



The Flame

February 2011

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Peninsula



13136 Warwick Blvd
Newport News, VA 23602
www.uufp.org 757-369-1098



The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Peninsula is to create a dynamic community that celebrates life and searches for truths.

February Services

Theme: Com/Passion

February 6th: "Justice, Com/Passion and the Network of Mutuality" — Rev Millard. The second principle that Unitarian Universalist congregations covenant to affirm and promote is justice, equity and compassion in human relations. These values lie at the heart of our liberal faith, but rather than being separable ideals, they are vital and interrelated, and are aspects of our being human individuals-in-community that enliven, motivate and sustain us in all we do.

February 13th: "* Some Exclusions May Apply" — Rev Millard. It is curious — and, arguably, hypocritical — that our Commonwealth restricts the rights and privileges of marriage to heterosexual couples at the same time that it declares that "Virginia is for lovers." On the eve of Valentine's Day, let's look at why Unitarian Universalists stand on the side of love, demanding equality for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

Special music will be provided by the ChorUUs!

February 20th: "Are You Willing to Suffer?" — Rev. Jennifer Ryu. It is impossible to be truly compassionate without being willing to suffer. What is the nature of suffering? And what role does it play in our lives? We welcome Rev. Jennifer Ryu of the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists in this pulpit-swap with Andrew.

February 27th: "The Wizard of UUFP" — David Walsh. So, you've seen the "Wizard of Oz" and you think you know the whole story. Maybe not! This is your chance to see the "The Wizard of UUFP" at both services. Actors and props and story. Oh my!

Contents

For all that is our life!	2
Member Bio	3
RE News	4
Adult RE	4
Secret Friends	4
News Bytes	5&6
Harvest the Power!	7
Feel Connected	7
Interfaith Communion	8
General Assembly	8
Stewardship Program	9
TJ Webinar	9
Communicating ...	11
December Birthdays	11
Calendar Link	ClickHere



UUFP is experiencing a large number of visitors on Sunday mornings lately. This is great news and we want to make every visitor feel very welcome which includes seeing that they can find a seat when attending their first service. The Membership and Sunday Services Committees are planning to have yellow seat cards printed reserving some seats for first time visitors. Please help us let newcomers know how very welcome they are by making space for them to be with us.



Best Phone # -369-1098

Our mailing address is:

UUFP

13136 Warwick Blvd

Newport News, VA 23602

For all that is our life!

Andrew Clive Millard

“May I be well; may I be happy; may I be free from suffering.

“May my good friend be well; may they be happy; may they be free from suffering.

“May the neutral person be well; may they be happy; may they be free from suffering.

“May the difficult person be well; may they be happy; may they be free from suffering.

“May we four be well; may we be happy; may we be free from suffering.

“May all beings be well; may all beings be happy; may all beings be free from suffering.”

— Metta (loving-kindness) meditation based on the Theravada Buddhist *Path to Purification*

Think of a time when you’ve been in an argument. Maybe it was with someone you value as a good friend or with a family member you love. Or maybe it was with someone with whom you rarely agree at the best of times. Think about what was driving your side of the argument. Were you trying to make a point? Were you trying to defend yourself from what you felt was an unfair accusation? Were you trying to explain why you thought that the other person was mistaken? Were you trying to convince the other person of what you thought was a better course of action?

I know I’ve been in arguments for all these reasons and more. Some of them were modest disagreements with no raised voices or unkind words. Others of them... weren’t. Particularly if the other person is someone I respect, like or love, though, there can be as much of an argument going on within myself as there is between me and the other: the belief in my own truth and the feeling of my own righteousness sometimes overpowers my desire to treat the other person’s beliefs with fairness and their feelings with consideration. In this way there’s often a tension between our passion — for a plan or a cause or a world-view — and our compassion — for those with whom we disagree as well as for ourselves.

The emerging consensus of opinion concerning the terrible shooting in Tucson is that it wasn’t directly caused by the poor quality of public discourse in the country, yet there’s also

general agreement that we owe the victims and the survivors our efforts to do better. Heated arguments are nothing new, whether in politics or elsewhere in society, but there doesn’t seem to be a good reason as to why it needs to be that way. Passionate speech for or against a particular issue is to be expected, but name-calling and epithets bordering on slander are at best a distraction and at worst destructive of the public soul. It’s time for compassion to be a part of our civic discourse.

This isn’t about “political correctness”, going to great lengths to censor ourselves for fear that we might offend anyone for any reason whatsoever. Fear rarely allows for rational behavior, and the only way to be sure to never offend anyone is to never say anything (and, for that matter, to never be present). It’s also not about giving in or wishy-washy compromise, much less empty and valueless moral relativism. If we are to truly affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we must also expect every person to be accountable for their words (and their actions).

It is, rather, about consideration and loving-kindness. In recognition of our common humanity, we can begin by assuming that the person with whom we are arguing is, like us, doing so sincerely out of their own convictions. As James M. Barrie put it, “Never ascribe to an opponent motives meaner than your own.” In recognition of our own limits as finite beings, we can try to abide by one of the many variants of the Golden Rule found throughout the world’s religions. And in recognition of our interdependence as human beings in community and living beings in Nature, we might find ways to yoke the passion of our love for ideas and beliefs to the compassion of our loving-kindness for ourselves, one another and the world. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., “Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.”

May you and I be well. May the friend and the stranger be well. May the one who works with us and the one who works against us be well. May we be happy. May we be free from suffering. ☺



By Bobbie Schilling

1. When did you join UUFP? How did you find out about us? Why or how long have you been a UU?

I first found out about the UUs over 20 years ago through an article in the *Virginian Pilot*, describing the work of the Unitarian Church of Norfolk's gay minister. Since I was actively looking for a church for my son, and myself I figured that any church that was open enough to have a gay minister would be welcoming to a divorced, single mom, former Catholic. And I was right! By the end of the first service I knew I had found my spiritual home. While living in Norfolk I was a member of the UCN. When Jeff and I got married (at the UCN) and moved to the Peninsula, we joined the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists. I joined the UUFP on October 4, 1998 and have been a member ever since.

2. Tell us something about your background: Where are you from originally? Where did you go to school? Careers? Jobs?

I am a Philly girl and lived there from birth to age 24, when I moved to California. I lived there for 10 years, and then moved to the Tidewater area. With the exception of 2 years at West Chester State College in Pennsylvania, and my MA, I attended Catholic schools. My BA in Elementary Education is from Holy Family College in Philadelphia. I earned an MA in Reading Improvement from California State University, Northridge. My first career of 20-some years was as an elementary school teacher and reading specialist. During that time I began writing educational materials and gradually changed careers. Now I am a full-time freelance writer of children's books and educational materials. So far I have 40 ISBN number listings that show me as the author, along with more teacher's guides, student texts, and test passages than I can count.

3. Why become active with Religious Education Committee? How long have you been doing it?

I first became active with the RE Committee at the UCN when my son was young. While in Williamsburg I taught RE and was the DRE. For most of my time at the UUFP I have

taught and/or been on the RE Committee. I'm currently working with the teen group and love every minute of it. It's important to provide the educational background and support that our children need to form their beliefs. Through using the excellent curricula put out by the UUA, I have learned a lot more about our faith. I'm currently also a member of the Caring Committee and a Fellowship Circle and have been on the Sunday Services, Hospitality, and several Ministerial Search Committees.

4. "What do you like best about the UUFP" or "What keeps you coming to the Fellowship?"

Where else would I go? Really, as a liberal who thinks it's important to form my own views about religious and spiritual beliefs, there is no better place to be than in a UUA congregation. I like the people and the general atmosphere of acceptance.

5. When you are not doing church things...what do you like to do with your time? Significant others? Family? Other accomplishments?

Most of my time is taken up with work and attempting to stay healthy and fit. One of the main motivations for working and exercising is that I have the funds and stamina for traveling, which is my favorite thing to do. I also enjoy yoga, quilting, dancing, going to the beach, reading, and spending time with friends and family. I'm active in professional organizations and a quilt guild.

Jeff Hinkley and I celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary in August. Our son, Mike Roy, lives in South Korea where he teaches English at a community college. I have been to visit him 3 times and am now planning a 4th trip.

6. Anything else you would want us to know about you?

I have visited 33 states and 5 countries. When I travel I like to learn enough of a native language to be able to say, "Hello", "Please", "Thank You", "The food is delicious", "How much does it cost?" and "Where's the restroom"? I can do this in 5 languages and am working on a 6th. 🌍



I'd like to start by updating you on some of the gifts that we shared at the end of the year. Thanks to your generosity in holiday gift card purchases, I only had to return 3 packets of holiday cards to the UUSC. I sent them checks that added up to \$210.

So far we've collected \$296.78 in checks for Guest at Your Table plus more than \$30 cash. We will receive at least one matching gift from Shelter Rock.

The children sent \$35 to the Norfolk Zoo to adopt an animal. The money came from the re-gift store that people donated to, and purchased from, at Christmas.

Thanks so much for all your contributions.

Rev. Andrew and I will be running the next three sessions of the Harvest the Power course on February 10, 17 and 24 from 7:00-8:30. All are invited to attend. The final two classes will be held April 14 and 21. The course explores identity and purpose in relationship to leadership development.

We're making plans for a luncheon for nursery and Spirit Play families on March 6th. We want to give current members and visitors of our

youngest children a chance to get to know each other. We'll share a potluck lunch together directly after second service. Older siblings are welcome to attend.

Plans are in the works for a youth lock-in in Richmond. Stay tuned for further details next month.

It's not too early to start thinking about your plans to attend General Assembly. It will take place in Charlotte, NC this year June 22-26. Being the 50th Anniversary, this is sure to be a very memorable event. We hope to give many of our youth the opportunity to attend. If you are interested in helping with fundraisers to support the youth please see Joanne Dingus. Also, please check out the uua website under general assembly. They offer decreased registration in exchange for volunteering and they also have some scholarship money available. Registration begins March 1st and scholarship applications must be in by March 31st.

If you are interested in joining the RE committee please contact Brandy Bergenstock for the next meeting date.

See you in the RE! ☺



Adult RE

by Dennis Shaw

Adult RE participants will be in for a real treat in February as our own Jack Dougher will present a four part series titled "A New Story for a Mutually Enhancing Relationship Between Nature and the Human". Session topics will range from "A New Cosmology for the 21st Century" to "What Kind of Fit Would a Cosmology of Religion Have for the UUFP?" So, be sure to arrive early to get a good seat for this one! ARE sessions are held in the annex each Sunday from 9:30 until 10:30 and are designed to be both interesting and interactive. ALL are welcome. ☺

Secret Friends

submitted by Joanne Dingus

The Secret Friends luncheon will be held on February 6th after second service in the annex. Participants and their families are invited come. Food will be provided by the RE Committee. ☺



News Bytes

FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

The MISSION of our Fellowship Circle Program: "To create an intimate experience of mutual ministry. In these covenanted circles of support, we minister to one another through our presence. During our meetings we attend to each other by listening to the person who is speaking with our silence, signaling our care with our attention."

Fellowship Circle sessions are a different kind of meeting than most people are used to. The focus is on acceptance and learning together. Sitting in a circle helps us to get to know each other as we share what is meaningful in our life. A commonality develops as we listen deeply to each other.

On Sunday, February 6, we will hold a training session for all those interested in learning more about the dynamics of Fellowship Circles/Covenant Groups/Small Group Ministry. Contact Bob Smith Rsmith4908@aol.com for info. ☺

Bake Sale Date

The February date for the bake sale supporting the GA delegates to Charlotte is 20 February.

For more information, please contact Sandra Engelhardt sealbers@cs.com. ☺

Fellowship Circle Note

There will be a special instructional program on Sunday afternoon, February 6 on THE ART OF FACILITATING A FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE. Rev. Andrew and Bob Smith will lead this event. This program begins at 12:15 with a light lunch and end by 2:30. All those interested in learning these special group facilitating skills are invited. Please let Andrew or Bob know of your interest by February 4. See Bob Smith for information. Rsmith4908@aol.com ☺

Book Club

The UUFP Book Club meets every fourth Monday of the month. Come join us to share, discuss, and learn about what you and others have been reading. All are welcome - even if you have not read the "assigned" book!

Feb. 28 - free reading

Mar. 28 - Willa Cather's "My Antonia." NOTE: We are meeting at 6:30 for a pot-luck supper and brief discussion of the book, and then we will watch the movie for comparisons.

April 25 - free reading

Contact person: Nan Procyson, procyson@cox.net, 930-3093 ☺



2nd Sunday Lunch and

Please join the happy and hungry UUFP friends on Sunday, February 13 at 12:30, as we partake of a really good buffet lunch at NAWAB INDIAN CUISINE on Jefferson. Everyone is welcome. See Bob Smith for information. Rsmith4908@aol.com ☺

Humanist Meeting

The February Meeting of the new Humanist group will be on February 20 at UUFP. There will be a potluck at 6 pm followed by a presentation. The topic will be provided later.

For more information, please contact Sandra Engelhardt sealbers@cs.com. ☺

Goddess Circle

The Goddess Circle will meet for their monthly meeting and potluck after 2nd service on Sunday, Feb 6 in the RE room in the Sancturay building. They will be discussing "love" goddesses. Contact Dawn Hutchinson for additional information. ☺



News Bytes (cont.)

POETRY LOVERS' XOXOXO

Please consider joining our poetry lovers' group on the second Saturday of the month at 2 pm. In January we had eight in attendance. As we shared our snacks and poetry, we marveled at the brief "snowstorm" out the big picture window -another good day to be inside with hot tea. We've enjoyed quite a mix of poetry thus far - humorous, poignant, and some even perhaps a bit racy. Some have shared original work or the work of family members and we've talked about the poetry of a few contemporary poets - including Billy Collins.

From The Poetry Foundation website: Dubbed "the most

popular poet in America" by Bruce Weber in the New York Times, Billy Collins is famous for conversational, witty poems that welcome readers with humor but often slip into quirky, tender or profound observation on the everyday, reading and writing, and poetry itself. John Updike praised Collins for writing "lovely poems...Limpid, gently and consistently startling, more serious than they seem, they describe all the worlds that are and were and some others besides."

Come join us in the Annex Saturday Feb. 12 at 2 pm. It's a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Contact: Mary-Elizabeth Cotton msmaryeliz@verizon.net

Bellydance Bargain Bazaar and Show

On February 26 at the Fellowship, the Treasures in the Sand Middle Eastern Dance Troupe will be hosting a bellydance-themed rummage sale and performance show. Vendor spaces are \$5 (items must be related to Mid-Eastern dance, please) and shopping and show are FREE. Doors open for shopping at 12:45 pm, performance show begins at 3:30 pm. The show will include a special treat, live music by Wayne A. Hill. For more info, please contact Rachel Bevins (please use directory or e-mail at jeylan@cox.net).



This is the UUA's General Assembly chalice. It's been making the rounds in the TJ District prior to GA in Charlotte in June. It made an appearance in Williamsburg as part of a workshop on multiculturalism with UU minister and theologian Paul Rasor



4th Saturday Women's Drum & Pot Luck

7pm - A casual gathering of women to share food & friendship, & to make music together. Mark your 2011 calendar now! 4th Saturdays!

For more info, call Connie 788-8903.



To Pg 1

FIFTY & BETTER

On Feb. 3rd at 12 noon anyone near 50 or better is most welcome to join us for FRIENDSHIP, FOOD AND FUN . Please call Esther at 369-1858 for details. See you.

EarthRising

There are no Planning or Ritual events in February. The next scheduled event is for the Spring Equinox Planning on 4 March.

Services Attendance

Date	Early/Late	Visitors
Dec 24	106	--
Jan 2	35/75	0/10
Jan 9	31/75	0/2
Jan 16	44/83	5/10

Orientation Class a Great Success!

submitted by Bobby Schilling

UUFP Welcomes 14 New Members!

On Saturday, Jan. 22, the Membership Committee held the first Orientation Class of 2011. Thanks to the efforts of my dedicated committee members, the informative session (not to mention delicious lunch) was well attended. As a result, we are delighted to welcome fourteen new members to our Fellowship! It was my pleasure to witness the following sign our membership book: Gary Ward, Elizabeth Wells, John Templeton, Alex Hicks, Amanda Young, Rebecca Popplewell, Kathy Black, Allison Black, Bill

Whitley, Randi Akers, Brenda Barlow, Aaron Hansley, Nikki Ussia, and Mike Wagner. Please join us in helping to make them feel at home at the UUFP. I would also like to thank Alice Smith, past Membership Committee Chair, and Mary Cotton for their valuable help in preparing for this workshop. If you are a newcomer and interested in learning more about us or considering joining, don't worry. We will be scheduling another Orientation Class in late spring.

Submitted by Bobbie Schilling, Membership Chair

Helping People Feel Connected

submitted by Alice Smith

Projects of the Membership Committee and Stewardship Program

The UUFP has recently instituted two programs to keep us connected to each other as we grow, and to lend an ear to your suggestions and thoughts. One of these programs is for members and friends, while the other is for visitors and newcomers.

Members and Friends: You have probably been contacted by your steward and offered an opportunity to become better acquainted with that person through an invitation to friendship. If you have not heard from your steward, please contact Judy Remsberg 898-6237 remberg2@msn.com

Visitors: All visitors may request a "Befriender," a person who will contact them to answer their questions, get to know them better, and introduce them to other UUFP folks. The Greeters will ask visitors if they want a "Befriender." Those who do, will have a star placed beside their names on the visitors' sign-in sheet. The Befriender will phone or email the person in a few weeks. ☺

Harvest the Power!

Developing Lay Leadership at the Fellowship

Submitted by Rev Millard



Classes will resume this month, returning to the issue of Identity (Who are we?) on Feb. 10th and then moving on to Purpose (What ends do we serve?) on Feb. 17th and 24th. All sessions may be attended individually and take place from 7pm until 8:30pm in the Office Building.

Whether you're new to Unitarian Universalism or are an old hand, whether you've served as a lay leader or committee chair or are just curious about what's involved, we invite you to join us in this dance of growth, leadership and vision! ☺



Progressive Interfaith Communion

Next Steps for the Progressive Interfaith Communion: Save the Date for Saturday, February 26th!



Following a potluck and screening of a movie about California's Proposition 8 a number of months ago, the pro-LGBTQ "Interfaith Communion" has been working on reaching out to more liberally religious clergy and planning an upcoming weekend workshop. As well as addressing issues of basic information concerning human sexuality — in other words the sort of information that UU Middle Schoolers receive as part of the "Our Whole Lives" curriculum — the workshop is intended to broaden the communion's conversation and move it toward more formal structuring as a non-profit with congregations as members.

The workshop is entitled: "What is human sexuality? And what does it have to do with people of faith?" It will begin on Friday,

submitted by Rev Andrew Millard

February 25th with a day-long meeting of clergy and religious professionals and continue on Saturday, February 26th for both clergy and parishioners. There will also be an evening workshop for youth that Saturday. (Following a similar principle as in the case of "Our Whole Lives", youth may attend the evening workshop if their parents must have attended the day's workshop.)

Whether you consider yourself an activist for human rights and sexuality equality or you believe that accurate, science-based information about human sexuality simply needs to be more available so we as a society can make better informed decisions that affect our minds, our bodies and our souls, I hope you'll plan to attend this important workshop.



Joanne and I are involved in the planning, and my registration allows everyone else from the Fellowship (including youth) to go for free! More information will soon be available at <http://www.interfaithcommunion.org/> but here are the key points for now:

Saturday, February 26th workshop for clergy and parishioners: 9am–4:30pm, breaking for lunch off-campus

Evening workshop for youth (parents must have attended Saturday): 6pm–9pm, beginning with pizza

Location: St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2605 Cunningham Drive, Hampton VA

Please feel free to contact me with questions, concerns or offers to help :) ☺

General Assembly

Some info and a request for details

by Sandra Engelhardt



As the June date gets closer, we are trying to learn some details about those interested in attending GA, so we can coordinate housing and transportation. We want the maximum number to attend at a minimum cost. The UUA website (uua.org) has the basic 22-26 June schedule and the registration time deadlines. Housing info is not there at this time. Please decide what you will register for (at least what you are planning):

a) the one day-\$130. (covers Wednesday night's Welcoming Ceremony with Banner Parade & Thursday when Andrew is recognized on stage at the Service of the Living Tradition.)

b) the entire five days -\$315.

Payment is not due til 1May.

The reason we would like the decision soonest is housing. Our plan is try to get housing on the outskirts of town as there is a metro system. We

are assuming singles will share rooms unless you let us know otherwise. GA housing opens on 1 March. We would like to be ahead of the curve on this. We would also like to know if you prefer to drive to Charlotte or to ride with someone else.

Please email Sandra at xandihardt@verizon.net with your choices before 8 Feb 2011. For more information, please contact Sandra Engelhardt slealbers@cs.com. ☺



Stewardship Program

by Judy Remsberg



A steward is one who takes care of something that is valued and helps it to grow.

For me, taking care of something I value (being a Steward) gives me a sense of pride and ownership. It makes me feel good. It is a spiritual practice to me. After all, isn't this why we join a faith community? We are stewards of our Unitarian Universalist faith when we give our time, talents and our money to help sustain our congregation. I have heard it said that if you look in someone's checkbook, you can see where their real values lie. I might add that looking into one's calendar would likewise show where your values are. You will feel good to take care of your church so that it will continue to be strong and healthy; so that visitors will see that we are welcoming and

happy to see them; and so that we can have more people here to support community outreach activities.

The Finance committee is beginning a new Stewardship program. Frankie Price Stern (UUA Consultant) presented weekend workshops last fall to help us learn about this program. Basically it is a year long process to steward our members and friends to find their niche in our congregation. This can be taking the initiative to pick up some trash on your way in to a meeting, help with hospitality, or to become a full fledged steward who works continually with a few people to make sure they are supported in their own spiritual growth.

Your Steward will be contacting you soon (if not already) to get to know you, find out what

your passions are, and what you feel positive about in the Fellowship. We want you to feel a part of what we are doing here – to help where needed as well as to offer suggestions for improvement. Your steward will be there to listen to your ideas and pass them on.

I came here years ago to be a part of something, but now I have found that it is a part of me—I'm transformed.

The Fall UU World has an article "The Spirituality of Service" that I recommend. I'll quote from it because it sums up why I do what I do here:

"Work devoted to something greater than yourself lifts you out of the narrow sphere of individual concerns, enlarges your perspective, and provides context for the joys and concerns of your own life." ☸

TJ Webinar: Moving Toward Regionalization

by Sandra Engelhardt, Denominational Affairs Chair

Thomas Jefferson President, Jim Key led a webinar on Jan 19 to inform TJ members of recent events. This included info from UUA, TJ Policy Board, District Presidents Association and some details of a two day meeting in Orlando of the four Southern Districts resulting in the "Orlando Platform."

UUA:

- considering reducing Bd of Trustees to 1/2 (now 23)
- in transition to policy governance
- 5th principle task force considering need for GA every

year

TJ Policy Board:

- the TJ name change will be voted on at the annual meeting on April 30, 2011 in Durham, NC
- Feb bd meeting will provide more details about strengthening clusters

District Presidents Association (meets twice annually):

- considering changes to way Executive Directors report
- sharing staffs
- 1/2 now use policy governance
- task force looking at financial data for making things more equitable

The **Orlando Meeting** was attended by over 40 UU's from UUA and the presidents and staff of the Thomas Jefferson (63 congregations), Mid South (33 congregations), Florida (33 congregations), and Southwestern Conference (72 congregations) Districts. The following is a quote from our TJ President, Jim Key, "For the first time, leadership from multiple districts came together to discuss how they could better serve Unitarian Universalism

Continued next page.

Continued from previous page.

by streamlining governance structures. Moreover, we claimed our common values as UU leaders and reached agreement that our Association required only one policy governance board, the UUA Board of Trustees. District boards committed to engage in conversations with their member congregations that will lead to strengthening our covenantal relationships."

After two days of discussion and reflection the "Orlando Platform" was written. Among other things it stresses the importance of congregations or clusters working together. Below is the beginning of the document. The whole document is on the TJ website (www.tjd.org).

Introducing The Orlando Platform

During an extraordinary meeting in December 2010, the Boards of Trustees of the four districts of the Southland Region came together to consider the challenges our faith faces and to begin the conversation about overcoming those challenges.

The attached document, dubbed "The Orlando Platform," is a statement of the consensus at which we arrived. It is a statement of commitment. It does not prescribe specific actions, but instead commits us to working together to develop organizational and governance strategies that will strengthen Unitarian-Universalism congregations and communities.

We are not alone in this

work. Other regions are also examining ways to restructure their governance and service-delivery systems. We will learn from one another.

In the words of The Orlando Platform, "Though not all the answers are yet clear, we proceed in faith and in covenant with one another, seeking the ways to best serve and connect our congregations and districts." The work will be hard and it will take time; but it will be worth every bit of effort we put into it. It will probably not be mistake-free; but it will be well thought out and the result of the love we share for our faith and for each other.

It is in this spirit that we offer you this document, realizing it is but the beginning. What has begun here will be continued, perhaps even perfected, through the efforts of many.

We want to recognize and thank the drafters of the Platform, who captured so well the consensus of commitment their fellow board members achieved: Ila Klion, Florida District; Rev. Fred L Hammond, Mid-South District; Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, Southwest Conference; and Nathan Alan Hollister, TJ District.

We four district presidents invite you to direct questions and comments about the Orlando Platform to us. We also invite you to join us in the work that lies ahead, transforming our faith and our lives.

With joy and hope,

Rachel Christensen
Florida District

Gail Sphar
Mid-South District

Kevin Bolton
Southwest Conference

Jim Key
TJ District

The Orlando Platform

Preamble

We as the Unitarian Universalist Association have maintained the same numbers of members nationwide since our merger in 1961. However, the percentage of our membership has shrunk over the last fifty years when compared to the population growth of the country. The Unitarian Universalist Association has been impacted by this stagnation of growth and is on a path of streamlining its governance in order to be proactive in its decisions for our future.

Our faith is not growing, and we are not doing what is necessary to enable ourselves to have an effect on the world. The question arises: Are we going to disappear, to continue to stagnate, or to transform the world? The Cambridge Platform, written in 1648 as a guide for how we conduct ourselves with congregational polity, had two major themes or directives: That each congregation makes its own decisions and calls its own leadership; and that congregations cooperate with and be accountable to one another. It seems that our Association has gotten good at doing the first of those. What is now needed is a maturation of our Association in embracing the second. ☸

Communicating with the Fellowship...

by Steve Kadar
(Reprint)

What happens when you send your announcement to announcements@uufp.org? It goes to:

Steve King who creates the Flame every month. Deadline is the 20th of the month.

Mary Cotton who does the Order of Service and the Announcements from the podium weekly. Deadline for the OOS is Thursday at noon. Deadline for Podium announcements is Saturday noon.

David Walsh who does the The Weekly Digest and updates the website. Deadline for The Weekly Digest is Thursday at noon. Submit in a timely manner for the website, and

Steve Kadar who chairs the Communications Committee and constantly updates our Facebook (MySpace and Twitter) pages. Submit in a timely manner.

The primary purpose of the Flame is to let folks know what

you did or what future activities will be happening, even months in advance. The Weekly Digest is about what is going to happen in the near future, say in the next 2-3 weeks. The Order Of Service is what you "have in hand" each Sunday morning with brief announcements. We now produce a list of Announcements read from the podium on Sunday. Our well-established web site is full of information with links to our activities, committees, events, photos, and a lot more. Facebook is a social networking website (along with MySpace & Twitter) which is another way for our members & friends to get information on all we have going on.

It's not a perfect system and

improvements are always being made. Keep in mind it never hurts to send a follow-up note, especially if you are announcing something a month or more in the future.

NOTE: We frequently edit articles. Well over half come with typos & we fix those if we catch them! We also have to trim articles if they are too long.

One email and many places to put your announcement and get the word out! Just let us know the subject and where the announcement should go (i.e. Member Bio-Flame, Adult Ed-Digest, Second Sunday Brunch-OOS, etc.) no matter if you want your news put in the Flame, Digest, OOS, Podium Announcements, Website, Facebook). ☺



February Birthdays

Happy Birthday to these members and friends!

If your birthday is in December and we overlooked you, please contact Bobbie Schilling, Membership Chair, va_skibums@hotmail.com.

<p>3 Nan Procyon 3 George Fiscella 4 Barry Campbell 7 Milyn King 9 Andrew Burkes-Campbell 9 Westley Joseph 13 Joe Luke</p>	<p>18 Julie Stubbs 20 Aiden Grissom 21 Barbara Linde 24 David Dick 24 Steve King 29 Arik Christensen</p>
--	--





February 2011 - The Flame