



The UUCG Beacon



President's Notes

On Writing

Okay, so it's time for me to write my first article back in the "President's Corner" and I had this great idea to write about a Science Fiction theme and some deeper images in the stories and relate them to where we are in our journey as a Congregation in the midst of a Ministerial and likely many other transitions. When I started on the second page of my typing, I realized that I wasn't even close to my conclusion yet, despite stopping myself from going into much detail on several concepts which I personally find fascinating.

If you've been with our Congregation long enough to remember the last time I was in the President's Corner (2007-2009), you might remember that my President's Corners rarely fit "in the corner" of the newsletter devoted to that purpose. (I know at least some people read them, because I'd often get comments... about the content, not the length.) Yes, I admit, I can generally fill some column inches. I went back through back issues of the Beacon and found that 18 times out of 23, the bottom of the front page had a "continued on page ___" down at the bottom. The first four months were all single-pagers, but three of those had a noticeably smaller font to accomplish the task. Finally in my fifth message, I busted onto a second page, and also actually a good portion of a third.

But in the reality of our increasingly digital climate, I need to go back to my roots and remember how I learned inverse-pyramid writing for my high school journalism class. When writing the news, you concentrate as much important information in the beginning as possible, and then you proceed to subsequent paragraphs with less important information, with the least important at the end. The idea behind this is that when it is determined that there isn't enough room for the whole story, you can cut from the end rather than having to go back and edit out content throughout to make it fit. This also works for reading either in a newspaper or digital medium. The reader may edit you by simply stopping reading without reaching the end.

This isn't how I think, though. I tend to introduce an idea; weave my way through the topic with whatever point and substantiation that feel important to mention, hoping you see all the reasons I feel a topic is important; and then bring it all together at the end so you come to the same brilliant conclusion that I did (or maybe it was just good in my mind).

By now, I'm certainly already on the second page, and hopefully you're still reading. It feels short to me. There were several ideas I had in my head, but by the time I got to where I might put them, they don't feel like they fit anymore with the direction I took sometime in-between, so they are never explored, except for maybe next month? As for my original idea, I'll still share it with you, but in a more appropriate forum. I'll be doing the service on August 31st. For those of you who may be away during that Labor Day weekend, I'll make sure to post the text online in the case that you might be curious about what you missed and what I had to say. Even though it's about Science Fiction, it's also about our current time of transition. Being the day before the new Minister officially starts, hopefully it will be timely as well.

Rich Elkins, UUCG President

Worship

8/3 "Earth Centered Religious Practices: Separating Myth from practice"

In an effort to bring us together, a series of services are planned that focus on the religious practices that not all congregation members are familiar with. This service will focus on Earth Centered Religious practices and will aim to enlighten and educate on the practices of this diverse group of people. Hopefully we can dispel certain myths and rumors along the way. Led by Michelle Covi and Michael Betteken

8/10 "On Growing Older"

"On Growing Older" - a revealing look at what it's like to suddenly find you are "older"- a personal journey. Led by Judi Hickson

8/17 "Grieving- A Moment by Moment Process"

I would like to share my belief about Death. What is grief and how it affects our lives. Sharing my process of grieving the death of my son with the congregation will be therapeutic for me and hopefully educational for the congregation. Led by Gladie Hamilton

8/24 Ethics of reciprocity the Golden Rule

Led by Laura Schroeder

8/31 "Control-Alt-Delete (reboot)"

Control-Alt-Delete is the key sequence in older Personal Computers to call for a "reboot" of the computer. In this service, at this time of new starts, we'll explore the idea of reboots in Science Fiction series and discover how that applies to us in our current situation as our next season premiers soon! Led by Rich Elkins.

Staff

Interim Minister: Rev. Rod Debs
Music Director: Mort Stine
Choir Director: Sue Jefferson
RE Director: Lilani Butler Masters

Board of Trustees

President: Rich Elkins
Vice President: Brenda Stewart
Secretary: Shannon Terry
Treasurer: Feryl Masters
At Large: Cam Scales
At Large: Terry Shank
Past President: Tom Thielen

Committee Chairs

Building and Grounds:

Chris Federico & Bob Hudson

Caring:

Ruel Tyer & Ruth Abrahamson

Communications:

Rich Elkins

Fellowship:

Cheryl Federico

Finance:

Richard Baltaro

Fundraising:

Patrice Alexander & Jennifer Schultz

Hospitality:

Kim Flemming & Holly Brown

Membership:

Susan Foreman

Social Action:

Ray Sobel & Ann Eleanor

Stewardship:

Patrice Alexander & Feryl Masters

Worship:

Michael Bettekin

Youth Religious Education:

Shannon Terry &
Christy Hoppenthaler

Developmental Minister's Reflections



Growing up in Ohio in the 1950's, I never imagined I would let go of my Evangelical Friends faith to study philosophy, practice Buddhism, attend a Methodist seminary, and become a Unitarian Universalist pastor. Though I rather like to stay put, Unitarian Universalist ministry has taken me from Boston University School of Theology to Texas (four years) to Iowa (nine years) to the Florida panhandle (eleven years), and now to share ministry with you in North Carolina. This calling is very much about connections and change.

I watch my father, 91, letting go of his love for fishing, letting go of sixty years of pastoral ministry. He is pretty much full-time care-giver for Mom as she goes from hospital to rehab to assisted living and back. I will have to be letting go of Mom and Dad soon, I know.

You too know the loss and sadness of letting go. At this writing, your beloved Terry Shank is dying. Terry has been mother of the congregation for some forty-five years, I understand, a nurturing and strong mother determined that for our faith community in Greenville, failure is not an option.

Although I couldn't imagine it in my youth, I am learning that all of life is temporary. Where I live, the rental Jeannette and I will move into, and the work we do is only temporary. My gardening and my rabbits out back are only temporary; I'll be leaving them to a farmer in Florida.

I am only temporarily a spouse, only temporarily the father of our daughter in Colorado. My loved ones and friends of many years are only temporary. In part because of their impermanence, they are precious.

Marjorie Montgomery said, "Life is a gift for which we are grateful. We gather in community to celebrate the glories and the mysteries of this great gift."

I am only temporarily able-bodied. I am only temporarily able to join with you to nurture an open-hearted and vibrant religious community of mutual trust and support. I am only temporarily able to affirm and promote Unitarian covenant community that we're all in this together and Universalist compassion that no one be left out.

May the privilege of being alive be ever more precious to the point that we do not have time or energy for whatever does not affirm and promote life's ever-widening mutual relations and wholeness.

May we renew our joyful celebration of this unlikely and temporary gift.

Rod Debs



FUNdraising

The Fundraising Committee has been talking about some of the "tried and true" activities and some new possibilities when it comes to the fundraisers that contribute a significant amount to UUCG's operating budget - for this year our goal is \$8,000. Committee co-chairs are Jennifer Schultz and Patrice Alexander; committee members include Feryl Masters (carwash & McAlister's), Claudia Sundman (Barnes & Nobles gift wrapping), and Jennifer Thielen & Gail Butler (yard sale). We want to plan activities that both raise money and are fun for all!

One of the newer fundraisers we have decided to start with is BINGO! We tried a Bingo night a couple of years ago and had a good time when the weather cooperated! So this time we have scheduled our first Bingo night in August - the first one is scheduled for Friday, August 8th, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided. We are hoping to make this a bi-monthly event and alternate it with a Friday Games night. Anyone like to play Scrabble, Trivial Pursuit, 500 Rummy, Boggle, Pictionary, etc.??? If you do please let us know and plan to join us for the first Games night on September 5th. Since these are fundraisers there will be a small charge to participate and we are encouraging members and friends to bring all their family and friends.

Another idea that we came up with - every other month on the second Friday we are going to try to have "TGIF Dinners for a Donation." We plan to alternate them with the bi-monthly Art Receptions so we are in the process of finalizing those dates - please stay tuned!

Other ideas that we are exploring: a Dog Wash, a teens lock-in with pizza and movies, a musical evening with performances by congregational members, friends, and family, and an expanded Service Auction. We are searching for unique ideas that will enable us to involve the entire community - not just UUCG members. So, please let us know if you have an idea for a possible fundraising activity or project.

We will need help to make all these activities a success. Several members and friends have expressed interest in helping with the committee and working on some of these projects. Please contact Jennifer or Patrice to let us know how you can help and to share your ideas. This is all about working and playing together to reach our goal!!

Now, Kalamas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that, 'These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness' — then you should enter & remain in them.
Gautama Siddharta, "Buddha"

Social Action

Social Action Committee – Past, Now, Going Forward

Article for “The Beacon”

UUCG’s primary charity is the Cancer Support Community. Before I came to UUCG, I believe there was a congregational meeting to decide what organization(s) would be ‘adopted.’ There was some conflicting opinions as to how many and how long the organization(s) would be ‘adopted.’ While CSC was the selected charity, some congregation members wanted to support a wider range of organizations. Until and unless, UUCG as a congregation decides to change that priority, CSC will be the primary focus.

Fortunately, there is an established group of UUs, who organize, guide, and manage CSC. I’m sure they can always use more help but it does leave open the possibility to support other charities.

Organizations UUCG supports/serves and our various levels of support:

On-going

- Greenville Community Shelter Action Group--committed to a number of nights a month to assist with check-in; also donation of cleaning and household supplies.
- First Born Community Development Center--monthly; 4th Saturday; delivers donations of non-perishable food stuffs, used grocery bags.
- Family Violence Prevention--donate used cell phones; collected phones are periodically delivered to Greenville Police Department for distribution to victims of family violence
- Adopt a City Street (Oakmont St)--clean-up at least twice a year
- Share the Plate (previously 5th Sunday)--donate 1/2 the non-designated Sunday offering with a local organization; organization changes monthly focus is on smaller local groups that may not have deep pocket supports. UUs can nominate charities; ask for organization nomination form.

Annually

- Silent Vigil for Reproductive Rights--late January, meet on steps of courthouse; stand silently to show support for reproductive rights
- CROP Walk October – UUCG joins with other local churches to raise funds and promote awareness of local, national, and global hunger
- Guest at Your Table--Thanksgiving – donation program to support individuals that UUA have identified who take social justice directly to those in need. Guest boxes are distributed in early fall and collected at Thanksgiving. All monies go to UUA.

Use of UUCG space for variety of community activities--Provide free or reduced rent to use our space; doesn’t require UUCG volunteers

- Safe place for LGBT community to socialize
- Vegetarians, Buddhists, Sierra Club, Girl Scouts
- Eastern Carolina Interfaith Alliance (rotates among participating churches)

As with most other things in our lives, extra hands, time, and ideas are always needed. The Social Action Committee for 2014-2015 officially are--Ray Sobel, Ann Eleanor, and Pat Tesh.

Social Action—continued

The following UUs are currently volunteering for social activity or indicated an interest in working with/on Social Action this year--Rebecca Woelkers, Katie Ayers, Grace Hoskins, Helen & Hank Foster, Ruth Abrahamson, Bob Hudson, and Fred Crawmer.

Ray, Pat, and Ann met recently to discuss 'going forward.' Pat suggested UUs select a significant social justice issue and periodically stand, protest, inform citizens about the issue. A Pitt County "We Care Wednesday" perhaps, modeled after the Moral Monday events. Members are encouraged to suggest projects they feel we should undertake, with the understanding that suggesting a project implies personal commitment to that project.

I hope this has provided additional understanding of UUCG's Social Action commitment "Past, Now, and Going Forward."

Ann Eleanor

Meet Reverend Debs!!

There is much excitement in the air at UUCG as we prepare to welcome Rev. Rod Debs and his wife Jeannette, into our community! The Debs are busy preparing to move from their home in Florida to Greenville sometime in late August.

By way of introduction, Rev. Debs has been a UU minister for some 24 years, being ordained at the UU Society of Wellesley Hills in Wellesley, MA in May of 1990. Since then, he has served churches in Richardson, Texas, in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and, for the last eleven years, has been the first full-time, called minister at the UU Fellowship of the Emerald Coast in Valparaiso, Florida.

Rod's wife, Jeannette, has had a very impressive career herself, serving several organizations in the areas of childcare management services, child abuse, and domestic violence. Their daughter, Katrina, has a BA in International Studies and is currently working as an organic farmer in Colorado.

Rod has had a very interesting life even before his embarking on his UU path, having been a worker in both metal stamping and furniture foam fabrication plants, on an automatic electrical assembly of printed circuit boards, and in the area of statistical process quality control for printed circuit boards, cables and cable harnesses. He has been involved in union organizing and has fought for many causes in which he believes.

Just for grins: Since their daughter was a child, Rod has raised and shown pedigreed Mini Rex and Holland Lop rabbits. (*Note: The rabbits may not be as enthusiastic about moving to Eastern NC as Rod and Jeannette are....so we may have to settle for photos of the little guys!*)

We are all greatly looking forward to learning more about Jeannette and Rod during their time with us! With their impressive and varied backgrounds, it's gonna' be a FUN RIDE!!!!

~ August 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sometimes I think the surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is that none of it has tried to contact us.					1	2
3 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30am Worship 12:00pm Lunch Groups	4 6:00pm Science of the Mind	5 8:00am Breakfast Group 7:30pm KTC Buddhist Meditation	6	7	8 6:30pm Bingo Night	9
10 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30am Worship 12:00pm Lunch Groups	11 6:00pm Science of the Mind 7:00pm Board Meeting	12 8:00am Breakfast Group 7:30pm KTC Buddhist Meditation	13	14	15 1:00pm Women's Lunch Group	16
17 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30am Worship 12:00pm Lunch Groups 5:00 Vegetarians in Pitt County	18 6:00pm Science of the Mind	19 8:00am Breakfast Group 7:30pm KTC Buddhist Meditation	20	21	22	23 8:30am First Born Food Dist.
24 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30am Worship 12:00pm Lunch Groups 12:00pm Shelter Action Group	25 6:00pm Science of the Mind 7:00pm Book Club	26 8:00am Breakfast Group 6:00pm Democracy NC 7:30pm KTC Buddhist Meditation	27	28	29 1:00pm Women's Lunch Group	30
31 9:30 am Mindfulness Meditation 10:30am Worship 12:00pm Lunch Groups	History is the fiction we invent to persuade ourselves that events are knowable and that life has order and direction.					

The UUCG Beacon is published every month, on or before the last Sunday of the month. It is posted electronically to both the church website and the church Facebook page. It is also emailed with the weekly NUUS following publication.

If you are receiving this copy by mail, please consider using one of the methods above. If you must receive a paper copy (and we are glad to do so) please contact the church office OR email the beacon at the email address below OR contact Toni Broshears directly. Thank you.

Deadline for next month's **Beacon** is Tuesday, **August 26 at 8:00 pm**
Send articles to beacon@uugreenvillenc.org

Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Greenville
131 Oakmont Drive
Greenville, NC 27858

