

# Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



May 2021

## The Meanings of Service: Service is Our Prayer

We offer service to the Fellowship as a human ecology and, within that ecology, we offer service to each other as individuals. We make a conscious choice to provide a value to another individually or as a collective. This is one meaning of service: that value which we provide to others, without charge.

This meaning derives from the Latin root of service, *serv*, meaning slave. This led to words such servant and subservient. But over time, the meaning evolved from serving as an expression of powerlessness to serving as an act of generosity.

Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, wrote: “I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”

*Serv* had another meaning in Latin, to save; thus words such preserve and conserve.

This other primary meaning of the root *serv* is just as applicable to what we do as we serve – and just as significant.

In offering service we are, in many ways, saving that which has value to us as individuals and as people who have chosen through our free will to associate with each other in fellowship, within this two-century-old tradition of Unitarianism and Universalism. We are preserving and conserving.

Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright, novelist, poet, and essayist and also a Nobel Prize for Literature awardee in 1986, wrote: “Human life has meaning only to that degree and as long as it is lived in the service of humanity.”

While I don’t agree with the “only” assertion, I do concur with Soyinka’s insight: service provides value to those who receive it; service provides meaning to those who provide it.

The reciprocity inherent in this relationship is both intimate and profound. And, to my mind and heart, this reciprocity explains why service can be experienced as a prayer, as we assert each week in our spoken aspiration. Prayer is giving and receiving, not necessarily to a higher power, although this can be a way to construe it—service is giving of one self and receiving for oneself. And it is serving and saving.



*David Marshak*

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## Progress

Stucco-plywood housing tract carved out of the chaparral. Brown Hills overlook a dry river bed. The trail of test missiles in the sky.

Highway buffered by a lemon grove, too perilous to cross on school days was our access to the corner store. Coke bottles redeemed for penny candy, and on a good week enough to swim.

Our school, an oil-rich oasis. With a pool, remnant oaks wide, green lawns nestled Spanish architecture.

Learning to duck, cover, and evacuate, the Shell Oil ammonia plant leaked and, eyes watering, we knew the drill for getting home.

*Debby Harrison*

# Religious Education

To the Beloved Community,

I believe it was L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* who said, "Kindred spirits are not so scarce as I used to think. It's splendid to find out there are so many of them in the world." When I arrived at HUUF over two years ago, at the invitation from a friend (Therese Fitzmaurice, our beloved former DRE), I could not have imagined so many kindred souls gathered in a single place. Indeed, the amount of grace, tenacity, generosity, heart and wisdom I have encountered among you since that time has left me speechless.

Like many UUs, I exited the faith of my childhood at an early age (16 in my case, when I also happened to leave my family's home and strike out haphazardly on my own). At that point, I resolved to end my affiliation with anything that bore any resemblance to organized religion. Obviously, "my people" were not to be found within such spheres. However, it's my opinion and experience that Grace often comes to us unbidden, often in the form we least expect, and carrying the very nectar and resources we need to step more fully into the work that is ours in this world.

This last year, serving as your Fellowship Engagement Coordinator - taking part in Sunday Services, RE and Committee work and sitting in on meetings for Pastoral Care and continuing to ascertain the rich history and vision of this sweet community – has been, hands down, the most rewarding and beneficent of my working life to date. It has been a joy and an honor (though those words smack of cliché) to show up and serve this congregation in what ways I could. And so, I am equally grateful and excited to begin my work this coming year – starting in July – as your newly appointed Director of Lifespan Religious Education. Building upon the rich foundation laid by my DRE predecessors, my hopes and plans for the year to come include:

- Creating more opportunities for intergenerational collaboration and communion, through the offering of quarterly youth-led services and offering more events geared towards All Ages
- Continuing the momentum and creation of our Nature-based Playscape project
- Re-booting our OWL (Our Whole Lives Sexuality) curriculum for the fall for select age groups
- Get our annual Halloween Festival up and running once more
- Bring more mindfulness, somatics (movement), and creative expression (including music and art) into our RE curriculums overall (for both children and adults alike)
- Create pathways for HUUF to become more fully integrated and partnered with like-minded organizations and groups to increase our impact and efficacy in the community overall
- Strengthen our existing connection to HSU – both students and alumni – and provide greater opportunities for these growing leaders to serve within our congregation more fully
- By Summer 2022, create a rich seasonal, day camp curriculum which working parents can take advantage of for their childcare needs, as well as serve as a vehicle to promote UU values and practices within the younger generation, and employ our teenage youth, as well

A bit about my own history and what I bring to this work:

- For the past ten years, I've worked as a group yoga instructor, community herbalist, and 1:1 holistic coach. Although it takes many forms, my work is being a conduit for healing in this world.
- Music, theatre, Art and the Written Word are about as close to the Holy as anything I've experienced in this life. (I am a graduate of Dell'Arte's 1-year Physical Theatre program, as well as a lifelong pianist, choir member and writer.)
- I've worked on-and-off inside formal classrooms, both as a paid aide and also as a volunteer. And though I do not purport to be "good with children," we seem to get along, because my own enthusiasm and maturity level seems to register at the same tone as theirs.
- I have a 9-year-old daughter, Sailor Jane, who I consider to be one of my spiritual teachers in this life, as well as a small gaggle of children under the age of 11, who share the property where I live. When they are in my home, I am "Mama Amy" to all.
- Two of my greatest spiritual mentors in this life have been my paternal grandfather – Charlie – a man who lived out his values with a warm smile and firm handshake extended to all, and who volunteered his time and talents extensively with Habitat for Humanity. And my maternal grandmother – Lois – who, as a Baptist preacher's wife, lived out her

own calling of community-building, fierce-love-offering and service by teaching Sunday School and running summer ministry programs to underserved, inner-city youth in the Bay Area. If I can show up to this life with even half the amount of heart and generosity they brought, I will consider my time here well spent.

- There is much more I wish to say, and discover and create along with you all. But I will pause here – only to reiterate: My gratitude. Thank you for providing me with such a worthy and beautiful place to offer up my gifts. To station my heart. And to add the humble work of my own spirit, to the many kindreds I am blessed to serve beside here.

Thank you for welcoming me so fully into this beloved community. For laying such a strong foundation that those of us who feel called to can do great, beautiful things here – in the year to come – and the ones beyond.

Yours in grace and gratitude,

*Amy Day, Fellowship Engagement Coordinator*

## Soul Matters

Our monthly open Soul Matters group continues to meet through the month of June. As we've returned to the Orange tier here in Humboldt County, we are masking up and gathering at HUUF, in-person once more to explore these themes in intimate and heartfelt conversation. On Thursday, **May 13**, at 10 a.m., we'll meet outdoors, if weather allows, where we will examine what it means to be "A People of Story," facilitated by David Marshak. On Thursday, **June 10**, at 10 a.m., we'll explore the theme of "Play," facilitated by Amy Day.

If you'd like to know more, or receive these rich packets beforehand to peruse at your leisure, contact Bridgette at 822-3793 or at [office@huuf.org](mailto:office@huuf.org).



*Amy Day*

## Two bird walks remaining

Hard to believe, but we're approaching the middle of the bird breeding season in Humboldt County. We will have two more bird walks, one on **May 7**, and our last one on **June 11**, so please sign up if you're interested.

Some of the surprises we've turned up during our surveys have not been birds, but early flowering shrubs. We've noticed both oso berry and twin berry pushing up through the thicket of largely native blackberries. Oso berry is one of those unusual plants that have either male or female flowers on separate plants; most plants have bisexual flowers. Since you need male and female plants to produce the red berries that birds love, we were happy to find we have both on our grounds. We also spied a green and rust-colored Allen's hummingbird guarding "his" patch of twinberry.

If you'd like to join the next hunt for the gems hidden in plain sight in our landscape, we'll meet at HUUF on **May 7** at 8:30 am; email me at [polkaqueen@gmail.com](mailto:polkaqueen@gmail.com) to reserve a spot. We are observing Covid restrictions and limiting our group to six people. Bring binoculars, a mask and sturdy shoes for wet, soggy and uneven ground.

## Poeple

*Valerie Gizinski*

Congratulations to HUUF member, **Andrea Pickart**, for her recognition in the March 28 Times Standard for her significant contribution with the ecological restoration projects for the Lamphere, Ma-le'l Dunes becoming recognized as a National Natural Landmark.

On January 19, 2021 the Lamphere, Ma-le'l Dunes were recognized as a National Natural Landmark. For many decades this area, which is within the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge and Ma-le'l Dunes Cooperative Management Area has been managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. According to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service project leader for the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge Cashell Villa, "Andrea has been a driving force with all the restoration work – such a dedicated, hardworking employee. It is amazing, just incredible to be recognized." The National Park Service, which administers the landmark process added: "Andrea has been working to conserve, restore and protect this site for over 30 years and she deserves a large amount of credit for this project." Bravo Andrea. We are very proud of you!

On April 8, our HUUF Grounds co-leader, **Karen Underwood** was guest speaker with the Humboldt Trail Council for the California Retired Teachers Association Division 27 "Zoom Spring Party." Judy Rishel, our Memorial Garden guardian and RE children's craft creator extraordinaire attended Karen's presentation. (April 13 Times Standard).

*Kate McClain*

## Sunday Services

### **Sunday, May 2 – 11 a.m. – The Queen of Months Transforms – The Rev. Jamal Tharp**

Every human has the absolute, inherent right to reach out, without holding back, toward that which one cares about more than anything. Whether a person describes the recipient as God, Goddess, Allah, the Great Mystery, a profound sense of indestructible love, or a dream of a kinder world, it is in the act of offering one's heart, in sharing one's experiences and life stories with others that something in us is transformed. The Queen of Months, Ramadan invites humanity to go beyond limited thinking to imagine humanity's transformation to wholeness.

### **Sunday, May 9 – 11 a.m. – Mother's Day of Peace – Lezley Troxell and Debi Cooper**

When Julia Ward Howe urged women across the world to join her cause of peace-building she had no idea her cries to, "Disarm!" would eventually lead to a day for celebrating Mothers worldwide. This Mother's Day join Lezley and Debi as they honor mothers and non-mothers alike, explore what it means to be a nurturer, and learn why Black Mamas Matter.

### **Sunday May 16 – 11 a.m. – Milestones on a Spiritual Journey – Berti Welty**

While a few Unitarian Universalists were raised as UUs, most have found their way to this non-creedal spiritual congregation from various religious or secular backgrounds. Today a few members will share personal stories of childhood experiences and how and why they became Unitarian Universalists. Emphasis will be placed on moments of transition in perspective and understanding. Unitarian Universalists not only come from varied backgrounds, their current beliefs widely vary. That is why atheists, Christians, Buddhists, Pagans, Muslim, agnostics, etc., are all welcome and embraced.

### **Sunday, May 23 – 11 a.m. – May the muse be with you – Pat McCutcheon**

The Fellowship's Friday Poets have met since National Poetry Month 2020 to talk about others' poems and to share their own. Now with 12 participants, they have grown as poets and as friends and have overcome some of the Covid blues by writing together. Their words invite us to not only embrace life, love and beauty, but also to explore our personal histories. This past year, to quote Amanda Gorman, "even as we grieved we grew."

### **Sunday, May 30 – 11 a.m. – Ministry History and Mystery – Amy Day and Bonnie MacGregor**

HUUF has a rich history of lay leadership. Before there was a person in the official seat of "minister," it was a task taken on by the collective, and this has happened time and again through the years. Everything from pastoral care to managing our resources to proclaiming wisdom at the pulpit, we have held those spaces with what gifts we have to give.

As we tentatively exit the isolation of Covid, and we eagerly await the coming of the Rev Farriday, we sit inside the question: What is our ministry in this time? Together, we'll mine stories of the past for insight and inspiration and craft a vision of what can be when not just one person steps into the powerful work of ministry, but many.



## New Religious Education leadership role

In February, the Board hired Amy Day to serve as our Director of Religious Education for 2021-22. After further consultation with Amy and exploration of how this role has evolved in other UU congregations, the Board chose to reinvent this role, expanding its reach to become the Director of Lifespan Religious Education. Amy inspired the Board to explore this innovation, and she has graciously accepted this new appointment.

With this inclusion of adult Fellowship members with youth and children, Amy will lead us in developing more intergenerational programs and opportunities for families, youth, and elders to connect, learn, and share meaningful experiences together that ground us more in our UU values. Examples of possible activities include all-ages song circles, connections between the Grounds Committee and the Playscape Committee, and youth-led Sunday morning services.

*David Marshak*

# Cooperative Decision Making workshop

“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.” – Arundhati Roy

One of the ways we bolster our efficacy and impact in the larger world is partnering with like-minded organizations in our community. We are happy to announce the creation of a collaborative workshop from members of leadership at HUUF and at Cooperation Humboldt. The workshop, which will take place in person on HUUF grounds, is the result of an ongoing conversation between our two communities, and a way to address some of the issues we face, both collectively and individually. From a UU perspective, as illustrated in the recent publication, *Widening the Circle of Concern*, Unitarian Universalism at large is deeply concerned with some of the following issues nationwide:

- Governance: When we talk about governance, we are talking about power. When we talk about power combined with prejudice, we are talking about oppression.
- Congregations and Communities: Many of our congregation’s inability to address issues of inclusion, equity, and diversity, contributes to dwindling membership and participation.
- Hospitality and Inclusion: Unitarian Universalists continue to repel many of the people who would otherwise provide the resources to fuel our continued growth.
- Living Our Values in the World: The work of becoming more equitable, inclusive, and diverse within our congregations is justice work.

Cooperation Humboldt has long been a pioneer in the field of non-hierarchical, collaborative leadership, and empowering their members to take ever-increasing roles of authority, autonomy and shared responsibility when spreading the mission, message and service of their organization’s values into the larger community.

Together, we have crafted a half-day workshop aimed at helping our organization and others become more fully equipped to address these concerns and help us thrive in coming times.

“Living Into Our Values: Cooperative Decision Making to Change the World & Ourselves” will take place on Saturday, May 22, 10-3 on HUUF grounds and will focus on:

- Ways to effectively share power and responsibility within groups
- Inviting & Empowering leadership within our congregation and the communities we serve
- Moving from an outmoded, hierarchical power structure to one of collaboration and cooperation
- Creating pathways for direct engagement and involvement based upon the gifts and abilities present within your community
- Forms of dynamic and inclusive governance
- Successfully addressing and uprooting hidden forms of white supremacist and patriarchal values embedded in our systems
- Fostering an atmosphere where a multiplicity of voices and viewpoints can truly be heard

This workshop will be of particular use and interest to:

- Tired and overworked committee members or chairs who would like to develop better systems of shared responsibility and learn ways to attract new leadership to the work that you do
- Board members (past or present) who would like to learn more equitable and inclusive forms of governance
- Those who are deeply invested in the health and future of HUUF, and seeing our systems evolve for greater sustainability and impact

Admission will be on a donation-based sliding scale, and no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

If you or anyone you know is interested in learning new ways to embody the values of inclusivity and our systems of interdependence in our social systems and beyond, we invite you to this time of deep, engaging exploration and learning. For more info, contact Fellowship Engagement Coordinator, Amy Day at [comm@huuf.org](mailto:comm@huuf.org).



## “Nature Speaks” workshop

As the weather continues to improve, vaccination levels continue to rise, and our sense of hope and faith for the future begin to mount once again, we are happy to see the return of in-person events at HUUF.

Please join spiritual teacher Heather O’Connell for the upcoming workshop, “Nature Speaks,” on Saturday, **May 15**, from 2:30-4:30 p.m. on the Fellowship grounds. The suggested donation is \$25. Space is limited, so an RSVP is required.

When we take time to pause from our ordinary life, quiet ourselves and allow our curious hearts to be our eyes and ears, we may find ourselves in a new and mysterious territory where the plants, animals, trees, and, elements become our stewards and guides. In this state, we learn directly from the source how to deepen our connection and work in conscious partnership with Nature’s many treasures towards common goals.

The land, nature and elements are conscious; they invite experiences and circumstances that seek to guide us towards balance and enhance our understanding of interconnectedness. We don’t have to live in the wilderness to access their wisdom and healing. Their power and intelligence are all around and within us; it’s always accessible and each of us has an inherent capability to speak directly with Nature.

In this engaging and highly experiential circle, participants can expect to experience a series of drum and/or rattle journeys to establish a direct connection with and receive guidance and healing directly from the land, trees, plants, animals, and elements themselves for connection and enhanced well-being.

RSVP to [heather@hearthoftheheart.org](mailto:heather@hearthoftheheart.org) or text your name and email address to 397-0018. Details including what to bring with you and how to submit a donation will be sent via email a few days before we gather.

COVID 19 Protocols & Agreements: All participants of this circle agree to wear a face mask and observe at least 6 feet distance upon arrival and throughout our time together. If you’ve tested positive or have been exposed to someone who has COVID within the last 30 days, or are feeling unwell, please stay home and join us in spirit.

Heather O’Connell is a Spiritual Teacher and Practitioner who resides in the Coastal Redwoods of Northern California. She’s been practicing and teaching Cross-Cultural Healing, Plant Spirit Wisdom, Spiritual Land Stewardship, and animistic approaches to being in relationship and living well for over 10 years. She’s known for her warm, integrative, and experiential style of working with others. You can find out more about her and her work at: [https://](https://hearthoftheheart.org)

[hearthoftheheart.org](https://hearthoftheheart.org)



*Amy Day*

## Caring Circle

Do you have a gift for caring? Are you typically the one who’s there in the moment of need, armed with a casserole, a card, a well-timed phone call, or a helping hand to lend? Have you felt yourself wanting to “give more” during the past year, but are unsure how or where to begin?

Companioning one another spiritually is one of the most important ministries of a faith community. It’s often referred to as “Pastoral Care,” which might imply that the Pastor or Minister should do all of the care. But ministry in congregations is meant to be shared between ordained and lay members.

The Caring Circle is an important part of HUUF’s lay ministry. A group of heart-centered volunteers who meet regularly to attend to the physical and emotional needs of our congregation, they serve a vital role. But oftentimes, we hold back from stepping into this work, because we feel ill equipped to meet the depth or breadth of needs that we see. Toward that end, we are putting together a study cohort for those who would like more training and support in how to offer Lay Pastoral Care during these times.

Together, we shall move through the course offered by the UU Institute: Spiritual Care Training for Congregational Leaders: Discernment. If you would like to know more about this group and the curriculum and how to become a more proactive member of the caring community here at HUUF, please contact Nancy Engel at 839-5789 or

[akindsoul@ymail.com](mailto:akindsoul@ymail.com).

## Climate Action Campaign news

We are in a climate emergency. CO<sub>2</sub> levels are beyond the 350 ppm (parts per million) considered acceptable and are now at 440 ppm. It's imperative we do what we can now as individuals, families, as a congregation, as residents of planet earth so we leave something of this good green earth for our children, grandchildren, great grands, and 7 generations hence. A carbon tax is widely said to be the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions. Write to Rep. Huffman to ask for his support of H.R. 2307, the Energy Innovation Act. This act has been reintroduced and will create a progressive and quickly increasing carbon tax that will be distributed back to American households. For more info see <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/write-your-representative/#/74/>.

CAC is a co-sponsor with 350 Humboldt of a presentation by Alderon Laird on Monday, **June 7**, entitled, "Humboldt Bay, Wigi on the Threshold of Change." In the last decade, Alderon Laird has specialized in the history of California's coastal water, sea rise vulnerability assessments, and adaptation planning on Humboldt Bay. This presentation will cover when sea levels will reach 1, 2, 3 and more feet, where sea level rise impacts are likely to occur, what land uses, developments and resources will be adversely affected, and who is responsible for these assets at risk and responding to sea level rise. The tides will continue to rise; all we can do is adapt. More info to follow.

The California State Legislature has had a recent increase in interest in plastic pollution and waste reduction related issues. After last year's SB 54/AB 1080 (CA Circular Economy and Plastic Pollution Reduction Act) narrowly failed to pass, the Legislature has introduced a variety of bills to handle individual parts of the problem. For more info about these individual bills, see the website for Californians Against Waste at <https://www.cawrecycles.org/legislation>.

Results from our online climate action survey have been tabulated. Thank you to the 88 people who responded online. Thanks to Bridgette Garuti and Margy Emerson, a further 140 paper surveys have been mailed to those in the congregation who were not able to complete the online survey. If you are one of them, please complete and return your mail-in survey to HUUF by May 1. Note that return postage is provided (thank you, Cena Marino).

Here's a sample of the responses received to one question on the climate action survey - What's one new action you or your household plan to do for Earth month in April?

From the 88 responses, here are six selected actions:

- Plant or expand a garden; fruit trees; native plants; or perennial berries
- Eat more vegetarian; or one vegetarian or vegan meal a week; or 40% vegan
- Be aware of excess packaging; minimize plastic packaging purchases in buying decisions
- Hang blackout curtains for heat retention
- Turn down water heater temperature
- Reduce food waste, meat consumption, personal possessions and donate latter for reuse

From Pat Carr: Humboldt is California's most dangerous county for pedestrians. None of us should be stuck on the couch because we're afraid for our safety, but we shouldn't be stuck having to drive a CO<sub>2</sub>-belching vehicle either. The safer our streets, the more people will bike or walk to work or the store, cutting climate emissions. (Driving is Humboldt's biggest emissions source.)

Local governments are preparing an update of the county's Regional Transportation Plan. Early indications are the update will build on momentum to do some good things: reduce miles driven, make roads safer and less stressful to drive. To get involved in this process, contact the County Association of Governments, which is leading the update, or transportation activists at the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities.

Thank you everyone for your good efforts on behalf of planet earth. Keep it going.

*Sue Lee Mossman*

## HUUF game, puzzle, and book exchange to end Mid-May

Bookstores and libraries are now open, and so we will end donations by **April 30**, and the exchange tables will be taken down in mid-May. A maximum of 3 books/games/ puzzles may be brought. We would love to see the tables emptied of books and puzzles by mid-May, so please stop by before they are gone.



# Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

P.O. Box 506  
Bayside, CA 95524

24 Fellowship Way, Bayside (off Jacoby Creek Road)

(707) 822-3793 <http://huuf.org/>

e-mail: [office@huuf.org](mailto:office@huuf.org)

**Administrator:** Bridgette Garuti

Mon. - Thurs. noon - 3 p.m. [office@huuf.org](mailto:office@huuf.org)

**Family Religious Education/Fellowship Engagement**

**Coordinator:** Amy Day [comm@huuf.org](mailto:comm@huuf.org)

**Teen program director/Tech Support:**

Scarlett Trippsmith

Tues. & Thurs. 3-6 p.m. [it@huuf.org](mailto:it@huuf.org)

**Newsletter Editor:** Stephen Sottong

[newsletter@huuf.org](mailto:newsletter@huuf.org)

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## All Fellowship Summer Retreat

We have tentatively reserved the Mattole Camp and Retreat center on **July 30-August 1** for our annual Fellowship retreat, which we missed last year due to Covid. We plan to have at least a limited size retreat. Family pods will not be mixed in cabin assignments. The dining will be spread out with canopies and tables on the deck. Even though we will be vaccinated, we will be practicing the Covid protocols that are appropriate at that time.

Our first planning meeting will be on Zoom, following the service on **May 16**. Please join the meeting with your ideas, questions, concerns, etc. Use the link for the Sunday Service. Let's have a post-Covid HUUF retreat.

*Berti Welty*

### CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads are 10¢ per word. Send your check to the HUUF office and email the text of your ad to [newsletter@huuf.org](mailto:newsletter@huuf.org).

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Linda Vinson is available for house/pet sitting starting  
[July.linvinson@yahoo.com](mailto:July.linvinson@yahoo.com). 808-987-7323

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Raspberry Shortcake plants for sale, one gallon \$7.50, two gallon \$10.00  
three gallon \$15. No staking needed [jfwelch22@gmail.com](mailto:jfwelch22@gmail.com)

## Deadline information

Deadline for the **June** issue of the newsletter is Thursday, **May 20 at 5 p.m.** Send committee reports, announcements and articles related to HUUF (email only) to [newsletter@huuf.org](mailto:newsletter@huuf.org).

Many file formats are acceptable, but .doc, .docx, .rtf and text are preferred, and .pdf and .pages cannot be used. Late submissions are not accepted without prior approval. Full guidelines at:

<https://tinyurl.com/HUUFNewsGuide>

*Stephen Sottong, editor*