

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



October 2011

Fork in the road

With apologies to Yogi Berra, the Board sees “two forks in the road, and [urges] that we take one of them.” Later in this newsletter you will find, on colored paper, a pull-out summary of Mary Gleason’s Fellowship Assessment Report. The summary highlights some undeniable facts and suggests that the Fellowship chart a course that, in effect, requires us to select one of two pathways into the future. What are these divergent pathways? In answer to that question, it is fair to ask: Why have we made hiring a minister our number one priority? Why have we committed to a single-service and the “Gathering the Family” theme? Why have we fashioned a two-year budget that makes cuts in several areas while at the same time highly leverages our reserves to pay for a minister? Why are we pressing to implement ideas from the Golden Colorado DVD? Why have we hired consultants to help us figure things out? What is at stake? The Board sees two paths: 1) do nothing - go along with what we’ve got, make the best of it, and shrink into irrelevance if not oblivion, and 2) get moving (i.e., do the things identified in the questions above) and build a Fellowship for the future, the next 50 years. We invite you to read the summary, apply your own experience and understanding of our Fellowship’s history, and join the conversation about our future.

The Board of Trustees

Halloween fest

It’s almost Halloween Festival time and I am looking for anyone who would like to help out this year. As many of you know this event is something very special, and this is a great way to have a lot of fun while contributing to our community. There are many ways to get involved.

- Skit performer
- Parent skit supervisor
- Craft maker
- Kitchen helper
- Guiding Light
- Guiding Lights coordinator
- Set-up and decorate
- Snack bringer
- Cupcake maker
- Clean-up helper
- Crafts coordinator
- Shuttle driver
- Kitchen runner
- Fire ring keeper
- Goodie bag station helper
- Apple juice bringer
- Pumpkin carver
- Parking helper

Don’t miss this opportunity to be a part of something great. Contact me at 499-1131 or sandy5527@sbcglobal.net if you are interested in any of these things, or if you think of some other way you can help.

Sandy Lynn

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People

Mickey Strang, a member of HUUF who has been unable to attend the past few years, had a fall on September 4 and broke a wrist and her hip, resulting in a hip replacement.

Thea Gast had a successful hip replacement and is home recuperating well.

Bob West is doing well from his successful knee surgery.

Ginger Gardner is at Mad River Hospital dealing with a very low hemoglobin count. She should be discharged soon.

Cathy Enis is healing from an automobile accident. She was not at fault.

June and Dave Davis will soon return from their adventures around Chamonix, Paris and Italy.

Scott and Susan Allen report that they are having fun on their motor home trip to the Pinnacles and beyond.

Howard Stauffer is preparing for a trip to Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Malasia and Hong Kong.

Karen Knapp

Gay Pride event

HUUF's Social Action Committee is responsible for arranging for our participation, along with other supportive church groups, in the recent Gay Pride Parade and Celebration in Eureka. Jean and Jack Munsee carried our HUUF banner in the parade, while Ursula Osborne spent the afternoon in the park at our HUUF table talking to people who expressed an interest in our denomination. She gave out 25 carefully selected brochures which identified our congregation. We appreciate the leadership of our Social Action Committee.

Awanna Kalal

SAC vegan brunch

The **October 16** service on Ethical Eating, given by Martha Devine, Ursula Osborne and Danielle Stubblefield, will be followed by a Social Action Committee brunch featuring vegan cuisine exclusively. Bring your vegan appetites and join us for this delightful experience.

Eve Anderson

Sprucing up

Thanks to the contributions of several members, we now have 12 round tablecloths for special occasions. Members have also donated enough money to purchase 25 new chair cushions.

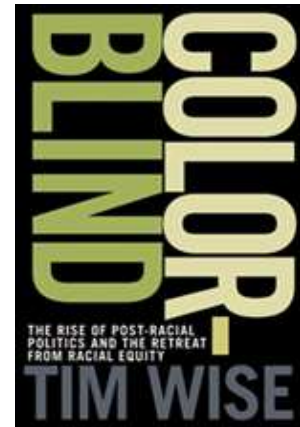
Awanna Kalal

Your editor is a bit cranky this month

This month more than usual, there have been requests to make one or another article stand out – "Make it bold." "Put it in a different larger font." "Put in lots of exclamation points and make every third word all caps." "Put everything I write on the front page." I exaggerate only slightly, but you get the point. Your editor tries to maintain neutrality, and therefore cannot honor these demands. Each article is only as important as the next one. Only the Board has the slightest bit of exemption from these requests – witness the colored insert – but even then I edit their pieces for length, punctuation, grammar, etc.

So please don't ask for special treatment; it isn't going to happen. Sorry to disappoint you.

Joy Thomas, editor



Colorblind

Without thinking, many of us assume "colorblind" to be a good thing. In this short volume, Tim Wise catalogs evidence to disabuse us of any notion that we are in a post-racial era, that ignoring race and current effects of racism and enduring privilege is helpful in any way, or that there is nothing we can do to address racial disparities and heal our divided culture. Tim's prescriptions for color-conscious actions leave the reader hopeful, empowered and challenged to find more ways to take positive measures. Should be read by every teacher, lawyer, doctor, parent and anyone contemplating interaction with someone of a different race. *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity* is a follow-up to *Between Barack and a Hard Place* (2009). You may read the auto-graphed-by-the-author copy in our HUUF library.

Chip Sharpe

Thanks from Maisie

Thank you to everyone who brought hygiene products for homeless youth. I have met my goals to achieve the Girl Scout Bronze Award. Couldn't have done it without you!

Maisie French

HUUF Board update

As we begin our fall single service on Sundays, improvements are being made. The sound system received a significant upgrade to ensure that folks will be able to hear and that the comfort of our services is preserved. Shay is training building stewards to assist the Program and Worship Committee with set-up on Sunday mornings and increased efforts to greet people into the Fellowship are in place. So we hope that when you come you feel welcome within the HUUF family.

The Board is very grateful for the continued diligent efforts of the Search Task Force in seeking a consulting minister for the Fellowship. We are hopeful a good candidate for our community will be secured soon. A big thank you to Berti Welty, Pat McCutcheon and Jack Munsee.

Current Board activity includes preparing for the October Congregational meeting, reviewing the Fundraising Task Force plan, and keeping our focus on key learning from our Spring UUA Assessment visit. Look for a summary of this report soon that will be used in a variety of ways to improve our practices and nurture the life of the Fellowship.

Planning is underway for the annual Halloween Festival. This is the primary Fall fundraising activity for the Fellowship, and there is an opportunity for everyone to help make this wonderful event happen. Board members have been known to glue hundreds of googly eyes on popsicle sticks for this event. So in the spirit of autumn colors, spooky creatures, and the scent of apple cider—reflect upon what your contribution will be.

Wendy Rowan, Secretary

Volunteer opportunity

Are you looking for something to do on weekday mornings that is exciting and fun? If so, you could be working with first and second graders one day or more days a week for one or two hours at Loleta School as part of the HUUF Loleta program. During the last school year five members and friends of HUUF did just that. To participate, you must be interviewed by Sally Hadden, Principal. If she thinks there is an appropriate placement for you at the school, she will give you a form to take to your local police department so that you can be finger-printed. You will also need to get a polio shot. You will be reimbursed for the cost of the finger printing, but not for the polio shot. All five of those who participated last year are going to participate again this year. As a bonus, when you finish your time at school, you can do what Jean and I do, and have a delicious pastry or lunch the Loleta Bakery to reward yourself for a job well done. Please contact me at 668-4095 or munsee@csulb.edu for more details or if you have any questions.

Jack Munsee

Pancake breakfast

On Saturday, **October 8**, the PTO of Loleta School will sponsor a pancake breakfast at the school starting at 8:00 a.m. This is a first-ever fundraising event sponsored by the newly established Parent/Teacher Organization for the school and is eagerly anticipated by the entire school community. If you plan to go to the Loleta Antique Fair that weekend, having breakfast at the school would be a good way to start the day. And even if you don't plan to attend the Antique Fair, stop by for breakfast at the school and help make this milestone event a success.

Jean Munsee

GA materials available

Two General Assembly items may be borrowed from me or from the HUUF library.

1. DVD-ROM Compilation of the Full Conference of the UUA General Assembly, June 22-26, 2011.

2. Audio compact-disc of Tim Wise workshop #2062 *Roadmap to Racial Equity: Allies in Today's World*.

Chip Sharpe

Quaker service?

It's said that Quakers sit in a circle in silence during their services waiting for someone to be inspired. If the Program & Worship Committee doesn't get more support from the Fellowship, that could be the formula for some of our services in the future. Planning the services is one of the most important and dynamic functions of the Fellowship, and the more minds we put to the task, the better.

Both co-chairs have stated that this will be their last season planning worship and that their positions will become vacant in July if not filled before then. There are still several months left to gently transition in a new chair or chairs and to boost the membership of the committee.

Program and Worship meetings are held after the service on the second Sunday of each month, the next one being **October 9**. If you are interested in finding out more about the inner workings of your Fellowship and influencing the direction of our services, please join us. If you feel, as we do, that silence does not become us, you need to be there.

Stephen Sottong

Summer to autumn art exhibit transition

I am grateful to the artists participating in the Humboldt UU members art show which was displayed July through September but which will come down September 26. Please see and enjoy these works by Anna Mae Botley, Archie Mossman, Carl Thomas and Sally Williams. Their Artist Statements are printed in this newsletter on page six.

Through October and November the art exhibit will be titled "Collaborations: Poets and Visual Artists" and comes from a group of local poets and visual artists who have created unique collaborations of poetry and art. Using topics ranging from sunsets to bathtubs and Kenya to Fern Canyon, these partners have merged their talents to create syntheses that enhance both media.

For our Sunday service, **October 2**, the poets will read their work and the artists will discuss their process. Among those included are Karen Knapp, Suzanne Moore, Ruth Mountaingrove, Pat McCutcheon, Vince Peloso and Cheryl Rau.

Pat McCutcheon and Cheryl Rau arranged the program. They, as well as Karen Knapp and Suzanne Moore are members of HUUF.

Irith Shalmony



SAC planning

At the suggestion of the financial consultant the Social Action Committee (SAC) seeks suggestions from the congregation for courses of action for the year.

A document similar to that which follows will be given out at the **October 2** service with a request that you write down what you want SAC to pursue for the rest of the HUUF year.

Dear members and friends of our HUUF Congregation:

SAC aspires to forge a closer relationship between itself and the Congregation as a whole. This message is a first step in working toward that end. We seek your counsel in reviewing our activities and hearing your reflections/suggestions to continue, modify them or to pursue new endeavors.

SAC has financial resources from the HUUF budget, donations to the Loleta Connection from members of the congregation, proceeds from the monthly brunches, proceeds from chocolate/coffee sales and donations from members of the congregation to SAC.

Members of SAC invest time soliciting and scheduling meals cooked by HUUF folks for the Arcata night shelter, arranging for HUUF folks to tutor at Loleta school; taking food donated by HUUF folks to the Loleta Food Pantry; allocating money to various local, national and international groups; organizing and cooking monthly brunches; deciding what functions to bring to the attention of the congregation so that HUUF folks can participate; collecting and taking books to the county jail; and taking clothes donated by HUUF folks to agencies for needy children and adults.

At the bottom of this sheet, please list suggestions as to how you prefer SAC to disperse finances and spend time.

If you are willing to participate in implementing any of the suggestions that you make, please write your name next to that item.

SAC will compile this data and report to the congregation at a future service. This is an opportunity for all to participate in the choice of SAC activities.

Please give your responses to the SAC member sitting at the card table in the foyer who will be glad to answer any of your questions or concerns about SAC."

Suggestions will be accepted until after the service on October 9. At the **October 30** service, SAC will present skits dramatizing how SAC feels that we can implement the suggestions that we have received. SAC members will work with Jenny Cranston, retired theatre professor, so that we convey the suggestions in an entertaining way.

Please start thinking about your suggestions and writing them down, and please remember to bring them to the Fellowship on **October 2**. Thank you,

Social Action Committee

Religious Education



October 2. Curriculum Sunday

Preschool. We will talk about what makes us special. What can you do? We will sing our 7 Principle song and *This Little Light of Mine*. We will make an enjoyable craft and play together.

K-2nd. This month we will learn about how we accept and value each person. Today we will talk about how we are alike and how we are different. We will play games and do a craft.

3rd-4th. We will learn about Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, and its twin, Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the last day of the old year and the day for righting wrongs. We'll make Jewish prayer shawls, called Tallith shawls, hear the story of Jonah, and eat the traditional apples dipped in honey to wish for a sweet New Year. We will learn that UUs believe in forgiving others and in trying the right the wrongs we have done.

Intermediate. We will continue our exploration of the Bible through stories, plays and discussion. We might try our new "doodle journals."

October 9. All Worship. All ages will gather in the CARE building. This month Halloween is celebrated by some religions, while others feel it is un-Godly. We will learn about the history of this holiday started over 2,000 years ago called Samhain. If you would like to bring a picture of a pet or person who has died, we will place it on our altar. We will make spirit houses to honor those who have died.

October 16

Preschool. We will talk about what is a family and who is in our own family. We will make family trees and sing songs. Bring something to share that makes your family special to you.

K-2nd. We will continue to explore and discuss the concept of what it means to accept and value each person and how we as UUs act on that belief. Come play games and have fun!

3rd-4th. We will learn about the Hindu holiday Divali. We will visit with an international student from India, who will tell us how her family celebrates Divali. We'll make good luck designs, tiny clay lamps called depas, and flower garlands, dance the Raas (stick dance) and share Indian sweets. We will compare the Indian idea of God to our UU belief that each one of us should think through our own religious beliefs. Our celebration ends with the Indian goodbye, namaste: "I honor the light within you."

Intermediate. We will explore stories in the bible and how they relate to our UU Principles.

October 23. Social Action Sunday. This month we will work on crafts to hand out at our own Halloween Festival. Come visit with your friends, all ages together, to support this fun tradition.

October 30. Friendship Sunday. Childcare provided for all ages while we relax after our Halloween Festival.

It was an enjoyable Family Fiesta Night. Many thanks to all who brought food and helped to clean up. Gordon Leppig's yin/yang pudding was a delicious work of art.

We have many wonderful volunteers this year teaching in Religious Education.

Josh and Jovanah Hoboo are back again in the preschool room, teaching our UU Principles with music, activities and crafts. Judy Rishel is now our K-2 teacher, joined by John Broderick. They will utilize a series of books that focus on building values and skills that reflect our UU Principles such as working out our anger, volunteerism, acceptance, working together. Valerie Gazinski and Jean Munsee will teach our 3-4th grade class with a favorite curriculum, Holidays and Holy Days. Sandy Lynn will teach our newly formed group of 5th-6th graders with Bibleodean, a curriculum that teaches bible stories through plays.

We are happy to have Jenny Williams back as our Teen Director. The Teens started their Coming of Age year with a
continued on next page

RE, continued from page 5

ropes course in the Arcata Community Forest. Much fun was had by all with a lot of working together.

We welcome Jesika Mitchell our new Childcare Coordinator. She is a senior in Child Development at HSU and an Assistant teacher at the Child Development Lab. She also works with the local native Head Start program and brings lots of experience in working with all ages of children.

We welcome Allison Bronkall and Sherie & John Broderick to the RE committee. Allison will be facilitating our family worship time. Please think about what your family might share with our larger fellowship. Tracy Jordan French and Erica Alston are committee co-chairs. We would love to have more members. Please think about supporting the important work we do.

Jillian Mooney

Classified ad

Who would like to teach HUUF UUs Conversational Spanish in preparation for GA at Phoenix in June 2012? Interested teachers of Spanish please call 707-825-8995 or email osborne@humboldt1.com.

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Classified ads are 10 cents a word. Send text of your ad to jthomas3@csulb.edu and your check to the HUUF office.

Artists' statements

In the 1960s, I joined a painting group called Art Dynamics, a program that originated in our San Mateo UU Church and was led by one of our members, a fine artist also interested in exploring the dynamics of our work. These are some of the questions he posed to us: What does it mean to you to put down on paper what you feel? What do you see in your painting that might be of help to you in dealing with everyday life? I was healing from a bad depression at the time and this group was instrumental (I think) in my recovery. We all worked on newspaper print with poster paints. Some of us tried out acrylic paints on the same paper. One of my paintings is done with acrylic. They have no names; I numbered them in terms of sequence.

Anna Mae Botley

To really see something, I need to draw it; to make it mine. Humans, quail, and otters are aesthetically pleasing to me and I hope to others. But, don't tell me that something in nature is "as pretty as a picture." Pictures can't come close to the beauty of nature if you begin to understand and appreciate the natural world, at least in my opinion. A picture, in a way, is a minimalist rendition of a solo, but nature is a symphony of everything we can sense and then some. With art, I think, whether or not it is closely tied to the natural world one hopes to trigger an emotional and intellectual understanding, a gestalt, in oneself and in others. The artist can only make the art available. The others and the artist, do the rest according to their own changing

awareness. If you tell me that something of nature is "as pretty as a picture," but mean that it triggers in you an emotional and intellectual response, an aesthetic gestalt, that you have experienced or might experience in viewing a picture, I won't argue with you. Oh, by the way, I doubt that aesthetics and intellect can be kept in separate boxes.

Archie Mossman

I have always liked painting with watercolors because it is fast from start to finish. I took watercolor classes from Max Butler, Thomas Knight and Mel Shuler when a student at HSC in the 60s. My interest in drawing and art is like most everyone who is given crayons as a child, but I didn't lose interest in my teen age years. I took all the art classes I could at Eureka Jr. and Sr. High and at HSC. I like to see my thoughts about a place on paper as soon as possible. I have no patience for waiting until the paint dries.

Carl Thomas

My four paintings displayed here were all done far from Humboldt County. "Quiet Corner at the Inn" is pastel painted at a funky bed and breakfast in Taos, New Mexico. "High and Dry at Day's End" is pastel, painted in Los Barriles, Baja Sur, Mexico. The two landscapes, "Glorietta Canyon" and "Hot Desert Morning" are in oil, painted in and around Borrego Springs, a small desert community southeast of Palm Springs in northeast San Diego County, where I live half the year.

Sally Williams

Heirloom seeds

In September, the Petaluma Seed Bank hosted the first National Heirloom Exposition at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa. My husband and I attended two of the three days and were astounded at the attendance. A wide diversity of people came for a number of different reasons but mostly because they are starting to realize that industrial agriculture has serious flaws that affect our environment, health and quality of life. Keynote speakers were Jeffrey Smith of the Institute for Responsible Technology; Alice Waters, chef at Chez Panisse and the founder of the Edible Schoolyard Project; and Dr. Vandana Shiva, the irrepressible Indian activist who dares to confront Monsanto and their predatory practices.

There were also hundreds of vendors, educational workshops and talks on the importance of collecting, conserving and sharing heirloom seeds, movie screenings, and food producers selling fresh, organic, local foods. It was really an incredible experience, and heartening to see so many people thinking outside the box and reshaping the way we grow and produce foods. If you are interested in finding out more about any of these projects, I have selected a few websites to share with you. Also, if you have questions, please talk to me about it, and I'll try to answer them.

Katherine Almy (839-3406,
kathrich@arcatanet.com)

Chez Panisse Foundation:
www.chezpanissefoundation.org
Partners for Sustainable Pollination:
www.pfspbees.org
Institute for Responsible Technology:
www.responsibletechnology.org
Dr. Vandana Shiva:
www.vandanashiva.org and
www.navdanya.org
The Weston Price Foundation:
www.westonaprice.org

Deadline Thursday, October 20

Please e-mail articles to jthomas3@csulb.edu. Print and .pdf items cannot be accepted. If you need a copy of the newsletter guidelines, contact me.

Joy Thomas, editor

Work party

Please remember to thank the crew who did the work, made light by many hands. Remember, too, that you are most welcome to join in the stewardship of our Fellowship. There are many landscaping opportunities (and other maintenance items) that you can do on your own time, with a friend or at the regular fellowship work parties on the third Saturday of each month.

Special appreciation is due to Cathy Enis, who has turned out for every CARE Building landscaping event and who led the last one. It is a special joy to work on completing the beautiful project envisioned, planned and largely installed by our talented duo, Jo Weisgerber and Bertie Welty.

Scott Allen

CARE Building garden

Check out the garden in front of the CARE building! Many hands make for light work and great results. Please give a hearty and well deserved "Thank you" to the wonderful souls who came out for August's maintenance day: Valerie Gizinski, Ursula Osborne, Christina Hutton, Archie and Sue Mossman, Berti Welty, Jo Weisgerber, Chip Sharpe, Anna Mae Botley, Jeff and Karen Knapp and Irith Shalmony. Scott Allen is proud of us filling in while he was away. And, speaking of Scott, he deserves a huge "Thank you" for keeping this project going and on track this summer. Not only is the landscaping in front of the CARE building looking great, but Scott has continued to work on the piece at the far end of the building where you can now sit in a circle of log benches surrounded by green grass and plants which are getting well established. Also, let's not forget to thank Berti and Jo who had the original vision, got it started, and continue to monitor and repair the drip system they installed. I hope you will plan to join us on the third Saturday of next month. A few hours donated by many people is preferable to a few people donating many hours to keep "burn-out" at bay.

Cathy Enis





Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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JoAnn Thomas
Vice-President Greg Blomstrom
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Trustees Judy Rishel
Kim Moor
Treasurer Chip Sharpe

Newsletter Editor Joy Thomas
Calendar Editor Shay MacKay

UUA President responds to sentence in Arizona protest trial

The Rev. Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association was convicted August 5, on misdemeanor charges stemming from his nonviolent civil disobedience in Phoenix in July.

Rev. Morales was arrested while protesting Arizona's anti-immigrant legislation, SB 1070. For his act of conscience, he received a sentence of one day in jail, with credit for the one day already served.

Rev. Morales released the following statement upon hearing of his sentence: "While my trial has finally ended, my determination to oppose Arizona's SB 1070 and the inhumane practices of Sheriff Joe Arpaio is stronger than ever. As people of faith, we are called to oppose injustice and help protect the most vulnerable among us. We cannot turn a blind eye to the inhumane immigration enforcement practices of Sheriff Arpaio, nor should we accept similar policies in other parts of our country. We Unitarian Universalists will continue to stand on the side of love against such legislation and the anti-immigrant sentiment it represents. We look forward to an opportunity to witness publicly against such injustices at our Justice General Assembly in Phoenix in 2012."

Chip Sharpe

Loleta food bank

Many thanks are extended to those who brought food for the Loleta Food Pantry in September. The food was abundant and gratefully received as always. The minister of the receiving church in which the pantry is located said that he is so pleased to be partnering with us UU's and mentioned that the food pantry is now supplying about forty families regularly. This is a very worthwhile and gratifying project we're engaged in. Remember that food is collected the third Sunday of each month at the Fellowship and delivered to Loleta by Ruth Needham. Thank you, Ruth, and thank you all who contribute.

Jean Munsee

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



HUUF is at a fork in the road; we need to take it.

Special insert

Thank you, Yogi Berra.

At the Board's request, our Unitarian Universalist Association sent consultant Mary Gleason for a June 3 to 5 "assessment visit," advising us on our finances, growth, programs, leadership and other important areas. This summary of her findings is being sent to every HUUF member because we on the board think that it contains important observations about our HUUF community as well as recommendations about how to prosper. A copy of the full report is on the HUUF website and posted on the bulletin board.

HUUF is at a crossroads.

HUUF is changing, whether we like it or not. At 58 years strong, many of the founding members have moved away from the area or have died. Only a few remain who have been coming for more than 50 years. More important is that half of the membership is age 65 or older; and while the leadership embraces and respects their founders, all of us need to reflect on the needs of newer and future members.

We must change our practice from "getting things done" to "sharing our values between and amongst ourselves and the community."

Our written materials, conversations, and goals are largely "transactional," rather than "transformational." "Transactional" is getting things done such as balancing the budget or making sure each Sunday service has a program prepared and staffed. "Transformational" is seeing that our decisions, priorities and goals are deeply

tied to our shared values, HUUF making a major difference in our lives and community, and having HUUF challenge, fulfill and excite us. Transformational goal examples are creating new ways to advance liberal religious values in our congregation and community, increasing religious tolerance in our community, or finding commonality with local churches on environmental issues.

We need to change from being efficient at what we do to being effective at what we do.

An example of efficient is measuring the success of our Sunday services by how dependably we have a Sunday service each Sunday. But more important is whether those services reflect our shared values, move our shared vision forward, uplift us or significantly add to each Member's search for truth and meaning.

Mary believes we need more integration and promotion of shared values, Sunday programs, and activities, where parents with children in our religious education program join with members without children in that program.

We're growing and shrinking at the same time – we're essentially a pastoral sized congregation.

A family size congregation is characterized by fewer than 100 members and relies on volunteers to meet all of its needs. When a congregation is between 101-250 members, it is considered pastoral size. Because of the increased demands more congregants bring, it becomes

increasingly difficult to meet all of the congregation's needs with only volunteer labor for long periods of time. Now with 144 members, we're beyond the size when most congregations start depending on paid staff to perform office, operations and maintenance functions. Mary believes having a paid, extremely experienced choir director and piano accompanist adds significantly to the value of our Sunday services. She also believes our very qualified and experienced Office Administrator is a necessity at our size and circumstances. As to further growth, she notes we add new members but lose roughly the same number we add, and our recent overall trend is shrinking rather than staying the same size. She advises we cannot "grow our way" out of pledging and volunteering problems; instead, we need to make our programs and activities have deeper meaning and more importance in Members' lives so they're motivated to contribute more.

Leaders noted that attendance at important fellowship meetings is low. Of 144 members, only about 40-50 actually attend important events such as the annual meeting, trustee elections, annual budget drive kick off, and the service auction fundraiser. This makes it difficult to build community and develop critical mass when choosing directions to move forward.

There are a growing number of families arriving at HUUF and the RE program is blossoming. The Coming program has been added and the youth group is up to twelve teens this year. Volunteers who participated in the assessment meeting offered important insights. A consistent committee of volunteers with working and over scheduled parents is difficult to establish. One of the committee's responsibilities is to contribute to the DRE's evaluation. Without this vital input this critical part of congregational life is vulnerable. The children's RE program is folded into the operating budget and is requiring more resources. There is no additional registration fee to participate in RE classes. Sunday attendance by families is sporadic and many families have yet to become members or pledging households. Welcoming newcomers is an important part of being a fellowship and a denomination. Welcoming families requires extra attention to what brings them to your door. Introducing families with young children into the congregation can sometimes feel a little chaotic to others. Some families who experience the uneasiness do not return. Given these matters:

- The board is looking to institute a registration fee to attend children's RE and find ways to encourage families to make weekly attendance a priority.
- During this summer, the Board looked at ways to have RE be offered at times before or after the service in order for the children to participate in worship and become a regular, seen and contributing part of the fellowship. This could lessen the "us and them" feeling and add a richer experience for all. We've begun this change by setting aside 15 minutes at the start of our single service for a HUUF family to lead the service through children lighting the chalice, a story for all ages, etc.

Money Matters

Half of our annual income (see chart below) comes from 17 members, all of whom - bless them -are 65 or more years old.

Quartile	# pledge units	Total \$ pledged	% of total	Ideal
First	6	\$32,000	5.4	10
Second	11	\$29,720	9.8	15
Third	22	\$28,280	19.6	35
Fourth	73	\$26,074	65.2	40
Totals	112	\$116,074	100	100

Another area of concern is the large gap between the average gift and the median gift. The closer these numbers are the more evenly distributed the responsibility for the budget is between the upper and lower quartiles. Ideally these numbers would be a difference of a few hundred dollars. For HUUF the gap is nearly double the median gift.

Membership attrition rates are something to look at as well. While visitors are arriving every Sunday and some join, many founders are moving on, many having passed away. Remembering that new members need time to grow their generosity as they find the value of the congregation in their life, those who have already done so are those who are also leaving. Keeping the attrition rate in mind will keep the sense of growing grounded in reality and keep plans realistic.

Recommendation

- Statistics raise eyebrows, stories open check-books. Begin services with a story or with a testimonial as to why we are at HUUF.
- Have a board member share what's going on or why they are a member of HUUF.
- The board is looking to add more greeters and to diversify these greeters so that they include families and young children along with LGBT and the old.

Membership

Inherent in growth is change. Inherent in not growing is stagnation and eventually extinction, a less desirable form of change. The Golden, CO, DVD, "Ideas for Growth" is a valuable tool that can be used to inspire visitors to become new members and to help us all to retain the members that we do have. One of the best ways to retain new members is to help them become involved in ways that are meaningful for them.

Recommendations

· The board is committed to entering into less efficient and messier processes and one recommendation to facilitate this change is to create gracious space. To that end, the board is looking at rearranging the entry, foyer and the sanctuary.

· HUUF is moving back to a single service only for the foreseeable future. As such, this provides a potential to have committee's table before or after the service.

· Reduce the number of active committees, but encourage membership in the most important committees such as Membership, Program and Worship and RE.

· The board has for several years now intended to assess committee chairs, committee charters and committee function to determine how each is meeting the immediate and long term needs of the fellowship – but we have yet to begin.

· As committees are evaluated, the board is going to ask each to rewrite its charter, beginning with each committee's theological reason for being. This can be a bit challenging while helping the congregation to speak in more inspirational terms (for instance what is the theological reason for the Internet Technology committee to exist). As a values laden, religious organization, values laden statements underscore the significance of the fellowship and the values it espouses to the community.

Visioning Process

"Ugh," you say, not another damn vision quest. But Mary says engage your hearts and dare to dream. In everything the fellowship wishes to accomplish, it must first begin with a shared vision that answers the question "why." Why is the community, world, and we as individuals better because we are here as UUs? Why will it be better five years from now?

Recommendations

· Craft a mission statement and put it up in the sanctuary or in the foyer. A mission statement answers the question "what." What are you today, here, in this time? It is a values laden statement that is just enough to encourage people to check you out (effective.) It does not answer all of their questions up front (efficient).

· The two-year period with a consulting minister will provide much needed time to explore a "messier" vision and mission process followed by strategic planning that will guide the board, committees and individuals decisions about resource allocations. It will help all to live in the present with an eye on the future.

The board welcomes your input and suggestions that might be raised after reading this summary or the full report.

Board of Trustees
Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Transforming our transactional selves – gobbledygook or not

Who would have thought that I would be writing this kind of article for a spiritual organization (certainly not my mother, I can tell you!). Growing up in El Cerrito in the SF Bay area, my parents thought that my sister and I should go to Sunday school to try it out. Mind you, they weren't about to stay for "church", they dropped us off and picked us up – as it turned out just once for me – I couldn't stand the red blazer at age six. My next church experience was around age 25 when I attended a wedding in a mainstream church. So my being a member of HUUF and now vice president of the board of trustees came as quite a shock to my mother, who to this day I don't believe has ever attended any type of organized church service.

What does my little story have to do with the title of this article? Well, it's more transformational than transactional – that is, I've told you a little about how my life has been transformed through the years, instead, I could have gotten right to the point, transacted my thoughts to you, and left you to consider my creed.

Our June site visit by Mary Gleason is full of suggestions that HUUF is transforming itself whether we like it or not, but we tend to interact with each in a transactional manner – we don't spend enough time telling stories and trying to find a connection with each other. Many of the founding members have moved away from the area or have died with only a few remaining who have been coming for more than 50 years. More important is that half of the membership is age 65 or older and all of us need to reflect on the needs of newer and future members.

At Mary's closeout she told us one of her stories about what a difference being a UU family in a congregation had made in theirs and their sons life. She also recounted how they have increased pledging because statistics raise eyebrows, stories open checkbooks. She suggested we begin HUUF services with a story or with a testimonial as to why we are at HUUF.

Mary observed that our written materials, conversations, and goals are largely "transactional," which is getting things done such as balancing the budget or making sure each Sunday service has a program prepared and staffed. "Transformational" is seeing that our decisions, priorities and goals are deeply tied to our shared values, that HUUF is making a major difference in our lives and community, and that HUUF challenges, fulfills and excite us. I know at board meetings it's all transactional, and sometimes that is all you can hope for. But lets start being more transformational – lets hear each other's stories and hope they make a major difference in our lives and in our community. So, next time you see me, ask me about the cold November day in 1974 when my friend Steve Adams and I had two flat tires 27 miles northwest of Orleans in the middle of nowhere at on a dead-end dirt road and how two guys in a pickup helped us fix both flat tires so we could make it home. Now that was transformational.

Greg Blomstrom