



COMMENT

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury, 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811 * 203-798-1994
Rev. Linda Hansen, Minister

APRIL 2008

Letter from Linda



What a wonderful Easter Sunday we just had! An amazing number of you turned out for both services, and the mood was as festive and joyous as I've experienced among us. Our Jazz Quartet deserves some credit for that; thank you, Rob Catalano, Tim Gilbert, Brad Greene, and Charlie Schott! And so does Mary Collins, who was terrific in her story-telling; thank you, Mary! And yet, as I said, it's all of us coming together in love, as we clearly did on Sunday, who turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. I was especially moved as we all wrote or drew, and then planted, our "seeds of hope" for ourselves, our congregation, or our larger world. May we continue to water our seeds with love.

Our Pledge Drive

Thanks to Marie and Keith Dupree and the great committee she has assembled, plans for the annual canvass are well underway. You will be hearing from several of us in the very near future about our visions as well as the nuts and bolts of the 2008-2009 budget. The pledge drive will culminate in an unusual and wonderful Sunday celebration on April 27th when we will turn our Fellowship Hall into a cabaret-setting for a Jazz Sunday, preceded by a continental breakfast! Six wonderful musicians will perform—five from our own congregation: Rob Catalano, piano; Tim Gilbert, guitar; Brad Greene, percussion; Kim Papa, guitar; and Charlie Schott, bass—and one guest: Ruth Ahlers, alto saxophone. This is a not-to-be missed event!

Ministerial Transition

Please be sure to attend one of the services on Sunday, April 13th, when our UU Metro-NY District's new Ministerial Settlement Representative, the Rev. Craig Hirshberg, will preach on "It's Just Change" and help you understand what's involved in the search for a new settled minister. Unitarian Universalist congregations practice "congregational polity" which, among other powers and responsibilities, means that you choose your own next minister. The person you ultimately choose will depend a great deal on all that you put into the process, including whom you elect to the Search Committee at the Annual Meeting on Friday, May 16th. As the outgoing Ministerial Settlement Representative for the District, I gained an even deeper understanding of and respect for the process of seeking and settling a new minister. Craig, who served herself as a parish minister for many years, will bring great insight to you and the Board now, and later to your Search Committee. Don't miss this chance to hear her speak and to ask her questions during coffee hour.

My Upcoming Schedule

While spring is supposed to be a time of renewed energy, for those of us who work on an academic calendar it can be a time when energy runs low. In the past, I've not taken vacation time in the spring, but last year realized too late that it would be a good idea. So for this year, with the help of the Committee on Ministry and the Board, I planned a week of vacation with a Sunday off at both ends: Sunday, March 30th, through Sunday, April 6th. I would not be taking any extra Sundays off, just arranging my Sundays-off differently.

Ah, as Robert Burns reminds us, "The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men, gang aft agley." A couple of minor glitches have occurred in this "best laid scheme." The first is that an older cousin in New Jersey needs my help following a cataract operation Thursday, March 27th to Friday, March 28th—the week *before* my vacation. So I will take those two days off and work instead on Monday, March 31st and Tuesday, April 1st.

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The second glitch is that the only Sunday we could schedule the Rev. Craig Hirshberg to speak to the congregation is April 13th, which means I will be out of the pulpit three weeks in a row. I am truly sorry for that. I will be coordinating Craig’s service, and I will be attending services both on March 30th and April 6th, but I won’t be preaching those three Sundays.

So please keep in mind I will be on vacation Thursday-Sunday, March 27th-30th, and again Wednesday-Sunday, April 2nd-6th.

My Own Plans

In my letter of resignation, I expressed the hope of eventually finding chaplaincy work in the Milwaukee area. Before doing so, I need more professional training—called Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). I have two units of CPE, but professional chaplains need at least four. I’m happy to tell you that I’ve been accepted into a one-year CPE residency program beginning in mid-August at Aurora Sinai Medical Center in inner-city Milwaukee. By the end of the program, I’ll have four more units of CPE and be able to apply for Board certification and professional chaplaincy positions. Wish me luck!

I Haven’t Left Yet!

In the meantime, remember that I’m still here and will be working through mid-July. For me, knowing our time left together is limited is making me savor it even more. Please let me know if you’d like to get together for any reason, including just the chance to know one another better before I leave.

With love,
Linda

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Sexton	Don Cassel	798-1994 (O)
Nursery	Allyson Tozzoli	798-1994 (O)
Website	www.uudanbury.org	
The Church Office is typically open on Tuesday from 8:45 - 10:45 and Thursday and Friday from 9:00 - 2:00. Please call		

ahead for office hours and/or appointments with Rev. Linda Hansen, Rev. Peggy Block or DRE Mary Collins.

Comment is the newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury, 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811, (203) 798-1994. Articles (**250 words or less**) may be emailed to Sherry at secretary@uudanbury.org or dropped off at the church office.

Deadline for the May Comment - Friday, April 19th.



President's Letter

By Carl Tichler, President

I hope that many of you heard the announcement I made at the March 9th service, that the Board has recommended that Mary Collins' position as Director of Religious Education be expanded to a full-time role from its current part-time status. As I mentioned then, this is a recognition of the importance of religious education to our congregation, and also of Mary's accomplishments and leadership in her role. I wanted to clarify that this decision is a recommendation for next year's budget, and as such would need to be approved by the congregation at the upcoming Annual Meeting as part of the vote on the adoption of the budget. Also, at this month's Board meeting we discussed having this expansion be in her capacity as DRE, and not to expand it to volunteer coordination or community outreach. It was felt that there is enough work to do across all aspects of religious education to justify this. Please let me or other Board members know of your perspective on this.

There has been a great deal of work done recently in organizing our annual giving campaign (also known as the canvass), headed up by **Marie and Keith Dupree**. Please hold the following date in your calendar—Sunday, April 27th—when our two services will be not only a jazz cabaret with great food and entertaining company, but also your opportunity to hand in your annual pledge card. Please note that this year we will be adding more options for you to conveniently pay your pledge: credit cards and PayPal, paid automatically via monthly debit if you wish. Thanks to all who have volunteered to help in the planning for this year's giving campaign, and to everyone in the congregation for your generosity in this year and in past years. More details on this to come in the mail and in our "This Week at UUCD" email. See you in April!

Carl

“Right to Flourish”

by Jean Bowen

The “Right to Flourish” is an affirmation of value, respect and contribution by elders, individuals with disabilities and individuals with health concerns. With this in mind some of our members came together in November to learn and think about how we can develop our own grass roots support for one another.

In subsequent meetings we have identified key concerns that include living alone, isolation, accidents in our home and remaining at home. The development of a process to support one another is in the works. Our group has identified and matched individuals who desire to have a local person to contact for emergencies. And we have identified and matched individuals for regular telephone contact with one another.

A small group is planning Sunday afternoon meetings after the 11:00 a.m. service where we get together to discuss issues we wish to pursue and share strategies. On Sunday, March 30th, our own **Meredith Spector** will present a program with tips on keeping your home safe. Future programs and discussions will focus on advanced directives and end-of-life care, Medicare, home repair and money management concerns.

For more information contact **Jean Bowen** or **Rev. Linda Hansen**.



**Treasurer's
\$\$ Report \$\$**

Bruce Buzby, Finance Chair, is on vacation, so I will endeavor to give you all a quick overview of our financial picture.

In comparing the Budget for 2007-2008 to the Actual through the end of February the following is noted: In certain ways, we are very much on track with our finances. For example, our total expenses are 97% of the projected Budget, and our total income receipts have been good. However, our pledge receipts are off by 10%. As we projected our expenses to be in excess of our income at this point and since we paid off the Building Bridge Loan of \$12,000 in February, we now have a cash flow issue and this bears watching.

The Auction at the end of March and the income it is expected to provide will certainly help. Many of you have been paying your pledges on a monthly basis and some have paid all of their pledge for the current year! This is all good news! If you would like information of your pledge status, please contact **Leslie Miglietta**.

And here is some exciting news: UUCD will now be accepting Credit Cards! We will accept and swipe credit cards at the Auction! We can accept M/C, Visa, Discover and American Express. For Pledge and gift payments we can process your credit card through our accounting program, QuickBooks. And, shortly, you will be able to go to our website www.uudanbury.org and process your payment through PayPal. We will also be able to set up monthly or quarterly automatic payments. Please contact me for more information.

Marie Dupree
Treasurer

Why I Pay My Pledge Automatically

by Mira Dessy

Every Sunday we come to the portion of the service where the offering is taken. The words used run something along these lines, "We will now take the offering that helps to sustain this congregation." What that simple sentence does not adequately describe is how much emotional and spiritual sustenance I get in return for my offering.

In the six years since I started attending UUCD a lot has happened to our family. Some good, some bad. But I have discovered a connection to the people and the place that truly sustains me. Hearty and heartfelt congratulations for the good things as well as the sense of support and, many times, the complete understanding of where we are and what we face for those events that are not so good. This is truly a blessing.

Additionally I have found amazing insight in many sermons, both ministerial and lay-led, that are frequently thought provoking and encourage me to go deeper in the process of walking my own spiritual path. Book references, essays, personal highlights, many different avenues of thought to challenge me. Not to be left out is the sense of community that comes from non-Sunday events. Choir practice, potluck dinners, the Winter Boutique and many more social events that draw us together.

I am writing this on a Sunday. Unfortunately it is a Sunday when I am unable to be at church. But my offering is there. Because I derive so much from what I receive I felt that it was important to set up my offering through direct payment with my bank. This way when I am not there I am still able to participate in some small way to help this wonderful, meaningful community to survive. If this is an idea that appeals to you perhaps you might also consider some form of automatic payment to help sustain this community.

Budget Forum on Wednesday, April 23rd

Before you are asked to turn in your pledge card on Sunday, April 27th, and before you are asked to vote on the budget at the Annual Meeting on Friday, May 16th, this forum will provide a chance to discuss early and at length the budget being proposed by the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee. This budget will include the proposal to expand Mary Collins' position from part-time to full-time Director of Religious Education, as well as the expenses involved in next year's ministerial search, and everything else that goes into running our congregation from one year to the next. Please come to ask your questions and share your points of view. **The meeting will take place in the Fellowship Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 23rd.**

From the Interim Search Committee

by Marcia Brooker

C-H-A-N-G-E. That six-letter word that causes hearts to beat faster, palms to get sweaty and feelings of distress and anxiety. Some of us may be wondering what changes will take place when a new face, an AIM, is in the pulpit most Sundays beginning in September. AIM stands for Accredited Interim Minister.

The practice of hiring an interim is almost universal among Unitarian Universalist congregations. Many mainline Protestant denominations and synagogues have depended on interim ministry to deal with the phenomenon of transition.

“...The purpose of interim ministry is to enable a congregation to call a successor minister based not ‘on the rebound,’ but on its sense of its own, independent identity, strength and direction—in sum, based on its health.”

The interim period following the end of one relationship and preceding the beginning of another offers a congregation a chance to begin anew. It provides a breathing space to consider the quality of its life in common and tune up for a new era. The one- to two-year period it usually takes for a congregation to grow into and own its identity, independent of both positive and negative feelings about the ministry that has come to an end, can be exciting, even transformative.

The Board has approved hiring an interim and has begun the process by appointing an Interim Search Committee: **Barbara Myers, Andrew Bloch and Marcia Brooker**. They met with Andrea Lerner, our District Executive, at the February Board meeting. Andrea answered questions and gave out print materials for both the Interim and Settled Minister Search Committees.

There have always been ministers to fill a vacant pulpit until a new minister is called. The UUA recognizes the complexities inherent in this period and developed a specialized program for ministers who make interim work their calling. Ministers who complete the program are awarded the Accredited Interim Minister (AIM) designation attesting to their competence both in parish ministry and as resident consultants, their ability to assist congregations in reviewing and revitalizing their operations. In addition, they carry out the normal responsibilities of congregational ministry, including worship and pastoral care. They possess specific skills in assisting a congregation

- in claiming and honoring its past and engaging and honoring its griefs and conflicts
- recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs and challenges,
- clarifying the appropriate leadership roles of minister, church staff and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition

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- making appropriate use of District, UUA and other outside resources
- reaching beyond the dominant culture to embrace the multicultural world in social service and social justice
- proudly coming into possession of a renewed vision and strong stewardship, prepared for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.

Unlike a called minister, whose ‘call’ comes from the congregation as a whole, an interim minister is hired by the governing board. The interim minister’s placement is temporary and demand exceeds the supply; the interim hiring process is simple, brief and competitive. Applications received in the Transitions Office by April 15 that meet the conditions set forth regarding compensation and other contractual matters will be eligible for the early preference pool for AIMs.

The effectiveness and integrity of the interim ministry rest upon the twin facts that the minister was here before and won’t be here long. To maintain the integrity of their role, all interim ministers pledge three things: not to become a candidate for that congregation’s called minister, not to serve more than two years as an interim, and not to discuss specific candidates for the called ministry with the Settled Minister Search Committee.

Many opportunities lie ahead of us as a congregation and as individuals in the interim period. The role of our AIM in helping the congregation and each of us to seize the day and to be productive in this time of change is our challenge. It is an opportunity for the person-to-person ministry for us all.

Religious Education Update

by Mary B. Collins, Director of Religious Exploration (DRE)

Mary Collins is grateful for:

- **The Board of Trustees** voting to recommend the full-time position for the Director of Religious Education for 2008-2009. I appreciate their encouragement to being a Life-span Religious Educator and to add to the broader ministry of this congregation. It is a gift and an honor.
- **Heather Smith and all our Girl Scouts** for celebrating Girl Scout Sunday on March 9th for the first time.
- **Jurinha Fallon** for coming in one day to clean out one of the Religious Education Supply closets!
- **Darlene Anderson-Alexander** for organizing, promoting and keeping on track our first ever **UUCD Junior Chorus!** I love hearing children singing and the families in the House!!!
- **Religious Educators and Volunteers!**

Coming Of Age – changes to note:

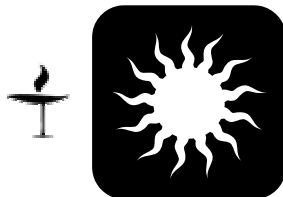
- The **Boys Retreat and the Girls Retreat** will be held from **Saturday, April 5th to Sunday, April 6th. NO COA Group session at Clapboard Ridge that Sunday.** Families should expect a detailed letter from the Retreat Facilitators a week or two before the retreat. RSVP to the DRE if you haven’t already so we can get the information to you.
- **Joint COA Year-End Celebration: Friday, June 20th at 7:00 p.m. through 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 21st. Sleepover and BBQ at Clapboard Ridge, Fellowship Hall** will be in place of individual 6th-8th and 9th grade year-end activities. Youth from both groups will organize activities they would like to do (ideally, let the Fallons know 2 weeks prior to the event for scheduling). Youth should plan to bring any items/materials they would need for their workshop/activity. Contact the Fallons if you need assistance purchasing any craft materials and they may have some to offer.
- **Due to the 6th-8th graders Jr. High Conference on April 12th – 13th (see below), they will plan their COA service on April 20th.**

Junior High Youth Group (6th-8th graders)

- **Junior High Metro New York District Conference for 6th - 8th graders in Lincroft, NJ, on April 12th-13th.** For details on this second-of-the-year overnight where 6th-8th graders from all over the Metropolitan New York district meet: check out the district web page www.uumetrony.org (then click "Calendar & Events" and scroll down). Register online there or at <https://www.formdesk.com/uiforms/JrConApril08>. **Contact** the Fallons for carpool/driving information.
- **Schedule change for JHY** - The group will only meet at Clapboard Ridge on the FIRST Friday (April 4th). Other activities? Youth and their families are encouraged to take a turn at organizing an outing (bowling, movie night, hike...) and inviting the group. Jurintha Fallon will pass the invitation through the group email list to spread the word if you let her know in advance.

The next **RE Committee Meeting** is scheduled for Thursday, April 10th, from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor Conference Room. All are welcome to come even if you are newish family to the congregation, or your babies are big now. We value your opinions on shaping and making our programming the best it can be. We will begin presenting Religious Education curricula (some summaries) to the congregation in April for a sneak peek at 2008-09.

I encourage everyone to check out the website www.uumetrony.org for information about the **Annual Metro-NY District Annual Meeting on May 2nd-3rd in Stamford, CT.** There's music Friday night, a huge choir, and Workshops on a variety of topics. You will meet UUs from around the Metropolitan NY area. Go home with friends, ideas, and energy. Check out the bookstore too!



Won't You Consider Leading a Sunday Service this Summer?

While we at the UUCD have the utmost respect for our professional ministry, we also believe that all members of our Community should have the opportunity to share their journey with the congregation. As has been our custom for many years, this summer we will be providing nine lay-led Services during July and August. We hope that you will consider lending your voice and ideas to our Services.

Please contact any member of the Sunday Services Committee to pursue leading a Service this summer. We are: **Geri Boggs, Bob Bollinger, Bruce Buzby, Ross Fenster, Barbara Searing, Mike Searing, Nancy Tramontana, and Darlene Anderson-Alexander** (Chair). Remember that two or more people can collaborate on a Service as well. We hope that you will consider this wonderful opportunity to foster the spirituality of our congregation.



The Sunday Services Committee

New Sanctuary Movement Update

by Chris Halfar, Social Action Committee

As we continue our study of the experiences of new immigrants, the injustices in our immigration system and the need for fundamental changes in the law, it is a good time to recall what we are leading up to: a congregational vote on May 16th on whether the UUCD should pledge to participate in the New Sanctuary Movement.

The New Sanctuary Movement Pledge

The New Sanctuary Movement is a coalition of interfaith religious leaders and participating congregations, called by our faith to respond actively and publicly to the suffering of our immigrant brothers and sisters residing in the United States.

We acknowledge that the large-scale immigration of workers and their families to the United States is a complex historical, global and economic phenomenon that has many causes and does not lend itself to simplistic or purely reactive public policy solutions.

We stand together in our faith that everyone, regardless of national origin, has basic common rights, including but not limited to: 1) livelihood; 2) family unity; and 3) physical and emotional safety. We witness the violation of these rights under current immigration policy, particularly in the separation of children from their parents due to unjust deportations, and in the exploitation of immigrant workers. We are deeply grieved by the violence done to families through immigration raids. We cannot in good conscience ignore such suffering and injustice.

Therefore, we covenant to:

- *Take a public, moral stand for immigrants' rights*
- *Reveal, through education and advocacy, the actual suffering of immigrant workers and families under current and proposed legislation*
- *Protect immigrants against hate, workplace discrimination, and unjust deportation*

What will it mean for our congregation to sign this pledge? It will mean that the UUCD commits to work toward an immigration system that respects human dignity and family unity. The New York Sanctuary Coalition, which coordinates activities in our region, invites congregations to join at one of three levels.

At the minimal level, we would promise to educate ourselves about immigration, stand up publicly for immigrants' rights, and act as we are able to protect immigrants' rights. We could start by agreeing to get acquainted with a particular immigrant's family.

At the midlevel, we would be willing to partner with other congregations in supporting an identified Sanctuary family threatened with deportation, short of physically housing them.

At the maximum level, we would be willing to house an individual or family facing deportation and/or physically try to prevent the government from seizing the immigrant for detention or deportation, even though such actions risk arrest.

We could start by joining at the minimal level and, after further study, increase our participation.

How might we live out our New Sanctuary commitment? We could hold events to educate ourselves and the community; host “know your rights” forums for immigrants; write to or visit immigrant detainees; preach about immigration policy and radical hospitality; stand with immigrants in our community in ways they suggest; provide material support; support someone’s legal case; accompany someone checking in at the ICE office. We can be as creative as we like and the New York Sanctuary Coalition will help us in any way they can. Rachel Soltis met with the UUCD in December and Fr. Juan Carlos Ruiz, a national founder of the NSM, will be with us on May 4th to answer all our questions.

The Social Action Committee has two remaining programs leading to our vote to join the New Sanctuary Movement. Please join us on Friday, April 4th and on Sunday, May 4th to become informed.

For more information, look for materials on the table in the Fellowship Hall and articles in the November and December Comment. To read about denominational endorsement by the UUA, go to www.uuworld.org/news/articles/26739.shtml. The national NSM website is www.newsanctuarymovement.org. Please contact Chris Halfar with any questions or concerns.

An Invitation from Carina Bandhauer

Carina Bandhauer, one of the panelists from the March 16th program on “The Politics of Immigration” has invited us to attend her course at West Conn.

Thanks again for inviting me to the immigration event yesterday. I enjoyed the opportunity and I also, perhaps most, enjoyed speaking to folks afterwards. Please feel free to have people contact me if I can be of help during this process.

If it is of any interest to anyone in the congregation, I am currently using 2 books that might be helpful to people. They are "No One is Illegal" by Chacon and Davis and "Out of the Sea and Into the Fire: Latin American-US Immigration in the Global Age" by Lydersen. If folks would care to partake in the conversation we will be having in my upper-division class I would be most delighted to have as many as 20 people join us. We meet Monday and Wednesdays from 11-12:15 and we'll be discussing the Chacon/Davis book the first 2 weeks of April, but really any time would be fine to have people come and engage on the topic.

Again, thank you and the others so much for putting this topic on the front burner in the UU church and getting conversations going. This is so important!

You can reach Professor Bandhauer at (203) 837-8650 or bandhauerc@wcsu.edu or contact Chris Halfar for more information.

Over the Fence and Under the Radar Conversations about Immigration at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

from the Social Action Committee

How did immigration impact the United States in the past? What does immigration mean today? Who are our new immigrants and why are they here? What impact will immigration have on our democracy, our economy and our society? How are the children of immigrants affected by the threat of their parents' deportation? What would fair immigration policies and laws look like? What will the future hold and how can we help build a strong, diverse community?

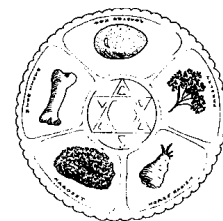
The Voices of Immigrants: 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. Friday, April 4th

A panel discussion including Wilson Hernandez, an Ecuadorian immigrant and business owner; Clementina Lunar, a Mexican immigrant who is a family advocate; Victor Padilla, the Hispanic liaison for the Village of Brewster; and Attorney Michael Boyle who successfully fought a deportation order of removal for Danbury immigrant, Tereza Pereira, and her family.

Join us for a thoughtful program about this very complex and compelling issue on **Friday, April 4th** beginning with a Latino dinner at 6:00 p.m. served by the Social Action Committee in our Fellowship Hall. This is the second in a 3-part series on immigration, leading up to a vote to join the New Sanctuary Movement at our annual meeting. Please come and be informed! Childcare will be available. **Please sign up for dinner, childcare and this important program in advance.** Sign up sheets are available in the rear of the fellowship hall. While the Social Action Committee will be extending invitations to leaders from the immigrant and faith communities, **this event is not open to the general public or the press.**

Spiritual Conversations Class

The Spiritual Conversations class will meet on Monday, April 21st at 7:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. This month, the class has chosen to look at **A Course in Miracles**... a non-dualist, "received"/channeled series of lessons on Forgiveness and Waking Up. What makes this book different from other 'New Age'/channeled materials? How can a thinking person benefit from its teachings? You need not be familiar with the text in order to participate. We will be talking, mostly, about the idea of Forgiveness and how essential it is to living. Hope to see you there! For more information, contact **Scot Fritz**.



Passover Seder for the Whole Family

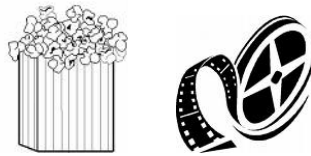
Reserve this date: Saturday, April 12th, 6:00 p.m. Come one and all. Join us for a fun, authentic Passover Seder. We will have great food and great company while we share the story of Passover through a modified Seder. There will be activities for children as well. Look for the sign-up sheet at the back of Fellowship Hall for help setting-up, cleaning-up and what food to bring. We look forward to a fun time! If you have any questions, please contact **Renee Simon, Judy Lacker, or Andrew Bloch**.

First Friday Film and Discussion

by Chris Halfar

The Film Discussion Committee presents the following film:

Friday, April 11th, at 7:30 p.m. "Farmingville"; discussion led by the Social Action Committee. The New York Times called this award-winning documentary about a Long Island suburb's response to Mexican immigrants in the community "a primer for anyone who cares to better understand the usually unseen cost of America's appetite for cheap labor."



Movies with a Message: Fourth Friday Film Series, April 25th

by Keith Dupree

The Rub of Attraction: A gentle spoof on the challenges we face in getting the Law of Attraction to work for us. The popular message of *The Secret* is put to the test by a devoted band of followers, with quirky and humorous results.

Song of Songs: This 66-minute documentary "explores the challenges of relationships. If we are all so fascinated by love, why is it so difficult to make a romantic relationship last? Experts ... speak on this topic, along with people who have made relationships work.....This sweet film reminds us of our true inner nature: one that is inspired and nourished by love." (From the Spiritual Cinema Circle letter, 2008 – Volume 2)

On the fourth Friday, April 25th, come to the UUCD Conference Room prepared to discuss and enjoy. *Rub of Attraction* will start at 7:00 p.m., with our feature *Song of Songs* at 7:25 p.m. Pizza will be provided for those who wish to chip in. Bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional!

Theater Enthusiasts

by Keith Dupree

April 24th is another "Pay What You Want" night at TheatreWorks, New Milford. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.; seating is general admission, first-come, first served.

This month's play is *Moonlight and Magnolias*, a comedy set against the backdrop of the 1939 film classic, *Gone With the Wind*. Join fellow UUCDers at the theater at 7:30 p.m. on April 24th for an evening of fun. Go to www.theatreworks.us for more information, or contact coordinator **Keith Dupree** if you have questions. Also, please call Keith so that we know how many people to look for and so that we can try to arrange to sit together.

From Your Community Minister, Rev. Peggy Block

Dear UUCD Members and Friends,

I don't know about you, but I am still in a state of denial that Linda is leaving. Linda is leaving! Our Linda...ouch.

What I do know is that I will miss our very special collegial relationship, lunches, minister meetings and especially "sharing" some of the Sunday services. Linda did "the heavy lifting" of order-of-service, sermon, selecting readings, etc., and I got what I considered "the fun parts."

I will also miss Linda's warmth, earnestness, twinkling eyes, infectious soft laugh, her extraordinary love of movies, music, and cats. Linda is a wonderful minister, in public and in private – to me, and to many of us.

The future is upon UUCD with the "transitional planning" for an Interim and a Search Committee for the new minister to come.

The good news for the future of Chaplaincy is that, it seems, Linda will be joining our professional ranks, via her hospital work, Clinical Pastoral Education Residency, and hopefully becoming a Board Certified Chaplain, as I am, with the Association of Professional Chaplains (A.P.C.), as she continues in her new work and renewed geography.

I will miss Linda here with us. But – lucky me! – I hope to see Linda annually at the A.P.C. Conferences. I know she'll hug me there, and send hugs to all of you too.

Faithfully yours,
Peggy

Men Out to Breakfast

Men Out to Breakfast is an organization of men seeking fellowship and spirituality and meeting for breakfast and discussion on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at the Windmill Diner, Mill Plain Road in Danbury, convenient to exits two and four. Meeting time: 9:00 a.m. All are welcome. April dates are the 5th and 19th.



Women out to Breakfast

Women out to Breakfast will meet on Saturday, April 12th and Saturday, April 26th at Elmer's Diner on Padanaram Road across from the North Street Shopping Center (exit 6 from I-84W, turn right; exit 5 from I-85E, go straight 2-3 miles.) Please notify **Karen Gillotti** via email if you plan to attend.

Intergenerational Retreat

The date is now reserved from Friday, May 30th to Sunday, June 1st at Camp Jewell for the **Intergenerational Retreat**. All congregants are welcome. If you plan on attending, please contact **Nancy Tramontana, Carl Tichler, or Suzanne Perry**. Please send in a deposit of \$20 (per person).

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Lynn Taborsak, Soup Kitchen Coordinator

On Saturday, April 5th, **Andrew Bloch** will be leading Team #2 at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street with team members **Anne Krieg, Carl Tichler, Judy Lacker, Val Cochrane, Stacey Campanella, David Payne, Pamela Mitchell, Michael Searing and Glenn Brady**. Spring is officially here but our hot meal and hospitality are still really appreciated.

We are working on a new way to schedule our Soup Kitchen volunteers to match the work flow at the kitchen. When your team leader calls to remind you about volunteering this month, please tell him which “tasks” you are available to do. Maybe you can come in at 11:00 a.m. to prepare the food and side dishes. Maybe you come in at 1:30 p.m. to set-up the dining room, wrap silverware, make bag lunches and set up dessert trays. If you are a highly skilled waiter or waitress, you can come in at 3:00 p.m. to serve our guests and stay for clean up duties. We want to be flexible enough to give everyone in the congregation an opportunity to participate in this long-standing project of the Social Action Committee. Our congregation has sponsored soup kitchen and shelter teams for 25 years, each and every month.

If you are not a soup kitchen volunteer please consider serving as an occasional alternate when extra hands are needed. You can also help us feed our neighbors by donating a gift card in any amount from any local grocery store in the collection plate on Sunday. You can continue to bring in donations of non-perishable food items every week to replenish our local food pantries. There is a large basket for these items at the entrance to our Fellowship Hall. Finally, you are responsible for finding a substitute if you are unable to work on your assigned day. You will receive a list of congregation members who serve as alternates with your e-mail reminder.

“Bridges to Belief: Community Lectures on Values and Vision”

The Unitarian Church in Westport announces a new series of lectures exploring current ethical and philosophical issues of our day. **On Sunday, April 6th**, Dr. Sharon Welch, will examine notions of peace and peace building in our world in her lecture “**A Theology of Peacemaking.**” Dr. Welch is Provost and Professor of Religion and Society at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Previously, Welch held positions as Professor and Chair of Religious Studies, Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies and Adjunct Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri. Before that, she was associate professor of Theology and Religion and Society at Harvard Divinity School. Welch is the author of four books: *After Empire: The Art and Ethos of Enduring Peace*; *A Feminist Ethic of Risk*; *Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work*; *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity: A Feminist Theology of Liberation*, and many articles. There will be a reception following the lecture which will take place at 3:00 pm at the church, 10 Lyons Plains Road in Westport. All lectures are free and open to the public. For more information, please call (203) 227-7205



The **Nonfiction Book Discussion Group** meets on the second Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are welcome. Please contact **Bruce Buzby** if you have any questions.

The discussion-meetings schedule for April, May and June follows (on the second Thursday of the month):

April 10, 2008 - Topic: Can we forecast the future? Facilitator – To be determined. Source: “Microtrends: The Small Forces Behind Tomorrow’s Big Changes” by Mark J. Penn, 2007, 448 pages, \$17.15. Relying on some of the best data available, Penn identifies more than 70 microtrends in religion, leisure, politics, and family life that are changing the way we live. Among them: People are retiring but continuing to work.

May 8, 2008 - Topic: How Geography influences history; Facilitator – To be determined. Source: “The Discovery of France: A Historical Geography From the Revolution to the First World War” by Graham Robb, 2007, 400 pages, \$18.45. The notion of ‘the French’ as one nation is relatively recent and – historically speaking – quite misleading; in order to discover the ‘real’ past of France it’s not only necessary to go back in time, but also to go at a slower pace than modern life generally allows, this book is the result of 14,000 miles covered by bicycle.

June 12, 2008 - Topic: What should we be looking for in our next President? Facilitator – To be determined. Source: “Command of Office: How War, Secrecy, and Deception Transformed the Presidency, from Theodore Roosevelt to George W. Bush” by Steven Graubard, 2006, 722 pages, \$13.55. With access to former members of both Republican and Democratic administrations, Graubard has written a masterful history of presidential power – one that anyone concerned with American politics will need to read.

Save the Date for our Annual Meeting with Family Potluck!
Friday, May 16th

Once we began continuing two services into June, having our Annual Meeting on a Sunday in mid-May meant we lost the participation of many of our 9 a.m. service attendees. So this year we’re trying something different in hopes of getting the best attendance possible—a Friday evening meeting preceded by a family potluck. There will, of course, be childcare during the meeting itself. Please save the date and plan to be there!



Wheel of Life

Congratulations to

- **Dawson Stout** (son of **David and Nina**) who won the butterfly event in a recent swimming meet.
- **Sasha Dessy** (daughter of **Mira**) who was just inducted into the National Honor Society for Psychology.
- **Laurie and Charlie Schott** on the birth of their new grandson.
- **Jim Walsh** on his 30th anniversary as Executive Director of Danbury Youth Services.

Our sympathy to

- **Anna Bisogno-Papa and Kim Papa** on the recent death of Anna's grandmother / Kim's stepmother.

Current Board of Trustees

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COMMENT

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Rev. Linda Hansen, Minister

Sunday Services at 9 and 11 a.m.

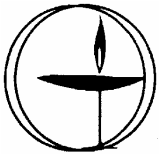
March 30, 2008. **In The Fishbowl.** How do you see the world? How does the world see you? Ever feel like you are being watched? The Senior High Youth Group is going to give you the chance to explore these questions in their annual Senior High Youth Service. Come and find out why we all feel that way sometimes. Share your thoughts and feelings!! If you haven't attended a youth service before, you are in for a real treat, and if you have, you know to expect something different!

April 6, 2008. **"Why I Go!"** The Rev. Phyllis J. Leopold, the Executive Director of the Association of Religious Communities of Greater Danbury (to which UUCD belongs), and a Methodist minister, will address some influences on the evolution of her faith, and why she "keeps on keeping on." Rev. Leopold says that her sermon "may speak to anyone who's had faith, lost it, and got it back in a new way."

April 13, 2008. **It's Just Change.** This Sunday we will welcome the Rev. Craig Hirshberg, the Ministerial Settlement Representative for our Metro-New York District. She will explore the nature of change and how it impacts a congregation beginning the process of finding a new minister. Service led by Rev. Hirshberg and coordinated by Rev. Linda Hansen.

April 20, 2008. **Liberation and Responsibility.** The Jewish festival of Passover will have begun just the evening before. We'll explore the meaning of this holy time for Jews and the power of its liberating message for all of us. Service led by Rev. Linda Hansen.

April 27, 2008. **Jazz/Cabaret Sunday!** Come a half-hour early to the services this morning for a continental breakfast. Yes, we'll be asking for your pledges; we'll also be treating you to extraordinary jazz, and a sermon using jazz as a metaphor for the ambiguity, richness and spontaneity to be found in our personal lives and our congregation. Service led by Rev. Linda Hansen, members of our Canvass Committee, and most importantly, these jazz musicians: Ruth Ahlers, alto saxophone; Rob Catalano; piano; Tim Gilbert, guitar; Brad Greene, percussion; Kim Papa, guitar; and Charlie Schott, bass. WOW!!!



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