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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 4

May 21,

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## 2001 **Coming Sundays**

### **Taking the Pulpit**

**Sunday**, 10 AM, June 3, Sister Ann Wittman

**Sunday**, 10 AM, June 17, Rabbi Dan Danson, Relearning the Art of Community: A look at Jewish mourning customs.

**Sunday**, 10 AM, July 1, Rev. Spenser Hoyt.

**Sunday**, 10 AM, July 15, Kay Read, DePaul U. Professor of Religious Studies.

**Sunday**, 10 AM, July 29, Max Gaebler.

**Sunday**, 10 AM, August 12, Amy Holt and Friends, About a UU Conference.

**Sunday**, 10 AM, August 26, Rev. Sydney Morris.

**Sunday**, 10 AM, September 9, Angela Merkert.

**Sunday**, 10 AM, September, 23, Rick Wambach.

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

## **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. On April 15<sup>th</sup> we began a new series of tapes on The Old Testament described as follows. "These 12 lectures [by distinguished scholar and Vanderbilt Divinity School Professor Amy-Jill Levine] offer an introduction to the history, literature, and religion of ancient Israel and early Judaism... Attention is given not only to the content... but also to the debates over their meaning and the critical methods through which they have been interpreted."

May 27, "Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar." June 10, "Isaac." June 24, "The Jacob Saga." July 8, "Folklore Analysis and Type Scenes." July 22, "Moses and Exodus." August 5, "the God of Israel." August 19, "Covenant and Law I." September 2, "Covenant

and Law II.” September 16, “The Conquest.”

## **Note from the President**

Last weekend was an eventful one for our Fellowship. The annual meeting was held on Friday and attended by 27 members. The budget for the next year was passed; Patty Buehler was elected secretary, replacing Don Barnes; and Tom Graber was elected to the memorial garden committee, replacing Dick Fields. Both Don and Dick have done wonderful jobs for our fellowship and I know all of you join me in thanking them for their service. Ruth Erbs was re-elected Treasurer and Dawn McCusker was re-elected to an at-large position on the board.

On Sunday, our Fellowship’s third Coming of Age service was held. This year nine young adults were in the Coming of Age class. Listening to the faith statements, I found myself thinking that it would be hard to walk away from this service pessimistic about the future. I also found myself wondering what my personal faith statement would include. As mentioned by many of the students, developing a system of beliefs is not a process that has an end. I wonder if it might be interesting to have a “Coming of Middle-Age” service where some of us no-longer-young adults were asked to share our faith statements. How different would they be from those of our youths?

This was also the last of the children’s services directed by Dawn Holt. Dawn has been the chair of the Children’s Religious Education committee for the last seven years and has done a wonderful job. The standing ovation she received at the end of the service was heartfelt and richly deserved. Over the years the children’s RE program has been excellent and several years ago the middle-aged students even won a national award. Dawn deserves much of the credit for her untiring and loving leadership. Thank you Dawn.

Tim Kratz °

## **Children’s RE News**

Dawn Holt

Coming of Age Service: Sunday, May 20 was the day of the children's service. It was a wonderful program that consisted of a children's story read by Steven Cyra, Joe Dallapiazza, Avery Kobling, and Kayla Norris. This was followed by musical pieces, and faith statements by our Coming of Age class. These teenagers gave thoughtful, moving, diverse accounts of their spiritual journeys. Those attending also enjoyed a violin piece by Claire Polfus, a piano piece by Cora Holt, and a vocal duet by Amy Kratz and Rose Gabert. As in the past this COA service was a refreshing, youthful account of what it means to participate in a UU church.

This year's COA class member's included: Erick Boustead, Melanie Cyra, Rose Gabert, Cora Holt, Minetta Kobling, Amy Kratz, Claire Polfus, Quinn Sullivan, and Zane Sullivan.

Boston Trip: June 13 - June 18 the COA class and 4 chaperones will be in Boston celebrating the completion of their organized religious education and the completion of the Coming of Age year. In addition to touring the UUA headquarters, and visiting area UU churches, some of their plans include a whale watch, museum visits, the aquarium, Boston Red Sox game, lazer show at the museum of science, International River Festival in Cambridge, and of course shopping. Thanks go to the fellowship for all their support both financial and otherwise.

Teacher Thanks: The church school year has come to an end. I would like to thank all those who gave of their time and energy to volunteer as a teacher for our youth. Please thank the following people: Annamarie Beckel, Andrea Billings, Patty Buehler, Joan Hauer, Susan Knight, Dawn McCusker, Jean Polfus, and Toni Lieppert Polfus. Thank you all. °

### **Summer Childcare**

This summer the fellowship is hiring a student to provide childcare for young children during our services. Brandon Stevens has just completed his junior year at Lakeland High School. He has worked at Reed's Day Care in the 4-5year old room as a work study student during the past school year. He will continue his employment at Reed's as an assistant in the school age summer program. Brandon will be at the June 3 service to begin his summer work for us. He is considering education as a possible career choice. °

### **Resignation**

**(reluctantly but gratefully accepted)**

After 7 years as Children's R.E. chairperson, I will be stepping down from the position at the end of June. It has been fun, challenging, and rewarding but it is time for me move on to other things for awhile. I wish to thank the fellowship for all its support over the years. You have been a wonderful group to work with. I would especially like to thank Annamarie Beckel, Andrea Billings, and Toni Lieppert Polfus for assisting me on the committee. Without their support, friendship, and time my position as chairperson would have been much more difficult and less enjoyable. Thanks again to all. It's been a joy.

Dawn Holt °

### **Joys & Concerns**

We acknowledge with grateful praise, the creative and dedicated work of Dawn Holt as our Children's Religious Education Director these past seven years. *"May peace surround you. May love surround you. As you go, as you go, as you go on your way."*

Don't get the wrong idea. Dawn is NOT leaving us. She's just stepping down as our RE Director to take a well-earned place in the sanctuary during services.

Congratulations to LUHS Freshmen, Claire Polfus, honored by her Nordic Ski Coach for work in March including her third place finish in the Howard Young Cup race and her part in the State Championship team!

NUUs can now boast of the Lady Leapers of Lakeland, Jean Polfus and Melanie Cyra, who respectively poll vaulted eight feet and high jumped five feet to win firsts in recent track meets. The LLLs were part of the Lakeland team that won the Lumberjack Conference Championship for the first time in fifteen years.

Jerry Woolpy and Patty Buehler thank our many friends who offer support to our family following the recent suicide of Jerry's grandson, Chris Apple.

In response to a shareholder resolution filed by the Unitarian Universalist Association which called on Home Depot to "amend its written equal employment opportunity policy to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and to substantially implement this policy," Home Depot moved on May 11, 2001, to amend its equal employment opportunity policy to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. The policy applies to all of the company's approximately 226,000 employees globally. (see <http://www.uua.org/main.html>)

Thanks to Dawn Wasko, Bob Dallapiazza, Jerry Woolpy, Patty Buehler, Doris Eberlein, Joyce and Don Barnes, and others who helped Paul Braunstein with the Food Pantry this week. And, thanks to Paul Braunstein, Joyce Barnes, Bob Dallapiazza, Connie Lefebvre, Candace Zahn Cain and Erick, and others who helped Terry Hoyt with the highway cleanup last week. As the song says: *"... 'tis a gift to be free, 'tis a gift to come down where we ought to be, and when we find ourselves in the place just right, 'twill be in the valley or love and delight."* °

## **Announcements**

Please join Patty Buehler, Katie Bruhy, Bob Dallapiazza, Dick Fields, the Building and Grounds folks, who will assemble the new playground equipment, clean up the yard, and work on the memorial garden, 9:00 AM till noon, Saturday, May 26. Bring gloves, rakes, wheelbarrows, lopping shears, hammers, and screwdrivers. Lunch will be provided. °

## **NUU Views**

**Question:** Question: A small group of disgruntled UUs is forming a new religion with "more God and less politics." According to the Chicago Tribune, April 21, they claim that in most UU congregations, if you got up and started talking about Jesus, you'd be run out on

a rail. And they say that UU faith has been replaced with political commitment. UUs have shed their Christian heritage to embrace other forms of religious expression, including humanism and Buddhism. What notice ought NUUs take of these assertions and how might we respond to the criticisms made by these iconoclasts? (Readers are encouraged to answer this question and comment on the answers provided by others.)

**Answer** from Jerry Buerer: I have mixed feelings regarding this situation. The "all things to all people" philosophy of our "denomination" at times causes me to wonder: What am I doing here? I'm not a Buddhist, not a pagan, not an atheist. Might I not fit in better somewhere else?"

But that raises the question: if not in the UU circle of saints, where then?

As frustrating as the openendedness of UU s can be at times, frankly, it's this inclusiveness that provides some of the charm of our organization. Yet, I can see how individuals, particularly those coming from families affiliated with the "old Unitarian" tradition for generations, do feel alienated. If they want to start their own religion, more power to them. I understand their position and wish them well.

Yet, as with so many things in life, the situation is not quite so simple. Why, we may ask, is our national headquarters so concerned with the split that it has gone to court. Far be it from me to boast of my connections with the national office. I have none. But I do have a Boston area UU friend who stays abreast of such happenings. He advises me that part of it is money. Yes, my friends: "filthy lucre," as I believe it's called in the Bible. The splinter group wanting to co-opt the name "American Unitarian Association" is a very serious matter, particularly since evidently through the decades numerous sizable bequests have been made to the AUA and thus protection of the name, for this, among other reasons such as property control, is extremely important.

So, if the splinter group is successful, fine and dandy. But let them call themselves "Original Unitarians," "Orthodox Unitarians," "Authentic Unitarians," "God's Chosen Unitarians," or some such thing. If they do, I say, pretty much like Dickens said, "God bless you, one and all!" But do leave the money in Boston!°

**Answer** from Dick Fields: We UU's pride ourselves in accepting individuals within our denomination that have diverse religious views. I feel this is the backbone of our religious tradition. Unfortunately some UU are less tolerant of religious views different than their own. We need to develop more tolerance to others. There's many within our Fellowship who's religious views I can not except but I don't say they are wrong or in other way infer that my beliefs should be adopted by others.

I disagree that a discussion of Jesus or the mention of his name in our Fellowship would empty the building. We are more tolerant than that. In fact, I am sure there are many in our Fellowship that would welcome sermons that are oriented toward traditional Christian

teachings.

Although we are mainly a liberal Democratic denomination and individually peruse liberal causes, I do not see these political/social activities detracting from our UU faith and our UU Principles. Within our Fellowship I feel the vast majority of our Sunday sermons are spiritual, not political. If there are individuals in a particular UU Church/Fellowship that do not like the direction it is taking then they should try to change it from within. With only 216,000 members our denomination cannot afford to fracture into even smaller groups. °

**Answer** from Terry Hoyt: If this group of people truly believe in traditional Universalist values then they had better learn to get along with all of their fellow man since universal salvation will join them together in the afterlife. In most places of worship the lay person doesn't usually get asked to say much. Here we do and of course we have to be aware that there are different views and different belief systems. I look to Ghandi many times on the model of how to deal with these issues.

The objection voiced on too much politics and not enough God is an interesting one. There's a bumper sticker out now that says, "What would Jesus have done?" If this group wants to get back to their Christian heritage then they need to deal with that question, because that is the point of the New Testament (in my opinion). They have to answer political questions through their Christian heritage. I really think these people are a little shortsighted in what it means to love God. I really think you have to consider your "Christian heritage" when you deal with political issues like the "death penalty", "environmental degradation", "denial of health care", "incarceration of the poor", etc.

I close with this question, "If we can't find room for everyone in our own religion, how will we ever do it when we leave the building?"°

#### **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 arrange to receive the NUUSLETTER by email or they may have it posted to them. Notify [jerryw@earlham.edu](mailto:jerryw@earlham.edu) to receive the NUUSLETTER by email. Special thanks to the 22 out of 49 subscribers who, by use of email, have helped to reduce our NUUSLETTER budget by \$500.

**Next NUUSLETTER Deadline, Sunday, July 1, 2001.**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
