

MAGNET



Alexander's Meander

by Rev. Alex Riegel

A note from the "minister's eye view"...

We all know, though we often forget, that how we experience life; how we interpret life depends on our perspective, which is always a little (or a lot) different from any one else's perspective. On occasion I like to give the minister's perspective on things at UUCF, so this meander is a snapshot of the church from the minister's point of view, to let you all know how things look from "the pulpit" these days.

All churches go through peaks and valleys. Sometimes we sit atop a wave of new members, increased energy, creative ideas, etc... and sometimes we seem forever to be treading through stasis; membership neutrality or decline, fatigue, habit, etc... Right now, UUCF is riding a growing wave of new membership, energy, and creativity. I know that this isn't always apparent to everyone, so I thought it would be good to point out a few examples of what we have to celebrate these days.

Quietly but assuredly our Children's RE program has undergone noticeable change and is taking on significant projects and responsibilities. Did you know we have ten people that sit on the Children's RE committee these days? Did you know we have 13 people working on the curriculum subcommittee, which is overhauling the children's RE curriculum to reflect UUCF's increasing commitment to our interfaith identity? Did you also know that many of us will be meeting with an RE consultant from the UUA this Saturday to help us strengthen and clarify the varying roles that different parties play relative to our Children's RE program? A lot of good things are happening with that group!

Did you also know that there are a number of new faces sitting on the Program Council these

days, with more to come after this? Did you also know that the Program Council is undergoing some deep reflection on what is its purpose and how it wishes to play a larger role in our church community? Did you know that program Council has been maintaining a higher attendance record than it has in quite some time? There is an influx of energy and willingness taking place, giving some of our understandably tired longer term members a chance for respite.

Did you know that an interfaith symbols committee is now forming to investigate artistic AND TACTFUL ways of making our interfaith commitment more visible at the church?

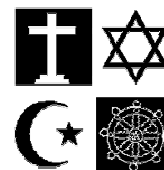
Do you recall that the Building Team is hard at work to ASSURE that we will succeed at our Meeting House restoration (look for ceiling fans and wonderful new windows in the Meeting House before long!) and midterm building plans?

Do you recall the challenge pledge that an incredibly generous donor made to the canvass this year, showing a great deal of commitment and faith to this organization?

There are a LOT of things happening, under the radar, that give us reason to celebrate what is happening at UUCF!!! What I'd like to end with here is one question, namely, are you part of this growing wave, or are you merely sitting on the beach while others ride it? If the latter, I hope you will think about a way to add your energy and talents to what is happening!!! Look around! UUCF is a changing and we want you to be part of it!

Namaste,

Alex





From the Director of Religious Education

by Jennifer Teed

From you I receive, to you I give, together we share, and from this we live...

During April 6's Children's Chapel we will begin something new. Children are invited to bring a monetary donation for our **Children's Offering**. This year our children have spent a great deal of time discussing our 7th Principle, the interdependent web of existence, and how each of them can make a difference in the world. The children have decided that if they do a collection each month they can decide at the end of the year what to do with it. They may decide to do something for the church, or for some organization that helps people or animals.

Thank you to all who participated in the **book drive** for Webster Elementary School. We collected many boxes of books that were very well received. This activity was very meaningful to our youth as well.

During the month of March we have been singing a different song each week to "**sing the children out**" of the service. I am anxious to hear your feedback; we will need to decide by April 13th what song we'll be moving forward with. If you missed a service and would like to hear all the songs, I have taped copies for you to listen to (please ask).

Next week the RE Committee, Alex and I am participating in and **RE Consultation**, led by a district consultant. To prepare for this we have been working to update our RE program's Mission and Vision statements. If you have ideas or would like to have direct input towards our future vision, please share with me. Also remember the RE Committee is open to any interested member. We currently meet on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Another meeting I'm looking forward to next week is the **RE Curriculum Committee**. This great group of people is working together to create a rich RE program for next Fall-Spring. Our focus will be World Religions. I look forward to sharing more with you as things develop.

I hope to see you on April 27th, after church (both services) we will dance around the **Maypole!** The RE Committee has moved up our May Day celebration this year to encourage families to participate in the **Crop Walk** on May 4th. Please talk to Betty Marshall for more information.

My Office Hours

I am usually in my office after church on Sunday until 3:00 pm, Tuesday 11:00 am-3:00 pm, Thursday 7:30-9:30 pm. I like to be available to meet with parents and volunteers at your convenience, due to this and various scheduled meetings I may sometimes not be in during office hours. I suggest you call first to make sure I am in, or schedule an appointment. I also may be reached by cell phone when I am not in my office.

See you at the **Art with Heart** opening this month & the **High School Dinner Fundraiser!**
(More details for both events elsewhere in newsletter).

In Peaceful Song and Stories, Jennifer Teed, Director of Religious Education

We are collecting plastic berry baskets to recycle into May Day Baskets, And plastic mesh bags used for fruit for another project. Please leave these in RE Office. Thanks!



Senior Singles: Coffee and conversation for those 50 and better will be held the second Wednesday, April 9, from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. in Adams Hall. *Head and Heart*, a recent book by Gary Wills, has caught Aubrey Crawford's attention, and he will share some of the insights Wills offers about the interplay of emotion and reason and how it has shaped the history of religions in the U. S. . Any questions? Call Mary Hurd at the church.



**Recycle grocery shopping bags WITH HANDLES
and support the Farmington Hills/Farmington Meals on Wheels program!**

The Green Sanctuary Committee invites you help the FH/F Meals on Wheels program which Monday through Friday serves over 140 people in our community by recycling your **paper grocery bags with handles** to be used to package and deliver the food. Place your bags in the Neighborhood House box located at the foot of the stairs under the coat rack. Only paper grocery bags in good condition with handles can be accepted for this project. Thank you for your support. Any questions ?? call Susan Lightner at the church.



**Chinese New Year Potluck
2008 - The Year of the Rat**

The combined efforts of RE and the Social Events committee resulted in an excellent Chinese potluck with approximately 32 UUs coming together for an evening of food, fun and fellowship. As folks started arriving, the buffet counter began filling up with a great assortment of ethnic dishes. Some were familiar, and many were different, new and authentic. With the diverse assortment of dishes, we experienced a potluck very different from all others. Unexpectedly, a few rodents appeared (stuffed and whimsical,) and resided in Adams Hall for the evening. It was a most enjoyable event. Thank you to our outstanding cooks, organizers, and clean up crew.

The Social Events Committee

LIFELONG LEARNING FORUM

FREE ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES PRESENTED BY UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF FARMINGTON

Join us for free classes on a variety of topics

The Lifelong Learning Forum hosts a six-week series of classes with three different topics offered each week. Topics include religion, philosophy, art, science, health, and social and political issues. No advance registration is necessary. Drop in and pick the class that interests you most!

All classes open to the public

Sessions are scheduled twice a year in the fall and winter/spring

Fall sessions will be 10/3-11/7/08 with a kickoff concert by Mustard's Retreat, Saturday, September 27

Thursday Classes • March 6 - April 17, 2008 • 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Three topics to choose from weekly

Refreshments are served at our social gathering at 7 p.m. Free childcare provided.

March 6

Ritual in Everyday Life

Meditation Retreat Fundamentals

Drugs!?

March 13

Great Decisions: Talking to Our Enemies

Joy of Giving

Alternatives to Military Enlistment

March 20

The Resources and Programs of PFLAG Core Beliefs Psychotherapy

How Do You Know That You Know That You Know?

Note: No classes March 27

April 3

Energy Literacy

Hypnosis

Grassroots Politics

April 10

Great Decisions: U.S./China Trade Policy

Vegging Out II

A Lifetime of Women's Health

April 17

Introduction to a Course in Miracles

100th Monkey: Wouldn't You Like to be a Monkey, too?

Religious Education at Home

Program descriptions are listed on our web site at: www.uufarmington.org/uucf/re-lifespan.html

Program Committee

Our Committee's purpose is ...“ to provide knowledge and insight that can challenge our awareness, assist us in our social understanding, and aid in the development of our moral compass”. We are pleased to have three visitors in our pulpit this month we think will do just that.

April 6 Pulpit Exchange – Rev Dr. Cindy Landrum: "Mother Wisdom: Humanism and the Goddess" - The story of how one past and present Humanist had an experience in the woods which took her around the world and back in a quest for the Goddess.

Rev. Landrum is the minister of the Universalist Unitarian Church of East Liberty, in Clarklake, MI, near Jackson. Before going to Clarklake, she served churches in Massachusetts and Texas, but she was raised in Michigan, and grew up in Pleasant Ridge and attending the Birmingham Unitarian Church.



April 13 Rev. Alex will be in the pulpit.

April 20 Brandon Faber - “Under Pressure” Brandon is from our congregation and will bring a program based on this pervasive, and very current topic. He explains the plight of American schools that enables bullying and harassment to run rampant throughout, its causes, how to identify it, and most importantly, how to combat, reduce, and prevent it. All of us can recall at least some instances of bullying, whether it is as the victim or the bully. The information Brandon will present is cutting edge, current, and relatively unheard of in popular culture. And the application therein can make for a tremendous reduction of a colossal cultural problem as well as bridge divides and find application to numerous cultural and personal issues.

April 27 Joe Riley and UUCF Green Sanctuary Committee bring us a program for Earth Day. His theme is "We Are All One".

Part of the Program Committee's commitment is to provide refreshments at the Sunday morning services. Bob Tweedy and Bea Eglinton do our shopping for Fair Trade Coffee which we hope helps our earth both in the growing and economics of the coffee. We and Green Sanctuary both hope you will honor Earth Day by using your own coffee cup which can be stored in the kitchen for your use each meeting. A small measure, but hopefully, one that can save paper and plastic use. Use Your Cup!!

Do you know what “C R O P” (as in *CROP Walk*) stands for?

Listen for the answer in an upcoming Sunday service or watch future publications.

Pat Blackard & Betty Marshall

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

Special Earth Day edition

Earth Day 2008 – Tuesday, April 22nd – could you go green? How about engaging in life's tasks in a way that leaves less of a footprint?

Of course you have someplace to go, right? Could you walk or bike or carpool there? Use mass transit? (<http://www.smartbus.org>)

Planning on doing some household chores? Laundry is one area where there are a lot of new good products. Some are for cold water wash. Others are concentrated and the container is curbside-recyclable. (I like "Small & Mighty" by All.) Now that the duds are clean, how about taking them outside to line-dry?

Got other stuff to clean? Vinegar and water really does work. If prepared cleaners are what you want, have you tried Method brand? They work really great, Target carries the whole line, and if that weren't enough, 2 guys from Grosse Pointe invented it. Now while you're cleaning, how about trading in those bleach-processed paper towels for some fabric towels?

During Earth Day could you go without electricity? For just one day? This becomes easier to remember if you unplug your appliances. Did you also know that this is said to save 40% of power that goes needlessly unused?

Now let's talk dirt. Come April, many of us are anxious to get our hands in it. Where pollution is concerned, every home in the Rouge River Watershed is waterfront property. To make your garden more healthy, diversify the type of mulch used in various sections of your garden. Different mulches encourage different types of microorganisms and contribute different nutrients. Diversity helps build natural resistance to pests and diseases, which translates to less poisons used. Some natural mulches to consider for your garden:

- ◆ Grass clippings (in a vegetable garden on top of wet newspaper to help resist weeds)
- ◆ Pine needles (use around acid-loving plants such as rhododendrons)
- ◆ Compost (apply in 1 to 3" layers placed around plants as mulch)
- ◆ Hay or straw (hay contains many seeds so straw is preferred). These are useful in the veggie garden, provided that rodents are not a problem
- ◆ Shredded bark or wood chips (spread in a thick layer around shrubs or trees as effective control).
Double-cut hardwood is a by-product of the furniture industry, therefore preferred. Cypress is often gathered from delicate ecosystems of the south, so this should be a last choice.

Native shrubs make an excellent choice for new plantings. By definition, these are plants that existed in the Great Lakes region before the arrival of European settlers. Aside from your need to apply pesticides, fertilizers, and the arduous task of weed-pulling, they contribute to productive relationships among plants, animals, insects and microorganisms. They adapt well to the variable weather conditions of southeastern Michigan. They often provide a community (food/shelter/hiding place) for birds, butterflies, insects and other beneficial wildlife. Some native shrubs colonize disturbed habitats holding soil in place and absorbing nutrients which might otherwise run off into waterways. This might also include the next generation of trees.

(Continued on page 7)

Some favorite Native Shrubs for Home Landscapes in Southeast Michigan:

(Continued from pg 6)

- ◆ Black Chokeberry
- ◆ New Jersey Tea
- ◆ Arrowood Viburnum
- ◆ Mapleleaf Viburnum
- ◆ Spicebush
- ◆ Michigan Holly
- ◆ Buttonbush
- ◆ Ninebark
- ◆ Meadowsweet

Some Native Plants for Butterflies and Other Beneficial Insects:

- ◆ Milkweed
- ◆ Joe Pye weed
- ◆ Pawpaw
- ◆ Aster
- ◆ Violet
- ◆ Lupine
- ◆ Dogwood
- ◆ False Nettle (the real thing actually stings!)
- ◆ Hackberry
- ◆ Pipevine

Some native plant producers:

- ◆ Wildtype Native Plant Nursery Ltd. / Mason / 517-244-1142 / www.wildtypeplants.com/
- ◆ The Native Plant Nursery LLC / Ann Arbor / 734-677-3260 / www.nativeplant.com
- ◆ Michigan Wildflower Farm / Portland / 517-647-6010 / www.michiganwildflowerfarm.com

Mole Control

- ◆ “Mole Med” developed by MSU

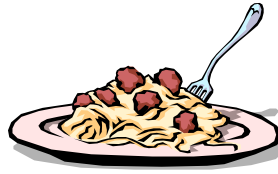
Earth-friendly Lawn Fertilizers

- ◆ Clean Green Soy Fertilizer
- ◆ Ringer Lawn Restore
- ◆ Fertrell Lawn Fertilizer
- ◆ Pursell’s Sta-Green
- ◆ Corn Gluten Pellets

Lastly, if you are moved to do more, please push your legislators to stop nurseries from carrying invasives. Ask legislators for a list.

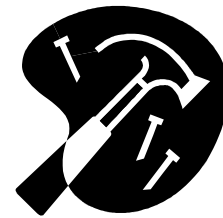
Submitted by Jeanie Bay, guest writer for The Green Sanctuary

The High School Youth Group presents
Italian Grandmother's Basement Dinner (take two)!!



Join us in Adams Hall on Friday , April 25th for a great evening of food and entertainment, Italian-style. This event will help provide funding for the high school youth to travel to Chicago this summer for a service/learning/fun week. Watch for info and the sign up in Adams Hall. Cost is \$7/person or \$20/family. Contact Joel Devonshire at the church for more information.

**Give A Little Love
Rebuilding Together**



You have the opportunity to support Rebuilding Together Oakland County in two ways. UUCF will provide a team of volunteers to refurbish a home of a needy elderly or handicapped person in Farmington or Southfield. You can also buy or sell raffle tickets to raise \$2000 so UUCF will be a Rebuilding Together sponsor.

The Social Action Committee any other interested persons will be selling \$20 raffle tickets. The winner of the raffle will have the Extreme Clean Team visit their home for four hours to do indoor or outdoor chores of their choice. Last years winners Brandon and Heidi had 6 yards of mulch placed around their home. Brandon said, "It took me the whole day to do 4 yards of mulch last year." Our awesome team had the 6 yards of mulch done in one hour! 100 tickets will be sold to raise the \$2000 for the sponsorship. Tickets are available at the Rebuilding Together display. Joni Tedesco and Gloria Tweadey will be the contact persons to get tickets if you would like to help sell them. Try selling them to a neighbor or a friend too. They love the idea of giving to a charitable organization and possibly getting tons of work done for them.

Volunteers are needed to work on April 26th with Patrick Laird, captain of our RT team, and Rob Horn and Bob Tweadey our co captains. All type of help is needed: brawn, brain, and food donations will be greatly appreciated. Last year over 30 UUCF volunteers work a miracle on the inside and outside of Farmington home. Volunteer applications will be at the Rebuilding Together display. Remember, when you give a little love you get a lot back. Our congregation has always been very loving and giving.

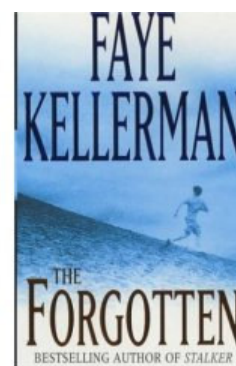
Thank you for your support.
The Social Action Committee

HOME QUARTERS FOR BARTER

AVAILABLE: PRIVATE MASTER BEDROOM SUITE (12' X 25') WITH PRIVATE BATHROOM/SHOWER, TWO EXTRA-LARGE WALK-IN CLOSETS, STORAGE; GARAGE PRIVILEGES; WASHER/DRYER, ETC. LIVONIA HOMEOWNER (48-YEAR-OLD FEMALE) SEEKS FEMALE HOME-MATE WILLING TO BARTER HOUSECLEANING, YARD & GARDEN WORK, INDOOR/OUTDOOR MAINTENANCE SERVICES*, ET AL., IN EXCHANGE FOR RENT & PARTIAL UTILITIES OF HER BEAUTIFUL LIVONIA HOME WITH SPACIOUS LIVING QUARTERS, 7 MILE & FARMINGTON ROAD AREA. UTILITIES NOT INCLUDED: OCCUPANT MUST AGREE TO PAY ONE-HALF OF ALL UTILITIES (HEAT, WATER, ELECTRIC) AND PROPERTY TAXES, NOT TO EXCEED \$300 PER MONTH.

Details: Applicant must love animals (2 dogs/3 cats), be a good cook, willing to clean, do errands, and work with homeowner and perform all indoor/outdoor household and yard/garden chores in lieu of rent as agreed. Female applicant must be healthy, active, educated, have good sense of humor and backbone.

Inquiries: K. Greenwald, through the church.



The Mystery Book Club will meet on Monday, April 28. The book we are reading for April is *The Forgotten* by Faye Kellerman. Kellerman balances Rina Lazarus's consuming Orthodox Judaism with the broader societal issues faced by her husband, L.A. homicide detective Peter Decker. Here they intertwine when the vicious defacement of their synagogue reverberates in a widening circle of murders. Ernesto Golding, a troubled, spoiled youth and acquaintance of Rina's son, Jacob, confesses to the crime, but several months later Ernesto and his therapists, Mervin and Dee Baldwin, are murdered.

As usual we will meet for dinner at Panera (12 mile and Halsted) at 5:30 for dinner and will be back at the church for the book discussion at 7. If you can't join us for dinner, come for the book discussion.

Contact Helen Head if you have any questions.

Calendar Note

Please note that the calendars included in this Month's Magnet are not the usual format.

Due to a computer glitch it was necessary to use a different format this month.

We will return to the regular format in May.

Thank you for your understanding.

The Welcoming Congregation Committee's third coffeehouse was a great success! Fun was had by all as we were entertained by musicians Steve Curtin, John Alexander & others. Poetry and comedy also graced the stage courtesy of Ed Gardiner and William Watson. Altogether, we had 8 great acts & several fun open mic performers. Watch for news of coffeehouse #4 and join us then.

Terie Spencer

Pledge Report for February 2008

February			YTD		
Actual	Budgeted	Variance	Actual	Budgeted	Variance
\$7,289	\$17,625	(\$10,336)	\$30,696	\$35,249	\$(4,553)

New Policy Adopted by the Executive Board 2/19/2008

Food and Beverage in the Meeting House

The condition of the meeting house is of great importance to honor the weekly gatherings of the congregation, to welcome visitors for our events, and for facility rentals for weddings and other occasions. Spilled food and drink is one common source of mess and stains that is easily preventable simply by keeping it out of the meeting house. Therefore,

Food and beverage, except water, are prohibited in the meeting house.

Share Your Home, Change the World, Host a YFU Exchange Student

Youth for Understanding (YFU) is seeking host families for high school students for the 2008-2009 school year; many of them are willing to attend their host family's religious services as often as they do. Kids willing to attend services who need families in Oakland County include.... a Chinese girl who loves to dance and enjoys singing as well... a German trumpet player who says he can't wait to find out about all the sports at an American high school... a German girl (of Ghanaian heritage) whose faith is important to her and so is her music (singing and piano!)... a Swiss boy enthusiastic about singing, piano, theater, scouting, plus a variety of sports... a Thai girl who has enjoyed Girl Scouting and family life... a popular Korean boy who's successful in the classroom, on the soccer field, and in student government... a German girl whose priorities are communication and humor plus she enjoys little kids... a Thai boy who is a sports enthusiast with a sense of humor and a sense of helpfulness...plus more

Many different kinds of families can host -- you don't need to have high school age kids -- just the ability to be a good parent for a high school student, and to open your heart to another child. Most students stay from August through June, though a few come for shorter times. They bring their own spending money and good health insurance and can share a room with a same-sex host sibling. Take a leap of faith and change a life!

For more information on these kids and others, and to find if hosting is right for you, contact Barb Kilkka at 248-932-0811 or Kilkka@yfu.org You can also visit www.yfu-usa.org

A LIBERAL VOICE OF REASON IN FARMINGTON FOR OVER 150 YEARS

IN OTHER NEWS

Happy Membership Anniversary!!

	Yrs of Membership	Date Joined
Pat & Art Morrill	51	4/7/1957
Dennis Monthei	25	4/24/1983
Roger Oberts	16	4/12/1992
Ann Oberts	16	4/12/1992
Janet Barna	14	4/10/1994
Michael Dunaway	14	4/10/1994
Barb Eglinton	10	4/12/1998
Nancy & John Hayden	7	4/1/2001
Beverly Church	6	4/21/2002
Terie Spencer	6	4/21/2002
Julie Plassman	6	4/21/2002
Ben & Marie Taylor-Kidd	4	4/15/2004
Marion Moir	4	4/18/2004
Joel Devonshire	2	4/16/2006
Melissa Falb	2	4/16/2006
Lee Anne Leaver	1	4/22/2007
Rob Horn	1	4/22/2008



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Next Magnet Deadline:

April 27, 2008