



February 2012

Newsletter of the Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

We affirm the

inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Sunday Mornings at 10:30

February 5: "The Kindom in Our Midst: in honor of Black History Month, - Rev. Morris. Children's Religious Education will explore equality and the work of Henry Hampton (producer of "Eyes on the Prize") with teacher Barry Fink.

February 12: Forum: Living Greener. How do heat pumps work; what veggies should I plant?

February 19: "Practical Theology IV: Contemplation," - Rev. Morris. The many paths of contemplation invite us to practice connecting not only with people of the ages but also our own deepening. As E. M. Forester writes, "Only connect." POTLUCK and BOOK SALE today! Laurie Bornhorst will teach the children about astronomy and Unitarians Maria Mitchell and Edmund Halley

February 26: MUSIC SUNDAY -- Between choir, congregation and instruments we will take an adventurous excursion into our hymnbook - both theologically & musically.

Childcare is available every Sunday.

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

February birthdays: 2nd, Mary Jane Williams; 4th, Helen Clanaugh; 6th, Shirley Galbraith; 8th, Elaine Young; 9th, Ralph Horvath; 10th, John Johnson; 12th, Audrey Frair; 13th, Craig Kurtz; 14th, Lisa Dunnebacke; 15th, Mengya Li; 16th, Amlan Mukherjee; 17th, Diane Shoos; 20th, Linda Rulison; 21st, Debbie Makkonen; 22nd, Roxanne Dobbs; 28th, Al Baker, Roger Held.

Green Sanctuary Report – Carol Ekstrom

The Green Film Series: Issues and Dialog has a website <http://wupcenter.mtu.edu/news/2012/2012GreenFilmFestival.html>. Barry Pegg's film summaries are still being posted on KUUF webpage under Environmental Resources, <http://www.kuuf.net/EnvironmentalResourcesforthewebsite.pdf>

January was a busy month. Jim Boyce's talk on the Economy and the Environment was appreciated by 170 people, and the discussion was great. This was the best attended of all our programs since they began Sept. '10. We continued the economic theme the following week with the Film "The Economics of Happiness". Thanks to Laurie Bornhorst, Linda Belote, Linda Rulison, Jeanne Sewell, Val Pegg, Nanno Rose, Mary Kuure, Barry Fink, Joan Chadde, and Carol Ekstrom for the delicious desserts; and a big Thank You to Alice and Jim Boyce for having such wonderful kids who are willing to give their time and expertise!!!

The Green Film Festival Schedule:

February 16 **Addicted to Plastic** - Reveals the history and worldwide scope of plastics pollution, investigates its toxicity and explores solutions. (85 min.) Discussion facilitator: Dr. Judith Perlinger, MTU Dept. of Civil & Environmental Engineering.

March 15 **Blue Gold: World Water Wars** - This award winning documentary posits that we're moving closer to a world in which water—a seemingly plentiful natural resource—could actually incite war. (90 min.) Discussion facilitator: Dr. Alex Mayer, Michigan Tech Center for Water & Society.

April 19 *Carbon Nation* A documentary movie about climate change SOLUTIONS (82 min.). Discussion facilitator: Dr. Sarah Green, MTU Dept. of Chemistry.

May 17 *Food* is a local issue, a global issue, and a development, health, political and economic issue. How can we design a food system that ensures health, accessibility and affordability for everyone? (49 min.) Discussion facilitator: Sara Salo, School Food Tour.

June 21 *Into Eternity* explores the mind-boggling scientific and philosophical questions that long term nuclear waste storage poses. (58 min.) Discussion facilitator: Dr. Wayne Pennington, Dept. of Geological Sciences & Engineering. #

Experimental Archaeology – Bob Wheeler. Archaeology is generally seen as a data recovery field, in which archaeologists recover fragments of the past. However, one area of the field is a data generating process, Experimental Archaeology. What can and cannot be done with experimental archaeology? How is experimental archaeology different than Living History? At the next meeting Dr. Carl Blair of Michigan Technological University and an active experimental archaeologist will discuss these issues using examples from his own experiments with wrought iron smelting and charcoal to illustrate the topic. In addition future activities will be discussed. Please join us at 6:30 pm on Feb 4th, at the Portage Lake District Library. This program is hosted by the Copper Country Ancient Sites Conservancy, and is free and open to the public. #

KUUF Board meetings are open to all. The next one is Sunday, February 19 from 1 to 2:30 pm at the KUUF office at Trinity Episcopal Church. - . Harriet King, President of the Board.

Linda Belote and other members of the Membership Committee have prepared an information booklet about KUUF. It will be enclosed with printed copies of this newsletter or emailed to those who get their newsletter in that form. If you fail to receive this information, please tell Linda. #

In 2011, KUUF contributed \$560 to the UUSC by participating in the Guest at Your Table program. Thank you all for participating and for your thoughtful contribution. - Chuck Young #

Two Books. - Ken Kraft.

Lazlo Valentyik brought me two books about religious beliefs published in 2011 that he asked the Portage Lake District Library to purchase. The two books are quite different but both are very interesting. One was "The Believing Brain" by Michael Shermer This book contains much information about recent discoveries on how the brain works including how the brains of skeptics and believers differ. Shermer speculates that natural selection may have given us a brain with a strong tendency to believe in the supernatural. The other book was "Man Seeks God" by Eric Weiner. The author claims to have no religious beliefs and sets out to try to obtain some. First he goes to Turkey to learn about the Sufis, then to Nepal for an introduction to Buddhism, then to a homeless shelter run by Franciscans, and on to Raelism, Taoism, Wicca, Shamanism and Kabbalah. It's part travelogue, and part a summary of his reading about each group and his experiences questioning the people he meets. #

Bob Fiandt's report on a book from the KUUF library: *For the Sake of Clarity: Selected Sermons and Addresses*, by Stephen H. Fritchman, (1992, 431 pages)

How do Unitarians Think of Jesus? "Unitarian Time" [radio address—12/25/1949] Fritchman attempts to answer the following: "How do Unitarians think of Jesus? Do they think of him as God or as a man? Have liberals a right to celebrate Christmas with sincerity?" He thinks that it is absurd to claim that Unitarians don't believe in Jesus. We believe profoundly in the historic Jesus—the great teacher and prophet. We should "take Jesus with the greatest possible seriousness." Jesus "gave men a sense of their own dignity and promise, the kernel of truth that later blossomed as the democratic faith." Fritchman gives numerous quotes attributed to Jesus—seeds brought to flower by Jefferson, Paine, and Lincoln. Concluding, he quotes Emerson: "The history of Christ is the best document of the power of character which we have."

Should the Church Stay Out of Politics?

“Unitarian Time” [radio address—4/23/1950]
The answer that most Unitarians in America would give is “No.” “Political issues, to Unitarians, are very often ethical issues” involving our basic values: “justice, equality, brotherhood, and truth-seeking.” Fritchman quotes Harry Meserve: “We have proclaimed that the whole of life is the business of religion.” He also quotes the Bible, which has a deep concern for political affairs. Furthermore, *many* people of various denominations say that “earthly matters of profits, wages, and unemployment are *both political and also religious concerns*.” He continues, our democratic way of life is advanced by group effort—“ardent, consecrated, and directed by moral principles”—and this is a political task. When dealing with politics and suffering, such as human injustice and exploitation, no morally responsible church dare be neutral. To conclude, Fritchman cites historical figures and how they relate politics to religion—“They cannot be separated without ending the meaning of religion.”

How Do Unitarians Face Death? “Unitarian Time” [radio address—1/28/1951] Fritchman will not discuss immortality or the nature of the afterlife because he knows nothing about them. He states one basic Unitarian attitude toward death: “If this life be all, it should be lived the better, not the worse.” “We must confess the simple truth of nature—that all that is born must also die.” He adds, we should tell our children that it is not evil that men die (except by violence or greed). Quoting Socrates, “No evil can befall a good man, either in life or in death.” Fritchman continues, “When Unitarians talk about facing death, they talk about life and make mighty affirmations.” We think of life’s unfulfilled possibilities; “living life for life itself, rich, full, and free.” We believe in living as though each day were our last. Also, Fritchman comments, we believe that there is power in the life and teaching of Jesus. “We have found immortal qualities of goodness and justice and joy, which speak eloquently for themselves.” “Let us proclaim our high confidence in man’s infinite possibilities here on this green and fragrant earth.”

The Church and Anticommunism. “Religion and Modern Life” [radio address—1/16/1955] (The reader should understand the historical perspective; this address was given during the early days of the Cold War, and does not necessarily reflect modern society.) Fritchman begins by explaining his position on Communism: “Anticommunism is a very weak battle station for a clergyman working for a principled dedication to a better world.” “Millions of the citizens in communist countries are members of the same churches and faiths as ourselves in America, . . . and they believe. . . that they are seeking to solve great problems with moral integrity and practical skills.” Fritchman talks about the high cost of the anti-Communist mania in America. Also, he claims the church is important because, over the centuries, it “has been an agency of reconciliation and understanding between peoples of differing ideas, doctrines, economies, and political systems.” Fritchman suggests we need to feed, clothe, and educate all before we tolerate enormous inequalities of wealth and privilege—this has been taught by the Jewish prophets, the Buddha, Lao-Tse, and in the Sermon on the Mount. Anticommunism obliterates these facts and arouses passions of nationalism and sectarianism, and increases hatred and fear. This is why thousands of churchmen refuse to be drawn into the anti-Communist crusade. Fritchman claims, “Good faith breeds good faith. . . and such faith can remove mountains of prejudice and distrust.” He ends with a quote from the Bible—“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” #

My most interesting magazine – Ken Kraft.

It is Free Inquiry, the publication of the Council for Secular Humanism. Here is how the Council describes itself: For many, mere atheism (the absence of belief in gods and the supernatural) or agnosticism (the view that such questions cannot be answered) aren’t enough. It’s liberating to recognize that supernatural beings are human creations, that there is no such thing as “spirit”, that people are undesigned, unintended, and responsible for themselves. But what’s next?

For the questions that remain unanswered after we've cleared our minds of gods and souls and spirits, many atheists, agnostics, skeptics and freethinkers turn to secular humanism. Secular means pertaining to the world or things not spiritual or sacred. Humanism is any system of thought or action concerned with the interests or ideals of people. It is the intellectual and cultural movement characterized by an emphasis on human interests rather than religion. Secular humanism is a comprehensive, nonreligious life stance incorporating a naturalistic philosophy, a cosmic outlook rooted in science, and a consequentialist ethical system in which acts are judged not by their conformance to preselected norms but by their consequences for men and women in the world. The Council for Secular Humanism is North America's leading organization for nonreligious people who seek to live value-rich lives. Its web site is www.secularhumanism.org. #

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