



Unitarian Universalist Notes

A monthly publication (except July/August) of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango, 419 San Juan Drive, Durango, CO 81301.

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Services 10:00 a.m. Sunday

Religious Education and Child Care: 10:00 a.m.

A Monthly Newsletter of the Fellowship

January 2012



January Programs

NO SERVICE JANUARY 1

January 8

“Stepping into the Unknown –Walking on a Heroine’s Journey with Spirit”

Victoria FittsMilgrim, PCC

As we all run faster and faster on the accelerating Hamster Wheel of Life, we lose touch with any kind of true meaning for our lives. And yet, the Divine will send us on a Heroine’s Journey if we choose to take it. When you have an understanding of the messages received, the unfolding stages and the tools for this Journey, you can navigate your Life’s Changes with more peace and clarity. With this

inner connection to our highest evolution, even the challenges we face, become nourishment for the Soul.

Victoria is the Director of True Life Coaching & Retreats in Durango. She designs, coaches, and leads transformational Journeys for women, in addition to offering individual and group coaching. She is the winner of the 2009 "Extraordinary Woman" Award and the President of the Board of Directors of the Women’s Resource Center.

January 15

“Martin Luther King Jr's Pledge”

Rev. Lawrence Henson

When it became apparent to civil rights leaders that change would not happen without public action, they made a plan to use nonviolence. But, they knew that making a plan would not be enough. They created a pledge. Can we learn something from this? Is our covenant more than an agreement?

The sermon will examine the pledge civil rights workers for the SCLC had to take in 1963. I will ask if we might not think of using our covenant in the same way.

The Rev. Lawrence Henson is the minister in Grand Junction, CO. For the past 12 years he used a Sufi name ‘Zakir’ but quit using that name over the past year and a half as part of the same spiritual practice that invited him to begin using it in the first place. He lives close to downtown

Grand Junction and walks with his dog, Penny, 3 to 4 miles a day in the near-by canyons, weather permitting.

January 22

“Robert Burns, Scotland's Best Loved Bard and a UU as well”

Jim Cross

The talk commemorates Burns' poetry, its themes and memorable lines with some Scottish traditions mixed in. I have done this talk several times at UU appropriately in January as we Scots celebrate his birthday on January 25th with a traditional Burns Supper. It originated from my own interest in Robert Burns as well as UUs claiming Burns as one of their own. I felt the need to revisit his works and attempt to verify that claim.

Jim Cross has been an educator for 37 years. He is an Associate Professor of Exercise Science and President of the Faculty Senate at Fort Lewis College. He is a past President of the UUFD.

January 29

“In Search of the Sacred”

Katherine Burgess

The Dictionary tells us that a sacred object is something that is devoted or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose; consecrated. In this secular age, the very idea of the sacred seems to be waning. Is there anything you consider to be holy or sanctified? Our speaker says she has been searching for the sacred all her life, through travel, education, and personal relationships. We'll discuss together the value of sacredness.

Katherine Burgess, a long-time member of UUFD, is a lifetime student. Most recently, she has quit teaching and begun a new career as a travel agent.

UU Readers Reminder

Friends, we will meet to discuss Don DeLillo's *White Noise* at noon on January 8, 2012 (!) over sack lunch.

Brooks

Presidents Message: Looking Back, Looking Forward

A lot was accomplished in 2011. Accomplishments include the completion of phase 2 landscape, expansion of the RE program, the appointment of two staff employees for administration and religious education, excellent music programs on Sundays and evening recitals, the appointment of a new Hospitality Committee chairwoman, active Social Justice initiatives in the community, resurrection of the greeters role, excellent Sunday services and much more. I am grateful for everybody's hard work without which this volunteer organization could not function. You know who you are; give yourselves a pat on the back.

I'll mention a few highlights in more detail. The landscape projects bring us closer to nature, thus fulfilling one of our important principles. The new audiovisual system ensures that all can hear the services and provides a venue for big-screen film presentations. The new library has lured me in for extended browsing; it is no longer just the cry room. The religious education program has been revised and expanded to include a youth group and adult learners.

Social Justice, already significantly involved in community betterment, will greatly expand its scope of activities thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous donor. This initiative will be called the Social Justice Community Fund. Its purposes are:

- To invest in upholding the worth and dignity of marginalized people in our community;
- To provide short-term relief and promote long-term confidence and self-reliance through education and training for underserved individuals;
- To provide funds to local individuals, organizations, or projects who do not otherwise have sufficient resources available to accomplish the purposes outlined above;

- To foster public recognition for UUFD for providing the money and effort resulting in accomplishing the above.

A subcommittee of Social Justice Committee will identify people or programs most worthy of support. Members and friends are urged to discuss this exciting initiative with SJ Chairwoman Maureen Maliszewski to learn more. In this way, you can decide if you are interested in contributing funds or services to the Social Justice Community Fund.

RE is going great guns under Terri Reherman's direction. The Board has approved her new contract at an expanded effort, namely 15 hours weekly. She oversees the childrens', youth and adult programs. Kathleen Adams has developed a phenomenal youth group. The youth group is heavily involved in volunteer work at the Volunteers of America Durango Community Shelter. Please ask Kathleen to show you the commendation given to the Youth Group in the VOA's Holiday 2011 Newsletter. The Youth Group also visited a sustainable farm in the Santa Fe area this fall. If this isn't teaching kids our values, I don't know what is! With help from Judith Reynolds, a group of twelve adult learners are deeply immersed in the history, thinking and controversies of the UU tradition. Clearly, the RE director job is growing and will continue to do so.

Looking forward to 2012, lots of work confronts us.

- Administratively, the Board will be re-budgeting in January for the remainder of the fiscal year. We need input from the Committees on their near-term priorities.
- We look forward to another successful Frolic fundraiser in May. Funds raised will be used to complete the landscape project.
- Sunday Services will continue to plan great programs, with assistance from our excellent office manager Melissa Lopez. Melissa needs special help from members to develop a list of potential speakers who reside in the greater Durango area. If you

know knowledgeable and engaging local teachers, scholars, ministers etc. whose expertise fits our Fellowship's needs, please ask them if they would be willing to speak at a UUFD Sunday service. If yes, pass the contact information on to the Sunday Services Committee or Melissa so she can get them scheduled.

- The Welcoming Congregation initiative is moving forward. I would like to see us certified as a Welcoming Congregation this coming year.
- The Board is reviewing the Long Range Plan as a prelude to generating a members' survey on evaluation of and priorities for our Fellowship. Information gained from the survey will be used to revise the Plan. We also need input from the Committees on their goals for the future. You'll be hearing more about this in the coming months.

These are just a few of the tasks ahead. To support all this, we need your ongoing financial support. Six months into this fiscal year, we are about 10% behind on our pledge collections. We know that some of you prefer to give periodically rather than regularly, so we aren't too worried yet. Just a gentle reminder.

Here's wishing all of you a healthy and happy New Year.

Graham

**2011 in Review:
Thanks from Local and International
Organizations, for your Generous Support**

Share-the-Plate: Del Alma and the Community Emergency Assistance Coalitions (CEAC) have asked me repeatedly to thank all of you for the contributions we have given them. Share-the-Plate donations collected during the offertory on the first Sunday of each month are given alternately to these two organizations from September 2011 through August 2012. Since September, we have donated a total of \$1807.56 to these two organizations.

Del Alma's mission is to promote cultural competence and educational excellence for multicultural youth. CEAC is a collaborative multi-agency effort at providing one time, emergency financial assistance for persons unable to meet urgent payments. Learn more about CEAC at www.lpfcc.org and Del Alma at www.delalma.net.

Disaster Relief Fund: For the 2011–2012 fiscal year, the Board of Trustees budgeted \$2600 to provide disaster relief. The Social Justice Committee, using established criteria, selected the International Rescue Committee and Medical Teams International to each receive \$1300. Organizational information and their receipts/thank you notes are posted on the Social Justice Information board in Bowman Hall. Further information is available at www.rescue.org and www.medicalteams.org.

NEW!!! In December, two generous and visionary members of our fellowship made a donation to establish the **Social Justice Community Fund**. The purpose/goals of this fund are to:

1. To invest in upholding the worth and dignity of marginalized people in our community
2. To provide short term relief and promote long-term confidence and self-reliance through education and training for underserved individuals;
3. To provide funds to local individuals, organizations, or projects that do not otherwise have sufficient resources available to accomplish the purposes outlined above; and
4. To foster public recognition for UUFD for providing the money and effort resulting in accomplishing the above

The initial donors to this fund envision their contribution as a foundation to be built on by other Fellowship members through contributions of time and/or money. This fund will give a hand up, rather than a hand out. Many thanks to the founders of the Social Justice Community Fund for your example, vision and generosity. Please contact me for further

information or if you might like be involved through funding or service.

Maureen Maliszewski
Chair, UUFD Social Justice Committee
970-259-4713

A Different Way of Doing Business

The title describes the buying and selling of fairly traded products. Buying products grown by small, organic, and precariously sustainable farmers in countries that grow the best cocoa and coffee should be done in a way that respects the farmers and protects them from the whim of large agri-businesses.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee at the national level has developed a relationship with a trusted company named Equal Exchange. They sell to many interfaith groups who believe in a different way of doing business.

When UU churches buy fair trade products from = Exchange, a certain percentage of the sales is returned to the UUSC for use in their service programs. At the end of 2010, UUSC received \$15,624.86 from =Exchange.

Our own Fellowship purchased the equivalent of \$2540.69 in Equal Exchange products in 2011. Our December sales were \$421.00. UUFD, though small, is very generous and we are delighted with your support for fair trade. And for the welcome help during sales from Mo and Paul Maliszewski, Karen Roberts, and Brooks Taylor.

If you would like more information, please pick up a brochure at the = Exchange table in Bowman Hall during coffee time.

Janice Taylor

Poetry by Ralph Blanchard

Ralph Blanchard, a member of UUFD, had a poem published in the Winter 2011 edition of *UUWorld*. We have reprinted it here.

The day after

I think the next day
Is what I mostly like
About Christmas when
The wrapping paper and tinsel and
Other gay detritus are carefully
Tucked away and the
Happy excited look in
Children's eyes is fresh
In yesterday's memory along
With the kindly smiles
Of family and friends
And strangers even
And I am aware
That we have safely navigated
The white water of another
Year with its successes
And its sorrows, and our
Eyes now focus only on the tree
With all its baubles collected over
A lifetime hanging quietly and
The space beneath it emptied of the
Brightly colored packages
And the tree alone directing us
To peaceful paths
With its symbolic star

I like the day okay but the next day
Is the one I prefer, offering a quiet space
A universal exhalation
The day after, when thoughts are
Gathered up and cast into clear light,
I see the suffering world and the dim
Outline of small things I'm meant to do
I also hear the laughter
And the mixture of the two
Brings hope that each next day
Will find us further on

February Newsletter Deadline

I try to send out the newsletter on the last day of each month, regardless of the day of the week. Preparation and fact checking takes a bit of time so I need your articles by 5:00 PM two days before it is to be sent out.

Thus, the deadline for the February newsletter will be 5:00 PM, Sunday, January 29.

Remember—if I don't have it, I cannot print it!

Thanks for your consideration. *Ron*

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