

Gorge UU News

September 2008



A monthly publication of Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

IN A WELCOMING FELLOWSHIP OF LOVE AND COMPASSION

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OUR MISSION IS TO NURTURE INDIVIDUAL
SPIRITUAL BELIEF AND GROWTH WITHIN A
WELCOMING COMMUNITY



Room for Different Beliefs
Yours

President's Letter

Henry Snell, *Men Movements and Myself* (1936)

“Although I had become a member of the National Secular Society, and no longer believed in the verbal inspiration of the bible, in miracles, the biblical story of creation, or several other orthodox doctrines, I had arrived at no settled opinions concerning the mystery of life, or of the origin, nature, and government of the universe. Consequently, the Unitarian chapel with its scholarly approach to these great problems, with its tolerance for those of other faiths, and with its record as a progressive force in the civic life of the town, made a quick and strong appeal to me, and I entered into its gates with thanksgiving.”

Beyond the fact that this was written in 1936, a noteworthy year for those of us born then, I am struck how concisely this captures, for me, the strong appeal of our faith. While I, personally do not see “the mystery of life, or of the origin, nature, and government of the universe” as “problems” (challenges, perhaps); I can identify with the appeal of “tolerance for those of other faiths, and with “its record as a progressive force in the civic life of the town”.

In terms of “tolerance for those of other faiths”, we are a theologically diverse lot and each of us brings our prior religious experiences/baggage with us. For some, those experiences were painful and recalling them today is agonizing regardless of the faith or denomination involved. Our third Principle, “Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations” doesn’t include the words “but” or “except” and perhaps mutual respect is the most basic expectation. I am constantly challenged, often unsuccessfully, by the tension between what I need, versus what others may need. Without at least striving for acceptance/tolerance, I know I’m falling short.

How about “being a progressive force in the civic life of the town”? I can say for sure that there are those of you who are doing a MUCH better job than I on this count. More importantly, how are WE doing and are WE doing as much as we have the potential to do? I’ll leave that for each of you to answer, individually, but would challenge each of us, and especially myself, to take the initiative to find out what those needs are and what we individually and collectively can bring to the table.

In Peace,

Scott

Board Highlights

There are two meetings of our Board to report on in this edition.

July 19th

Board Members Present: Scott Clements (president), Bruce Bolme, Debbie Olsen, Judith Tenbrook.

Myrna Clements reported on plans for the summer children’s religious education program.

Recruitment efforts for Children’s Religious Education Coordinator are continuing.

Endowment fund proposal was discussed with a draft for action at the next meeting.

Retreat planning is on track.

Treasurer’s Report: The fellowship loan to Gorge Grown for a truck has been repaid. Our income vs. expenses is in the black. The Board decided to approve budget items that were previously optional items. The County Grant Account was closed as their activity has finished.

Unitarian Universalist Association 2009 dues of \$2,998 and \$113 for Pacific Northwest District dues was authorized for payment.

District leadership conference was reported on by Scott including concepts dealing with transitional changes in small fellowships and how to make board meetings more effective.

“Thoughts for Our Future,” an email from Scott to the board was reviewed and discussed. Leadership development and need to avoid “burn out” of active members was noted. Scott suggested a board liaison plan to our existing activities and groups. The liaison would hopefully enhance communications and smooth working of the group while identifying potential problems early.

Upgrade the fellowship’s website is under way to, thanks to Anita Johnston.

Ex-Officio Status: Scott proposed former officers and Board members be invited to participate in Board Meetings in a non-voting role to maintain “corporate memory.”

August 10th

Board Members present: Scott Clements (president), Bruce Bolme, Debbie Olson, Nicole Schrankel, Judith Tenbrook, Ray Klebba, Rod Krehbiel.

Board Liaisons agreed to:

Administration - Scott Clements	Community Ministries –Judith Tenbrook
Facilities - Ray Klebba	Finance - Bruce Bolme
Membership - Debbie Olsen	Music - Debbie Olsen
Pastoral Care - Scott Clements	Religious Education - Rod Krehbiel
Worship - Scott Clements	Pastoral Care - Scott Clements

Retreat: Holly reported \$1300 received in registration fees. There was discussion about a retreat T-shirt to be sold to members at a slight profit to the fellowship. Options will be further explored.

Endowment Fund proposal was reviewed and approved for bylaws action at congregational meeting.

Historian: The Board voted to create an official historian position with a team to help put the information into notebook form. Up to \$100 may be spent for expenses. The position will be referred to congregation for inclusion in the bylaws. Team members are Juliana Sandahl, Pam Morneault, and Judith Tenbrook with Don Hardin as a consulting member.

Ex-officio Role for Outgoing Board Members is also to be referred to congregation for a bylaws amendment.

Interest and Skills Survey: A questioner is being developed to identify fellowship volunteer interests and current commitments. It will be emailed to each member.

Children’s Religious Education Coordinator: No candidates yet; recruitment efforts are continuing. Candidates do not have to be fellowship members, but need to be in sympathy with its mission, philosophy, and objectives.

Adult Religious Education proposal from Don Hardin was approved to begin in January for four series of four sessions each series to be spread over the 2009 calendar year. Participation will be open up to six fellowship members at a time at no charge to members or cost to fellowship.

Chairs: A thank you will be sent to the Rockford Grange for their purchase of new chairs.

“Country Living Educational Series” being led by Linda Short under sponsorship of the Rockford Grange was endorsed by the Board.

Upcoming Sunday Services

Services are held on Sundays at 10 AM at the Rockford Grange, 4262 Barrett Drive,
Hood River

August 31—Labor Day, David Plant. Most Americans probably consider Labor Day as just another opportunity for a three-day weekend before summer comes to an end and the kids return to the classroom. But for the working class in the United States in the 19th century, the establishment of a day to memorialize their struggles and celebrate their victories was an important victory. Some argue that labor unions are no longer necessary or even appropriate, and that Labor Day itself is simply a historical artifact of no particular

significance in the modern global economy. However, although the composition of the workforce is certainly different than in the "good old days" and the problems facing workers have changed, it remains true that individuals often have very little bargaining power when facing their employers and that workers can more successfully deal with problems confronting them by working together. Hopefully Labor Day will be celebrated for a long time to come.

Sept. 7—FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY with Joseph Santos Lyons— A More Perfect Union. Obama's national call for unity through new approaches to racial justice still reverberates. This is one of our greatest opportunities and spiritual challenges. Truth, love, freedom, bedrocks of our faith, are guides for us in this important journey. How you can make a difference.

Sept. 14—History of Our Fellowship. Together Pam Morneault and Juliana Sandahl will present a History Program. It will include a brief history of the early Unitarian Church in Hood River (1904-1918), followed by the history of the Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. A slide show, with some very grainy photos of some of us, will highlight the places we have met and the contributions of the many members that have kept the Fellowship active throughout its history. An invitation has been sent to former members that we know are in the area to join us on this special day of memories and friendships.

Sept. 21—See you at our retreat

Sept. 28—Honor Labor: Music and words of the Worker's Movement Until the 20th century, the 40-hour work week was only a fantasy. Sweat shops, child labor, tyrannical bosses and horrid working conditions have been the norm for thousands of years. Come hear some of the anthems and thoughts from the folks who brought us unions, health insurance, and collective bargaining. Paul and Rod

Other Fellowship Calendar and Events

Newsletter Deadline for October Issue—Sunday, September 21st.

Groundwork: Race, Class, and Our Community

This workshop series explores difficult and timely issues for our country and community. Session topics: The Color of Wealth, Race – the Power of an Illusion, Mattering and Marginality, and Transforming our Community. Incorporating personal experience, video, brief assignments, and Rev. Santos-Lyons' own scholarship in the area, the series connects to a series of four Sunday sermons by Rev. Santos-Lyons. Children's program provided during workshop sessions. To register or for info contact Kristen Dillon, 387-4011, paul@speedfish.com. **Register by Sept 3.**

Location: Sundays at the Grange, Saturdays at the Blackburn/Dillon home 401 Montello Ave Hood River

Dates/Times: Sunday 9/7/2008, noon-2pm; Saturday 10/4/2008, 3-5pm; Sunday 11/9/2008, noon-2pm;

Saturday 12/13/2008, 3-5pm

Limit: 20, ages 16 and up

Fee: sliding scale \$5-20

Save the Date! Friendship Sunday! Sunday, September 7, 2008—E-mail, text message, telephone, write a letter, whatever it takes but ***bring a friend*** to our MCUUF's homecoming service, *Sunday, September 7*. MCUUF will kick-off the first of our 4-part series 'GroundWork' workshops and the monthly associated worship service, with the Reverend Joseph Santos-Lyons. You won't want to miss this special in-gathering service. The long days of summer are behind us and we look forward to kicking off our Fall, Winter and Spring worship services with this extra special Sunday program. Be there or be square ☺

MCUUF All Fellowship Retreat 2008—AMAZING – simply amazing! The reservations are in (however there is still time to sign up if you've been procrastinating!) and this year's retreat "Begin Within" has all the

markings of being a one-of-a-kind – not-to-be-missed opportunity! We have record attendance levels (based on reservations received) and the buzz is –it’s the place to be **September 19-21**. There is something for everyone. Food, fun, inspiration, fellowship – oh yes and SMORES! Please remember to bring your vial of water for the Sunday Water Communion service. Please contact Holly Harrel if you need any information or have questions. See you there! Please note: if you mailed in your registration and have not received a written confirmation in the U.S. mail please call Holly! 509 493 2412.

Sunday at our retreat we will celebrate the UU Water Communion service. This is a nationally recognized service in the UU tradition which speaks to our connectedness with each other and the natural world around us and is significant at the time of the autumn equinox. It also signifies our coming together again for many of us after our various summer travels. To this extent, we ask that you please bring with you that water you collected during your summer and bring it to join (or we can use symbolic water)with the rest of us.

Creating a Green Sanctuary

A Green Sanctuary is a congregation or fellowship that lives out its commitment to the Earth by creating a sustainable life style for its members as individuals and as a group. Please visit the internet site <http://uuministryforearth.org/files/GreenSanctuarySummary.pdf> for an introductory summary of the Green Sanctuary Program.

Fellowship members Theresa North, Tom Penchoen and Bruce Bolme have agreed to facilitate the initial discussion leading to a fellowship decision whether or not to become a Green Sanctuary. Discussion began at our August 10 service and it will continue at a meeting on Monday September 15 at the Hood River Library starting at 6:30 pm and also during our September retreat.

Some may initially see the Green Sanctuary program as another program competing for the limited attention and resources of the fellowship’s activities. However, the Green Sanctuary program is a chance to bring new energy and creativity to some of those present activities, while also creating new opportunities to fulfill our visions for a better future environment.

Green Sanctuary Accreditation requires accomplishment of a minimum of 12 new or revitalized projects or activities. The following list includes some examples and possible projects for our fellowship to consider or use as idea generators to create our own.

Green Sanctuary Potential Activities and Projects

Worship and Celebration [two or more projects or activities]

Include Earth awareness meditations, readings, and sermons in our services

Have special services such as Earth Day, water communion, and flower communion

Have seasonal celebrations, rituals and alternative worship events

Religious Education [two or more projects or activities]

Adopt an Earth-centered curriculum for the children’s RE program

Create and intergenerational project to learn about a serious local environmental issue

Conduct a Northwest Earth Institute discussion course

Organize a book study group with environmental topics

Collaborate with other congregations or environmental groups to develop an educational program on a local issue of significance. Follow up with action.

Earth Justice [two or more projects or activities]

Promote sustainable agriculture

Start a community garden

Build and install bat houses

Join an existing coalition to prevent some environmental degradation

Sustainable Living [four or more projects or activities]

Reduce environmental footprint at the individual and family level

A project to reduce energy consumption and CO2 emissions
Promote recycling, composting and used of recycled projects
Support development and use of alternative transportation and ride sharing
Move fellowship financial assets to socially/environmentally responsible investments

September 26th UU potluck hosted by Cindy Allen, Trish Leighton, and Kathy Fitzpatrick to be held at Cindy's home at 3533 Avalon Dr., Hood River. **Directions:** From 13th and Belmont: Go west on Belmont to Avalon Way. It is the street between Bunting's Auto and the Dental Plaza. Turn left on Avalon Way. You can only turn left. At the first stop sign on Avalon Way, turn right. At the second stop sign on Avalon Way, turn left. When the street begins to curve, curve right. . See you there.

Music Programs—Songfest for all on Sunday mornings at 9:45 for those who would like a run through of the songs we will be singing during the morning service. The **MCUUF Singers** practice on the 4th Sunday at 9 AM for performance later during the service. We would love to have you join us. Please call Trish Hardin 509 493 4819 so she can arrange to get a copy of the music to you ahead of time. The singers are open to all. However the singers appreciate your presence during the pre-service practice if you wish to sing with them during the service. **Leaders for congregational singing** please contact Paul Blackburn 541 387-4011 to get on the schedule.

Spiritual Practice Group—Mondays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The Teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky form the basis for study and discussion. Meeting place is at Tolya's home, 1206 14th Street.

NEW: Sermon on the Web—"Thanks to our webmaestra, Anita Johnston, we have posted our first sermon on the website. Check out the link at <http://church.gorge.net/unitarian/default.htm> and happy listening"

Thank You from Gladys House—Gladys expresses appreciation to all those who donated for her recent dental work. Paul Blackburn, our pastoral care coordinator, adds "A big thank you to all who contributed to the fund to help Gladys with her dental work. \$1200 was raised. The dentist reduced his fees by 20% to contribute to the cause, and the work has begun. Hooray for our being able to help our friend."

Children with Birthdays this month—You are entitled to receive a birthday card. Please pick them up from Gladys House.

"Guest at Your Table 2008"—Between September 7 and November 23, members and friends of MCUUF will have an opportunity to participate in the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's "*Guest At Your Table*" program. Our MCUUF children were busy decorating money collection boxes for your use in participating in the 2008 campaign. The boxes will be available at the September 7, Sunday Service. This year's *Guest at Your Table* program will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and your contributions will help to support the good works of the UUSC. The *Guest at Your Table* tradition has built lasting connections to UU faith in action for more than thirty years. MCUUF is pleased to join with many congregations in the country — and around the world — in welcoming a Guest at Our Table. *Guest at Your Table* is for everyone!

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a nonsectarian organization and affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, that advances human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world. Their vision is that of a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights. Through a potent combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with

grassroots organizations, UUSC promotes economic rights, advances environmental justice, defends civil liberties, and preserves the rights of people in times of humanitarian crisis.

The Worship Team needs your input! Have a burning idea for a service? SHARE IT! We are ALWAYS looking for inspirational, thought provoking and creative ideas for our Sunday services. Let us hear from you!

Membership Survey— Your Board of Trustees is seeking feedback on the programs and initiatives that are of greatest interest and input as to potential levels of support. A membership survey was recently emailed. Please be sure to download your copy sent to by email (or pick up a copy from church), fill it out, and return it to Scott Clements.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Sept 11-14—“**Nonviolence as a Way of Life,**” at the University of Oregon. This conference features Marshall Rosenberg, PhD (founder of Nonviolent Communication) and more than 80 presenters on the application of nonviolent (compassionate) communication and nonviolence in personal life and society. See www.nonviolentliving.org for registration information and full details.

Members and friends of The UU Church in Eugene are offering free lodging (while space is available) for out-of-town Unitarian Universalists during this three-day conference at the University of Oregon. Contact Dick Loescher (richardloescher@msn.com) for housing details.

MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
Meeting at the Rockford Grange, 4262 Barrett Rd., Hood River, Oregon

We welcome all to join in our activities and enjoy including visitors, guests, and friends of the fellowship. The foundation of our community is formed by members, people who have chosen to make a commitment to engage deeply with our work and support it with their time and money. We offer a “New UU” class for prospective members and welcome new members in a special service several times each year. Opportunities to become a member are publicized in our newsletter, website, and orders of service. If you have interest or questions, please speak with one of our board members listed on the front page.

For more information go to our website: church.gorge.net/Unitarian

Mid-Columbia
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