

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Salem, Oregon
October 4, 2006



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It WAS a Special Sunday!

In his sermon, Rick Davis spoke of how society often tries to force us into molds such as right-handedness and heterosexuality, how Unitarian Universalism honors diversity, and how we need to welcome our members’ diverse talents into the organization of our Salem congregation. Then people were invited to fill out and bring forward their Volunteer Pledge Forms, indicating how they were available “to help fulfill the shared ministry of our congregation.” As they placed the forms in the big basket, they were given ribbons to pin on a big board to show where they were volunteering – in areas such as Fellowship, Office Volunteers, Operations, Social Action, and Sunday Services. All the ribbons were claimed and the bulletin board glowed with color!

Long after people had enjoyed the potluck lunch and left the building quiet, Mike Berger, Lori Jenkins, and Leah Knudsen were in the office reading and computerizing the information on stacks of yellow forms. Those who didn’t turn in forms were to be called Monday. If you haven’t been contacted and are interested in being part of this shared ministry (and perhaps want more information about it), please call the church office. There are plans to have a special “warm line” for this – but you can also leave a message with Rose Drake.

The **WOMEN’S ALLIANCE** will have its first meeting of the new church year on **Thursday, October 5**, at 7 p.m. The continuing "Getting to Know You" program series will feature Margaret Boyle as speaker. All church women are invited to attend and to enjoy an evening of fun and friendship.

This issue was edited by Elsa Struble. NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 11:30 a.m., October 15, 2006. Send news to editors@uusalem.org, put it in workroom newsletter “mailbox,” or mail it (marked “newsletter”) to church.

Reverential Ramblings

There was a time in my idealistic but rigidly dogmatic youth when I disdained capitalism as a soulless, contemptible economic system. I was inspired by the alternative economic vision of early Christian communalism as described in the book of *Acts 4: 32 - 35*: “*Now the whole group (i.e., the Christians in Jerusalem) were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common...there was not a needy person among them for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold...and it was distributed to each as any had need.*” (Ironically, this was later echoed by the atheist Karl Marx in his guiding dictum: “from each, according to his ability; to each, according to his needs.”)

Time has tempered my disdain for capitalism, and I now acknowledge that this early Christian economic vision would be hard to realize in our world, where the profit motive, not rarefied altruism, is the engine that drives the economy. That’s the way it is, and perhaps it’s not altogether a bad thing. After all, the idea that you can work hard, innovate, produce and then reap the benefits has stimulated a great deal of creativity and produced a lot of good things in our lives.

Adam Smith, the Scottish political economist and original “trickle down” apologist for capitalism, claimed that the principle of self interest – such as people desiring to make a profit, or somehow cut the best deals for themselves in a competitive marketplace – operates like an “invisible hand” that insures, paradoxically, that the common good is served. There is some truth in the notion that self interest isn’t altogether bad. My inner countercultural, socialistic child doesn’t like to admit this, but maybe capitalism isn’t an unalloyed evil after all.

Yet neither is it a perfect system. I agree with the 20th century macroeconomist, Arthur Okun, who said: “Two cheers for capitalism, but not three.” (Thanks to member Brian Reeder for telling me about Okun.) That is, a capitalist system can serve us well, but unrestrained capitalism is horrendous: when the profit motive is put on the very highest pedestal, many innocent victims get sacrificed upon its altar.

Right now, as you read this, due to the clever maneuvering of powerful capitalists who effectively subvert the collective bargaining power of labor, there are millions (or is it billions?) of people toiling for long hours and working for scandalously low wages to produce the goods and services that we take for granted, while the super rich reap obscene profits. (Those of us in the middle class are complicit here in that we profit indirectly by enjoying lower prices for commodities like food, clothing and various goods and services.) Or think, if you can bear to do so, of the millions of animals raised in crowded, inhumane factory farms by those whose sole objective is to maximize the profit. Or think of how the earth is raped – strip mined, depleted, clear cut, fished out, polluted, paved over and poisoned – for profit.

There may be an invisible hand that guides the economy, but unless there is another, more powerful, spiritual hand of care and compassion guiding us, we all lose. It’s good to remember Jesus’ indictment of the mindset of unlimited acquisitiveness: (Matthew 16:26): “For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?” Let us, at least, remember that profit and self interest play a role, but not the leading role, in our lives.

Love, Rick

Lunch & Discussion with Rick

On Friday, October 6, bring a sack lunch and join Rick and fellow UUs in a discussion of “Religion” – What is it? What isn’t it? What role does it play in our lives? Is it helpful, harmful, neutral? What light do different religious traditions have to shed on this subject?

Orientation Invitation

Are you a newcomer who would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and the Salem Congregation? If so, you are invited to join Reverend Rick Davis and the Membership Team at a "Mini-Orientation" class on October 22. The class will be held in Rick's office just after the Sunday Service and will last about an hour. Child care is planned. Those who attend will meet other seekers and will learn about the development of Unitarian Universalism and of its seven guiding principles. For those wishing to explore membership in the Salem Congregation, a "Path to Membership" class will follow on November 5. All are welcome to these classes.

The Membership Team

Committee on Ministry

On October 22 the Committee on Ministry will be available to meet with members of the congregation; we strive to do this approximately three times a year. We will be in the front of the sanctuary after the service, to receive helpful feedback for our minister and the leaders of the congregation as we strive to fulfill the shared ministry of our congregation. Comments will be brought to the attention of the appropriate congregational leaders. C.O.M. members Harriet Trill, John Roy Wilson, Diana Bodtker, and Hudson Schweickert are looking forward to speaking with you.

Treasurer's Corner

Hello, everyone. I am your new treasurer and am trying to fill Marian Robison's shoes. I have not yet decided whether it will be the right shoe or the left! As treasurer it is good to be right, but politically I am on the left. What a dilemma. Probably only a few of you understood how much effort Marian put into the job. She and Rose worked very hard to bring the financial house in order when she became treasurer. I am finding the accounting of the congregation's finances to be in excellent shape. Marian deserves big thanks, as does Rose for her able assistance. I only hope I can maintain the quality that is here.

I will put a little article in the newsletter every month after the Board meeting. Those of you who read Phil Cogswell's summary of the Board minutes in the last newsletter will have noted that pledge income is behind what would have been expected for the first two months. I just encourage everyone to keep current on their pledges. Please contact me if there are any changes in your personal situation that would alter the amount that you have pledged.

I will post on the bulletin board a copy of the "Treasurer's Report" that is generated by our computer system for those of you who may be interested in looking at a lot of numbers. This will also be on a monthly basis.

I am looking forward to serving you in my capacity as treasurer. I am always open to questions or suggestions regarding the treasurer's responsibilities.

Paul Rice

Salem Interfaith Hospitality

UUCS will be hosting our SIHN families October 22-29. Please sign up to help with food and companionship and overnight stays by calling Rosa Barton or Loraine Stuart.

Loraine Stuart

Salem Crop Walk

Sponsored by Church World Service, the Crop Walk is an interdenominational community event, raising money for hunger issues, both locally and abroad. This year's walk will be this Sunday afternoon, October 8, starting at 1:30 p.m. from the north steps of the Capitol. To get involved, contact Dick Boyle of the Social Action Team.

Reader's Forum

All are welcome to attend Reader's Forum, the (9:15) Sunday morning book discussion group, in Hanneman Fellowship Hall. The conversation is lively and far-ranging, so even if you haven't read the week's selection, you'll still fit right in. Copies of our selections are available at Jackson's Books, 320 Liberty SE. The book for October and November is Nevada Barr's *Seeking Enlightenment Hat by Hat: A Skeptic's Path to Religion*, a collection

of short essays about her own skeptical spiritual path. Her essays are often witty and thought-provoking. Up for October 8 are pages 31-58 (Addiction, Justification, Judgment, Turning the Other Cheek, Prayer, Fear); for October 15, pages 59-85. Contact Don Wolf for more information.

Peace Lecture October 18

The topic of the annual Peace Lecture will be "Genocide in Darfur: Lessons for the World." Speaker John Heffernan is Director of the Genocide Prevention Initiative at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The lecture begins at 7:30 p.m. in Hudson Hall in Willamette University's Rogers Music Center; UUCS is a cosponsor; admission is free.

Dick Boyle, Social Action Team

Yurts, Anyone?

Last year, Mike and Petra Berger enjoyed Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving at Nehalem Bay campground in six different yurts with about 15 other people, mostly UU's from Salem. They again reserved yurts this year, plus the Community Hall right next to the eight yurts. However, their plans have changed and they cannot use the reservations this year.

These yurts are hard to come by: people reserve them nine months ahead, especially for the holidays. If you are interested in taking over one or more of the Bergers' reservations, please give them a call at 503-363-0789 by next Sunday, before they cancel the reservations. The cost is \$27 a night plus \$6 registration fee for each yurt. Yurts sleep up to 5 (one double, one wide Futon, one bunk bed).

Firewood Available

We have some moderately dry oak (mostly) firewood available, from a large native oak that toppled over behind the church last winter. I'm not sure what price to ask for it, but I can attest that it was split the old-fashioned way. I can load and deliver it, for a little extra. My truck will hold about 1/3 cord.

If you're interested, call me before the rains set in.

Tom Lancefield

Wheelchair-lift Van?

Geraldine Rock says her neighbor who is in a scooter would be grateful for at least occasional rides to church from the Chemeketa Community College area. Call Geraldine, who would ride along.

Were You Confused?

The colored sheet enclosed in your order of service is the *Sunday Bulletin*. It is produced, complete with illustrations, by Office Administrator Rose Drake. Get your announcements to her early Wednesday morning at the latest; Tuesday is better, so that Rick and Lise can read it at the Wednesday staff meeting. The office phone and email address are always on our page 8 as well as on the Sunday publications. You are now reading the *Unitarian Universalist*, more often referred to simply as "the newsletter." Current editors are Lois Nodland and Elsa Struble; deadlines and contact information are always at the bottom of page 1. You might want to email your information to the office and the editors at the same time!

UU Artists

Kristen Hunt is showing a few new pieces at Salem's Blue Pepper Gallery on Commercial Street throughout the month of October. She has an oil painting depicting Willamette's Waller Hall and the Great Maple that was removed a few years ago, as well as several pastels. She and Bruce will be there on Wednesday, October 4th, from 5 until 6:30 p.m.; you are welcome to join them.

John Casey has had one of his paintings accepted for the 38th Annual Watercolor West exhibition in Brea, CA, this fall. He also has a one-man show, which runs to December 8th, at the Hamersley Library at Western Oregon University in Monmouth. His exhibit of paintings, prints, photography and sculpture is titled "Explorations II."

UUCS Community News

Congratulations to **Amanda Nelson** on her recent marriage to long-time partner Eric Jensen! Amanda concluded her UUCS service as advisor to YRUUS this summer, and anticipates more time for other church involvements.

UUCS families have bid farewell once again as offspring returned to universities across the country: **Anne Reeder** to Macalester College, **Kathleen Herrin** to The Evergreen State University, **Diana Cunningham** to Eastern Oregon University.

Adam Logan, Jean's son, has enrolled in the Rochester Institute of Technology. He would welcome notes/cards from friends in our community:

Rory Gravelle has just completed a whirlwind bus tour of the continent utilizing America Pass. The junket took him across Canada to New York and west again via Las Vegas and San Francisco. This week he begins work for Americorps in its program directed by the Salem YMCA, in one or more of the projects it operates in this area. Rory is the son of Marie Gravelle and Phil Carver.

Galen Brownson, Cherie Ulmer's son, has the honor of being the Dean of the upcoming UU district conference for high school-age youth! At its conclusion in mid-month, he'll return to job-seeking, followed in winter term by coursework at Chemeketa. His next step is to attend Shoreline Community College outside Seattle.

Ri Britton returned to Chemeketa this week, continuing his studies in hospitality management but adding a course in film media.

Robin Grupper began studies at Oregon State University this week. Her major interest is Peace Studies, a program in the philosophy department with coursework in communications and anthropology as well.

Congratulations to **Alex Reeder**, recently named a National Merit semifinalist, one of just seven in the Salem area! He is the son of Brian Reeder and Bonnie Heitsch.

Congratulations to **Lydia Gutierrez** on her appointment as counselor on the McKay

High School team providing services not only to McKay students but also to those in the high school's seven feeder elementary schools! Lydia was formerly a resource teacher in the district; after completing a master's degree in counseling she is highly qualified to serve the needs of students at risk of dropping out.

Congratulations to **Linda Geissler** on her recent appointment to full-time counseling at Englewood Elementary School! Following the completion of her master's degree last year and internship in the district, she served as a part time counselor; this is a well-deserved promotion!

Malissa Duniway-Holland's daughter, **Eden Rogland**, married Chris Peak on a farm outside Seattle this summer. Eden is the granddaughter of the late David Duniway, one of the "founding seven" members of UUCS.

Condolences to **Esther Friedman** at the death of her grandfather, Merton Buffum. Esther worked last year in Washington and hopes to return to Salem in some child-serving program.

Condolences to **Dennis Ehrp** at the lung cancer death of his kid brother, Steve J. Gould, in Modesto, CA, last week. Dennis writes, "At our father's death, Steve became my surrogate son. I helped him buy his first car, get his first job, and his first home. I counseled with him when he got involved in drugs and all the other stuff that dads are supposed to do." Juxtaposed with this sad news for Dennis and Jill (Baker) is the remembered happiness of the wedding of Dennis' daughter Jody on August 26, as reported in the September 6 newsletter.

Cathie Olcott is very ready to venture forth following the extended illness and death this summer of her husband, Gordon. She'll attend an Elderhostel study program in South San Francisco featuring short courses in three distinct areas of interest: Impressionist painting and the political milieu of that time; politics of the Supreme Court; and the American Musical. We'll hear from Cathie how Elderhostel can fit all that into four days!

Iris and **Bill Sea** will leave us next week, returning, as they do annually, to their winter

home in Palm Desert, California. But as the migratory birds do predictably, they will return in the spring!

Marge and Dick French flew to New York City this week to attend the marriage of Dick's only granddaughter, Sarah French, to Evan Johnston. They plan to include visits to the United Nations and also to the western Pennsylvania home of former UUCS members Tracy Boyle and Steve Ovens. Early this summer the Frenches sold their rural home of many years and moved to a condominium in South Salem.

Need background on diagnostics relating to blood flow to the heart? Three UUCS members are uniquely qualified by recent experience to provide information: **Emily Start, Anne Alexander, and Rhea Devery.**

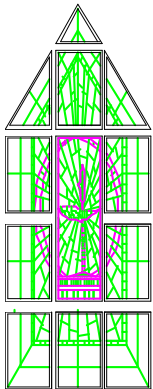
Last Friday **Pam Williams'** husband, **Ernie**, had a total knee replacement. On October 17 **Anne Alexander** will have the same surgery. We're fortunate to have so many members ready to provide information on

their experiences and act as resource persons to the rest of us.

This column is intended to provide opportunity for us to share with one another those events in our lives that evoke joy or sadness. It's also a space to share what's new or changed in your life, where you have been, what you have seen; all these contributions add to our actually being a community. To make this happen, news has to come in from you! Please e-mail or call me with your own news, or refer me to others you believe have noteworthy issues to share; I'll call them to confirm their willingness to have information in print.

Joan Erickson

The editors thank Kim Willaman for writing this column during the past year and welcome back Joan Erickson, who created the column several years ago.



UUCS Calendar

- Wednesday, Oct. 4** Meditation, 7:00 p.m. (every Wednesday)
Chat 'n' Craft, 7:00 p.m. Info: Kate Walker
- Thursday, Oct. 5** Women's Alliance, 7:00 p.m. (see page)
- Friday, Oct. 6** Brown Bag Discussion with Rick, noon (see page)
- Saturday, Oct. 7** Lifelines Lay Ministry, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 8** Readers' Forum, 9:15 a.m. (every Sunday)
Salem Crop Walk, 1:30 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 9** YRUU Meeting, 7 - 9 p.m. (every Monday)
Marvelous Monday (6 p.m.) and Team Meetings (7 p.m.)
- Wednesday, Oct. 11** Meditation, 7:00 p.m.
Choir practice, 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 12** Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. All welcome.
- Wednesday, Oct. 18** RE Team meets, 7:30 p.m.
Salem Peace Lecture, 7:30 p.m., Willamette Music Bldg.
- Sunday, Oct. 22** Orientation, after service
Visit with Committee on Ministry, after service
- Saturday, Oct. 28** Medicine Wheel, Mount Angel (Contact Beth Malouf.)

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem
5090 Center Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97317

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Minister: The Rev. Richard R. Davis

rdavis@uuma.org

Religious Ed. Director: Lise Adams Sherry

Associate DRE: Mark Babson

Board Chair: Diana Nicholson-Nelson

Office Administrator: Rose Drake

Phone (503) 364-0932, Fax, 364-3280

email uucsoffice@yahoo.com

Website: www.uusalem.org

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