



The Communicator

of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Lake County

June 2008 Programs

1 – "Was Jesus a Myth?" Gladys Becker will present some interesting and provocative thoughts from the book "The Jesus Mysteries" by Freke and Gandy.

8 – "A New Look at Astrology." Amy Barlow, daughter of our member Carl Skiles, will give an insight into present day astrology. Bring (if you wish) birth info - place, date, and exact time. Amy lives in Boca Raton, has been a city planner and now is a math tutor and mother of two young daughters.

15 – June 15, FATHER'S DAY. Bill Becker will speak on "Thoughts of My Father" and early religious recollections. Bill may ask you to share your memories.

22 – Marvin (Jake) Jacobson has been researching secular humanism and will present an informative talk. He gave a like talk to The Philosophy Club of Clermont.

29 – "Into the Third Millennium - Looking Back - Ahead - Within" with Rev. Roger Seidner. Our final service before summer break. Rev. Seidner will direct our thoughts backward and forward in view of concerns for our world and humanity.

Note: Roger and Clarice are available for pastoral care during the summer.

June 29 will be the last regular service for the summer. During July and August only the Adult Discussion will meet, from 10:30 to 11:30 AM, with a variety of topics and leaders, coordinated by Bob Young.

Note: During the summer months Gladys Becker, Program Chair, can be reached at

95 Bluebird Road
Clayville, NY 13322
Tel: 315-822-6548

Email: bgbecker@webtv.net

President's Column...

One of my favorite magazines is *The Skeptic* which I subscribe to from time to time if for no other reason than to read articles by Richard Dawkins who is a regular contributor. Much is also available free online and recently the website reprinted an article from *The Nullifidian* of December 1994, referring to a debate between Dawkins and the Archbishop of York on Easter two years prior at the Edinburgh science festival. The topic was the existence of God and part of the discourse focused on personal religious beliefs. Since most UU's these days were reared in other faiths his comments on "Inheriting Religion" may still be pertinent.

Dawkins said, "As a Darwinian, something strikes me when I look at religion. Religion shows a pattern of heredity which I think is similar to genetic heredity. The vast majority of people have an allegiance to one particular religion. There are hundreds of different religious sects, and every religious person is loyal to just one of those.

Parental Influence

"Out of all of the sects in the world we notice an uncanny coincidence: the overwhelming majority just happen to choose the one that their parents belong to. Not the sect that has the best evidence in its favour, the best miracles, the best moral code, the best cathedral, the best stained glass, the best music: when it comes to choosing from the smorgasbord of available religions, their potential virtues seem to count for nothing, compared to the matter of heredity.

"This is an unmistakable fact; nobody could seriously deny it. Yet people with full knowledge of the arbitrary nature of this heredity, somehow manage to go on believing in *their* religion, often with such fanaticism that they are prepared to murder people who follow a different one.

"Truths about the cosmos are true all around the universe. They don't differ in Pakistan, Afghanistan,

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Next issue will be for September.

Send material to canopus1@comcast.net

UUCLC Information & Contacts

Mail address: PO Box 1761, Eustis, FL 32727

Phone: 352-383-2263

Email contact: canopus1@comcast.net

Website: lakecountyuu.org

Officers

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Phone: 407-905-5767

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President's Message, continued...

Poland or Norway. Yet we are apparently prepared to accept that the religion we adopt is a matter of an accident of geography.

"If you ask people why they are convinced of the truth of their religion, they don't appeal to heredity. Put like that it sounds too obviously stupid. Nor do they appeal to evidence. There isn't any, and nowadays the better educated admit it. No, they appeal to faith. Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence. The worst thing is that the rest of us are supposed to respect it: to treat it with kid gloves.

"Even those with no faith have been brainwashed into respecting the faith of others. When so-called Muslim community leaders go on the radio and advocate the killing of Salman Rushdie, they are clearly committing incitement to murder--a crime for which they would ordinarily be prosecuted and possibly imprisoned. But are they arrested? They are not, because our secular society 'respects' their faith, and sympathizes with the deep 'hurt' and 'insult' to it.

"Well I don't. I will respect your views if you can justify them, but if you justify your views only by saying you have faith in them, I shall not respect them."

(continued)

Get Smart

I for one followed my mother through the doors at Grace Lutheran Church in Louisville, Ky. for many years believing, nay knowing, she had me on the right path. It took the university experience and other influences many years to sink in before I was able to openly come to grips with the truth, a "coming out" you might say. During one of our discussion groups last year Esther Smith said she had been asked why many UU's seemed to be so old and her reply: "it takes a long time to get smart."

...Bill Hermann

E-Mail Hotline...

We're going to test run a Lake County UU e-mail hot-line this summer to inform snowbirds and vacationers quickly about important events or happenings in members' and friends' lives. We have an e-mail distribution list, and Pat Linfield, the coordinator will send notifications as soon as she receives the information. We envision the following types of events being mentioned in our messages:

- Sudden illness, hospitalization or death of a family member or UU friend
- Up-dates on a family member's or friend's rehabilitation
- Birth or adoption (grandchild, pet)
- Greetings from vacationers
- Any other important personal information you think people in our congregation would like to know.

Please e-mail Pat, plinfield@comcast.net, with information you think others would like to see and which can be sent via e-mail. If your computer is down, call 352-315-0203. (Pat & Wayne will have their phone number forwarded when they're away. You can also leave a message on their voice mail.) Be sure to give details such as hospital or other address where cards can be sent, visitors requested or not, name of new baby or puppy, etc.

If your e-mail address has changed recently, please give the correct one to Pat or Ted Fessler, canopus1@comcast.net. The Lake County UU E-Mail Hotline is now operational and expected to keep members and friends in close contact during the summer months.

...Pat Linfield

June Birthdays:

Michael Jasenas, June 1
Bob Young, June 2

UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund

The month of June is upon us, when we, the Florida District, are afforded the opportunity and responsibility of hosting our Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) General Assembly (GA) in Ft. Lauderdale, June 25-29. I look forward to being with you this year, especially because I was not able to attend the District Annual Meeting in April. For those of you have been to a GA you know what an exhilarating and wonderful experience it is. For the first-timers you will find much to do and learn during our UU days together. This month I am writing about something I touched upon in the lengthy report which can be found on the District website, written after I returned from the April UUA Board of Trustees meeting: a new DVD, "Listening to Experience", produced by the District Services Staff Growth Team.

This recently-completed DVD captures the wisdom and experience of twelve ministers from some of the fastest growing UU congregations in our nation who gathered for three days in November 2007 to talk about how to increase the number of Unitarian Universalists in the world. Five thousand copies have been produced, and are being distributed, along with a letter from Rev. Bill Sinkford, UUA President, to UU ministers, seminarians, theological school professors and instructors, and hundreds of key lay and professional leaders throughout the Association. During the conversation among these ministers, they responded to questions posed by the Rev. Alice Mann of the Alban Institute which included:

- What is the saving message of your congregation?
- How does your congregation help people move inward and outward on their spiritual journey, and how does this relate to congregational growth?
- What institutional, organizational, and practical nuts and bolts need to exist in order for a congregation go grow and keep growing?
- What are the obstacles or roadblocks to growth?

This is an excellent DVD for ministers and lay leaders to watch together over several meetings and benefit from the wisdom of these ministers. A list of questions to discuss, the same ones that served as the basis for the conversation in November, is included in the packaging, as are the names of the participating ministers.

If you would like a copy of the "Listening to Experience" DVD contact Heather Bond, District Services Administrator, hbond@uua.org. Again, I look forward to being with you in June. In the meantime if you have questions, concerns, or just wish to talk about "something UU" call me at 813-931-9727 or email jlund@uua.org.