

# THE UNIGRAM

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Columbia, SC

July 17, 2007



## July 22, 2007

### 11:00 Sermon Topic: Reflections from General Assembly

by Ann Johnson, Joe Long, Pat Mohr, and Don Mohr  
Last month's General Assembly was one of the largest in history. The learning opportunities at any GA are great, and the challenge for those that attend is to find a way to share what they bring back with everyone else. Ann, Joe, Pat, and Don will begin that sharing as they reflect on what they thought was most important about this meeting of 5,800 UUs

### 9:30 Forum Topic: Law and the Bush Administration

## July 29, 2007

**11:00 Sermon Topic:** Frank Benedetti and Gary Trowbridge, co-chairs of the Thomas Jefferson District of the UUA Accepting Allies Committee. On Saturday evening, July 28, Frank and Gary will participate in a potluck Dinner Dialogue at the Fellowship, where topics of discussion will include issues of spirituality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, hate crimes, and marriage equality. On Sunday, July 29, Frank Benedetti will provide the sermon on the topic of Marriage Equality, assisted by his life partner, Gary Trowbridge.

The potluck Dinner Dialogue will begin with a brief informal social get together at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 28, with dinner beginning at 7:00 p.m.

### 9:30 Forum Topic: Clinical depression

## Sunday Schedule

**Forum:** 9:30 AM in the Library

**Worship:** 11:00 AM -12:15 PM followed by a Coffee Hour in the Social Hall

**Nursery:** Available during service for infants through age 2

**Children:** 11:00 AM -12:15 PM Religious Ed. classes for children ages 3 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade

Hey, hey what d'ya know,  
**Helen Rader** turns the  
Big Nine 0.  
After the service we'll  
celebrate!

Sunday, July 29th is the date.

There'll be cake for everyone

So please come on and join the fun!



## Ministerial Musings

John Murray and Me

As a part of the credentialing process to become a UU minister, I have been reading a great deal of UU history. One of my favorite stories from our religious heritage is that of John Murray, considered the father of Universalism in America. It must be remembered that at the time of our nation's independence, the dominant theology was Calvinism, which held that God predestined some to heaven and others to hell regardless of people's character or faith. Universalists taught that God's love was universal, that God desired all to be saved.

One such Universalist preacher was John Murray of London, where he was denounced as a heretic. After his one-year-old child and wife died, Murray was thrown into prison for debts that had accumulated during his wife's illness. Upon his release, he managed to pay off his debts and decided to start his life over in America. Murray resolved never to preach again.

In 1770 Murray sailed for America, and his ship was brought over a sand bar off Cranberry Inlet on the New Jersey coast. While the crew waited for high tide and a change of wind, Murray went ashore and met Thomas Potter, who had built a meetinghouse on his farm. It seems that Potter had been waiting for God to send him a preacher who would teach universal salvation, and he believed that Murray was the man. Murray insisted that he would never preach again, but Potter persisted. In the end they struck a deal: if the wind changed the next day, Murray would continue on his journey, but if the wind remained unchanged, he would accept this as a sign from heaven that God wanted him to preach.

You can guess the rest of the story. The wind did not change, Murray preached, and he went on to help establish Universalism in America.

I am drawn to this story because it resonates with my own story. After serving as the minister to two traditional Christian congregations, I resolved never to preach again. I had become disillusioned with the church and with Christianity's preoccupation with sin, life after death, and a superhero deity. Because I asked questions and accepted nothing at face value, I was called a liberal, the modern equivalent of "heretic."

Cont'd. page 2, column 1

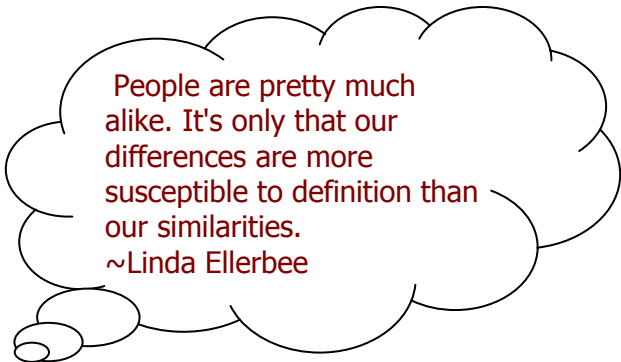


Cont'd. from page 1, column 2

I went to graduate school to start my life over. The plan was to complete a doctorate in psychology at Baylor University and become a clinical psychologist, but as John Lennon used to say, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." At the UU Fellowship of Waco, I encountered a congregation of Thomas Potters who insisted that I serve as their minister while working on my doctorate. At first I strongly resisted. The last thing I wanted to do was to be a damn minister again. But I sensed that things might be different this time -- that this was a congregation of seekers and that I might be appreciated as a seeker myself.

When I completed my Psy.D. Degree and left Waco, I also left behind my dream of becoming a UU minister. My post-doctoral internship in psychology brought me to South Carolina, and at the UU Fellowship of Columbia, I met some other Thomas Potters who invited me to be their minister. You know the rest of the story. I don't know if God had anything to do with my coming to Columbia or to our Fellowship. I don't even know if there is a God. But I do know that these last two years as your part-time minister have been among the most fulfilling of my life and that I anticipate the coming year (and hopefully years) as your fulltime minister to be at least as rewarding. Your acceptance of me and your integrity in living out your convictions have helped to heal my soul. I will be forever grateful for the change of wind you have brought to my life.

*Neal*



***UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS***

**The UUFC is still seeking a Director of Religious Education!**

If you are interested, please see the June 5 Unigram for details. If you don't have a copy of that Unigram, you may request a copy by e-mail to [UUFC@bigfoot.com](mailto:UUFC@bigfoot.com) with the phrase, "DRE Search" as the subject line. The position will remain open until it is filled.

*We extend our concern and support to...*

**Carolyn McLeod**, whose father I.M. Scott died July 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Bob Amundson**, who is a patient at Richland Hospital.

**Jo Conner**, is recuperating from knee replacement surgery at the home of Bernie Sandick (xxx-xxxx)

**Cecil Myers**, is recuperating from knee replacement surgery at Baptist Hospital.

*We extend our appreciation to...*

**Ann Cargill, Marilyn Miss, Jennifer Slater, and Dillard Thompson**, who filled in for our Administrator, Gin Beery, while she was away last week.

The new members of our Board of Trustees: **Mike Paget**, President-Elect, **Ann Cargill** and **Glenn White**, Co-Treasurers, and **Joe Long** and **Ruth Sproat**, our members-at-large (as opposed to large members). They join present Board members **Peter Kandis**, President, **Jessica Kross**, Secretary, **Mike Kelly**, **Mary McGriff**, and **Cheryl Soehl**.

**Mike and Buzzie Kelly**, who hosted a more-or-less safe July 4<sup>th</sup>, party at their home.

**UUSC** for an informative and rewarding Journey taken by **Gin Beery** last week through history, visiting Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma and Birmingham. Hearing the stories of those who were there to witness the Civil Rights. Learning more about the trials and triumphs of Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Reverend James Reeb. The journey lasted a week but the inspiration will last a lifetime.

*We extend our congratulations to...*

**Mary McGriff**, who has returned from St. Croix, where she celebrated her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday with her daughter and son-in-law.

**Yolanda Ganong**, whose daughter Myra has co-produced and filmed a documentary, "The Chances of the World Changing," which will be shown nationwide on PBS on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Michelle Meredith**, who will be moving from Asheville to Columbia to work as a clinical psychologist at the V.A. hospital here. We will be happy to see more of her, but probably not happier than husband **Kevin**.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

**Drumming lessons** with Amara Camara have been cancelled for the next two Sundays and will resume on Sunday, August 5, at 3:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

### Collecting School Supplies

DING-DONG.... SCHOOL BELLS soon will be ringing. Meanwhile, the Cooperative Ministry is collecting supplies for children who might not otherwise have the paper, pencils, etc. needed to 'make the grade'. Boxes will be on the stage in the Social Hall until August 12th for your donations.

### Used Book Sale

The Religious Education Committee will be holding a used book sale on Saturday, August 25 from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. If you have used books in good condition that you would like to donate, please bring them to Room 7 in the RE Wing no later than Sunday, August 19. Proceeds will be used to purchase new books for the RE Children's Library.

### SEEDS OF HOPE

'Our farmer' Mr. Reed is delivering his fresh fruits & veggies every Sunday. Please pass on the word to any friends who might be interested in 'shopping' at UUFC.

### Women's Book Club

This book group meets the second Tuesday of every month in the home of participants to share our personal responses to the books we've chosen to read. All female friends and members of the UUFC are welcome to attend.

On August 14th we'll meet in the home of Lynne Sparrow, 1425 Adella Street, Columbia to discuss *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM. Call Lynne at xxx-xxxx if you'd like more details or directions.

September 11 – *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones

### Science & Religion

Eleven folks participated in a lively and enlightened discussion of the Dalai Lama's book. Our next meeting will be Thursday August 9 at 7:00 pm at which time we will be discussing C. P. Snow's book *The Two Cultures*. Although this is not a new book, the subject is still relevant. All are welcome to read the books and join our discussion. We find that we learn from one another as well as the book, and diverse opinions are welcome. [More info? call Joe Long at xxx-xxxx or Ann Johnson at xxx-xxxx.]

### September Set

FRIDAY JULY 27, 6:00 PM--Mark your calendar now for this month's September Set PotLuck dinner in the Social Hall. Bring some food to share including entrees & -- more important-- bring yourself & others who might enjoy an evening of good food & fellowship. If you have any questions call Jan Fulcher at xxx-xxxx.



## The Green Corner

The following suggestions are taken from:

<http://sierraclub.typepad.com/greenlife>

Avoid the toxic chemicals (and high price tags) of many commercial cleaning products by making your own. A teaspoon of liquid soap or borax dissolved in a quart of warm water makes a dandy all-purpose cleaner. For tougher jobs, use one-half cup borax, one-half teaspoon liquid soap, and a splash of vinegar in two gallons of warm water.

Each year, 100 million trees are used to produce junk mail. Find out how to get off marketers' lists at [newdream.org/junkmail](http://newdream.org/junkmail).

Feeling fishy? Opt for Wild Alaskan or Pacific salmon over the farmed kind. It's better for you, and the ocean. To download a handy reference guide to potentially dangerous or overfished seafood, go to [sierraclub.org/mercury/fishguide.pdf](http://sierraclub.org/mercury/fishguide.pdf).

> This column is open to anyone that wants to contribute an article, please send to [uufc@bigfoot.com](mailto:uufc@bigfoot.com).

Lie quietly along the earth

That sky may send its strength through you

Into the spinning planet.

Absorb from eons of tumultuous change

The rhythms pulsing up through fire and water, rocks and roots of growing things....

Your body filtering with flesh and spirit

Earth's vibrant offering to the sky.

You are the instrument of peace...

Judith Billings

# The Unigram

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**How to Reach Us** Fellowship Office (803) 799-0845  
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**E-mail:** UUFC@bigfoot.com

**FAX:** (815) 550-4740

**Web Page:** www.uu.columbia.sc.uua.org

**Special Events Line:** (888) 849-4224 ext.4

## The Mission of our Fellowship is:

- To nurture and respect each other in our spiritual growth and pursuit of meaning,
- To create a welcoming and engaging environment through which we work for positive change in our community and the world.

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## Unigram Deadline

The e-mail deadline for the next Unigram is **9:00 p.m., July 29, 2007.**

Please submit articles and announcements for the next issue to UUFC@bigfoot.com

Typed or neatly handwritten copy must be received in the office by 12:15 p.m. the same day.