

August 2008



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

3773 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, IL 62526
Phone: (217) 875-5442
www.uufd.org
www.myspace.com/uufd_il



Minister:

Rev. John Biedler
Church Office:
(217) 875-5442
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(217) 423-7349
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(217) 972-2184
jbiedler@uufd.org

Office Hours:

Tuesday evenings
5 – 7 p.m.
Wednesday & Thursday
mornings
10 a.m. – noon

President:

Julie Pajer

Past President:

Linda Shroyer

President Elect:

Heather Stoa

Vice President:

Tom Meyen

Treasurer:

Mark Sorensen

Secretary:

Mary Lovell

Board Members at Large:

Ron Shafer
Dave Snoeyenbos
Rita Schwake

UUFd Trust Board:

Ken Robertson
Vern Thistlethwaite
Dave Snoeyenbos

Upcoming Services

All Sunday services begin at 10:15 AM.

There is religious education for children and child care for babies.

August 3 - "Talking Heresy" by Rev. John Biedler

During the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, heretics were the ones who just couldn't quite see it the way the priests or the pope or whoever was in charge saw it. These were the folks who kept questioning the norm, people who just wouldn't stop thinking other truths and other possibilities than the orthodoxy of their day. Maybe you too are a heretic -- in our day and time. Maybe you've been looking for a place where you can express free and open questions when it comes to religious matters. Maybe you've been looking for Unitarian Universalism. Let's talk heresy.

Also on August 3, during the worship service, there will be a special Child Dedication Ceremony for Jasmyn Joy Allen Zaker to which all are welcome.

August 10 - "Stress: Its Causes, Effects, and What to Do About It."

Diana Knaebe from the Heritage Behavioral Center will give us an overall view of those factors which cause the most stress in our lives and point out how stress affects us both physiologically and psychologically. She will then give us some possible ways to reduce the stress in our lives.

August 17 - "The Harmony of Science and Religion."

David Draves is Chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Decatur. David will discuss the basic terminology, using quotations to present the Baha'i teaching and talk about some of the implications that those definitions have for the human race.

August 24—"The Effects of Poverty on Decatur's School Children" With Jennifer Raleigh

This presentation will provide an understanding of what language is, how poverty effects the development of language, what implications it has, and some possible ideas to help develop language skills. Other portions of this service will include data with regard to the ongoing efforts to measure and improve the effectiveness of education institutions in Decatur and Macon County for the purpose of improving our whole community. Stay for discussion after the service!

August 31—Summer Potluck at the Pajer's

The Pajer's are hosting an end-of-the-summer potluck at their home on the West End for the fellowship and friends! Please bring a favorite dish and enjoy music, games, and conversation! Address, driving directions and parking instructions to their home in the West End will be available at the Fellowship in August. See you there!

Next Newsletter deadline: August 15, 2008

Religious Education Classes

August 3 - The UU principles

August 10 - Stress relief for kids - Cassandra Meyen

August 17 - Gaia Consciousness Day - Explore Mother Earth as a living planet - Cassandra Meyen

August 24 - Showing Compassion - Liz Richards

August 31 - Potluck Day - no RE



Rummage Sale Kudos

WOW!! What a rummage sale! Another recording breaking year and world of thanks to all who had a part in its success.

Thank you to all who helped me wade through the finer points of creating and mailing out post card reminders .

Thank you to all who donated the wonderful items for the sale. Your generosity is overwhelming.

Thank you to all who donated their time to set up the sale .

Thank you to all who donated their time the day of the sale.

Thank you to Vern for his tireless efforts in picking up the donations that could not be delivered to the Fellowship.

Success is a group effort.

"A friend in need walks seven steps to help us.

A real comrade walks twelve to give us aid.

A person walking weeks with us is kin;

Walking longer they become ourself"

Jataka 83



"Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase"

~Martin Luther King Jr.

Rev. Biedler's Hours

Office hours for Rev. Biedler in August will be by appointment only as August is Rev. Biedler's vacation. You may reach John by leaving a message at the church office: (217) 875-5442; or by calling his cell phone at (217) 972-2184.

Earthstock Success

This year the UUFd hosted their first environmental consciousness fair called Earthstock. The event's purpose was to raise consciousness for living Green, as well as to promote a vegetarian/vegan lifestyle.

During the event, many of our members and UU groups were able to network with other companies and organizations, making valuable contacts. The event also drew new faces to our fellowship, allowing them to learn what we are about, what we believe in and stand for. In addition to the networking and outreach, we also brought in donations totaling \$260.07 for our fellowship.

A huge THANK YOU goes to all of the fellowship members and friends, as well as all of the community organizations that helped make Earthstock a success!

August 2008 Calendar of Events

All activities take place at the Fellowship, unless otherwise noted.
Visitors are always welcome!

Friday, August 1st

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Sunday, August 3rd

- Noon — Drumming Circle

Tuesday, August 5th

- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.—Christian Practices Covenant Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group

Wednesday, August 6th

- 10:00 a.m. to noon—Wednesday Morning Covenant Group

Friday, August 8th

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Saturday, August 9th

- 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.—ARE/Edgar Cayce Study Group

Sunday, August 10th

- Community Food Bank

Tuesday, August 12th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. — decREADgrp

Wednesday, August 13th

- 6:00 p.m.—Women's Book Club

Thursday, August 14th

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFDF Buddhist Group—Terry Ankrom's House

Friday, August 15th

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Tuesday, August 19th

- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.—Christian Practices Covenant Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group

Wednesday, August 20th

- 10:00 a.m. to noon—Wednesday Morning Covenant Group

Saturday, August 23rd

- 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.—ARE/Edgar Cayce Study Group

Tuesday, August 26th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. — decREADgrp

Thursday, August 28th

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFDF Buddhist Group—Terry Ankrom's House

Friday, August 29th

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Group discussion topics:

ARE/Edgar Cayce Study Group—at Julie Lauper Cook's home

Buddhist Group—The UUFDF Buddhist Group will no longer meet at the Fellowship Hall. We will be meeting every 2nd and 4th Thursdays at Terry Ankrom's house, 2480 West Main Street, Decatur, Illinois, 62522. For further information call 217-428-1807 or email terryankrom@gmail.com.

Christian Practices Covenant Group—Please join us for discussions on the life and teachings of Jesus as we read the book by Marcus Borg "The Heart of Christianity." Guests are always welcome.

Community Food Bank—Please bring a donation of nonperishable food items to be taken to our local food banks on this Sunday

decREADgrp—Our readings and discussions are centered around religion, science, and philosophy. Information sheets are available on the literature table at the Fellowship. Open to the public.

Drumming Circle—Noon after the morning service at UUFDF. If the weather is good we'll again be outside under a shade tree for this fun energizing activity. Bring your drums, tambourines, etc - this is an event for all ages!! Questions: June Allison #423-1813

Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group—The discussion group seeks to explore the teachings and spiritual philosophy of Eckhart Tolle, a contemporary mystic, through discussions, audio-visual presentations, and silent meditations. Presently we are viewing and discussing a spiritual retreat with Eckhart Tolle filmed in Costa Rica a few years ago. This event was attended by Marcelo Lepeley. Open to the public. Contact Mel Weinstein (763-0509) for additional information.

Social Action Covenant Group— will not be meeting during the summer months and will start up again in the Fall.

Wednesday Morning Covenant Group— Please join us as we discuss the final chapters of the book *Constructing a Life Philosophy* by David L. Bender. Guests welcome.

Women's Book Group— at the home of Kathy Sorensen. The book is *The Other Side of the Bridge* by Mary Lawson. Please bring a dish to share.

Letters from John...

Some have asked about the purpose of the Committee On Ministry (COM) that is called for in our Fellowship's constitution. I'd like to share with you what I think. First, it's purpose as a committee is to strengthen the quality of the total ministry within the congregation at UUFD.

One of the responsibilities of the committee is to serve as a support group for the minister and as a communication channel between the minister and the congregation. Members of this committee must have the confidence of both minister and congregation in order to serve effectively on this very important committee.

I would like to introduce the six members of the COM for 2008-2009:

Kathy Kline, Rosemary Idleman, Vern Thistlethwaite, Joan Brown, Carla Jordan and Karen Bethel. These six have been presented to the Board and by unanimous vote have been approved.

And what is it this committee does?

Here is a brief list boiled down from the *Congregational Handbook* of the UUA:

1. primarily, this committee is to aid the minister in carrying on an effective ministry within the congregation by being available for counsel;
2. they are to keep the minister advised of conditions within the congregation as they affect relationships between ministers and members, with the main thrust on strengthening and improving relationships;
3. also, they are to continually interpret to the congregation the nature and scope of the work of the minister, including a clarification of role expectations and realistic priorities for ministers and members;
4. they are to consult with the minister and submit an annual compensation recommendation to the governing board;
5. and finally, to work with the minister on his continuing education program, sabbatical planning, or other professional development and to advocate such plans to the governing board and congregation, including appropriate funding.

The Committee meets either monthly or every other month, with a regular agenda for each meeting so that, during the course of a year, each aspect of the ministerial-congregational relationship is reviewed. Every September, for example, the committee might discuss the minister's performance expectations for the coming year; every June, the minister's compensation; every November, the minister's housing situation, etc.

Trust, integrity and confidentiality are essential to the work of this committee. The members must have the trust of the congregation at large, of the Board and of course the minister. They must be perceived as having a firm commitment to the overall health of the congregation (as opposed to a special interest within the life of the congregation.)

Close relationships are important to build and maintain trust. It is wise to remember that the minister and the congregation members have a professional – not private – relationship with each other. The COM and the minister need to make sure that the minister has sufficient personal and collegial support networks outside the congregation.

As members of this committee, they continually monitor congregational life, coordinate periodic (perhaps every three years) assessments of the shared ministry of the congregation, and within that context, the professional ministry. They help model healthy and deepening relationships with the minister as well as support the minister as lay-colleagues.

As you can see, I depend on the members of this committee to give me honest and thoughtful feedback. During the coming year I hope you will get to know them, share some of your suggestions, your praises, your concerns. That's what they are here for...I just thought you ought to know.

In Faith,
John

Another chance to recycle locally

Decatur now has a Craigs List where items may be posted for sale or to give away. So we now have at least three more opportunities to move items to someone who needs/wants them.

Check out: decatour.craigs.list.org and we-love-decatour-illinois@yahoo.com and DecaturArea-BST@yahoo.com. You may need to select a password from yahoo to view the latter two websites. (vern thistlethwaite) vtistle@comcast.net



A message from the President...

I was driving home from a visit to Chicago a few weeks ago. The rest of the family had fallen asleep the minute the car was in motion, so I decided to perform a little test right there on I-55. I elected to drive 55 miles per hour the whole way back home. I hear you gasping – please read on. At the time I imagined it as being tantamount to something that had never before been attempted by a parent with three children and a speed-demon husband. Yet, if I was ever going to try, this was as good a time as any. (I should mention that my Nissan Quest minivan has a little miles-per-gallon calculator in the console, and it is fun to play with every now and again. But for this test, I was serious.)

I did not pass a single (moving) car. Not an old Datsun, not any American car from the 80's, not one car! And cars were generally indifferent about zipping past me. I only got a few annoyed grimaces – nothing more than usual.

The results:

At 65 MPH: 17.8 miles per gallon (this was my baseline)

At 55 MPH: 25.5 miles per gallon (+/- .3 while on flat terrain)

(For grins, I did speed up at one point to 75 MPH, which is my wonderful hubby's cruising speed. The result was 15.2 miles per gallon.)



I felt the results were fairly impressive, and thinking back to my high school driver's ed class, I vaguely remember that the magic speed of 45 miles per hour is when engines seem to start losing their fuel efficiency. Therefore, I was spurred on to adjust my test once I reached Route 51 South of Bloomington. I actually drove 45 miles per hour from Bloomington to Decatur! Unbelievable! I know you are beside yourself at this point. If my Chicagoan husband were awake at the time, he would be telling me that while 55 MPH is risky at best on an interstate (after all, that is how people get killed!), but 45 on a highway is just insanity. I was not only risking the life of my family, but furthermore, I might as well have been going backward.

The result:

At 45 MPH: 28.2 miles per gallon

I returned home safely, children seemed none-the-wiser that they were practically in death's cold grip. My husband woke up and said, "Home already?" I narrowed my eyes and grinned feeling very pleased with the coup I just pulled.

What was most impressive was not my car's fuel efficiency, my \$20 gas savings, nor my ability to disprove that driving 45 MPH is actually going backward. It was that for an hour and a half on I-55, I had a fan club! Not everyone passed me! I had, at one point in time, five cars following me going 55 MPH. They had ample opportunity to pass me, there was no other traffic holding them there. They were very clearly choosing to go slower. I imagined them cheering me on, impressed by my courage and fortitude to save gasoline in spite of the familial ridicule I would most certainly endure when my family woke up, or at least be forced to stop at a disgusting gas station for a restroom break. Eventually my fan club reached their respective exits and by the time I reached El Paso, I was alone.

Sometimes we know what is right, but breaking our habits can seem incomprehensible - like an army of one against many "ourselves". But I challenge you to question what you take for granted, and enjoy the adventure of living intentionally.

For bonus points, assuming gas is \$4 per gallon and that I go to Chicago 10 times per year driving 180 miles each way, how much money would I save in a year by going 55 miles per hour on my trips rather than

75 miles per hour? Feel free to send your responses, or any other thoughts, suggestions or concerns regarding the Fellowship (not my driving) to jpajer@invivoventures.com .



Global warming expert warns local gathering of impending climate change

Theresa Churchill, Senior Writer

Decatur Herald-Review

June 25, 2008

DECATUR - The 1988 drought that brought Lake Decatur to one of its lowest levels, the 1995 heat wave that killed hundreds of people in Chicago and the rains this spring that flooded parts of Iowa and Illinois may seem to be unusual events.

However, climate change expert Don Wuebbles says such weather is expected to become commonplace as temperatures continue to rise because of humanity's reliance on carbon-based fuel.

Indeed, without major changes, Wuebbles said Illinois weather in 2095 will be pretty much the way it is in east Texas today - warmer winters, wetter springs and dryer, hotter summers.

"This is really one of the most important issues facing humanity," he said. "The science community is nearly unanimous in concluding that human activities are causing the majority of the climate change that is occurring."



Wuebbles, professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, made his remarks at a town hall meeting that attracted about 70 people to the Decatur Public Library on Tuesday evening to learn what they could do to help.

The meeting was the first of several planned around the state by the Illinois Environmental Council to drum up support for legislation that would require furnaces and vehicles to be more energy efficient and provide incentives for power and industrial facilities to reduce pollution.

It was co-sponsored by the Community Environmental Council, Agricultural Watershed Institute, Audubon Society and environmental affairs council of Millikin University. (The UUFd also had a table set up at this event, promoting our Green Sanctuary and Buy Green Co-Op)

State Reps. Bob Flider, D-Mount Zion, and Bill Mitchell, R-Forsyth, also spoke at the forum, with Mitchell warning that passing the legislation will be an uphill battle because business and labor don't want to put Illinois at a disadvantage in attracting employers.

More than one member of the audience suggested, however, that the state should seek environmentally friendly employers.

Jonathan Goldman, executive director of the Illinois Environmental Council, said spending less money on fuel would create jobs by putting more money into people's pockets and that individual measures, such as recycling, using compact fluorescent bulbs and driving a fuel-efficient car are not enough.

"It is going to take government action to solve a problem this big," Goldman said. "We need to ensure that all the light bulbs and all the cars on the market are more efficient."

Living Green Tips from the Green Sanctuary Committee:

Water, water everywhere...

As summer is in full swing, we of the UUFDF Green Sanctuary committee thought you might want to learn more about bottled water. Last year, Americans drank their way through three billion cases of bottled water — an increase of 14 percent over 2006, according to *Beverage Digest*. Water, of course, is essential to human health. However, we consumers need to arm ourselves with knowledge about what we're buying before we grab the next bottle off the shelf. It really pays to do our homework! For instance, you already probably know that way too many of these plastic bottles end up in our landfills! But there's more!

If you reuse your plastic bottles, you may want to know that the reuse of polycarbonate plastic bottles (labeled #7) is generally not recommended by commercial bottled water manufacturers, as it may pose a health risk from two perspectives. First, everyday wear and tear from repeated washings and reuse can lead to physical breakdown of the plastic, and bacteria can harbor in these cracks, posing a health risk. Secondly, reuse of plastic water bottles can lead to bacterial contamination unless washed regularly. If a consumer wishes to reuse a plastic water bottle, it should be washed after each use in mild detergent only and rinsed well. The plastic should not be subjected to extreme, hot temperatures or harsh detergents, and should be carefully inspected for physical breakdown prior to reuse.

Most water bottles are made with polyethylene terephthalate, a plastic derived from crude oil. Worldwide, some 2.7 million tons of plastic are used to bottle water each year. "Making bottles to meet Americans' demand for bottled water requires more than 1.5 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 U.S. cars for a year. which leach into the water. , and then shipped insanely long distances--and nearly one-fourth of it is sent across national borders--by boat, train, airplane, and truck. This "involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels. More fossil fuels are used when packaging the water.

Bottled water contains varying levels of lead if the water is run thru old lead pipes in the bottling plant. Or if PVC (polyvinyl chloride) piping is used, which contains chlorine and dioxin--both known human carcinogens. Dioxin is a hormone disrupter and is one of the most toxic synthetic compound ever produced. Polycarbonate water bottles (labeled #7) contain bisphenol A (BPA) which leaches from the plastic even at room temperature and has been linked to chromosome damage and hormone disruption. These are the types of plastic Nalgene water bottles found in sports stores. Since polycarbonate bottles don't impart a taste to fluids, many users assume they are safer than bottles made out of other kinds of plastic. But now an accidental discovery has cast doubt on their safety. Most at risk are people with developing endocrine systems: pregnant women and newborns, followed by young children, and women who might get pregnant.

In most cases, the quality of the bottled water is not even better than the water flowing out of our taps. We drink tap water—but we filter it thru a Brita, then into glass bottles to take with us whenever we leave the house. If you are concerned about the plastic in the Brita being safe, know that Brita filter systems use containers made from styrene methacrylate copolymer, which is a polymer (a combination of molecules) primarily used in the production of acrylic sheeting, molding powders and resin and surface coatings. But according to Brita, the company manufactures containers made from styrene methacrylate copolymer to avoid leaching. Brita's information on leaching came from the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), which performs extensive material safety tests. The NSF states that Brita pitchers have been tested for material safety and National Geographic's The Green Guide confirms that.

If you'd rather not use glass bottles, there are safe metal bottles out there now to choose from--though you might want to avoid the aluminum and go with the stainless steel variety (aluminum has its share of dangers--but that's a whole nuther story!) Here's to OUR good health!



REPORT FROM YOUR UUFD PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The UUFD Program Committee is responsible for providing lay programs for Sunday services during which our minister, Rev. John Biedler, does not speak. This year's committee is Ron Shafer, Chairperson, Joan Brown, Julie Pajer, Denise Renfro, John Biedler, and Mark Sorensen.

Providing stimulating and intellectually and or spiritually rewarding programs which will appeal to most of our members and friends and attract visitors from the wider Decatur Community is not an easy task. The Committee welcomes suggestions for speakers and/or programs. We are able to pay a fifty dollar honorarium for outside speakers.



We also need service leaders. Our small committee cannot provide service leaders for all the lay programs. If you would be willing to volunteer to be a service leader, please contact Ron Shafer. Committee members will be happy to aid any volunteers in the service preparation.

We urge you to attend all the Sunday services.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or complaints, please contact Ron Shafer at rnshfr@shelbywb.coop or 217-865-2636.

We hope to have a very successful year ahead of us.

MEDITATION CLASS

Several years ago, Mel Weinstein and I taught a meditation class at UUFD. Recently, we have had some inquiries about a new meditation class. If there is enough interest, Mel and I are willing to offer a class this fall, probably beginning in October, and requiring six, hour and a half sessions. The course would probably be on Thursday evenings from 7:00-8:30 at UUFD. We would require at least six people who are willing to commit to all six sessions. The course would involve a history of meditative practices, scientific evidence for the value of meditation, and an exploration of a variety of meditative practices. There would be a meditation during each session, beginning with ten minutes and working up to twenty minutes by the second or third session. The approach would be secular, but there would be information on the value of meditation as a spiritual practice. There would be no charge for the class.

If you are interested, please contact Ron Shafer at rnshfr@shelbywb.coop call 217-865-2636, or speak with Ron personally.



UUFD, MySpace, and Outreach to our younger community

- Since the inception of our MySpace page (www.myspace.com/uufd_il), we have had 286 views of the page. (80 of these views have been within the past month)
 - Each month our MySpace page is updated with all of our sermons and RE classes.
 - We have had a few people become our MySpace "friends", so they are notified automatically of our updates each month.
 - Myspace is mostly a community of younger people.
 - There are over 3,000 people on myspace within a 5 mile radius of zipcode 62526 between the ages of 18 and 40.
- If you have special information, or an event that you would like to have posted on the MySpace page, please contact Tammy Bledsaw at t.bledsaw@hotmail.com or at 217.855.0736.



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“Promoting freedom, reason,
And tolerance in religion”

Return Service Requested

Fellowship mission statement:

In a nurturing environment of openness, mutual respect, and friendship, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur is a welcoming, diverse congregation. We share values and seek to celebrate life and support one another in our inward and outward searches for spiritual meaning, provide a liberal religious presence, and strive for compassion and justice in our community and our world.



August Birthdays

Rosemary Idleman August 5th
Lois Worley August 20th
Vern Thistlethwaite August 21st
John Biedler August 21st



Seeking a UU newsletter Editor

Hello everyone,
I realized that I've been doing the newsletter for nearly 2 years now. My how time has flown! I would like to extend the opportunity for someone else to take over being the newsletter editor, and perhaps bring a freshness to it. If you are interested, please email me at t.bledsaw@hotmail.com. Thank you!, Tammy

For	Contact	At:
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Newsletter submissions	Tammy Bledsaw	t.bledsaw@hotmail.com or (217) 855-0736
Website suggestions	June Allison	JuneChelso@springnet1.com or (217) 423-1813