



## UUSBHC December Newsletter

2003

### CONSCIOUS LIVING CORNER

The season of rampant consumerism approaches, when we are supposed to prove our love for family and friends by the quality and quantity of THINGS we purchase for them. In the spirit of conscious living, how can we avoid conspicuous consumption and make gift-giving more meaningful? Here are a few ideas:

- 🎁 If you have a large extended family, suggest a system of drawing names rather than everyone buying presents for everyone. With fewer gifts to purchase, you will be able to put more thought into each one.
- 🎁 Give an experience, not a thing: tickets to a play, a series of music lessons, membership to a museum, a massage, a workshop, etc. You can add a gift of your time by accompanying the recipient to the event.
- 🎁 Give something handmade. You can make it yourself (it doesn't have to be a masterpiece to be appreciated) or give something handmade by someone else. Helping independent craftspeople make a living is an added bonus.
- 🎁 If you are giving to a child, make it something that is powered by imagination. Building blocks, a collection of bright scarves for dress-up, craft supplies, etc., encourage the child to create something rather than being a passive "consumer". We always tell extended family: "No batteries! No power cords!" on the gifts they buy us.
- 🎁 Children also love gifts that are unique to themselves. You can make a personalized book for a child by taking some photos, putting them in a one-picture-per-page photo album, and writing the text on an index card opposite each picture. Write the story of the child's life, a special trip or event, etc. If you have old family photos, make a book showing the different generations of your family. Children could even make their own photo-books to send to faraway relatives, with pictures of themselves, their friends, their pets, their school, etc.

Have a *conscious* holiday season!  
*Karen Impola*  
(for the Conscious Living Group)

### ANNOUNCING OUR UU DREAM TEAM

At the Special Congregational Meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2003 the congregation elected seven members to our Ministerial Search Committee. These seven members have agreed to take on the challenge of finding the next Minister for our Congregation.

Our dream is for the team to have completed its charge by the spring of 2005 so that our new Minister will be in residence by that fall.

The Search Committee will be conducting interviews and congregational surveys during this winter, spring, and summer as they gather the information they will need to put together our congregational record. Help make our dream come true by assisting the Search Committee when they ask for your help.

The Search Committee members are: *Lynn Brant, Jan Gallagher, Judith Harrington, Esther Kieffer, Pam Hays, Carolyn Hildebrandt, and Shanlee McNally.*

**EVENING OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> 4:30 p.m. - ?**

Come enjoy an evening of music, dance and food from around the world with *Erika Downs* on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. Celebrate the contributions Erika has made to the children of our Society with an intergenerational evening of folk dance. Learn (or observe) simple dances that will allow an experience of various countries' traditions through movement and music. Bring a potluck dish to share (preferably with international flavor) and a free spirit to dance (or just sit and clap to the beat!). Drinks and table service will be provided. Call *Juanita* (232-6819) or *Carolyn* (235-9285) with questions.

**OUR UU YOUTH IN THE NEWS--SERVICE PROJECTS ABOUND!**

We appreciate the gift the youth gave "children of all ages" at our Halloween Party on November 1<sup>st</sup> by creating the perfect haunted house. They had just the right mix of mystery and fun, and went "light of fright" to allow it to be age-appropriate for all. What a nice contribution (and it seemed they had a good time doing it, to boot!).

Special thanks to *Bryn Sumner* who did double duty remaking signs for our recycling center in the church kitchen. She's helping us live out our Seventh principle—"to promote respect for the interdependent web of life".

**CHECKING OFF YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT LIST**

Be sure to check out the Scrip table in the fellowship hall every Sunday. Scrip is a great gift idea—easy to mail—a great idea for those hard-to-buy-for people on your list. How about that teenager on your list—Best Buy or Burger King? Call or e-mail *Mica* at 291-6509 or <micallea@mchsi.com> to make sure the gift certificates you want will be in stock.

**LIBERATING BELIEFS**

The 2004 UU Women's Heritage Society Wall Calendar is for sale now. Stop by the Scrip table to look over this great resource. For \$15 you can support the UU Women's Heritage Society and get a calendar that will give you inspiring information about many UU women from our past and present.

**GIFTS TO YOUR CHURCH**

The "Gifts to your Church" tree has gone up again this year. It is on the wall in the fellowship hall. There are a number of items that aren't in the budget but would be welcomed additions. A few examples: new dry/erase bulletin board and chalk board in the fellowship hall, more Hymnals, a covered waste basket for the nursery and a second microphone for musical offerings. Check out the other suggested gifts on the tree. If there are some other needs that aren't on an ornament, please write it on an ornament with the estimated cost.

Please consider buying a gift for your church this year by putting your name on the ornament for the gift you would like to purchase, write a check for the amount (note Christmas gift in memo) and put the check in the envelope that is the "base" of the tree.

**TREATS AND TALENTS AUCTION A SUCCESS!**

November's Treats and Talents Auction raised nearly \$2,400 for our Society. Many thanks go out to Auctioneer *Frank Olson*, to *Mary Olson*, *Pam Hays* and *Mary Kay Madsen* for providing refreshments, and *Mica Lorenz* for recording sales. Special thanks to all of you who provided an amazing array of treats and talents for sale at the night's event.

A full listing of the treats and talents offered at the auction is posted on our website at <[www.UUSBHC.org](http://www.UUSBHC.org)>. Names of those who purchased the items are also posted, so donors can see who bought them. If you are interested in purchasing any of the items still remaining, just contact me at 291-6509 or at <[mikemica@mchsi.com](mailto:mikemica@mchsi.com)>.

Two items still available for purchase are worth noting. The first is Item #20: Cello-bration being offered by our own UU Cello Ensemble. Buy your ticket for the spring concert at auction price of \$10.00 and save money as tickets on sale at the door of the concert will cost you more.

The second is Item #36: "We're Having Fun at the YWCA". This item offers a pool party for the children. Tickets can be purchased at \$5.00 per person. You can also sponsor the cost of a child attending the pool party. Check it out!

*Mike Knapp*

## CEDAR AIDS SUPPORT SERVICES

Again, this year, the UUSBHC is assisting the Cedar AIDS Support Services (CASS) in collecting holiday gifts and other items for their clients. CASS serves over fifty clients in ten northeast Iowa counties, many of them living below the poverty level. This year, we are collecting items for two clients, along with daily living supplies like shampoo, lotion, paper towels, etc. A list of requested items is on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Cash donations are also welcome. Scrip gift cards for gas and restaurants would also be great! Please bring your items to the church, and *Sue Hill* will take care of them from there. For more information, contact Sue at <suehill6@mchsi.com>. Thanks!

### ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sundays from 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

**December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Conscious Living Circle**—A discussion group considering how we as individuals and as a congregation can deepen our commitment to live in harmony with the Earth.

**Racism Right Here in River City?**—The City of Cedar Falls has rendered its Human Rights Commission ineffective by laying off its staff. Explore this problem in the context of broader issues of diversity and exclusion in the community where many of us live.

**December 14<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Theology Discussion Group**

**Becoming a Welcoming Congregation**—This continues a series of discussions begun last spring, following a curriculum prepared by the UUA, that prepares our Society to be a truly welcoming congregation to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons. Led by our Board Chair, *Mica Lorenz*.

**December 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Conscious Living Circle**—A discussion group considering how we as individuals and as a congregation can deepen our commitment to live in harmony with the Earth.

**Winter Solstice Celebration - Deep Ecology Group**—Celebrate the waning and the return of the light, as the earth's rotation places the sun in the skies of the Northern Hemisphere for the shortest period of time of the year. This winter celebration predates Christianity by thousands of years and expresses the human yearning to understand and connect with the powerful cycles of nature that affect our lives.

**December 28<sup>th</sup>**

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### CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NOVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> -- DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>

#### **First hour – Alternative Activities**

We are studying Ramadan and next we will study famous UUUs.

#### **Second hour – Religious Education and Exploration**

##### **Session 2 – Holidays & Rituals**



The children will be studying rituals of different groups, countries and religion using information from books, the internet and expert guests. The rituals on which we will concentrate are: Death; Before and After Fasting; Harvest; Giving Thanks; Renewing the Spirit; and Welcoming the New Year. The groups will be using the books: Kids Around the World Celebrate!, The Best Feasts and Festivals from Many Lands by Lynda Jones, Special Times—Christian and Jewish Holidays, and internet resources.

## WELCOMING CONGREGATIONS

We are finishing up our Welcoming Congregations series this month with programs on December 14<sup>th</sup> and December 28<sup>th</sup>. Doing the workshops was one part of the process of becoming an official Welcoming Congregation. Next, we will be taking an official vote at our annual meeting in April deciding if we want to be recognized as a Welcoming Congregation. Other actions we can take are celebrating and affirming GLBT issues and history during the church year, participating in and supporting efforts to create justice, freedom and equality for GLBT persons and other actions such as creating a Welcoming Congregations Committee to offer programs at our society and to monitor our progress.

Civil rights issues for gays have become very prominent issues in today's society. We can expect them to continue to dominate discussions, especially during the politically charged atmosphere of a Presidential election year. It appears that ultra-conservatives intend to use the issue of gay marriage and what it terms as "special rights" for gays as a weapon in the political campaigns much as they used "women's lib" in previous political campaigns. (Recall the tactics used by these groups during the battle for an Equal Rights Amendment for Women.)

I urge everyone to be prepared to stand up against these tactics and to take a stand. Let's not let the proponents of so-called "family values" use their tactic of fear and ignorance to maintain discriminatory practices instead of embracing inclusion. Let's get our voices and our pens ready! There is a lot of good information on the UUA's position, materials and links on the UUA.org web site.

## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Happy Holidays to all!

I hope each of you have an opportunity to during this season. In my family the holiday with those family and friends that we don't see them we make that extra effort to contact them with rushes up and reminds us, "Hey...time is slipping friends."



spend some time with someone close and dear to you season is about making an extra effort to get together often enough. If we are not able to actually visit with letters and cards. It seems the Holiday season by...you're losing contact, don't forget your

If you haven't visited with your friends here at the Unitarian Universalist Society for awhile we invite you to come and enjoy the Holidays with us. Renew old friendships, meet some of our new members and re-connect!

*Mica Lorenz*

## UU EXTRA-CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Excerpted from "Belonging: The Meaning of Membership")

The UUA by-laws make provisions for Associate and Independent Affiliate Organizations. These groups offer places to interact with others who have similar opinions or identities. Currently, there are five theological/religious extra-congregational organizations associated with Unitarian Universalism: Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPS), Friends of Religious Humanism (FRH), UU Buddhist Fellowship (UUBF), UU Christian Fellowship (UUCF), and UU's for Jewish Awareness (UUJA).

The UUCF and FRH differ from the other three organizations in that either in the past or currently, the theological approach they advocate was or is the dominant theology of Unitarianism or Universalism and/or Unitarian Universalism.

Both Unitarianism and Universalism originated as part of the Christian tradition, and it was not until the middle of the twentieth century, with the rise of the Humanist movement, that individuals, let alone congregations, began to seriously question Christianity as a shared theological understanding. By the end of the twentieth century, a large proportion of our congregations were primarily Humanist in outlook.

On the other hand, the theological orientations represented in CUUPS, UUBF, and UUJA have not had that level of popular support and understanding in our congregations. Although CUUPS boasts the largest membership of any of these groups, only one percent of our congregational membership is involved in CUUPS.

For UU Christians, the existence of UUCF offers support and resources for Christians within our congregations. Although the predominant worship style in UU congregations follows the Reform Christian format (readings, hymns, sermon, with the sermon as the focal point of the service), many UU Christians do not feel affirmed in the worship. For them, Jesus and a liberal interpretation of the Christian Bible are important parts of their individual theologies, and they find that, depending on their local congregation, this is rarely supported.

Similar stories are told by those who are Humanist. Many Humanists have an abiding sense that the movement is losing its way in the recent swing toward the inclusion of more spiritual, religious language in programming at both the local and the continental levels. Gatherings of FRH at recent General Assemblies have spent time considering the nature of the shift in theological language. Many feel that they are in the process of losing their religious homes. They believe that Unitarian Universalism is moving away from its place in the theological/religious world and becoming very much like other liberal Christian communities. FRH strives to keep a Humanist stance alive and accepted within our UU congregations.

UUCF and FRH are united in their belief that congregational life should reflect their particular theological outlook, at least part of the time. Members of both organizations expect to hear language that reflects their theologies in services and in the music and readings. While the atheist Humanists bewail the addition of spirituality and “god-talk”, the Christians appreciate the inclusion but often long for explicitly Christian language and readings. There is an inherent tension in these requests: for Humanists and Christians alike, the ideal worship community would offer language that evokes their imagery and beliefs, without need of translation. However, it is a logical impossibility to use the language of both groups within the same service. One either uses language that includes Jesus or does not; there is no middle ground except for long-term balance.

Members of CUUPS long for imagery that evokes the goddess and earth centered spirituality. Pagan UUs seek out CUUPS on a continental and local level in order to find worship that is most meaningful to them. Although many of our congregations now celebrate some of the neo-pagan festivals and holy days (most notably the solstices and equinoxes), very few, if any, congregations are focused primarily around goddess and earth-centered spirituality. CUUPS provides an outlet and place of worship for many who identify with the neopagan movement.

For More information about these and other UU Affiliate groups go to the [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) web site.

\*\*\*\*\* 2003 \*\*\*\*\*

- DECEMBER 7 10:00 A.M. “DECK THE HALLS” – Kathy Klink-Zeitz and Del Carpenter  
Alternative Activity for Children  
11:00 A.M. Fellowship Time  
11:30 A.M. R.E. for Youth / Adult Education
- DECEMBER 14 10:00 A.M. “MID-WINTER REVELS” – Karen Impola  
Alternative Activity for Children  
11:00 A.M. Fellowship Time  
11:30 A.M. R.E. for Youth / Adult Education
- DECEMBER 21 10:00 A.M. “GETTING EVEN IS NOT EVEN” – Dr. Rahdi Al-Mabuk  
Alternative Activity for Children  
11:00 A.M. Fellowship Time  
11:30 A.M. R.E. for Youth / Adult Education
- DECEMBER 24 7:00 P.M. CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
- DECEMBER 28 10:00 A.M. “LETTING GO” – John Miller and Judith Harrington  
Alternative Activity for Children  
11:00 A.M. Fellowship Time  
11:30 A.M. R.E. for Youth / Adult Education

