

UFL SUMMER NEWSLETTER

July 1, 2008

Sunday, July 6th

9:15 a.m.: Spiritual Celebration: Immigration in a Spiritual Frame

The current debate over immigration is usually framed in practical terms -- does it help or hurt our economy? Does immigrant labor displace American workers or do the jobs no one else wants? What's rarely mentioned are the moral and spiritual questions inherent in this issue. Our Unitarian Universalist principles and traditions speak to these questions, as we listen to the voices of those most affected by our decisions as a nation. Drawing on the actual words of undocumented immigrants, minutemen, humanitarian aid volunteers, and others, Marta Caminero-Santangelo will lead a (hopefully) multi-media contemplation about what it might mean to approach the immigration issue in the context of our "this-worldly" faith.

10:45 a.m.: Program: "LINK: Hunger in Douglas County".

Today's program, brought to us by the Fellowship's Social Action Committee, focuses on the local interfaith efforts of the Lawrence Interdenominational Nutrition Kitchen to alleviate this vexing problem. Sunday's program will feature a panel including Janney Burgess, Fellowship Liaison to the LINK Board; Ellen Sward, Fellowship LINK Service Coordinator; and Herman Leon, Board Member and one of the founders of LINK.

Social Justice: We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of each person. We respect the interdependent web of all existence, our mutual interdependency, and we affirm the need to create a world in which each person has the opportunity to flourish, and that each person, as a birthright, should have enough to eat.

The Fellowship has a long history of participation in LINK since its beginnings in 1985. Members of the Fellowship have generously supported and participated by preparing food and serving the guests. The service will provide opportunity for members of the Fellowship to contribute to The Fellowship LINK Fund. The funds will be used to purchase various supplemental food items for the days the Fellowship serves. Each of these four or five days out of the year \$75 to \$100 is needed to supply milk and other necessary food items. The goal for LINK is \$500 for the coming year.

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AND ACCESS FOR ALL: Some Thoughts on the UFL Building Addition

In the last 40 years, societal attitudes toward people with disabilities have been changing. The disability rights movement, similar to other civil rights movements, has exerted influence on our language, our environments, and our understanding and acceptance of human differences. Personally, I have been pleased to transition from being referred to by pejorative terms such as "crippled" or "confined to a wheelchair" to more neutral terms such as "person with a disability" or a "wheelchair-user"; to have increased access to public places that I was previously excluded from; and to be accepted as a full person who happens to have a mobility impairment rather than "half a person," the way Jerry Lewis infamously considers wheelchair-users.

Here at UFL, some changes over the years have been implemented to include those who have disabilities or who need some type of accommodation. Installation of an elevator provides access for people who, temporarily or permanently, cannot negotiate stairs to attend programs and services.

Comfortable chairs facilitate participation for those who cannot sit for long periods on un-cushioned seats. A sound system with assistive technology allows those with hearing impairments to share in our fellowship activities.

When we begin using our building addition and renovated space, we will enjoy new ways to welcome those for whom physical barriers can deter participation. Some paved accessible parking will accommodate those who cannot negotiate gravel. A raised floor in the RE wing will provide opportunities to involvement for those who previously could not enter and exit easily. Accessible restrooms will promote dignity and convenience. A larger, street-level gathering area will preclude the need for elevator use for many activities, and will provide more options for seating and full participation in activities. How exciting! This is an important step in the history of UFL and a product of much vision, hard work, cooperation, and sacrifice by many people—and, I must say, a significant investment of time.

Of course, these are not the only ways we will need to change and learn to accommodate people with disabilities and other needs in the future. But I am fully confident that our guiding Unitarian principles, including affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of every person, will guide us as we grow in numbers and diversity, and continue to serve as a beacon for those on spiritual journeys who seek an “uncommon denomination.”

Fourteen years ago I attended an Americans with Disabilities Act anniversary celebration on the White House lawn with 2000 other guests who had worked to pass this groundbreaking civil rights legislation. The event marked what had been accomplished in the past and, even more importantly, what would be accomplished in the future as people with disabilities continue to take their rightful place in American society. As we see our new UFL space nearing completion, I am excited about what has been accomplished in bringing this project to fruition, but even more, by the possibilities for inclusion and growth that it presents. This is truly a cause for celebration! (Dot Nary)

LINK

For the first time, the Fellowship is taking a turn serving at LINK during the summer! We will be serving this Saturday, July 5. If you have not yet signed up to bring casseroles and other goodies, or to help with serving and cleanup, please contact Ellen Sward. If you've been thinking about doing this but have never gotten around to it, now is the time! There are some "Guidelines for LINK Volunteers" on the Fellowship website, as well as a couple of suggested recipes. Thanks for your help!

Thanks. Ellen

Gift Card Sales Top \$80,000, new sales team appointed!

During our fiscal year that ended Monday we purchased a total of \$80,225 in grocery store gift cards and certificates! That will provide \$4,661.75 for our operating account. Congratulations to all who participated in the program! A new group of volunteers will handle sales in this new fiscal year. They are **Joe Gant, Marcel Harmon, Chris Redford and John Roper**. Let's back this program fully to achieve \$100,000 in sales and \$6,000 for our Treasury this year!

Presentation of Chalice Lighters Check for New AV Equipment

Last Sunday we enjoyed a nice ceremony downstairs between Service and Program complete with wine and cheese. Jim Grebe, of All Souls in Kansas City and a member of the Prairie Star District's Chalice Lighters Grants Committee, presented Bob Harper (our Technology Chair and AV visionary) a check to the Fellowship for \$6860.65. Jim presented both a real check and a large poster-size copy, now on display downstairs. This money is the result of our proposal to seek funds to help us achieve our vision for a first-class sound system, projector, screen, recording equipment, and eventually closed-circuit TV. We hope for all members to be able to hear and see well and, if unable to attend, to be able to access audio and visual copies of programs, services, and other events. (The grant proposal was an effort of the Fellowship's Steering Committee, especially Bob Harper, Joe Hollowell, and Barbara Schowen.) The money we received from our AV grant proposal came from small donations from individual members of Prairie Star congregations who had joined Chalice Lighters. *At \$10 a person, this represents donations from some 600 people who were supportive of our endeavors.*

Chalice Lighters is a program designed to help UUs throughout the Prairie Star District be part of "lighting the chalice" for individual congregations: helping congregations fund projects to build stronger communities. The program works through modest periodic donations from a large number of donors like you.

The program awards four kinds of grants ours came from the Chalice Lighters Call: A call for a specific purpose from a PSD congregation is issued to the network of Chalice Lighter donors. A call typically yields an amount between \$6,000 and \$8,000. Calls are designed for the following purposes: 1) Initiating a new congregation. 2) Assisting in securing a building. 3) Assisting in securing professional religious leadership.

As mentioned above, hundreds of individuals in the Prairie Star District responded to our appeal. It turns out that only six people in our Fellowship are members! *Now that we know the power of this program, and have been the recipient of a sizable amount of money for a worthy cause, perhaps we should consider joining ourselves. I have.* More information about the program and on how to join can be found in the black and white leaflets at the Fellowship and also at the following website <http://www.psdoua.org/ChaliceLighters/ChaliceLighters>
(Barbara Schowen, Steering Committee Chair)

New Building Update

Our new facility is taking shape nicely, with nearly all the horizontal cedar strips in place, the roof flashing finished and the concrete in place for our decks and porches. Sidewalks are nearly finished and the handicapped parking pad will be installed this week. Inside, the wiring and ducting have been completed, the heavy-duty insulation placed under the roof and in the walls, and the metal framing for the suspended ceiling is nearly finished. Sound control board has been applied to the east and south walls. Next week we will have drywall installed and then interior painting can begin. Meanwhile, we have eliminated a drainage problem by running a drainpipe to the ditch alongside the road. Metal framing for the entrance trellis and the east side trellis has been completed and the wood will now be installed.

SUMMARIES

May 25, 2008, 10:45a.m. (One service) FLOWER POWER: A UNITARIAN TRADITION OF FELLOWSHIP AND JUSTICE

Our minister **Jill Jarvis** explored the uniquely Unitarian history of the flower communion. The Czechoslovakians Maya and Norbert Capek started the flower communion. Coming from a strong tradition of rigid Catholic theological doctrine, the Capeks were looking for a “free church.” They eventually visited a Unitarian fellowship in New Jersey, where the freethinking individuals, and the Unitarian freedom of conscience, struck a chord within them. Afterwards, they returned to Czechoslovakia and formed their own Unitarian fellowship, which quickly became one of the largest Unitarian fellowships in the world.

The Capeks started the “Flower Festival Service” (later called a “flower communion”) to celebrate the liberty and community among Unitarians. Each fellowship member was like an individual flower, with a secure sense of self, and the liberty to think for herself/ himself. But when joined together as a community, the members -- like flowers-- became a bouquet, which was more vibrant and effective than separate flowers. When Dr. Capek was sent to a concentration camp, he led services and instituted a flower communion, by having prisoners exchange a weed, stick, or flower with each other. In this way, the prisoners were given hope and strength from others. Today, Unitarian fellowships celebrate their own freedom, as they recognize the need to make freedom and justice a reality for all. After Jill’s talk, we held a flower communion, put flowers by our peace pole, and held our spring potluck. --*Summary by Becca Dirks and Jean Dirks*

June 8, 2008 9:15 a.m. KATRINA: A HUMAN-MADE TRAGEDY

Jill Jarvis reflected on her experience five weeks ago, when she and 16 UUs from Kansas City helped rebuild New Orleans homes that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Although Katrina’s winds ended in August 2005, and although the affluent tourist areas of New Orleans have largely been rebuilt, the devastation and homelessness in poorer areas (such as the 9th ward, which is 98% black) are still present. Jill reflected on the inappropriate priorities that had contributed to recovery problems, as she invited us to visit New Orleans and help the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in rebuilding projects there. “We can live our faith and build a more just world.”

Preceding today’s talk, **Sherry Warren**, Director of Religious Education, told the children a story about how UUs are gathering money to give animals to poorer parts of the world, through Heifer International. To illustrate her talk, Sherry brought “Miss Henny” (a live chicken) – to the front of the Fellowship, much to the delight of the assembled children.

--*Summary by Jean Dirks*

Quotations about the disability rights movement to commemorate the 18th Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans With Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990

In its broadest implications, the independent living movement is the civil rights movement of millions of Americans with disabilities. It is the wave of protest against segregation and discrimination and an affirmation of the right and ability of persons with disabilities to share fully in the responsibilities and joys of our society.

Ed Roberts, 1977

The world community should be as galvanized into working to see justice done for the disabled as it was to see apartheid ended. It is as much a moral issue as the struggle against apartheid ever was, and we must all take it up as a matter of religious and political conviction.

Desmond Tutu, 1994

Disability used to signal the end of active life. Now it is a common characteristic of a normal lifespan. Sooner or later it will occur in the lives of most people, surely in the life of every family.

Justin Dart, 1995

I was in a nursing home for 13 years. I had to fight to get out. It was the beginning of my life at 22.

Claude Holcomb, n.d.

...an exclusively special needs approach to disability is inevitably a short-run approach. What we need are more universal policies that recognize that the entire population is at "at risk" for the concomitants of chronic illness and disability...Without such a perspective we will further create and perpetuate a segregated, separate but unequal society---a society inappropriate to a larger and older "changing needs" population.

Irving Zola, 1989

Too often older or disabled people live limited lives or give up their homes and neighborhoods prematurely because standard housing of the past cannot meet their needs. The universal design concept...allows people to remain in their homes as long as they like.

Ron Mace, 1994

We can go nowhere until you can go everywhere.

Gloria Steinem, 1994

Now I sign legislation that takes a sledgehammer to another wall, one which has for too many generations separated Americans with disabilities from the freedom they could glimpse, but not grasp.... I now lift my pen to sign this Americans with Disabilities Act and say 'Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down.'

President George H.W. Bush, 1990

For generations, society has viewed people with disabilities as citizens in need of charity. Through ignorance we tolerated discrimination and succumbed to fear and prejudice. But our paternalistic approach did no more to improve the lives of people with disabilities than labor laws restricting women in the workplace did to protect women. Today we are shedding these condescending and suffocating attitudes--and widening the door of opportunity for people with disabilities...

Kennedy, 1990

Senator Ted

Black people fought for the right to ride in the front of the bus. We are fighting for the right to get on the bus.

Mark Johnson, n.d.

There was a time in this country when I was required to ride in the back of the bus. I could not accept that kind of discrimination then, and I will not accept it now for any American...What disabled Americans seek with this legislation is the dignity which can only come with full recognition of their civil rights.

Cardiss Collins, 1990

As a former mental patient (who now prefers to use the term psychiatric survivor) who has been active for many years in the movement to develop self-help and empowerment, I have seen the crippling effect that stigma has on people who carry the mental illness label...Indeed, this prejudice may be the most powerful

barrier that persons with psychiatric labels face, keeping us out of the mainstream in a way that the lack of ramps hampers people in wheelchairs from fully participating in community life.

Judi Chamberlin, 1993

Our foreign aid dollars...should go toward building accessible, not inaccessible, structures and our technical assistance and bilateral aid should be inclusive of disabled persons. Foreign disability policy should reflect the American way.

Judy Heumann, 1994

ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] has made me feel like a real American!

Gregory Dougan, 1995

America is reaping the benefits of a more inclusive society. Employers have a larger pool of qualified workers. Businesses are opening doors to new customers. State and local governments are enjoying broader citizen participation. Most important, individuals are being judged not by their disabilities, but by their abilities.

President Bill Clinton, 1995

I'm tired of well meaning non-cripples with their stereotypes of what I can and cannot do directing my life and my future. I want cripples to direct their own programs and to be able to train other cripples to direct new programs. This is the start of something big -- cripple power.

Ed Roberts, 1970

As a Latina who is blind, I have first-person experience with the low expectations and assumptions of the majority culture. I have seen many disabled Latinos live down to these diminished expectations. They become overwhelmed by isolation, are disconnected from the service delivery system and don't have disabled Latino professionals to look up to or network with. I think things are changing for the better though.

Kathy Martinez, 2005

The poor that include thousands of people with disabilities are a very easy target for discrimination by budget-cutting politicians who do not get much by way of contributions to their political campaigns...When a particular minority group is always asked to justify their existence, their right to health care, to transportation, their right to housing, their right to a personal care attendant, there is no other word for it but discrimination.

Lillibeth Navarro, 2006

Congress acknowledged that society's accumulated myths and fears about disability and disease are as handicapping as are the physical limitations that flow from actual impairment.

Justice William Brennan, n.d.

For me, like many other people with disabilities coming to age in the late 1960s, the civil rights struggles of the day gave me hope. I knew that the dignity, freedom, and civil rights which black people, women and others were beginning to win were exactly those things I wanted and would have to work hardest for in life.

Bob Williams, 2007

Similarly deceptive is the now-popular figure of "43 million people with a disability"...for it implies that there are over 200 million Americans without a disability. We in the independent living/disability rights movement have coined the term TABS—Temporarily Able-Bodied. But the metaphor of being but a banana-peel slip away from disability is inappropriate. The issue of disability for individuals...is not where but when, not so much which one but how many and in what combination.

Irving Zola, 1993