

September, 2003

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse Newsletter

Sunday Services: Program at **10:00 AM** followed by refreshments at **11:00 AM**, Southside Senior Center, 1220 Denton Street, La Crosse, WI

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

Message Center: 608-796-9993

Web site: www.uulacrosse.org

Upcoming Programs

September 7 – “We Gather Together.” Join us for our fall welcome back service. We will be sharing rocks and water from our travels and recreation over the summer and reflecting on our transition back into fall. Please bring your rocks and water from your experiences this summer. Cindy Ericksen will facilitate this service.

September 14 - “Oh, My God!” Unitarian Universalists hold myriad beliefs about God. Eric Severson will lead this program of activities and discussion designed to help us examine our own theologies and beliefs. We’ll compare our visions of God—with one another and with the beliefs of the general public—and will celebrate the free and responsible search for truth and meaning. *Choir Sunday.*

September 21 - The Reverend Michael Schuler, leader of the Madison First Unitarian Society (one of the largest UU congregations in the country) will present **“Refugee or Seeker: Which are You?”** He notes that people who come to our UU communities are typically either refugees who left another faith dissatisfied, or are “seekers” who enter our doors expectant, and without a lot of old religious baggage to unload. He wants us to know that the quality of our shared life in a UU congregation depends on how we address and satisfy the needs of both types. *Choir Sunday.*

September 28 – “Sharing Hmong Religious Practices.” Thai Vue of the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association will speak about Hmong religious practices. His presentation will include historical as well as contemporary perspectives.



Religious Education News

By Christopher Townsend

RE leaders are looking forward to welcoming back the children and youth of our Fellowship on September 7. The RE committee will be offering programming during the Sunday service for four different age groups again this year. The four groups will be pre-school through first grade, second through fifth grade, middle school, and high school.

The RE committee is currently looking for volunteers to help with tasks such running the program for each age group, reviewing and purchasing curriculum, maintaining supplies, and helping with interviewing and hiring teachers. Volunteers to teach, especially at the high school level are also needed. To volunteer for the RE committee, or to find out more information about what is involved, contact committee chair Kim Cobb at _____ or _____

Music News

By Becky Post

The UU choir will sing on September 14th and September 21st. Sunday morning rehearsal time is now 9:15 to 9:50 AM. (The change in the time of Sunday services necessitated a change in choir rehearsal time.)

Our next evening rehearsal will be Wednesday, September 24th, 7:00 PM at Becky’s, _____, La Crosse.

New choir members are always welcome. For more information call Becky Post at _____ or Eric Kraemer at _____.

Important Schedule Notes

Sunday Meeting Starting Time

Please note that Sunday programs will begin at **10:00 AM**, starting on September 7. See *Updates from the Board*, on page 2 for details on this, and other Board decisions.

Sunday Potlucks in Homes

There will be potlucks on **Sunday, September 28th** after the service in homes. See *News from the Membership Committee* on page 3 for more information.

Updates from the Board

By Kathy Schnitzius

The Board of Trustees met on August 27, 2003 for a regular meeting. These items were decided and/or discussed:



- j To have our treasurer, Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer, redeposit our Building Fund balance into a 19-month CD;
- j Bob Huff, President-elect, will be attending the PSD Stewardship Conference in October; Kathy Schnitzius, President, and Bob Huff will be attending the PSD Presidents' Conference in September; Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer, treasurer, will be attending the PSD Treasurers' Conference in September;
- j An Ad Hoc Committee composed of Kathy Schnitzius, Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer, and Lisa Metz-Belzer, Board member, was formed to study and make a recommendation to the Board regarding which services within our Fellowship should be paid for.
- j Board members will ally themselves with each Committee in order to offer support and increase communication;
- j Criminal background checks will be done on every person who volunteers with or is paid to work with our children. Any problems will be referred to the Board for consideration;
- j **The Sunday Service time has been changed to 10:00 AM** for a trial period of 3 months beginning on September 7, 2003 after which a congregational vote will be taken to determine whether to continue or to return to the 9:30 AM time.
- j Our next regular Board Meeting will be on Sept. 23rd at 6:30 PM at Connie Long's.
- j Our Board Budget Meeting will be on October 2, at 6:30 PM at Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer's.

Annual Campaign/Canvass

Bob Huff

The annual campaign is scheduled for October this year. Please thank the members who have volunteered to help again this year. They are: Kathy Schnitzius, Ron Malzer, Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer, Madeline Kepner, Liz Spangler, Red Haines, Keith Belzer and Cindy Ericksen.

Please assist your fellow members by being available to them to give your input regarding the Fellowship as well as to make a generous contribution. When we give generously, we are helping to further the things we say that we believe in our Covenants, our Mission and in our Vision for the future of this Fellowship.

You will be contacted between October 5- 19th.

News from the Program Committee

UU Minute

By Madelon Wise

The Program Committee hopes you enjoyed last season's UU Minute, the brief biographies we presented of famous Unitarian Universalist ancestors. This year we will be inviting members of the fellowship to tell their own stories about how they came to be UUs. In the next weeks, Keith Belzer will be asking folks to share their Living UU Minute for the fellowship.

Program Committee Retreat

By Matt Bosworth

The Program Committee held a retreat at the Franciscan Spirituality Center on July 20th to plan for the upcoming service year. Numerous suggestions were considered regarding many aspects of Sunday programming, including a desire to incorporate personal stories into services when possible. All found the retreat useful—thanks to Cindy Ericksen and Eric Severson for coordinating.

What would Venus do?

By Madelon Wise

Imagine if Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty, walked into the Southside Senior Center on a Sunday morning. After being certain we had sensual, delicious food, beautiful music, and ambient lighting, I imagine she would say that we simply must do something about that room. She would begin to drape fabric about and place vases of flowers on flat surfaces. Venus wants to create a setting where creative interaction can take place. Who among you wants to help her? You could help on any Sunday by simply bringing flowers, pictures, fabric, or anything you think is beautiful. Or you could join Venus and me in a more concerted effort to heighten the aesthetics of our Sunday experience. Contact Madelon Wise at _____ or _____.

Keeping in Touch

By Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer

There are now **many** mailboxes for staff and volunteers at the Fellowship meeting place at the Senior Center. They can be found on top of the rolling RE cabinet that is stored in the small RE room during the week, and is out in the upstairs hall during Sunday services. There are mailboxes for every committee chair, for the President, President-elect, Secretary & Treasurer of the Fellowship, and for the Coordinator and Business Manager. All of these people are encouraged to check their mailboxes regularly. If you leave something for someone and time is of the essence, please let her or him know it is there.

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. Fellowship members don't always know of other members' difficulties, but we would like to extend a hand to any of our members and friends in need, so please let us know about your hardships, as well as the joys in your lives.

*The Caregiver for September is Celine Donofrio,
, or*

If you are unable to contact the monthly Caregiver please contact the Caregiver Coordinator, Liz Spangler at
or

Member News

Congratulations to **Becky Post**, whose granddaughter, Grace Elizabeth Fredricksen, was born on August 18 here in La Crosse!

AdventUurers News

By Liz Spangler

Plan to join our group at the Soup, Sandwich, Cinema events held at the Franciscan Spirituality Center, 920 Market St. La Crosse (phone 608-791-5295) on the third Thursday of each month beginning at 5:30 PM. The series begins on September 18th with "Run Lola Run." Other offerings will be, October 16th, "Devil's Playground," November 20th, "Atanarjuat" (The Fast Runner), December 18th, "The Tree of Wooden Clogs." For the \$6.00 fee you will get a delicious soup, a sandwich, the movie (beginning at 6:00 PM) and some lively discussion. Call the center and let them know you are coming. For movie details or other questions, call Liz Spangler at

If you would like tickets for the UW La Crosse Theatre Arts 2003-2004 season call Madeline Kepner at

. General Public \$30.00, UWL Student, \$12.00, Senior Citizen \$20.00, Non UWL Student \$20.00. The five shows are as follows: "Metamorphoses" in October, "The Laramie Project" in December, "Romeo & Juliet" in February, "Shelter Dance" in March and, "The Secret Garden" in April. Of course you may join the group for any of the plays singly. Liz Spangler can reserve you a ticket.

During the year the "AdventUurers" gather for events and outings. New people are always welcome. New ideas are also welcome. So if you want some fun, fellowship and friendship come with us!

News from the Membership Committee

By Madeline Kepner

There will be potlucks on Sunday, September 28th after the service in homes. Mark you calendar and look for more information in the Sunday bulletins. This is a good way to become acquainted with new people. Contact: Madeline Kepner at
or

We hope to have a new directory printed by October 15th. If you have any changes in your address, please fill out a change form at the Membership Table.

Generosity

Bob Huff

Is generosity a key value or desirable quality that you would like to develop in your child or in the people around you? It seems that many of us try to teach our children to share toys, food, kind behavior etc....Is generosity a value that religious or ethical societies or Fellowships should try to encourage?

Can generosity be taught? Michael Durall in his book "Creating Congregations of Generous People" cites a study by Daloz. Laurent Parks Daloz, a writer and cofounder of the Community College of Vermont, surveyed more than one hundred people who worked for the common good, often in the face of complex and daunting circumstances. He sought to learn what kinds of experiences increased the probability that a person would live a life of commitment to a larger whole, and the factors that fostered a greater generosity of spirit in society. His findings provide insight into how religious institutions might engage congregations in the conversations about generosity in our lives.

Daloz found that several factors appear significant in the first three decades of a person's life. Not all appear in every life, and no single one is determinative. They are:

- The experience of being "seen" as a child
- Having at least one publicly active parent
- Growing up in a home that is hospitable to the wider world
- Living in a safe yet diverse neighborhood
- Actively participating in a religious life
- Having contact with adults in the community who model commitment
- Participating in youth groups
- Having mentors

Do these issues strike you as interesting things for programs, services, or small discussion groups? Let me, or a member of the program committee know if this interests you.

By the way, do you think we are a generous Fellowship? Do you do the right thing when it comes to giving? Are we who have more discretionary income giving at levels that are right?

UUA General Assembly

The Dihlmann-Malzer family was lucky enough to attend several days of General Assembly in Boston this summer. We all agree that the highlight of our time there was the Ware Lecture presented by Julian Bond, chair of the NAACP. He is a marvelous orator who speaks with passion and humor about important social issues. He spoke eloquently about prejudice, our current administration, and his experience hosting "Saturday Night Live." At Elise's urging, we ordered a copy of the videotape of his talk and plan to share it with the Fellowship.

It was amazing to attend Sunday worship service at the Fleet Center with 9000 UUs! It was also delightful to be with UUs with diverse and wonderful ideas and heartfelt passion for our religious tradition.

We thank the Fellowship for their support of our attendance at General Assembly and encourage others to seize any chance they might have to attend in the future.

Ron Malzer, Margaret, Greg & Elise Dihlmann-Malzer

Summer Focus Dinners

By Bob Huff

This summer the Long Range Planning Committee held three focus dinners and thirty-three members attended. We had some great fellowship, good food, and the gathering of ideas for our group.

Folks seemed comfortable with the Vision Statement that was approved by the members in 1999 as a part of the Long Range Plan that was presented then. Key points included: visibility, image, growth, diversity, programming, balance of rational and spiritual, celebrating life transitions, social action, aesthetic meeting space, honoring the seven principles of UUism and relating to district and UUA. The Vision is a consensus of where we are headed in the future and gives us direction and helps us prioritize our efforts in programming, facilities, and all of our activities.

We also received input on Sunday attendance, ideas for programming, and Sunday set up and take down. Thanks to all for attending and giving us your input. We have assigned the follow up to the appropriate committees or board. Please contact any board member or long range planning committee member for further details.

The focus groups give us the opportunity to express our selves and gather input in smaller groups and they seem to be very enjoyable to all as well as providing valuable input for the Fellowship. Stay tuned for more focus meetings in the future as we bring other issues to you.

Retreat Summary

Bob Huff

A retreat was held Saturday, August 23rd at the Spirituality Center for the board and committee chairs. The purpose of the retreat was: to improve communication between committees and board; build on our teamwork and leadership skills; and for each committee to write two or three specific objectives and action steps for the coming year. Thirteen members attended from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM and all committees were represented.

People are more aware of the work of other committees and how much each committee depends upon the other and that what one does affects the other. One of the key items to come out was that the committee chairs decided to meet twice a year to exchange information and coordinate activities. They suggested a November and spring meeting.

The following are a few of the rough items that were discussed and not cast in concrete and are open to more input by other committee members and the total membership:

Program and Music

- convey program theme to all presenters
- remind all of the meaning of chalice lighting
- standardize opening and closing
- new UU minute using personal testimonials
- coordinate communication between music and program
- consistent choir practice date
- find back up piano player
- getting program topics to music ahead of time
- consider moving back to 10:00 AM start on Sunday

RE/Membership

- expand RE committee with more members for more input
- increasing rate of return of visitors and being welcoming
- new directory update by Oct 15th
- small group home meetings, parties, budget, policy guidelines

Finance/Building

- increase giving and pledging
- promote bequests and large gifts now
- finish building process with consultant by November
- include location parameters, prioritize rent/lease/own
- regularly update members on progress

To find out more about the retreat, contact a board member, the long range planning committee, or the chair of any committee. This brief summary is just an attempt to keep membership informed and some of the above are not complete and will change some as committees meet with their other members. We want to increase communication all the way through the association as well as develop written tasks, action steps, and timetables to help us reach our goals and meet our mission, covenant, and vision.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular **Board Meeting** will be on Sept. 23 at 6:30 PM at Connie Long's. The **Board Budget Meeting** will be on October 2, at 6:30 PM at Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer's.

The **Building Committee** will meet on Saturday, September 13, at 9:00 AM at the home of Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer.

The **Theology Discussion Group** will meet on Sunday September 21, after the service.

The **UU choir** will sing on September 14th and September 21st. The next evening rehearsal will be Wednesday, September 24th, 7:00 PM at Becky Post's house.

Events in the Wider Community

Storytelling Festival Announced

By Keith Belzer

The first annual La Crosse Storytelling Festival will take place on September 13th at Pettibone Park. Professional storytellers from around the Midwest will tell stories in two tents from 1:00 to 4:00 and from 6:30 to 9:00. For more information or to purchase tickets please see or call Keith Belzer.

Debate: The Place of Religion in the Public Square

Tuesday, September 9, 2003 - 7:30 PM., Viterbo University Fine Arts Center Main Theatre-sponsored by D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership, Viterbo University.

"The public understanding over the proper role of religion in American public life has perhaps never been so divided. The difficult questions that have recently faced the city of La Crosse over the placing of the Ten Commandments on public property are also faced by many other communities throughout the country. Join us as we seek answers to these questions through a discussion with representatives of three different viewpoints."

The three speakers are Dan Barker of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, Scott Moore, Asst. Professor of Philosophy at Baylor University and author of The End of Convenient Stereotypes: Extraordinary Politics at the End of Modernity, and Francis J. Manion of the American Center for Law & Justice.

"Fula from America" comes To Winona

Theatre du Mississippi continues its Arts Beneath the Bluffs season with Carlyle Brown's hilarious and provocative one-man show "Fula from America." Mr. Brown will perform on September 18-20 (Thursday through Saturday) at Winona's historic Masonic Temple Theatre, 5th and Main Streets. Shows will be at 7:30 PM and admission is \$15 at the door or \$12 if purchased in advance at Pieces of the Past, 79 E. 2nd Street. Admission for seniors is \$10, for persons with Victorian Fair buttons, \$10, and student tickets are \$5. Mr. Brown will also conduct a playwriting workshop on Friday afternoon,

September 19. For more information and to reserve tickets for the shows, call 507-474-7530.

In 1981 Carlyle Brown went to West Africa in search of his family's roots. He traveled through Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, experiencing overwhelming generosity, wrenching poverty, incredible beauty and civil war. He found himself "on the hyphen in African-American." West Africans referred to Brown as "the Fula from America" recognizing him as a Fulani (a nomadic tribe of the region).

"Fula from America" showcases the dazzling range of Carlyle Brown's talents and the power of his vision, as well as solidifying his reputation as a vital force in American theatre. Mr. Brown has just completed an extended run of Fula at the New South Play Festival in Atlanta.

Building Committee

The Building Committee will be meeting on Saturday, September 13, at 9:00 AM at the home of Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer. We will be reviewing the results of our meeting last spring with PSD consultant, Kathy Burek, and planning for our next meeting with her.

Involvement Fest 2003

Our Fellowship will participate in the Involvement Fair at UWL on Tuesday, September 23rd from 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM. We need a few volunteers to help at our table, and because the Fest is held on a weekday, we particularly need volunteers who have that time free. Any volunteers to help at the table call Madeline Kepner at _____ or _____

Theology Discussion Group

By Christopher Townsend

The Theology Discussion Group will meet on Sunday September 21, after the service. For this month, I invite you to come prepared to try to answer the "elevator question." Imagine you are in an elevator, when someone notices the chalice pin you are wearing. She asks you about the pin, and when you tell her it is a symbol of Unitarian Universalism, she says, "Oh I've heard of that, and always wondered about it. *What is Unitarian Universalism?*" How would you answer that question in the 45 seconds before the elevator reaches the lobby? There are no right or wrong answers to this question, but it can be helpful to all of us to practice saying what we believe are the fundamental elements that define UUism, and to hear what others would say those basic elements are.

In addition please bring your ideas for future topics and your hopes for the direction of this group in the coming year.

Please note that
beginning
September 7
Sunday services
will start at 10:00
AM!

Welcome back UUs!

Important Notes

- i You are invited to bring water or stones collected during your summer travels to share at our September 7 welcome back service.
- i The membership committee will be scheduling potlucks in members' homes for Sunday September 28.

Inside...

See the Sunday Program Schedule on front page.

Important updates from the Board and Program Committee are found on page 2.

See page 3 for Member News and an article on Generosity.

Updates on the summer focus dinners, and this summer's leadership retreat are found on page 4.

See page 5 for upcoming events of possible interest in the community, and for even more Fellowship activities.

