



The Free Spirit

News from the Big Sky Unitarian Universalist Fellowship • Helena, Montana

April 2007

Thanks to Joyce Kronholm
for sharing this article.

D is for Difference

*D is for Difference
enriching our lives
Where lifestyles are many
And openness thrives*

In many religions, everyone believes the same things, everyone behaves somewhat alike, accepting the same three C's: Creed (list of beliefs), Code (what is right and wrong), and Cult (ways of worshiping together).

But UU's are famous for their differences, not for their sameness. The society has agreed on just seven "principles," but these basic ideas allow and encourage diversity. We are allowed to disagree on what we believe, on what is right and wrong, and how to worship--as long as we accept what is sometimes called the UU covenant or "The Seven Commitments":

1. the inherent worth of every person;
2. justice and compassion as fundamental virtues;
3. mutual respect for each other, and the promotion of spiritual growth;
4. the free search for truth and meaning in human life;
5. each conscience as sovereign – with group decisions made democratically;
6. the value of world-wide peace, liberty, and justice;
7. reverence for the web of life.

This seven-part covenant is what we believe in: not a creed, a code or a cult. It contains our foundational ideas.

Newcomers are not expected to change their belief system when they join a UU community, just to make this covenant their own. They are expected to take part in church life as best they can, to help pay, if possible, the costs of maintaining services, and to be tolerant of other people and of opinions other than their own.

Excerpted from the book, The ABC's for UU Newcomers: A brief introduction to Unitarian Universalism by William Cleary. He gladly gave our Big Sky Unitarian Universalist Fellowship permission to include excerpts from this book in our monthly newsletter to our members and friends. His books are available from the UU bookstore at www.uua.org/bookstore. You can read more about William Cleary at his website www.clearyworks.com.

Words of Wisdom

"Strange is our situation here on earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that man is here for the sake of other men--above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy." -- Albert Einstein, from *Living Philosophies*



Photo by Jennifer Fokker

Ellie Furbush and Jean Weeks led our March 25 service. Quotation above is from Ellie's sermon: A Humanist Look at Ethics (available for download at www.bigskyuu.org).

Sunday Service Schedule April 2007

April 1 - The Humanist in Me, led by Nick Hopkins. First Sunday Potluck! Greeter: Christine Bates.

April 8 - Christ, 2000 Years Later, led by visiting Bozeman UU member, Bill Mallory. Greeter: Woody Hines.

April 15 - New Member Welcoming Ceremony, led by the Welcoming/Membership Committee. Nine new members will be honored today! Greeters: Peg Hunter and Carl Junkerman.

April 22 - Religious Naturalism, led by visiting Bozeman UU minister, Rev. Lois Van Leer, returning to Helena to give our Earth Day sermon. Greeter: Cynthia Overturf.

April 29 - How are the Children? Led by Carl Junkerman and Peg Hunter. A look at 40 "developmental assets" or building blocks, which provide a common framework through which our community can support youth. Greeter: Patti Borneman.

The Free Spirit

BIG SKY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

April 2007

We unite in this fellowship to seek truth, deepen our awareness of religious values, strengthen one another in our free search, maintain the sanctity of the individual conscience bound by no dogmas or creed, and uphold freedom, community, and equal rights for all.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Clarke - Co-chair
Joyce Kronholm - Co-chair
Jeanne Powell, Secretary
Patti Borneman - Treasurer
Nick Hopkins
Lynda Saul
Winston Swift

COMMITTEES

WELCOMING & MEMBERSHIP
Jeanne Powell (465-0954)

WORSHIP/SERVICE
Lynda Saul (461-2838)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Becky Warren (449-6908)

COMMUNITY SERVICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE
Jennifer Forker (442-6698)

WEBSITE/NEWSLETTER/E-MAIL LIST
Patti Borneman (442-0656)

MAILING ADDRESS

Big Sky Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
PO Box 816
Helena, MT 59624
PHONE: (406) 449-3096

SERVICES

First Church of Christ, Scientist
1800 Highland
Helena, MT 59601
11:30 a.m. - Everyone Welcome!

Sign up to receive email updates and our newsletter: write to pattib@mt.net or call (406) 442-0656.
www.bigskyyuu.org

Helena Unitarian Society founded 1891

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE: 20TH OF EACH MONTH. SEND TO:
pattib@mt.net

Message from the BSUUF Co-chair



We spend a considerable amount of time, in our fellowship, discussing our core Unitarian Universalist beliefs. We turn the puzzle 10 different ways to examine the ways we can lead thoughtful, compassionate, mindful lives. That's right and proper, of course; it's perhaps the chief reason we've all made the decision to take this religious path.

But let me throw one more idea into the mix. I find great value in the idea of community, and particularly in our community. We are like-minded in many things, but not so like-minded that we don't have interesting conversations. We have the same set of core beliefs, but we act on them in different ways. And because we're a lay-led fellowship, we're given the opportunity to share our thoughts with each other.

This line of thinking crystallized for me during our inaugural dinner-for-eight effort. Around the table where I sat, there were people whom I hadn't even known for two years. Indeed, at least one person I'd just met that night. But it was a delightful evening, full of sharp, intelligent conversation and some really funny jokes. (Ask Pad to tell you his Dad's joke about lutefisk.) We ate, drank and laughed. But what we really did, at my house and at the two other homes, was strengthen our community by forging stronger bonds. Nearly everything we do as a group accomplishes this, and it's pleasing to look at the initiatives we've taken during the past two years my family has been involved in BSUUF.

The knitting circle, the Food Share efforts, the group dinners, the potlucks and our budding efforts at more social justice action--it all goes toward building a community we can revel in and be proud of.

-- Jim Clarke

The 7 Principles of Unitarian Universalism

1. The inherent dignity and worth of every person.
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our conversations.
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part.

Knitting for Peace - April 4 and 18 First & Third Wednesdays, 7 - 9 p.m.



Photo by Ruth Luke

Some of the UU ladies who knit for a cause--and in this case, the Breast and Cervical Health Program of the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department--pose with the scarves created by the group. L-R: Magalie Belanger, Jennifer Forker, Lynda Saul, Ruth Luke and on top, Peg Hunter and Patti Borneman (flinging her scarf over her shoulder ... that's not a ghost!).

The knitting continues every first and third Wednesday! We're knitting rectangles to be stitched into a blanket and also pink scarves for door prizes for women who come to learn about health screenings offered by the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department. Come to knit, needle-point, crochet, embroider, or bring your darning--we don't care! It's as much about fellowship as anything. We listen to a sermon and discuss it, but also visit with each other. Chocolate and tea are always part of the social offering.



We meet the first and third Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. at Lynda Saul's home (unless otherwise noted). If you'd like to join us, check your e-mail for notices or call Lynda at 461-2838.

Patti Borneman, Leila Goldes, Ruth Luke, and Cynthia Overturf knitting this winter in Lynda Saul's cozy abode.



Photo by Ruth Luke

Community Service & Social Justice

The Big Sky Community Service and Social Justice Committee (CS/SJ) met twice during the last week of March. We're looking into launching a number of summertime and fall activities, including volunteering at Food Share's *Food 'n' Fun* and finding a role for our small fellowship within the local Habitat for Humanity efforts.

However, we've decided to start our work with a high-profile, social-justice event: The fellowship is going to sponsor a public viewing, most likely at the Lewis & Clark Library, of the 1971 documentary "The Winter Soldier." This full-length movie chronicles the struggles -- both personal and political -- of about 30-plus Vietnam veterans upon returning home from that war. The movie makes a strong, anti-war statement that's consistent with UU principles.

We've joined forces with the Helena Peace Seekers in planning and hosting this event. The Peace Seekers have a large list serve, thus enabling an e-mail about this event to reach hundreds of people statewide. The Unitarian Universalist principles are keenly aligned with the Helena Peace Seekers' mission. It's a good fit for both groups.

Stay tuned for details of date/time/place, tentatively a weeknight in May. When the time comes, here's what we'll need from BSUUF members and friends:

- We'll need everyone with e-mail access to e-mail information about the event to their local friends and family.
- We may need folks to help post fliers throughout town.
- We'll definitely need people to bake goodies for the event.
- We'll definitely need Big Sky UUs to attend the event!

The CS/SJ committee is enthused about co-sponsoring this event. If you'd like to get more involved in this or other CS/SJ work, or if you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Forker at 442-6698 or jsforker@bresnan.net.



Support the Community Service & Social Justice Committee! Profits earned by our sale of coffee and tea will benefit the work of the committee. Buying this coffee supports our church, but it also supports the fair-trade coffee market as well as organic and environmentally sound farming practices. The 10 oz. bags of coffee sell for \$8 each or 3 for \$20. Boxes of tea are \$3.50 each or 3 for \$9. Look for the display each Sunday!



Big Sky Unitarian
Universalist
Fellowship
www.bigskyuu.org

Room for
different beliefs.
Yours.

Please join us
in Helena, MT



New Ad to Run on www.helenair.com in April

Check out this online ad that is running through April at www.helenair.com/ap/headlines. Pick a story to read and the ad should appear on the page. When you click on the ad, it takes you to our Web site. Already, as of April 1, the site registered 187 visitors in one day!

The daughters of Jim Clarke and Jennifer Forker--Grace (left) and Hope (right)--graciously lent their smiling faces to greet visitors to the Helena *Independent Record's* Web site. Grace and Hope are regular participants in our religious education program (thanks Ellie and Becky Warren)!

To learn more about our religious education program, see the March 2007 newsletter or visit the Web site.

Take an Online Survey to Tell Us How We're Doing

We have prepared a very short (5 questions) survey using SurveyMonkey.com to find out how you like the current church facility, the time we're meeting, and to collect feedback about how the fellowship is meeting the needs of our members and friends.

The survey is anonymous unless you choose to give us your name. Please be frank and generous in your answers. It shouldn't take more than five minutes. And, we'll keep the survey open until April 30, so there's plenty of time to complete it.

Please go to:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=762933553214>

Once the survey closes, we'll let you know how to read the results online or we'll put together a report. If you want to bypass the online survey and take it on paper, let us know.



Circles of 8 Dinners Sunday, May 20 - 5:00 p.m.

Get Acquainted with Fellow UUs, Laugh, and Enjoy
While Sharing a Meal Together

Sign Up by Calling or E-mailing:

Carolyn Lacey - 443-4267

cdottiel@hotmail.com

Our first Circles of 8 dinners took place on March 17 with three hosting families: Jennifer Forker and Jim Clarke had 12 people, Jeanne Powell had 9, and Joyce and Bill Kronholm had 9. What a nice evening for all! In our first try at small group ministry, we had 30 people at three homes.

Everyone, including the folks who attended the dinner in March, are invited to our next Circles of 8. **The next dinner will be Sunday, May 20 at 5:00 p.m.** Be sure to sign up as a guest or host (see sign-up sheet at church) or contact Carolyn Lacey at 443-4267 or cdottiel@hotmail.com.

You don't want to miss this fun event!



In Memorium

We are saddened to learn of the death of Constance Marie Overturf (1934-2007), Cynthia Overturf's mother. Cynthia was in Buhl, Idaho, in March to be with her mother at her bedside and to spend time with family after the funeral. We hold Cynthia and her family in our hearts and minds during this time of remembrance.

New Member Welcoming Ceremony - April 15

Join us April 15 when we welcome our new members and celebrate our fellowship. The following members joined the fellowship in late 2006 and early 2007:

- Magalie Belanger
- Ryan Grandy
- Rebecca Hargis
- Woody Hines
- Nick Hopkins
- Jay Johnson
- Steve Loken
- Pad McCracken
- Nisan Burbridge



If your name is not on the list and you consider yourself a new member, or wish to be, please notify a committee or board member. See details below on how to become a member. If you're considering joining, ask for a Membership Packet. As you offer your gifts, talents and time, all of us together nurture our religious growth and work together to make our growing fellowship a warm and caring environment.

Welcoming/Membership Committee:

Jeanne Powell - 465-0954
Carolyn Laceky - 443-4267
Patti Borneman - 442-0656
Karrie Fairbrother - 443-0408

Becoming a Member of the Big Sky UU Fellowship

When you become a member of this church, you will be invited to contribute your time and financial resources. And if everyone makes a responsible financial contribution, our church can expand and grow, with new programs and community outreach and social justice programs.

We know that people are in varying life circumstances. Some are caring for elderly relatives or have health concerns or medical bills of their own. Others are between jobs. We do not ask that you place undue hardship upon yourself. And please remember that pledging or giving financial gifts to the church is not required for membership. But when you are ready to pledge, we hope it will reflect a serious commitment to the place you have chosen as your spiritual home, the place where your children will be educated in religious matters, the place where you will continue your own search for religious meaning.

Our Mutual Covenant with You

- We have an obligation to help you become connected to your new community and to maintain a safe, welcome environment where your religious questioning and searching is respected and nurtured.
- We have a responsibility to see that you are made welcome and that you find a place in our midst where you can make friends and continue your spiritual journey.

In return, we ask that you make an effort to become involved in the church in ways that are meaningful for you and enrich your understanding and personal commitment to Unitarian Universalism. These are some of the ways you can do this:

- If you're new to Unitarian Universalism, you can attend one of our informal "UU 101" discussion groups,

- Participate in a small group here that feeds your soul,
- Join in the work of a committee of your choosing, and
- Support the church as you are able with your financial gifts.

How to Become a Member of the Fellowship

When you are ready to join, contact a board member or Welcoming/Membership Committee member. We will ask you to fill out a simple form to tell us something about yourself and how we can work together to meet your spiritual and social needs.

- Sign the membership book in the presence of the fellowship or a church officer.
- Participate in the New Member Welcoming Ceremony in the spring, when you will be officially welcomed into the church and honored, along with other new members.
- You will also be asked to make a financial pledge in support of the church, but remember that it is not required for membership. You are welcome to give whatever you can afford. To guide your decision, here is what membership costs BSUUF:

Our dues to the Unitarian Universalist Association will cost \$54 per member in 2007. All members who sign the book, regardless of contribution amount, will receive the magazine of the Unitarian Universalist Association, *UU World*. Dues are also paid to the Mountain Desert District of UUA (\$20 per person), the Montana Area UU Association (\$90), and the Church of the Larger Fellowship (\$265).

If you'd like to see a copy of our 2007 budget or our monthly financial reports, contact Patti Borneman.



Big Sky Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

A LAY-LED WELCOMING FELLOWSHIP IN HELENA, MONTANA
PO BOX 816
HELENA, MT 59624

SAVE THE DATE!

- April 4 - Knitting for Peace! Details inside.
- April 16 - BSUUF Board Meeting - 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (lower level of church).
- April 18 - Knitting for Peace! Details inside.
- May 4-6 - MDD Growth Workshop, Billings, MT.
- May 20 - Circles of 8 Dinners. Sign up today!
- May 27 - Last BSUUF service before summer break.
- June 20-24 - UUA General Assembly in Portland, OR.
- August 26 - First BSUUF service after summer break.
- October 12-14 - MDD comes to Montana! See below.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR MDD CONFERENCE

Billings, Montana - October 12-14, 2007

Corps of Discovery: Exploring Life Stories



Mountain Desert District Unitarian Universalist
2007 Annual Conference, Billings, Montana

Visit <http://mddconf2007.googlepages.com/> for more info.



General Assembly 2007 in Portland Delegates from BSUUF going!

Along with a hoard of UUs from Kalispell, Billings, Bozeman, and Missoula, two active UUs from Helena--Lynda Saul and Patti Borneman--will be attending UUA's General Assembly this year. It is rare when the annual meeting of UUs from all over the country is held so close to our home, so we're taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity to participate. It's looking like a really great meeting, with workshops and speakers and opportunities to get to know fellow UUs from Montana and the Mountain Desert District.

Lynda and Patti will also represent our fellowship as delegates and will vote on various positions and goals for the organization. They will also attend a special two-day workshop called UU University prior to GA to learn more about congregational growth and leadership. In turn, the BSUUF board has agreed to pay the registration fees for both, since they are covering their own lodging and travel costs. We are also applying for a UUA matching grant to offset these costs.

There's still time to register if you want to attend GA. Talk to Patti or Lynda or visit www.uua.org for more information.