

 **the**
FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester

Web Edition – No personal phone numbers or addresses

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SUNDAY SERVICES

March, 2006

March 5

STAND BY THIS FAITH

Rev. Larry Smith

She was the first woman minister with denominational recognition in the United States. She was at times also a newspaper editor and a tireless campaigner for women's suffrage. She was the Rev. Olympia Brown.

March 12

HINSONVILLE, A COMMUNITY AT THE CROSSROADS

Marianne Russo

Ms. Russo is the author of the book for which this service is named. Hinsonville was a community of free black land-owners during antebellum times. It was located in southern Chester County, where Lincoln University stands today. Torn by tensions that troubled African Americans everywhere, the dozen or so families of Hinsonville grappled with many of the important issues of the day: white vs. black; slavery vs. freedom; colonization vs. abolition. In a society that denied blacks education, or offered only very limited options, the community of Hinsonville schooled its young (including ministers), and became the site of the first college founded in the country exclusively for "young men of color."

March 19

IF WOMEN WROTE THE BIBLE

Rev. Larry Smith

What if women wrote the Bible? What would be different? What might remain the same?

March 26

...AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Rev. Larry Smith

Marriage is an ancient institution of humankind, thousands of years old. Today, the UUSC marks "Justice Sunday", an occasion for reinforcing our stand on issues of human rights. One key human right is the right to marry. But is that right available to everyone? Should it be?

FROM YOUR INTERIM MINISTER

As I write this column the snow is still on the ground from the blizzard that hit the Eastern seaboard in early February. It is a reminder that winter is still with us. When I lived in Chicago I used to long for springtime in March. In the deep South March is usually the time of year when springtime is first felt in the year. It marks the beginning of the change.

Change is coming in my personal life. I am now well-versed in the subjects of wedding favors, photographers, musical performers, and soon I will be beginning dance lessons so my two left feet will be less embarrassing than usual. Yes, wedding plans are still in the works. Watch this column next month for details.

My search process for a settled ministry fizzled out early this year and I will either be acting as an interim minister next year or working in some position not yet materialized or going back to graduate school. Whatever happens, I am not really worried. I will be in the Philadelphia area in the coming year and starting a new life.

Life in the congregation seems to be moving apace in the past two months. The new, sanded floors have added grace to the sanctuary. The church office is returning to normal after being turned upside down after the move for the sanding. Meetings have been going on among the leadership to examine the way that things are done and to consider a new organizational structure.

Though I mentioned the Ministerial Search Committee in the last newsletter column, their continuing work with Unitarian Universalist ministers interested in

the Fellowship needs to be commended yet again. Today I received a call from a minister telling me what a great pleasure it was to meet your ministerial search committee. The ministerial search committee represents this congregation well. In fact, pre-candidates tell me that it represents our common faith well too. That is good for you as this ministerial search process is a spiritual journey unto itself.

I would like to thank Bruce Koepke, Ron Sartain, and Mary Yeager, the members of the Bridging Team, for their continuing work with Tom Chulak. Over the past couple of months the Bridging Team has spent countless hours training the

Fellowship's leadership on the concepts of the Carver Policy Governance model.

Finally, I would like to thank the Fellowship's president, Flo Miller, for her dedicated leadership. She has spent days working on the Chalice Lighter grant proposal. Those are days in addition to the hard work of being your church's leader. If you can, tell Flo that you appreciate her hard work on your behalf.

One of the pleasures of serving this congregation has been the dedication that I have seen to change and the interim ministry process. Let me again thank you for this time with you.

— See you in church,
Rev. Larry Smith



MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

NEWS FLASH! Candidating Week has been moved to the week from Sunday April 30 to Sunday May 7. Please plan to be around that week. The week will start with our candidate preaching for both services, there will be social events and committee meetings during the week and a big congregational social on Saturday, May 6 — many opportunities to meet our candidate! Most importantly, after our candidate preaches at both services on the 7th, there will be a congregational vote on whether to call this candidate as our settled minister. Times of events will be announced when the week draws closer, but please plan now to be here for these important events.

The search committee continues to meet and interview pre-candidates and will soon begin the final leg of our journey — choosing one to be our candidate. Please continue to keep us in your thoughts as we bring this work to a conclusion. Also, as ever, feel free to contact us with your thoughts and concerns by emailing search-committee, or by calling or emailing any of the committee members.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this, I am preoccupied with clearing over a foot of snow from our acre property. I'm sure that snow removal was top on your list of priorities in mid February as well. Before you put your snow shovel to work, however, I hope you took a moment to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of the winter wonderland that greeted us on Sunday morning, February 12. I know I tried to do so before concentrating on my first and most pressing task – shoveling a place for the dog!

Even before the snow started to fall, I was in conversation with Larry about the process for communicating the cancellation of Sunday services. The e-mail part was easy – the phone chain was not. I was directed to a key person who “always did it before.” She was unavailable, which can happen when an informal process is followed with no documentation and no back-up plan. I ended up flying by the seat of my pants, so to speak, hastily organizing a phone chain and using a membership and friends list I updated as best I could. I doubt that anyone would have come to church even without direct notice, but I still hope/pray (in my own Unitarian way) that we reached all of you, either through e-mail or phone call.

Please understand that getting out the word on this cancellation was not particularly difficult, nor did I mind doing it. At the same time, however, this is a small but very on-target example of the challenges we face as we grow. The word-of-mouth, informal assignment of responsibilities that typified this situation works well in a pastoral-size church. In a larger, program-size congregation, it is inefficient and introduces the very real possibility of gaps in commu-

nication. I'll be addressing the need for established procedures in emergency situations, including procedures regarding a phone chain, through our Board and Fellowship Council.

Other upcoming/outstanding issues include:

- The Chalice Lighters Application was submitted to the Joseph Priestley District's Growth and Extension Committee on January 31. I have confirmation of its receipt, but have heard nothing since then. It is possible they will get back to me with a request for some revision in the application; the final word on acceptance or rejection will come in March. Meanwhile, I want to thank everyone who turned out for our combined mini potluck/congregational meeting to approve the application on January 29. We had well over 50 in attendance on a Sunday night, when I know folks are busy getting ready for the school and work week ahead. What started out as a routine business matter turned into a social occasion where I think everyone had fun. I know I did!

- On February 4, I attended the first in a series of Growing Healthy Congregations workshops in Wilmington with Rob Sartain, Erich Patel, Mary Yaeger and Craig Talbot. These workshops, run through the Joseph Priestly District, will continue on a once-a-month basis through June. Our commitment as a team is to attend them all; our hope/expectation is that they will provide one more source of information and insights to help us as we grow. Given everything else on the Fellowship plate at this time, our ability to recruit and

send the 5-member team speaks well for us.

- The spring conference of the Joseph Priestley District will be held March 31 to April 1 in Arlington, VA. I plan to attend and I believe that as of this writing, Rob Sartain, Erach Patel, and our DRE, Pam Baxter, will also be in attendance. The keynote address will be delivered by Gini Courter, moderator of the UUA. Worship services and a full schedule of workshops on topics of interest will complete the program. The workshops cover everything from a Congregational President's Gathering (I'll attend that one) to an exploration of “Harry Potter and the Seven Principles.” Could Harry Potter be a UU? This looks like a fun workshop – I think I'll sign up for that one, too! (See p. 6.)

Generally speaking, I believe that our presence in the JPD and the wider UUA becomes more important as we grow larger. The programs offered at these events are valuable, and not just because of the workshops on issues and programs of concern to all UUs. Equally important is the opportunity to interact with UUs outside the boundaries of our own Fellowship building. We learn that we are not alone and that the ideals we hold dear are shared by thousands of others.

With that in mind, please consider taking a different vacation and attending another upcoming event – the General Assembly of the UUA, to be held June 21-25 in St. Louis, Missouri. It's not too early to start planning for this. The programs and workshops – and that all-important

Continued next page...

NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE

“Our mission is to provide the children of our Congregation with a positive experience of a faith community . . .”

So begins our UFWC Religious Education Mission Statement.

There are many ways to interpret and put into practice what is embodied by the words “positive experience of a faith community.” One of the elements behind this statement is the RE Committee’s belief that in order for a child to learn about and embrace Unitarian Universalism, he or she must first feel at home in the church environment. From this came the idea of organizing Family Social events throughout the year – opportunities to have fun, to spend more time and develop friendships with other UU kids, and to become acquainted with UU adults beyond parents and RE teachers.

Last year we went bowling, enjoyed pizza and games downstairs in the Circle Room, and had a combined hike/scavenger hunt/picnic at Valley Forge Park. This year, we had our first-ever indoor camping event, complete with everything except mosquitoes and mud. Thirty-six people gathered on Friday, January 27, for pizza, bingo, active games and folk singing around the campfire. Ten families pitched their tents on the sanctuary floor and stage, and settled in for the night. Special thanks to Craig Talbot for providing guitar accompaniment for our songfest. (Photos will be posted on the Fellowship’s website.) Note: Check elsewhere in this newsletter for details on the upcoming Community Dance on Saturday, March 25, 3-5:00 p.m., co-spon-

sored with the Fun & Fellowship Committee.

We had another “first” in January. On Sunday, the 29th, the ninth grade Coming of Age participants and their parents met the adult mentors at a pizza party. The class came up with the idea for pizza, and class teachers Dylan Williams, Tom Buglio, Janine Bellano and Hank Griffin made it happen. The event was a great ice-breaker, and gave the class members the opportunity to start on their first task: interviewing their mentors. Students and mentors will be honored at a ceremony this spring.

As part of our commitment to social action, on several Sundays during the year the children from Pre-K through 6th grade will be making muffins and other baked goods to sell during Coffee Hour after each service. Indulge your sweet tooth and support the Heifer Project, which donates livestock, tree seedlings and bees to people in need around the world. We also plan to polish up our origami skills and make peace cranes for sale.

— Pam Baxter
Director of Religious Education



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

As our Fellowship grows, the effort to hold on to intimacy is a bit of a struggle, whether you are new to the Fellowship or a long time member. Small Group Ministry is a movement designed for just that. While committee work is sometimes a large time commitment, SGM meets 1½ to 2 hours, twice a month to discuss topics of a spiritual or religious nature.

Presently, two groups meet (first and third Wednesday or Thursday) and each has room for new members. If you want to know more, please contact Alan Pittenger or Gerry Giess (email: sgm).



FROM THE PRESIDENT

(Continued)

interaction with other UUs – occur on an even greater scale at the General Assembly, which is always chock-full of educational, cultural, and just plain “fun” activities. See me, or go to www.uua.org/ga.

Finally, please stay involved and active in our own Fellowship community as we move through the coming very busy months. Our stewardship campaign and the potential calling of a new minister will take top billing, but there’s lots more happening as well. Your energy, your enthusiasm and your commitment are vital to the success of all our endeavors.

— See you in Church, Flo Miller

ANNUAL CELEBRATION DINNER

Religion is a candle inside a multicolored lantern. Everyone looks through a particular color, but the candle is always there.

— Mohammed Neguib

These words sum up the sentiment I feel whenever I enter the Fellowship. We are a community brought together because we are looking to the Fellowship to light our journey to spiritual fulfillment.

We are indeed on a new journey as we have expanded to double services, sought to increase membership, enhanced our Religious Education programs and continued with our search for a new minister.

In fact “Our New Journey” is the theme of this year’s celebration dinner.

Our annual celebration dinner is our one grand social event for all members and the kick off to our annual canvas for financial support.

On April 1 (that’s no joke) our hall will be saturated with fragrance of fine foods, laughter, music, and camaraderie.

So look for your invitation in the mail, and let’s join together on our new journey.

— Kathy Neary

SEDER MEAL

Interested in organizing a Seder meal this year? The Fun and Fellowship Committee will provide support such as literature and promotion. Passover begins the night of April 13. Contact Mary Yeager (email: fun) by March 7.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees met on the evening of February 14. Bruce Koepcke briefed the Board on the progress of the Bridging Team. The Team has formulated a new governance system for the Fellowship and will be working closely with the Board, the Fellowship Council, and JPD Consultant Tom Chulak in the months ahead. The details of the implementation of this new system will be discussed at the Board retreat on February 25.

The Board approved a motion authorizing the Finance Committee to contract the Fellowship’s payroll tasks out to professional service provider PayChex. This action recognizes that the Fellowship is moving from being a pastoral-sized church to a mid-sized church and that its payroll has increased accordingly.

The Finance Committee agreed to investigate Fellowship policies regarding gift monies to see whether changes are needed.

In light of the recent snowstorm and service cancellations, it was decided that the Fellowship Council would work on a procedure for notification of members.

Cheryl Pittenger presented the report of the Office Refurbishment Committee. The Committee has moved aggressively and has come up with estimates for the cost of refurbishing the office. The refurbishment plan calls for the office to be divided into a Secretary’s area, Minister’s area, and a shared area, and the estimates include furnishings and lighting. The final plan will be presented for Board approval at the March Board meeting, and implementation is planned for late March/early April.

— Paul Sapko, Secretary

BOARD RECOGNITIONS

Sometimes all it takes to get a job done is a couple of people who see the need and fill it.

Such was the case with our recent snowfall, when Shelly Case and Rose Werner took it upon themselves to take care of shoveling our Fellowship property. Some unknown good Samaritan was there ahead of them and had started the job. Shelly and Rose finished it, cleaning off all the sidewalks, the walkway up to the front steps, and the steps themselves. If we can identify the Good Samaritan by next month’s Fellowshiparian, we’ll be sure to thank him/her, too. But for now, thank you Shelly and Rose for taking care of this very important and unexpected chore.

The Board also wishes to thank the Finance Committee headed by Erach Patel for looking after all of our interests. Their job isn’t very visible, nor is it particularly glamorous, but it sure is necessary. They work behind the scenes, taking care of some very important matters, and we’re most appreciative.

Finally, many thanks to Tilo Stahl, who arranged and contracted for the Sand Free treatment that so greatly improved the appearance of our sanctuary floor. Additional thanks to all who chipped in and helped empty the sanctuary and office on Sunday, and then returned on Thursday to put everything back in. The outpouring of help made the job easy, and the results were well worth the effort.

— Flo Miller for the Board

SPRING JPD CONFERENCE

The Joseph Priestley District of the UUA, our district, is having its spring conference on March 31 and April 1 this year at the Doubletree Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. Some of you might remember the conference from last year. It was a great time to meet other Unitarian Universalists and, for the first time was an intergenerational event.

This year the conference is intended once again for those of all ages. The workshops are relevant for many different parts of congregational life with topics covering religious education, finance, youth groups, social justice, and religious services, to name but a few. The keynote speaker will be Gini Courtier, the Moderator of the UUA General Assembly.

If you are interested you may register for this event online at www.jpduua.org.

LUNCH GROUP

Lunch Group will meet at 11:30 a.m. at the Atlanta Bread Company in Exton on the third Friday of the month starting March 17.

After searching for a location closer to West Chester we have decided that we couldn't find a place as good as Atlanta Bread. It offers simplicity, a good menu, moderate prices, and it is not too noisy. We don't need reservations and there are no waiters or waitresses. You simply order at the counter and sit with the group.

Join us. Everyone is welcome. To add your name to the e-mail reminder list send a message to Linda Sander at lunch-group.

YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

February is always a quiet month. After the hectic holiday season, and then the social action events of January, we usually need a week or two to get recharged. So, this year, we watched the Super Bowl from our own homes and took the evening off.

On February 12, in the midst of a monster snow, however, Paul, David and Adam, along with a contingent of adult leaders, cooked a vast amount of chili, corn, brownies and salad, and served the meal at Safe Harbor. While most people got to hunker down at home, we cannot forget that the homeless still need our assistance, and perhaps more of it, during these difficult times.

From March through May we will be incredibly busy. There are several CONs coming up, more social action, more cool discussion, at least one costume bowling event, some hiking, and maybe finally that canoeing adventure that we've talked about for the past five years.

Sound interesting? The Youth group meets almost every Sunday night in the Fellowship basement, from 6 p.m. until 7:30. Every youth in 8th through 12th grade is welcome. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Michael or David Werner (email: youth-group).



HAVE YOU MET HALEY COX?

If home is where the heart is, then Haley Cox's heart is with the UFWC. The West Chester resident and recent master's graduate joined the Fellowship November 6 "because it felt like home" and was a befitting place to settle in, spiritually speaking.

Self-described as "hopeful, passionate and relentless," Haley West graduated from West Chester University in December with a master's in administration, with plans to sell her small business (Sunsational Tans on High Street in West Chester), join the workforce, volunteer abroad or pursue a PhD. She also hopes to become involved in the UFWC's Social Justice Committee, the Simplicity Circle and "anything involving diversity," she says.



When she's not meeting new activists, attending conferences and fighting for social change, you can find Haley digging in to an additional list of interests: vegetarian food, green festivals, independent media, fair trade, photography and concerts.

Or, she may be hanging out with her closest pals — her parents. "My mom and dad are my best friends," says Haley, an only child. "They live about two-and-a-half hours away in the Poconos." Haley's nurture network also includes two feline friends — Abby (after Abigail Adams, a forerunning advocate of women's rights) and Audre (after Audre Lorde, acclaimed novelist, poet and essayist).

— Sharon Breske

YOGA

Are you worth an hour a week to relax, to reconnect with your Self, to stretch and make your body more



flexible and healthier? Yoga can offer you that, and more.

Classes are 6 to 7 p.m. on Thursday nights at the Fellowship at a cost of \$8.00 per class. Please join us. Call or email Mira for more information.

EXPLORING DIVERSITY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Join us Sunday evening March 19, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. downstairs at the Fellowship, to discuss *Small Island: A Novel* by Andrea Levy. Dena Beeghly will lead the discussion. Her description follows: *Small Island* is a beautifully crafted and highly entertaining novel that provides absorbing insights into immigration and racism in Britain in the years following World War II. Readers are bound to laugh and cry along with the characters as they make their way in a world forever changed. Both the acts of racism and human kindness chronicled in the book should provide us with much to discuss.

Contact Ruth MacFadyen or Shelly Case.

Note: The 2005-2006 reading list is posted on our website. Next month we will meet the fourth Sunday, April 23, at our usual time.

COMMUNITY DANCE FOR ALL AGES

What is a community dance? It is old-fashion country dancing for all ages and experience levels, particularly tailored to the inexperienced. Simple American and English line, square and circle dances will be taught and called. The music is live and up-tempo, with tunes drawn from the Appalachian, Celtic, and other great musical traditions. Bringing a partner is not necessary — in fact, you will be encouraged to change partners frequently, so you get to meet and dance with lots of people.

The dress is comfortable and casual — shoes should be flat and soft-soled. Dress in layers, it gets warm dancing! We will have pizza (for a nominal charge) and a cold food potluck after the dance. Please bring a salad, snack or dessert to share.

Come enjoy this great activity and be part of an exciting, living tradition. Whether you come alone, with a friend or bring your entire family (children and grandparents love it), you'll have an afternoon you won't soon forget. If you can walk, you can dance!



- Caller: Ridge Kennedy
- Musicians: Ben Kennedy, Josh Burdick, Kim Fedchak, Wes Steenson
- Date and time: March 25, 2006 3-5 p.m., followed by pizza and refreshments
- Place: UFWC
- Cost: \$5 /adult; \$2 /child 5-12; under 5, free

This event is being brought to you by the Fun & Fellowship and RE Committees. Contact Nancy Artus (email: fun) or Cathy Vogt (email: RE).

GAME NIGHT

Friday, March 3, is our next night for food, fun, and games. Everyone is welcome. Bring a dish and a beverage to share as well as any games you would like to play. This is an informal event; there is no need to call ahead or be there on time — just come! Contact Mary Yeager.

FOLK SINGING

The next get-together for folk singing is Saturday, March 4, at 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. All are welcome. Bring a munchie if you wish. For more information pick up a brochure and map in the foyer, visit ufwc.org/folk_singing.htm, or contact Steve.

SIMPLICITY CIRCLE

Next meeting is March 5, at 12:30 p.m. More new members have attended or shown interest. Don Hurford led by posing stimulating questions. Interactions continue to be free as well as considerate, thought provoking and meaningful.

Focus continues to center on our strivings for a life of meaning, beyond the clutter and wasters of precious time and energy.

Sue Stedman will guide our thinking in the next meeting. Contact Heidi Buss (email: simplicity).

FELLOWSHIP CALENDAR

- Feb 25 Sat Valentine's Dance.** 7-10 pm, sanctuary. See below.
- Feb 26 Sun New Member Potluck Social.** 6 pm. Honor our newest members. See February *Fellowtarian*, p. 8.
- Mar 1 Wed RE Committee Meeting.** 7-9 p.m., Fellowship OWL room. E-mail: RE.
- Mar 2 Thu Religious Services Committee Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. in the office.
- Mar 3 Fri Potluck and Game Night.** 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. See p. 7.
- Mar 4 Sat Folk Singing.** 8 p.m. at the home of Steve and Linda Sander. See p. 7.
- Mar 5 Sun Simplicity Circle Meeting.** 12:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. See p. 7.
New UU Class. 12:30-2 p.m., office. See February *Fellowtarian*.
Social Justice Committee Meeting. 7:30-9 p.m., fireplace room. Contact Tom Townsend, Email: social-justice.
- Mar 6 Mon Finance Committee Meeting** 7:30 p.m. Contact Erach Patel, email: finance.
- Mar 8 Wed Fun and Fellowship Committee Meeting.** 7 p.m. at the a Yeager home. Contact Mary Yeager or Nancy Artis, email: fun.
- Mar 10 Fri Chester County Peace Movement Film Night.** *Gallipoli*, 7:30 p.m., sanctuary.
- Mar 12 Sun Safe Harbor Dinner.** Provided by the Fellowship the second Sunday of the month. Contact Catherine Sachs, email: safe-harbor.
- Mar 14 Tue Board Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship office. All are welcome.
- Mar 17 Fri Lunch Group.** 11:30 a.m. at Atlanta Bread Company in Exton. See p. 6.
- Mar 19 Sun Exploring Diversity Book Discussion Group.** 7:30-9 p.m., Fellowship. See p. 7.
- Mar 24 Fri Social Justice Movie.** 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Film: *Wal-Mart*. Contact Diane Maguire or email: social-justice.
- Mar 25 Sat Lunch for the Needy.** Provided by our Fellowship at the Salvation Army. Contact Catherine Sachs, email: salvation-army.
Community Dance. 3-5 p.m. Pizza & cold food potluck after the dance. See p. 7.
- Mar 28 Tue Building Committee Meeting.** 7 p.m., fireplace room. Email: building.
- Mar 31-Apr 1 JPD Spring Conference.** See p. 6.
- Apr 1 Sat Annual Celebration Dinner.** See p. 5.
- Apr 30-May 7 Candidating Week.** See p. 2.
- Groups meeting multiple times in a month:**
- Choir Practice** First and third Thursdays, 7:15 p.m., sanctuary. Email: choir.
 - Yoga** Thursdays 6-7 p.m., basement. See p. 7.
 - Youth Group** Most Sunday evenings, 6-7:30 p.m., OWL/Youth Group room. See p. 6.

FIGHTING WINTER BLAHS?

Start your Spring Cleaning – and set aside your best items for the Fellowship Flea Market coming in May. Interesting books, toys your kids have out-grown, good quality clothing, jewelry, appliances, garden tools, etc. etc. — if it's in good condition, we can sell it.

VALENTINE'S DANCE RESCHEDULED

(Snowed out February 11)
Featuring *Who Needs Nigel?*
 Saturday February 25, 2006
 7-10 p.m.
 ~ admission is free ~
 See the February *Fellowtarian* for details.