



The Communicator

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Lake County

December 2007 Programs

2 - A musical service featuring Jeff Friberg and Jonathan Hodge based on "The Beatitudes of Justice Builders" by Rev. Lindi Ramsden, a UU minister. This promises to be a special service, both in content and format.

9 - "A Realistic View of Immigration - 2007" by Julian Sanchez of Clermont, who is well versed on the practical side of this issue.

16 - Rev. John M. Higgins returns to bring a message of how Eastern Religions influenced Judaism and Christianity.

23 - "A Birth That Changed the World: a UU Looks at Christmas" by Rev. Craig H. Scott. We all think we know the Christmas story as reported in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke but scholars have found many differences between these two accounts. What do these differences tell us? What do we, Unitarian Universalists, make of these differing stories? Can we find hope in the story of a birth that still influences the world some 2000 years later?

Rev. Craig Scott, from Berkeley CA, is a UU minister to a wandering congregation. He has ties in Mt. Dora and his mother lives at Waterman Village.

30 - "Seek and You Will Find"; Rev. Roger Seidner considers a year end evaluation of our role as a congregation to the UUA and the community we serve. Rev. Seidner will give an overview of the outreach program which has been initiated through the ads in Time magazine. We are part and parcel of this nationwide effort. He will review and reflect on ways we can be an active part of this effort.

Our monthly Pot-Luck Lunch follows this service. All are welcome. Let's have a New Year's Celebration together.

Roger and Clarice are available to respond to calls for pastoral care in crisis situations. If you or someone you know has a need, feel free to call them at 407-905-5767. Reverend Seidner is consulting minister to our church.

President's Column...

Dear UUs.

November has almost passed us by; Thanksgiving was last week; and just about all of our snowbirds have flown their coops up north and have joined us finally here in the south. Halleluiah! And Christmas is just around the corner. Another Halleluiah! We should be feeling happy. But are we? Are we feeling happy?

I think the year 2007 has been a terrible year. We here in Lake County have experienced two tornadoes, cutting across from a neighboring county, with a loss of 20 lives. In addition, a number of us in our congregation have been suffering the many "shocks that flesh is heir to". We either are in the hospital or are in nursing homes or rehab centers. I myself had major heart surgery this summer, the kind which did not exist when my parents died in their 60s of heart complications. Long time and long loyal UU member Ruth Latimer announced she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Others have undergone hip replacement or hip repairs, ovary cysts removal, brain surgery, pneumonia, treatment for rheumatoid arthritis and just plain painful arthritis, something called polymyalgia rheumatica and even early Alzheimer's... all sorts of unpleasant ailments accompanied by unpleasant technological and/or pharmaceutical cures. To add insult to injury, our favorite and consulting minister Roger Seidner, while on his early morning jogging round, fell and broke his shoulder. Then, on a national scene, I am sure we are distressed and disturbed by what we read and see daily in the news about the never-ending violence in the Middle East. So all around us, there is much to be

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In 1952 Henry joined the Marines and served in Korea where he won three battle stars and three Presidential citations for his bravery. Home in the U.S., he returned to his old stamping grounds and promptly obtained a ham radio license and then a commercial operator's one. After a stint in the radio field, he moved over into medical research labs, and in one of them he was fortunate enough to find Joyce. He fell hard, and they were married in 1960 and are still are happily so.

About the same time, in another lab in Rustin, VA, he frequently worked on the assembly line with a UU woman who opened his eyes for the first time to UU thinking. Henry had "a real SOB uncle," a Fundamentalist, who, like many Fundamentalists, "would steal your eyeballs"; so he was delighted to learn you could join a church and not be yelled at about your sins and not hear raving and ranting about heaven and hell at religious services.

The last medical lab Henry worked in was 4-stories high, filled with animals and had an elaborate air/heating system. He and another employee went to night school to learn the air conditioning trade to keep that temperature constant. The training served Henry well, for shortly thereafter, he and Joyce and their young son moved to Florida. Henry took with him his air conditioning training and his latest liberated thinking. Fortunately, at a political meeting in Lake County, he ran into Verne Cannaday, one of our longtime friends, who told him about us and introduced him to our small Fellowship. Henry has been a member here some 6 or 7 years. We are happy you are among us Henry and happy you are one of our Trustees.

President's Message, continued...

unhappy about. No, 2007 has not been the best of years, and it is about to end. So let us cheer it on, send it on its way and look forward to 2008 with optimism, good will and hope.

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In the past year, from time to time we have added short biographies of how people arrived at UUism, or how they located in Lake County or even where and when they entered the world. This month, we have some facts to share with you about Henry Gray, serving as one of our Trustees.

Henry was born in 1930, 35 miles west of Washington D.C. in a small town with the name, of all things, Leesburg. He went to school in a 1-room schoolhouse where a teacher (crippled from a childhood illness) taught 7 grades of students, somehow altogether and yet somehow separate. Wow! He attended an Episcopal high school in the same area. Being near D.C., celebrities and politicians flourished, and growing up, Henry saw many of them: Arthur Godfrey, General George Marshall and even Franklin D. Roosevelt. The latter, while president, visited a Mrs. Eustis who owned a large estate in the area. (Henry believes she was related to General Eustis, who founded our city of Eustis.)

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Since I am writing this column the week of our pledge luncheon, I would like to end with a quote from a Florida minister, who, in turn, stole it from a late UU minister from the Midwest:

"There is only one reason for joining a Unitarian Universalist church and that is to support it. You want to support it because it stands against superstition and fear. Because this church points to what is noblest and best in human life. Because it is open to women and men of whatever race, creed, color, place of origin or sexual orientation."

...Ruth Gray

Monthly Canned Goods Collection

The congregation is asked to bring canned goods to be donated to the Lake County Food Bank. Please avoid foods in cardboard or plastic bags that might attract little critters.

December Birthdays:

Elaine Jasenas, Dec. 5
Vernon Cannaday, Dec. 14
John Steingart, Dec. 31

UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund

Hopefully you enjoyed a blessed Thanksgiving and are not too busy as we approach the holidays. With the exciting and well received national TIME magazine advertising initiative underway perhaps you are experiencing more-than-the-usual Sunday guests at your service. To quote Rev. Bill Sinkford, UUA President, "They will be bringing gifts, and in order to accept these gifts we will need to reconsider what it means to be hospitable. We need to be ready not just to greet visitors, but to welcome them into relationship within our faith community."

There are times for each of us that stand out and are remembered because they mark the beginning of a different direction or path. I remember the birth of my children, graduations, and some of the successes of my career. Most of us clearly remember the first time we were guests of the congregation that ended up becoming our spiritual home. How positively we remember that day depends upon how and whether we were greeted. If you have many visitors you need many greeters available each Sunday.

Greeting practices at UU congregations vary considerably, yet we have some constants including the use of guest name tags or a different colored coffee cup during social hour. But if no one greets the guest in our midst warmly with both initial and social time caring conversation all the pamphlets, bookmarks, newsletters, and information about our faith may not entice a return. I often visit congregations both in our District and elsewhere and sometimes have found myself standing alone until I approach someone or some group already in conversation. Hopefully this does not happen to your guests.

What if each greeter introduced themselves inside the front door and asked the guest to sign the guest book/form then gives her/him a quick orientation to the room where the service will be held, the bathrooms, where RE is held, and invites them to stay for coffee? In addition why not encourage the guest to visit the Sunday service at least three times so that they get a really good picture of the church. What if your congregation had a group of "phantom greeters", a group of regular attendees who like to talk to people and are knowledgeable about the congregation and who do not identify themselves as part of the greeting program, but simply as members? Would that work for your church during the social hour? Remember visitors should be tended to first and faithfully at the social hour.

There is much "greeter" and "retaining visitors" information to be found on the UUA website. Welcoming our guests is very important to all of us. Let me know how I can be of service to you. As always I can be contacted at jlund@uua.org or 9813-931-9727). Happy holidays one and all!