



COMMENT

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

MAY 2008

Two Important Meetings on May 16th

Barbara Myers, Secretary to the Board

Call for a Special Congregational Meeting to Elect the Ministerial Search Committee

7:15 p.m., May 16, 2008

From our bylaws: “When a vacancy occurs in the ministry, a Special Congregational meeting of the UUCD shall be called to elect a Ministerial Search Committee. To that effect the Board will submit a list of nominees; however, additional nominations from the floor will be accepted at the meeting if approved by a majority of those members present and voting. The Committee shall be comprised of seven members.”

Call for the Annual Meeting of the UUCD

7:30 p.m. (or whenever the Special Meeting is over), May 16, 2008

Every May, as specified in the bylaws, we hold the Annual Meeting of the UUCD. The order of business is specified in the bylaws, and includes Reports, Adoption of the Budget, and New Business, as well as Elections. Nominations from the Nominating Committee:

1) To be elected to the Board of Trustees:

President: Carl Tichler	1 year term until June 30, 2009
Secretary: Barbara Myers	1 year term until June 30, 2009
Treasurer: Marie Dupree	2 year term until June 30, 2010
Trustee: Jean Bowen	3 year term until June 30, 2011
Trustee: Eva DeFranco	2 year term until June 30, 2010
	(to fill out remainder of Marcia Brooker’s term)

Remaining on the Board:

Anne Krieg	Term ends June 30, 2009
Andrew Bloch	Term ends June 30, 2009
Nancy Tramontana	Term ends June 30, 2010
Valerie Cochrane	Term ends June 30, 2010

(continued)

2) To be elected to Nominating Committee:

Lana Wallace

2 year term until June 30, 2010

Remaining on Nominating Committee:

Jane Leff

2 year term until June 30, 2009

Carol Huckabee

2 year term until June 30, 2009

Andrew Bloch

2 year term until June 30, 2009

A vote on the **New Sanctuary Movement** and our new **Mission Statement** will also take place at the Annual Meeting.

Our bylaws allow Absentee Ballots. To vote by Absentee Ballot, you must submit it to Carl Tichler or Barbara Myers on or before May 15th, 2008. Ballots are available in the back of the Fellowship Hall or on the website.

Robert's Rules of Order prevail at all Congregational Meetings. Our bylaws also state that there must be a quorum of at least 15% of the membership. At an official membership of 145, this means there must be at least 22 members present at both of these May 16th meetings for the meetings to proceed. Voting rights extend only to those who have been members for at least 60 days, which, for this year's meetings, means anyone who signed the membership book prior to March 17, 2008.

The Special Congregational Meeting and the Annual Meeting will be preceded by a **FAMILY POTLUCK** beginning at 6 p.m. **Please bring your own beverages, and the following** (according to the first initial of your last name in the alphabet) **to share with approximately 8 people** (take-out or store-bought is fine):

A – K Main dish

L – R Salad

S Bread

T – Z Dessert

Childcare will be available during the two meetings. Please look for the sign-up sheet at the back of the Fellowship Hall or call the office ahead of time if you will need childcare. **Childcare reservations must be made by Sunday, May 11th.**

Meet the Candidates

For the **Board of Trustees**:

Jean Bowen has been a member of our congregation since early 2001, and ours is the first Unitarian Universalist congregation she has been a part of. Jean grew up on Long Island, later lived in Yorktown Heights, NY, and presently lives with her husband, Tom Nerney, in New Fairfield.

For all of her adult life Jean has worked in settings that address social justice issues, including issues of women's rights, housing for the poor, and rights for those living with disabilities. Jean was the director of WeCAHR for 27 years, the Danbury agency which advocates for persons living with disabilities. Earlier in her career she headed the National Organization for Women in Delaware. Jean's current passion is finding stable housing for the poor, and she works with others through Dream Homes Community Center toward that end. She has organized the self-advocacy movement known as People First of CT and serves on the Board of Directors of the National Kidney Foundation of CT.

At UUCD, Jean worked with Charley Stark to reorganize the Social Action Committee and helped to develop the priorities. Jean serves on the Special Events committee, and she has championed and developed our new Right to Flourish program for those living alone.

In addition to Tom, Jean's family includes a son and a daughter, 2 grandsons, 4 stepchildren, and 7 step-grandchildren.

Jean said that she brings experience managing non-profit organizations, all of which must observe conservative fiscal policies, and she is experienced running and working on various boards and committees. Jean feels that she can make a contribution to this congregation which has come to mean so much to her.

Eva DeFranco has been a member of our congregation for approximately 5 years. Eva was raised in Ridgefield and now resides in Danbury with her husband, John Bonansinga, and their 12-year-old daughter, Jody, who is currently in our Coming of Age program.

At the UUCD, Eva has taught Religious Education and she now manages the funds held in a bequest to the congregation.

Eva is a practicing attorney, and she brings skills and knowledge that will surely be a strength as she serves on the Board of Trustees. Her sister-in-law, Christine Bonansinga, describes Eva as a "smart and a methodical thinker with a great sense of humor." Eva looks forward to joining the Board of Trustees.

For fun, Eva kayaks, hikes, and plays golf, all with skill and enthusiasm, and she is also a potter.

For the **Nominating Committee:**

Lana Wallace has been a member of our congregation since 2001. She and her husband, Robert, were members of Unitarian Universalist congregations in Vero Beach, Florida, Woodbury, Connecticut, and in New York City prior to moving to Danbury. The Wallaces have two adult sons, and three grandchildren. Wade Wallace and his wife, Amanda, along with those three grandchildren, are now part of UUCD as well.

Lana served for several years on the Membership Committee, and has taught in Religious Education for several years as well. Lana worked on the Installation Committee when Linda Hansen became our minister, on the Membership Directory, and has been on a team at Dorothy Day Hospitality House. In her professional life, Lana has taught school, and has been a Human Resources manager, a position she currently holds.

Lana is interested in serving on the Nominating Committee. Lana is familiar with most of the young families in the congregation because of her work in our Religious Education Program and, after her experience serving on the Membership Committee and on the Religious Education Committee, she is committed to help members move into positions of leadership in the congregation.

Letter from Linda



The forsythia is blooming, the sun is warm and shining, it looks like spring is here! A friend outside of the congregation said on one of these beautiful days, “It feels like there’s a chance for things to get better.” Yes, it does. I hope it’s feeling that way to all of you, in whatever ways you need your world to be better.

Many of you will make things better for people in need in our congregation thanks to your recent generous offering for the Minister’s Discretionary Fund during the Easter Sunday services. The fund had gotten extremely low; you contributed very generously. I am most grateful.

And I offer a huge thanks to all of you who contributed to our March 29th Goods and Services Auction, especially to Co-Chairs **Valerie Cochrane** and **Christine Bonansinga**, to **Marcia Brooker** who organized the food, and to **Ross Fenster** who raised 41% in matching funds. That a congregation of our relatively small size could raise over \$23,000 is extraordinary, and goes a long way toward keeping this year’s budget healthier. Thank you all!

Some of you might remember, from a sermon I gave over a year ago, that I have one of those plants from which blooms very occasionally a gorgeous red flower. (I know so little about plants that I’m not even sure what it’s called.) How this dear plant—given to me by dinner guests who didn’t know my terrible plant history—has stayed alive for several years is beyond me, but I’m delighted it has. And once in a blue moon, at the oddest times, it surprises me by blooming. It just did so again on April 15th of all days—perhaps to offer a little consolation on tax day!

The bloom lasts two days at most, but it is splendid while it does. This past Sunday, a congregant and I were lamenting how short a time the forsythia stays in bloom, but while it does it too is amazing. The thing is, knowing that the beauty lasts only a little while, I try harder to drink it in, to appreciate it, while it’s here.

The temporary nature of flowers, of the spring, of beauty—of life in general—is, of course, even more on my mind as I prepare to move away this summer. I am even more conscious of the gifts you all are—of your beauty as a congregation. I am appreciating you even more knowing our remaining time is short. There is sadness in this for me, but there is sweetness and joy too. Things and relationships don’t have to last forever to be valuable. And sometimes their not lasting makes us value them even more!

With love,
Linda

Minister	Rev. Linda Hansen	798-1994 (O)
	email: minister@uudanbury.org	
Community Minister	Rev. Peggy S. Block	438-7678 (H)
Director RE	Mary Collins	798-1994 (O)
	email: DRE@uudanbury.org	
Office Manager	Sherry Kyriacou	798-1994 (O)
	email: secretary@uudanbury.org	
Facilities Manager	Cynthia Clark	798-1994 (O)
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Sexton	Don Cassel	798-1994 (O)
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Website	www.uudanbury.org	

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 June Comment -
Friday, May 23rd.

President's Letter

By Carl Tichler, President



Happy spring to everyone! The long-awaited warmer weather is now here as I am writing this in mid-April. It is giving me some mental and spiritual energy for the burst of activity that we have been experiencing on the Board, with both the Annual Meeting upon us in May, and also the ministerial search process. We will be posting the applications of the nominees for the Ministerial Search Committee in the Fellowship Hall in early May.

In other news, our permanent Certificate of Occupancy for our building has finally been approved by the city of Danbury, replacing our previous "temporary" certificate. Thanks are in order to **Cynthia Clark** and **Carl Tramontana** for all of their work on this, as well as **all those who laid the groundwork in previous years**. Among other things, this will allow us to go forward with planning for a permanent sign on Clapboard Ridge Road.

In fellowship,

Carl

Regarding the Possibility of My Becoming a Full-time Lifespan Religious Educator

by Mary Collins, DRE

This month at the Annual Meeting this congregation will take a vote on a budget that includes funding to make my position that of a full-time Lifespan Religious Educator. I just want to let you know how EXCITED I am at this possibility, both personally and for the congregation. I see us talking together, sharing our talents, finding what makes us "blissful" (as Joseph Campbell exhorts), and then creating meaningful programming that reflects our dreams and passions.

Let me offer just one example of the possibilities I see. I have been dreaming of kick-starting an alternate evening service that would provide us with a variety of music – jazz, acoustic, gospel, ethnic, and rock-and-roll – as well as commentary in the Fellowship Hall. I see this as meeting our Vision 2020 goal of having more music and spirituality. It would also be an "adult RE" opportunity for young adults to elders who wish to attend or share something they are learning or find useful on their journey (e.g., Buddhist quotes and meditation music, Sufi wisdom and dancing, Christian stories and songs of forgiveness, New Year traditions from Chinese to Jewish, rock-and-roll and respect ...). This is an exciting way to invite new and diverse guests into our community as well. How about Brazilian music and the theme of our Brazilian guest's choice?

Thank you for considering the possibilities. Whatever you decide about the budget, let's keep dreaming our way to growth!

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

The summary statistics for January through March of the 2007-08 year are recorded below.

	<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>March</u>
% Annual Canvass pledge return	54.9%	59.8%	65.2%
Operating Income Year-to-date	\$134,070	\$144,552	\$175,625
Operating Expenses Year-to-date	\$135,413	\$156,981	\$181,872
Operating Income – Expense YT	<u>-\$ 1,343</u>	<u>-\$ 11,231</u>	<u>-\$ 6,247</u>

Analysis for current year:

The “Operating Income – Expense, Year-to-date” (-\$6,247) has continued negative but not as low as last month. This is due primarily to a very successful annual Auction. The totals hide the slowing of pledge payments this year and are not attributable to a burst of Pledge payments. The “year-to-date percent pledge payments” (over the last 6 years) have ranged from 71.51% to 80.16%. **This year’s rate of 65.2% is significantly below average.** Efforts are being made to better understand why this is happening. **So please keep your pledge payments coming.**

The Operating Expenses Year-to-Date are Normal.

The budgets for next year are in their final stage of development. We would like to note that there are four significant items that are being added to the budget this year.

1. It is estimated that \$3,000 will be charged by the vendors for the use of Pay-Pal and Credit cards to pay for payments to the congregation. This option for payment is not only a convenience to our members but it has been reported that a significant increase in payments follows the availability of this convenience.
2. Moving expenses (a maximum of \$6,500) for the interim minister will be our congregation’s responsibility.
3. To carry out the search for a new minister in a single year will require an estimated budget of \$15,000. We all hope that this process can be confined to a single year.
4. To continue our very successful Religious Education Program the Board feels that it is necessary to promote the Religious Education Director’s position from part time to full time. It is estimated that this will increase our costs by \$20,000.

These items will increase our operating expenses by about \$44,500 next year and \$23,000 in following years, expenses that have not been incurred in the past. Discussions of these ambitious plans will be taking place over the next month. We hope that the congregation is in agreement and willing to financially support the Board’s ambitious plans.

Bruce Buzby, Finance Committee Chair
Marie Dupree, Treasurer

Religious Education Update

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

Current RE Group sessions end May 11th but Programming continues. (See the insert for details.)

Coming of Age Services May 18th (9:00 a.m. by the 6th-8th grade group, 11:00 a.m. by the 9th grade group) - Youth have their say and share their credo (belief) statements!

Leader Appreciation - notes collected now for June 8th service.

Parents, children and youth, if you have a note or picture of appreciation for your RE Leaders this year the DRE will be collecting them through June 1st. You can write to one leader or all of them! Look for paper to write on and paper bags (one per group) above the black table in the House.

Leader Appreciation will be at the June 8th Intergenerational Flower Communion Service and the leaders will get them then!

A Child's Explanation of Jesus...

Marcia Brooker sent an email to me recently about a church that asked children, at the end of their religious instruction, to write about some of the important figures they learned about during the year. Here is one example (*and, of course, the views expressed are solely those of the child who wrote it and in no way represent the UUUCD's take on the subject!*):

“During His life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like the Pharisees and the Republicans. Jesus also had twelve opossums. The worst one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.”

As funny as this is, I think we all hope our UU children know the basics. **Even if we have a humanist viewpoint, our “yearn to learn” principle means that we can deepen our knowledge including using Hebrew and Christian stories and characters for our spiritual growth!** The stories and characters are full of humanity at its best and worst. UUs can seek out the universal themes and underlying ideas, make comparisons to other religious material, and deepen our spiritual practice and experience. If you choose, you may be amazed at what you learn about yourself, and perhaps shift your view about this UU source.

Consider leading a small group of wonderful children or youth to explore timeless themes during the 2008-2009 Religious Education Year. It is cultural literacy in the United States today to know Bible stories and figures. If you find yourself hearing a reference by a neighbor or co-worker, or seeing one in print in books or movies you will be the wiser. SAY YES and YOU GET:

- TRAINING as a group facilitator,
- INFORMATION provided (outlines, provocative questions, details too),
- HELP given if you need it.
- GROWTH in your knowledge, experience and relationships with others.

Let the DRE know what age-level you might be interested in working with.

Welcome to New Members

Veronica Swain grew up with little religious instruction in her early life, yet felt extremely drawn to various spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Paganism in her teen years. Her passion for religious study continued to grow into her twenties when she finally discovered Unitarian Universalism. Since then she has been involved with the Religious Education Program and the Vision 2020 Task Force. Veronica currently works as an after-school teacher and a freelance artist. Her hobbies include dancing, yoga, writing, and gardening.

Chansoda Roeun comes from a family of Cambodian immigrants with a Buddhist tradition. In her early years, she was discouraged from ever joining a church by her parents—not to preserve her Buddhist tradition, but from fear of religious fanatics. Chansoda is searching for her own path to truth (away from religious fanatics!), and has found a spiritually open-minded community here at UUCD where she can continue to question and grow. Chansoda is an art teacher and freelance web/graphic designer, and her hobbies include a variety of crafts. She also enjoys bicycling and kayaking.

Together Chansoda and Veronica live in Danbury with their Chihuahua, Malai, and their cat, Raiju.

Fern and Michael Paes write: “Karma probably played the greatest role in our meeting. We were both in law school, Fern going at night and Michael during the day. We had each had other careers. We each had lived in two places where the other would eventually live. Even though Michael was brought up mostly in Cornwall, New York, and Fern was brought up mostly in Paramus, New Jersey, we each frequented restaurants that the other had also frequented. Our families’ two major trips, one to Disney World and one to Puerto Rico, occurred, we believe, in the same years at different times.

“We come from different religious backgrounds. Michael was raised as a Catholic, Fern as a Jew. We both believe that religion should never divide people, and that the most important thing that anyone can do is to treat others with kindness and respect. When we had **our son, Jonathon**, nine years ago, we began searching for a place where we would both feel comfortable. When we found UUCD, we knew we had found that place.

“We have our own law practice, and we concentrate in the areas of civil rights, employment law, small business law and workers' compensation. Michael also has a business, The Bulldog Bat Company, and hand turns vintage and modern baseball bats, and supplies vintage baseball equipment to vintage Base Ball teams throughout the country. Michael plays bass guitar and Fern cooks and sews. We live in Sandy Hook with our son Jonathon who is a great baseball fan and also is in Babe Ruth. We have two dogs, Churchill, a bulldog, and Metty, a very sweet rescue whom Jonathon named after the Mets.”

Guest At Your Table

Thanks to all of you who contributed to this year’s **Guest At Your Table** program to benefit the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Altogether, you donated **\$900.17!** This money will help people who need the basics to live and who need justice here in the United States and all over the world. Your generosity is most appreciated!

Spiritual Conversations Class

The Spiritual Conversations class will meet on Monday, May 19th at 7:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. Hope to see you there! For more information, contact **Scot Fritz**.

Update on the Interim Minister Search

by Barbara Myers

The Interim Minister Search Committee (**Andrew Bloch, Marcia Brooker, and Barbara Myers**) is working to find an interim minister to guide us for the 2008-09 congregational year.

What does an Interim Minister do?

The UUA's guidelines for an interim minister are clear:

1) ...interim ministers both carry out the normal responsibilities of congregational ministry, including worship and pastoral care, and also assist the congregation in addressing the following interim tasks:

- * claiming and honoring its past and engaging and acknowledging its griefs and conflicts*
- * recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges*
- * understanding the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition*
- * making appropriate use of District, UUA, and other outside resources*
- * reaching beyond the dominant culture to include the multicultural world in social service and social justice, and*
- * renewing its vision, strengthening its stewardship, preparing for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest*

2) ...in accordance with the established policy of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the interim minister is pledged not to become a candidate for the congregation's called ministry, not to serve the congregation for more than two years (with a limited exception for interim ministers of religious education and interim associate and assistant ministers), and not to discuss specific prospective candidates for the called ministry of the congregation with the ministerial search committee.

How does our Interim Search Committee find an Interim Minister?

Unlike the search for a settled minister, the process for hiring an interim minister is brief:

- 1) the Interim Search Committee submits its application online by April 15th;
- 2) the UUA Transitions office recommends 3-5 candidates to the Committee;
- 3) interim candidates and the Committee exchange informational packets;
- 4) by appointment, all members of the Committee conduct a conference call with each candidate;
- 5) the Committee tenders an offer to the best prospective candidate, subject to approval by the Board;
- 6) (optional) the Committee brings the prospective candidate to town to meet with the Board and search for housing;
- 7) if the Board is satisfied with the choice, the interim minister is hired.

The Board has committed our congregation to following the UUA guidelines for a "Committed Fair Congregation." This includes guidelines for salary/housing, benefits, and professional expenses. The UUCD is also committed to hiring an Accredited Interim Minister (AIM), a minister who has completed a specialized program for ministers who make interim work their calling.

Where is our Interim Search Committee in this process?

By the time the *Comment* is in your hands, we will have exchanged packets with candidates. We should be in final negotiations for an interim minister by mid-May.

The New Sanctuary Movement

by Chris Halfar, Social Action Committee Chair

The Social Action Committee will be recommending adoption of the New Sanctuary Movement pledge at the Annual Congregational Meeting on May 16th. By that date, we will have completed our series of three programs on the complex issues surrounding immigration. We hope that a strong majority of the congregation will support adoption of the resolution and proclaim:

“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.”

In April, the United States League of Women Voters announced their support for a pathway to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants. In addition, they oppose the deportation of current unauthorized immigrants who have no criminal history. The criteria they support for future admission to the U.S. would include family reunification of spouses and minor children, business and employment needs in the U.S., political persecution or humanitarian crises, and finally, studying in the U.S. Copies of their press release are available in the back of the Fellowship Hall and at www.lwv.org.

If we can know the position of a national organization like the LWVUS, we should certainly be entitled to know the positions of our federal elected officials. The Social Action Committee would like to invite our U.S. Representative and our two U.S. Senators to come to Danbury and speak about the kind of immigration reform that they would support.

In addition to keeping the congregation informed about federal legislation, the Social Action Committee will continue to work with the Association of Religious Communities on outreach to the immigrants in our community. Several members of the Social Action Committee have offered to shelter the children of undocumented immigrants if the parents are detained by immigration and there are no relatives in the area.

Following the vote on May 16th, the Social Action Committee will have several open meetings to structure and plan our participation as a congregation in the New Sanctuary Movement. We will welcome your suggestions and concerns. Finally, we will take the ideas for congregational participation to the Board of Trustees for their feedback and approval.

Change is coming this year. We are electing a new president for our country. We are seeking a new settled minister for our congregation. We are fulfilling our vision to bring our liberal UU values to our new home in Danbury.

See the May 4th service description on page 16 for information on the third program in the Social Action Committee’s series on immigration issues.



Summer Services are Coming Together ... But There's Still Room for YOU!

THANK YOU to **Judy Lacker, Gale Alexander, Evan Smith, Carl Tichler, Susan Shaner, Veronica Swain, Doris Henderson, Charlie Schott, and Joe Gillotti** for offering to lead or take part in a Sunday Service this summer! Believe it or not, there are only TWO open Sundays available, so if you are interested in leading a summer service this year, please contact **Darlene Anderson-Alexander**, Sunday Services Committee Chair, TODAY! Remember, summer services tend to be a time for flexibility and creativity ... and we will provide you with guidelines and support as you formulate your ideas. We hope that you will consider this wonderful opportunity to share your journey with our congregation!

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).

Medical Ethics Lecture

Daniel G. O'Hare, Ph.D. will present a lecture on **Advanced Directives and End-of-Life Issues** in our **Fellowship Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13th**. Dr. O'Hare is the consultant ethicist to several hospitals (including Danbury Hospital) and health care agencies, and previously held the position as the first institutional ethicist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. He currently lectures in Medical Ethics at New York Medical College, at the Graduate School of Social Service of Fordham University in New York, and in the Anesthesia Education Program at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. He has published in the areas of Ethics, AIDS, and Physician-Assisted Suicide.

Dr. O'Hare will focus his remarks on Advanced Directives (living wills) which have recently changed in Connecticut, and on his long experience of the difficult situations that arise when individuals have not discussed their end-of-life wishes with their families and physicians. He will also be glad to take your questions on any area of medical ethics.

If you would like to attend and need a ride, please contact Rev. Linda Hansen at 203-798-1994 or minister@uudanbury.org. We want everyone who wants to attend to be able to do so!

Interfaith Peace Camp

Registration is now open for the 5th Annual **Interfaith Peace Camp** sponsored by the Association of Religious Communities (ARC) of which our congregation is a member. This 5-day camp, **for children ages 9 to 12**, meets from **July 14th through the 18th** at five different sacred sites in our greater Danbury community. Each day campers learn "What Peace Means" to a different world religion, and they have the chance to express what peace means to them as they explore fun, friendly ways to create peace with each other and in our community. The camp includes lunches, healthy snacks, and all supplies for games, crafts, and interactive activities. The cost is \$75 for the week. Full scholarships are available; phone Rev. P.J. Leopold at 203-792-9450. Please see Rev. Linda Hansen for an application.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Lynn Taborsak, Soup Kitchen Coordinator

On Saturday, May 3rd, **Lynn Taborsak** will be leading Team #3 at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street with team members **Bob Taborsak, Jim Wruck, Joe and Nora Tigner, Anne Eigen, Susan Sherman, Darlene and Maddie Alexander, Eva DeFranco and Jodi Bonansinga, Julie Gordon and Mike Toto**. The beautiful spring weather has officially arrived but our hot meal and hospitality are still really appreciated.

We are trying a new way to schedule 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 or her which “tasks” you are available to do. Maybe you can come in at noon to prepare the food and side dishes. Perhaps you can 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 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 a local supermarket 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. Don't forget the letter carriers' food drive on the second Saturday in May. You can leave non-perishable food items right at your mailbox that day.

Finally, you are responsible for finding an alternate if you are not able to work on your assigned day. You will receive a list of congregation members who serve as alternates with your e-mail reminder.

On Sunday, April 20th, representatives from the **First Unitarian Society of Rockland County in Pomona, New York** visited our services to ask our support for their **Chalice Lighter Call** this spring. As most of you know, each spring and fall one congregation in our UUA Metro-New York District is designated a Chalice Lighter congregation and allowed to solicit funds from the other UU congregation in the district in support of a special project. Just a few years ago, we were the lucky recipients of almost \$30,000 from this project to help us build our Fellowship Hall.

The First Unitarian Society of Rockland County is seeking funds to help them hire their first part-time professional Director of Religious Education. They would use the grant to supplement their own money over the next five years. If you were not at one of the services on the 20th, or didn't have your checkbook with you, you're still very welcome to contribute to this good cause. Suggested contributions are \$10 for individuals, \$20 for couples or families; whatever contribution you can make is gratefully accepted. Checks should be made out to UUDMNY (for UU District of Metro-New York). You can send them to the office anytime, or give them to John Miglietta or put them in the collection plate the next couple of Sundays. Thank you.

Auction Update

by Valerie Cochrane

First THANKS!!!! from the Auction Committee. Our list would rival that of any Oscar winner*.

- To everyone who attended with enthusiasm and brought much energy to *Around the World in Eighty Ways*;
- to those who donated goods and services;
- to those who contributed time and effort working for months in preparation of the catalog, publicity and solicitation of donations;
- to the chefs, musicians, auctioneers, computer wizards, cashiers whose time and efforts made this the smoothest running auction yet.

Results of all these efforts:

Tickets	775.00
Raffle	183.00
Silent Auction	3,990.00
Live Auction	11,820.00



AN ENORMOUS THANKS!!!! to the donors of matching funds

41% Match	6,482.10
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In terms of dollar\$ & cent\$: Total Revenue **\$23,250.10**

In terms of fun and congregational morale: **PRICELESS!!!**

(Expenses were under \$500 and dinner purchases still being made will nearly or completely cover them.)

*Lists of all these winners are posted in Fellowship Hall.

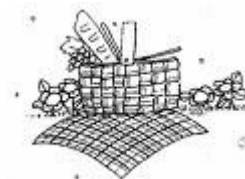
Men Out to Breakfast

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. May dates are the 3rd and 17th.



Women out to Breakfast

Women out to Breakfast will meet on Saturday, May 10th and Saturday, May 24th 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.



End of the Year Picnic

The EVENTS COMMITTEE has scheduled an end of the year picnic for Sunday, June 29th. Please reserve the date and plan to attend. More information to follow in next month's *Comment*. Also, look for a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall mid-May!

Save the Date
Saturday, May 31st
Dorothy Day House of Hospitality
is celebrating its' 25th Anniversary
at 12:00 noon with an outdoor barbecue picnic
behind the kitchen at 11 Spring Street.



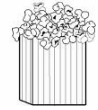
Friday Film and Discussion

by Chris Halfar

The Film Discussion Committee will meet on Friday, May 2nd at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. *Please note the group is meeting on the first Friday rather than the second Friday this month.* More details about the film will be available in the Order of Service and weekly email.

Movies with a Message: Fourth Friday Film Series, May 23rd

by Keith Dupree



As regular attendees probably know, we have been using selections for *Spiritual Cinema Circle* as the basis for nearly all of our Fourth Friday presentations. Many have asked about *Spiritual Cinema Circle* (or SCC) -- what is it? How did SCC originate? What is its mission? We will begin this month's session with a filmed discussion in which SCC responds to such questions.

Our feature film for May is *Tara Road*, based on the novel of the same name by Irish author Maeve Binchy. If you are a Maeve Binchy fan as I am, you will recognize the strong characterization and emphasis on personal relationships that mark Ms. Binchy's works. Two women, played by Andie MacDowell and Olivia Williams, living in different countries, agree to switch homes in an effort each to mend a broken heart. If you not already enamoured by MacDowell, Williams, and Binchy, I think you will be after seeing *Tara Road*.

At the conclusion of our feature, Stephen Simon and Mariel Hemingway share some observations, which we will use to spur our discussion.

7:00 p.m. Stephen Simon and Anna Darrah, director of acquisitions for SCC, discuss the philosophy and origin of *Spiritual Circle Cinema*.

7:15 p.m. Feature film: *Tara Road*

8:55 p.m. Mariel Hemingway and Stephen Simon comment on the film.

9:05 p.m. General discussion

Please join us on Friday, May 23rd, at 7:00 p.m. in the UUCD Conference Room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza will be provided for those who wish to chip in. Bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional!



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 schedule for May and June follows:

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.



Wheel of Life

Congratulations to

- **Bob Weston and Carolyn Holt** who had a lovely commitment ceremony, exchanging rings and vows becoming life partners, on April 12th at Fearington Village in North Carolina. Former Danbury UUs Deborah and Gordon Pirie (now in Asheville, NC), John Gagnon, Carolyn's son, Chris, and Bob's children, Shanna and Leith, attended.

Best wishes to

- **Marcia Brooker** on her move to New Hampshire on or around June 1st. How we will miss you, Marcia!
- **Elisabeth Levy and Claire** (Elisabeth's wonderful service dog) on their move into a new home in Bethel.
- **Jill Miller** on her move into a new apartment in Danbury.

Our sympathy to

- **Geri Boggs and Bruce Buzby** on the death of Geri's Aunt Helen, who had been her closest living relative except for her children.
- **Rita Santos** on the accidental death of her nephew.
- **David Stout** on the accidental death of his close friend.

Our concern to

- **Andy Andersen** whose mother has been ill, and who has been spending all of her free time with her.
- **Chris Halfar** whose father has been diagnosed with early-stage leukemia.

Current Board of Trustees

President	Carl Tichler	(845) 279-5493 ctichler@yahoo.com
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Board Member	Marcia Brooker	(203) 267-7884 marciabrooker@aol.com
Board Member	Nancy Tramontana	(845) 278-6587 nanciilee@aol.com

Contact names in the April *Comment*:

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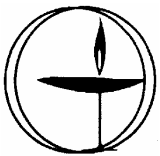
Services at 9 and 11 a.m.

May 4, 2008. The **Impact of Sweeps, Raids and ICE Enforcement on Families**. Come listen to the fears and concerns of young people whose parents are the target of the latest round of ICE enforcement actions. Young people will take part in this New Sanctuary Movement Service at both 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. The second service will be followed by a light brunch and a presentation at 1:00 p.m. by Father Juan Carlos Ruiz on "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the New Sanctuary Movement but Were Afraid to Ask." The services and Father Ruiz's presentation form the third program in a 3-part series on immigration, leading up to the vote to join the New Sanctuary Movement at our Annual Meeting on May 16th. Copies of the official resolution on which we'll be voting will be available that day. Service coordinated by members of the Social Action Committee.

May 11, 2008. **Women Shaping Unitarian Universalism**. We hear often about the famous men who founded or profoundly affected the future course of Universalism or Unitarianism, and we hear about famous women whose Unitarianism or Universalism influenced their work. But who are the women who *helped to shape* our UU traditions themselves? On this Mother's Day, we'll explore and honor the lives and work of several of these lesser-known figures to whom we owe our gratitude. Service led by Rev. Linda Hansen.

May 18, 2008. This morning our **Coming of Age Youth** present their Credos. The 9:00 a.m. service will feature our 6th-8th graders and one four-footed guest with a tail. The 11:00 a.m. service, "One Winged Angel...Learning to Fly," will showcase our 9th graders favorite music as well as their commentary on what they believe to be true. This is a day to celebrate and listen to the next generation!

May 25, 2008. **Power and Powerlessness at the End-of-Life**. On Tuesday, May 13th, we'll have the chance to hear Dr. Dan O'Hare speak in our Fellowship Hall about medical ethical issues related to the end-of-life, including the use of advanced directives. We'll continue some of that exploration this morning, including the issue of whether assisted suicide may be justified. Service led by Rev. Linda Hansen.



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