

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



The Tower of Value

June 2020

I awoke this morning with a relieved back. An ache in my lower right side, that I had been experiencing for the last few days, had subsided. The smile on my face was obvious as I headed to the coffee maker. As I sipped my morning coffee, I remembered that today is the birthday of one of my heroes, El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, aka Malcolm X. Among many worthy things, Malcolm said that; “This is a time for martyrs now and if I am going to be a martyr, then let it be in the name of brotherhood.” Thus, wrote Malcolm and what he said has remained a constant reminder and a soothing salve for me as I sit, my back better, my head and heart not as much. I am in grief. I am grieving a communal grief, an ancestral grief, a family grief, an American cultural grief, a racial grief and a personal grief. Today, I run with Ahmaud.

Ahmaud Arbury was murdered while jogging. Ahmaud Arbery died from a gunshot, while unarmed and wearing short pants and a t-shirt, in broad daylight. Ahmaud’s roots can be traced back some 200 years to the salt marshes of coastal Georgia. His family is one of the oldest in Georgia and in the country for that matter. I am amazed how records and DNA tracing can reveal our stories, reminding us that we are not in fact, self-made. Armaud’s family is descended from the Georgia Sea Islands- from Geechee ancestors. Geechee is a word etymologists tell us comes from the Kissi (pronounced Geezee) ethnic group of what is today known as coastal Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. His ancestors fought for the United States in the War of 1812, as did many African Americans, despite the alienation of their “inalienable” rights granted by our nation’s founding documents. Following the Civil War, Ahmaud’s ancestors bought land, paid their taxes and fought off terror and attempts to steal their land. They lived by fishing, hunting, crabbing and farming for over a century before the first titans of industry showed up to poison their water with chemical plants, and before snowbirds turned it into an island playground of the rich and retired.

Ahmaud, you see, died from a virus much older than the one plaguing our nation and our world. Covid-19 has exposed a virus that has been an ever-present element of our nation’s DNA. It is a virus of white supremacy. This virus justifies the hierarchical ranking of human life. Our country has, from its inception, endorsed an idea that some folks – Africans, indigenous North Americans, Latinx, and others, like poor white folks, the old and frail, the disabled and the sick – are deemed of lesser value. This tower of value is surrounded by a moat whose waters are infested with crocodiles that guard access to it.

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People

Jo Weisgerber is recovering from injuries received from when a ladder slipped out from under her. She had surgery to the bone around her left eye in Redding and should be home by when you read this.

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The tower has convinced the crocodiles that they are better than those identified as “the other.” The tower also reminds them to be heavily armed just in case.

Our tower of value dwellers say a person receiving SNAP assistance and Section 8 housing vouchers is of lesser value. Our tower of value dwellers espouse a commitment to a government designed to not help people in need of help. Those who sit atop the tower, our government leaders, have universal health care and need no nutrition assistance. Their leader, our President, is a walking billboard for the white supremacy virus.

This virus is not new to people of color, even as most white Americans have denied it. We are a country that is divided not only between the haves and the have-nots, but also between those deemed worthy of life itself and those deserving of death. Our tower of value is so tall and impervious that it’s clarion caller can justify twenty thousand lies, naked nepotism, visual and verbal contempt for any form of disagreement, obvious cronyism, and can give a white-power fist salute on a daily basis to a deafening media silence.

The details of Ahmaud’s murder are important and demand immediate justice. Yet, I believe, they are only secondary to the call for the destruction of the old and the building of a new tower. A tower of value where the words of Malcolm X resound like a morning call from a minaret in Mecca, loud, beautiful and full of meaning for all listeners, “This is a time for martyrs now and if I am going to be a martyr then let it be in the name of Brotherhood.” (Or siblinghood I might add, with a nod and a prayer.) I’m still there, believing in those words. I’m still here keeping a watchful eye on the tower, committed to tearing it down brick by brick, and to building a new tower of value where know that, as Dr. Cornel West reminds us, “justice is what love looks like in public.” Can you see it?

Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson

Climate Action Campaign news

CAC members hope you’re weathering this Covid-19 climate reasonably well, and are staying in good spirits. Thanks everyone for keeping up your individual and collective climate actions while sheltering in place.

On Tuesday, June 2 at 7 p.m., CAC and 350 Humboldt are co-sponsoring a Zoom presentation by Professor Sarah Ray, HSU Environmental Studies professor and author of, *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet*. Professor Ray will address ways to handle our anxieties and stresses about climate change so that we don’t become demoralized, and can keep making positive change. She’ll answer questions afterward. Look for more details on this in another part of this newsletter from Pat Carr.

On Wednesday, June 3, from 10:30-11:30 a.m., CAC member, John Schaefer, will provide information on Low Cost Battery Storage for Emergencies on the HUUF Zoom. Look for an email coming soon from Bridgette and/or David Marshak with the link to this Zoom meeting.



Sue Lee Mossman

Puzzle and book exchanges

The Puzzle and Book Exchanges are now up and running in front of HUUF’s main entrance. During a weekly HUUF Monday Zoom session called “Conversations about Life During Shelter in Place,” facilitated by Terry Uyeki, the idea for the exchanges was born from participants lamenting that they were out of books to read and puzzles to do at their homes.

The Puzzle and Book Exchanges work like this: In the bins set up on a folding table outside of HUUF, people can leave a book(s) or puzzle(s) and take a book(s) or puzzle(s). You do not have to leave something to receive something; however, people who leave items should know that they will not receive the item back and people who take items can either bring the item(s) back to the bins when they are done or pass them on to someone else who will enjoy them. Please note: Only leave books or gently used magazines that you think the majority of people will enjoy reading (no textbooks or technical manuals.) Please feel free to leave gently used games, children’s and young adult books also, as well as easier puzzles for young children. Also note, because of COVID-19, please leave a note on your drop-off items with the date you left them in the bins. There are pens and Post-It notes on the Puzzle and Book Exchange table so that you may easily do this. Thank you and have fun.

Allison Bronkall

Religious Education

Hello everyone, I'm Suzanne Kimmel your new Director of Religious Education. I've enjoyed meeting some of you through Sunday services and committee work. I look forward to meeting more of you over the next few weeks. I am eager to learn about your passions, concerns, joys and struggles as we navigate this time of Covid-19 together. By the time this newsletter reaches your inbox, I will already have had the opportunity to talk with many of our RE families. From these conversations, I hope to learn what support is needed in this community. It's a time of challenges: economic, emotional, spiritual. We're in a time of crossing thresholds, a liminal space for discerning what worked in the past, what works now, and what could be better in the future.

I want to thank Therese and acknowledge her good work with the RE community for the past three years. Her thoughtfulness and compassion can be found throughout the RE program, including the Fourth Sunday activity of families cooking for the night shelter, and her promotion of OWL curriculum across the ages. I appreciate her time with you all. I feel lucky to have a smooth ongoing hand-off with her.

I am fairly new to Humboldt county. I moved here last August to be with my sweetheart, now my husband, Rabbi Bob Rottenberg. We live in Arcata, which is familiar to me because my older daughter, Caledonia, graduated from Humboldt State in 2013. She now lives in Seattle with her husband and cat. My younger daughter, Ella, lives in Brooklyn, although due to Covid-19, she is temporarily at my previous home in Davis with my son, Benjamin. I graduated last week from Starr King School for the Ministry with a Master of Divinity. While I was in seminary, I worked for two years as a DRE at a small fellowship in the Bay Area. I am currently the adult chaplain and adult advisor for the Young Religious Unitarian Universalists of the Pacific (YRUUP). I strongly believe that religious education is a lifelong journey. I'm happy for the opportunity to utilize my experience and skills to collaboratively create a supportive, enriching RE program across the lifespan.

Personally, I've been riding a roller coaster of emotions since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. I feel grief, gratitude, worry, frustration, thankfulness, anxiety and bits of joy, sometimes all in one day! I turn to my UU faith for grounding and solace. I'm glad to be with you now, so that we can continue to explore our faith and build community together in these unprecedented times.

Suzanne Kimmel

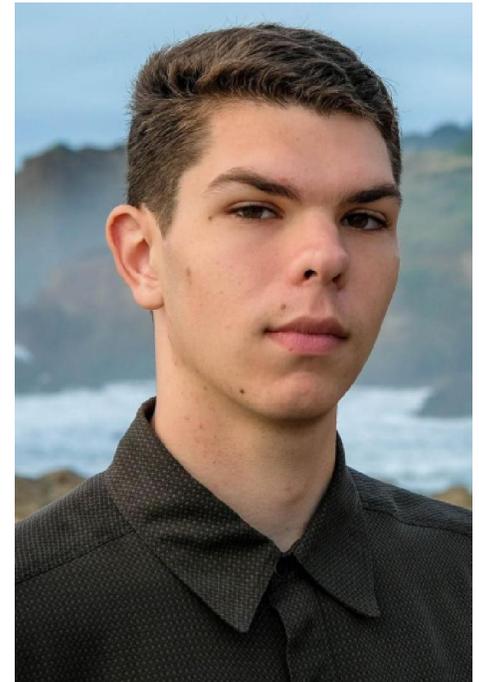


Chill out from climate anxiety

Sarah Ray, HSU Environmental Studies professor and author of *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet*, will give a Zoom presentation on Tuesday, June 2, at 7 p.m. This talk is produced by 350 Humboldt and co-sponsored by HUUF's Climate Action Campaign. Sarah will describe ways to handle our feelings as we hear daily about the dangers of climate change. If we are to make a positive difference, we must not become overwhelmed by anxiety and fear. She will be available to answer questions. Register in advance at: <https://www.facebook.com/350humboldt>.

Climate activist Bill McKibben said of *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety*: "It would be foolish not to freak out over climate change. But it would be sad if that despair kept you from working hard on this crisis. This book has some wise strategies for finding a useful balance."

Pat Carr



Honoring HUUF High School Graduates

Ian Shermer attended Six Rivers Charter High School on the Arcata High Campus taking college prep, honors, and advanced placement classes and playing JV and Varsity baseball, cross country, and wrestling. He has played basketball on Six Rivers’ team for the past four years and is the captain this year. He has been a first violin in the Armack orchestra all four years and is the Co-Concert Master this year. He has been an active UU teen in regular teen cons in the Bay Area, acting as participant, cook, and small group leader. He is a kind and thoughtful brother and son and looks forward to becoming a family nurse practitioner starting next year at Humboldt State with plans to transfer to Sonoma State.

Fiona Seibert also attended Six Rivers Charter High School and graduates this year as the Valedictorian. During high school she has taken rigorous coursework at Six Rivers and Arcata High including AP and Honors classes while also working and writing for Redheaded Blackbelt. She has participated in a variety of activities including music, theatre, SRCHS basketball, and cross country as well as taking on multiple leadership roles such as President of student council, Editor-in-Chief of the yearbook, Lead Set Designer for multiple productions, and Co-Concertmaster of ArMack. She is thankful to the UU community who have been there through all of life’s challenges and helped her grow to be the capable person she is today. She will be attending Williams College in Massachusetts and is planning to major in molecular biology or biochemistry.

Jacob Alston is graduating as salutatorian from Eureka Senior High after completing rigorous studies which included AP courses and the Yurok language. During high school, Jacob enjoyed playing violin solo and with the EHS orchestra, playing varsity soccer all four years, and participating in the YEAH club (Youth Educating Against Homophobia). He hosted several Rotary exchange students and spent three weeks in the Netherlands as part of the Rotary Youth Summer Exchange program. Jacob grew up in HUUF from first attending in his mother’s arms during services, to participating in the RE program through the years, and traveling to YRUUP CONS in the Bay Area. In the fall, he will attend CSU Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo where he intends to study mathematics and science.

Rocks and plans for the Cairn

Hopefully you know about the cairn we are planning, in memory of former HUUF member Marilyn Walker, but did you know that it is to be a permanent fixture in our garden? And did you know that the Cairn Committee members are all elderly women, who could use a little help hauling big rocks out of the river and around our grounds? You can bring yours to the “cairn rock” pile, behind the CARE building.



We would also welcome help with planning, ground prep and construction.

For more information, contact me at 826-0719 or bertbtaylor@gmail.com.

Services

Sunday, May 31 – 11 a.m. – Music Day 2020

This service for all ages will celebrate music and all that it offers us, both in times of struggle and in times of joy. It will be a mixture of pre-recorded performances made by HUUF choir members in May, plus live music (hymns and other sing-along opportunities for attendees), and other special music-related offerings. Richard Kossow will lead a musical meditation, Thea Gast and Kaelyn Rocheleau will present readings, and Eve Anderson will share her photographs in a musical montage. There will also be a short section toward the beginning of the service featuring children's songs.

Sunday, June 7 – 11 a.m. – Transitions – Suzanne Kimmell

Life transitions are opportunities to remember what it is to be human and in community. Religious Education Director Suzanne Kimmell and other Fellowship members will celebrate this year's graduates of all ages within the HUUF community. We will hear stories of struggles, hopes and dreams as we mark this important milestone. We will acknowledge the transitions from preschool to the receiving of a graduate degree and all the stages in-between.



Sunday June 14 – 11 a.m. – Ways We Nourish Ourselves – Berti Welty.

This service will explore the various ways that different members of the Fellowship have been nourishing themselves while sheltering in-place. These range from taking advantage of our fortunate access to the natural world, to various meditation practices, as well as music, videos, and comedy. Images of the natural world will likely be included, as will a virtual tour of the HUUF garden installation project.

Saturday, June 20 – 1-2:30 p.m. – Summer Solstice Ritual – Lucera Love

This ceremony, via Zoom, will celebrate of the longest day of the year, and it will be a time to share hearts, songs, and/or poetry. Prepare you space with a candle to represent the fire of the sun as well as paper and a pen.

Sunday, June 21 – 11 a.m. – Color Him Father – The Rev. Anthony Johnson

In celebration of Father's Day, Rev. Anthony and Fellowship members will use songs, words and stories to delve into what it means to be a father. This exploration will also feature a panel of HUUF dads.

Sunday, June 28 – 10 a.m. – General Assembly Sunday Service

This is the largest annual gathering of UUs joining in worship and will be our Sunday service with a Zoom gathering after.

UUA Virtual General Assembly



From June 24-28 you can observe Unitarian Universalism at a national level. Live streaming of the following events is available to all, free of charge (Pacific times).

- Service of the Living Tradition – Thursday, June 25 at 3 p.m. This service honors ministerial transitions. Our very own Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson, will be 'walking' as a newly fellowshipped minister. Jamal Tharp will be 'walking', having received final fellowshiping.
- Synergy Bridging Worship – Friday, June 26 at 3 p.m. This service is a joyful rite of passage for youth transitioning into adulthood.
- Sunday Morning Worship – 10 a.m. This is the largest annual gathering of UUs joining in worship and will be the Sunday service for HUUF, with a HUUF zoom gathering either before or after.

For those wishing the full experience with the Saturday evening Ware lecture, a multitude of workshops, mini assemblies, discussions, debates, informal gatherings, and the UUA annual business meeting, registration is \$150. Registrants will be able to participate live via the webinar experience. Detailed information is available at www.uua.org/ga. If you wish to serve as a HUUF delegate to GA, contact me at bertijo@humboldt1.com.

Berti Welty, HUUF Co-President

Financial status amidst COVID 19

In addition to dealing with keeping our members safe and engaged during this Covid 19 pandemic, your Fellowship Board has been responding to the harsh economic consequences to our society at large, and to the Fellowship specifically. HUUF entered this period with a solid financial footing and should be able to weather the economic fallout reasonably well, with your help.

Since shelter-in-place began, Fellowship income from building rentals and anticipated fundraisers has been nonexistent. Sunday collections and payments on pledges have suffered. As we go forward, we understand that many of our members' personal financial situations have changed dramatically. People have lost their jobs. Elders relying on income from investments are suffering; hence, we must be proactive.

The Board's Executive Committee recently met to discuss this. We did not discuss line-by-line budget items but rather priorities and approaches. We favor forward thinking – e.g., utilizing our healthy financial status to pay staff to reach out and engage our members with robust programming. However, we also decided to immediately freeze all but essential spending, even if the money had already been set aside, such as for the Playscape and completing the sidewalks in the garden.

Our main focus will be to continue paying professional staff to not only let us tread water, but to thrive. Since 72% of the current Fellowship budget is for personnel, the Board applied for, and received, one of the US Treasury's Paycheck Protection Programs (PPP) forgivable loans for \$28,800. This will cover two and a half months of payroll expenses. Our bookkeeper, Katherine Almy, is diligently tracking all records necessary to get the loan forgiven.

Staff has worked diligently, mostly behind the scenes, to create ways to keep our members nourished and engaged. This has involved some expenditure in new technology and a steep learning curve, especially for our elders. Tech guru Amy Day, administrator Bridgette Garuti and minister Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson have ushered us into 21st century methods of maintaining community in the virtual realm. As we emerge from our homes, the Fellowship needs to be able, both to provide services for persons with social distancing options and to continue with virtual programming. This will require staff, additional technology and dedicated volunteers.

The Board will be proactive, yet prudent – we will trust but also verify all spending and actions. We will look at the budget in entirely new, creative ways and not just carry over the same but slightly-tweaked budget. To make the process more responsive, we're considering an official budget for only three or four months.

We accept that there will be differential levels of in-person or remote engagement by members, depending on concern over virus, and will plan accordingly. The Board is also planning long-term for the next year to year and a half. We will prioritize normal funding sources, and, to the greatest extent possible, use equity funds as a last resort. We're also going to assume that pledges and this year's carryover plus the US Treasuries PPE are going to succeed in the upcoming year.

Your investment in the Fellowship over the years has made it possible for the Board to request a budget that prioritizes appropriate compensation for the professional services we receive. Your contribution to that budget is greatly appreciated. Reaching out to persons you visit in person will help to maintain community. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.



Berti Welty for the Fellowship Board

Congregational Zoom Meeting

On June 14, following the service, we will have our first live, in-person zoom Congregational Meeting. The Fellowship is slowly adapting to new ways of communicating and decision-making. Please attend, as we need your input and a quorum. Topics will include approval of budget for 2020-2021 and the necessary document changes to enable the Endowment Committee to handle additional bequests. These bequests have specific restrictions regarding the allocation and use of both principal and interest. At present this will include the Chaffee funds and the F. Suzanne Moore bequest.

The proposed budget is in its review stage and will be sent via email prior to the meeting. The proposed bylaw and endowment document changes, which have been thoroughly reviewed by the Board and all related committees, will also be sent via email. Your input either via email or during the meeting, speaking or using the chat feature, is appreciated.

Thank you, pledgers

Thank you, thank you, thank you to the 73 people who have made their 2020-2021 HUUF pledge. As a Pledge Committee member it helps us so we don't have to hound you (but in a nice way) by phoning or writing to badger you into pledging. It also helps the Board plan for the coming year. So, again, thank you.

In these unprecedented times, you and your family's continued and generous support of HUUF helps ensure that our community is strong and supportive to those in need and those seeking a continued spiritual and intellectual pathway to serenity.

So, to those who've made your HUUF pledge, take a moment to pat yourself on the back for helping. If you haven't made your pledge, just mail in the form (with your questionnaire), or drop them in the box at the Fellowship or complete the online version that you can find on our website.

HUUF Pledge Committee, David Marshak, Rebekah Paez, Greg Blomstrom

Social Action offering

Affordable Homeless Housing Alternatives (AHHA) will receive the Congregation's Social Action Offering in June. June 14 would have been the day to gather for our potluck brunch and donate the Sunday offering to a local organization carrying out work in the world that furthers our values. Please express your generosity for this effort by sending a special check to HUUF with AHHA on the advice line.

AHHA is one of the main local groups advocating for and serving houseless people in our community. From the website (<https://ahha-humco.org/>) you can access a current newsletter.

It is too soon to report the results of the May appeal. We will do so in an upcoming green sheet.

Richard Kossow

AFS students



Intercultural Programs

We selected students for Eureka High School with help from AFS local volunteers and your input. It is almost our deadline to return these students if we do not have a family listed as hosting them when they arrive. Arrival plans have not yet changed, so we anticipate arrival in mid-August. If schools don't open as planned in fall and continue distance learning, AFS will make adjustments or delay arrivals. Can you help us secure these students for Eureka High School?

Helpful, open-minded, cheerful Philipp from Germany has diverse interests including discussing politics, playing guitar and drums, playing cards, eating healthy, snowboarding, and biking through his town playing Pokemon Go with a younger brother, to name a few. His desire to be an exchange student was sparked by an English speaking volunteer in his Kindergarten. He even took private lessons from her following that year. His English skills continued to flourish as a result of his love for online gaming with people from across the globe. His motto is to make people feel good.

Bisera (Macedonia) was selected as part of the YES scholarship program to live and study in the USA, something she has long dreamed about. With her excellent English and a sharp mind, she'd like to join a debate team in America. A social girl, Bisera sees herself as a leader in her group of friends. She draws to relax, likes visiting art galleries, reading fantasy novels, and is passionate about the environment. For exercise, she plays volleyball. As part of a national folk dance group, she's experienced many diverse cultures at dance festivals. She's super excited for her upcoming adventure in the USA.

Faiza is a cheerful, considerate and responsible young lady from Bangladesh. Her favorite activity is joining the local youth group where they organize events to improve their communities. In her free time, she watches movies with her friends and reads books, especially those of her favorite author, Khaled Hosseini. She also enjoys helping her mom prepare dinner, where they share about their days while cooking. In the future, she wants to be a high school teacher. Faiza is excited about meeting her host community and wants to learn to be independent during her exchange year in the U.S.

AFS needs the name, address, phone number, and email address for the host family. Application paperwork can then be completed before arrival and host family interviews done virtually. These students are waiting to be able to contact their host family. Connie Doyle is the AFS volunteer working with EHS. Since 2000, EHS has hosted 44 AFS participants and 25 students have gone abroad with AFS.

Abby Munro-Proulx



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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.

Member asking for living space ideas for HUUF friend: Single nonsmoking woman, nearing 60, needs a quiet, long-term place to live to help her recuperate from prolonged trauma. Ideal would be a private studio, cottage, tiny house or ADU. Potential for some limited gardening help. She has had caregiver training and experience. Arcata or close is preferred. McKinleyville, Eureka possible too. References available. I am helping in the search, so please contact me with questions, ideas or possible connections. Thank you,

Cathy Hanafi, cbhanafi@yahoo.com (or phone number in the directory).



Deadline info

Deadline for the **July/August** issue of the newsletter is Saturday, **June 20** at 5 p.m. Send committee reports, announcements and articles related to HUUF (email only) to 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/HUUFnews>

Stephen Sottong, editor