



MAGNET

Alexander's Meander

This past weekend Kimi and Preston and I stole a few days away in the woods of northern Michigan. As usual, the place was filled with wildlife, especially deer, as they are being pushed out of their habitat and into ours; the hunters currently invading their living quarters. Yes, deer hunting season is upon us, and it still brings up ambivalent feelings in me. On the one hand, there is a sacred dimension to hunting, which the natives of this land exemplified. On the other hand, hunting as "sport" disturbs me. Life should never be used as an object of sport, in my opinion. Hunting should only be engaged in as a sacred act. Indeed, the killing of any animal ought always to be a sacred act, or at least *whenever possible*.

This tension between hunting as a sacred act and hunting as sport was brought home to me in spades this year while walking a back road just north of Grayling. At one house, nestled back in the woods, we found a deer splayed out and being butchered. Preston was both awestruck and scared. My son, already an external processor, spewed forth with more questions than I can count – well into the night and the following day. "What's that (pointing to the liver)?" "Why do we kill deer?" "Why do people tie deer to the roofs of their cars?" "Can I buy a gun?" etc...

Now, I was challenged with how to frame my philosophy about all of this to a seven year old. In typical UU parenting style, my explanations almost always began with "Some people believe... x" "Some people think... y" "Some people feel... z" *You see, it's all about perspective, son...* was the implicit message in my explicit answers. I'm not sure to what extent I succeeded...

But the point I want to make is actually about something tangential to deer hunting. In that struggle to relate to my son my feelings about deer hunting, I realized something, *again*, that tends to creep up on me from time to time. Every generation is a blank slate. Every generation must discover anew about the world. What is right? What is wrong? What is meaningful? What is the Good? etc... Oh! How I wished I could just make a copy of my thinking on this matter and download my thoughts and feelings about it into his head and heart! After all,

I've already spent a lot of time thinking this through!

Of course this is partially naïve. Sure, it would be great if we could find some mechanism by which to give our children a head start on life, so they don't HAVE to start out as blank slates. We could just download into them everything we've already figured out. Wouldn't they be ahead of the game that way? Actually, No! They would just be carbon copies of us. All of this is to say that there would be BOTH pros and cons to injecting into our children our way of thinking and feeling about the world. The pro would be that yes, regarding some matters we could save them a lot of time and trouble involved in the process of learning about life. The con would be that they would lose an important life skill if they didn't have to struggle a bit to find their own answers to life's questions, not to mention the fact that we are often wrong to begin with! So I conclude the following...

Feeling stuck as a parent when it comes to helping our children figure out the world can be a good thing. It is indicative of the fact that we can't download answers to life's questions into the minds and hearts of our children. Because of this, they are free to become who they already are, to steal a thought from Pindar, or who they were meant to be, if one believes that there is intent structured into the universe. All in all, sometimes being stuck as a parent is a symptom of our children's need for freedom, which is one of the necessary pillars upon which they can build happy lives. "I don't know" is some times the best answer...

Namaste,

Alex





From the Director of Religious Education

It's the most wonderful time of the year... well it can be, there are celebrations everywhere, in parks, schools, homes, also at places of worship. We have to be careful not to get caught up in the whirlwind...

This year I observed "Buy Nothing Day". This holiday falls the day after Thanksgiving, when most people are out hitting the sales and spending money on pretty useless things. This year I chose voluntary simplicity to prepare myself for the season. Once again I'm beginning to think about how to celebrate the joy of the season without unnecessary spending. I'd like to pass on a few of my favorite ideas to you...

I think the first thing that comes to mind is helping others- sharing the joy and intimacy of Christmas with those who need it most. I think we've got a good start on that here at church. We are involved in the Quilt Project, the middle school youth are raising money for military families and we just distributed Guest at Your Table Boxes. In Sunday school, children are learning lessons of community, sharing and responsibility. A few weeks ago church member, Arlene lead the youth in making dog biscuits in recognition of Unitarian, Henry Berg, founder of the ASPCA. (Check out www.animaland.org for lots of follow up activities regarding animal care, jobs and youth activism.) Just before Thanksgiving; parents, Leah and Sharon led the traditional Stone Soup making. Our children understand the importance of giving.

Promote this at home... suggest your children give gifts of time and skill, as well as presents made in the kitchen, workshop, or at the desk. Recycle- I use to love to wrap my Dad's gifts in the Sunday funny paper, do you remember using potatoes to print a design on brown paper grocery bags? Teach your kids- do it with them! It's also fun to cut up last year's cards to make gift tags, and even fold them into small boxes! Nature reminds us of our place in the world, it fills us with a wonder appropriate to the season and helps restore our souls- and it's free! Take a family walk, go sledding, hold a marshmallow roast. Of course it is the family time and creating traditions that make these gifts most valuable. If you must shop (and we all do)...Buy from alternative gift markets. Support musicians and artists. Buy art. Shop local and leave generous tips. I have a favorite independent book store I can recommend!

To help get you started with a more meaningful and simple Christmas. The RE Committee is hosting a party for our families and the families of Women Arise (Date -TBA). We will focus on the true spirit of the holidays. We will sing carols together, hear storytellers and make handmade gifts.

Women Arise is an organization that assists female offenders and ex-offenders with the education, training and interaction necessary to become productive community members and parents. Christmas can be an especially hard time for these women. In their absence their children have built up false expectations of a holiday with their mom. Society has helped our children to believe that now that mom is home they'll get the gifts they've been longing for (being newly employed or looking for work makes this difficult).

While simplicity is the key, a special material object can have meaning too. Especially if it is something fun to do to keep your mind off your troubles! In the next couple weeks have your children go through their toys and do some recycling. We'd like to have some gifts available at the party for children to take home- games and books are the best. Toys for infants and toddlers are also appreciated. As your helping your child pack up a few things- let your child know- what goes around comes around- at the party, they'll get to bring home a gift too! (Please no stuffed animals- due to asthma.)

We are also seeking monetary donations which will be used to give each woman a Target gift card. Giving her the freedom to buy the gifts her children really want or the things her family needs. Please contact me if your interested in making a financial contribution.

In the Simplicity of Song and Stories this Holiday Season,
Jennifer





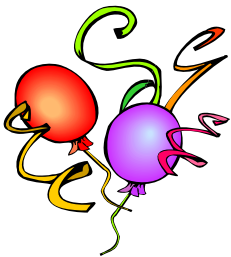
Congregational Emails

If you have not been receiving the congregational emails regarding some of the upcoming events and other news, and you would like to, please let Cheryl know and she will be happy to set you up in the system. Please indicate if you would like your Magnet sent to you by email, and whether you still want to receive it by regular mail.

Green Sanctuary Swap



New, Never-Used item Swap & Gently-Used Book Exchange Sunday, January 28th after each service.
For more information or questions contact
Linda Brus at UUCF



Happy Membership Anniversary!!

	Yrs of Membership	Date Joined
Barry Brown	26 yrs	12-21-1980
Betty Marshall	25 yrs	12-13-1981
Ann Ford	22 yrs	12-8-1984
Alison Beland	20 yrs	12-9-1986
Anna Rado	18 yrs	12-11-1988
Leslie & Peter Travis	17 yrs	12-10-1989
Linda & Paul Denawetz	14 yrs	12-13-1992
Marianne O'Connor	13 yrs	12-12-1993
Laura Evans	12 yrs	12-18-1994
Sandra & Ray Gross	4 yrs	12-15-2002
Kelly & Evan Carpenter-Crawford	1 yr	12-4-2005

Daytimers

On November 16 fifteen people attended the Daytimers meeting, which is the social group for seniors that meets each month at the church on the third Thursday at noon. Nancy Bailey, the leader, could not attend because she had to go to a 2-day income tax seminar, so husband Paul Bailey led the meeting. Mary Hurd brought the dessert, a delicious oatmeal-nut cake. Thank you, Mary, and thank you, husband Paul.

The Daytimers planned the December meeting which will be a potluck Christmas party at the church at noon on Thursday, December 21. To date all members have been contacted to determine what each will bring to this Christmas potluck.

At the December 21 meeting each Daytimer should also bring a wrapped present that costs \$8. On the present please note if the present is for a male, female, or unisex. Nancy Hayden volunteered to handle a fun, and sometimes hilarious, Christmas present exchange game.

All church members and friends age 50 or over are invited to the Daytimers Christmas potluck party. Please contact Nancy Bailey if you wish to attend so that it can be decided what you will bring to the potluck. Also, don't forget to bring a wrapped \$8 present so you can join in on the gift exchange game.

Submitted by Nancy Bailey

NOTICE: We will be having a congregational meeting at UUCF at 6:00pm on Sunday December 3rd. Among the items on the agenda will be a vote on proposed Bylaw changes. A Bylaw change requires a large quorum. Please make a special effort to attend this meeting.

If you absolutely can not make the meeting there are proxy vote forms available on the table in the volunteer office. You must have your form turned in to Cheryl Krug, Office Administrator prior to the start of the meeting.

Remember, proxy votes do not count towards our quorum.

Child care will be available to those who need it.



Holiday Dessert and Gift Auction:



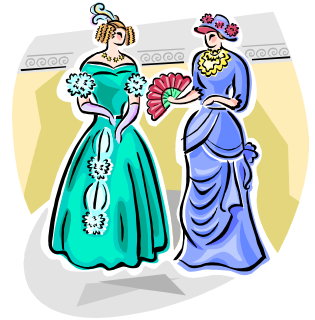
Do you have a dynamite holiday dessert that everyone raves over? Do you have the handcrafted or newly purchased item that would make the perfect gift for someone else to give? Please bring them to church on **Sunday, December 17th**, for our annual fundraising Holiday Dessert (and now Gift) auction. Show off your baking, crafting, or shopping prowess, and help raise money for UUCF.

The auction will be between services, so you'll need to come to church by about 10:15 that morning to drop off your goodies. Don't have anything to auction, not a problem- just bring your checkbook and take something great home with you. Questions? Call Linda Brown.

2nd Friday Women's Group – December Meeting

For December only: we will be attending Strut Night 2006 at The Royal Oak Music Theatre located at 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Show time is from 7:00 – 11:00 PM. The evening will include a fashion show, complimentary snackies and great shopping. There will be a \$10 donation fee. We will be car pooling from the UU parking lot at 6:00 PM. If you would like to car pool, contact Joan Ramsay or Mary Smith.

The next meeting at UUCF will be the 2nd Friday in January.



Meet our new members:

Jason & Melinda Bryce

Jason grew up in the Detroit area, and Melinda in Harbor Springs. The couple married in 1997, and after Melinda graduated from Oakland University in '99 they moved to Northern Michigan where Jason bought and ran a coffee shop while Melinda was a Montessori teacher and administrator. They moved back to this area just over three years ago, and have been in their home in Livonia since Spring of 2005. Jason now works for Lab-tech Corporation (a family business) in Detroit, and spends his free time running, collecting rare hot sauces, and is just getting back into rock climbing. Melinda stays home with the children and runs the household while dabbling in her artistic endeavors. Chailyn attends first grade at Hoover, and Kayden preschool at Academic Pathways. Prior to children the couple spent a lot of time traveling, and has always enjoyed outdoor activities such as camping, climbing, hiking, and mountain biking. The family enjoys frequent visits to Greenfield Village, the zoo, the science centers, biking, soccer, jumping on their trampoline, swimming, and now UUCF events!

Important RE Dates

12/3 am- Children are invited to **bring mittens** for the mitten tree. We will discuss this with the youth during our children's chapel. Donations will go to a local shelter.

12/10- **Bring a bucket** to church today(sand buckets, Halloween buckets...). Ask your child if they remember why???

12/24 am- There will be no scheduled RE Classes this morning. We will however offer special alternative programming for a multi-age group of children. Activities may include, stories, crafts, songs, movies and yoga.

Christmas Eve there will be an Intergenerational Service for children, youth and adults in the meeting house.

12/31 am- There will be no scheduled RE Classes this morning. We will however offer special alternative programming for a multi-age group of children. Activities may include, stories, crafts, songs, movies and yoga.

1/7 am- Only one service at 10:00 am. All classes will meet.

A Sweet Donation

On Sunday, December 10 the middle school youth will host a chocolate fountain at the 11:30 coffee hour. For a small donation you will be able to dip a variety of special treats into the melted chocolate. Yum!

The proceeds will benefit military families in transition.

You Gotta Have Art

Thank you artists Laura, Jeanie (parent) and Dayna (youth). The beautiful mural you created in the Youngers classroom is very inviting. Jeanie painted grass and sky one week, and now there are animals peeking out of the grass and hot air balloons floating in the sky. Laura Evans is a professional children's book illustrator who has given us her time and books in the past. Thank you all! All church members should take a peek in the downstairs classroom, last on the left.

Another New Member:

Nancy McLernon

Nancy lives in Clarkston with her husband, Mike Brown. She was previously a member at UUCF for 5 years until she moved away. Nancy is a social worker who substitutes for special education. Her husband is the director of the Boys and Girls Club in Auburn Hills. During her spare time she enjoys reading and outside activities like hiking and swimming.

New Years Eve Brunch

We are again sponsoring a brunch to start the New Year holiday.

Please join your fellow UU's at the lovely home of Linda Brown in Farmington Hills on December 31, 2006 from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm for great food and camaraderie. The menu will include egg casseroles, ham, sweets and fruit, as well as Bloody Mary's and Mimosas. The cost is \$15 PP.

Sign up on the sheet on the Social Events bulletin board by December 24. Payment may be made to any Social Events committee member.

Linda Rourk, Social Events



AUTUMN SOCIAL EVENT

The place to be on October 20th was the legendary Dakota Inn Rathskeller on John R. in Detroit. Close to 30 UUCF'ers came out for the Oktoberfest celebration there. We enjoyed a traditional Bavarian dinner, numerous mugs of German beer, and we were seated in probably the best section of the house--right by the band and the dance floor. We had a blast participating in the sing-a-longs and almost everybody got up and danced! We are a fun group! We decided then that we should make this a UUCF tradition so catch this one next year if you couldn't make it this time.



The **Welcoming Congregation Committee** will meet at 6:30p.m.on Wednesday, December 20, 2006 and Wednesday, January 17, 2007. This committee focuses on making our GLBT members, friends and visitors welcome and on informing the entire congregation of GLBT oriented events at church or in the larger community that they might find of interest. We will be planning our calendar for the year, including possible workshops, movie nights, and participation in local Pride events. All UUCFers are invited to participate in committee meetings. For more information contact Millie Foss or Terie Spencer.

Thank you. Millie





CAMPBELL LABELS REMINDER



Just a reminder to keep those Campbell Labels for Education coming in for the Farmington Community School Early Childhood Education and Head Start. We'd appreciate it if you would submit just the front part of the label, showing the name of the product; save the UPC code from bags (such as stuffing) and boxes; and save the lid from Prego Pasta Bake Sauce and pasta sauces 46 oz. or larger. We suggest you put them in a quart size zipperlock bag, which will hold many labels, keep them flat, and take up little space in a kitchen drawer (and make it much easier for the School's volunteer tote person to count the points)..

Any CAMPBELL product qualifies, including SOUP, V8, other JUICES; GRAVY; CHILI; PREGO; FRANCO AMERICAN; PEPPERIDGE FARM and SWANSON (broths only). .

Christmas and New Year's are coming up. Are you cooking turkey? Consider Pepperidge Farm Stuffing moistened with Swanson Chicken Broth; add Broth to your basting mixture; add Broth to your gravy. Use Campbell Gravy. Making hors d'oeuvres? Go South of the Border with Pace products and Campbell's Chili. Use V8 juice for a gazpacho base. Additional ideas are welcome.

For more information contact me or visit www.labelsforeducation.com. The collection box is usually in the entryway during Sunday services, otherwise at the foot of the stairs on the Adams Hall level, on top of the chest for Neighborhood House donations. It has pictures of Campbell products on it.

Millie Foss

UU JOURNEYERS

Our group of seven children in grades 2 thru 4 are well on their personal journeys now in this explorative expedition about what it means to be UU. We have been meeting once a month after the 2nd service and will continue to do so until the end of spring. We eat lunch together then we study, and last, Jennifer, DRE, comes in with suggestions for living the tradition and caps it with some fun activity. In September we explored Principle #1. The kids made their very own chalices using clay pots, paint, and tea candles. In October we explored Principle #2. The children learned a very catchy UU tune. Also, as a group, we visited the seniors at Halstead Place and played BINGO with them. It was hard to tell who had more fun--us or them! (They invited us back!) In November we explored Principle #3. The children created their own "unique beings" note cards and accepted [them]. For the month of December we will complete Principle #4 with our families in our own homes.

We will come together as a group though, for some simple, good ole' holiday cheer.

Jeanie Bay

UU Journeys Liaison



And More New Members:

Barb & Thomas Tucker

Barb and Tom reside in Brighton and have been married for 43 years. They have two grown daughters and two dogs. Tom retired 5 years ago after working as a letter carrier for 42 years. Barb retired at the end of last year after having worked in the computer industry. They both enjoy yoga, the outdoors, spending time with their dogs and family.

Toni Davis

Toni holds a degree in banking and finance and was a banker with Citizens Bank out of Flint. During this time of her life she lived in Saginaw. She has been married to her husband Jim for 5 years. Toni has two adult children. Her daughter lives in Cass City and is a clinical psychologist with the school system. Her son lives in Seattle and is a ship captain on the ocean. Toni enjoys gardening, art, painting, sketching, and re-finishing furniture.

Michelle Morrow

Michelle lives in Royal Oak and teaches special education for an academy in Taylor. She is currently working on her masters degree in special education at Wayne Statue University. Michelle enjoys hiking, camping, reading, and taking her dogs for a walk or basically being outdoors. Once she achieves her degree, Michelle hopes to become more active in the church, such as involvement with social action, social events, and the mystery book club.

Amy Johndro

Amy lives in Royal Oak with her best friend Michelle Morrow who is also a new member. Amy is a social worker who enjoys volunteering, being an activist, traveling, reading, and spending time with family and friends. She became a UU because the congregation is welcoming to people from all walks of life.

Lynn Meisel

Lynn lives in Novi and is a nurse anesthetist at Providence Park hospital in Novi. She has three children ages 12, 120, and 8 years. Lynn keeps busy with her kids who are involved with sports, theatre, and music. She sings with the Novi community choir and has sung with the UUCF choir. Lynn is a marathon runner and enjoys athletics, skiing, and scrap booking.



Sabbatical Support Team Update

“Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation. For when you come back to your work, your judgment will be surer, since to remain constantly at work, you lose power of judgment. Go some distance away, because then the work appears smaller, and more of it can be taken in at a glance, and a lack of harmony or proportion is more readily seen.”

These sensible words from Leonardo da Vinci can give us some insight on why our minister needs to take a sabbatical. We can hope that not only the minister will enjoy the gifts of renewal and refreshment with some time away from his daily duties, but the congregation can also develop fresh perspectives and enthusiasm.

One of the opportunities we will have for a different perspective is the service that our Program Committee has lined up for next February 4. Our guest will be LaRon Williams, who has been steadily earning a reputation over the past few years as one of the finest storytellers in the state of Michigan. He is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University. His salient gift is his remarkable rapport with audiences of all kinds. Children and adults respond with equal enthusiasm to his warmth and vigor as he uses dialect, facial expressions and movement to breathe life into tales which transcend the boundaries of class and age.

Also, from February through July of next year, our Writers Group has offered to publish a monthly article in the *Magnet* to replace Alex's column. This "View from the Pew" will give us some inspirational thoughts, differing viewpoints, or reflections on some of the topics discussed during Sunday services.

In addition, Alex and the Sabbatical Support Team have arranged with Kimi Riegel to be on call should there be any emergency needs for ministerial support during Alex's sabbatical leave. Doug Gallagher and Mark Evens from Birmingham UU Church have also offered to help. Please remember that any pastoral care needs will be coordinated by **Lisa Hayhow** and her Pastoral Care Committee, with **Vanessa Baber** as coordinator for memorial services.

And again, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or one of the other members of the Sabbatical Support Team: **Susan Breen, Ann Ford, Maureen Linker, Joan Olds, or George Rourk.**

Harry Munson
Chair, Sabbatical Support Team

HEARTLAND DISTRICT CHALICE LIGHTER GRANT PROGRAM

Help Spread the Light of Unitarian Universalism! Become a Heartland

District Chalice Lighter! This program gives small grants to Heartland District churches for specific purposes. There are three calls a year (Winter, Spring and Fall), and you can pledge as little as \$10 for each call.

In 2005 monies brought in by The Chalice Lighter Program went to Epiphany Community Church in Fenton, MI, which was in the process of purchasing land and constructing a building; East Liberty Church in Clarklake, MI to help provide handicap accessibility for its church and schoolhouse; Peoples Church in Ludington, MI, for startup materials for a youth chimechoir, much of which can also be used for a handbell choir in the future; and the U-U Church in Fort Wayne, IN, to hire a quarter time Director of Religious Education.

The Spring 2006 grant went to the Unitarian Church of Cincinnati, Ohio to help update the church facilities.

The Fall 2006 grant will again go to the UU Church in Fort Wayne, this time to increase the RE Director to 24 hours a week since RE attendance has more than doubled since Spring. In addition, they have many new members and friends and want to provide training for the DRE and teachers.

You can pledge as little as \$10.00 per call, or you can make an annual pledge of \$30.00 or more per year. CHALICE LIGHTER BROCHURES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE RACK NEAR THE CHURCH ENTRANCE.

Millie Foss

Serve the Heartland on the District Board

The Nominating Committee of the Heartland Unitarian Universalist District is searching for committed and talented lay leaders to serve as members of the Heartland Board of Trustees. The Board is focused on carrying the vision of the District and setting policies that are designed to achieve our desired impact in the world. To guide their work, members of this leadership team utilize the Carver Model of Policy Governance, a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the governing board's role in business, nonprofit, and governmental organizations.

Board members are elected to two-year terms at the HUUD Annual Meeting each spring, with terms commencing July 1. In addition to the Annual Meeting, members are responsible for attending quarterly weekend board meetings in a central location, which includes a transition retreat in June. Additional phone or email communication is required throughout the year. Members are compensated for travel, lodging and other approved expenses. Board members must be voting members of member societies of the District or of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Larger Fellowship residing within the geographical area of the District.

To be considered as a candidate for the HUUD Board, or for more information, please contact Kyle Bagnall, Nominating Committee member, at wildshore@charter.net or at 989.513.0961. Candidates are required to submit a letter of interest and a vitae detailing their professional and lay leadership experience. Please include two references that are familiar with your service as a UU leader. Send materials to Kyle via email (preferred) or by mail to 2809 Dawn Drive, Midland, Michigan 48642.

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IN OTHER NEWS



Did you know that UUCF has been participating in the Meijer Community Rewards program since it began three years ago? Or that church members who are already enrolled in the program have been earning money for UUCF just by shopping at Meijer?

It's easy to join the program.

You can apply in store, on-line at www.meijer.com/rewards or by mailing in a completed application. Your card will arrive in about 2-3 weeks.

There's also a family and friends linking feature . Please consider participating in this easy way to help UUCF. With the holidays approaching it's a great time to enroll and an easy way for us to earn extra \$\$ for our church. Just be sure to use our code # 833393

Thanks,
Fundraising Committee

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Next Magnet Deadline:

December 24, 2006