



## **July 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**

**July 4:** "The Fate of Nations" The song we sing to the tune of Finlandia reminds us that while we have deep and abiding affection for our country, so too do other people for theirs. In order to fulfill a patriotic duty, let's look at the bigger picture, and the changes in the scope and nature of nationhood itself.

**July 11: Forum.** Ken Kraft talks about Susie Kraft's grandfather, W. A. Wheeler. Born in 1876 into a Congregational family, he evolved into a Unitarian. He was a college professor and a pioneer in the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

**July 18:** "Inch by Inch" The annual garden service extolling the virtues of patience, and all green growing things. **POTLUCK TODAY!**

**July 25:** "Why World Religions?" Our Principles imply respect and lifelong learning about so many things: why a world full of religions, when we have our own - or do we?

**Our minister is The Reverend Dr. Sydney A. Morris**, ph. 370-3927, [samorris@uuma.org](mailto:samorris@uuma.org).

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**July birthdays:** 6th, Mari Clanaugh; 7th, Jim Belote; 16th, Tom Hiltunen, Rolf Swanson; 17th, Jim Boyce; 21st, Bruce Granat; 22nd, Cory McDonald, David Owens; 23rd, Joe Dobbs; 24th, Bowen Li, May Amelia Shapton; 27th, Nick Rao. #

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

**Sign outside a Church of God:** Honk if you love Jesus, Text while driving if you want to meet Him. #

**"There are no passengers** on Spaceship Earth. Everybody's crew."- Marshall McLuhan #

**CROP Walk**, Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty, a fundraising project of Church World Service, working in some 80 countries, seeks to help by:

- Providing emergency food aid and long-term development assistance
- Promoting educational opportunities for women and girls
- Supporting infant health and nutrition services
- Securing durable solutions for refugees and displaced peoples
- Developing sustainable, safe sources of drinking water and promoting water as a basic human right to policymakers
- Advocating for just trade rules and the reduction of the debt of poor nations

UUSC is a member organization of Church World Service. Our annual participation in CROP Walk will be on Sunday, Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>. See Barry Fink to join the team of walkers and/or plan to sponsor a walker. #

**There will be a memorial service** to celebrate the life of Susie Kraft at 2 pm, Saturday, July 31 in our meeting room. At 6 pm that day there will be a potluck picnic for friends and relatives of Susie in the large pavilion in Centennial Park in Chassell. #

### **The oil spill and the soul of nature:**

You don't have to be a Pagan to know that animals have awareness and are capable of both suffering and compassion--every dog owner knows that! Pagans see all the world as animate, imbued with life and spirit. Every aspect of life is important and has a role to play in the whole.

The Pagan view sees everything as interconnected. As we look at the pictures of

birds and sea creatures drenched in toxic oil and dying, we are horrified both by the individual suffering they represent and by the toll on the larger systems of life. The suffering of a seabird causes me pain, whether or not I allow it to come to consciousness. The toll of the spill on the life and biodiversity of the Gulf diminishes us all.

No amount of money can ever repair the damage that BP has done by its criminal negligence and carelessness. BP never had a realistic plan to deal with an accident or a spill. They cut corners on safety and plumbing, and attempted to conceal the scope of the disaster and the amount of oil that is actually leaking. Their callousness has caused irreparable damage to the ecosystems of the Gulf and may have destroyed whole communities whose culture is linked to the once-thriving biodiversity of the bayous and deltas of the south. They must be held accountable for the damage as far as amends can be made, and in a way severe enough to prove a deterrent to other companies tempted to put profits above the safety of their own workers and the environment.

If a vandal spilled oil over a neighbor's yard, he'd be sent to jail. Why should BP executives go free, when they are responsible for the greatest environmental catastrophe in U.S. history, one that has killed vast numbers of living things, destroyed the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people, and endangered the survival of many keystone species? In the Pagan view, ecocide is a heinous crime on a level with genocide--for indeed, to kill an ecosystem is to destroy the people and cultures that depend on it for survival.

The BP disaster should be a clear lesson to us all--that the age of oil is over. We cannot afford the impact on the earth's climate of continuing to burn fossil fuels, nor the risks inherent in searching for oil in ever-deeper water or more pristine places. Were the costs of disasters and cleanups, the immense costs in life and suffering factored into the costs of production, it would be clear that oil has become unaffordable by any standard. Yes, we will all be required to give up some comforts and convenience to make the shift--but not nearly as many as people fear. Safe and renewable alternatives exist--sun, wind,

water, a bit of muscle power, a focus on the local and the truly sustainable would give us an energy policy and the beginning of a new culture and economy that could bring us back into balance with the natural world. Without that balance, there is no security. No terrorist attack on the US has done anything close to the damage that BP has done. No amount of armaments will save us if our oceans no longer produce food or oxygen, our waters are poisoned and our soils blow away.

The world needs to shift to values which have long been held by Pagans but are certainly not unique to us. Indeed, every religion holds within it an imperative to care for and nurture creation. We must make a shift to a culture that values life over profits and the health of the environment over the financial balance sheet. To do so is not only a moral and religious imperative but a matter of survival. We are meant to be earth healers, not destroyers, and a moral person is one who cares for the web of life which sustains and supports us all. --**Starhawk**, June 19, 2010. #

#### **From Peter Morales, President of the UUA:**

Some congregations have it. Others don't. And it doesn't take long to figure out if a congregation has "it" or not. We sense it right away. It is unmistakable.

Some congregations are full of life. The energy fills the room. The warmth is palpable. We feel it in worship. We sense it in coffee hour. There is something about the "buzz." We see people smile and embrace. They engage one another.

Alas, some congregations--far too many--don't have it. They feel lifeless, cold, moribund. Why is this? What makes the difference between being full of life and warmth versus being dead and cold?

I think the difference is religion. Really. Religion. The key to the future for every single congregation and for Unitarian Universalism as a movement is whether we can "get religion." If we "get religion" we will thrive. We will touch lives and change the world. If we don't, we will decline.

Perhaps I should explain.

We tend to think of religion as a set of beliefs. That is a huge mistake. Religion is much more about what we love than about what we think. This emphasis on belief, especially on “true religion” being about correct belief, is a modern aberration. If we look at religions historically and across cultures, we discover that in fact belief has very little to do with religion. Some religious traditions, like Buddhism, have virtually no beliefs.

Consider the Hebrew tradition that gave rise to Christianity. The prophets in the scriptures show no interest in correct belief. They show a lot of interest in how people behave and whether they are faithful to their covenant.

Actually, the very word “religion” comes from a Latin root that means to tie, to bind. Ultimately what ties us together, what makes us a religion, a united people, is what we love. Religion, our religion, is what we truly care about, what we want to preserve, embrace, and create.

The questions we ask one another are so critically important. If you and I ask each other what we believe, we will get into talking about very heady stuff. We will put forth our beliefs and then support them with evidence and argument. All too often we will end up arguing. I know. I have done more than my share.

However, when we ask one another what we truly love, what we truly value, what we care about more than anything else in life, something amazing happens. We don’t argue. We listen. We connect. We discover that we love and want the same things. We care about one another. We want honesty, depth, and intimacy in our relationships. We want enduring friendships.

We also discover that we realize that we are all in this life together. We want to help heal the world. We want compassion, understanding, and justice to guide our actions and our governments. We want to work together, hand in hand, to build a world beyond exploitation and violence.

When you and I focus on what we love and what we long to create, something almost miraculous happens. We are energized. We form lasting bonds. We become eager to commit ourselves and to work together. We become more

generous. We come to care more about “us” and less about “me.”

In other words, when we focus on what we love we “get religion.”

The truth is that we do care deeply about the same things. We share a vision. In our congregations there is love, idealism, and energy waiting to be released. When we release these, when we really let our people go, we transform lives and change the world.

Let’s get religion. I can’t wait to see what we can do together. #

**May 23 marked the bicentennial** of the birth of Sarah Margaret Fuller, one of the three principal thinkers of the Transcendentalist movement, the vanguard theorist on women’s equality and gender roles in America, and, some say, the first public intellectual in the United States, male or female. Yet a lot of us, perhaps most of us, have only a vague idea of who she was.

In her relatively brief life, from her birth to a Unitarian family in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1810 to her death in a shipwreck in 1850, she accomplished a staggering list of firsts and milestones. Furthermore, Fuller’s visionary ideas—on the need for both social and personal transformation, rationalism and mysticism, intellectual freedom and religious pluralism, and democracy and human rights outside our borders—resonate with modern Unitarian Universalism.

“Of all the women in [Unitarian Universalist] history who have made a really significant contribution, she is certainly at the top of the list, yet we’re relatively ignorant about her,” says the Rev. Dr. Dorothy Emerson, who is cochairing one of three UU-related Margaret Fuller bicentennial committees. She admits that she herself only recently learned the full scope of Fuller’s work. “It’s really revealing of how we lift up men and what men do, that we could claim Transcendentalism and not understand how significant her role was in it. In so many ways she’s embedded in our whole movement.”

Fuller is best known for writing the first American manifesto for women’s equality, *Woman of the Nineteenth Century*, published in

1845. It was forward-looking for any time, but especially in a time when women's lives were confined to home, an era when colleges didn't even admit women. It became an internationally known bestseller.

"If you ask me what offices women may fill: I will reply—any," she wrote. "I do not care what case you put; let them be sea-captains, if you will. . . . I have no doubt, however, that a large proportion of women would give themselves to the same employments as now. . . . Mothers will delight to make the nest soft and warm. . . . The difference would be that all need not be constrained to employments, for which some are unfit. . . . By being more a soul, she will not be less woman, for nature is perfected through spirit."

Fuller went further than calling for the need to open colleges and professions to women and to give women voting and property rights. She also dove into the concept of "gender roles"—which few really explored until the Second Wave of feminism in the 1970s—arguing that we all have characteristics that our culture has deemed male or female.

But to characterize Fuller's contributions on that work alone would be like describing an elephant by looking only at its trunk.

"One reason she's a little confusing to people is that she can't really be pegged," says Megan Marshall, who is now at work on a book called *The Passion of Margaret Fuller*. "She had so many activities; it's hard to say what she was. You can say Emerson was a philosopher, Thoreau a naturalist. Fuller really was the first female public intellectual, like Susan Sontag, Mary McCarthy, or Simone de Beauvoir. I'm personally shocked that she's faded from the public mind."

Fuller was just three when her father decided it was time to begin her education. A Harvard-trained lawyer and congressman, Timothy Fuller instructed her in the same rigorous classical education he'd had: Latin, Greek, grammar, history, math, music, and modern languages. (Continued on the UUA web site.) #

**Please send material** for the August Newsletter by July 20 to Ken Kraft, [kkraft2@earthlink.net](mailto:kkraft2@earthlink.net).

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