The President’s Column by Bruce Swiecicki

I’ve come to understand why certain topics of discussion are generally considered to be taboo at dinner parties and other such events where polite conversations are the norm. There are good reasons for this “rule,” because people like to get together for socializing and to have a fun and engaging evening without necessarily causing people to become uncomfortable. Some just aren’t comfortable divulging their personal viewpoints on religion, God, abortion or other topics that can be polarizing and lead to emotional reactions.

However, in this instance the discussion over viewpoints on religion took place between two longtime friends that have had similar discussions in the past and actually looked forward to having them. Unfortunately, this time the discussion broke down and got personal, degenerating into a heated argument.

As Unitarian Universalists, we ascribe to the Seven Principles, which include the Fourth Principle:

A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning*

What I’ve run up against is a viewpoint that UU’s have no direction or nothing to hold them to a standard of behavior. They can believe whatever they want and act in any manner they choose. For me, the freedom to believe what one chooses to believe is the primary reason I became a Unitarian Universalist. “No one, I think, is in my tree. I mean it must be high or low”** describes the situation that we find ourselves in. Each person’s life experiences contribute to our outlook on life and our belief system. No one else can know exactly what we know based on our experiences. I cherish the freedom our Fourth Principle gives us.

But the operative word is “Responsible.” Regardless of what experiences and the analyses of them that brought us to the point we are at, we have to remain responsible in our dealings with others and with the world we live in. Many religions and philosophies subscribe to the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would want them to do to you.” One of our former ministers preached a variation on that rule, which went something like “Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.” My belief is that while I search for truth and meaning in this life, I must also remain a responsible citizen of the world and contribute to its betterment while I am able to do so. Who knows, maybe our contributions to that cause in and of themselves constitute truth and meaning.

~Bruce

*For a reflection on the intent of the Fourth Principle, see this link to a writing by Rev. Paige Getty: Reflection on the Fourth Principle

** From “Strawberry Fields,” Lennon and McCartney
February Forum

February 1st - No Forum: Community Sunday Potluck

February 8th - Care of the Earth: Butterfly Lady Kay McNeil will speak on “Monarch Stuff and How to be a Caterpillar Mom. Free milkweed seeds.

February 15th - Dances of Universal Peace with Pat Segner
Join us for a discussion of the history and philosophy of Sufism. Learn about Samuel Lewis, Sufi Murshid and Zen Master, who founded the Dances of Universal Peace in the late 1960's in San Francisco. We will also have a participatory sampling of some of the dances.

February 22nd - The Middle East Conflicts: past Present and Future with Gideon Falk, PhD of Purdue University Calumet
Professor Falk will provide us with an overview of the history and geography of the Middle East and who ruled which areas. He will provide a summary of past conflicts and insights into current situations. In particular, he will examine current barriers to peace and what we might expect to see in the future.

Pastoral Care: Listening Hearts

Two Listening Hearts, or members of the Lay Pastoral Care team, are on hand each month to serve your needs. They are not acting as professional counselors, but rather a source for listening, support and resources. They have participated in training to become Listening Hearts.

The resources they can provide include connecting you to professionals of various kinds. For example, the Lay Pastoral Care team has lined up qualified counselors who are willing to provide low-cost (and, in some cases, no-cost) services in the church building.

Listening Hearts will soon have a ribbon on their name tags to identify them. If you do not spot one of them at church, or if you wish to talk to one of them in particular, call the office during regular hours and ask Diane O'Connor.

Listening Hearts for February are Joyce Semmler and Char Pierce

Regional Assembly 2015

Join fellow UUs the weekend of April 17-19, in Naperville, Illinois (a western suburb of Chicago) for Regional Assembly 2015. It will be a great chance to be together as one region to explore The New in a New Era of Unitarian Universalism with presentations by two major speakers: the Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt and the Reverend Dr. Marlin Lavanhar. You can benefit from workshops designed to strengthen your congregation, deepen your social justice work, and enrich you on a personal level. Come and experience the Regional Business Meeting, good food, and time for meeting new friends and old from congregations across our great Region, culminating with the joy of shared worship and musical celebration on Sunday morning.

See http://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly
What’s going on in RE?
by Dan Feldt, Director of RE

First, I’d like to assure everyone that as far as I know Lynn Lidbury is in perfect health. As the teacher of the 3rd to 5th graders last Sunday, she volunteered to have them give her a “funny face” with makeup. (The lesson was on humor as a UU principle.) The results were kind of weird when they were done.

The junior high class is coming along very well with their photojournalism project on families. Some of you will be interviewed next month. The class is now working on how to ask good questions and how to take interesting photographs.

We will be starting our adult education and discussion group in mid-March. Hopefully by that time the weather will be good enough for us to confidently venture out on the roadways. On the blue surveys that we did a while back, a majority of the respondents selected the Forrest Church workshop Lifelines: Holding on (and Letting Go), so we’ll be starting off with that material. I’ll be contacting all of you who selected that as your choice, but certainly any others who wish to take part in that discussion are welcome to join up. I’ll have a sign-up sheet available soon.

Here’s some information regarding the book and discussion group lesson plan:

About the book

In this eloquent, personal, hopeful book, writer and minister Forrest Church explores the lifelines that can sustain us in times of trouble: deeper connections to neighbor and stranger, a better understanding of human limits, and a larger view of our place in the universe.

“With wisdom from Ecclesiastes guiding the contemporary wisdom of one of our nation’s leading pastors, Life Lines offers good counsel, comfort, and insight for today’s dilemmas. Forrest Church takes on the toughest issues – love, death, guilt, and forgiveness – and comes up with practical, usable advice.”

-Dan Wakefield, author of Creating from the Spirit

Discussion group introduction

How can we make peace with our mortality and the death of those we love? How can we accept things that cannot be changed and change the things that can? How can we forgive ourselves and others? How can we gather the courage to overcome our fears? How can we connect with others to fashion a more just society, a more loving community? ... Where can we find God in what may seem at times a godless world? ... How is it that some people manage to conquer adversity, while others are consumed by it?

Any one of these questions is enough to bring us to a screeching halt, paralyzed by the enormity of what we do not know. Yet sooner or later some crisis—an illness, the loss of a loved one, a failure—brings each of us face to face with pain so deep that we can only cry out, longing for answers to one or more of these seemingly unanswerable questions. This is our shared destiny: as Forrest puts it, confronted by the "dual reality of being alive and having to die, ... we question what life means." Often, this is what brings us into fellowship in the first place.

We will begin to explore some of life's deepest questions, and this very process of exploring in community offers the hope of experiencing some answers. We will look at what it means to wake up to the fact that everyone must suffer grief and adversity, and together we will begin to discover the many ways—love, humor, and compassion foremost among them—in which this awareness can draw us deeper into the connections that make life worth living. Using the book Life Lines: Holding On (and Letting Go), by Forrest Church (Beacon Press, 1996), as a jumping-off place, participants will have the opportunity to share their own stories and to listen to others' in a dialogue that joins them to each other and to the human family everywhere.
Please help stop the proposed Illiana Tollway!

The proposed Tollway would be 47 miles long, running east-west from Indiana over to south of Joliet. This project would require that more than 3,000 acres would be paved over including, historic farms, small communities and natural areas. Studies have shown that this route would be too far south to help alleviate traffic congestion in the Chicago area on I-80 and that truckers would not be inclined to use this route. Further, this project has been proposed to encourage the development of the third airport in the Peotone area.

You can help put a half to this project!

Learn more here at the Sierra Club Illinois website. Sign an online petition in opposition.

Join the Sierra Club on Wed. Feb 4th in either Chicago or in Springfield for a Lobby Day and to deliver paper copies of the petition. Contact Erica Dolt (erica.dodt@sierraclub.org 312- 251-1680 x197) of the Sierra Club for more details.

The Medical Cannabis Education Association Meeting is being held on February 1st. Noon till 1pm in Classroom 3. Attendance is FREE.

This month’s topics include: Adding Conditions, Health Benefits of Hemp, and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Raffle Items for Congregational Dinner

Last year good fun was had by all and some mighty nice prizes were taken home. This year we will again be holding the fun and interactive Raffle Baskets at our dinner on May 3rd, 2015. We are looking to inspire donations of themed baskets, personal services and individual items to raffle off. Please consider donating items, or share a service or talent. Collections will begin in April.

Contact Dorea or Nancy with questions.

Women Helping Women:

In 2006 Mary Lazaraton initiated a project where women of UUCC contributed $60 each annually to fund organizations helping other women in places like Rwanda, Afghanistan and Iraq. This effort has quietly continued at UUCC through the years, among those who made the initial commitment. Irmgard Faulkner would like to revitalize this effort with a new call for donors and new organizations to support. She has proposed that funds be provided to three organizations helping women to help themselves:

- **South Suburban Family Shelter** assists local women cope with and escape from domestic violence.
- **Bead for Life** provides training in small business entrepreneurship to women in Africa.
- **KIVA** provides micro loans to individuals in poverty striving to become self-sufficient.

Donors can support one, two or three of these organizations. Please contact Irmgard Faulkner for details in how to make out your tax-deductible donation checks. Please have a heart, and submit all donations to Irmgard by February 14th as a Valentine!
Free Healthy Living Group
(Second Thursday of the month)

Thursday, February 12th, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Topic: Book Review and Discussion of The Four Agreements

“Dr. Wayne Dyer indicates it is an inspiring book with many great lessons....”

In “The Four Agreements”, author don Miguel Ruiz reveals the source of self-limiting beliefs that rob us of joy and create needless suffering. Based on ancient Toltec wisdom, “The Four Agreements” offers a powerful code of conduct that can rapidly transform our lives to a new experience of freedom, true happiness, and love.

Carol Wentz, occupational therapist, will summarize the book and lead our discussion. You do not need to have read the book to attend.

Come join us! All are welcome. Free tea and coffee
Optional: Bring a snack to share. Join in the discussion. Invite friends!

Religion Without God - (from the opinion pages of the New York Times)

THIS Christmas our family will go to church. The service is held in a beautiful old church in the charming town of Walpole, N.H., just over the border from Vermont. The Lord’s Prayer hangs on the wall behind the sanctuary. A lectern rises above the nave to let the pastor look down on his flock. The pews and the side stalls have the stern, pure lineaments suited to the Colonial congregation that once came to church to face God.

Except that this church is Unitarian. Unitarianism emerged in early modern Europe from those who rejected a Trinitarian theology in preference for the doctrine that God was one. By the 19th century, however, the Unitarian church had become a place for intellectuals who were skeptical of belief claims but who wanted to hang on to faith in some manner. Charles Darwin, for example, turned to Unitarians as he struggled with his growing doubt. My mother is the daughter of a Baptist pastor and the black sheep, theologically speaking, of her family. She wants to go to church, but she is not quite sure whether she wants God. The modern Unitarian Universalist Association’s statement of principles does not mention God at all.

As it happens, this kind of God-neutral faith is growing rapidly, in many cases with even less role for God than among Unitarians. Atheist services have sprung up around the country, even in the Bible Belt.

Many of them are connected to Sunday Assembly, which was founded in Britain by two comedians, Sanderson Jones and Pippa Evans. They are avowed atheists. Yet they have created a movement that draws thousands of people to events with music, sermons, readings, reflections and (to judge by photos) even the waving of upraised hands. There are nearly 200 Sunday Assembly gatherings worldwide. A gathering in Los Angeles last year attracted hundreds of participants.

How do we understand this impulse to hold a “church” service despite a hesitant or even nonexistent faith?

To read this entire article, go to: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/25/opinion/religion-without-god.html?_r=1
Free Movie & Discussion
Friday, February 27th, 7:00 p.m.

Carbon Nation is an optimistic, solutions-based film that shows how tackling climate change boosts the economy, increases national & energy security, and promotes health and a clean environment. 2011 84 minutes

Free coffee, tea, and popcorn. Join in the lively discussion. Invite friends!

Winter WomanSpirit 2015

February 6th - 8th
HEALING WORDS: Called to Consciousness
Lake Country Unitarian Universalist Church, Hartland WI

Keynote Speaker: Mary Pierce Brosmer
Registration includes Friday Opening Ceremony, Saturday Workshops, Lunch and Concert by Armonia.

Conference Registration Fees:
- Thru Feb 1, 2015 $200
- Feb 2 - Feb 6 $225

Please visit www.womenandreligion.org or contact us at uuwandr@gmail.com for more information and to register.

CUUPS Imbolc Celebration
Join us for a family friendly ritual as we celebrate Imbolc and turn the wheel of the year. Imbolc is an ancient Celtic festival associated with the goddess Brigit, held early in February to mark the beginning of spring. We will be making a holiday craft before the ritual and feasting together after it's done.

Tuesday, February 3rd, 2015 at UUCC
Gather: 6:00 pm, Ritual: 6:30 pm

Please bring a dish to share, $5 donation is requested
All are welcome to join us as we celebrate the stirring of seeds in the earth and look toward spring!
UUCC Café Français
The south of France is coming to UUCC!

Sunday Feb. 1st, 2015
6pm to 9pm

Sophisticated Wine Sipping,
Gourmet Gastronomical Delights
Magical Musical Memories

Presented by: Cheryl Ordower, Chris Ussery &
John Hurtubise

Reservations required beginning in January
$25 per person (limited seating)

Edgar’s Place Coffeehouse Proudly Presents

Michael Smith

February 14th at 8pm    Adults: $15

Michael Smith stands out as one of the few undisputed
geniuses among singer-songwriters.

- Sing Out! Magazine

One of the best songwriters in the English language . . .
an enchanting and riveting performer.

- Chicago Magazine

Coming Soon! New UUCC Logo Coffee Mugs for Sale!

Thanks to the donations towards the fall memorial campaign, UUCC will
soon receive an order of new logo coffee mugs. We had to order a minimum
of 72 mugs, which is more than required for current coffee hour needs. If
anyone would like to own a mug, they will be available for sale in the Gath-
ering Room after services for several weeks, once they arrive.

Prices: 1 mug for $6.00  or  3 mugs for $15.00
Rainbow Café
Rainbow Café is a social event that provides a safe and welcoming environment for single or partnered gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender adults and their allies, by creating a space where they are able to socialize outside of the usual bars.

The Café is open every 3rd Friday of the month from 6:30-10:30 pm. More info: Call Dave Matteson 708-672-8837 or (714) 930-6134.

RAINBOW CAFÉ will meet on February 20th. The movie shown will be an attempted re-showing of “MORGAN”.

Depressed and despairing after an accident renders him paraplegic, Morgan gets a new lease on life when he meets Dean on a basketball court. But when Morgan risks his life entering a bike race and Dean walks out, he is pushed to the brink once again. This is an inspiring movie regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Cast: Leo Minaya, Jack Kesy, Benjamin Budd 2012 NR 89 minutes

A Moment in Balance

Yoga Classes by Karen Nielsen
Monday and Thurs
9:30am – 11am
Wednesday evenings
7:00pm – 8:30pm

No reservations needed. Drop-in fee is $10 per class and the 6th one is FREE.

Buddhist Meditation

Learn and enjoy the simple, straight-forward practice of meditation. Please join us for sitting and walking meditation in the Zen and Theravadan Buddhist traditions. This is an ongoing event led by Steve McCabe and Beverly Feldt.

When: Saturdays at 9am to 10:30am
Location: UUCC
Cost: Free Will offering, (proceeds go to UUCC)
Contact: For questions, contact Steve McCabe (708) 465-3116 or Beverly Feldt bevfeldt@gmail.com

Free Healthy Living Group

2nd Thursday of the month
1-2:30pm

February 12th: Book Review and Discussion of The Four Agreements

Free tea & coffee
Optional: Bring a snack to share
Join in the discussion. Invite friends

QiGong with Jim Kobus
Most Thursdays @5pm

(This class will be held typically every Thursday of the month but there will be exceptions so you must send Jim your email if you are interested in participating.)

It is suggested that you not eat before class. Please bring your own water. $5 suggested donation per class.

Email Jim: emiton1@aol.com
For questions call: 708-799-1925

Sacred Communication Workshop
February dates: TBA

These Transformative Workshops will help you in identifying and dissolving mental and emotional blockages, learning to use your authentic voice, defining authentic friendships, and more. For more information, call Rev. Henrietta Byrd: 312-593-4732.

Dances of Universal Peace: 3rd Sunday of the month.

Dances of Universal Peace are held on the 3rd Sunday of the month from 2-4pm at UUCC. We join our voices in singing sacred phrases and Divine Names from many spiritual traditions while moving in circle dances and walking meditations. For more information contact certified dance leader, Pat Segner, at 708-748-2217.

Next DUP meets on February 15th

Love to Sing??

Join the UUCC Choir! The Choir sings on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, with rehearsals on those days at 8:30am and one weekday evening per month. No experience required. If interested email our choir director Bev Feldt at bevfeldt@gmail.com.
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**Upcoming Events:**

**CUUPS Full Moon Fun Night**
Join us for a social gathering of pagans; children welcome. We will be discussing plans for the Spring Equinox Celebration. Please bring possible readings or activities for that event. **Friday March 6th at 6:30 pm** at UUCC. Please bring a snack to share.

**CUUPs Spring Equinox Celebration**
Save the date! We will be celebrating the Spring Equinox with a family friendly ritual and potluck on **Saturday March 21st, 6:00 pm**. Check the March newsletter for further details.
Some crops may be resilient to increases in temperature to climate change. And yet some will be quite fragile. Coffee will be one of those crops that will have a rough time with climate change. Along with decreased production, there will be decreased income for the very low income workers of the coffee fields with possible negative social consequences.


Climate change is threatening coffee crops in virtually every major coffee producing region of the world. Higher temperatures, long droughts punctuated by intense rainfall, more resilient pests and plant diseases—all of which are associated with climate change—have reduced coffee supplies dramatically in recent years.

**Dramatic declines**

Because coffee varieties have adapted to specific climate zones, a temperature rise of even half a degree can make a big difference. A long-term increase in the number of extreme and unseasonal rainfall events has contributed to lower crop yields that are threatening the livelihood of coffee growers. For example, between 2002 and 2011, Indian coffee production declined by nearly 30 percent.

Additionally, warming has expanded the habitat and thus the range and damage of the coffee berry borer, a grazing predator of coffee plants. This pest is placing additional stresses on all coffee crops, as is coffee rust, a devastating fungus that previously did not survive the cool mountain weather. Costa Rica, India, and Ethiopia, three of the top fifteen coffee-producing nations in the world, have all seen a dramatic decline in yields.

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**Coffee farms climb higher**

It used to be impossible for coffee to grow above 5,250 feet in Costa Rica. Warmer temperatures mean trees are now thriving at much higher elevations.

Sources: Coopedota, other Costa Rican farms, The Specialty Coffee Association of Costa Rica

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES
You are invited to participate in a study about romantic couples.

If you are currently at least 18 years old, have a current romantic partner, and live in Illinois, Florida, Georgia, or Texas, then you may be eligible to participate. You can be in a same-sex, different-sex or gender-complicated relationship.

In this study, you will be asked about a wide range of topics, including self-identity, family, health, work, relationship, and community issues.

Your participation in the study will be kept completely confidential. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be compensated for your time.

Please visit the following web-site:
https://illinoisaces.col.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_72JF3bQt7RQsYOV

You may also email us with any questions about the study at UIUCmarriagemarriagestudy@gmail.com.

Thank you! Brian Ogolsky & Ramona Oswald

It's time to register for the MidAmerica Regional Assembly, a weekend long gathering of UUs. You'll hear from great speakers, participate in thought-provoking workshops, and meet and mingle with UUs from all over the Region. Regional Assembly is April 17-19 in Naperville, Illinois - just outside of Chicago. Go to www.midamericaauua.org/RA to see all the exciting events and register. Youth are welcome. Childcare is offered. Limited partial scholarships are available. Hotel rooms are available at a group rate, too! Deadline to register at the early bird discount is March 15.

The following are some of the highlights from the Board of Trustees meeting held on January 13th:

- In an effort to bolster UUCC’s rentals, new advertisements in newspapers will target the LGBT community.

- The following dates have been chosen to satisfy the UUCC requirement for approving the budget for 2015-2016 at a membership meeting in May:
  - Fellowship Dinner: May 2nd
  - Canvass Sunday: May 3rd
  - Annual Congregation Meeting: May 31st

- The Board asked Nancy Irons to secure a proposal to clean and polish the floors in the sanctuary and hallways.

- In an effort to avoid scheduling conflicts for the next fiscal year, the board intends to use the July meeting to choose dates for all of the events that it possibly can.

UUCC is looking for a few friendly faces that can search out visitors to our services and make them feel welcome and attended to. If you don’t mind arriving 15-20 minutes early to services and filling this role, please contact Dan Feldt for more information.
Church Information
70 Sycamore Drive
Park Forest, IL  60466
PHONE:  708-481-5339
E-Mail:  diane@uuccpf.org
Web:  www.uuccpf.org

(Due note from time to time some office hours vary)

Newsletter deadline is always the 20th of every month

*You can help save a tree and a stamp by simply picking up your newsletter or receiving it electronically via email.

Visit us on the web @ www.uuccpf.org