



Island Passages

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF WHIDBEY ISLAND

P.O. Box 1076, Freeland, WA 98249 • 360-321-8656 • www.whidbey.com/uucwi/

MARCH 2002

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
3 4 PM Sunday service and CRE.	4	5	6	7 7:30 PM Board meeting at Trinity.	8	9 7PM Movie Night at Ken and Sandy's. See article on page 2.
10 4 PM Sunday service and CRE.	11	12	13	14	15	16 Saturday Supper. See article below.
17 4 PM Sunday service and CRE.	18	19 7:30 PM UU Book Group at Mavis's				23
24 4 PM Sunday service and CRE. 6 PM Oscar Party See article on page 2.	25	26				30

31
4 PM Sunday service and CRE.

SATURDAY SUPPERS

Saturday Suppers are a great way to get to know each other. Suppers are held in two homes on each date and limited to a maximum of 8 people attending at each home. The host/hostess will choose the ethnic theme and coordinate food and drink contributions. There are two separate sign-up sheets (on the church membership table), one to host and the second to attend. The final dates for this church year are March 16 (Irish theme) and May 18 (Caribbean theme). Please contact Gail A. or Sally K. for more info.

COME TO ELIOT *from Bill G.*

Since 1980, I have rarely missed attending at least one session each year of Eliot Institute held at Seabeck on Hood Canal. It has probably been my most treasured involvement as a UU. It is a wonderful opportunity for learning, spiritual renewal, and to make lifelong friends throughout the Northwest. The summer sessions have special appeal for families with children. The first session this year will be between March 28 and April 1. Week-long camps will occur in July and August, and a shorter session is held over the New Year holiday. If you dare to learn more, visit their websight at www.eliotinstitute.org, or call 206-374-2497, or just ask me or Sarah R, another longtime Elioteer.

UPCOMING SERVICES

March 3 — “Giraffe Heroes Project: A Celebration of Courage and Compassion,” with guest speaker, Keith Mack

The Giraffe Heroes Project, a nonprofit located in Langley, encourages people to “stick their necks out” for the common good. We tell the stories of “Giraffes” in newspapers, on TV, on the internet, and in our nation’s schools. Giraffes are courageous, compassionate folks who prove that, indeed, one person can change the world. Their stories inspire others to stick their necks out, too.

Keith Mack is the Outreach Director for The Giraffe Heroes Project. He helps spread the Giraffe message through speeches and fundraising.

Service Facilitator: Malcolm Ferrier; Membership Rep: Malcolm

March 10 — “Thank You For Caring So Much,” with guest UU minister, Rev. David Maynard

In any close relationship we find conflict is as inevitable as the good-time feelings. Using marriage as an example, the sermon will consider tools and attitudes which can render conflict into a blessing and help keep one’s cool in the midst of battle.

Reverend Maynard has served the West Seattle UU Fellowship as Consulting Minister for the past three years. A life-long Unitarian, he lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife Jane. He previously served churches in Illinois and Tennessee.

Service Facilitator: Sandy W.; Membership Rep: Baird B.

March 17 — “This, I Believe”

Unitarian Universalists are well known for their ambiguous beliefs, or as we prefer to think, our acceptance of many pathways to religious beliefs. But what *do* we believe? This Sunday is a chance to listen to and be inspired by some of our own members about what they believe.

Service Facilitator: Sarah R.; Membership Rep: Roy B.

March 24 — “A Rare Gift of Blessing,” with guest UU minister, Rev. Peg Morgan

Henry David Thoreau said that “It takes two to speak the truth, one to speak and another to hear.” We will explore this rare gift of giving and receiving full, listening presence.

Rev. Peg Boyle Morgan has been a Unitarian Universalist for 32 years. She was ordained in the year 2000, and is completing a two year interim position as Assistant Minister at University Unitarian Church in Seattle. Previously, Peg served as Pastoral Care Coordinator at University Unitarian. She recently retired from her clinical social work career after 30 years as the Executive Director of Mercer Island Youth and Family Services.

Service Facilitator: Ken M.; Membership Rep: Malcolm

March 31 — “The Easter Challenge,” with guest UU minister, Rev. Barbara Davenport

How do religious liberals make the Easter story relevant to their lives? Can we believe in the unseen and unknown? We’ll consider this quote from the Gospel of John: “You believe because you can see. . . Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.” *John 20:29*

A Harvard Divinity School graduate, Barbara is a consulting minister with Skagit UU Fellowship in Mt. Vernon and South Fraser Unitarian Congregation in Surrey, B.C.

Service Facilitator: Bob W.; Membership Rep: Baird B.

MOVIE NIGHT

Everyone is invited to Ken and Sandy’s, Saturday, March 9 at 7:00 p.m. to watch *Truely, Madly, Deeply* (1991) starring Alan Rickman and Juliet Stevenson. This off-beat, tender, and well-written tale speaks of love, loss, and the supernatural. Popcorn will be provided. Bring your own beverage and any other munchie you might want.

OSCAR PARTY

Lights, camera, action . . . On Sunday, March 24 at 6:00 p.m., Ken and Kathy C. will be hosting an “Oscar Extravaganza!” If you enjoy watching this Hollywood Hoopla, or you just love a good party, this is the place to be. If you’re inspired, come in glamour eveningwear or your favorite movie star costume! Ballots will be available before the show to cast your vote. A prize will be awarded to the person whose ballot most closely matches the Hollywood voting. Concession-counter munchies will be provided—bring your own beverage. Please RSVP to Kathy and Ken.

AUCTION REPORT

The Services Auction was a great success! Folks had a fun evening with chatting, wine, coffee, and fabulous desserts. Ken M. pulled lots of dollars out of our pockets—but his job wasn’t all that hard due to the great items people offered up for sale. There are a few items left that you can purchase by being the first to e-mail the church at uucwi@whidbey.net. The auction earned about \$2,700 for our church work.

The people who made it happen and who deserve our heartfelt appreciation are: Ken M., Sandy W., Gail A., Mavis C., and Francie W. for set up, decorating and desserts, Mavis C. for beautiful harp music, Effie B. and Elaine W. for more great desserts, Roy B. for cashing, Al G. for tracking, and Sarah R. for organizing.

List of items still available:

- Five months of cottage flowers
- Weekend at waterfront house
- Sea kayaking basics
- Music lessons
- Elegant brunch
- Trio of homemade jam

BILL'S BANTER

from UUCWI Board President, Bill G.

I begin with excerpts from a poem titled: "Winter Grace" by May Sarton, an influential Unitarian:

It is time we learned again the winter grace
To put the nerves to sleep in a dark place
And smooth the lines in the self-tortured face.

For we are at the end of our endurance nearly
And we shall have to die this winter surely,
For this is the end of more than a season clearly.

Before the seed of faith so deep and still
Pushes up gently through the frozen will
And the joyless wake and learn to be joyful.

Before this buried love leaps up from sorrow
And doubt and violence and pity follow
To greet the radiant morning and the swallow.

I would not be the first to observe that the seasons of our calendar offer a rich metaphor for considering the ongoing transformation that often occurs in the lives of individuals and organizations. In this metaphor Winter is a time of consolidation, reflection, confronting the hard issues, and "smoothing the lines in the self-tortured face."

We have indeed been in the Winter, haven't we? We have endured the dank and dark weather, as well as the Pacific Northwest District Contact Team "assessment" which dramatized concerns and divisions that were and are real. We have reacted and overreacted. Our hearts were heavy. The Winter continued and we lost, for one reason or another, several of our beloved members, considerable energy, our choir director, our RE teacher, and a ministerial candidate (but praise be and loving thanks to Susan Cyr and the Search Committee for their efforts). Others were tempted to go away, but they didn't. And, we continue on.

Out of Winter (so say the poets) emerges spiritual renewal, the creative energy and budding that is Spring, the fulfillment that is Summer, and the harvest that is Autumn. In February I am sure I detected a turning point. We had a very successful fund-raising auction and a thousand kudos to Sarah Richards for pulling that together in the face of our pessimism. The auction was followed by an inspiring service presented by the Pastoral Services Committee and aptly titled: "To Keep One Heart from Breaking." At both of these events I sensed a joy and a delight in being there and being with one another that has been missing. On March 2, the Board will have its first meeting with Rev. Jim Anderson to determine how he might help us mend and grow, and I am extremely pleased about his involvement. I even hear optimistic talk about a possible new choir director and RE teacher.

I would not purport to suggest that we have solved our problems. They are not susceptible to quick fixes. Please know, however, that the Board, the Assessment Task Force, and others have committed literally hundreds of hours addressing the issues. The entire congregation will soon experience some of the fruits of their efforts. Please reflect too, especially when critical thoughts are nearby, that none of these volunteers owes us a damn thing.

Every minute devoted is purely a gift of love and, in my opinion, love ought to be offered in return.

I am very ready to "greet the radiant morning." In March, Francie and I will be doing just that every morning in Guatemala leading our students on birding walks in the tropical rain forest. So my prayers are that you will join acting President, Ken M., and each other in proclaiming the arrival of Spring and return of the swallows on Whidbey Island.
Blessed Be.

MINISTERIAL SEARCH PROCESS ENDS

from Susan C., Search Committee Chair

The Search Committee had been engaged in an interview conversation with a fine applicant over the past few weeks. He has, however, declined our invitation to be Minister for the remainder of this church year. He feels it would not be healthy for him—or the congregation—to come into our congregation at this time when things are so very sticky and unresolved. He feels that since Rev. Jim Anderson is coming to help with conflict resolution (see ATF article on page 4), it would be best to focus there and not allow ourselves to be distracted by a ministerial relationship.

This marks the end of this search committee's activities. Even though the result is not what we had hoped for, I know that this committee's contribution to the life of this congregation has been a worthy one. We have learned a great deal. Thank you to the Search Committee: Carol B., Bob W., Christi S., and Linda G. for such dedicated work at this difficult time in the life of our congregation.

2002-2003 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF DINNER

Saturday night, April 6 — Mark your calendars! That's the night of the gala Kick-off Dinner for the 2002—2003 UUCWI Stewardship Campaign. This year it will take place at the Bayview Cash Store beginning at 6:00 p.m.

All those who attended last year's Kick-off Dinner remember what a great time we had: good food, good entertainment, and good fellowship. We expect no less this year, so make your plans now to come out and enjoy an evening of fun and camaraderie. And it's FREE (unless you believe the maxim that there is no such thing as a free lunch or Stewardship Campaign Dinner). Actually, we will be telling you about the financial needs for UUCWI's coming fiscal year, and letting you know that this is an opportunity to continue to support our liberal religious community so we can keep the promises we've made to ourselves. So it may not end up being free—but the rewards are great.

LOOKING FOR CROCKPOTS

We'll be needing some crockpots (with removable liners) to borrow and use at the Canvass Dinner. If you're willing to lend, please call Mavis.

NOTES FROM THE ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE

submitted by Ken M

Although it may not be evident to the casual observer, the Task Force is laboring away in the background. I'm sure that to many we are moving far too slowly in addressing both the positive and negative effects of the CONTACT Team's December Assessment of UUCWI. There are a couple of reasons for that:

1) We're are engaged in a considered and deliberate process intended to engage both the Assessment and members of congregation. If the Assessment itself could be characterized as tumultuous and hurried, we want to change the pace to a calm and deliberative process.

2) Comprised of three Board members, our Chaplain Al G., and Effie B., we have a very busy and involved group. Though we recognize the importance of dealing with these issues, time resources are finite and we all have other responsibilities.

What I can announce is that we are preparing an informational packet that will be sent to everyone who received an Assess-

ment Report. This document is designed to explain the intent and process of the CONTACT Team and provide some insight into how that process was developed. It contains the charge to the Assessment Task Force from the Board and our recommendations in response to that charge. It also outlines what we have accomplished so far and previews what we intend to do in the future.

The Task Force held its first small-group communication exercise, led by Effie B., at the joint Board and Committee Chair meeting on February 7. Look for more opportunities in a variety of venues to talk about the Assessment, our congregation, and what we can do to make our community stronger.

We recommended the Board hire Rev. Jim Anderson to act as a consultant to the Board in dealing with the most pressing conflicts in our congregation. This has been done, and Jim will be meeting with the Board to begin that process on Saturday, March 2.

We thank you for your continued patience as we work through these very complex issues.

“ . . . AND SERVICE IS OUR PRACTICE.”

news from our Social Action Program

SHADE-GROWN/FAIR-TRADE COFFEE

Apologies for the late arrival of coffee this month. Our supplier unfortunately misplaced the order so delivery has been delayed. Not to fear, the delicious stuff is on its way and will be available for pick-up Sunday, March 3. Sign-ups for the next order will also be on the social action table or you can call Ken C. and place your order. We have now amassed \$276.00 for the social action fund from this great project. Thanks to all who order so faithfully!

HOMELESS WOMEN'S BASKETS

The Homeless Women's Choir performed at the February 10 service and was presented with the baskets that we worked so hard to assemble. Due to the incredibly generous response from our congregation, and others, we were delighted to present them with 36 baskets!!!! The beautiful baskets were overflowing with gloves, socks, lotions, soaps, cosmetics, and dental care products. If you missed the service, we only wish we could have bottled the good feeling that was present and pass it on to you. One particularly memorable moment occurred during the postlude when one of the homeless women walked up to the offering baskets, which had already been passed, and deposited the coins from her pocket. It was a very humbling experience for us all.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU...

Thanks to all who gave items for the baskets. Since most items were dropped in the donation basket, we cannot thank you by name, but you know who you are. Special thanks to Judy W. who delivered several loads in her "Coupeville Express" and thanks to her friends Arlene House and Jewel Czuchta who contributed so generously. Thanks to the supremely organized team of Sally K., Gail A., Wendy F., Marie P., Carol B., Jacqueline S., Lisa Y., Sandy W., and Sandy M. who assembled the baskets. Particular thanks to Carol B. who provided a great work space, refreshments, ribbons and things, and lots of cheer. Thanks also to Frances W. whose donation purchased 12 pairs of gloves. Last, but by no mean least, thank you Kate . for your inspiration and your generosity. None of this would have happened without you.

THANKS ALSO...

Linds Freeland Pharmacy, the Bon Marche, and Whidbey Good Cheer each donated some great items for the baskets. We salute you!!!

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new member, Judy W.! Judy has lots of great ideas and we will be considering a future project with the nursing home in Coupeville where she is volunteer coordinator.

SOAPBOX

from Newsletter Editor, Ken M.



With full knowledge that I may be beating a dead horse, I offer this little article I plucked from *InterConnections*, a newsletter published by the UUA for the benefit of lay leaders. It supports my concerns that e-mail, as convenient and powerful a communication tool as it may be, can cause more problems than it solves if used indiscriminately. I have had very similar experiences to those described by Rev. Hill. I've seen problems that arose though the improper use of e-mail, that then escalated due to subsequent e-mails, only to be hashed out by the intercession of other parties because the combatants would no longer speak to each other. And none of the mess would have happened at all if not for e-mails. Please let me know what you think.

“Danger: Difficult Issues and E-Mail Don’t Mix”
InterConnections: Volume V/ Issue 1, January 2002

Use caution when discussing congregational issues on e-mail, reminds the Rev. Bob Hill, district executive for the UUA’s Southwest District.

“E-mail is wonderful,” Hill says. “But it’s also a terrible way to discuss difficult issues.

“Please, please, please, whether you are a minister of a lay leader or a loyal critic, do not use e-mail as a forum for dealing with complicated church issues or as a means of gathering support for one side or another of a controversy.

“I have assisted with more than one situation in which e-mail messages have made problems worse than they had to be. E-mail has these dangerous qualities:

- E-mail gives a false sense of conversation . . . without the help of non-verbal signals: voice tone, body language, and so on.
- E-mail lets you react almost instantly. I don’t know about you, but often my second thoughts are a lot wiser than my first reactions.
- E-mail messages are available to everyone in the world. They can be forwarded accidentally or on purpose to anyone who is on-line. Say nothing in e-mail you wouldn’t be willing for everyone to read.
- E-mail messages are immortal. Any message you send about a church controversy today may be plucked from someone’s hard drive, zip disc, or CD next week, next year, 10 years from now and quoted totally out of context.

“I’m not urging you to refrain from criticizing what needs criticism or to hold back your opinions about any legitimate concern of church life. Sometimes needed change can only come about through struggle and difficulties.” End.

I stand by my assertion that e-mail is an excellent way to convey information quickly, easily, and cheaply. But its strengths are also its weaknesses. When used as a forum, it’s too easy, too quick, and too costly in terms of the damage it can do. Please use it responsibly and remember that once e-mailed, your words can never be taken back.

BOARD NOTES

prepared by Ken M., Board Secretary

The Board held its monthly meeting February 7. The Board welcomed the chairs of most of our committees to this joint meeting. Under “old business” the contract with Rev. Jim Anderson as a consultant to the Board regarding the Assessment and conflicts that arose out of it was accepted with a cap at \$750. The vote was unanimous.

The impending loss of our estimable Church Coordinator, Sandy W., was discussed. We need to identify a willing candidate to take over for Sandy while she is still available to do some training and transition work.

An *ad hoc* committee of Bill G., Ken M., and Mitch H. was pressed into service to prepare issues for the annual meeting at the end of the Church calendar. If you have any issues you would like to see taken up at the annual meeting, please contact one of these intrepid volunteers.

The job description for the Social action committee was approved unanimously by the Board. It is available on the web site or by request through Kathy C.

Highlights from the Committee Chair Reports:

The Search Committee was unable to identify a suitable candidate who could commit to the congregation for this Church year. The matter will be taken up by the congregation at the annual meeting.

The Canvass Committee announced its annual Canvass Kick-Off Dinner to be held at the Bayview Cash Store on April 6. Ken M. has agreed to emcee.

The Social Action Committee is looking for members. Kathy and friends are doing great things, but they can’t change the world alone. The Board voted unanimously to allow the SAC to use any revenue generated by its activities at its discretion.

The Membership Committee acknowledged the significant progress made by the congregation in meeting and greeting guests and newcomers to our services.

Pastoral Services: Service scheduled for Feb 17. Two new members Sally K. and Roy Z. have replaced Ann W.n for a net gain of one member. Ongoing programs are working well and the addition of our Chaplain Al G. is seen as significant upgrade to our pastoral presence. Pastoral Services training proposed for the fall.

Web Site: Web Site needs more feedback and better advertising in the newsletter.

Finance: Pledges remaining to be paid of \$13,000 with an expected shortfall of \$6500 expected due to conflict, moving, and attrition. If you have pledged and not yet met your obligation, the Church needs your continued financial support. If you are current with your pledge, thank you for making us possible.

Bylaws Review: Agreed to table the process until the April Board meeting with an interim report to interested parties.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for March 7.