



unitarian universalist  
CONGREGATION OF DANBURY

# COMMENT

24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811 \* 203-798-1994  
Rev. Barbara Fast, Settled Minister

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JULY/AUGUST 2011

*At the heart of it..." from Rev. Barbara Fast*



Summer has started! This morning as I write, the air is mild and the sun is bright and it is a joy to *draw the breath of life*. My tomatoes have taken root and are starting to bud. They grow so well all through the night. This is a photo of one of them. I will keep you posted through the summer.

It is the end of our first congregational year together. It is that time in the life of UUCD when we take a summertime Sabbath, which is a less formal time of year. *Less formal but no less important.*

During the summer I will have a month for study, reflection and composition. During that time, I am on call for significant pastoral needs but not for day to day work. You can reach me – if you need me - by email. My cell phone number is on my office answering machine. The Caring Committee will be available and they also know how to reach me.

I will also have vacation time – I will be visiting my mother and family in Finland. Urgent pastoral emergencies will be provided by your community minister Rev. Peggy Block and/or my UU colleagues, as well as our dedicated Caring Committee folk.

This Wednesday I leave for four days to attend the UUA General Assembly in Charlotte. It is the annual gathering of congregations. It is several thousand people strong and full of events, worship, lectures and voting. I will bring back what I have learned.

I invite you into the beauty and bloom of summer with words from *Ralph Waldo Emerson's* Divinity School Address which he delivered to 6 young men who were the graduating class of 1838 at Harvard Divinity College:

*In this refulgent summer, it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life. The grass grows, the buds burst, the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers. The air is full of birds, and sweet with the breath of the pine, the balm-of-Gilead, and the new hay. Night brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade.*

*Through the transparent darkness the stars pour their almost spiritual rays. The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eyes again for the crimson dawn. The mystery of nature was never displayed more happily. The corn and the wine have been freely dealt to all creatures, and the never-broken silence with which the old bounty goes forward, has not yielded yet one word of explanation. One is constrained to respect the perfection of this world, in which our senses converse.*

*How wide; how rich; what invitation from every property it gives to every faculty....*

Sabbath time is not just a time for resting from labors. It is another way of growing, organically, like heirloom tomatoes in the night. I invite you to allow some of the *refulgence of this summer* to flow through and renew you. Thank you, thank you, thank you for this year.

In good faith and with love,  
*Barbara*

*Our Mission Statement:*

*The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury is an open religious community that welcomes a diversity of people, ideas and beliefs. We celebrate together that which is good in life, and offer comfort and care in times of need. With others, we work to create a just society and a sustainable Earth. We stand as a beacon for independent thought, and encourage lifelong spiritual and intellectual exploration.*

*Adopted by this congregation May 16, 2008*

**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](mailto:SherryUUCD@gmail.com) or dropped off at the church office.

**Deadline for the September *Comment* -  
Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>.**



## President's Comment

by Ben Roberts, President

With the coming of the solstice yesterday, summer is officially here. And that means my official start as President of UUCD is also just a few days away. As I contemplate both of these transitions, I am filled with gratitude. On a planet where so many struggle simply to survive, my wife Kim and I have the incredible privilege to be able to enjoy the summer months by slowing down, being with family, taking in the pleasures of the Connecticut and Rhode Island shore and delighting in the bounty of all the local food that is once again becoming available.

I am also grateful for the opportunity to serve this wonderful congregation over the coming year. What an honor to have been selected by you and entrusted with safeguarding the health and growth of UUCD. And it is an opportunity for me to grow personally and to connect more deeply with our wonderful community as well. I am also grateful for the intelligence, experience, caring and commitment of my fellow Board members and especially for the powerful work of outgoing President Jean Bowen. Jean has made my job far easier as a result of the changes instituted on her watch, and we are very fortunate that she will continue to offer her wisdom and insight in an *ex officio* capacity over the next twelve months.

As I mentioned in last Sunday's welcome, I see my role as part of a community of "stewards" rather than a "leader" in the traditional sense. Kim teases me because I'm always quoting Peter Block, my favorite thinker on communities and organizational development. And here I go again, from his book *Stewardship*...

*"The alternative to leadership is stewardship... Stewardship asks us to be deeply accountable for the outcomes of an institution, without acting to define purpose for others, control others, or take care of others. Stewardship can be most simply defined as giving order to the dispersion of power... [It] questions the belief that accountability and control go hand in hand. We can be accountable and give control to those closer to the work, operating from the belief that in this way the work is better served. Instead of deciding what kind of culture to create, and thus defining purpose, stewards can ask that each member of the organization decide what the place will become."*

This philosophy fits perfectly with the transition our fabulous Growth Team identified for us over the past year, from a "pastoral" to a "program" congregation. In this shift, we move from an organizational reliance on "leadership" to a mission-driven model based on "shared ministry." It promises to be an exciting journey, and I look forward to our taking it together.

Sincerely,  
Ben Roberts

# Committee News

From the *Adult Education Committee*

## 2011-12 Chalice Circles

(Fall Chalice Circles begin September 25<sup>th</sup>; registration open now through September 15<sup>th</sup>)

### What are Chalice Circles?

Chalice Circles are groups of people who build community and friendship, while deepening their own spirituality. Each group of 6-10 participants commits to meet regularly for 90-120 minutes, to share their experiences and feelings on a specific topic. The group has a trained facilitator, and follows a structure which encourages deep connections, while emphasizing respect and confidentiality. Each Chalice Circle becomes a personal community of listening and caring in the midst of our large congregation. Anyone ages 16 and older are welcome to participate.

### What are the topics for 2011-12?

For the 2011-2012 church year, we are planning three separate Chalice Circle cycles, each of which will run for approximately 6 consecutive weeks. Chalice Circle membership and facilitators may change each cycle.

Our topics will be:

- \* Fall: Living the Seven UU Principles (7 weeks)
- \* Winter: Exploring the Writings of Rev. Martin Luther King
- \* Spring or Summer (yet to be determined): Poetry

### When do Chalice Circles meet?

The fall Chalice Circle cycle will run from September 25<sup>th</sup> – November 12<sup>th</sup>. Each of the seven sessions will focus on one of the Unitarian Universalist principles. Our primary resource will be *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*, a book which contains short sermons, poetry, and meditations on the significance of each of the principles. No purchase is necessary; the readings on each principle will be distributed.

Fall Chalice Circles will be offered at these times: Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m.; Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.; Thursdays at 4:00 p.m.; and Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.

**How can I be a part of a Chalice Circle?** To register, pick the time(s) that fit your schedule, and email Sherry at [sherryuucd@gmail.com](mailto:sherryuucd@gmail.com) with your choice of times. If you are available at more than one time, please tell her. You can also call Sherry at 203-798-1994. Brochures and registration forms will be available on the table in the back of the sanctuary; if more convenient, fill one out and leave on Sherry's desk while at the Ridge. Registration is open between now and September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**More questions?** Ask any of our fall facilitators: Ross Fenster, David Parr, Meredith Spector, Claudia Volano, Barbara Myers; or talk to Rev. Barbara Fast.

From the *Buildings and Grounds Committee*

The Spring Clean Up on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> was a Superb Success! UUCD volunteers worked hand and hand to achieve a common goal in order to support Buildings and Grounds.

Thank you all who participated in the Spring Clean Up:

Gale Alexander  
John and Patrick Alvord  
Cynthia Clark  
Mary Collins  
Jon, Lisa, Jordan and Marcus Dupree  
Keith and Marie Dupree  
Brad Greene (RE bird house installation)  
Judy Lacker  
Donna Lawrence (delivered lunch and ran errands for last minute supplies)  
Elisabeth Levy and Claire  
Greg and Cathy Pings  
Ben Roberts  
Donna Roscoe  
Yvonne Ruddy-Stein and her very patient children Serena and Zachary  
Chris Schmitt  
Joe and Sue Tarshis  
Al Taylor  
Carl and Julie Tramontana  
Gary Winn



Special thanks to the Garden Committee who has helped B&G this past year in keeping the grounds beautiful.

Thank you to the following people who showed up prior to Saturday: Cheryl Edelen, Cathie Billings, Barbara Myers, Donna Roscoe, and Lisa Austin-Smith. Thanks to Jim Bannan who came a week later for another task.

### From the *Caring Committee*

To accommodate Caring Committee vacation schedules, please note that:

- Valerie Cochrane will be in charge of Caring notifications for those in need beginning July 5<sup>th</sup> – July 18<sup>th</sup> . -July 18.
- Karen Gillotti will be in charge July 19<sup>th</sup> – July 24<sup>th</sup> .

The Caring Committee does want to keep up with your needs for rides to medical appointments, help with errands, and other support services on a short term basis. So please make a note of these temporary changes for the summer.

Have a great summer!  
Joanne Wells, Chair

### From the *Events Committee*

The Events Committee will kick off the new year on September 24<sup>th</sup> with an adult evening--red wine and chocolate tasting and another gold/silver sale. Summer is a good time to look over the jewelry boxes and dresser drawers to find forgotten treasures that may be worth money to you.

Bob Doyle, our "gold guy" will be here to evaluate and pay you on the spot for the value of your treasures. He gives 60% of his profit to the congregation.

The chocolate is from DOVE and even includes cocktails. The 'wine experts' and the 'chocolate lady' will pair their goodies for some taste sensations. 'Wine expert' to be announced.

Saturday, September 24th will be here before we know it! Babysitting will be provided. Questions, call Marcia Brooker

From the *Social Action Committee*

## Soup Kitchen Corner

### July and August

**On Saturday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>**, Soup Kitchen Team #1 will serve up a hot, nutritious meal at the Dorothy Day House of Hospitality on Spring Street and celebrate Independence Day as well. Team Leader **Gary Winn** will be joined by **Donna Lawrence, John Miglietta, Chris Halfar, Matt McPartlin, Tara Keinath, Max Schmitt, Shawn Sweeney, Nancy Cullen, Joan Stapleton, Carl Dwyer** and **John and Sandy Alvord**. Thank you everyone for giving up part of your Saturday afternoon to meet a community need.

**On Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup>**, Soup Kitchen Team #2 will provide the meal under the leadership of Team Captain **Carl Tichler**. Carl will be joined by team members **Andrew Bloch, Mike Searing, Al Taylor, Karen Judd, Juan Cazorla, Ben and Kim Roberts**, and **Karen and Caroline Iannella**.

Please remember that if you are not able to volunteer on your scheduled day, you must find a substitute from the alternates list which you can access from our website. The show must go on!

Remember, you can volunteer to cook, set-up the dining room, serve the meal and help with clean-up. You can also serve as an alternate when extra hands are needed. In addition, you can help us feed our neighbors with a gift card in any amount from any local supermarket. Finally you can help eliminate hunger in our community with your donation of non-perishable food items for the food offering each Sunday.

All of us, each in our own way, are Super Stars in fight to end hunger!



# Upcoming Events



## Conversations

Conversations meets on the second Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are welcome. The group chooses current topics of interest and their sources. Questions designed to stimulate conversation are emailed to all members. If you wish to receive our announcements and questions, please email at **Bruce Buzby**. Recently published books of interest are selected to stimulate and support discussions; reading the book is not mandatory in order to participate and enjoy the gathering. Recent topics have related to Ethics, Brain Function Research, Evolution, God, Iraq, Islamic Culture, Civil Strife, History, Science and Religion, DNA Research, Women's Liberation, Military Industrial Threat, China, Nation Building, Economics, Science, Art, and so on. Upcoming Conversations:

**July 14, 2011: Illusions of Perception and Thought.** Facilitator: Doris Henderson, Source: "*The Invisible Gorilla*" by C. Chabris & D. Simons, 2010, 320 pages, \$14.47. The authors write about six everyday illusions of perception and thought, including the beliefs that: we pay attention more than we do, our memories are more detailed than they are, confident people are competent people, we know more than we actually do, and our brains have reserves of power that are easy to unlock. Through a host of studies, anecdotes, and logic, the authors debunk conventional wisdom about the workings of the mind and what "experts" really know (or don't). Presented almost as a response to Malcolm Gladwell's *blink*, the books pay special attention to "the illusion of knowledge" and the danger of basing decision-making, in areas such as investing, on short-term information; in the authors' view, careful analysis of assumed truths is preferred over quick, intuitive thinking.

**August 11, 2011: How the Brain Works.** Facilitator: Bruce Buzby. Source: "*The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement*" by David Brooks, 2011, 448 pages, \$14.85. David Brooks has written an absolutely fascinating book about how we form our emotions and character. Standing at the intersection of brain science and sociology, and writing with the wry wit of a James Thurber, he explores the unconscious mind and how it shapes the way we eat, love, live, vacation, and relate to other people. In *The Social Animal*, he makes the recent revolution in neuroscience understandable, and he applies it to those things we have the most trouble knowing how to teach: What is the best way to build true relationships? How do we instill imaginative thinking? How do we develop our moral intuitions and wisdom and character? Brooks has always been a keen observer of the way we live. Now he takes us one layer down, to why we live that way.



We continue our film series through the summer, meeting each month on the second Friday. Watch *This Week at UUCD* and the Sunday Bulletin for any changes. Also, check the bulletin board in the Sanctuary for more film information.

**Friday, July 8:** Two films that I have held for a while, waiting for the right time to show.

7:00 – 7:20: *L'Homme Sans Ombre /The Man Without a Shadow*. Is there any part of yourself that you would be willing to sacrifice for riches and fame?

7:30 - 9:10: *Thomas and the Rainbow*: Mix an orphan boy with some Irish countryside and a few dolphins for good measure – Presto! You have the basis for a remarkable adventure as Thomas struggles to find his place in the home of his compassionate adoptive mother and in the heart of his taciturn adoptive father.

**Friday, August 12:** Imagination can lead us to do silly things. It can also enable us to act nobly.

7:00 – 7:25: *Seeding Dreams*. A spirited and inventive boy gains permission to spend the night in a hospital with his seriously ill younger brother. The story of their adventures is told through a creative mix of standard filming and animation.

7:30 - 9:10: *Round Ireland with a Fridge*: “Tony Hawks is a TV and radio comedian....His first book was *Round Ireland with a Fridge*, the story of his absurd quest to hitch round the circumference of Ireland within a month...with a fridge in tow. After being serialized on BBC Radio 4, the book became a top 10 *Sunday Times* bestseller.” (Arielle Ford, writing for *Spiritual Cinema Circle*, 2011 volume 3). Tony Hawks plays himself in this screen adaptation.

**We believe that good experiences are even more fulfilling when shared with others.** To this end, our objective each month is to present films of substance in a living room setting and to provide an opportunity to discuss with friends. Please join us on **Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.** in the Conference Room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza is provided, bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional! Contributions will be gratefully accepted, all of which will go to the UUCD to encourage continuation of UUCD programs. **(For more information on these films and on our film series, check the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, look under “UUCD Events” or visit [SpiritualCinemaCircle.com](http://SpiritualCinemaCircle.com).)**



**One Service at 10:00 a.m.**

Our summer lay-led Sunday services start on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. **One 10:00 a.m. service.** We have a stellar line up of UUCD talent willing to expound their thoughts, feelings and viewpoints from our pulpit. Sound like fun? The weekly schedule is below. Toddler care provided.

**July 3, 2011** Coming Full Circle Carl Tichler  
Touching on themes of torture, human rights, language, euphemism in wartime, music and spirituality --- Carl will bring together his perspectives and new insights.

**July 10, 2011** 'BUSY'NESS' When Does it Slow Down? Marcia Brooker  
We will take a look at the pace of our lives and see if there are ways to have more time for ourselves

**July 17, 2011** Magic In A Modern World Gale Alexander  
Does magic exist? And if so, what is its place in the modern world. Come join our resident conjurer as he explores (and exhibits?) the place of magic in a world of science and extremism.

**July 24, 2011** The Benefits of Practicing Mindfulness David Parr  
To be Mindful is to pay attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally. Practicing Mindfulness can transform your life. David Parr, a clinical psychologist, will provide a brief overview of Mindfulness and it's benefits, and engage congregants in several practical and fun Mindfulness exercises.

**July 31, 2011** Love and Sacrifice Susan Shaner  
Can you have one without the other? Please join Susan as she explores these words from a universal kabbalah perspective.

**August 7, 2011**Laughter Buddha

Joe Gillotti

Laughter can be self-produced, spontaneous, stimulating and most importantly lots of fun. The health benefits of Laughter Yoga are profound. Bring your spouse, bring a friend, bring anyone who would like to experience an all-natural, low calorie pick-me-up.

**August 14, 2011**The Heart of Conflict Resolution

Eva DeFranco

Why getting to the heart of conflict can bring about peace and some strategies for peacemakers

**August 21, 2011**UUvangelism: A Moral Imperative

Shawn Sweeney

Belief in our UU principles makes it necessary, even our moral imperative to share the joy, love and opportunities our UU faith and spiritual practices offer people. This sounds like evangelism. In this sermon Shawn will discuss how we can move forward with our own way of telling the world about our faith, something we'll perhaps call UUvangelism.

**August 28, 2011**An Eyewitness Report from Palestine

Barbara Love

Barbara will speak about fulfilling her covenant to the Christian peace group, The Tree of Life, by sharing what she has seen and heard with others in the interest of a just peace.

**September 4, 2011**A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Retirement

Pat Coulston

A view of work, love and focusing. A one-way journey through life.