



THE CHALICE

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK (UUFV-VA)

P.O. Box 1266
White Stone, VA 22578

April 2010

Fellowship Services

Fellowship services are held each **Sunday** at **10:30 A.M.** at 366 James Wharf Road, White Stone, VA.
All are welcome. Coffee and conversation follow the presentation.

Sunday Programs

April 4 – Rev. James Sanderson: “Alleluia”

Rev. Sanderson will examine the Easter story, with readings from the Gospel of John.

April 11 – Richard Weekley: “Amazing Things”

Jog with Richard down a winding path strewn with Amazing Things—a shard of choice, a puddle of Tao, a deluge of poetry. Hear how the affable cry of the UU bird guided Richard to independence, familial mutuality, and the exquisite plateau of Zen, gleaming in the phenomenal light of *now*.

April 18 – Rev. Kathy Duhon: “Celebrate the Earth on a Ramble with Henry David Thoreau”

From his amazing reflections on a simple, joyful life which he recorded in *Walden*, to his gathering of the neighborhood children, including Louisa May Alcott for berry-picking in the woods, Thoreau has given us a model for celebrating the Earth. Join us as we prepare for Earth Day by taking a ramble with this important Unitarian philosopher of the woods.

A Potluck Luncheon and Conversation with Rev. Duhon will follow the service.

Who Are We? A New Look at UU Conversation

We will gather yet again for a conversation about Unitarian Universalism, and everyone is welcome – just stay after the potluck. This time we will focus on our idea of “holy scriptures” – what UUs raise up for our inspiration and why. April is Poetry Month, so please consider bringing a short inspirational poem that you love and would be willing to share with the group. We’ll have about 45 minutes together after lunch.

We’ll also share a yummy treat together. I really appreciate your wonderful participation.

April 25 – Sara Mackey: “Standing on the Side of Love”

Unitarian Universalist congregations have the opportunity to become designated as Welcoming Congregations by participating in a process of exploration and discernment that helps them understand the issues of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members of their congregations and their communities. Sara Mackey has worked with two churches on their path to becoming Welcoming Congregations; she will discuss how we do it, and more importantly, why we do it.

President's Corner

After traveling almost a month in the ancient land of China, I am asking myself, "What can I share that might convey the inspiration I gained by traveling in that famous land?"

We saw and heard much as we journeyed across China by plane, train, bus, ship, and sampan, from an icy and snow-covered Beijing to the perennial spring of Yunnan Province in the southwest. There is much to relate and share. But my single, most salient impression is of the enduring strength of the Chinese culture.

We all know what turmoil China has been through over the last century and a half – conquest by the Western powers, a civil war lasting many years, contrived political and economic upheavals such as Mao's "Great Leap Forward," and the "Cultural Revolution." Yet we observed a social cohesion, a striving for education, a working culture, and a culture unified by a renewed interest in traditional Chinese religion and philosophy that has been transforming that nation into a powerhouse.

The huge public investment by China in alternative forms of energy and transportation infrastructure is far beyond anything I have observed anywhere. It appears that almost every dwelling has its solar water heater and solar electric panels. Morning rush hour in the big cities is relatively hushed with the swishing by of thousands of plug-in electric motor scooters among the cars and busses. Our electrified train sped effortlessly at 175 miles per hour on seamless tracks.

I was intrigued that every temple we visited (Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian) was full of activity, occupied with people taking a few moments in their busy workdays to practice their time-honored rituals. Not just old folks, but people of all ages -- students, business people, the wealthy, and the poor.

We stayed overnight in a private farm home, and we visited others where we learned that while life still is hard, people are happy that their lives have improved, and they have more hope for the future. We observed that people really do hold Mao Tse Tung in

great esteem as their emancipator although they now feel free to point out his mistakes.

In the evenings these hard-working people flock to the village squares and city parks where they engage in self-organized dancing and singing. In the early morning hours they are in the same venues practicing their Tai Chi and other athletics. The people are clean, well-dressed, well-fed. (As were we too well-fed there.)

China is vibrant and on the move.

One other thing I noticed – when I am away I find myself missing this wonderful Fellowship we have here on the Northern Neck. Each Sunday, remembering the upcoming programs, I would experience a bit of nostalgia, wishing we were back at our Rappahannock "lighthouse." It's good to be home.

Bob Weekley

The Joys of Playreading, Plus!

by Thea Marshall

I would like to hear from anyone interested in participating in a 3-part play reading series. We will cover three plays by Henrik Ibsen: Doll House, Ghosts, and Hedda Gabler.

We will explore Ibsen's "daring" to write social dramas about duty, loyalty, religion, and hypocrisy in the 1880's. And, we will attempt to learn if his writings are as relevant today as they were when first written.

We will read scenes from the plays, particularly each play's last act, as well as analyze motives, etc. It's essential that attendees read the plays. They are available at local libraries and on-line, free to print from the Guttenberg Project Website.

I have done this before, and learned that this works best with a limited number of people. The maximum size of the group will be twelve.

Phood and Philosophy

Dave and Marge Rowden will host this month's Phood and Philosophy in their home, on **Saturday, April 3rd**, at **5:30 P.M.**

The evening's topic will be: "**What does UU mean to you?**" We will explore what Unitarian Universalism and UUFR-VA means for each of us. We are proposing five questions to guide the discussion.

1. What does it mean to you to be a Unitarian Universalist?
2. What is most important to you about our Fellowship?
3. Who would you like to see join our Fellowship if they knew about us and could; what would they be like?
4. If there was one thing about the Fellowship you could change, what would it be? This could be to drop something we are currently doing, or add some needed function or activity.
5. If you could sum up your feelings about UUFR-VA in a couple of sentences, what would you say?

Bring a dish or two, a bottle of wine or another beverage, and your thoughts on our topic, so that we may all share together our Phood and our Philosophy. For planning purposes, please let **Dave and Marge** know you plan to attend. We don't want to be short of chairs!

Earth Day 2010: 40/40/40

excerpt from UUA.org



What is 40/40/40? Unitarian Universalists (UUs) across the continent are expanding **Earth Day's 40th anniversary** on April 22, 2010 to last **40 days**, from Sunday April 18, to Thursday, May 27.

How? By committing to small and large daily actions over the 40 days, for the sake of the Earth and all who live here. Some UUs are even taking small lifestyle changes for 40-day "test drives," knowing that our personal choices affect many aspects of global environmental justice.

View the entire article and sample actions at:
<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issues/environmentaljustice/159611.shtml>.

Spring Cleanup

Sue Adriance is organizing an early Earth Day Celebration, beginning on **Friday, April 9, at 9:15 A.M.** There will be ample opportunities to witness the miracles of spring. Celebrants should bring garden gloves, rakes, and smiles. Anyone wishing to demonstrate the wonder of power tools should bring those as well. A gratifying and satisfying time will be had by all. Many hands make the celebration lively.

Thea's Blog and UUFR-VA

Thea Marshall shares her thoughts on the Northern Neck and UUFR-VA in her NPR blog. Check it out at:
<http://blogs.ideastations.org/wcvefm/category/tales-from-the-northern-neck/>

The UUFR-VA Yard Sale Update

by Hank Stupi

As you know, the UUFR-VA will be holding a yard sale on Saturday, May 1. Donated items (no broken items and no clothing, please) are needed for the sale and will be accepted at our building from Sunday, April 25, through Friday, April 30. Please contact me if you plan to deliver items Monday through Friday, so that arrangements for help and access to the building can be made.

We likely do not have enough tables to properly display the anticipated items for sale and will be looking for six foot or larger portable tables to borrow that day. Additionally for outdoor items, e.g., tools, lawn equipment, etc., we will likely need to make some tables using sawhorses. There appears to be sufficient lumber stored under the building for rough tabletops. If not, a call for additional lumber will be forthcoming. Please contact me if you have any portable tables or sawhorses that can be borrowed.

This is a major endeavor and will require many volunteers to ensure success. The following is a list of foreseeable activities where volunteers are needed. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to volunteer for as many activities as you are able.

- **Sign Preparation** – Paint and letter two large signs to be placed on Route 3.
- **Pick-Up Donated Items** (Sunday, 4/25 – Friday, 4/30) – Pick up and deliver donated items for any members needing help and assistance.
- **Sorting and Pricing** (Sunday, 4/25 – Friday, 4/30) – Accept donated items, sort items into similar categories, and place price stickers on all items.

- **Prepare Bake Sale Items** – Bake homemade goodies and arrange for their delivery prior to yard sale and have coffee and cold drinks on site and available for sale.
- **Saturday Early Morning Set-Up** – Set up tables and move items from building to tables, set up signs, etc.
- **Conduct Yard Sale** – Oversee actual yard sale, help with traffic flow and parking and loading, answer questions, function as cashiers, etc.
- **Clean-Up** – Remain after yard sale's completion to take down signs, load and appropriately dispose of unsold items, disassemble tents, put tables away, etc.

Please wear your UUFR-VA shirt or hat! (If you don't own one, this is a good occasion to buy one.)

River Readers

The book discussion group meets on the **fourth Monday** of each month at **2:30 P.M.** at the Lancaster Community Library. Everyone is welcome. Please read the book and join us. The upcoming selections are:

April 26: *The Housekeeper and the Professor* by Yoko Ogawa

May 24: *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout

June 28: *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein

July 26: *The Enchantress of Florence* by Salmon Rushdie

If you have a recommendation for a good read, or if you have any questions, please call **Elaine Weekley**.

A Personal Message from Jim Key

UUA Thomas Jefferson District President

[During the District's 2010 Annual Meeting, which will be held April 30-May 1, our district-elected leadership is unanimous in recommending that delegates vote in the affirmative on several issues, including changing the name of our District.]

It is about the proposed name change that I want to share my personal thoughts. I suspect many of you are nonplussed by your district-board's focus on changing our district name.

As a congregational board president for five years, I did not reflect much on the name of this district. I was busy with budgets, long-range planning, fund drives, calling a minister, and all of the other things that consume a congregational leader. I accepted without question the "Famous UUs" posters, T-shirts, and congregational web-page claiming Thomas Jefferson as one of our most prominent Unitarians.

This was an easy sell for me. As a native of the Commonwealth of Virginia, graduate of Jefferson High School, and spouse to a graduate of Mr. Jefferson's University, I was pleased that the faith community I had freely joined and loved had chosen to name one of its districts after one [of] my historic heroes. Moreover, I considered myself something of a Jefferson scholar; my library contains many volumes about Jefferson that I have collected over the years.

So it all worked for me-until I began to listen to the pain that the name Thomas Jefferson evoked for so many people.

I returned to my library and refreshed my understanding of Jefferson's legacy. There is no doubt that Thomas Jefferson's most important contribution to religious thought and liberty is the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1779) which established the separation of Church and State that later became a part of the Bill of Rights. Unitarians and Universalists owe a debt to Mr. Jefferson for that body of work, although ironically Virginia Baptists were more enthusiastic about the separation of church and state than New England Unitarians. Moreover, Jefferson was an Episcopalian, albeit a Deistic one, not a Unitarian. While he was influenced by Joseph Priestly and sympathetic to Unitarianism, he was born an Episcopalian and died an Episcopalian.

However, his own writings on the system of slavery and enslaved Africans were the most troubling to me on re-reading his biographies through the lens as an ally, an in-law, and grandfather to people of color. In *Twilight at Monticello, the Final Years of Thomas Jefferson* by Alan Pell Crawford, Crawford writes about the correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Edward Coles. Coles was in his 20s and secretary to President James Madison. He had inherited a plantation not far from Monticello, and it came with 23 slaves attached to it. However, Coles saw slavery as evil. He was determined not to be a slaveholder and to do justice to the black people he now owned, but he saw no realistic way to achieve his goals. Coles wrote to the great man for advice on how best to proceed.

Jefferson wrote back to Coles that he should "reconcile (himself) to (his) country and its unfortunate condition" and leave it to future generations to solve the problem of slavery. Jefferson believed that when slaves were ultimately emancipated, they could never live among white society without harm to whites. He wrote: "The amalgamation (of blacks and whites) produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of human character, can innocently consent". Black people "brought up from their infancy...are by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves. Left to their own devices, they lacked the capacity to care for their own offspring." [1]

Edward Coles did what Thomas Jefferson would not, could not, and did not do. He ignored Jefferson's advice and sold his plantation in Virginia, moved to what is now Illinois, emancipated his slaves, purchased land for them, and set them up as farmers and free men. He would later become governor of the free state of Illinois.

"Ethics to Jefferson was little more than a process by which the rational individual chooses the most commonsense course from among a finite set of options. By reducing morality to a matter of rational selection and removing it from...influences of religious faith and practice, Jefferson ruled out the bold, the adventurous, (and) the imaginative, by which great challenges, such as ending slavery, might be accomplished..."

Crawford writes and I agree that, "this seems a surprisingly constricted view of the moral universe, especially from the author of the Declaration of Independence with its soaring sense of human possibility...He could always insist, as he did throughout his life, that the time to end slavery had not arrived. But tragically, that was in no small part because Jefferson had resolutely chosen not to hasten its coming." [2]

Three different TJD boards have voted unanimously over the past three years to recommend changing the name of the district to one that better reflects our vision:

Grounded in our covenantal tradition, we are a vibrant faith community of healthy congregations who grow through connection, right relationships, and service, thereby transforming ourselves and the world.

Through deep spiritual reflection over a long period, your elected leadership has repeatedly come to the conclusion that a new name, aligned with our vision, would put us in right relationships with the sources of our authority and accountability, identified as:

- Our member congregations
- Current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists
- The heritage, history, and ideals of Unitarian Universalism
- The vision of beloved community
- The spirit of love, life, and the holy

I encourage you to lead your boards or congregations in a conversation about our name, and what new name would better represent how we want to be known as a faith community. Out of those conversations, I trust that delegates to the annual meeting will be selected to vote their congregation's views.

And certainly, I hope the delegates will consider their elected representatives recommendation for a positive vote.

In faith and Standing on the Side of Love,
Jim Key, President
Thomas Jefferson District of the UUA

1[1] *Twilight at Monticello*, Alan Pell Crawford, pp 100-104

1[2] *Ibid*, pp 107, 108

Comment by UUFR-VA President Bob Weekley: *Clearly, this issue of the name of our district is generating passion. Strong voices from UU churches in our district disagree with the rationale for changing the name and some in our own congregation also oppose changing the name. Thomas Jefferson was a great man of his time, an inspiration for Unitarians, and many do not feel we should diminish his stature by judging him against contemporary norms. Your comments to me on this issue, pro or con, will be carried to the district meeting.*

View Updates and Additional Comments at <http://www.uufrappahannock.org>

Board of Stewards

Bob Weekley, President
Caroline Shifflett, Vice President
Lynn Langley, Treasurer
Diana Jamison, Secretary

Vacant, Past President
Shirley Kinney, Vice President for Programs
Fran Schelling, Vice President for Membership

Web Site

<http://www.uufrappahannock.org>
<http://www.uufr-va.org>
Bob Prescott, Webmaster

Newsletter

Deadline for articles: 20th of the month
Bob Prescott, Editor (editor@uufrappahannock.org)