

*The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of La Crosse Newsletter
March, 2004*

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

New Services Site as of 2-29-04: The Pump House
119 King Street—La Crosse

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

Message Center: 608-796-9993 **Web site:** www.uulacrosse.org

UU FELLOWSHIP BEGINS NEW ERA AT THE PUMP HOUSE

Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer

La Crosse, Wisconsin

February 29, 2004

We did it! In a matter of merely 75 minutes last Sunday (February 22), we loaded the truck with all of the Fellowship's possessions, drove to the Pump House and unloaded everything. This apparent miracle happened only because of the efforts of many individuals before, during and after the move:

- Madeline Kepner organized and coordinated the packing;
- Connie Long and Liz Bonnett packed most of the RE supplies;
- Bob Huff coordinated the actual moving day;
- Ellen Severson provided snacks at the Senior Center;
- Ann Beechler fed us at the Pump House;
- Christopher Townsend and Eric Severson coordinated publicity and communications.

Many, many other individuals contributed large chunks of their weekend time to packing on Saturday, loading and unloading on Sunday, and unpacking boxes. Keith Belzer led us in a moving (in every sense of the word) Sunday service that helped make the transition easier. It was a reminder that the individuals in the Fellowship are what makes us special, not the space we find ourselves in. That said, I am excited because I believe the move to the Pump House will allow us to share the experience of being a UU in La Crosse with even more people.

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After being at the Senior Center more than 25 years, we will need to learn to do some things differently in our elegant new surroundings. In order to protect the space we utilize and maintain a good relationship with our new landlords, we need to heed the following:

**** We will have only 2 keys to the Pump House** and if we lose either of them, we will pay a **very large re-keying charge**. The coordinator will keep one of the keys. The other key will be available for checkout if someone needs Pump House access when it is not open to the public. The second key may be checked out *in advance* from the coordinator, and should be returned to the coordinator after use.

****There always will be art on display at the Pump House.** That's one of the things that will make it a great environment for us. However, the Fellowship does not want to have to buy artwork because it has been damaged. The old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child" applies here. **We will all need to be responsible for helping the children of the Fellowship learn that the art can only be looked at, not touched.**

**** We have access to all of the public areas of the Pump House. We do not have use of the offices – they are private space, some of which is rented by other organizations. We cannot use any of the office equipment, including computers, copier and fax machine.**

**** The Pump House will be getting new carpeting in the Dayton Theater very soon (that is our meeting room).** As all of you are aware, coffee spills at the Senior Center were common. On a vinyl floor that was not a big deal (except when it spilled on our hymnals). On new carpet, it's a very big deal. **We strongly recommend that no drinks be carried into the Dayton Theater unless they are in cups with lids.** We will still have coffee available downstairs in the gallery, but ask that it not be taken upstairs unless you have put it in a cup with a lid. The Fellowship does not own cups like that, so if drinking coffee during the service is important to you, please, get in the habit of bringing a travel mug or similar type of cup from home. If there are spills on any of the carpeted floors, ask the coordinator where to get cleaning supplies.

**** We will be able to use the Steinway grand piano** that is in the theater during our Sunday services. It is a gorgeous and extremely valuable instrument, and will add to the musical experience of our services. We are responsible for any damages to it, so **we need to take great care of it.**

****The Fellowship's mailboxes are located on a file cabinet that sits across from the door to the women's restroom on the main floor.**

We have use of the space from 7 AM to noon every Sunday. If we are going to be going significantly later than noon, we will need to make arrangements ahead of time with the director at the Pump House. We have made arrangements for regular use of the building for choir rehearsals and Board meetings. **Other uses need to be specially arranged; please contact the UU Board.** If there are concerns about any of the arrangements at the Pump House, please contact me. Together we can work out the details and make this a wonderful experience for all of us.

Upcoming Programs:

March 7th “Thomas Jefferson’s Commentaries on Religion:” Red Haines, UUF La Crosse member. Thomas Jefferson remains one of the most controversial figures in both American and UU history. Widely revered for his contributions to American democracy, and widely criticized for his status as a slave-holder, Jefferson’s thoughts on religion are provocative to this day. Red writes: “Thomas Jefferson began to feel at some point in his life that the teachings of the Church in which he had been reared were not quite right. He had been influenced by his teachers at William and Mary College and by acquaintance with men of other beliefs whom he met in Philadelphia and elsewhere in connection with his Government service. While President, he commenced a scholarly examination of the Gospels and of western philosophers, the result of which was a book, not completed until 1819, that he titled, “The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth,” sometimes referred to as “The Jefferson Bible.” He also authored two bills establishing freedom of religion in Virginia and wrote extensively in his correspondence about religion and of reasons to assure religious freedom from interference by the State, which he had reason to assert when he was President. This service will explore Jefferson's writings and commentaries on religion.”

March 14th “The Search for the Meaning of Life,” author William Elliott. Mr. Elliott is the author of **Tying Rocks to Clouds, Meetings and Conversations with Wise and Spiritual People**. He spent ten years seeking and conducting interviews with some of the most prominent religious thinkers in the world. His book reports on twenty of them, including: Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Norman Vincent Peale, Ram Dass, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Robert Schuller, Jean Houston, B.F. Skinner, Swami Satchidananda, and Rabbi Harold Kushner. Bill lives in Madison, and has spoken to Unitarian Universalist congregations around the country.

March 21st “Same Sex Marriage,” a presentation by UUF La Crosse members Matt Bosworth and Katie Van Roosenbeek. While Unitarian Universalist congregations have recognized unions of gays and lesbians since the mid-1980’s, no state in the country has given legal recognition to gay couples prior to Vermont’s July 2000 civil union law. Massachusetts appears poised to recognize gay marriages this May, while President Bush is launching a national effort seeking to pass a constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriages. Katie and Matt will present a program on legal, political, moral, spiritual, and personal questions raised by this very current issue. A potluck follows today’s service.

March 28th “Women’s History Month,” facilitated by UUF La Crosse member Ann Beechler. An intergenerational panel of members of the fellowship will present a program celebrating Women’s History Month with a group exchange of ideas and understandings of women’s lives.

April 4th “Beyond Retribution,” a social justice panel presentation facilitated by UUF La Crosse member and attorney Keith Belzer. While retribution is an element of the justice system, it is by know 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. The Honorable Ramona Gonzalez will talk about the philosophical and spiritual underpinning for considering restorative ways of conducting justice. La Crosse County Justice Sanctions Coordinator Jane Klekamp will discuss specific programs that have been initiated in La Crosse County.



Music News

Becky Post

IT'S A GOOD TIME TO TRY OUT THE CHOIR! We would love our choir to grow, and we've been hearing lots of melodious voices in the congregation! Perhaps our new, centrally-located meeting place, along with improved acoustics and a grand piano will inspire some of you to try out singing with us. Our rehearsals are not all hard work. We sometimes take laugh breaks!

Rehearsals will now be at the Pump House. Enter by the back door and go down the basement to the conference room. The choir will sing for Sunday services on March 14th and March 28th. We will rehearse before each of those services at 9:00 AM in the basement of the Pump House.

The next two evening rehearsals are:

Wednesday, March 24 -- 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Wednesday, April 28 -- 7:00 to 9:00 PM

For more information, contact Becky Post or Eric Kraemer.

LOOKING FOR EXTRA SINGERS FOR A SPECIAL CELEBRATION

On Sunday, May 23rd, we'll celebrate the journey our fellowship has taken this year. For this service, we'd like to pull in some extra singers from the congregation. We will sing Vivaldi's "Gloria."

We are inviting anyone who likes to sing to consider joining us for this song. If you'd like to help us out, **please come to the rehearsal on Wednesday, April 28 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Pump House.** We rehearse in the conference room in the basement. Use the back door.

Let's fill our new meeting hall with wonderful sounds!

Congratulations on our Move and Thoughts on Refreshments

Liz Bonnett

Congratulations to our UU Fellowship for bravely responding to changes associated with the move.

Because the auditorium appears to be inconvenient for food and drinks, we will have refreshments in the reception area. We can discuss any inconvenience that might create for us. We welcome these changes with verve and vitality.

Social Justice Column:

The Ten Commandments Monument – What’s the Point?

Dave Long

With the decision by Judge Barbara Crabb in the La Crosse Ten Commandments case, to deny summary judgment to the defendants—the City of La Crosse and the Fraternal Order of Eagles—and to declare a finding for the plaintiffs, the requirement now exists for La Crosse to remove the monument from Cameron Park or continue the case to an appellate court.

Successfully removing this religious symbol from a public park is a small victory to this plaintiff. However, it does prove that the courts will support the First Amendment establishment principle if we actually move to challenge an infraction of this principle. It is a small victory because a multitude of onerous separation issues are being forwarded by our current US administration.

The challenge is declared to be creating divisiveness, at least according to many of the Christian opinion writers in the local paper. And now the court’s decision angers those who believe that the US courts simply support atheists who are against any expression of religion. The Constitution’s intent - to provide a secular position in all government actions regarding religious preference - is ignored or misunderstood. This past week, yet another opinion writer claimed that because the court did not support the majority Christian opinion in this community we, therefore, no longer live in a democracy.

While there have been many conflicting emotions, I suspect that for many of the confused, the term secular is being incorrectly interpreted as atheist or antireligious. Some fundamental religionists even cite the court’s decision as proof that atheists are being allowed to dominate public morality and in our nation. In their view, a majority religious opinion should ultimately determine the public good.

Another emotion being expressed is that the religious intent of our forefathers has been lost because of unreligious influences in our country – a further proof of evil gaining influence over good. A more accurate reading of our nation’s history would recognize the wisdom of our forefathers who were able to foresee the critical need for a secular approach to government.

The majority-rule lost dominance over their park with their religious symbol and it has angered those who felt this issue was purely about being either for or against the Ten Commandments. The religious symbol’s park presence as a beacon became politically equal to its importance as a moral guide from God. There is no thought concerning the danger it represents to a secular government.

While the arguments played out in the editorial pages, it seemed that the real issue - seeking to clarify local resolve for the First Amendment establishment clause - is still lost from the public’s understanding. Perhaps witnessing the painful results experienced by religious-connected governments of other nations will help educate to the need for secular governments.

POT LUCK FOLLOWING SERVICES ON SUNDAY MARCH 21ST



Please bring a dish to share!

Member News—Thank You

Madeline Kepner

Thanks to all the people who responded to the call for help in packing and moving into the Pump House. We appreciate the volunteers who gave a Saturday morning or Sunday morning for this effort. In particular, thanks to Connie Long and Liz Bonnett, who spent hours packing RE materials during the week. Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer deserves thanks for designating the cabinets and rooms for moving; without her help, we would have missed one whole closet that I didn't even know about. Connie and Margaret are heroes for working so long to find space for us.

(editor's note: Madeline Kepner also devoted significant hours to this move—thanks to her as well)

Additions and Corrections to Member/Friend Directory:

(clip and insert into your January 2004 Directory)

African Peanut Soup—from Bob Huff and Congo Cookbook

3- cups of chicken or vegetable broth 1-small onion-minced
1-sweet pepper-minced 1-carrot finely chopped
1-garlic,one clove crushed 1-2 tomatoes chopped or canned
1-hot chile or jalapeno seeded and minced- for some kick!!
1-sweet potatoe or yam cooked and crushed
1-cup of natural, crunchy peanut butter
Salt, pepper, cayenne to taste.

Cook yam and mash in your soup pot. Add other ingredients except the peanut butter. Cook for about twenty minutes. Add peanut butter and stir in well. Soup should be thick and smooth. Add some milk or half and half just before serving. Serves about four or five.

Committee Chairs Meeting

The Committee Chairs will meet on Saturday March 6 at 9:00 AM at the main La Crosse Public Library.

Fellowship Business Manager Helen Fricke will inform us about ways that the new database software can help us in our committee work.

Please bring your own beverages if you want them.

Members' Activities and Transitions

Liz Spangler

Caregiver for the month of March is Katie Van Roosenbeek phone _____ -or e-mail at: _____
Call me, Liz Spangler at _____ o r e-mail me at: _____ if you
would be willing to be caregiver in April or May.

Sympathy and thoughts are extended to: Mary - _____ whose uncle died, Christopher _____ whose
uncle died, and Melinda _____, whose mother died. Keep Betty - _____ in your thoughts as she
continues to recover from her knee replacement surgery. Mike _____ mother also continues to recover from her
surgery. Madeline _____ daughter in _____ is now back at work after her auto accident. Keep the son
of Wendy _____ and the daughter of Kathy _____ in your hearts as they are now deployed overseas.

Congratulations to Travis _____ and his Lego robot team. They placed in the top ten out of three hundred
entries in the Minnesota state competition. Way to go Travis!!! A ton of thanks to all the UUs who were able to
help with the move to the Pump House. Keith Belzer led us through a meaningful reminiscence time in the
Senior Center including a trip upstairs to the room where the group first met. The "Kool Kids" had their picture
taken on their stairs. Then on to the Pump House where many helped to unpack and where we lingered long
over the taco bar which Anne Beechler prepared for us. "Can You Feel the Love?" an Elton John song from
"Lion King" came to my mind as we packed, loaded, lifted, visited, and ate that Sunday.

The AdventUUrers are looking forward to this month's movie at the Franciscan Spirituality Center on March
18th. "The Seventh Seal," an Ingmar Bergman film, in Swedish is an allegory on the human condition. Call for
supper reservations (1-608-791-5295) at 5:30 PM. The film begins at 6:00 PM and lasts for 96 minutes. Cost is
\$6.00, and the Franciscan Spirituality Center is located at 920 Market Street. The last movie in the series is "The
Postman" on April 15th. "Shelter Dance" will be performed at the UW-L Toland Theatre on March 26th and 27th.
Come and join the AdventUUrers when they attend one of these performances. Call Madeline Kepner for
details.

Looking into April, there will be a game day at Liz Bonnett's on Saturday
April 10th. Liz lives in _____ . Ca 11 her for directions
. Bring a favorite game and some snacks. As we play you will enjoy the aroma of Liz's cowboys'
beans along with corn bread. We will eat at about 5:30 PM and then continue with the games. We would
especially invite our newer people to join us in our adventures. If you would like to ask about any of the above
plans call Liz Spangler _____ .

UUA President Speaks on Gay Marriage Issue

(Boston -- February 19, 2004)

UUA president the Reverend William Sinkford has issued a statement congratulating the newly-married same-
sex couples in San Francisco. The statement reads, in part:

"On behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Association, I am delighted to extend congratulations and blessings to
the same-sex couples who have been married recently in San Francisco. I applaud the courage of the mayor and
citizens of San Francisco in taking this bold step forward for civil rights. It is my fervent hope that the events in
San Francisco and the recent rulings by the Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts mark the dawn of new day
of justice and equal rights for all citizens." For the full text of this statement, please go to www.uua.org.

March Call for New Horizons Items

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: baking pans; toilet paper; bath gift sets; bath towels; wash cloths; batteries (all sizes); billfolds; bleach; body lotion; bras (all sizes); comforters; and Ziploc bags (all sizes). If you have questions, please contact Ellen Severson at .

Come check out the Fellowship in our new location, 119 King Street.

the
PUMP HOUSE
regional arts center

Sunday Services have never been so esthetically pleasing!

UU Fellowship of La Crosse
PO Box 2676
La Crosse, WI 54602-2676

