



COMMENT

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

MAY 2009

For the Time Being

Notes from your Interim Minister

In 2003, this congregation pulled up stakes, left The Barn's lovely rural setting in West Redding, and moved into Danbury - eventually settling on this beautiful, windswept Ridge just north of downtown. The move was the result of many years of planning, driven by a bold and compelling vision: "enhancing our diversity and accessibility, and enhancing our presence as a force for good and activism in the wider community."

Six years later, the dream that led this congregation to Danbury is bearing fruit. To be sure, UUCD has had a presence in the city for years. Some members, like Bill McWilliams, have been involved with ARC (Association of Religious Communities) from its inception. Lynn Taborsak reminds us, elsewhere in this issue, that you've supported the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen for more than a quarter century.

Now, other initiatives are springing up, expanding UUCD's ministry in the community. For example, UUCD was instrumental in creating the well-attended Immigrant Resource Fair at the end of March. This was one concrete outcome of your participation in the New Sanctuary Movement, in support of immigrants' rights. Lynn Taborsak was the prime mover behind the Fair, and many others helped out.

Meanwhile, the "Sow Green" community garden is taking shape downtown, sponsored by UUCD's Team Green, and spurred on by the skill and dynamism of Ali Zipparo. Located on State Street, between Main and Town Hill Avenue, the garden will benefit the downtown area in many ways. In addition to creating a space where urban dwellers can grow their own food, it will beautify a once-blighted parcel of land, and bring people together. Check out the new website, www.sowgreendanbury.org, stop by for a visit - or better yet, pitch in and help!

On April 3, I was happy to attend the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury's 5th Annual Recognition Breakfast, at the invitation of the Social Action Committee. The Hispanic Center, founded in 1967 as a linguistic and cultural group, has evolved into a community service organization, assisting and empowering members of the Latino community. It is considered the "first stop" for members of that community who need "advice, guidance, education, and in some cases food or even a warm coat for the winter."

What I didn't know until I got to the breakfast was that UUCD was receiving an award! You were recognized "for collaborating with the Hispanic Center for many years by educating, empowering, caring, and helping the Hispanic community."

In other words, UUCD's ministry in the community is not passing unnoticed. You are becoming what you had hoped, that "force for good and activism in the wider community." Congratulations, and keep up the good work!

Blessings,
Sue

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 SherryUUCD@gmail.com or dropped off at the church office.

Deadline for the June/July Comment - Friday, May 22nd.



Sunday, June 14th will begin our Summer Service Schedule. We will have one service at 10:00 a.m. This will continue through Sunday, September 6th.

New to UUCD?
Come to a "Coffee Connection" on Sunday, May 3rd after the 11:00 a.m. service.

Share the Plate Sunday

Thanks to all who have given generously in our last two Share the Plate Sunday 50-50 collections. The City of Danbury is cutting back on support for local non-profits and we at UUCD are pleased to do our part to help. The next Share the Plate Sunday is May 3. The recipient is the ARC (Association of Religious Congregations) Domestic Violence Prevention Program.



Help wanted

- (ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS ARE DESPERATELY NEEDED FOR THE "SCRUB CLUBS" (A.K.A. CLEANING TEAMS)! REMEMBER THAT "MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK"
- (MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS
- (HOSPITALITY HELPERS
- (RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADERS FOR 2009-2010

FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT DARLENE ANDERSON-ALEXANDER



President's Letter

By Carl Tichler, President

Due to the upcoming Annual Meeting on May 8th, the focus of the Board during the April meeting was preparing the budget proposal. In the four years that I have been part of this process, first as a Trustee, and for the past two years as President, this has been a long, difficult meeting, but particularly so this year. When our congregation moved to the city of Danbury, we expected that our use of cash reserves would only be needed for the first two or three years since many expenses were due to the move and would not reoccur in the future. We also expected to become an active, visible presence in Danbury, and that growth in membership would allow us to balance the budget and then build back up our reserves. In the past month, there have been two examples of how we have begun to accomplish this, with our recognition by the Hispanic Center of Danbury for our work as a New Sanctuary Congregation for the immigrant community, and the community garden initiative of the Green Team, in particular Ali Zipparo. But the growth in membership that we hoped for has not occurred, and although we have been able to reduce our expenses, the income, in particular our pledge income, has not yet been able to make up the difference. So for this year, we are faced with a budget shortfall of \$30,000 which needs to be addressed.

As I have worked on the budget, I have come to understand that the choices we make in our budget --- and which the congregation votes on at the Annual Meeting --- are a statement of our priorities and values as a congregation. This is reflected in both what we decide to fund in the coming year, and in how well we preserve our financial stability for the future work of the congregation. It also will reflect in our vision for the ministry and in our search for a new settled minister. We agreed as a Board that we would present a balanced budget this year, without any use of our cash reserves. We also decided that we would preserve our current level of staffing in the budget we present. So we came to a proposal which addressed the shortfall through two parts --- by reducing expenses by \$15,000, and increasing revenue by \$15,000. The expense reduction would be through refinancing our existing mortgage at a lower rate, reductions in our payment of congregational dues to the UUA and the Metro District, reduction in administrative costs, and cutbacks in committee funding. The additional income would be partially through increases in the RE fees, but primarily through a supplementary pledge of \$100 per pledger.

We feel as a Board that this proposal can address the crucial financial needs of the coming year in a way which preserves our congregational vision for the future. This is an important congregational decision, so we will be having time after each of the services on May 3rd, for everyone in the congregation to give their feedback and suggestions on the budget before our vote at the Annual Meeting. I would like to thank the Finance Committee and the Board for their work on this. I personally feel that as a congregation we can come to a shared consensus on how to address the financial concerns and continue to expand our vision for the future. I look forward to your thoughts.

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

The summary statistics for December, January, February and March of the 2008-09 fiscal year are recorded below.

	December	January	February	March
% Annual Canvass pledge return	60.4%	64.7%	70.5%	76.7%
Operating Income Year-to-date	\$115,309	\$124,764	\$137,238	\$167,684
Operating Expenses Year-to-date	\$114,332	\$137,341	\$157,290	\$179,472
Operating Income – Expense YTD	<u>\$ 977</u>	<u>\$ -12,577</u>	<u>\$ -20,052</u>	<u>\$ -11,788</u>

Analysis for this Month:

The March pledge returns (6.13%) is below the average March returns (7.02%.) Due to the earlier strong showing the Total Pledge returns to date (76.7%) is still above average. Over the last 7 years the average and maximum pledge returns to date were 74.19% and 80.16% respectively. Thank you. So please keep the pledge returns coming as early as possible. Both the Operating Income YTD and the Operating Expense YTD are essentially on target.

Analysis of 2009-10 Budget:

The budgeting for next year's income and expenditures has followed the methods from past years. The resulting budget (called the Base budget) has expenditures exceeding income by \$32,030. The Board voted at the April meeting that it wishes to present a balanced budget at our May meeting. This is mostly due to the significant reduction in our reserves over the last four years due to unbalanced budgets.

To achieve a balanced budget while working towards our goal of growth, growth in leadership, growth in our vital programming and growth in membership is clearly a challenge that requires new ideas from all of us. This means both, new ideas for revenue generation and new ideas for reducing costs.

The base budget and first draft plus ideas for reaching a balanced budget is presented below. The Base budget is presented in regular type and the potential adjustments in bold and script. To best achieve a balanced budget that has the support of the congregation, the Board has scheduled a number of times during the next month that we can come together and present our ideas, and concerns. The following represents where we are at this moment.

Income	<u>Budget 2009-2010</u>	Comments	Additional Possibilities
Pledge Rects	\$155,000	Based on pledges \$165,000	
Building Use	\$9,000	Includes school rental	
Collections	\$6,000		
Donations	\$4,000		
Fund Raising	\$25,500	Includes \$20,000 auction	New Fundraising (\$2,000), Music prog., etc.
Interest & Dividends	\$5,500	Wellsley + Boston fund	
Jeremiah Smith Trust	\$7,500		

Miscellaneous	\$1,000		
RE Tuition		Scholarships for 10	Fees (5,000) retreats,
(\$125*50)	\$5,000	students	Seminars, Workshops
New Income	\$11,000	Short Pledge + Other	
Total	\$229,500	Ideas	
Expense			
Contribution	\$12,106	UUA, District, ARC	
<i>Reduce Payments</i>	<i>-\$8,500</i>	<i>Delay payment to later</i>	<i>Additional \$4,106 (UUA Metro, ARC)</i>
Administration	\$8,670		
<i>Reduction of supplies</i>	<i>-\$1,000</i>	<i>Stamps, paper, ink</i>	
Building & Grounds			
Mortgage	\$39,816		
<i>Adjust interest rate</i>	<i>-\$5,000</i>	<i>Interest reduction by 1%</i>	
Utilities	\$13,450		
Other	\$12,565	Equip, Supplies, Services	<i>Maybe \$2,000</i>
Total	\$65,831		
Committees			
Search	\$8,500		
Other	\$8,380		
<i>Reduce committee</i>	<i>-\$4,000</i>	<i>Analysis by Committees</i>	<i>Additional \$2,000</i>
Total	\$16,880		
Staff			
Minister	\$88,009	Includes Benefits	<i>Following year reduction of \$10,000</i>
RE Director	\$26,196	Includes Benefits	<i>Reduce the scope of RE Dir. functions</i>
Other Staff	\$27,838	Secretary, Music, FICA, other	
Total	\$142,043		
Total	\$246,530		
<i>Minus the reductions</i>	<i>-\$18,500</i>		
Total Total	\$228,030		
Cushion	\$2,470		More money for Cushion

Bruce Buzby, Finance Committee Chair
 Marie Dupree, Treasurer



Call for the Annual Meeting of the UUCD May 8, 2009 7:00 PM

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: Jean Bowen	1 year term until June 30, 2010
Secretary: Valerie Cochrane	1 year term until June 30, 2010
Trustee: Barbara Myers	Completing Valerie Cochrane's term until June 30, 2010
Trustee: Pamela Mitchell	Completing Jean Bowen's term until June 30, 2011
Trustee: Mike Searing	3 year term until June 30, 2012
Trustee: Christine Halfar	3 year term until June 30, 2012

Remaining on the Board:

Marie Dupree, Treasurer	2-year term until June 30, 2010
Eva DeFranco	Completing M. Brooker's term until June 30, 2010
Nancy Tramontana	Term ends June 30, 2010

2) To be elected to Nominating Committee:

Nancy Tramontana (Bd. Rep)	1 year term until June 30, 2010
Anne Krieg	2 year term until June 30, 2011
Jeremy Stein	2 year term until June 30, 2011

Remaining on Nominating Committee:

Lana Wallace	2 year term until June 30, 2010
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Roberts 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 146, this means there must be at least 22 members present at the May 8 meeting for the meeting to proceed.

Voting rights extend only to those who have been members for at least 60 days, which, for this year's meeting, means anyone who signed the membership book prior to March 9, 2009.

Absentee ballots are allowed, and will be available in the sanctuary and online by April 24. Absentee ballots are to be turned into Carl Tichler or Barbara Myers by May 7, 2009.

If, by a majority of those members present and voting, the Congregations so wishes, nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting with the consent of the nominated.



Come one... Come all... to the

Potluck preceding the Congregational Meeting

5:30 PM - May 8, 2009.

Religious Education Update

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

- **10th-12th Grade Our Whole Lives** group will have its last session on May 3rd
- **Junior High Youth** will not meet on the 2nd Sunday in May (it's Mother's Day) and instead they will meet on May 17th at 11:00 a.m.
- **Our last 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. current group leaders and sessions will conclude on May 17th**

On that day we plan on recognizing and thanking our Religious Education Leaders during the Children's Focus. I encourage you or your children to write notes or draw pictures of thanks and appreciation of their group leaders/advisors. If you wish to write them now, I can collect them in a basket in the house Kitchen, or bring them that day. I know they will be appreciated!

Programming Continues: At 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. on Memorial Day Weekend (through Flower Communion) I will be calling for helpers to give our religious educators a break and hopefully offer the opportunity for new folks to have a chance to interact with us in the House.

NOTE: May 24th (Memorial Day Weekend) we will be planting flowers. The Grounds team suggested all who wish may bring **YELLOW marigolds** (not orange) and **any color geraniums (a six pack/flat)**. If you wish to help by being there that day to plant with the children, or bring a trowel or flowers, please contact mary.collins.dre@gmail.com.

Our next multigenerational service will be the **Flower Communion on June 7th**. **Everyone is invited to bring a flower** (from your patch/ pot of dirt or from a store)! During the 11:00 a.m. service, our *Senior High* youth who are graduating will have "**Bridging Ceremony**" during the Children's Focus. They will "cross the bridge" from High School to the other side to meet other young adults in our community (who are invited to come at that service to greet them)!

Year-End Programming "Spirituality and the Arts" will continue through June 29th (then the Director of Religious Education and the Religious Education Committee take a much needed break).

In the past, volunteers from the community have stepped forward to organize programming in the summer. Some of the programs we have had before include: Dr. Seuss stories and UU Values, Ten Amazing People (multicultural models), Art, an on-site garden, Social Justice "In Our Hands." This year we have part of the summer covered.

July Summer Programming was taken on by the Green Team. **Mary Alice Kimball** is spearheading a program to make Empty Bowls (a hunger education as well as artistic project) **but at this Comment deadline, there will be NO August through Labor Day programming.** There is no coordinator to organize it or enough volunteers to cover these six weekends. Nursery care will be available for babies and toddlers. Parents with younger children may use the downstairs space but will be responsible for their children, and to put away any materials they may take out (and to make sure to close windows/doors/fans/air conditioner switches, too)!

I'd like to thank **Scot Fritz** for donating crocheted costume parts! And **Fern Paes** for taking on the job of the leaders' Thank You Gifts.



Just a reminder that we now take a weekly Food Offering during the Children's Focus of our Sunday service for distribution by our Social Action Committee to local soup kitchens and agencies. A list of appropriate foods appears in our Sunday Order of Service, **Dried beans and whole grain rice are especially needed.** It is easy to forget to bring your donation so when you think of it stick it in your car.

Summer Services



We are excited to report that several members or friends of our congregation have stepped forward to create and present Sunday Services this summer. There's still room for YOU to add your voice to our summer of lay-led Services. And, remember, IT'S SUMMER - a time to think out-of-the-box, explore new ideas, re-examine old ones, share art, drama, and music ... it's all up to YOU!

Please contact **Darlene Anderson-Alexander** TODAY to discuss what part YOU would like to play in creating a spiritual experience for all this Summer!

~ The Sunday Services Committee



ARTS SUNDAY
Enjoy OUR CREATIVE CONGREGATION
MAY 17th-----Sermon by Reverend Spencer:
The Artist Within
Exhibition by Adults and Children
May 17-24



Wikipedia *“an alternative conception of creativeness is that it is simply the act of making something new=E 2.*

Visual arts should be brought to the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, May 16th, from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. Take down is the 24th.

If you've not already committed so we may allocate space, it would be greatly appreciated if you would email or call Geri Boggs at artssunday@gmail.com.

Wanted

**Two Delegates to Represent Our Congregation
 At the UUA General Assembly**

Time and Place: Wednesday, June 24 to Sunday, June 28, 2009
 Salt Lake City, Utah

Interested? Contact Mary Alice Kimball

Search Committee Update

by Charley Stark

UUCD Friends and Members,

The final phase of the assessment piece of the search process is now underway. We refer to the Congregational Survey, which is now available on-line until May 24th. We have now completed our Cottage Meetings as well as the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop.

To the many who attended the small group Cottage Meetings, held in various homes as well as at the Ridge, we thank you. Special thanks go to the folks kind enough to open up their homes as hosts. The reactions the committee received were very positive. If you participated I think you feel it was worthwhile and time well spent. The committee will be analyzing the data and opinions collected and will be guided by them. After completion of the survey we will try to give you an idea of where it all came out.

Let's talk about the Congregational Survey. This is the most important piece of the puzzle. It is comprehensive and delves into many areas. Why did you first come to UUCD? Why do you continue to come? How do you take part in its life, beyond Sunday? What is your theology or philosophy? How do you see the new Minister's role in the life of the congregation? Where do you want to see the congregation go in the coming years? That and much more.

Why do we need to know these things? The short answer is because prospective new ministers will want to know them. We need to know, and the prospective minister needs to know, what kind of match we make. Is the new minister's vision of a great congregation the same as ours? Will he/she feel comfortable here? Will we feel comfortable with her/him?

I think you will find taking the survey to be challenging and fun. It is very important that we be able to report near 100% participation so that all candidates will see that we are engaged and committed to our joint future. So please take a little time now and find the link to the survey on the member's page of our website, UUDanbury.org or in the weekly email. If computer or Internet access is an issue we are providing some laptops in the Fellowship Hall. While we can make paper copies available, using the computer makes the process of quantifying the results much easier.

So please fill out the survey and if there are questions or any way we can help, don't hesitate to let us know. Thanks to all for your enthusiasm.

Here's the link to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=9kQ4A887KU284dFvJrVIOA_3d_3d

**If you have any questions for the Search Committee,
please email them to search@uudanbury.org.**

New Spring - Summer Chalice Circles

Chalice Circles are groups of up to ten people who meet regularly to build community, learn to practice shared ministry, and nurture their spiritual lives. Every Chalice Circle has a facilitator who meets with other facilitators in their own Chalice Circle. The facilitator this summer will be **Maredith Spector**. Sign up for this **8 session group** as a new or seasoned Circler. **Drop-ins welcome in May and June!**

The following dates have been tentatively scheduled at 7:30-9:30 pm, in the Cottage:

May - Wednesday, May 27th

June - Wednesday, June 17th

July - Wednesday, July 1st, 15th, and 29th

August - Wednesday, August 12th, and 26th

September - Wednesday, September 9th

For more information, or to sign up, please contact **Maredith Spector**.



Yoga is back on the Ridge!

Starting Tuesday, May 12th, at 6:00 p.m. in UUCD Fellowship Hall, Harnam Singh (Tony Zatzick) will begin teaching weekly Kundalini Yoga Class. Any and all are welcome to join the class. It will be open to both members of UUCD, and members of the community. Each class has a fee of \$15.00 and will last about one and one half hours. Some mats will be available, but if you have your own please bring it with you.

Kundalini Yoga is a sacred art and science that was brought to the west by Yogi Bhajan from India in the late Sixties. This yoga incorporates many elements, including breath, mantra, mudra (hand positions) and postures to help people quiet their minds and experience shunia (a profound inner peace). This class is an opportunity for students of all levels and styles to tune in to the divine truth that dwells within each of us.

Harnam Singh (Tony Zatzick) is a certified 3HO level one Kundalini yoga teacher who has been practicing for over ten years and teaching for the last two. His rigorous personal practice includes 31 minutes of Bound Lotus Kriya every day. This path is a pure ray of light that has helped him experience the divine in all aspects of life. It is from this place that he wishes to share this ancient wisdom with everyone.

He has recently released his first meditation CD titled "The Love and Light of Guru Ram Dass" featuring the beautiful vocals of Ardas Kaur (Anne Novak) and masterful musical/production talents of Sat Jot Singh. It is being distributed by Spirit Voyage Records. Harnam has been blessed to performed live sadhanas and workshops with Snatam Kaur, Nirinjin Kaur and Guru Singh as well as a powerful evening performance with Guru Ganesha Singh and Sat Jot at the 2008 summer solstice yogi tea café in New Mexico. Harnam is currently working on a full-length follow up CD once again featuring Ardas Kaur and Sat Jot Singh.

If you have any questions please contact **Shawn Sweeney**.

A Note from Hannah Vining

I want to invite everyone down to my new home in Dalonega, Georgia. Not all at once please, and please call to make sure someone else will not be there when you come. I have a fully furnished guest room with a queen size bed and a full bathroom. There is a screened in sun porch with a hot tub. Guests can use the kitchen, which is quite large and the porch and the hot tub. It is hot in the summer, but it's very dry and my house has central air conditioning. The area is 65% national forest with wonderful hiking. The Appalachian Trail starts nearby. The town caters to tourists and has some nice shops, a music café called the Crimson Moon which has great entertainment and decent food. There is also a UU Church. The area is drop dead gorgeous. I am only 60 miles from Atlanta. If you drive, I'll give you directions. It's a beautiful drive and takes two days. For anyone who is interested, it would be a relatively inexpensive vacation.

I am sad to leave the congregation, but am hoping that I will get many visitors.

Best Regards,

Hannah Vining

(please see contact information in the back of the Comment)

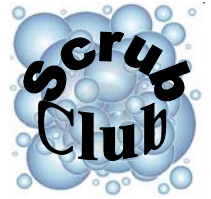
Men out to Breakfast

Men Out to Breakfast is an organization of men seeking fellowship and spirituality and meets 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 2 and 4. Meeting time: 9:00 a.m. May dates are the May 2nd and 16th. All are welcome. Please notify **Mike Searing** if you plan to attend.



Women out to Breakfast

Women out to Breakfast meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month at 9:00 a.m. for informal coffee and conversation at Elmer's Diner. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to attend, please contact **Karen Gillotti**. May dates are the 9th and 23rd.



Please consider joining the volunteers who no doubt would rather be doing most anything but cleaning, but they gather anyway because it needs to be done. Volunteers gather on the first Saturday of the "even" months 1:00 p.m. Please lend your hands Saturday, May 2nd at 9:00 a.m. The more the merrier, and the less time it takes to sparkle Fellowship Hall and the R.E. house.

Father's Day Sunday Service June 21st

The Sunday Service on June 21st will be devoted to remembering our fathers. The Sunday Services Committee is looking for people, women and men, who would like to speak for two to three minutes in remembrance of their dad during the Sunday service. Contact **Sherry** our Office Manager at sherryuucd@gmail.com or Ross Fenster if you are interested.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Lynn Taborsak, Coordinator

On Saturday, May 2nd, **Jim Wruck** will be leading Team #3 while **Lynn Taborsak** leads a workshop with **Charley Stark** and **Chris Halfar** at the UU Metro District Annual Meeting in Jersey City, N.J. All team members need to report as usual including **Bob Taborsak**, **Anne Eigen**, **Mike Toto**, **Sue Sherman**, **Eva DeFranco** and her daughter, **Jodi**, **Julie Gordon**, **Vicky Wolff** and **Heather Smith**. Spring weather has arrived in full force but many area residents still need our hot meal and hospitality.

Please plan to arrive at 1:30 pm unless you are asked to come in early to prepare the meal and side dishes. Jim will put you to work setting up the dining room, wrapping silverware, making bag lunches and setting up dessert trays. You can try out your skills as a waiter or waitress at 3:00 and serve our guests a delicious meal. We have been serving between 100 to 160 meals every day for the past four months. The economy is showing us just how great the need is in our local community. The UUCD has been providing meals for 25 years at the Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, in good times and bad times, month after month.

If you are not a soup kitchen volunteer, please consider serving as an occasional alternate when extra hands are needed or help us feed our neighbors by donating a gift card in any amount from any local grocery store in the collection plate on Sunday. Finally please continue to bring in non-perishable food items for our local food pantries. Also, you must remember that it is YOUR JOB to find a substitute from the alternate list if you are unable to volunteer on your assigned day.

This summer we will also be serving a meal on one TUESDAY in July and one TUESDAY in August. The kitchen is not air conditioned and we are standing in for a team that cannot work with summer heat because of medical issues. Let me know if you are interested in either of these opportunities.

Greetings from the Social Action Committee

by Jean Hislop, Chair

Spring is here, and more than just flowers abound! As always, there are so many ways for you to become involved in the Social Action Committee!

As some of you may know, our numbers are, again, shrinking, as people move on to various other projects and endeavors in their personal and professional lives. For that reason, we are now in need, more than ever, of your particular gifts. Whether it's attending our meetings, which of course, are always open, or pitching in in other ways, we really would like your participation and help.

By now you are all aware of the food collection we have been doing at the front of the Fellowship Hall near the altar. We are running in short supply of people who could drop those offerings off at their designated drop off, and wonder if you might be of help. Please feel free to email me if you are interested in committing your time to this.

In addition, we will be organizing our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Sunday for June soon, and will need volunteers who would like to help us to coordinate this service. If you would like to work on this with us, please let myself or **Charlie Stark** know as soon as possible. This year's focus will be on transgender issues.

The "Sow Green Community Garden" is of course, still always willing and eager for volunteers, so don't forget to get involved with this project if you can find some time, and think you may have a green thumb! Contact **Ali Ziparro** for more information.

And finally, please keep our next "Share the Plate" Sunday in mind. The recipient of this month's shared offering will be ARC's Domestic Violence Prevention Program. We are looking forward to hearing more about this necessary and important program, and to being able to contribute to the cause.

I wanted to take this opportunity also, to share some great news with you. First of all, a team of our SAC members will be traveling to the Metro New York District Conference in New Jersey on May 2nd, to lead a workshop/presentation on how our congregation became a New Sanctuary Church. This is an exciting opportunity to seek allies in the district for the New Sanctuary Movement, and also to be partners with our Congregation.

I also wanted to share the good news that the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury was recognized in April at the Danbury Hispanic Center's Annual Award Breakfast, for its continued support of the Hispanic Center. Rev. Sue accepted the award, with eight other members and friends of the congregation. It was a proud moment!

Finally, I would like to add a belated "Thank You" to **Lynn Taborsak** for her amazing work on the Immigrant Resource Fair, which was held on March 26th at the Brazilian Catholic Center. Because of Lynn's hard work, we were able to serve over 150 people with informative programs, and make a stronger relationship among our Immigrant sisters and brothers. We also had a great bunch from our congregation come and help out at the event. We hope to be able to repeat this program in the fall, as its value to our local immigrant population was truly remarkable.

Theatre Aficionados

by Keith Dupree

Mark your calendars: Thursday, May 7th, the next "Pay What You Want Night" at Theatreworks, New Milford. The evening's performance is "The Fourth Wall," an off-beat comedy by A. R. Gurney.

For more information, go to the website www.theatreworks.us, or call **Keith Dupree**.

As there are no reserved seats for this performance, we will convene at the theater when the doors open at 7:30 p.m. If you call Keith Dupree to say you plan to be there, we will be sure to look for you.

Members, Friends, Friends of Friends – All are welcome. Theatre Aficionado – You can be too!



Movies with a Message – Friday, May 15th

by Keith Dupree

How often has it been said, and to what sage should we give credit, for the aphorism, “Life is what happens to us while we are not looking.”

Again this month, two shorts will bookend our main feature. In all three, we search for that elusive something that imbues life with meaning.

7:00 p.m. - *We Were One* – Imagine your assignment for the Elevate Film Festival: take a randomly assigned topic; base your film around it; write your script; create your music; stage and film your action; and have your film ready for screening in seven days. We are privileged to present *We Were One*, written and directed for the festival by Scott Cervine. (Suggestion: Look up “Elevate Film Festival” on Google.)

7:20 p.m. – *Happenstance* – Suppose you hadn’t taken that dead-end summer job? Suppose you had thought it really was just too cold and hadn’t gone on that ski weekend? Suppose you hadn’t lost your hat in the wind? The “butterfly effect” describes how the flutter of a butterfly’s wings can affect the course of events years hence and halfway around the world. In our feature film this month, six seemingly disconnected stories illustrate the wonderful randomness of life, and how a seemingly insignificant event can change one’s life forever! (*In French, with English sub-titles, starring Audrey Tatou.*)

9:10 p.m. – *Love on Track* – Five minutes, no dialog, but asking loudly: What about the nod to a stranger you didn’t make? The smile you didn’t return? Two people sit near each other on a train, worrying and wondering about the possibilities of non-verbal communication.

(For additional information on these films, see the posting on the bulletin board near the hymnal rack.)

Our objective each month is to present films of substance in a living room setting and to provide opportunities to discuss with friends. Please join us on **Friday, May 15, at 7:00 p.m.** in the UUCD conference room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza is provided. Bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional!

Contributions gratefully accepted, all of which will go to the UUCD.



UUCD Conversations (formerly the Nonfiction Book Discussion Group)

UUCD Conversations 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 2009 is:

May 14, 2009: Green Revolution. Facilitator: Brad Greene. Source: *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution—and How It Can Renew America* by Tom Friedman, 2008, 448 pages, \$18.45. In vivid, entertaining chapters, Friedman makes it clear that the green revolution we need is like no revolution the world has seen. It will be the biggest innovation project in American history; it will be hard, not easy; and it will change everything from what you put into your car to what you see on your electric bill.

June 11, 2009: Ethical Eating. Facilitator: Sue Spencer. Source: *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* by Michael Pollan, 2008, 464 pages, \$9.35. The author examines what he calls “our national eating disorder” (the Atkins craze, the precipitous rise in obesity) in this remarkably clearheaded book. It’s a fascinating journey up and down the food chain, one that might change the way you read the label on a frozen dinner, dig into a steak or decide whether to buy organic eggs. Along the way, he is alert to his own emotions and thoughts, to see how they affect what he does and what he eats, to learn more and to explain what he knows. His approach is steeped in honesty and self-awareness. His cause is just, his thinking is clear, and his writing is compelling.



The **Knitting Ministry** is offering knitting lessons to anyone interested in learning this wonderful craft. We knit for charity as well as for our annual holiday craft show, and we meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. You'll be amazed how creative you can be in a short amount of time with just two "sticks" and some yarn.

Beginning in June, we will also be starting an evening group for people who may not be able to join us during the day. We will meet the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. in the second floor Conference Room. Knitting lessons will be offered at this time as well

So pick up some new knitting needles, or dust off the old ones, and come join us for fun, learning and creativity. Please contact **Karen Gillotti** if you are interested or for more information.

May 2009						May 2009							June 2009						
						S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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						17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
						24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
						31													
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun														
					May 1	9:00am Men's Breakfast 10:30am S. Kimball's Chalice Circle (Yth)													
						Sunday Services 12:00pm Budget Mtg (Conf) 12:00pm Coffee Connection													
7:00pm Power of Now (Conf)	10:00am Knitting Ministry (2 Conf) 10:00am Transition Team (Conf) 7:30pm Membership Comm (Conf)	7:00pm M. Kimball's Chalice Circle (Yth) 7:00pm Sunday Serv. Comm (Conf)	7:00pm B. Myers Chalice Circle (Yth) 7:00pm DRE Relations (2 Conf) 7:30pm Theatre Enth (NM)	5:30pm Pot-Luck (FH) 7:00pm Annual Meeting (FH)		9:00am Women's Breakfast 1:00pm Beltane Festival (Grounds)													
						Sunday Services													
7:00pm Power of Now (Conf)	10:00am Cluster Mtg (FH) 6:00pm Yoga (FH) 7:30pm Social Action Comm (Conf)	7:30pm J. Leff's Chalice Circle (Yth)	7:00pm RE Comm (2 Conf) 7:30pm Book Grp (Conf)	7:00pm Movies w/a Msg (Conf)		9:00am Men's Breakfast 10:30am J. Lacker's Chalice Circle (Conf)													
						Arts Sunday Sunday Services													
7:00pm Power of Now (Conf)	10:00am Knitting Ministry (2 Conf) 6:00pm Yoga (FH)	7:00pm Bd of Trustees (Conf)		Comment Deadline		9:00am Women's Breakfast													
						Sunday Services													
	6:00pm Yoga (FH)	7:30pm Chalice Circle (Yth) 7:30pm Council Mtgs (FH/Conf)	7:30pm Search Comm (Conf)			Congregational Retreat													
						Congregational Retreat Sunday Services													

Shaded Events are off-site

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

May 3, 2009: **The Interim Minister's State of the Congregation Sermon.** As a prelude to the May 3 budget hearings, and the May 8 Annual Meeting, I'll offer my interim minister's perspective on UUCD. Service led by our Interim Minister, Sue Spencer.

May 10, 2009: **Creating Peace in the Home.** Mother's Day is a good time to talk about peace in the home, and lift up efforts to end domestic violence. The Association of Religious Communities (ARC) has a very effective program of domestic violence prevention, unusual in that it treats the perpetrators of violence. This month, our first-Sunday "Share the Plate" collection will support ARC's prevention program; the sermon today expands on the presentations made May 3. Service led by our Interim Minister, Sue Spencer.

May 17, 2009: **The Artist Within.** How many of us have been told (and perhaps believed) that "You're not creative" or "You're not an artist"? On Arts Sunday, we challenge these assertions, and celebrate the creativity of everyone! The service, coordinated by Geri Boggs and Bruce Buzby with Sue Spencer preaching, is described more fully in this *Comment*.

May 24, 2009: **"How is a War Ever Won?"** How is it possible to put down your arms and come to peace with yourself, your family and community, and perhaps even your enemy? Haider Hamza is a young Iraqi journalist whose journey to speak to US citizens about the war in Iraq was profiled by Ira Glass on "This American Life." We're fortunate to have him speak to us this Sunday, through the kind offices of our own Scott Wolfman. A Fulbright and Rhodes scholar, Haider works for ABC News and Good Morning America. He was an embedded war journalist, beginning at age 16, in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

May 31, 2009: **"This is Spirituality: Waking Up!"** What does it mean to live the life of the spirit? Some imagine it's an otherworldly endeavor, but it's really about waking up to what's around us. Service led by our Interim Minister, Sue Spencer.



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