



UU Update

Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa

• January 2009 • Volume 53 • Issue 1 •

Sunday Services at 9:00am and 11:00am

January 4th

THE MIDDLE WAY (And our Fourth Principle)

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Lucia Milburn

Continuing our extended exploration of the spiritual practice of the Principles, today we will use Buddhist and Transcendentalist wisdom to consider what it means to be on a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning." This Principle is, in many ways, the essence of Unitarian Universalism, a high path that requires bravery, compassion and good companions. And it is no accident that it sits right in the middle of the Principles, as we shall see.

January 11th

POWER (And our Fifth Principle)

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Heather Lawton

Our incoming president won his campaign using the very same principles of community organizing - story-telling, leadership development, relationship-building - that we are currently exploring in our growing interfaith coalition with partner churches Knox Presbyterian, Resurrection Catholic Parish, Shomrei Torah, and St. Vincent's Catholic Church, and others. With the Inauguration, and the transfer of authority that is the hallmark of a democracy, fast approaching, we'll take a look at power itself, and explore ways to generate more of it for ourselves and others.

Our 9:00am Service

Gathered in a circle, we have the same readings and message that are given at the 11:00am service, plus we have time for a discussion of the sermon topic. What UU doesn't like a discussion? There is childcare available. Any questions, contact Andy Levine at 887-9810.

January 18th

WHERE IS THE SOUL?

Worship associate: Andy Levine

Service Leader: Orlando E. Raola

Come to this service of questioning. We will enlist many tools for our task: poetry, neuroscience, the Bible, Plato, the Bhagavad Gita, Dawkins and Sagan, among others. Come with an open mind, because you might be exposed to ideas at odds with your own belief system. Come with your loving heart, because searching for the soul will be, no doubt, a labor of love. Also come with welcoming hands; to embrace what you will find here, together with the members of our beloved community. But most important, do not leave disappointed because you did not get an answer, any answer, the answer, for our gathering will be all about our endless quest for truth and meaning.

January 25th

THE WELCOME TABLE

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Erin Howseman

The welcoming table is an enduring and moving spiritual image for the sharing and fellowship that marks a religious community. A seat at the table for everyone has been used to describe the kingdom of heaven, the true sangha, and the real practice of democracy. Every Saturday morning a remarkably diverse group of people, some 175 in number, gather around tables to enjoy a hot breakfast and some warm hospitality here at UUCSR, thanks to the leadership and hard work of many people. Today we'll invite our Saturday morning guests to worship, hear some stories, honor our volunteers, and renew a commitment to always leave room for more.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Inside & Outside—Rev. Chris

One of the distinguishing features of the Unitarianism and Universalism of the 19th Century was their expansive optimism and faith in the human character. They believed that the world was getting better all the time. In their time, as in ours, the advances of science, medicine and technology were suggesting limitless power over the dangerous challenges of the natural world. The emergence, and cultural prominence, of liberal theology led our predecessors to believe that the old world of superstition and fear would certainly pass away, and an enlightened humankind would continue its ordained progression from the darkness of ignorance and immaturity into the light of reason, freedom and tolerance. James Freeman Clarke, one of the most prominent and respected of the Boston liberal ministers in the late 1800s, spoke for most of his Unitarian brothers and sisters when he claimed that such progress would continue "onward, upward, forever!"

I must confess that my faith in humankind, however, has often been a little more shaky.

Most of the time I walk a middle path that is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. I observe that the world has both good and evil energies. It seems realistic to assume that some people will always be crazy, or confused, or cruel. Physical reality has creative and destructive elements. Things come and go. Civilizations come and go. Gods come and go. While I am hopeful for humanity, the Earth and all Her creatures, I accept the reality that there are no guarantees in the universe. It is up to us, not God, whether we make the planet inhospitable, or we evolve into something new and wonderful.

I still believe that our destiny is the latter, in the end, if with less boldness than Clarke. Like him, I think hope is not unreasonable - far from it. Life can indeed be a great struggle, but there appear to be endless opportunities for transformation in this ever-changing world, an endless amount of creative energy of every type. The universe *evolves*. It naturally gets more complex, while keeping itself ordered. It brought forth life and mind and love, for crying out loud. That all counts for something. We have all the resources we need to live many long, happy and peaceful centuries upon this planet.

Perhaps we can even escape to another solar system before the sun explodes. Who knows what we'll evolve into?

Another reason my hope is intact and strong is that every now and then something happens in our history - something that can't be taken back, something that tips the scales permanently in one direction or another. The insights of the great religions into our unity and our inher-

ent enlightenment, the insights of physics and chemistry, the possibilities of democracy, the demise of the more egregious forms of human bondage in many parts of the world, the promise of women's equality, the Golden Rule - none of these can be put back in the bag forever.

Neither can the election of a black man to the presidency of the United States of America. I am convinced that this event is a watershed moment for the U.S. and her people. It opens long-overdue and hitherto unknown possibilities of conversation, reconciliation, healing, and transformation of the complex and corrosive race problems that have plagued this nation since its inception. I know that democracy is a fragile affair, and I try to face honestly the many failings of our government and our people over the last three centuries, so I have feared at times that our tendencies to divide rather than unite might win in the end, or that corruption and capitalism would turn out to be at the heart of our great experiment, rather the equality of all and each one's inalienable rights.

Perish the thought! The mere sight of Obama's light brown face, and the darker faces of his family, with those thousands of faces of every color in the crowd on the night of his election renewed my faith in my people. Whatever you think of the Senator's politics or policies, the mere fact that we have placed an African-American in the highest office opens a door of hope for a diverse, multi-cultural non-racist country that cannot, and will not, be closed again.

Closer to home, I feel that we are also walking through some doors as a congregation that cannot be closed again. Of course, we still have work to do - we are not as diverse, or powerful, or solvent as we should be, but we know what it feels like to worship with emotion, and rockin' music (why, we even had a revival!). We know what it feels like to have enough money in the bank. We know what it feels like to give generously. We know what it feels like to make an impact on our neighborhood, and to shape the political process. We know what it feels like to pray, to sing, to study, to speak honestly, to grow in number and in spirit.

As the world changes around us, and as we navigate the difficult waters of the next few, (or many) years together, my hope is that our loving commitment to ourselves, to each other, and to the wide world will continue to grow and unfold, that we might redeem our ancestors' optimism after all. I wish you all a very Happy New Year!

Rev. Chris

Splinters from the Board

Like most all the rest of the world, your UUCSR Board of Trustees has been knee-deep in financial issues these past several months. Not much new about that, of course—part of our job description is to deal with (and occasionally lose sleep over) budget issues, no matter the time of year or condition of the national and world-wide economies. But with the general economic slowdown and the specific issue of our property tax bill (addressed in the Treasurer's Report elsewhere in this newsletter) in front of us these past months, even more attention than usual has gone to ensuring that our financial house remains in as good order as possible in these turbulent times.

One key to even better and more consistent oversight of our financial affairs is to complete the transition to our new governance structure, which includes a Financial Stewardship Council charged with doing the heavy lifting of our fundraising and budgeting process. That council has made some major organizational strides in recent weeks, and looks to be on the road to fruition.

Other councils are in various stages of their own formation as we transition to this new way of decision-making and prioritizing on matters that affect virtually every aspect of our congregational life.

The very words "governance structure" have a built-in yawn factor, I'll admit. I can predict with supreme confidence that a redrawn organizational chart—even of this scintillating organization—will never be cited as "a must-read!" by the New York Times.

That being said, the creation of that chart—and its embodiment by real people in this congregation who volunteer to step into its slots—is of great importance as we seek to flip our organizational chart and bring decision-making on a number of fronts down to the level of individuals working within the councils of their choice. For that, we need leaders to step forward, either to claim their known leadership capacities in areas of their expertise, or, just as important, to perhaps explore and discover leadership capacities they didn't necessarily know they possessed.

You don't need Lincolnesque eloquence or Obamaesque temperament to assume a leadership position that can help make good decisions today and chart a healthy future for UUCSR. An open mind, a willingness to listen and work with others, life experiences or interests that coalesce (perhaps not even obviously) with some aspect of our varied councils and committees—these are the building blocks of leadership that we will need as we move forward to embrace our new system of governance.

You may never have to run a meeting or draw up a budget to help ensure the long-term vitality of UUCSR. But if the cup of involvement does get passed your way, consider taking a sip. It might be just the tonic that can further invigorate the contributions you are already making to this special community.

President, Board of Trustees
Andrew Hidas, Board President

THANK YOU!!! FROM REV. CHRIS

My dear friends, you demonstrated your tender hearts, generous spirits and commitment to this community on Christmas Eve by giving your largest-ever collection for the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which is used for direct relief of members, friends and others. Pending a couple additional promised donations, you gave \$2248! I am deeply touched and nourished by such an expression of UUCSR's heart, and I thank you from the bottom of mine.

Treasurer's Report

As we bid adieu to the final waning days of the year that was 2008, it's natural to sit back, take a deep breath, and reminisce over our current state of affairs... which undoubtedly would, in all likelihood, include our FINANCIAL state of affairs. For the financial stewards of the UUCSR, there has been, for some time now, a big question looming over our heads: a question of this somewhat complex issue of property taxes - and how the outcome will reflect on our bottom line. We are glad to report, however, that at the close of the year 2008 - we finally have a concrete answer to this multi-faceted question.

As a quick review, the basic issue we had with the county was that we had, on occasion, rented our building to individuals and/or groups who were not non-profit organizations (meaning, they were not officially established with the county to be 501(c)3 organizations). Doing so made us subject to property taxes.

So here's a riddle for you to ponder: When would it happen that a bill you receive in the mail for \$23,000 - would be a GOOD thing?? Well - I have an answer for you. As we have reported to you over the last several months in newsletters and during congregational meetings - the property tax issue came up earlier this year, and would have substantial financial consequences. We had looked at 'worst case scenarios' - and had projected the possibility of owing much higher amounts. We have met with our county representative and gone over the figures, and are happy to report that \$23,000 is our final balance due through 12-31-2008. (THIS IS GOOD NEWS!!)

So, at last, we have a final answer to this perplexing question, and we will be happy to pay our fair share of property taxes to the county. And, diligent as always - your beloved Finance Committee and Board of Directors have already planned the payment of this money, half of which is due this month (January), and half due in April. Since we were finally able to put aside quite a nice sum of money as "Reserves" last year (think of a savings account) - we do have a cushion, should it be necessary. However, to pay the bill in full, the Board has approved continuing UUCSR Member Notes (which come due this month) by either rolling them over, or acquiring new ones. This will allow our Reserves to remain in good standing.

We have a HUGE debt of gratitude to two people in our congregation who have worked tirelessly throughout this whole process - and who have put in tons of time and

energy into resolving our little 'problem'. Let's give a loud and raucous round of applause to Ted Miller and David Templeton, both of whom have helped to save the day. Ted did an exorbitant amount of work with research and conversations with the county, with other churches, with lawyers, with tax people - you name it - he got us the information and the answers that were needed to intelligently discuss and make decisions about these issues - and his talent, knowledge, optimism and unflagging goodwill have sure paid off. David has worked very hard to come up with a plan, which was assisted and supported by our Rentals Committee - to go forward from Jan 1st on. This plan has been laid out in detail, and was approved by the Board of Trustees in December.

Going forward we will continue to rent any part of our building to non-profits; however, we will restrict rentals to the SOCIAL HALL ONLY for any FOR profit groups (ie, anyone who is not an established 501(c)3 organization). That way, we can continue to rent the building to most of the groups we have rented to in the past - but we will restrict for-profit groups to only the social hall. In doing this, we will pay property tax on just the square footage of the social hall, but not on the rest of the building. We have run calculations on the approximate amount that will be due on just this area, and we are able to offset the expense within our normal operating budget.

As you can see, much deliberating has been done by the Rentals Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Board of Trustees - and it has been decided that this is doable: this is a good move forward on behalf of the congregation, and it is in keeping with our religious mission and purpose. We can continue to share our beautiful building with most of the groups who have rented from us in the past - many of whom have shown an eager desire to continue to use our building in the future. As January progresses on, your diligent and hard-working Finance Committee have already started to put together a budget for our upcoming 2009-10 fiscal year, and you can rest assured that we will be able to work future tax liabilities into our operating budget. (*Here's to no more tax surprises!*) Wishing you all a glorious New Year - we certainly have much to be thankful for. Happy 2009 everyone!!

Respectfully submitted,
Denese Pender, Co-Treasurer

Children's and Youth Religious Education (RE)

Happy New Year!!!

It is that time again for shaking off all the stuff you are happy to leave behind from 2008 and making plans for a bright new year. My experience with New Years resolutions has been more about guilt tripping than about actual positive change. So often they have focused on the things I don't like about myself and vow to change (the annual pledge to loose a few pounds - ough!). So, I have resolved to not to make resolutions this year. Instead I am looking ahead with a sense of hope knowing that with conscious intention I can make this a year of growth in my work at UUCSR.

I have been serving you as DRE for a year now. I have learned a lot over the course of 2008, and I initiated a number of changes in our program based on what I heard as priorities from parents. As with everything there is always room for improvement. And I would love to hear some feedback about what you feel has gone well and what could use some help. Are there subjects you would like me to cover with the kids that I am missing? Are there favorite projects that you would like to bring to RE? Are there questions your kids are asking that you would like to have specifically covered? How do you feel about the "Children's Affirmation"? Drop me a line by email, or give me a call. I really welcome your ideas.

My new thing for the New Year is to initiate a program for parents and kids to deepen our relationships with one another and to explore what it is to be a Unitarian Universalist in the context of family and culture. As Rev. Chris often says, there is more going on here than what happens on Sunday morning. I would like families to have an increased sense of support and con-

nection here at our congregation. The idea is not a new one....we would gather once a month on a weeknight for a shared simple meal and then break up into a parent's group and a children's group. I will be looking for guidance from parents as to content and logistics. I have a curriculum called Parents as Spiritual Guides which could be used, or we could run it like a T.I.E. group with a topic of special interest to parents and families. OR we could do something altogether different. Please be looking for a survey which will be emailed or mailed to you by Elizabeth Olsen. Once I get some ideas of what might meet your needs I will put together the details. I look forward to hearing from you!



In faith,

Deborah

What's happening in R.E. this month:

- 1/4/09** **1st Sunday - Youth Worship**
- 1/11/09** **Curriculum**
- Grades K-2** **Around the Church - Chalice Making**
- Grades 3-5** **Spirit of Adventure - Food – Stone Soup Sunday**
- Grades 6-7** **Jr. High Youth Group**
- 1/18/09** **Curriculum**
- Grades K-2** **Around the Church – I'm Unique and Unrepeatable**
- Grades 3-5** **Spirit of Adventure - Food – A Visitor: Volunteer from Sat. Morning Breakfast Program**
- Grades 6-7** **Jr. High Youth Group**

Community Organizing Trainings

Our work continues with the North Bay Sponsoring Committee, a coalition of area congregations seeking to build a lasting broad-based organization for civic power in Sonoma County. This work also directly benefits our congregation by keeping us regularly engaged in meaningful conversations about our interests, concerns, and goals, as well as cultivating our own leadership. Plus, it's fun.

Intrigued? You might like to attend the **Bay Area IAF Leadership Development Day, Wednesday, January 14th, 2009 from 10:00 am-3:30 pm** at the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael (1520 Grand Avenue, San Rafael

94901), where you can join leaders, clergy, and core teams from across the Bay Area IAF organizations as we build relationships, develop leadership skills, plan for action in the new year, and learn about the political realities in San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma and Napa counties.

Also on **January 25th** there will be a training after the service for those who signed up to facilitate our first round of organizing house meetings here at UUCSR. Talk to Rev. Chris, Linda Proulx, Dorris Lee, Deborah Mason, or Linda Harlow for more information.

Together In Exploration (TIE) Groups Regrouping in January

If you are interested in joining a TIE Group, there may be a few places available in January for new members. TIE Groups meet twice a month from October through May with trained Facilitators. Meetings follow a format designed to allow members to share views on a pre-selected, often emotionally or spiritually sensitive topic

without interruption. Rather than verbally wrestle with each other, members are involved in the religious practice of listening with silent support for divergent points of view. If you would like further information, please contact Bonnie Daines (537-7247) or bon-bob@sbccglobal.net.

CALLING ALL TIE GROUP MEMBERS FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS!!!!!!

ALL TIE GROUP MEMBER POTLUCK

Saturday, January 17th, 12 PM - 2 PM in the Social Hall

Please bring one dish and your strongest opinions to share

UUCSR Writers

The next UUCSR Writers meeting date is Monday, January 5, 2009, from 4 - 6 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 547 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa.

Whatever your creative endeavor: memoirs, letters, history, biography, the Great American novel, short story, Poetry, essays, dissertation, Master's thesis, song lyrics, report, term paper, cook book, web pages, blogging, etc., our focus is to provide an atmosphere where serious writers improve and hone their writing skills.

The UUCSR Writers is open to the novice, the more experienced, and the published author. Membership at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Santa Rosa

(UUCSR) is not required. We meet once a month at UUCSR in Santa Rosa, CA on the First Monday of the month, except September, from 4:00-6:00pm.

UUCSR Online Writers

Can't attend monthly meetings? Live in another City, State or Country? Request an Invitation to join our "Online Writers" Blog. You can learn more about our group, and current "Works-in-Progress", at the UUCSR Writers Blog.

Information

UUCSR Writers, Georgette G. deBlois, GGdeB@aol.com,

Women Together

Start the new year right with a Women's Pot-luck Lunch
on Saturday, January 24th from 12 to 2 at UUCSR!

Our Holiday Party at Helga's was so great that we decided to get together again soon.
Bring a lunch dish to share, and any friends who'd like to join in the fun
and get to know us better.

Linda Harlow/Women Together Steering Committee



IMPORTANT BUT RANDOM NOTES about Glaser Center Activities

Happy New Year everyone! As 2008 sinks into the mists of time, space, memory and history, and as 2009 rises before us as a shiny new something-or-other, let's take time to do a little mental new year's reorganization. In no particular order, here are some bits of information, along with a few new rules and procedures, that you might want to know about, mainly regarding the use of this facility by the congregation and the community at large.

ONE: On Saturday, March 7, we will be presenting what we hope will be the first annual Our Favorite Songs concert, with performances of songs selected by . . . you! Please see the insert asking you to nominate a song you'd love to see-and-hear performed by one of our "house musicians" and some guest artists from the community, who will be joining together for this special event. The song can be from any source: popular, classical, folk—even from our own hymnal. Just decide what your favorite song of all time is, and submit it by Sunday, February 15. We will build the concert from as many of these submissions as we can. Then, on March 7, we will come together for this one-of-a-kind concert. Tickets will be on sale soon, with all proceeds benefiting the work of the UUCSR. Please stay posted, and get those song submissions in soon!

TWO: Many of you know that UUCSR has a television set and DVD player, and also an LCD projector and laptop, which are available for church activities, group meetings, etc., and also for rental by community groups using our facility. Due to an increase of demand for these items, the office has implemented a new rule regarding their use. Starting in January, each of these items will have to be reserved in advance to ensure that they will be available when they are needed. To reserve the TV or the projector, for any in-house purpose whatsoever, you must either write the date and time you wish to use the equipment in our reservation book (located in the office with the Projector), or you must call Janis Brewster or myself at the office, 707-568-

5381 and ask us to reserve the equipment for you. This new procedure has been created to ensure that no one will arrive planning to use some of this equipment, only to find that someone else is already using it. This equipment will be reserved on a purely first-come, first serve basis. Please spread the word to all UUCSR committees and other groups that occasionally use this equipment. Thank you so much for your help

THREE: Starting in 2009, our community rental operation will be focusing much more on renting to non-profit groups and community organizations that are especially aligned to our principles. There are new procedures describing how we will rent which portions of the building, and to which kind of group. These changes have been put in place, in part to come into compliance with county tax code, and also as part of our effort to further establish the Glaser Center (the UUCSR's Arts, Culture and Community ministry) as a thriving place for socially-conscious, humanitarian groups, and also for life-affirming celebrations and cultural activities.

FOUR: In keeping with the previous statement, the UUCSR's Events Committee will, in 2009, be working to present an even wider array of cultural events, including more multi-cultural music and performance, and will be teaming with significant cultural institutions in our community to bring even more exciting programs (including speaking engagements and workshops) to our home. Please check the "Box Office" table often in the months to come to find out what new opportunities for cultural celebrations we are making possible. We hope that you all will support these efforts with your attendance and volunteerism, and also by spreading the word to those you feel would be interested in these activities.

Thanks for all of your support, and here's to a vibrant, interesting, and abundant New Year!

David Templeton
Glaser Center Artistic Director



Membership News

Please Welcome Our New Members: Catherine Arnold, Larissa Dahroug, Elizabeth Olsen, Sarita Hazen, J.D. Thompson, and Dorothy Walsh.

Catherine Arnold grew up in Japan, Washington DC & Boston, finally moving to MI where she received both a BA & Masters in Social Work from U. of Michigan. She remained in MI for 15 years, then she & her husband lived in the Chicago area for 5 years. Their daughter, Halle, was born there in 1997. They moved to Sonoma County in 1998 & their son, Braden, was born in Santa Rosa in 2000. Catherine was raised a Catholic, attending parochial school until she was 11 years old. In her teens she stopped participating in any religious group. However, when Braden was very young, he asked to explore religion & find a "spiritual home." They began attending UUCSR in August 2008 & almost immediately decided that it was a "good fit." Catherine is hoping to become involved in social justice activities, while Braden enjoys participating in our RE program. Catherine has worked with high-risk, underserved children & families for over 25 years. She is currently co-coordinating a graduate program in social work (MSW) through CSU-Long Beach, offered at Sonoma State University. She also works as a consultant (grant writing & program development) for local non-profits. Her other interests include photography & she has recently sold some of her children's photos. Catherine is also very involved in her children's schools & extra curricular activities: music for Braden & synchronized swimming for Halle. In addition to her husband & 2 children, Catherine's mother lives in Santa Rosa.

Larissa Dahroug is originally from PA. After living in the South Bay for a few years, she & her husband moved to Santa Rosa 2 years ago. Larissa is a new UU, having been raised in a Roman Catholic family that included a few priests & nuns. About 6 or 7 years ago she realized that she was not Catholic, though she has a deep respect for that faith & still embraces some of its traditions & teachings. She considers Jesus her guru, but does not identify as a Christian. When she learned about UUism she was pleased to find a group of people who embrace the very principals she tries to nurture in her own life. Larissa is very involved in social justice work within the Sonoma County community. She has been organizing with other non-faith-based, local, grass-roots groups; doing women's general & mental health advocacy, food distribution, as well as volunteering as a "friendly visitor" at Los Guilicos juvenile detention center twice a week. Larissa is also a working artist. Although she has held a number of different jobs in her life, she considers art, activism & Reiki practice

to be her real "occupation" (she is a Reiki Mater/Teacher). Her other interests include: writing, reading, public speaking, gardening & nutrition.

Nancy Fitzpatrick grew up in Washington DC where she belonged to a young people's group at All Souls Unitarian Church, and she became a member there as an adult. After her husband died, she moved to Santa Rosa and has lived here for several years. Although she visited our congregation before we moved to Santa Rosa, she did not decide to become a member until after Rev. Chris began his ministry with us. She has already become involved in several TIE groups and often helps with congregational and Glaser Center events. Nancy is a volunteer coordinator at Friends House and has won an achievement award for her work there. She is a member of the Sonoma County Dance Guild and participates in the SRJC Summer Repertory Theatre. Her other interests include music, swimming, and travel. Nancy has one son who lives in the Bay Area.

Elizabeth Olsen is originally from MA but moved to AZ at age 24. She was raised as a Methodist & did not discover Unitarian Universalism until 2003 when she became a member of UUFSC at our Stony Point Road location. She was involved in the Membership, RE & Canvass Committees. She taught grades 1-7, organized a canvass dinner, pot-luck dinners & other family events, as well as researching alternative places for the fellowship to meet. A year later, she began attending the Congregational Church in Sonoma & then the Community Church in Sebastopol. She returned to UUCSR in June 2008 & was inspired by Rev. Chris, the music, poetry, personal testimonies & wonderful, enthusiastic, caring people of our congregation. Elizabeth has joined the choir & a TIE group, hiked with the Under the Hill group & attended Chris Bell's UU history class. Currently she is working in the alternative energy field as a business developer, volunteers as a publicist & marketing representative for the Santa Rosa Concert Association, helps produce a volunteer newsletter for the Schulz Museum, ushers for the Spreckles Performing Arts Center & teaches a "Matter of Balance" class for seniors. She also enjoys hiking at Spring Lake, reading memoirs & learning about physiology. Elizabeth has a married son who lives in San Rafael, 2 brothers & a sister-in-law living in San Jose & San Carlos.

Membership cont. on page 9

Membership News Cont.

Cont. from page 8

J.D. Thompson grew up on the farm that his grandparents homesteaded in SD. He graduated from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD & received a Ph.D. in Biophysics from the U of Wisconsin. Since he grew up in a Scandinavian community, he was an active member of the Lutheran Church. After teaching physics, math & computer science for 42 years at Augustana, J.D. retired to the Big Island, HI, where he taught physics & astronomy part-time at U of HI-Hilo. He then fully retired & earned his Master Gardener certification, which he used to develop a "botanical garden" in his 3 acre yard, specializing in orchids, tropical fruit, palms, hibiscus & viryeas. While living on the Big Island, he became a member of the UU Fellowship of Puna. After living in HI for 8 years, J.D. moved to Sonoma in early October. He is currently a member of a TIE group at UUCSR & enjoys meeting other members. J.D. is in the process of converting his triplex to a single family residence with a second living unit. His hobbies are computers, reading, gardening, photography & traveling. He also enjoys the cultural opportunities in this area, including music, dance, art & wine. J.D. is eager to

become part of the Master Gardener effort in this area & has already started applying his green thumb to his yard. He has 4 children who are scattered around the US, as well as 7 grandchildren.

Dorothy Walsh was born in ND but lived in the state of WA until her sophomore year of high school. She later moved to Southern CA, where she became a member of the Santa Barbara Unitarian Church. She moved to Santa Rosa in 1997. Since becoming involved in our congregation, she has already joined the Fiber Arts Group and the Writers Group. Her other interests include writing (fiction and poetry), needlework, beading, as well as baking, cooking, gardening, quilting & reading. Dorothy is now retired, having worked as a secretary-bookkeeper, office-manager for an attorney in Southern California & for her son Michael in his painting business in Santa Rosa. In addition to Michael, who is a member of UUCSR, she has another son, Patrick, who lives in Santa Rosa with his wife & their 7 children. She has a sister & a brother who live in Sacramento, as well as a sister in Oregon.

Advocates for Social Justice

Share the Basket

On the first Sunday of the New Year, let's again think about those in our community for whom the year hasn't started so well. On Sunday, January 4th, half the money in the basket will go to support our Saturday Breakfast program, one of the highlights of the week for many men, women and children living in shelters, cars, or out of doors. Please keep the holiday spirit

alive by giving as generously as you can.

Thanks to your loving hearts, we sent a check to the YWCA's safe house for \$607. in time for Christmas!

With appreciation and hope for some positive changes in this country's priorities starting at the end of the month,

Linda Harlow/Advocates for Social Justice

Saturday Morning Breakfast

Our Saturday breakfasts are going full bore and we can always use new volunteers for cooking, serving and clean up. If the early morning hour is a bit daunting, we can use help with washing tablecloths. This is a one month commitment and we are covered until March. If this is of interest, please contact Phyllis or Anne.

Thanks and happy holidays to you all!

Phyllis Heagney—fpd@sonic.net and
Anne tenBensel—annetb4@gmail.com



Report on the UU Trip to New Orleans

UU Trip to New Orleans 12/6 to 12/13/08

Eight people recently made a group trip to New Orleans in support of rebuilding efforts there. The UU members are: Bryan Hargis, Jeffrey De Roboam, Jean Smith, Anne tenBensel, and John Jaffray. Anne's friend Judy Henning also came. Bryan's son Jeff, and his friend Joanne Cook, who live in Phoenix, flew in from there and were part of our group at First Unitarian Church of New Orleans (FUUNO), our partner church there.

The volunteer center at the church, which includes group bunk bed accommodations, a good kitchen facility, and limited bathroom and showers, is now under the auspices of the New Orleans Rebirth Volunteer Program, part of the Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal, whose director is Quo Vadis Breaux. Quo Vadis and her young assistants, Cory and Christie, found us volunteer opportunities with partner organizations, helped us with our various needs at the volunteer center, and cooked dinner for us one evening.

Our group worked in four locations. Two of the homes are being built or assisted through an organization called ACT - All Congregations Together. Bryan supervised Jeffrey, John, and Anne at a home that needed base boards installed, and Bryan installed shelves and clothes hanger rods in the closets. Judy and Joanne scraped a very rough and weathered ceiling on a front porch, and then painted it with a primer and a finish coat. Later Bryan and Jeff helped the owner, Mr. Stewart, install pillars to support the front porch roof. Mr. Stewart was very grateful. Both of these homes are in the Lower Ninth, which we toured earlier. Large sections are still devastated, and most homes still are derelict, even though there are many being rebuilt, like the ones we worked on.

We viewed the beautiful Make It Right homes, and spoke to one man who is having one built with the help of the 'Road Home' funds, and the Make It Right funds combined. Jeff and Jean laid linoleum tile in the laundry room of an elderly lady with limited mobility, so that the washer and dryer can be installed and Mrs. Ifama won't have to go out in this cold time of year for

her laundry. Later, Bryan and Jeff put in the base boards and re-installed a window that fell out during the snowstorm. Five of us painted part of the third floor corridor of a concrete and brick middle school that dates from 1927. Plans have been made to refurbish the school in 2012. Until then it is being used as a home for fifty artist studios and exhibit rooms, under the auspices of CANA, the Creative Alliance of New Orleans. It is also hosts the home office of Katrina Corps, the volunteer organization that supervised our work there, and does home rebuilding in N.O.

On Friday afternoon many of us visited Magazine Street, which has many restaurants and boutique stores. We bought two books on the Katrina disaster at a local bookstore, including the N.O. Times Picayune photo collection and a book of stories by columnist Chris Rose, covering the year after the flood, with a good description of the situation in the Ninth Ward. These two are now available from the Diversity Task Force Library.

Four of us visited Mrs. Boyd in her home, which we helped rebuild last year. She made a nice lunch for us, and we were happy to see her with her son and granddaughter in her almost finished and very cozy home.

Our stay finished with a Debriefing from our hosts, and an appeal from Nancy of FUUNO for further financial help for the three UU congregations in the greater New Orleans area. They are still a long way from recovery, and ask that the partner churches, including UU Santa Rosa, continue to help them in their rebuilding efforts.

We owe special thanks to Bryan and Jeff for coming. Their expertise was crucial in allowing us to do most of this work.

Report by John Jaffray



Guest At Your Table

Sunday, January 4 is the date for you to return your filled GAYT boxes. I will be in the lobby from before the 9 o'clock service (so you don't have to be carrying a box while you are in church) until well after the 11 o'clock service so we can accept all your donations.

Of course, the slot in the top of the box would indicate an ongoing deposit of coin for the work of the UUSC.

However, we are very understanding people and want you to know that if you run out of coins and bills, a check would be most welcome!

Thank you for participating in this traditional opportunity to support the UUSC

Phyllis Clement, UUSC Representative.

Thank You!!

**to the following businesses for donating so generously to our
Annual Service Auction.**

Breakthrough Fitness	Emily Morrison	Rialto Lakeside Cinemas
California Luggage Company	FlavorBistro	Simply Chic
Chance Massaro	Gary Chu's Restaurant	Sonoma County Museum
Chloe's Cookie and Coffee Company	Hank's Creekside Restaurant	Susan Cooper
Community Market	Holly Near	Spreckles Performing Arts Center
Dance Instructors	It Fitz, Inc.	The Toyworks
David Molencupp, DC	KRCB	Village Therapeutics
Dierk's Parkside Café	Larissa Daroug	West Coast Live
Edna Lucero & Dick Jensen	Paula's Original Tote Bags	

UUCSR Men's Retreat Planning Meeting

We are having the second meeting for the UUCSR Men's Retreat on January 11, 2009 at 12:30 in the Board Room.

If you want to get in on the planning of the retreat please come join us. Any questions, please contact Andy Levine 887-9810

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2009**

Newsletter@uusantarosa.org

**E-mail submissions
Greatly Appreciated!**

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January 2009

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Order of Service Announcements:

Send submissions to Orderofservice@uusantarosa.org
Editor: Janis Brewster
Deadline: Wednesday, Noon, prior to Sunday Service

UU Update Newsletter:

Send submissions to Newsletter@uusantarosa.org
Newsletter by E-mail is available. To sign up, send an e-mail to Administrator@uusantarosa.org with your name and e-mail address

Editor: Janis Brewster

Newsletter deadline follows the 3rd Sunday. All electronic deadlines are noon Monday.

Please place any hard copy submissions in the Newsletter mail slot in the office by noon Sunday.

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SUGGEST a SONG

FOR THE VERY SPECIAL

'OUR FAVORITE SONGS' CONCERT

TO TAKE PLACE IN THE SANCTUARY

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 7

What's your favorite song of all time?
Something by Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Cat Stevens or
The Captain and Tenille? Maybe a classical
composition by Beethoven, Verdi, or Mozart? Perhaps
a rocker by the Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, or Fine
Young Cannibals? Maybe it's something reflective
from liturgical tradition, or a love song made famous
by Nat King Cole or Frank Sinatra?
You name it, and we'll try to fit it into this very special
concert: *Our Favorite Songs*.

(please fill out this form and leave it in the box near the Box Office in the Social Hall)

My Favorite Song is: _____

It was originally written or recorded by _____

I've loved it since _____

My name is _____

SONG SUGGESTIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15