



Unitarian Universalist Notes

A monthly publication (except July/August) of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango, CO 419 San Juan Drive, Durango, Colorado 81301
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Services 10:00 a.m. Sunday

January 2011

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

Welcoming Congregation Committee Now Forming

(Increasing understanding and acceptance of people with different sexual orientations.)

In 1987, the UUA established the Common Vision Planning Committee. This committee found many negative attitudes, deep prejudices, and profound ignorance about bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender (BGLT) people; this resulted in their exclusion from our churches. As a result, the 1989 General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to initiate the Welcoming Congregation Program to educate its members.

This program is completely voluntary for congregations that wish to become more inclusive toward BGLT people. It consists partly of a series of workshops developed by the UUA with the goal of reducing prejudice by increasing understanding and acceptance among people of different sexual orientations.

You may ask why single out bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people? The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong states in the Welcoming Congregation manual: "For centuries, the church has been a leading

force against sexual minorities. It is not surprising that gay people are reluctant to reach out to the very institution that oppresses them. Yet, gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual people have no less need for warmth, caring, and affirmation than anyone else who calls the liberal church their religious home. In fact, as a subculture in society, gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual people may need our support more than the general population.

Aren't we already a welcoming congregation? It is true that UUFD probably meets most of the qualifications for a Welcoming Congregation. Article IV of our Bylaws states that we affirm and promote full participation of persons without regard to ethnicity, gender, physical or mental challenge, sexual orientation..... Our membership already includes BGLT people who are active members, willing to give of themselves and share their experiences. However, official recognition as a Welcoming Congregation will allow us to open UUFD as a safe place for BGLT persons, to take positions on oppression in our larger community, and to accomplish outreach. Confronting, and understanding our prejudices in a non-judgmental, non-threatening group will allow us to explore their origins and replace those prejudices with knowledge leading to

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Our Mission:

- Provide a home for individual spiritual search and religious development.
- Serve our community by putting our beliefs into action.
- Provide religious education for all interested members and others.

We Affirm and Promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

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individual spiritual growth and congregational unity.

Our immediate goal, then, is to form a Welcoming Congregation Committee made up of members committed to the goals as outlined, and including members of all genders, sexual orientations, ages, cultural and racial groups. Please contact Susan Koonce (bluesky3@earthlink.net) or John Schwob (johnschwob@msn.com) if you are willing to serve on this committee or if you need additional information.

Call for hosts

The Fellowship offers guest ministers and presenters from out-of-town lodging on the Saturday night prior to the Sunday Service. If you are willing to host a guest, please contact Brooks Taylor, durango-folk@frontier.net, 382-0165, for possible dates and contacts.

Fair Trade Sales at UUFD

Many thanks to all who purchased Fair Trade products this holiday season. We sold \$380.00 of Equal Exchange products. And \$75.00 was earned through the donation/sales of Schwob honey.

Thanks go to Aline and John.

Janice

February Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the February newsletter will be 5:00 PM, Friday, January 28, 2011. Please send materials to Ron Garst at rdgarst@durango.net. Remember, the newsletter is one of our main means of communication, so please submit articles.

Contact Information

President—Brooks Taylor

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Sunday Programs for January 2010

January 2, 2011

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev (Chasidic Tales)

Eli Herb, Har Shalom

Worship Leader: Dennis Aronson

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev (Ukraine, 1740-1809) is one of the most celebrated masters of the early Chasidic movement. Known also a *Debarmdiger* - the Merciful - Levi Yitzhak is known for his intense love for G-d and people. A scholar and a mystic, he was also famous for his work the *Kedushat Levi* and profound states of spiritual ecstasy. Virtually unknown outside academia and the chasidic world until the last few years, Levi Yitzhak is gaining popularity among progressive Jews due to the many stories of his fiery devotion to loving all people.

Eli Herb is a Maggid, a Jewish spiritual storyteller who received his training from the renowned spiritual teacher & scholar of chasidic teachings, Yitzhak Buxbaum. He has a BFA in music composition, and a Master of Theological Studies, focusing on environmental ethics in Judaism. Born and raised in Carbondale, Colorado, Eli now lives in Durango with his wife and three children.

January 9

Coyote Tales

Sharon and Dr. Don Gordon

Worship Leader: Tricia Bayless

Members Sharon and Don Gordon return with an enactment of one of the coyote stories of UU minister, now deceased, Webster Kitchell. The title of the book is *Coyote Says*; the chapter is "Coyote Wants to Know What the Great Architect Had in Mind."

Sharon Gordon has a BA from San Francisco State; she taught school on the Navajo Reservation for 15 years as a reading specialist. She has served in the past as the UUFD Vice President for programs for many years, and as RE director. Currently she is Active in the AAUW and LSPERA. Don is emeritus professor of anthropology at FLC with MA and PhD from University of Oregon. He led the annual FLC Innovative Month Programs to Latin America for 25 years, was the founder of the

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FLC Environmental Center and Environmental Studies program. He currently serves as president of the La Plata division of SCPERA.

January 16

Keeping the Christmas Spirit Alive

Dr. John Lyons

Worship Leader: Alane Brown

We've all heard that the Christmas season is a time for 'Peace on earth, good will toward men'. Many of us put feelings of ill will aside during this period and afterwards, attempt to continue this practice in the coming year. The task can be made easier if we first understand the obstacles to succeeding that are inherent in our human nature.

John's undergraduate education was in engineering; this led to a 30-year career at NASA. However, his graduate work was in the behavioral sciences, which culminated in a doctorate. His recreational passions are architecture, giant wind-bells, and reading books that no one else wants to read and about which no one is interested in talking.

January 23

The Inherent Worth & Dignity of Every Person

Dr. Ron Garst

Worship Leader: Katherine Burgess

UU congregations affirm & promote "the inherent worth and dignity of every individual." Do we really believe this applies in all cases? What are the exceptions? How does that belief influence how we think about the behavior of other people?

Ron Garst has been a Unitarian Universalist for the past 38 years. He and Marilyn moved to Durango in November 2005 and have been active members since joining in early 2006. Ron is currently the Fellowship's treasurer, a member of the Board of Trustees, immediate past President & the newsletter editor.

January 30

What Do Philosophers Have to Say about Ethics?

Dr. Sarah Roberts-Cady, Fort Lewis College

Worship Leader: Crystal Carroll

Various ethical theories and options will be introduced in this presentation.

Sarah Roberts-Cady is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Fort Lewis College. She received her PhD in philosophy from Purdue University. She specializes in moral philosophy, with publications on theories of justice, medical ethics, and environmental ethics. Most recently, she has focused her interest on ethics and public policy.

Christmas Eve Service at the Fellowship. All photos by Katherine Burgess.

