

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



December 2011

Dennis' December musings

Sitting in a house darkened by the early setting of the winter sun, it is hard to remember the seasonal transformation that came last spring. In my mind and heart I know those times will come again. The grass will sprout anew, the days will become longer and more filled with rain, the leaves will bud, the flowers blossom and the rain will get a wee bit warmer.

But right now it cold and wet outside and I would like to give into the silent primal urge that call me to join some of my mammalian cousins in hibernation. But such urges are the purview of more solitary beasts.

We humans are, by nature, social beings; and so we head out into the dark to gather together with others of our kind. We kindle fires and light lights and plan, prepare and enjoy treats and feast. We give gifts as expressions of warm feelings. We do all this to keep the dark at bay and to remind each other that the light and the warmth will return again.

We also are good predictors of what will be and, thus, we know that this is the time to prepare for the spring. It is time do some of the work that will get things ready for the growing season to follow.

Raking leaves and piling them for compost will enrich the soil for next season's growing. After a good winter soaking, pulling weeds and

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Seasonal gatherings

December 22 – 7 p.m. Solstice Spiral – Dennis Reynolds, consulting minister

The rich and elaborate celebrations of the season are filled with sound and light, feasting and ornamentation, yet under all the glitter glows a simpler fundamental reality – the winter solstice. Come to this quiet reflective homage to the shortest day of the year. The gathering will offer an opportunity for each to find a deeper connection to this special time.

December 24 – 7 p.m. A Christmas Eve gathering

The traditions of childhood and the Christmas story serve as powerful metaphors for the birth of new possibilities of peace and love. Let us gather in a traditional candlelight celebration of the power of possibilities that the Christmas story, in word and in song, offer to us all.

Kathy Dillon

ReFashion fundraiser

Check your closets. Visit your favorite second-hand store. Ply the garage sale seas. HUUF introduces its first ever ReFashion Fashion Show. **March 10**. Interested? You should be. Stay tuned or contact me right now at 725-9043 or harris2761@sbcglobal.net.

Dave Harris

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Calendar?

War made easy

War Made Easy, a film based on the book of the same title, will be shown at 7 p.m. Friday evening, **December 9**, in the HUUF main hall. It is a well-conceived peace film, brought to our venue by Nezzie Wade, a peace worker active with Humboldt Access. Discussion will follow the showing of the film. There is no charge. Everyone is invited to attend.

Ursula Osborne

People

Phyllis Stanewick fell and is currently at Pacific Wellness and Rehab Center in Eureka. She greatly appreciates visitors.

Ginger Gardner continues to get better at Eureka Health Care. She hopes to go home soon. She welcomes visitors in the afternoons while she is at Eureka Health Care.

We welcome our newest members: **Trisha Sanders, Debi Cooper, Nyra Valle and Kinara Erickson.**

If you have news to share through the People column, please email me at jessica@reninet.com.

Karen Knapp

Holiday gifts to support social action

Hello UU coffee, tea and chocolate lovers. Social Action Committee coffee and chocolate sales will take place most Sundays through the holiday season so that you can shop for gifts and stocking stuffers for your loved ones. We have French, breakfast roast and decaffeinated coffee, English breakfast tea, hot chocolate, baker's chocolate and a selection of chocolate bars. Nuts and dried fruit will also be available. Our prices are competitive with and often better than what you will find at the Co-Op or Wildberries.

This project supports Circulo de Amigas school in Nicaragua while supporting small scale farmers in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the U.S. Equal Exchange pays farmers a fair price for their crops and makes contributions to UUSC programs for item purchased by our congregation. This holiday season let your gifts give in multiple ways.

Julie Neander

The Political Mind

Two years ago, a commentary in *UU World* on the question of why people vote against their own best interests made a deep impression. I have repeatedly referenced that article's mention of George Lakoff and the suggestion that the world-views of conservatives and of liberals seem to correlate with differing views of parenthood: Conservatives see the primary responsibilities of a parent as being security, protection, moral instruction, reliable order and firm guidance that will prevent misbehavior; while liberals and progressives see parenting as being primarily about nurturance, support, actualization of the individual and providing a breadth of opportunities and strength to face unforeseen and difficult choices. It fascinated me that these differing views of parental responsibilities could explain differing views of the responsibilities of government.

When I found George Lakoff's *The Political Mind* at Northtown Books, I eagerly dove into it, anticipating more insights into our quandaries and hints as to a way forward. I was not disappointed, but am glad my enthusiasm was sufficient to carry me past the first 40 sluggish pages. There is much in the heart of the book to explain why the conservative view has predominated, how liberals have fed that view by using the conservatives' terminology and how to articulate progressive values of empathy and responsibility. One quick example: Rather than arguing that "our tax burden" is not too large or that the "burden" should be shared, progressives can speak of taxes as an opportunity to invest in what we care about and as an affirmation of faith in our social contract.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this increasingly relevant book. I have placed a copy in our HUUF library.

Chip Sharpe

Men's group open meeting

A men's group meets every other Saturday morning at the Fellowship. The meeting on Saturday, **December 3**, is an open meeting with a brief time scheduled for men interested in learning about the group to ask questions and to learn how the group works. For more information, contact me at 825-7674.

Jeff Knapp



New email for newsletter

I have a new email address. It is joythomas3828@gmail.com. The old address will work for a while, but please use the new one as the old address will not forward messages to the new one and eventually will cease to work at all.

Thank you.

Joy Thomas,
newsletter editor

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

Make a joyful holiday noise and come to a party

December is full of opportunities to sing and socialize at HUUF. Attend one rehearsal or many, and join the choir as we celebrate the holidays with music.

The HUUF choir rehearses Wednesday evenings 7:00-8:30 and performs two Sundays a month. New members are welcomed at any time, and you do not need to read music to join. Contact choir director Elisabeth Harrington with questions.

The Holiday Party on Saturday, **December 17** is for everyone, not just singers. Bring a friend, and come join the fun.

Here is the schedule for December:

Sunday, **December 4** is drop-in choir day. If you love to sing in a group but can't commit to the regular Wednesday rehearsals, then come join the choir Sunday Dec. 4 at 9:15. We will rehearse one song to perform at the 10:30 service to go with the

Wednesday, **December 7**. All interested children are invited to attend choir practice from 6:30-7:15 to rehearse with the adults. We will rehearse holiday songs to share with everyone at the service on Sunday, December 11.

Wednesday, **December 14**. All interested parties are invited to attend choir practice and rehearse holiday songs for Saturday's annual caroling trip.

Saturday, **December 17**. Caroling and holiday party. Meet at HUUF at 11:30 to divide into caroling groups. Depart at 12:45 for home caroling visits in Arcata/Bayside; McKinleyville and Eureka. Return to HUUF by 4:00 p.m. for an all-generation holiday party at HUUF. (Saturday, Dec. 17 4:00-6:00 PM)

Everyone (not just singers.) is invited to HUUF to enjoy music and fellowship, accompanied by soup, hot cider and cookies.

Saturday, **December 24**. Christmas eve candle-light service, 7:00 p.m. Come and enjoy traditional seasonal music sung by the HUUF Choir. See the first page of this newsletter for more information about the Christmas eve service.

Elisabeth Harrington



Celebrate the tradition of Guest at Your Table

During this season of giving, we join with other congregations in support of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. By helping make the work of UUSC possible, we consecrate our commitment to our part in the interdependent web, the inherent worth and dignity of all, and each of our seven principles.

UUSC works in this country and around the world, helping people recover from disasters; strengthen their communities; and secure employment, health-care, shelter, clean water and good food. This vital work could not continue without our support. Each fall, during the Guest-at-Your-Table campaign, our fellowship has shown increasing support for UUSC.

Founded in 1939 to rescue victims of Nazi persecution, the UUSC is an independent human rights organization grounded in UU principles. UUSC receives neither government funding nor general financial support from UUA. We are grateful for the work they do and for this opportunity to give our individual and collective support.

We hope that you have a place setting for the "Guest at Your Table" in your home. Collection boxes are available in our HUUF foyer. Your daily donations should be collected until January. You may make out a check in the amount of the contributions (rounded up, if possible) to "UUSC." Please bring it to the Fellowship on **January 8**. Contributions of \$100 or more are matched by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY.

You and your family members can also earn UUSC membership by giving at the membership level during the Guest-at-Your-Table drive. Contributions of \$40 or more qualify for UUSC membership (\$75 for dual memberships, \$20 for seniors, \$10 for youth.) Let's see if HUUF can achieve 100% membership.

Thank you.

Chip Sharpe

Dennis's musings, continued from first page

transplanting shrubs that have outgrown their current locations will be easier. The quiet to follow will give the plants time to settle in after the disruptions. It is time to sharpen our tools and check out the seed catalogues and make plans.

And so it is with planning and preparing for a spring season for the Fellowship. The assessment report done last summer and the examples offered by the gardeners in other congregations offer us a catalogue of possibilities that can bring increased beauty and bounty to us all.

But we can't wait until spring to begin the work of making dreams real. We need to begin now to do some of the messiest work of transplanting and transition that can make transformation possible. We need to speak to each other with passion about what we hope might be. We need to listen with compassion to the voices of all as we seek deeper harmonies.

Some old habits and past pattern of unhelpful behaviors may need to be pruned back or pulled up and discarded to make room for the new growth in depth and numbers that are hoped for. Each of us has found something special, for ourselves, our families and the larger community, here in this Fellowship. We want more of it and we want to share it with more people.

As we gather together in this season of darkness and damp, may be warmed by faith in new unfolding to come.

Dennis Reynolds



Artist statement

Marla West is the artist who graciously agreed to display her work December and January at HUUF. Her words about her artistic experience follow.

Irith Shalmony

For me foremost, making art is about seeing. But it's really a total body experience. How can I honestly paint a tomato if I've never tasted one? How can I know how to portray that fruit honestly if I haven't felt the roundness, the smooth texture of its skin? Or bit into that juicy freshness? How can I really try to paint a rose if I haven't ever smelled its fragrance? How can I paint grasses or trees or rivers if I haven't heard the wind rustling through them? Art is about noticing. Certain found shapes intrigue me. I love the roundness of a firm, ripe rosehip in autumn as they grow wildly on fences. It reminds me of change, the seasons, time passing. I am astounded as I think about the bud erupting after winter, then opening into its fullness, and subsequently dropping its petals, leaving the firm round ball with its graceful remnants lifting into space. It's magical.

Art is about contrast. How nature expresses the sacred geometry I see all around me. And I can't wait to explore it with paint or paper.

Art is an inside-outside thing for me. My piece "Untitled" just came from somewhere inside me; and I followed it in color, line, even rhythms undulating sensuously in and around what I cannot name. A tiny flower erupting through the snow offering the promise of spring. These things move me to want to paint. Art is my response to what I see around me.

Marla West

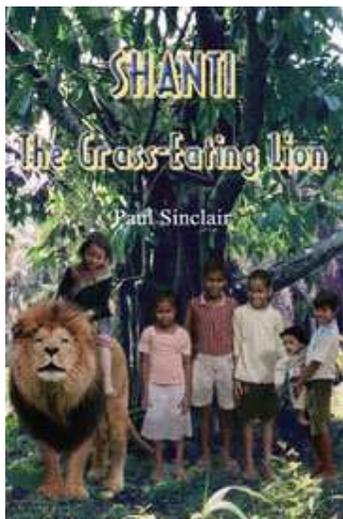
Board update

In the spirit of the current Fellowship theme, "Transition and Transformation in a Shared Ministry," the Board launched into the November meeting attending to business as usual, but with a commitment to ask ourselves the hard questions in our work together and a willingness to embrace opportunities for transformation. We received the first quarter fiscal report from Debbie Coggins, and the Board continues to be very appreciative of the valuable service she provides the Fellowship. Katherine Almy will work with Debbie to provide back-up for financial work as needed. Jillian always provides a detailed update on the activity of Religious Education, and Chip offers conscientious treasurer reports.

To facilitate better coordination among Fellowship committees with responsibilities for Sunday services, the Board decided to organize a joint meeting in January between Program and Worship, Religious Education, and Membership. This meeting will have a focused agenda and we will do some planning to better structure what we do together on Sunday mornings.

Board members had a lengthy discussion about the annual Canvass and decided that each Board member will take an active role in the Canvass. We are seeking to make it more personable and are considering hosting small gatherings in our homes during the spring pledge season to better connect to members. The finance committee is going to create a long-range financial plan to help us prepare for the Canvass as well. We also discussed two potential ideas for a winter fundraiser and the desire for this fundraiser to be enjoyable for Fellowship members and welcoming for the community.

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Shanti the Grass-eating Lion

I've written a fictional charity book which I hope will provide an inexpensive, worthwhile alternative Christmas.

The book is called *Shanti the Grass-eating Lion*, and all profits made from the book go to orphanages and other child welfare work. It uses parables in the guise of Shanti the Lion's adventures to promote the power of non-violence and forgiveness. It also helps people to reach a deeper understanding of the world around them. It was written to contribute to world peace by countering the effects of parents teaching their children to hate others because of ethnic origin, ideology and cultural differences and so on. The book teaches children and young people to focus on what they have in common with others instead of differences. The book also comes with a free website resource to help get children and young people into volunteering; it lists hundreds of group projects they can get involved in to make the world a better place.

For more information and reviews see <http://www.grasseatinglion.org/Book/book-index.html>

Paul Sinclair
Shanti Lion Children's Trust

Religious Education



December 4

Preschool: We will talk about helpfulness. How can we be helpful to our family, friends and in our community? We will read Uncle Willy and The Soup and make a mobile.

K-2nd: We will talk about manners. What are good manners? What are bad manners? We will also learn some sign language around this topic.

3rd & 4th: We will learn about and celebrate Santa Lucia Day. We will make special buns to give out and dress up in fun costumes to deliver them.

Intermediate: We're going to explore the story of Hanukkah. Come see what and where this important story comes from.

December 11

We will gather together in Sanctuary to be entertained by the Chamber Readers. Holiday stories, singing together and fun activities. We will decorate cookies (and nibble some) for the homeless shelter and make ornaments for our tree.

December 18

Preschool: Celebrate the Solstice. Let's wake up the sun! We will make fimo dough suns.

K-2nd: We will continue our exploration of what manners are. Why are they important? Different manners at different homes. More sign language fun.

3rd & 4th: We will learn about the celebration of Chalica. Come find out what this is.

Intermediate: We will look at the bible story of Christmas. What's different from our understanding as UUs?

December 25

Happy holiday!

Jillian Mooney

Board, continued from page 4

We have some excitement about doing a video about activity at the Fellowship to be aired on Access Humboldt, so we will keep you alerted when we are about to become famous. All the Board members felt the value of the presence of Dennis, our new minister, at our meeting. He has leaped into the richness of our Fellowship life and all the Board members are thankful. Finally, the Board recognizes that 'transition' and 'transformation' can be a little messy at times; but we are a community full of promise, and we hope members will relish the path we are on.

Wendy Rowan, Secretary

Council of Chairs meeting summary

The Council of Chairs, which consists of the chairs of HUUF's 27 committees, met on November 9 to discuss committee goals and hear about the Board's goals for the year. Present were Nancy Cook (Finance), Stephen Sottong and Katherine Almy (P&W), Joy Thomas (Newsletter), Awanna Kalal (Membership), Tracy Jordan French (RE), Dennis Reynolds (minister), Greg Blomstrom (vice president of the Board of Trustees), Ursula Osborne (Social Action), Shay MacKay (Building Use), Susan Allen (Personnel), Jan Rowen (Hospitality), and Danielle Stubblefield and Marianne Pennekamp (Nominating committee). Each person described their committee's goals. Highlights include:

◆ **Program & Worship:** Very excited to have a Consulting Minister. Still in need of committee members. Small group of dedicated folks who manage to get things done. Steve and Katherine both stepping down at end of June; we need to find someone to move into that position.

◆ **Social Action:** Julie Neander has taken over coffee sales. Continuing to do weekly/monthly events while honing those processes and adding more issues all the time. Planning to do a Sunday program to present to the congregation all issues SAC supports and asking them which they would like to continue to support.

◆ **Religious Education:** Integrating families more with the greater congregation. Really excited about Dennis's early childhood education background. Created a new age-group class this year to accommodate a group of tweens, with a whole new curriculum developed by Sandy Lynn. Jillian Mooney said to call Jesika Mitchell if you need childcare during meetings/events. Having children snack with the adults after service is not working, so the children are going back to having their snack in the CARE building. Katherine says it seems to her the RE families are doing their part to integrate, but the larger congregation needs to step up and meet them half way.

◆ **Membership, Awanna Kalal:** Main goal is to strengthen membership by increasing our numbers and integrating new members. Would like to continue the Welcoming table outside when weather permits. Wants to have a variety of door greeters including teens. Areas to improve: Revisit the sponsor program since it currently isn't really successful; Within six months new members should feel that they belong; Wants to take another look at Inquirers' Class format; Wants to provide more structured opportunities to learn about UUs. Will recruit more people to the committee.

Thank you to everyone who attended.

Greg Blomstrom, Vice President, Board of Trustees



Transforming ourselves and the world

Registration is open for February's Pacific Central District workshop which will focus on transforming the failures of the twentieth century with an engaged faith for the future. Please bring a team of leaders with you. There will be time for working with your congregational team and in cross-congregational networking.

Saturday, February 4, UU Church of Berkeley

9 a.m. registration; 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. program

Lunch will be served.

\$40 registration; \$10 childcare

This is the first workshop in the "Transforming Ourselves and the World" series. Each workshop in the series will explore:

- How to liberate liberal religion and be transformative change agents.
- How congregations can thrive and become more vital centers of personal and social transformation.
- How to transform stories of the past into a legacy for the future.
- How to work together to create a new future for Unitarian Universalism and the world.
- How to be transformed as religious leaders in the process.

Each workshop is independent and builds toward a brighter future. For maximum transformation and impact please gather a team and attend the full series.

Limited work-study scholarships are available.

Workshop presenters are: Rev. Robert Latham (District Executive), and Rev. Jeanelyse Adams (Director of Congregational Services).

Registration: <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=mk4zlobab&oeidk=a07e59plbkh22dd6b12>

Sunday services

December 4 – 10:30 a.m. NAMI serving Humboldt

Edith Fritzsche & Ira Blatt

Two volunteers from NAMI Humboldt, the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will discuss community activities, mental health advocacy and educational programs that this nonprofit, totally volunteer organization provides to the community. NAMI Humboldt President Edith Fritzsche and Past President Ira Blatt will describe how they advocate for those who have a mental illness, as well as the support they provide for well family members. NAMI also offers a variety of educational courses free to our community.

December 11 – 10:30 a.m. Songs, treats and decorating the tree

Come enjoy seasonal stories presented by the Chamber Readers and music from our choir. Make holiday treats — some for nibbling, some for giving to others. We will also sing carols together and decorate the HUUF tree with our Fellowship family.

December 18 – 10:30 a.m. Season of Darkness, Season of Light

Dennis Reynolds, consulting minister, and the HUUF Choir

This is the season of long nights and short days. It is the time when we create festivals and celebrations that kindle light in our homes and in our hearts. As we head into this time of celebration let us blend silence and song and shared words to nurture the light which shines within and amongst us. We pause, too, to explore the light and dark aspects of human behaviors.

December 25 – 10:30 a.m. Cider Sunday

Dennis Reynolds, consulting minister

Our new consulting minister will lead HUUF members and friends of the Fellowship in a holiday time of sharing stories of the season. Cider and coffee will be provided; please bring Christmas goodies to share.

Additional seasonal gatherings:

December 22 – 7 p.m. Solstice Spiral – Dennis Reynolds, consulting minister

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December 24 – 7 p.m. A Christmas Eve gathering

The traditions of our childhoods and the Christmas story serve as powerful metaphors for the birth of new possibilities of peace and love. Let us gather in a traditional candlelight celebration of the power of possibilities that the Christmas story, in word and in song, offer to us all.

God Rest Ye, Unitarians

God rest ye, Unitarians,
Let nothing you dismay.
Remember there's no evidence
There was a Christmas day.
When Christ was born is just not
known
No matter what they say.
O tidings of reason and fact, reason
and fact,
Glad tidings of reason and fact.

Our current Christmas custom
Come from Persia and from
Greece.
From solstice celebrations of the
ancient Middle East.
The whole darn Christmas spiel is
just another pagan feast.
O tidings of reason and fact, reason
and fact,
Glad tidings of reason and fact.

There was no star of Bethlehem,
There was no angel's song.
There couldn't have been wise men
'cause
The trip would take too long.
The stories in the Bible are
historically wrong.
O tidings of reason and fact, reason
and fact,
Glad tidings of reason and fact.

Author unknown





Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Kim Moor
Treasurer Chip Sharpe

Newsletter Editor Joy Thomas
Calendar Editor Shay MacKay

Where's the calendar?

There is no calendar in this issue of the newsletter because no calendar information was received this month. It is to be hoped that the information will be posted on HUUF's website soon. You will find the Sunday services on page seven.

Joy Thomas, editor

Deadline Tuesday, December 20

Please e-mail articles to joythomas3828@gmail.com. Print and .pdf items are not accepted. If you need a copy of the newsletter guidelines, contact me. Please note that this is a new email address.

Joy Thomas, editor

