

The Connection

Volume 13 Issue 1

Newsletter of the
University
Unitarian Universalist
Society

January, 2005



Sunday Service at 10:30 am.
Religious Education for children and adults
at 9:30 am.
We meet at 11648 McCulloch Rd. 1/2 mile
west of Alafaya Trail
For information Call (407) 737-4018
web site: www.universityuus.org



On December 12, the children impressed us with, "Behind Small Eyes." Shown above are two of the organizers, see page 4.

UNIVERSITY UUS SUNDAY SERVICES January 2005

January 2

Courtney Roberts, author and worldwide lecturer

"Seeking the Star of Bethlehem: The Magi"

Who were these astrologer/priests of Persian Zoroastrianism and why were they given such a prominent place in Matthew's gospel?

Courtney Roberts is a writer, originally from Miami, who specializes in the history of astrology and religion. She has recently completed the Masters program in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology at the Sophia Centre, Bath Spa University in England, and enjoys a busy schedule of lecturing and teaching worldwide.

January 9

Sheila Harty, Award-winning writer, lecturer, and religious scholar with BA & MA in Theology

"Thomas Merton's Last Talk: Bangkok, 1965"

Why did this American Catholic transform from an inward-looking Trappist Monk to a contemplative writer, poet, and non-violent activist with an interest in Zen Buddhism? And why did he put a ban on the publication of his diaries until 25 years after his death?

Sheila Harty majored in Catholicism with a minor in Islam, and her thesis was in biblical Judaism

January 16

Rev. Mark Spivey, Thanatologist and Pastoral Hospice Counselor

"Walking Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death: effectively handling human tragedy"

Mark Spivey is an ordained teaching Minister and pastoral care counselor who deals daily with individual and family crisis and tragedy.

January 23

Andrew Bernardin, writer, speaker, and adjunct psychology professor at Daytona Beach Community College

"The Three Functions of Emotion"

Andrew Bernardin is a writer, speaker, and adjunct psychology professor for Daytona Beach Community College.

January 30

Rev. John Higgins, minister, writer, former educator and administrator

"Disappointments and Hopes in Life: come sing a song with me"

Rev. Higgins is a Consulting Minister at Friendship UU in Rockledge. In persuasion, Dr. Higgins is a Humanist and serves on the Board of the American Humanist Association. He also is president of the Indian River Humanist Association, founder of the Interfaith Alliance of Brevard County, and President of the Florida Interfaith Alliance.

The Connection
 Newsletter of the UUUS Society
 Editor: Derrie Frost
 cfrost353@cfl.rr.com
 Publisher and photographer:
 Dutton Ashcraft

WE GET LETTERS....

Steve Helle submitted the following at the request of the Editor:

I, along with Eric Christensen and Kim Carter-Williams were invited to the Board meeting for a discussion about the issues concerning the Questions and Comments placement in our Order of Service, which created quite a stir in the November quarterly congregational meeting. I was impressed at the interest and conscientiousness of the Board as a whole and each member in particular. They were clearly dedicated to finding ways to make the Society work better for us, as members, and the larger community. This was particularly obvious in the efforts to restructure the committee organization and in trying to better define the meaning of "Friend" (vs. Member) of the UUUS. The running of the meeting was orderly, yet relaxed and friendly.

The discussion concerning the quarterly meeting and the Order of Service went very smoothly even though the Board members and the invited guests alike expressed several very different opinions. The participants seemed to listen and to learn in order to develop ideas and solutions that will improve the society. Two suggestions that will probably be further explored are:

Have a Parliamentarian to better control meetings and discussions, while assuring the full participation of all.

Pick one or two issues of concern to the entire congregation to be discussed at each congregational meeting.

In my opinion, regular congregational discussions on important topics in which opinions

vary significantly are critical to our success. Differences of opinion that are kept secret or only discussed by small groups generally result in misinterpretation and serious conflict. Our congregation has a history of not addressing such issues as a group, and often avoiding them altogether. I believe that is what happened with the seemingly minor issue concerning where to place the Q & A in the service.

Regular congregational discussions can be a pain. They often do not have a high priority in our personal agendas. But they are vital to the life of the congregation. I urge all of my UUUS brothers and sisters to support this suggestion and participate enthusiastically. Some potential topics that come to mind –

1. Do we want a minister? If so, at what level and for what purposes? This sensitive topic should recur every year or so to gauge changes in the members feelings.
2. When and how to expand our facilities? Again this topic should recur every year or so until our plans solidify.
3. How to approach our pledge drives: Jack Weststrate, our Treasurer, reported in November that only 60% of our members are pledging. 40% of members not pledging indicates a very unhealthy red flag.

I'm sure there are other important topics. Polls and committee meetings are important, but cannot be a complete picture without an occasional discussion of the full group. Polls are filled out in private and reflect personal feelings and opinions from an isolated frame of reference, without benefit from interaction with other stakeholders. Committees generally rely on committee member's opinions and/or feedback from individuals, who may represent a prevailing opinion of the entire congregation or only an outspoken few. The only way to tell is to discuss the issue with the entire congregation and then take a straw poll or actually vote on the issue. I have strong personal opinions on all of these topics and hope to share them with you in upcoming quarterly meetings.

Steve Helle

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THE EDITOR'S FAREWELL REDUX is not as at hand as she thought, since the heir apparent has had second and even third thoughts and is, alas, regretting. She is getting a gracious lot of help, though. The **December** issue was capably put together by **Marette Ferguson**, and this January issue is a trial run for **Gary Przyborski**, who already does our web site, publishes the **Connection** on his ambitious web site and takes wonderful pictures, but (to humanize him somewhat) confesses to as many computer glitches as the rest of us!

THE LUNCH BUNCH meets the second Wednesday of every month, makes its own good sandwiches (delicious fixings by **Eileen Aist**), and listens to its own great speaker—who this second Wednesday will be **Chris Jepson**, a Winter Park Observer columnist. We meet at the Lago Vista Clubhouse, off Redbug Road.

Like to read a good book, see a good movie, find good websites? Then see our web's "resources" page.

TRANSITIONS...

We are all saddened by the news that **Lisa Ruckman's** grandmother has died... Good news for **Wilmer and Eileen Aist!** His polyps were benign! Nice to see **Clark Slayman** back in the front seats after a long summer's illness, and we're hoping to see **Verena and Walter Zimmerman** soon. Welcome home to Peggy and Bill Gilbert from their sojourn in Nantucket!

GREAT DECISIONS 2005

Next February, the Great Decisions eight week program will be offered at the UUUS.

Highlights from last year's 29,000 opinion ballots:

- * Accepting that our cultural standards don't always apply to others. What we consider to be "corruption" may be a "cultural imperative" elsewhere.
- * Nothing real can be achieved anywhere until stability is in place.
- * The need to discover why terrorists are so angry with the U.S. Government: avoiding military operations and emphasizing social progress and prosperity.
- * The need to normalize diplomatic relations with Iran & N. Korea.

Weekly topics for 2005 include:

- 1) U.S.: The need for intelligence reform.
- 2) Russia: Terrorism and a poor economy.
- 3) Outsourcing: The economic effects of job loss and gain.
- 4) China: pollution and resource shortages.
- 5) Sudan's crisis in Darfur: U.S. & international community's role in resolving the humanitarian crisis.
- 6) Widening Poverty Gap: How can we narrow it?
- 7) Middle East: Does Iraq encourage Middle Eastern governments to adopt democracy?
- 8) Global Water Issues: scarcity & insuring water quality.

Contact: Kate Adda, Facilitator 407-622-1816



Children's R. E. Classes
Sundays, 9:30—10:30

ADULT R.E.— Mike Reid will continue to lead open-ended discussions for the month of December.

Pre-K through 1st grade children will continue with lessons from the **Chalice Children** curriculum led by **Bree Towne** and Jen Ulmer, our professional child-care staff.

2nd through 5th grade students explore UU principals through their **Carry the Flame** curriculum:

Jan. 2: Chris Reid finishes up Principle 2 by talking about compassionate UUs and how to bring compassion to our own lives.

Jan 9: Stephanie Dryden introduces Principle 3 with activities to help the kids get to know their own UUUS congregation better.

Jan 16: Julie Barrett introduces the kids to alternative religious practices, such as meditation, and pagan rituals.

Jan 23: Bill Coleman discusses some of the "big" religious questions with the kids.

Jan 30: Chris Reid explores with the kids how their religious beliefs have evolved over time.

Middle School students will expand on their experiences with the **You the Creator** curriculum:

Jan 2.: Paul-Gabriel Rowley will lead the lesson on 'Creating People and Gods,' reviewing the Old Testament story of creation.

Jan. 9: Diane Burns will lead the lesson on 'Of Sound and Song,' exploring music as a creative art.

Jan. 16: Keri Nolan will lead the lesson on 'Viewer and Doer,' to explore the idea that the creative process does not end with the creator.

Jan. 23: Kim Carter-Williams will lead the lesson 'I Don't Know What to Make,' to experiment with methods of finding creative ideas.

Jan. 30: Diane Burns will lead the lesson 'Starring You,' to begin understanding that as creators, we should be shaping ourselves.

We knew our RE children were the brightest and the best, but it was astonishing to see Sunday, Dec. 12, with what maturity **Tessa Barrett** and **Kayli Carter** organized and presented what turned out to be a children's service more thoroughly adult than many of our own. It moved smoothly and gracefully without a single candle mishap from its highlight ((young **Michael Ferri's** extraordinary violin performance of Seitz Concerto #3) to the stories of "Old Turtl" and "Behind Small Eyes." What I experienced personally was true comfort and joy in the childrens unselfconscious celebration of God. It gives me hope that their example may yet bring the word more trippingly to adult tongues.

Derrie Frost

ALLIANCE PROGRAMS**January 4**

10:30am Continuing Bazaar
11:00 Board Meeting
Noon Lunch, Board Report

January 11

10:30am Continuing Bazaar
Noon Potluck Lunch

January 18

10:30am Continuing Bazaar, make sandwiches
for the homeless.
Noon Lunch

January 25

10:30am Continuing Bazaar
Noon Lunch

Penny Kfare Jacobs (V.P.- Programs)

JANUARY SATURDAY SUPPER!

Mark your calendar. This month's supper will occur on the 8th of January at 6:30 pm. Our hosts will be Richard and Jenny Cohen at 3802 N. Lake Orlando Parkway, Orlando, (407)578-8233. Call the Cohens or sign up on the green clip board on the table at the back of the church. Our hosts will call you to give directions and find out what you would like to bring. Your goodies do not need to be elaborate. Getting together and enjoying one another's company is the main focus. Happy New Year! Janet March

Book Discussion Group Meeting

Date: Postponed from January 22 to February 12 due to the YRUU Conference at the Fellowship.

February 12th BOOK:

"The Field," by Lynn McTaggart

Got a book suggestion?

Call Steve Hall: 407-681-5066

or send an email: hallsorl@earthlink.net

COUNCIL MEETING—Mike Reid

The council meets at 7 pm on the last Thursday of each month. The committee reports from the 12-01-04 meeting are:

Facilities: General maintenance was performed on parking lot lights. The Building Taskforce met and discussed needs and resources.

Member Concerns: Thanks to Ray Ferguson for his efforts updating & verifying the congregation database. The next new member breakfast is scheduled for February 20, 2004.

Communications: Thanks to Marette Ferguson for her expert help as the Connection editor for December. The Connection editor position is still open. The church's web (www.universityuus.org) is our primary advertising. Gary Przyborski has done a great job, now with MP3 audio of Sundays.

Hospitality: Under the guidance of Eileen Aist & others, a delicious Thanksgiving meal was served to 23 people.

Finance: The committee is working new account trading for our different funds, working on alternatives for a potential operational revenue shortfall. A sizable contribution was received for the Building Fund.

Social Concerns: The share the plate project has shared over \$2800 with local groups- Farm Workers of Apopka, Second Harvest Food Bank, Coalition for the Homeless and Planned Parenthood. Cathy Giordano has volunteered to read to children in support of the Reading Books to the Homeless Project at the Coalition of the Homeless of Central Florida in Orlando. More volunteers are needed. The UUUS hosted the annual UUA Florida District Social Justice Conference on December 4th on Global Warming. The conference was well attended and received well. Audio is available in CD, tape, or through the UUUS website.

UUU Society, Inc.
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DATED MATERIAL ENCLOSED

THE CONNECTION

**Newsletter of the UUU Society
Orange County, Florida**

Meetings held at 11648 McCulloch Road
1/2 mile West of Alafaya Trail
Call 407 737 4018 for Information or see
Our web site at www.universityuus.org



Welcome

This is the newsletter of the University Unitarian Universalist Society. If like many others you are searching for religious alternatives which are intellectually more appropriate to modern concerns and times, we invite you to come check us out.

We endeavor toward love, understanding, tolerance, acceptance, and honesty to arrive at a place where religion fits the individual. We invest a significant portion of our budget in providing infant care and programs for youth.

If you are concerned about modern societal problems and their implications, we encourage you to join us on Sunday mornings at 10:30am. at 11648 McCulloch Rd. 1/2 mile west of Alafaya Trail.

DATES TO REMEMBER



Jan 8 Free Inquiry 12 noon
Jan 8 Sat, Supper 6:30 PM

Jan 12 Lunch Bunch noon
Jan 12 Board Meeting 7 PM

**Jan 22 YRUU District
Meeting 9:00 AM**
Jan 22 Newsletter Deadline

Jan 27 Council 7:00 PM