epitomize that UU covenant "Love is the spirit of this church and service is its law." They not only did the bulk of the heavy lifting and carting but, through their many connections in the community, knew just who needed which of our leave-behinds and delivered it to them.

And finally, we thank the congregation for the lovely Northwoods dish--the work of Toni Polfus. The blueberries that cover the bottom of the dish evoke our fruitful blueberry meadows, and the watchful brown bear on the rim is a dead ringer for our resident bear that visited the house from time to time. This special gift well forever reminds us of our five

years in the woods and our wonderful friends in the Northwoods UU Fellowship. Long may you prosper. Fred has seen the oncologist and has total confidence in him. For the moment, the doctor has prescribed watchful waiting. Until we get a permanent address--we have already started looking for an apartment--you can reach us at our son Guy's address: 1034 Belmont Street, Watertown, MA 02472; e-mail: urbeth@mediaone.net

With much love and appreciation,
Fred and Martha Urban

**Goodbye Fred, Goodbye Martha
Marie Adams**

It was with much sadness that we had to say goodbye to Fred and Martha Urban. During their time of need, they had many offers of assistance from many members of our Fellowship, some that they were able to accept and others that they had to decline.

Sharing joy and sadness and helping each other in good times and bad, is what this Fellowship is all about, but we can't fulfill that mission unless we share with each other. Hopefully we portray to our Fellowship members and extended communities, a genuine attitude of caring and compassion, and commitment to help others in any way that we can.

Next NUUSLETTER Deadline, Sunday, February 14, 1999.

