

CLL NOTES

Meditation for July

“Humans must rise above the Earth... to the top of the atmosphere and beyond. For only thus will we understand the world in which we live. [Socrates, 400 BC]; “Once a photograph of the Earth, taken from the outside, is available—a new idea as powerful as any in history will be let loose.” [Fred Hoyle, British Astrophysicist, 1948]; “The first day or so we all pointed to our countries. The third or fourth day we were pointing to our continents. By the fifth day we were aware of only one earth.” [Sultan Bin Salmon al-Saudi, Saudi Arabia, SS 5-G].

This Fellowship year has been memorable. We have accomplished a great deal and have had fun doing it. None-the-less, I think many of us are ready for summer’s change of pace. Certainly, I am looking forward to having some more time to myself. In case any of us do have time for summer reading, I recommend the Rev. Nancy Roth’s book *Grounded in Love: Ecology, Faith, and Action*. Those of us who attended the forum during which Nancy talked about her book realize that although she is hoping to reach a Christian audience, she has worked hard to make her book accessible to a wide audience.

Nancy begins by asking, “How do we ‘ground in love’ our relationship to the earth which is our home?” She describes a variety of meaningful activities to achieve this grounding, from cherishing children to contemplating the night sky. From Love, she turns to reasons for Concern, to discussion of Ethics, to suggestions for Action and reasons for Hope. In each of these sections, her thoughtful observations and contemplative exercises are appealing to me right now. During the next month, I hope to rest, meditate and regroup. In the Action section, Nancy emphasizes the importance of understanding nature’s designs and trying to live in within these constraints. (The book is not political and does not advocate courses of political action. The approach is entirely consistent with one of her aims—reaching Christian people not yet aware that environmental awareness and faith support each other.)

During the forum on June 29, Megan pointed out that the journey of this book is an important task for those who believe in the Gods or God, but surely also for those who do not so believe. Many in our UU denomination, those who are theists and those who are not, do center our beliefs within the earth, within the cosmos. Whatever sacredness means to us, our earth is sacred.

The first part of this book lays out basic principles that show us that we are part of a larger worldwide movement given strength by humankind’s new awareness of the earth seen from space. (Once again, Socrates amazes!) Nancy becomes eloquent, “The stars beat in our very blood, as we earthlings step outside at night for a breath of fresh air. It is no wonder they calm us, for we are looking at our origins; from stardust, everything on our planet was created. ... our real origin is both more complicated and more wondrous than [the Hebrew creation story]. We are not merely part of the earth; we are part of the cosmic beauty we see above us.”

I am grateful that preparing for Nancy’s forum started off my summer reading with a subject close to my heart. I hope that all of you may be so fortunate this summer.

I’m looking forward to seeing at least some of you at the picnics planned for July 6 and August 1. May we all let some ease into our lives!

Cheers,

Barbara A. Fuchsman, Commissioned Lay Leader

NEW BOARD ELECTED

Cindy Frantz is Chairperson, Jo Huber is vice chair, Stephanie Gibson continues as Treasurer, Elizabeth Aldrich is Secretary, Laura Huth is member at Large, as is Virginia Erdy, and L.D. Moore is seated as Past Chair. Many thanks to those willing to serve.

SERVICE FOR NAN SZWAJA

A memorial service to celebrate the life of Nan Szwaja will be held on August 2, at 2:00 PM in the auditorium in the Heiser Center at Kendal at Oberlin. The Rev. Peggy Clason will lead the service.

COVENANT GROUPS

In need of a little soul-tending this summer?

Do you have enough time in your life? For things that feed your spirit, spark creativity? Consider joining a **Covenant Group** where people connect with friends, discuss issues of the day, larger life issues. **Groups are open and new members are warmly welcomed.** For information, please contact facilitator, Barbara Fuchsman. If you need child care in order to come, please contact Barbara to arrange for the group to support the cost. **During the summer, one covenant group will meet at 1:30 PM on Thursday, July 17 and July 31.** On July 17, we will meet at Barbara Fuchsman's home—in the garden, weather permitting.

UU FLOOD RELIEF

In the aftermath of devastating floods that have wreaked havoc on several Midwestern states, the UUA and the Prairie Star and Heartland Districts have announced the launch of individual District relief funds to provide assistance to UUs in Indiana and Iowa whose homes have been severely damaged or destroyed by flood waters.

As of June 17, no UU church properties are known to have sustained substantial damage. However numerous members of local congregations have incurred flood damage.

In Iowa City at least fifteen parishioners' homes have been flooded, and the property of the University of Iowa, a significant source of employment in the area, was heavily damaged, impacting job security for residents. In Indiana, the Terre Haute congregation is trying to provide assistance to members, including the retired minister of the congregation, whose homes have been flooded. The city of Columbus has been extremely hard-hit, and a number of congregants have lost everything.

To contribute aid to the district relief funds, please address your check and mail it as follows:

Prairie Star District UUA

122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 303
Minneapolis, MN 55404

info@psduua.org

(612) 870-4823

Online donations may be made by going to

<http://www.psduua.org/> ;

updates will be posted at this site as well.

Heartland District of the UUA

445 N. Pennsylvania St., Suite 510
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1893

(317) 634-5384

(toll-free) (888) 948-4883

Updates will be made to <http://>

www.heartlanduu.org/ .

GREEN JOURNAL

"Using Summer Energy Wisely" is the July-August 2008 topic for the Interfaith Committee for the Environment (ICE) and the focus of our on-going congregational effort to earn certification as a Green Sanctuary. ICE brings small, doable tasks to the community each month in an effort to involve more people in helping to improve our global environment and to address issues of environmental justice in our community. (Items in *italics* are OUF tweaks.)

How can we use summer energy wisely?

**If you must use air conditioning, follow the guidelines below.*

Set the thermostat at 78 degrees or higher for the most energy efficient operation. Each degree below this setting adds 6% to your cooling costs.

Use a programmable thermostat to routinely raise the inside temperature while you are away from home for 4 hr. or longer. Pre-set the thermostat to adjust back to your normal comfort range 30 min. before getting home.

Do not place lamps near your thermostat. The thermostat senses the heat produced from the lamp and causes the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Use fans to move the air inside your home. This gives the sensation that it is 5 degrees cooler than the actual temperature.

Shade windows on the sunny side of your home. Keep drapes closed or add room-darkening shades to block out the heat from the sun.

Save heat producing chores, such as cooking, drying clothes and using an automatic dishwasher, for the cooler parts of the day.

Use your programmable thermostat to automatically increase the temperature setting at bedtime. Sleep under lightweight bedding and use fans during sleep.

Keep the air conditioner condensing unit clear from dried mud, debris and grass clippings because it needs to breathe.

Check your air conditioner's filter on a regular basis.

Do not set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in unnecessary expense.

**If possible, avoid using air conditioning. Use fans wisely, as suggested above. During the day, keep the house closed. At night, open windows and doors. Use window fans to exhaust hot air from the house and bring in the cool night air.*

Each participating congregation in ICE has a poster for each project. We ask everyone in the Fellowship who joins in the summer project in some way to sign the appropriate poster. Remember to look for our "Using Summer Energy Wisely" poster in the lobby when we gather again in September and add your name if you participated in the July-August effort.

Ohio-Meadville District UUA Trustee Election Process Begins

Our current UUA Trustee, Pat Solomon, will end her second term on the UUA board in June of 2009. The district is now starting the process of finding her replacement. Trustees must be a legal resident and member of a certified church or fellowship in the district. Pat has described the effective District Trustee as someone who meets these qualifications: Someone who has a broad and deep understanding of Unitarian Universalism, with significant experience as a congregational leader, and district or broader UU leadership experience and/or participation. Also knowledge of the district is important -- congregations and geography, programs and initiatives, strengths and opportunities, lay and ministerial leadership -- as is a track record of effective group work and leadership in a variety of life settings. An understanding of and commitment to our Association's anti-racist, anti-oppressions, multicultural journey and future is essential. Some understanding and experience with Policy Governance would be helpful. The election process of a District UUA Trustee is spelled out in our bylaws and requires that interested parties file a statement of intent and a letter of nomination from their congregational president by September 26th. If you are interested in this position, please visit the OMD website at www.ohiomeadville.org and click on "UUA Trustee" or call the district office to learn more.

Beth Casebolt
District Administrator
Ohio Meadville District
office@ohiomeadville.org
Phone: 740-252-5980 Fax: 866-460-7969
PO Box 157
St. Clairsville, OH 43950
www.ohiomeadville.org

OUUF

MPO Box 0354
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(440) 935-3812. Email: webmaster@ouuf.org. Website:
www.ouuf.org. RE Director: Shelly Rasmussen. Chair:
L.D. Moore. Vice Chair: Eleanor Helper. Secretary:
Virginia Erdy. Treasurer: Stephanie Gibson. Editor:
Dave Burwasser. Webmaster: Cal Frye

A NOTE OF THANKS

There are so many people to thank but I wanted to especially thank Eleanor Helper, Barbara Fuchsman, and Jennifer Porterfield for their dedication and quiet work as Trustees of the Fellowship, as they leave the Board. This is behind the scenes work and can easily go unrecognized and underappreciated. Their work, along with the other Trustees, is in part conservative in nature but my own experience is that this Fellowship can be grateful because its Trustees are also forward thinking and committed enough to take the kind of risks needed to support and foster vitality in the Fellowship.

And thank you to Virginia Erdy for rejoining the Trustees and welcome as new Trustees to Cindy Frantz as Chairperson, Elizabeth Aldrich as Secretary, and Laura Huth as Trustee at Large.

And of the many, many others that I can think of to thank, I want to mention Jason Wnek's enthusiasm and work. I hope you have noticed how open, welcoming, and spacious the area we use for services has become. Well, that is largely the work of Jason's continually looking for ways of improving the use of that space. Thank you, Jason, for the quiet transformation of the space we've been using into what has become truly like a sanctuary.

L.D. Moore, Past Chair