



September 2010 Newsletter of the Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

We are a Welcoming Congregation of people of diverse religious and spiritual beliefs.

Sunday Mornings at 10:30

September 5: Labor Day Service "In Praise of Work"

September 12: Forum: A sing along with songs from the 50's and 60's led by David Owens at the piano. David will choose and talk about the first few songs and then he will take requests. Word sheets will be provided.

September 19: "Margaret Fuller, Before Her Time" Transcendentalist, scholar, feminist, writer and editor, a visit with this remarkable woman illuminates some of our current dilemmas. Pot luck lunch.

September 26: "Fellowship Anniversary: 25 Plus Ten" In the nation of Norway, The Bet David Norwegian Unitarian Church celebrates its resurgence in 2005 as well as its beginnings in 1895. Our entire movement has beginnings that reach further than the eye can see -- but are held within the embracing continuities of the heart.
FELLOWSHIP PICNIC at Marsin Center for the afternoon with gala dinner cookout!

Our minister is The Reverend Dr. Sydney A. Morris, ph. 370-3927, samorris@uuma.org.

There is a link "Sermon Recordings" on the left side column on our www.kuuf.net website. You can hear audio recordings of many of Sydney's sermons. Check it out. – BillFink #

September birthdays. 7th, Sydney Morris; 8th, Laurie Bornhorst; 12th, Maya Rao; 15th, Meagan Harless; 29th, Dan Alder. As always, if you know of anyone who should be on this list (or any of the birthday lists) please let Dorothy Love know. #

Directions to the Marsin Center where we will have an evening cookout Sunday, September 26, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of KUUF: Turn onto Houghton Canal road off M-26. Drive about 7 miles to Red Brick road, which is about 1 mile past Oscar. Turn right on Red Brick road and proceed past the Preserve parking area (about 1/2 mile), around the bend to the right and shortly on the left is a sign marking the Marsin Center Entrance.

Crop Walk: You can make a secure online contribution to the KUUF CROPwalk team. Go to www.churchworldservice.org; click on CROP Hunger Walks; click on "find a walk"; click on Michigan on the map; click on Copper Country in the list; click on find a team and enter kuuf. There you will be able to make a contribution on-line. The walk is October 3rd at 1:30pm, speak to Barry Fink to be a walker. Barry will also be accepting donations on Sunday mornings. UUSC is a member organization of Church World Service. 75% of the collection is for national and international aid and 25% stays with local food banks. This the 21st annual Copper Country CROP walk. Church World Service has earned the highest rating--four out of four stars--from **Charity Navigator**, the independent organization that evaluates the financial health of America's largest charities in order to help donors make informed decisions about contributing to a particular organization. #

Is there a KUUF committee you would like to serve on? Tell Harriet King at 482-0506. #

Please help with hospitality 5 times per year or about every two months. Choose dates that work best for you. Thank you! #

We have created a page for sharing all sorts of interesting information that is not directly KUUF or UUA or Midwest District related. To access

this Facebook page, go to our kuuf.net site and go down the links on the left side. The link to click is just below "minister's midmonth". Then bookmark the page and check it regularly for new events, articles, entertainment, etc. Anyone can see it, you don't have to be a facebook user. If have something to share but aren't on Facebook yourself, you can send your item to Barry Fink barryfink@chartermi.net or Amlan amlan.m@gmail.com to post it for you. #

A Retrospective show of John Haro's

renderings, architectural drawings, paintings, etc will open Saturday evening, Aug. 28, at 7 PM in the Rozsa Gallery on the Lower Level.

According to Susanna Brent, who is coordinating it, there "will be a brief reception" at that time and it will be open to the public daily until October 15th. Admission to the gallery is free of charge. #

Lets Take Off the Hair Shirt – Marilyn Sewell:

Unitarian Universalists have been, as Paul Rasor [puts it](#), "engaged in wrenching self-examination" since we declared our earnest wish to become truly multicultural and multiracial almost eighteen years ago in the 1992 General Assembly. Over the years, we have continued to witness to our "failure" in countless articles, speeches, and sermons, castigating ourselves as insensitive and intransigent. It's time to take off the hair shirt.

We UUs are precisely human, nothing more and nothing less. What distinguishes us, if anything, is our fervent wish to become better than we are and to heal a broken and suffering world. But when we try to bring together people of different cultures and classes, we are subject to the same challenges as other human beings. Some of the challenges are especially daunting. A growing body of research shows, for example, that higher diversity results in less interaction and cooperation among people.

Robert D. Putnam, the Harvard political scientist and author of *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, completed another significant study in 2001, this one regarding the impact of diversity on trust and community-building. Interviewing 30,000 subjects, he found that "in ethnically diverse neighborhoods, residents of all races tend to 'hunker down.'

Trust (even of one's own race) is lower, altruism and community cooperation rarer, friends fewer."

A sense of community can grow amid diversity, Putnam argued, but it takes a long time and requires extended interaction between groups.

Racial and cultural integration comes when people actually get to know one another, and the built-in fear of "the other" is dissipated through experience. It will come, as it has already, *when people are brought together by institutional necessity*, as in our armed services, in sports, in integrated schools where young people learn and play together. In these settings, people find themselves engaged in common tasks where they encounter more than surface skin color and unfamiliar traditions, settings where they can observe their common humanity.

Unitarian Universalists should be commended for wanting to create churches where culture and class don't separate and divide. But it does a disservice to all when well-meaning progressives underestimate the very real obstacles we are up against. We're very long on the "should" and very short on the "how."

The only church groups that approach being multicultural are Roman Catholicism and evangelical mega-churches. Why have they been successful and we have not? Are they just more open and accepting of differences than Unitarian Universalists? Or could it be that their answers to the mysteries of existence are cleaner and clearer than ours and therefore have a broader appeal?

.Perhaps we should begin by humbly asking ourselves what realistic goals might be institutionally possible for us, and then leave behind the hubris that has led us to so much self-flagellation and so little accomplishment. #

Building Houses, Strengthening a Church –

Jane Greer: A Unitarian Universalist church in Wisconsin has sent almost 100 people to build houses in Nicaragua over the past seven years. Members of the Unitarian Universalist Church West in Brookfield, WI, say the weeklong service trips have broadened their horizons, deepened the bonds between members, and helped revitalize their congregation.

The Brookfield congregation made its first trip to Nicaragua with the Bridges to Community humanitarian organization in 2004, and since then, has made a total of six trips, scheduling them every other year. A seventh trip is planned for August. According to Jim Fischer, “[The program’s] growth has been explosive.”

What makes the Bridges program special? Many say that it’s working with the Nicaraguan community. In the house-building program, volunteer groups are assigned to a particular town or village with the goal of building one or two houses. The Nicaraguan community is responsible for making all of the decisions about what they want, and, in the case of houses, who should get them. Bridges provides a Nicaraguan mason to oversee the construction of each project. The building crews consist of the visiting volunteers, the family who will be getting the house, and other members of the community.

Working with the family who will be occupying the house as well as other community members creates a bond between the volunteers and villagers. “At the beginning of each weeks, the villagers made a speech thanking us for coming” Bruce Ambuel said. “They thanked us for leaving our families and traveling so far, and they thanked our families for being without us. Then they said, ‘You are members of our community and members of our family and you will always be welcome back here.’ It’s very moving to have a personal connection like that.”

“We get as much out of it as the Nicaraguans and we learn so much about family and community life and the value of those two things and how strong they are in Nicaragua. It reminds us of how much we can do in our own homes and communities in the U.S.”

Anita O’Conor believes that the experience in Nicaragua is helping the Brookfield congregation to become more interested in social justice issues in general. “I think it has made us more aware of social justice issues, and it’s made us talk about them in a deeper way,” she said. “We’re still working on how we want to carry out social justice efforts locally as well.”

Some Brookfield members especially appreciate the opportunity to bring their teenage children on

brigades. “Our church members have discovered that this is a really unique way to bond with their teenagers,” said Eddee Daniel, one of the church members responsible for bringing the Bridges program to Brookfield. “People almost universally come back having had an ‘aha’ experience on top of having had a bonding experience with their teen.”

Bob Chang, who went on his first brigade with his two sons Stephen, 17, and Michael, 21, said, “I think it changed my relationship with both of the boys. We were in an environment that wasn’t the typical parent-child environment,” he said. “You were working side by side with them. You were their peer down there; you weren’t their parent. I think it’s led to a warmer relationship with both of the boys back home.”

Stephen Chang agrees. “It was a lot of fun working with my father and brother,” he said. “I felt like I got to know my father and brother better, especially my brother, who’s been away at college.”

The experience has been life changing for some of the teens accompanying their parents. “My daughter was on three brigades,” Daniel said. “She subsequently went to college and majored in Spanish and minored in social work. She graduated a year ago and went down to Nicaragua, where she’s been volunteering for an organization in the capital, Managua.”

O’Conor’s daughters followed a similar path. One daughter went back and volunteered for a month in Nicaragua, then went on to major in Spanish, and is now studying public health. The other daughter spent her senior year in South Africa and just got back from Kenya, where she had gotten a grant to implement a mentoring program.

Nic Cable, 21, went on two brigades, one in 2008 with his mother and one in 2010 with his father and brother. A senior in college, he is planning to go to divinity school to study for the UU ministry. The trips were an important part of his discernment process about entering the ministry. “These trips opened my eyes to the power of our liberal faith tradition,” he said.

Ambuel, who has been on a brigade with his three children and son-in-law, said that he thought that youth and young adult participation in the trips was of crucial importance. "It's hard to keep adolescents and young adults engaged in church," he said. "This is a powerful way to keep them engaged."

"I really enjoyed working side-by-side with my own children and getting to know other young people on both trips," Ambuel said. "You develop a relationship with high school and college kids that you wouldn't get to develop in any other way in any other setting. In our society and in our congregations there are not that many opportunities to work together across generations. A Bridges trip is a really powerful way to build connections."

Bridges to Community, founded in 1992, is a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization that brings groups of all kinds to Nicaragua to work on housing, educational, and economic development

projects. The organization is headquartered in Ossining, N.Y., but employs a much larger on-the-ground staff in Nicaragua with a majority of Nicaraguan employees. The cost of a nine-day trip for each participant is \$1,295 plus airfare.

The Brookfield congregation had some initial reservations about participating in this project, said Rev. Lynch, the congregation's minister since 2003. "It was a reflection of where the church was at the time," she said. "It was in a hurting place. They had had a conflicted departure of a previous minister and then three years of interim ministry. I was brand new and they hardly knew me yet. So I think there was some mistrust in the system."

Sponsoring the Nicaragua brigades, however, has been part of the congregation's recovery, she said. "We have gone over the past seven years from being a church that was not feeling strong and was inwardly focused to being a very outwardly focused church that is looking for new ways to be of service and to work in solidarity with others. I think the Nicaragua brigades are one of the things we know has helped us make that transition."

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