



COMMENT

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury, 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811 * 203-798-1994

MARCH 2009

For the Time Being

Notes from your Interim Minister

Sunday, February 22 was Appreciation Sunday, when we came together to celebrate the ministry of UUCD. Thanks to everyone who made this service such a festive event: **Ross Fenster, Val Cochrane, Mary Collins and the R.E. children and teachers, Peggy Block, John Miglietta, Jeremy Stein,** and that amazing **Jazz Quintet: Ruth Ahlers, Rob Catalano, Brad Greene, Kim Papa, and Charlie Schott** – not to mention **all of you** who came to groove to the music and be acknowledged for your contributions to this great congregation!

Who are the ministers of UUCD? The easy response would be, “well, it’s Peggy, our Community Minister, and Sue, our Interim.” But a truer answer is suggested by my sister’s church in the Poconos, the United Methodist Church of Canadensis, which I attended a few Sundays ago. Sitting in the pews, I noticed the back of the Order of Service, where the staff was listed. On the first line were the Ministers: “All of us.” George Alt, the ordained person on staff, was down on the second line, as “Pastor.”

Now, I don’t expect UUCD to adopt the term “pastor” (meaning shepherd) any time soon. UUs tend to resist any suggestion that they might be “sheep!” Nevertheless, I think that UMC Canadensis has the relationship exactly right. The ministry of the congregation is primary. That of the ordained people, whatever you call them, is derivative.

In our free church tradition – the one Unitarians and Universalists inherited from the Reformation – *every* member of a congregation is called to serve. Every member of the community is a minister, and has a ministry. The ordained people are there to help the congregation, and its members, realize their ministries, both within the congregation and in the wider community. Like the leader of a jazz ensemble, they are there to help others shine!

Paul the Apostle saw the congregation as a body, with all parts dependent on the others. The congregation’s ministry comes from the gifts of the members: “To one is given the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge, to another the working of miracles, to another the gift of prophecy.” To which we might add, “To one is given the gift of skillful administration, and to another that of community organizing. To another is given the skill of managing money, to another the power of a listening heart, to another the talent of organizing auctions, boutiques, and manifold pot-luck suppers. To still others are given the gifts of music, and teaching, and of creating beautiful works of art - and of welcoming newcomers, and speaking with them at coffee hour.”

Each of us brings gifts to the congregation – our gifts of time, treasure, talent, and passion. With these gifts, we minister. If you aren’t sure what gifts you bring, or which of your gifts would be most helpful at UUCD, I invite you to speak to me, or to Darlene Anderson-Alexander, our Volunteer Coordinator. I’d also encourage you to complete the congregation’s “Interests and Talents Survey,” available both on-line and in hard copy.

Love and blessings,
Sue

P.S. Please make a point of attending the March 15th “Beyond Categorical Thinking” event. It’s very important in preparing for our new settled ordained minister.

Comment is the newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury, 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811, (203) 798-1994. Articles (**250 words or less**) may be emailed to Sherry at SherryUUUCD@gmail.com or dropped off at the church office.

**Deadline for the April Comment -
Friday, March 20th.**



UUUCD Cancellation Policy – During very inclement weather, Sunday Services, Religious Education and any other meetings and/or events will be cancelled. To learn of a cancellation, please check one of the following:

1. Call the Cancellation Line of the UUUCD's office phone: (203) 798-1994, press 1#.
2. Access the UUUCD's website at www.uudanbury.org.
3. Channel 3, WFSB-TV
4. WLAD 800 AM or WDAQ 98.3 FM Radio

Canvass Corner

by Canvass co-chairs Ross Fenster and Bruce Buzby

Our energetic, tireless canvassers have about 20 more families to canvass but should be all done canvassing by early March. Through February 24th, we have 103 pledges totaling \$152,613.00 for an average pledge of \$1482.00. It looks like we will fall short of our Canvass goal of \$196,000.00. On the other hand, it is clear from the many, many discussions our canvassers have had with UUUCD Members and Friends about what they value in our congregation that the strength and depth our community feeling is very strong and vibrant. People are giving very generously within the economic anxieties many people are experiencing.

We should end up with between 115 and 120 pledge units. Thank you for your loving spirits.

Share the Plate Sunday

Starting on Sunday, March 1st, we are instituting something new. On the first Sunday of each month we will be sharing all non-pledge proceeds from our regular Sunday offering with a worthy community charity or non-profit on a 50-50 basis. So please bring your checkbook or some handy cash and let's help both the community AND the UUUCD!



President's Letter

By Carl Tichler, President

I recently attended the "Meet the Presidents" forum at Community Church of New York (Unitarian Universalist), where the two candidates for UUA President, Laurel Hallman and Peter Morales, responded to questions on their vision for the UUA, and how they would respond to the opportunities and challenges of Unitarian Universalism in the coming years. Although there are clear differences in their vision and priorities, there is a striking common element in their backgrounds --- both are ministers of congregations that experienced phenomenal growth in membership, in regions of the country where more conservative churches have had a strong presence. I think that both candidates were able to foster this growth in both membership and spirituality by empowering their respective congregations to clarify their missions, and have the lay leadership of the congregations take on the roles of stewardship while each of them articulated as ministers the congregational vision for the future.

We are now coming to the point in our own Ministerial Search process where we will be having Cottage Meetings, to discuss in small groups what we are looking for in our next settled minister. The larger question that naturally arises is what is our vision of UUCD for ourselves, and the role of our minister in fulfilling this vision. I have already heard that these questions have been raised during the conversations for our annual canvass. And we have been addressing issues of growth and stewardship for the future as a regular part of our Board Meetings, including looking at our current governance structure and by-laws.

It seems to me that the opportunities and challenges for UUCD are essentially the same as those for the UUA as whole --- how do we articulate our spiritual vision to a community which is both unsettled and excited about the changes occurring in the world? And how do we see ourselves and UUCD in this process? Please join us at the Cottage Meetings for this conversation.

A Reminder from Buildings and Grounds

**B
&
G**

Fire Codes:

- All electrical panels need clear access
- All fire extinguishers need clear access
- All fire pull stations must be visible
- Both fire panels near entrances to Fellowship Hall and the Ridge House need clear access
- Coat closet in Fellowship Hall needs to be clear of items, with the exception of wheel chair and walker

Safety Issues:

During winter months, salt buckets and shakers are at everyone's disposal at each entrance to the Ridge House and Fellowship Hall. If you attend a function at the Ridge and notice icing, please use supplies to salt pathways or icy areas of parking lot.

**Treasurer's
\$\$ Report \$\$**

The summary statistics for October, November, December and January 2007-09 fiscal year are recorded below.

	October	November	December	January
% Annual Canvass pledge return	34.5%	42.9%	60.4%	64.7%
Operating Income Year-to-date	\$63,337	\$80,126	\$115,309	\$124,764
Operating Expenses Year-to-date	\$75,542	\$93,282	\$114,332	\$137,341
Operating Income – Expense YTD	<u>-\$12,620</u>	<u>-\$14,156</u>	<u>\$ 977</u>	<u>-\$12,577</u>

Analysis for this Month:

The January pledge returns (4.3%) are below the average January returns (7.8%.) Due to the earlier strong showing the Total Pledge returns to date (64.7%) are still above average. Over the last 7 years the average and maximum pledge returns to date were 61.3% and 70.4% respectively. Thank you. This achievement has helped contain the normal large bulge in the use of reserves during January. So please keep the pledge returns coming as early as possible as February is also expected to be lean.

Both the Operating Income YTD and the Operating Expense YTD are essentially on target.

None-the-less the Operating income YTD (\$124,764) falls short of the Operating Expenses YTD (\$137,341) causing an increasing in the use of reserve funds (by \$12,577). The Operating Income normally falls behind the Operating Expenses during January and February so the need for reserves will continue to increase during the current month. So please keep sending your pledge payments as early as possible.

Bruce Buzby, Finance Committee Chair
Marie Dupree, Treasurer

Have you taken the
***UUCD INTERESTS &
TALENTS SURVEY***
yet?



If not, log on to uudanbury.org, Member's Page
(see This Week emails for how-to's) OR take a
hard copy from the back table!

Say, "YES! I want to connect and support our congregation in ways that work for me!"

Trying something new can be fun!
A Food Offering as part of our weekly Order of Service



Through discussions with our Interim Minister Sue Spencer and Scot Fritz the Sunday Services Committee has decided, on a trial basis, to include a food offering as part of our weekly order of service. The offering will take place at the start of our Children's Focus. During the time the children come to the front of the sanctuary, children and adults if they wish, can bring a food offering to the front and put them into baskets near the pulpit.

The items donated will be distributed by the UUCD Social Action Committee to local shelters and soup kitchens. Dried beans and brown rice are especially needed. Other appropriate items to donate are:

Canned food: coffee, condiments, fruits, juices, peanut butter and jelly, sardines, soups, stew, tomato/spaghetti sauce, tuna, vegetables, etc.

Non-canned food: whole grain rice, cereals, cookies, corn flour, crackers, dry beans, oatmeal, mashed potatoes, corn or soybean oil, tea, sugar, salt & pepper.

Also Non-food items: baby wipes, bar soap, deodorant, diapers, dish detergent, laundry detergent sanitary napkins, paper towels, shampoo & conditioner, toilet tissue, toothpaste, toothbrushes.

We, of course, would like your feedback as we see how this fits into our weekly order of service. Trying new things can be invigorating and as **Scot Fritz** said "Seeing our congregation offering food to those in need is a moment of both community and commitment in action."

Buildings and Grounds Corner

by Cynthia Clark, Facilities Manager

Buildings and Grounds has been faced with financial hurdles this year and next. Volunteers have come forward to assist with the challenges created by the budget cuts needed for UUCD.

Thank you to the following volunteers of the "Even Month Scrub Club," who started the first week of February: We divided into teams as follows:

Fellowship Hall Kitchen Team: **Valerie Cochrane** and **Chris Halfar**

Fellowship Hall Team: **Anne Krieg, Judy Lacker, Donna Lawrence, Joe Teagarden** and **Joe Gillotti**

Ridge House Team: **Lynn Taborsak** and **Meredith Spector**

Garbage Area: **Jon Dupree**

The "Odd Squad" branch of the Scrub Club will convene together the first Saturday of the month, March 7th, at 9:00 a.m. Please join us. Members of the "Odd Squad" are: **Jan Galloway, Carol Huckabee, Leslie LaCroce, Pamela Mitchell, Barbara Myers, Greg Pings, Donna Roscoe** and **Cynthia Clark**. **Greg Pings** and **Veronica Swain** will be leading the **Junior High Youth Group** in scrubbing the R.E. House for the first time this Saturday. If we get extra volunteers for the Odd Squad in March, work will be speedier and merrier - and we may be able to change our groups to once every three months. If you want more info, contact **Anne Krieg**.

The teams are following procedures that adhere to Danbury Health codes. These procedures need to be followed by all who are using our facilities; they are posted in the kitchens.



- * Are YOU excited about a topic and seeking a place to explore it more deeply?
- * Are there thoughts in YOUR mind just waiting to be brought together and shared?
- * Do YOU have something to contribute to this faith community?

Then why not ...

Consider leading a Sunday Service this Summer?

While we at the UUCD have the utmost respect for our professional ministry, we also believe that all members of our Community should have the opportunity to share their journey with the congregation. As has been our custom for many years, this summer we will be providing lay-led Services while Sue Spencer is away from the pulpit. We hope that you will consider lending your voice and ideas to our Services. Remember that two or more people can collaborate on a Service as well. Please contact **Darlene Anderson-Alexander** for additional information or to schedule YOUR Sunday!

 The Sunday Services Committee

New Sanctuary Movement Update

by Lynn Taborsak

The Social Action Committee is planning an **Immigrant Resource Day** on Thursday, March 26th from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Brazilian Catholic Center on Liberty Street in Danbury. Local agencies will be providing information on ESL and adult literacy programs, health care and food resources, workplace wage enforcement, domestic violence prevention, Head Start and public transportation. “Know Your Rights” presentations will be offered in Spanish and in Portuguese and individuals will be able to speak with volunteer attorneys about their immigration status. If you can help with set-up and refreshments, please contact **Lynn Taborsak**. The UUCD has become a charter member of a newly organized statewide immigration coalition that will be working on state and federal issues including comprehensive immigration reform, in-state tuition for the children of undocumented immigrants, the Dream Act, ending workplace raids and curtailing the 287g program.

Search Committee Update

by Charley Stark

Greetings again from your Search Committee. Here is what is going on:

COTTAGE MEETINGS

Starting in March, members and friends will be hosting and joining in “cottage meetings” at homes and places in Danbury and the surrounding towns. Each meeting will have 8-10 participants, as well as representatives of the Search Committee, in attendance. These will be informal sessions in which we will gather together to discuss what we seek in our new settled minister. Although there will be many options, you need attend only one. There should be at least one scheduled at a time and place convenient for you. The results will be compiled by the Search Committee and will be vital for use in the process and final selection of the candidate we will present for settled minister.

BEYOND CATEGORICAL THINKING WORKSHOP

We all have pre-conceived notions of what a minister should look like. Think about yours. Then attend the Sunday service and workshop on Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) on March 15th. We will be joined by two facilitators, trained and provided by the UUA, who will conduct our regular 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services and invite us to open our minds to exciting ministers who may not fit our pre-conceived notions. The 11:00 a.m. service will be followed by lunch and then by a three-hour workshop that will involve each of us in the process of envisioning the possibilities of calling a minister of color, a gay or lesbian minister, a transgendered or African-American or Latino minister, a young or old minister- you get the picture. This promises to be fun and a challenge to our biases and prejudices. Please plan to join us. Open to all members and friends and anyone interested in helping to select our new minister.

ON-LINE SURVEY

Coming in April, a comprehensive written survey will be available to assess the desires of the congregation in the selection of our new settled minister. (For those who prefer pencil and paper, a written copy will be available.) We seek 100% participation of members and friends in this effort. The Search Committee will be able to quantify the expressed needs of the congregation for use in the effort to choose the best available candidate to present to the congregation next spring (2010).

So friends, you can see there is a lot going on as we move forward in the Search process. Your Search Committee **needs you** to participate in all three of these events so that the widest possible input may be considered in this all-important decision of who will lead us going forward. We happily await your input.

**If you have any questions for the Search Committee,
please email them to search@uudanbury.org.**

Religious Education Update

by Mary B. Collins, Director of Religious Exploration (DRE)

Update Regarding the Planning for 2009-10 Curricula

At the last Religious Education Committee Meeting on February 5th, 2009, the following ideas were discussed. The Committee and DRE **would greatly appreciate your input as we refine our programming for next year and going forward!**

The committee is currently reviewing for 2009-2010 Unitarian Universalist Association Lifespan Faith Development curricula called "Tapestry of Faith." Several curricula are available for all ages (children, youth and adults)! You can check it out too at:

<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/107218.shtml>.

We currently are trying to determine how we may best use this in our congregation, answering the following question: Will this work for us given the number of sessions and our class groupings? We also would like to see how using this material might impact our curriculum mapping over time. We plan to:

- Continue successful middle school programming for "Neighboring Faiths" (scheduled to be used in 2009-10), and in other years; OWL (Our Whole Lives Sexuality and Values), and our "Coming of Age" program in the future.
- Possibly adapt our Coming of Age to a partial year program, and if so, decide if we can offer it more often.
- Youth Groups – continued discussion is needed about *what* programming is desirable (curricula based or not) and *when* to offer it (*YOUTH and their families' input needed!*)

Come to the Religious Education Committee meeting on **Thursday, March 12th**, 2009 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the second floor Conference Room. Or send your comments to mary.collins.dre@gmail.com or RE Chairperson, **Samantha McCoy**.

March 2009 UUCD Religious Education

Sessions topics at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. include: Women of the Bible and others that inspire us, Mary Magdalene, Ruth's steadfast love, Esther's Courage and Influence / Jewish holiday of Purim, Deborah (in Judges), Moses and becoming a leader, Passover and the importance of freedom, Elijah the prophet's reminder to be good, Jesus' radical life, a miracle – and what do we think about "miracles?", Humble Leadership (Holy Thursday- Washing of the feet), Healing Power.

The 9:00 a.m. **Pre-school Group** will appreciate their senses of taste and smell, and the joy of such diverse things as: feet, animals, and the air as well!

Sunday, March 1st:

- Senior High (10th-12th grade) Our Whole Lives will meet
- NO Senior High Youth Group

Saturday, March 7th:

- Junior High Youth Group (6th-8th graders) **Clean Up on Saturday.** Meet at the Ridge House at 9:00 a.m. for this community service commitment. We will be part of a UUCD team (The Odd Squad) that will vacuum, sweep, dust, mop, and clean the Ridge House from stem to stern on the first Saturday of the odd-numbered months. This counts towards community service requirements your children may have for school or scouts. We should be able to do this in about two hours. Pizza will be served afterwards. (And, yes, we are considering our own name for this recurring event. Currently open for consideration are "The Flaming Hippos" and "The Toxic Unicorns.") To RSVP or any questions, please contact **Greg Pings** or **Veronica Swain**.

Sunday, March 8th:

- All UU Girl Scouts may join **Heather Smith** during the Children's Focus
- Senior High Conference in Summit, NJ (March 6th-8th)
- Junior High Youth Group meets at 11:00 a.m. in the House. We will make clay Mardi Gras masks which will be used in the UUCD Silent Auction.

Sunday, March 15th :

- **Jenn Rocca** will be a guest presenter for the 11:00 a.m. 6th-8th graders on the significance of bread in Jewish and Christian heritage. Come prepared to bake!

Date to be Determined – Junior High Youth Group – Lazar-Tag at PlayStation.

All other Sundays in March we have regular group sessions!

On Fridays you may check www.uudanbury.org -> Religious Education -> This Week to get more detail each week!

Planning Ahead for April

Sunday, April 12th - Intergenerational Easter / Spring service at 9:00 a.m. – If you or your child would like to participate through reading, or playing music, or singing, please contact Mary Collins.
(NO 7th-9th OWL on this date)

Saturday, April 18th – Sunday, April 19th - JUNIOR High (6th-8th graders) Conference – this is the only one until next Fall. To register on-line go to www.uumetrony.org and click on events (also let the Director of Religious Ed. and your advisors know for carpool).

Sunday, April 26th – Senior High Youth will lead both services today – put it on your calendar!

This Time in History

by Douglas Parkhurst



While traveling, have you ever seen or visited another Unitarian Universalist church? UU groups are located in cities, suburbs, and small towns across the continent and they come in many shapes and sizes. The same is true for the *names* of UU churches, societies, congregations, and fellowships; these too come in a variety of sizes and shapes! First Parish and First Church, followed by the name of a town, are common in some parts of New England. Then there is the Independent Christian Church, a UU church in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The designation All Souls is found in various parts of the United States; there is an All Souls UU Church in Watertown, New York, and another in Kansas City, Missouri. Some UU groups have adopted colorful names with a geographic reference, such as Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church in Seven Springs, North Carolina; Headwaters UU Fellowship of Bemidji, Minnesota; and High Plains Church, UU, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Still other UU churches maintain names of traditional religious or historical significance. There is a St. Paul's Church, UU, in Palmer, Massachusetts; a St. Paul's Universalist Church in Little Falls, New York; King's Chapel in Boston; and Starr King UU Church in Hayward, California. Attention was focused on the nation's capital during the presidential inauguration in January. Three Unitarian Universalist groups, with very different names, call the District of Columbia home: All Souls Church, Unitarian; the Universalist National Memorial Church; and the Washington Ethical Society.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury has been known by several names in its almost two hundred year history. In the beginning we called ourselves the First Universalist Society of Danbury. Later, and for much of the 19th and early 20th centuries we became the First Universalist Church of Danbury, often shortened to simply the Universalist Church. In 1960, just prior to the consolidation of the then separate Unitarian and Universalist denominations, we changed our name to the First Universalist-Unitarian Church of Danbury (note the order of denominations and the hyphen). In 1964 the Unitarian Fellowship of Ridgefield was organized and when the Danbury and Ridgefield groups came together in 1966 the geographically correct but somewhat cumbersome Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County was adopted. This was four years before our move from Danbury to a new home in West Redding.

During the latter part of 2002 and early 2003, in anticipation of our return to Danbury and a new home on Clapboard Ridge Road, our congregation once again pondered the desirability of a name change. A committee was formed to look into this; following input from members and friends, two congregational meetings on the topic, and much committee discussion, five possible choices were submitted to the Board of Trustees. Listed in alphabetical order these were:

1. Unitarian Universalist Church of Danbury
2. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury
3. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Danbury
4. Unitarian Universalist Society of Danbury
5. and maintaining the existing name of Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County

A congregational meeting was held at the Barn in West Redding on March 16, 2003, to settle the question of a new name. Opinions were shared and thoughtful discussion ensued. Choice 1 (some members objected to the word "church"), choice 3 (our organization was not strictly speaking a UU "fellowship"), and choice 5 (there was substantial support for changing the name), were dropped from consideration. Choices 2 and 4 each had backers among those at the meeting. In the final vote more members favored including the word "congregation" in our name and Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury was adopted.



Team Green/UUME

In our ongoing quest toward becoming a green sanctuary, our latest news revolves around two exciting projects. The first is to create a community garden in a vacant lot somewhere in downtown Danbury, its purpose being to increase awareness and availability of organically grown and local foods for those in need. The second, which closely relates to the first, is to implement “Empty Bowls”, a multi-month hunger awareness project which would begin in August as part of Summer RE, continue in September with participation in “The Taste of Danbury”, and culminate in October with a special potluck.

Our next meeting will take place on Sunday, March 8th at 12:45 p.m. in the Founders’ House. If you are interested and would like to attend, please bring a bag lunch.

If you have questions about the community garden project, please contact **Ali Zipparo** at alexzipper@hotmail.com. If you have questions about the “Empty Bowls” project, please contact **Mary Alice Kimball**.

March Madness Pot Luck

The Events Committee invites you to the third in a series of Pot Lucks on Friday, March 6th, at 6:00 p.m. Being a Friday, don’t worry about impressing us with your home cooking. You can brag about your favorite restaurant’s Take Out – anything goes during “March Madness”. This is an intergenerational event. Bring an appetizer, salad, main entry, or dessert to serve 8 – 10 people. A sign-up sheet will be on the back table in the sanctuary. We ask that you bring you own beverage. If you have any questions, contact **Donna Lawrence** or **Donna Roscoe**.



On Sunday, March 8th, all Girl Scouts, past and present, are invited to be part of our annual **Girl Scout Sunday** program at UUCD. We will act as greeters and lead the Children's Focus for both services. A short planning meeting will be held on Sunday, March 1st at 10:30 in the RE building for all interested Girl Scouts. Please email or call Heather Smith if you would like to participate. Thank You!

Round Robin Supper

On Saturday evening, March 14, 2009, **Donna and Brad Roscoe** will host a Round Robin (pot luck) supper at their home in Ridgefield starting at 6:00 p.m. Please look for the sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary and bring a dish to share. For directions please call Donna or Brad. If you would like to host a Round Robin Supper, please call **Darrell or Xin Bradford**.

Men out to Breakfast

Men Out to Breakfast is an organization of men seeking fellowship and spirituality and meets for breakfast and discussion on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at the Windmill Diner, Mill Plain Road in Danbury, convenient to Exits 2 and 4. Meeting time: 9:00 a.m. March dates are the 7th and 21st. All are welcome. Please notify **Mike Searing** if you plan to attend.



Women out to Breakfast

Women out to Breakfast meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month at 9:00 a.m. for informal coffee and conversation at Elmer's Diner. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to attend, please contact **Karen Gillotti**. March dates are the 14th and 28th.



UUCD MasqUerade Gala
Step out for Pleasure; Leave with a Treasure
March 28, 2009

By now, most of you have seen Auction Committee members wearing masks and promoting the event. We are just a few short weeks away and it's not too late to donate a good, service or event. If you have something in mind, please fill out a donation form and email it to Donna Roscoe or leave it with Sherry Kyriacou by March 8th. Any donation, large or small, party or object, will be greatly appreciated.

Donation forms can be found at the back of the sanctuary, on our website www.uudanbury.org under "Upcoming Events" or in the "This Week at UUCD" weekly email. Donations can be dropped off on Friday, March 27th, and Saturday, March 28th. Please watch the upcoming "This Week at UUCD" emails for specific times.

Tickets for the event will be \$10.00 per person and can be purchased from Committee members. When you purchase your ticket, you'll be given a blank mask to take home and decorate to wear at the event. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. and the silent auction will begin. Light fare and drink will be served at 6:30 p.m. The live auction will begin after 7:00 p.m. Childcare will be made available for the event but you must reserve space two weeks prior.

Now that we've covered the mechanics of our Gala, probably the next questions on your mind are: What will you wear? Who will you see? And, what treasures await you? The auction has been a fun-filled evening every year and there is always interesting fare for your bidding. So.... you're encouraged to dress to impress and be prepared for a fine night out with fellow UU's. For more information, please contact Christine Bonansinga or Lynda Dayley. See you there!

The 9TH Annual Women's Retreat is Almost Here!

The retreat is scheduled for April 17-19 at the picturesque Wake Robin Inn in Lakewood, CT. The food is wonderful, the women are phenomenal and the laughs are unstoppable! Some of the events that will be taking place include bird watching, flower arranging, comedy night, movies, plus a whole lot more. There will also be a book discussion on Khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns. Written by the author of The Kite Runner, this is a powerful woman's story set in Afghanistan. If you are interested in participating in the book discussion group, please get the book and start reading.

Ladies, we have a very full house, but there may still be openings for people who are willing to share king sized beds. If you would like to be placed on the waiting list please contact Marie Dupree.

The total price for the retreat is \$260 which is due March 7, 2009. Registration forms are available at the UUCD or from Dara O'Toole. To register or for any questions about accommodations please contact Marie Dupree. General questions about the retreat can be directed to Dara O'Toole, Sue Tarshis or Judy Lacker.

From Your Community Minister, Peggy Block

Dear UUCD Members and Friends,

How did we first come to a Unitarian Universalist service?

- With a friend?
- A special program?
- Publicity or website follow-up?
- Word of mouth?

As a newcomer/visitor, what happens when we get to a UU service?

- Can we find the place and parking?
- Can we find the front door and a seat?
- Do we feel comfortable?
- Do we feel welcome?

How did I first come to a Unitarian Universalist service?

In May, 1978, I saw a small ad in *The Ridgefield Press* announcing a Buddhist speaker, Tek Lyn, was going to be at the Unitarian Universalist Barn. I called, spoke with a real person who gave me driving directions and seemed friendly, describing this lovely “Barn” tucked in the West Redding woods (the former site of our UUCD).

That Sunday I found the place early and found the front door. People were setting up in a kitchen and directed me upstairs to the sanctuary where I was greeted and given an Order of Service. Before selecting a seat, I picked up several brochures. I was learning what “The Barn” was. I knew something about Buddhism, but I still knew zip about Unitarian Universalism.

The more I read those brochures, the more excited I got! UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM!!??!! Why hadn't I known about it before? Why hadn't I ever heard of it before? I had come to this service alone, but before the service started, before I had met anyone, I suddenly felt like I might be among kindred spirits! I could hardly wait to talk with a “UU” after the service. Chimes rang. The sanctuary, full of friendly chatter, suddenly became silent. I felt comfortable, enclosed in the beautiful rustic space and view across the (altar?) table into the garden and woods beyond.

The service started on time and was well-conducted by lay people who welcomed everyone to stay for coffee and conversation afterward. The Buddhist speaker, Tek Lyn, took us on a journey through the centuries of Buddhism and into “this very moment” with stories of tigers and peaches. For the benediction, we all stood in a circle and then headed for coffee.

(continued to next page)

Ann Thorpe was the first person who came over to me, with her big smile and welcoming handshake. After introducing herself, she invited me over to the brochure table. She laughed when I showed her my handful and told her I had already read them all before the service. She welcomed me into conversation so graciously. I had lots of questions! And I was so excited to be talking with “a real UU”, someone who embodied all the words I had just read and just heard throughout the service.

Ann Thorpe’s warm, friendly welcome was unforgettable. “Annie” worked the magic of her welcome Sunday after Sunday: “spiritual hospitality”, welcoming the visitor, the seeker, the lonely, the curious, with her smile, her handshake, her gracious conversation. And, of course, she got me signed up onto the mailing list I’ve been on now for over 30 years.

Annie’s legacy of spiritual hospitality is alive and well in your welcome to our visitors, your smile, your handshake, your conversation...Sunday after Sunday, year after year, in that very moment.

Faithfully yours,

Peggy Block.
UUCD Community Minister

Movies with a Message – Friday, March 13th

by Keith Dupree



The genre of the short story and its film equivalent, the movie short, may be overlooked as we devote our attention to longer cousins, the novel and the feature film. But many creative artists come to our attention through these shorter works, and this month we are privileged to present a series of short films that are in turn funny, touching, thoughtful, and inspirational.

7:00 p.m. - “West Bank Story” – With apologies to Leonard Bernstein, this winner of the Academy Award for best live action short presents its vision for peace in the Middle East through musical comedy.

7:30 p.m. - “The Wine Bar” – A winter evening in Manhattan, a young man walks into a wine bar and asks for a beer. In bumbling innocence, he both charms and offends the bartender and the beautiful woman seated and reading near him. As he slowly awakes to the complex world around him, he is instructed in two of life’s important lessons: Say what you mean, and don’t prejudge!

7:50 p.m. - “Greedy for Life” – Meet Lavada and Shirley. This short documentary introduces two women both over 80 who bring us a glimpse of how fulfilling life can be at any age!

8:35 p.m. - “A Walk in the Park” – A tale of hope set in Central Park. A man in despair after being rejected for a job meets up with a pair of NYC misfits who stir in him the friendliness and frivolity that await us on even the darkest, bad-luck, no-good day.

We’ll plan for brief comments following each film short, with a general discussion at the end. Join with us in the UUCD Conference Room on the second Friday of March (March 13th) at 7:00 p.m. for an evening of film shorts. Come prepared to view and discuss – As usual, all are welcome. Contributions gratefully accepted, all of which will go to the UUCD. Pizza will be provided. Bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional!

UUCD Conversations (formerly the Nonfiction Book Discussion Group)

UUCD Conversations meets on the second Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are welcome. Please contact **Bruce Buzby** if you have any questions. The schedule for March through July 2009 is:

March 12, 2009: *The Rise and Fall of Empires*. Facilitator: Bill McWilliams. Source: *Evil Genes: Why Rome Fell, Hitler Rose, Enron Failed, and My Sister Stole My Mother's Boyfriend* by Barbara Oakley, 2008, 473 pages, \$12.91. A highly-readable, entertaining, ground-breaking, must-read study with notable insights on the rise and fall of empires; but more importantly, it offers, perhaps for the first time, a distinctly plausible mechanism for explaining the origin and persistence of social inequality.

April 9, 2009: *Learning to Read*. Facilitator: Roger Bogart. Source: *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* by Maryanne Wolf, 2008, 336 pages, \$10.17. A professor of child development at Tufts University, integrates psychology and archaeology, linguistics and education, history and neuroscience in a truly path-breaking look at the development of the reading brain—a complicated phenomenon that Wolf seeks to chronicle from both the early history of humanity and the early stages of an individual's development ("unlike its component parts such as vision and speech... reading has no direct genetic program passing it on to future generations")

May 14, 2009: *Green Revolution*. Facilitator: Brad Greene. Source: *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution—and How It Can Renew America* by Tom Friedman, 2008, 448 pages, \$18.45. In vivid, entertaining chapters, Friedman makes it clear that the green revolution we need is like no revolution the world has seen. It will be the biggest innovation project in American history; it will be hard, not easy; and it will change everything from what you put into your car to what you see on your electric bill.

June 11, 2009: *Ethical Eating*. Facilitator: Sue Spencer. Michael Pollen's entertaining and eye-opening book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* will be the springboard for this discussion of issues of eating ethically and sustainably.

July 9, 2009: *The Small Guy Matters*. Facilitator: Bob Bollinger. Source: *An Army of Davids: How Markets and Technology Empower Ordinary People to Beat Big Media, Big Government, and Other Goliaths*, by Glenn Reynolds, 2007, 288 pages, \$11.24. In *Army of Davids*, author Glenn Reynolds, the man behind the immensely popular Instapundit.com, provides an in-depth, big-picture point-of-view for a world where the small guys matter more and more. Reynolds explores the birth and growth of the individual's surprisingly strong influence in: arts and entertainment, anti-terrorism, nanotech and space research, and much more.



Denominational Affairs News

by Mary Alice Kimball

Exciting News on the Denominational Affairs Front!

The UUCD will be presenting a workshop at the UU Metro District Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 2, 2009. **The Road to New Sanctuary: How the UU Congregation of Danbury Joined the Movement.** The New Sanctuary Movement, endorsed by the UUA, serves to assist and advocate for families being torn apart by the current broken immigration system. We'll describe the whys and hows of joining the Movement, with particular emphasis on achieving consensus and support from the whole congregation. *Facilitators:* **Charles Stark, Lynn Taborsak, and Chris Halfar** for the Social Action Committee of the UU Congregation of Danbury. So start making plans to attend the District Annual Meeting on May 1st and 2nd at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Jersey City, NJ. Our workshop will take place at 11:45 a.m. on Saturday, May 2nd. Join us for many outstanding workshops, inspiring worship, the UU Network Mall, music, fun, fellowship and food. Advanced registration deadline is April 24th online. See <http://uumetrony.org/am09/index.htm> for additional information.

Members of the congregation attended a UUA Presidential Candidate Forum at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains, NY. We heard candidates Peter Morales and Laurel Hallman present their platform and answer questions solicited from our district. Additional information on Peter Morales can be found at www.MoralesForUUAPresident.com and for Laurel Hallman at www.HallmanForUUAPresident.com.

We also had a road trip to the UU Congregation of Shelter Rock, NY. Here we participated in a peacemaking forum in preparation of the vote to accept or reject the draft Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking to take place at General Assembly in June 2009. This workshop will be presented again at the district meeting, so you will have another chance to participate.

It's not too early to start thinking about representing UU Congregation of Danbury at the General Assembly in Salt Lake City Utah, June 24th – 28th, 2009. If you would like any additional information please speak to **Mary Alice Kimball, Mike Searing, Charley Stark, or Sue Spencer** about the experience. The official link is: <http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly>.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Lynn Taborsak, Coordinator

On Saturday, March 7th, **Gary Winn** will be leading Team #1 at the Soup Kitchen with team members **Charley Stark, Donna Lawrence, Craig Mitchell, John Miglietta, Chris Halfar, Bruni or Mike Edwards, Matt McPartlin, Lynda Williams and Connor Greenbaum**. Old Man Winter is not through with us yet so our hot meal and hospitality are appreciated even more than usual.

Please plan to arrive at 1:30 p.m. unless you are asked to come in early to prepare the meal and side dishes. Gary will put you to work setting up the dining room, wrapping silverware, making bag lunches and setting up dessert trays. You can try out your skills as a waiter or waitress at 3:00 and serve our guests a delicious meal. We have been serving between 90 to 120 meals every day for the past 3 months. The recession is showing us just how great the need is in our local community. Our congregation has been providing meals for 25 years at the Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, in good times and bad times, month after month.

If you are not a soup kitchen volunteer, please consider serving as an occasional alternate when extra hands are needed or help us feed our neighbors by donating a gift card in any amount from any local grocery store in the collection plate on Sunday. Finally, during March, we are accepting a food offering at both the 9:00 and 11:00 services to help replenish to replenish our local food pantries. There is a list of needed items in the weekly order of service. Please remember that you must find a substitute from the alternate list or switch with someone from another team if you are unable to volunteer on your assigned day.



A Note from ARC



Everyone at ARC would like to thank you for your donation of winter socks and toiletries for the special “Care Kits” we deliver to those in need in the greater Danbury area. We have packaged and delivered over 200 care kits so far this winter. Without your generous donation of items in December, we couldn’t afford to meet this basic need in our community.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in this effort and donated items for our use. Thanks to your generosity and kindness, we can continue to serve the homeless population in our region.

One love,
Rev. Phyllis J. Leopold,
Executive Director

March 2009						<table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr> <th colspan="7">March 2009</th> <th colspan="7">April 2009</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td> <td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td> <td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td> <td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td> <td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>							March 2009							April 2009							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	26	27	28	29	30			29	30	31											
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Shaded Events are off-site

ARTS SUNDAY
Save the Date!
May 17, 2009

Be thinking about what creative work you will submit. For more information, please contact **Geri Boggs** at artssunday@gmail.com.

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

March 1, 2009: **Seeds of Change.** The UUCD is honored to have Hanna Eisler Burnett, program coordinator of Yale Sustainable Food Project speak to us about food, agriculture and sustainability. Health, culture, the environment, education, and the global economy cannot be addressed without considering food, according to the YSFP's. It is this organization's mission to give students the tools necessary to experience what food, agriculture and sustainability mean, and how crucial they are to every facet of our lives. This issue speaks to our Unitarian Universalist seventh principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

March 8, 2009. **Empowering Women Worldwide.** Women's empowerment has long been recognized as a key to well-being in developing nations. Thus "Promote gender equality and empower women" is one of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. On International Women's Day, we celebrate the efforts of women to empower themselves. Of course, empowerment begins at home, and the Children's Focus will honor our own Girl Scouts. Service led by Interim Minister Sue Spencer, with Children's Focus coordinated by Heather Smith.

March 15, 2009. **Choosing Our Next Minister: Beyond Categorical Thinking:** Join us as UUA- trained facilitators Eddy Carroll and Jacqui Williams, with help from Rev. Sue Spencer, lead a service inviting us to broaden our thinking and imagination as to what our new settled minister will look like. This inspirational service will be followed by lunch (after 11:00 a.m. service) and then a three-hour workshop led by the facilitators. It promises to be interesting and challenging. It is part of our search process toward a new settled minister.

March 22, 2009. **Conflict, Caring, and Community.** When conflict emerges in a congregation, some assume it's a sign that something is wrong. But what if it's a sign that the congregation is doing something RIGHT? Today we'll explore the role of conflict in congregations. Service led by Interim Minister Sue Spencer.

March 29, 2009: **Camviando Vidas – Changing Lives.** This service will feature guest speaker Jose Abreu, from the Dominican Republic and director of "Cambiando Vidas - Changing Lives". The vision of Jose Abreu, former brigade coordinator of Habitat para la Humanidad® República Dominicana, Cambiando Vidas is dedicated to the belief that every human being should have access to all of life's essentials – shelter, food, clothing, education, and the opportunity to realize one's full potential and ambitions.