



The Communicator

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Lake County

November 2007 Programs

4 – "The Dalai Lama, Who Is He and Why Is He Important?" by Mark Winwood, a practicing Buddhist and Founder/Facilitator of the Chenrezig Project, a Buddhist study group, infusing western life with Tibetan Buddhist compassion.

11 - "Religion and the Constitution." Marvin (Jake) Jacobson will present a comprehensive review of this relevant topic which he has been studying extensively.

18 - "Thanksgiving Sunday", with the Rev. Roger Seidner. We review our historic Thanksgiving observance from the perspective of Jamestown and Plymouth. We may shrink from the motivation that guided these events but they are part of our heritage. As people of liberal faith how can we express Thanksgiving in 2007?

25 - "Losing Faith, Finding Faith," with the Rev. Roger Seidner. We look at lives of four who found an exodus of faith a disturbing process. For those of us who are seeking rather than standing on faith we may find insight.

Our monthly Pot-luck will be replaced by a catered lunch to start our pledge campaign for 2008. More details later but mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

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.

The Program Committee welcomes any suggestions you may have for any Sunday morning services. There is also room for additional members on the committee.

Gladys Becker, Chair (352) 383-1265

President's Column...

Greetings UUs.

This Fall, in the months of September and October, attendance at our UU services has been sparse. It always is in early Fall until those snowbirds up north decide to flex their wings and fly southwards. But this year, we have had other problems. Many of us are getting on in years and are contending with our infirmities and are either in hospitals or nursing homes or in our own homes, but taking it real easy.

Rev. Roger Seidner and I decided this past week to go visit some of those members we had not seen for a long time; so we did the rounds together.

First, we went to Edgewater, a unit of Waterman Village, Mt. Dora, only to learn that Barbara Coats had pulled a surprise on us all and was not there. In fact, she had only spent four hours at Edgewater but then had been moved to Avante, Eustis, where she was now settled. Barbara, you may have heard, slipped in the middle of the night and lay on the floor for 11 hours until discovered by a neighbor, was then taken to the hospital for repair of a broken leg, and was being discharged into a nursing home. Despite her adversities, Barbara, when we found her, was in good spirits and sitting up in an armchair with a pin in her left leg. She is our vice president and has done a real good job keeping vice under control; so we look for her speedy return.

Before leaving Waterman Village, Roger and I decided to call on Ruth Latimer. Ruth and Bob have been active members for a number of years, and Bob continues to attend regularly. But Ruth has developed Parkinson's and finds it difficult to get around. We thought she did very well with a walker. While at the Latimers, we came to the conclusion that we should buy or build a ramp leading into the church, or get the Woman's Club to do it. This would make it much easier on our older

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November Birthdays:

Ginny Morgan, Nov. 12
Connie Sanford, Nov. 2

President's Message, continued from page 1...

members; so it is already on the agenda for our next upcoming Board meeting. While at the Latimers, we had a chance to see their daughter Carol who was visiting from California. Carol visited once before and attended one of our services. It was great seeing her again.

Next, Roger and I drove to Lake Ridge Village, Eustis to look up Lucy Landis. Lucy and Parks have been attending our Fellowship for some time, but we have not seen much of them in the last year and a half. They both were in a bad auto accident on Route 441 about that time and have been coping with the unpleasant results since then. During that year and a half, they had to make up their minds about a new place to live, where to find it and get moved into it -- all of which they did with some help from friends and children and other relatives. Then Parks developed his brain difficulty necessitating brain surgery. This was done through a specialist in neurology in Sanford, FL, and Parks has been recuperating at Ruleme Center, Eustis, just around the corner from Lake Ridge Village. We thought both Parks and Lucy were doing

extraordinarily well. For an individual recovering from brain surgery, Parks was upbeat and lucid, and he had been deep inside Tom Wolfe's new novel which numbers somewhere around 1000 pages. That's hard enough to go through without brain surgery.

Roger and I had a most pleasant afternoon and were happy to catch up with some of our friends which we had not seen in a long time. Roger had to hurry home because then and right now he is acting as caretaker for Clarice, who is suffering a recurrence of an old arthritic ailment and needs his help and support. Meanwhile, I returned home to check on Kathleen Cook, my almost next door neighbor, only to learn she was just that moment being carted off to Waterman Hospital with pneumonia in both of her lungs... Wow! Time marches on, and we are all getting older... Kathleen, by the way, is doing much better today.

On to Other Things

We are almost through the month of October, and soon we will be buying new calendars for the year 2008, if we have not bought them already. At this time of the year, we UUs start to think about money and our pledge drive. Two years ago, we went out to a restaurant and had quite a bash. Last year, we had bread and soup right here in the church building. This year, the Board went back and forth. First, we were planning to have a dinner evening out, with the church contributing some money. Then, we had second thoughts. Some people don't like to drive at night. Some people prefer a main meal in the middle of the day. Some people cannot make the stairs in the restaurant we were thinking about. So we compromised. We are having a luncheon here at the church that last Sunday of the month, just like our pot lunch lunches, but it will be catered. So remember the date, November 25, a month before Christmas.

I feel pretty strongly about pledge drives. I believe you have to support the organization which nurtures you. When I attend the Sunday morning adult discussion group, so many of us say we feel comfortable coming together because everyone accepts who you are. You can say what you like, take any position, express any opinion, no matter how outrageous, and there is no one judging you. We may disagree with each other, but those disagreements do not affect how we feel about each other. We could not express the same thoughts out in "regular" society in Lake County and enjoy the same affection and respect. When we meet in the

Woman's Club on those Sundays, we should remember our small 41-member congregation is paying the bill, supplying most of the food, and its volunteers are doing the leg work. We want to keep those meetings going, don't we?

Look forward to seeing you all Sunday mornings.
...Ruth Gray

**From Franklin Pennington, Ph.D.
Professor of Experimental Psychology (Ret.)...**

Hi!! Have been busy busy, looked up the proceedings of ACLU and under ABSTINENCE sure enough, a long write up (7 pages, check for yourself) RE same... and the FACTS. I.e., yes the U.S. has one of the HIGHEST teen pregnancy rates in the developed world and yes, OUR Congress has... "allocated more than a billion dollars since 1996 for programs that focus exclusively on abstinence until marriage and censor vital health care information about contraceptives." Actually the majority of parents WANT their children to receive information to help their teens make responsible decisions, so this biased program that obviously favors ONE loud minority view of morality in spending our collective tax dollars. HOW bad is it? Well, in 2002 the ACLU challenged Louisiana's "Governor's Program on Abstinence" (GPA) which over the years had funded, "among other things, "Christ-centered theater skits, held a religious youth revival, and produced radio shows that 'share abstinence as part of the gospel message'" in violation of the Constitution as ruled by a federal district court. I am currently trying to get in touch with the Lake County contact for the ACLU and learn just how their challenge to the Florida "abstinence only" program is progressing. OH and note that the LAW, from 1996, states that no one may use "... funds under this award to promote the use of contraception." Will keep you posted as I learn more.

"SICKO", A MOVIE BY MICHAEL MOORE
(Viewed by our movie group in October)
Review by Franklin Pennington

The message of SICKO is fairly simple and hopefully obvious to all: the health care system operating in the U.S. is a horribly overpriced mess that leaves over 50 million Americans with no insurance, leaves the insured (or their employers) paying huge costs (like the \$11,000 per employee in Lake County, as noted by Ruth Gray) and HMOs

that routinely pay HUGE salaries to executives who find ways to REFUSE treatment!

While not blaming any particular segment of our broken system, he does note that the "health industry" worked very hard and spent over \$100 million to SCARE the public away from the dangerous "socialized medicine" program proposed by Hillary Clinton. But in fact, DO other countries HAVE comprehensive medical programs that WORK? Moore and his team visited clinics & interviewed patients and doctors in Canada, England and France and found that WHATEVER our fears, collective medical programs are working quite well in other countries, period. NOT only do they end up spending LESS on health care, their people ARE better cared for and live LONGER than U. S. citizens (now 37th in life expectancy).

Mostly Moore focuses on the REAL human cost of our failed system. He follows a hard working couple, both employed AND insured, who after his 3 heart attacks and her cancer... were forced to SELL their home to cover expenses and go live in a daughter's basement! OR how about HMO horror stories? He ASKED for them on the NET and in less than a day was FLOODED with 25,000 tales of deception and disaster -- for example, the kind of "detectives" who work hard to find ANY REASON to DENY you HMO benefits for well, HOW about your problem was "a pre-existing condition", with the extreme example of a woman refused compensation for cervical cancer treatment because she had ONCE been treated for a yeast infection?? Or the woman, an M.D. who had worked for an HMO, in tears with testimony before congress regarding how she had essentially CHEATED people out of vital health services... resulting in their death and her salary going up to six figures. There are a LOT of losers in the current chaotic mess.

Corporate Greed replaced "Marcus Welby, M.D." under Nixon in 1971 when, compliments of the TAPE RECORDER in the oval office, he exclaimed that the initial KAISER HMO concept to limit care and increase profits was a superb idea! So now, even well meaning young men and women entering the health care professions are CAUGHT in this web of deceit and denial -- you know, WHAT is the bottom line? One U.U. member attending the SICKO viewing related that a relative who works for an HMO was spending a bit TOO much time with patients and her pay was DOCKED \$6000 for that month! And lest you think it would be EASY to change the system, there are FOUR TIMES as many lobbyists in D.C. as Congress Members,

many VERY well funded by very rich health Industries. NOTE that the absurdly complex "senior prescription bill" of 2003... essentially gave the drug companies the freedom to charge taxpayers an extra \$800 billion for their VASTLY overpriced drugs. Such lucrative deals will SURELY be defended well... in congress, and at the BORDERS where the feds routinely will STOP shipments of those DANGEROUS Canadian drugs (uh, that were in fact manufactured in the U.S.??). OH and the seizures were BRIEFLY suspended just before the Fall 2006 elections -- then resumed, of course, right after the election. WHAT a coincidence!

By the way, in interviewing medical providers in Canada, England, France and finally Cuba, it was noted that they felt GOOD about actually providing care and helping people in need. But no, their physicians in government run health care were not starving. Americans living in Paris had HIGH marks for the health system, and Moore even rode along in a SMALL car with a physician making house calls! Oh, and the WAITING time in other countries was reported to be about 30 to 60 minutes, unlike our emergency rooms where waits of MANY hours are common. So how can LESS wealthy countries afford such convenient health care and low cost to free prescriptions?

Perhaps the most disturbing part of the film was Moore's finding horribly SICK people who had been HEROES after the 9/11 disaster. These men and women were volunteer "first responders" who clawed through smoking rubble to try and rescue people and save lives, demonstrating a selfless bravery that earned the praises of all. But it did NOT earn them any extra health care benefits, as several of them developed lung problems which caused them to lose their jobs, and thus their health insurance if they had any, and now they are in great need.

Moore had seen the same televised proclamations that we all saw, stating that "the prisoners in Guantanamo have the BEST health care that can be provided!" Okay, so suspected terrorists get GREAT care and our heroes get NONE?? So Moore rented a boat and ILLEGALLY took a number of these people to the military base... where access was denied. But the FREE clinics of Cuba treated ALL of the visitors, provided medications where needed, and the local Cuban fire department had a special ceremony to HONOR the heroes who went in after the 9/11 disaster. Pretty bad when your heroes have to go to an ENEMY country to get decent treatment, but it happened. Yup, our system is SICKO!