

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse Newsletter April, 2004

Sunday Services: Program at 10:00 AM Refreshments at 11:15 AM

New Services Site: The Pump House 119 King Street

Fellowship Mailing Address: PO Box 2676, La Crosse, WI 54602-2676

Message Center: 608-796-9993

Web site: www.uulacrosse.org

Upcoming Programs

April 4th “Beyond Retribution.” Panel: The Honorable Judge Ramona Gonzalez; La Crosse County Justice Sanctions Coordinator Jane Klekamp; and attorney/UUF member Keith Belzer.

While retribution is an element of the justice system, it is by no means the only concern. At a time when the biggest growth industry in the state of Wisconsin is prison construction and management, most citizens are left wanting more than “an eye for an eye” justice. The La Crosse County Court system is recognized state-wide for creative and innovative ways of searching for justice in ways that go beyond retribution. Our panel will discuss philosophical, spiritual, and practical justice issues.

April 11th “The Earth Charter.” The Reverend Penny Andrews. Dr. Penny Andrews will be speaking about the Earth Charter, a declaration of principles aimed at building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. The Earth Charter speaks to global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The document's basic premise is that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible. Rev. Andrews will seek to link the Earth Charter to Unitarian Universalism.

April 18th “Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse Annual Meeting.” UUF Board of Trustees. All members are asked to be present in order to vote for open Board of Trustees positions and Nominating Committee positions. A State of the Fellowship address will be made by Board President Kathy Schnitzius, committee successes will be shared in an Annual Report, and volunteers will be recognized. Please be sure to join us to let your voice be heard through your vote and to celebrate our many successes of the past year.

April 25th “Healthcare Needs of the Poor.” Sister Le Clare Beres, R.N., FSPA. Franciscan Sister Le Clare Beres has played a key role in delivering healthcare to the poor in La Crosse for over two decades, having served as director of both the Indochinese Screening Clinic and the St. Claire Health Mission. Sister Le Clare will offer her perspective on the healthcare needs of those without consistent access to healthcare providers and treatments.

May 2nd “Spirituality Without God”. The Reverend Sarah Oelberg. Rev. Oelberg writes: “ ‘Spirituality’ is the popular term for religion today. What does it mean? Does it necessarily include a belief in God?” Rev. Oelberg served as the minister of the UU congregations in Mankato and Hanska, Minnesota. She has presented to our Fellowship on several previous occasions.

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Prairie Star District UUA Annual Conference

April 23-25, 2004 Kansas City, MO

The PSD Annual Conference is a wonderful opportunity for congregation members to attend informative workshops, network with UUs from across the District, hear terrific speakers, and bring back ideas and enthusiasm. Registration brochures have already been mailed to your congregation. A conference flier and brochures on Kansas City have been sent to congregation Presidents.

Sarah Greene, District Administrator

Phone: 612-870-4823

psdadmin@uua.org

www.unitarian.org/pstar



Music News

Becky Post

EXTRA SINGERS NEEDED FOR A CELEBRATORY SONG

The choir is going to sing Vivaldi's Gloria on Sunday, May 23rd, to celebrate our move to the Pump House. Please consider singing with us for this event!

We've purchased extra copies of the song. It's upbeat and beautiful, but not difficult to sing.

We'll be rehearsing this song on Wednesday, April 28th, at 7:00 at the Pump House. We rehearse in the conference room in the basement. Use the back door.

Please join us!

For more information call Becky at

We are enjoying singing in our new home! We especially like the acoustics and the piano. We would like the choir to grow, so if you love to sing, feel free to join us. We especially need extra singers for our May 23rd service (see accompanying article).

In April, the choir will sing on the 4th and on the 25th. We will rehearse at 9:00 AM before these two services.

The next evening rehearsal will be Wednesday, April 28th from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

All rehearsals are in the conference room in the basement of the Pump House. Enter by the back door.

For more information, contact either of the choir co-directors:

Becky Post

Eric Kraemer

Guest At your Table Update

Fellowship members and friends contributed a total of \$374 to this year's *Guest at Your Table* campaign. *Guest at your Table* is an annual fundraising campaign for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC).

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this cause. Special thanks to Ray Starrett and Ann Beechler who coordinated this year's campaign for our Fellowship.



RE News

Connie Long

News from the "Acquiring Class" (2nd - 5th Grade)

We have started learning creation stories from around the world. The first week we did both Genesis versions and we used clay to form the inhabitants of the world each of us would make. We learned about Izanagi and Izanami from Japan. Each week we will be adding a page to our Creation Stories books that each class member will take home later in the year. We have stories and projects scheduled so far from Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Mexico and some Native American cultures and I'm sure there will be many more. We will end this unit with the big bang to tie in with the Holy Curiosity unit we've been using since September.

Kristie Shappell and Randy Krainock (a.k.a. Parents of Lucas and Kenzie) will be sharing with the group some of their medical knowledge on April 18th. Kristie, a physician, will give a short presentation on UU Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to graduate from medical school in this country. She and Randy are bringing lots of equipment and some special surprises to help us learn more about how our bodies work. There will be lots of activities so come prepared to learn and have fun!

We will be dissecting owl pellets this month but I need to know the best date so as many as possible will be able to take part in this fun project. Dates would be the 11th (Easter) or the 25th. Please contact me with dates you know you will NOT be able to attend

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ATTENTION All Fellowship Members and Friends: The Inquiring Class, 2nd through 5th grades, is learning creation stories. If you have a story to share from your family background or interest (especially involving food) please contact Connie Long. Thanks.

News from the Board of Trustees

Kathy Schnitzius

A regular Board meeting was held on February 29, 2004 after the service at the Pump House. These items were discussed:

- **Connie Long will purchase an artificial floral arrangement for the seniors as a small token of our appreciation for the use of their building these many years.
- **The Social Justice Committee requested to make special collections during the Sunday services for specific causes. The Board approved 4 special collections per year.
- **There were some expected and unexpected moving costs as well as some related costs such as cabinets and sound barriers. The Board approved expenditures from our contingency fund to cover these costs.
- **Prairie Star District Dues will be \$17.50/member for 2004-05 and \$19.00/member for 2005-06.
- **Many grant opportunities--mostly social justice in nature--are available through the VEACH organization.
- **The Board has allotted \$110 plus \$50 per night for two nights for each of 3 delegates to the PSD annual meeting.
- **The issue of fire safety at the Pump House was raised. Jean and Connie will talk to the Pump House staff to determine their plans for fire safety, prepare one for us, and plan to inform us during an upcoming service.
- **Charge accounts will be set up at Office Depot and a florist to allow easy access using our tax exempt status.
- **Our next meeting will be held after the service at the Pump House on March 28.

NOTIFICATION OF ALL MEMBER ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Kathy Schnitzius

Our annual Business Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 18 at 10:00 AM at the Pump House. All members are asked to be present in order to vote for open Board of Trustees positions and Nominating Committee positions.

Nominees for open Board Positions:

- Ingrid Iverson: President-Elect
- Jean Novack: Secretary
- Eric Severson: Member-at-Large
- Joyce Starrett, Member-at-Large

The Following will fill out current Board terms:

- Bob Huff: moving up from President-Elect to President
- Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer: Treasurer
- Connie Long: Member-at-Large

Nominees for Nominating Committee:

- Lisa Metz-Belzer; Kathy Schnitzius; Ingrid Iverson

Social Justice Column

Naming the New Bridge for a "Peacemaker" Ray Starrett

Deborah Buffton has proposed naming the new bridge the "Rachel Corrie Memorial Bridge" in a Feb. 23 letter printed in the La Crosse Tribune. Deborah reminds us that Corrie, "was killed by an Israeli bulldozer last March as she attempted to protect a Palestinian home," and goes on to note that "war memorials are ubiquitous," and that "we rarely hear about, much less celebrate, peace in this country."

I submitted a letter to the Tribune that was printed March 19th, in which I argued that Deborah's proposal has, "much merit." I also suggest that a bridge is very appropriate symbol for the peacemaker's art of attempting to build a bridge between warring factions. Then, I turn attention to the Bush administration's determination to go to war in Iraq while peacemakers were pleading for more time for the UN weapons inspectors.

Deborah has provided us with an opportunity to powerfully link a local memorial to the importance of peacemaking. There are many ways to emphasize the need for peacemaking while we continue to honor those who serve in the armed forces.

Additional peace themes for letters to the editor come to my mind that note our country's failure to emphasize peacemaking in our culture. We are familiar with the arguments summarized by the "no blood for oil" slogan of peace proponents. Now that notes a social injustice! We remember the many failed attempts to create a US Peace Institute comparable to the military academies such as West Point. I encourage you to find a theme and join in a campaign to honor peacemakers with memorials such as this bridge.

Monthly Caregiver

The Caregiver sends cards and flowers to Fellowship members and friends as needed, and helps pass on the word if someone needs cheer or support. If you know of any member who is ill, has suffered a loss, or is having a rough time and could use cheering, please let the Caregiver know.

Caregiver for the month of April is Liz Spangler. You can reach Liz

or phone

If anyone is willing to be the caregiver in May, July or August please call Liz to sign up!

Member News

Keep **Clay LaBrec** and his wife in your thoughts as she recovers from her recent surgery. **Dean Staffanson's** position at Gundersen Lutheran Hospice and Homecare has moved from interim to permanent. Congratulations, Dean! We extend sympathy to **Keith Belzer** and his family as Keith's father was hospitalized recently.

AdventUurers: The last movie of the season at Franciscan Spirituality Center is Thursday April 15th. Soup supper at 5:30 PM and movie beginning at 6:00 PM. The movie is "The Postman," about a lonely man who is impacted by the arrival of the exiled Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Italian subtitles. 113 minutes in length. Call in your supper reservation at 1-608-791-5295. The center is located at 920 Market Street.

A time for game playing will be held Saturday, April 10th at Liz Bonnett's beginning at 4:00 PM. Bring snacks, or something that will compliment the cowboy beans and corn bread that Liz is preparing. She is located in

The Secret Garden is the last of the UW-L theatre arts season offerings. It will be in Toland Theatre, April 23-25 and April 29, May 1 and 2. When would you like to attend? Call Liz Spangler with your preference by April 19th. She will reserve good seats.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

The following meetings, conferences, and trainings are coming up. Consider attending to learn more about UUism, to represent our Fellowship, and/or to learn valuable leadership skills.

>**Prairie Star District Annual Meeting**--April 23-25 in Kansas City. The Board has approved \$110 plus \$50 per night for 2 nights for each of 3 delegates. A report back to the fellowship is requested.

>**UUA General Assembly**--June 24-28 in Long Beach, CA. The Board will be discussing compensation for this assembly.

>**Midwest Leadership School**--July 14-21 or July 24-31 at Beloit College in Beloit, WI. The Fellowship funds the entire tuition which includes room and meals. Members in leadership positions are encouraged to attend. Two tuitions are funded per year.

If anyone is interested in attending any of these conferences, please contact Kathy Schnitzius for more information.

STATEMENT OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF SPAIN WITH REGARD TO THE 11 MARCH TERRORIST ATTACKS IN MADRID

"Regarding the cruel and bloody terrorist attacks that took place in the morning of the 11th of March in Madrid, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Spain, which represents in Spain the Unitarian and Universalist religious tradition, inspired by its fundamental Principles which call us to: honor the inherent worth and dignity of every person, affirm the democratic process, and build a global community based on peace, liberty and justice, declares its absolute and radical condemnation of terrorist violence and affirms that the defense of all human lives and the values of peace and democracy are the only viable and acceptable way to a peaceful coexistence and freedom for all persons and peoples.

450 years ago, a peaceful, honest and fair man, Michael Servetus, was sentenced to death at the stake. He was the inspirer, pioneer and first martyr of Unitarianism, and his life and work keep inspiring us who identify ourselves with the Unitarian religious tradition. In his defense, the reformer Sebastian Castellio wrote: "To kill a man is not to defend a doctrine; it is to kill a man." In this spirit, we join together in the grief for the victims and the rejection of any death caused by fanaticism and intolerance."

*Social Justice Committee will meet after the service on April 4th.

*There will be a Membership Meeting right after the service on April 11th.

Thanks to Ron Malzer for his substantial assistance with the newsletter since the December issue. Among his many contributions, it is exciting to note the use of photographs in this month's newsletter. Thanks Ron!

Fellowship Directory Correction

In the March newsletter we tried to correct Madelon Wise's e-mail address, but managed to mangle it with more typos. Trying again, we believe the correct address is:

UUA NEWS

Unitarian Universalist Ministers Charged With Solemnizing Unlicensed Marriages

(March 16, 2004) The Ulster County (NY) District Attorney has charged two Unitarian Universalist ministers with solemnizing unlicensed marriage after the ministers performed civil marriages for more than twenty same-sex couples in New Paltz, NY. The ministers, the Rev. Kay Greenleaf and the Rev. Dawn Sangrey, along with the Rev. Marion Visel, a UU minister from Westport, CT, began performing the marriage ceremonies after the Mayor of New Paltz, Jason West, ceased officiating at same-sex marriages on March 6. West has had the same charges levied against him by the Ulster County DA.



Rev. Kay Greenleaf



Rev. Dawn Sangrey

Sangrey and Greenleaf signed affidavits for the couples they married and said they considered the ceremonies civil and legally binding. Ulster County District Attorney Don Williams said he was compelled to prosecute Greenleaf and Sangrey because they "publicly proclaimed their intent to perform civil marriages under the authority invested in them by New York State law, rather than performing purely religious ceremonies."

If convicted of the charges, the ministers could spend a year in prison and be fined up to \$500 each. The ministers will be arraigned on March 22.

In commenting on the charges levied against Sangrey and Greenleaf, the Rev. William G. Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association today issued the following statement:

“Unitarian Universalists strongly support marriage equality for same-sex couples. Our ministers have

been officiating at religious marriages for same-sex couples for more than thirty-five years, and our ministers have happily signed marriage licenses recently for civil marriages for same-sex couples in San Francisco and Oregon. Unitarian Universalism honors ministerial independence in matters of conscience, and the Unitarian Universalist Association supports the right of our ministers in New York State to act on their best judgment on these issues. Unitarian Universalists believe that equal marriage rights for all is a matter of justice. And in the long run, we have faith that justice will prevail. Unitarian Universalists are proud to stand on the side of love.”

SAN FRANCISCO NEWLYWEDS

By Becky Post

Look at all the joy in those faces.
 Look at all the love –
 love that was proscribed, denied,
 kicked stomped buried
 by those others. But
 a door has opened
 and they are a throng.
 They pour into city hall
 arm-in-arm,
 speaking shouting singing
 their vows
 of love,
 while those naysayers,
 with placards of spit and hate,
 circle around
 like a posse, pledging to nullify
 all this love. Yet
 in spring,
 thin green shoots
 burst
 through the ground,
 and new buds unfold
 to the warm embrace
 of the sun,
 and no one
 can stop them.

April Needs for New Horizons

Ellen Severson

Our fellowship has had a long relationship with New Horizons, a local shelter for women and children who are fleeing domestic abuse and constructing healthier paths through their lives. A donation box is available each Sunday at the front of the meeting room.

This month, please consider contributing one or more of the following items that are especially needed: brooms; children's toothbrushes; toothpaste; bus passes/tokens; can openers; canned food items; canned juices; carpet shampoo; cereal; child car seats; umbrellas; and children's gym shoes. If you have questions, please contact Ellen Severson at .

Important Notice!

Our Fellowship's Annual Business Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 18 at 10:00 AM at the Pump House. See page 2 for details.

Want to catch up on all the latest news from the UUA?
Check out this new page on the UUA Web site:

<http://www.uua.org/whatsnew.html>

