

April 2009



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

3773 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, IL 62526
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Minister:

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

Office Hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday and
Thursday evenings 4:30 to
6:30 p.m. at the Fellowship

President:

Julie Pajer

Past President:

Linda Shroyer

President Elect:

Heather Stoa

Vice President:

Available

Treasurer:

Mark Sorensen

Secretary:

Mary Lovell

RE Director:

Cassandra Meyen

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.

April 5: "The Freedom of Passover" by Rev. John Biedler

The festival of Passover is an important part of our religious heritage in the West as well as in Unitarian Universalism. Historically it began as a celebration of the liberation of the Hebrew people from slavery. Over the years this bold step toward freedom has become symbolic in the Judaeo-Christian tradition of the need of peoples to move toward justice and universal freedom. We will explore the ceremonial meal called the Seder, or "the order of the service," and hopefully find relevance for today from this ancient tradition.

April 12: "An Earth Day Easter" by Rev. John Biedler

Will we ever learn to love this Earth, our home? Can we humans dwell together on this tiny, fragile planet, this beautiful blue orb floating in the embrace of space with all other species? Through poetry we will celebrate Earth Day and Easter as we appreciate the gift it is to be alive in this magnificent, self-organizing earth and universe, participating in the dance of life, glad that we have senses to perceive it, lungs that breathe it, and organs that draw nourishment from it.

April 19: The Community Heart: A Very Brief Survey of the Voice as Community and the Voice as Heart by Marion van der Loo

The use of spoken language was, and remains, the most eloquent means of communication. The voice of a single loved one can almost always drown out those of anger or hatred around us. The singing voice is the purest of instruments--as a matter of fact, many instruments were designed to approximate the human voice. Voices in concert with one another, from medieval chant to the great Masses of later composers, have the capacity to create not only beauty, but community, a place for belonging, a purpose for struggling through difficult days, a magnificent, magical escape to realms beyond us. This day we hear recordings of music from various musical periods sung by numerous choruses, both professional and non-professional, with an oh-so-brief discussion of how it all came to be.

April 26, 2009 Service: "Family Sculpting" by Mary Jo Comerford

With a background in addictions and family counseling, Mary Jo will demonstrate family system dynamics, focusing on the survival roles we often assume during times of stress. This is a thought provoking model originally used in helping families affected by alcoholism and other addictions, but applies to others whose lives have been affected by problem behaviors.

April 26, 2009: Annual Congregational Meeting immediately follows the morning service when officers and budget will be voted on. There will be presentations by our Minister, the President of the congregation, the Treasurer and Officers of the trust fund.

Next Newsletter deadline: April 15, 2009

Additional Afternoon Workshop April 26th from 1:30 - 3 p.m.

Through class exercises and discussion, this workshop will promote a better understanding of ourselves as well as past and present family members. It will help you better recognize what may happen when we react rather than respond to life events and when we fail to communicate our own feelings and blame others for our behaviors. Mary Jo is a semi-retired registered nurse and is married to John Comerford and the mother of five adult children and grandmother of nine amazing grandchildren.

A change in the dates of the Enneagram classes conducted by Rev. Biedler: they will be April 5th; May 17th; May 31st; and June 7th.

All will be held on Sunday afternoons from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at the Fellowship. Even if you have missed the other sessions, you will learn a great deal about yourself just by attending a single session. You will find what your major concerns in life are as a personality, as an "ego." Are you driven to do things right? Is helping others your joy? For some, appearing capable, successful and accomplished is their underlying goal. Maybe you struggle with feeling good about yourself; or simply "knowledge" inspires you. Are you perplexed with trying to figure yourself out? Is just having fun your highest priority? Control might be your issue; or maintaining a calm inner state your nature.

We are all a mix of these nine (ennea) passions. Knowing yours opens you up, frees your spirit and gives spontaneity to your personality.

Join Rev. Biedler and other UU's from all over central United States at this year's Central Midwest District Assembly, April 24-26, 2009 Friday - Sunday in Waukesha, Wisconsin

Our theme this year is "Leadership in Times of Profound Change." We will welcome keynote speaker Sharon Daloz Parks, author of "Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World". As congregational and community leaders, what is asked of us in times of great change? Dr. Parks will lead us in exploring how we discern, inspire and mentor the next generation of leadership, while at the same time examining our own continuing practice of faithful and effective leadership in this complex age. Find out more on line at: <http://www.cmwd-uaa.org/content/>

Rev. Biedler's Hours

Office hours for Rev. John Biedler in April are Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., except Thursday, April 23 when John will be in the Milwaukee area attending the annual District Assembly of the Central Midwest District. You may reach Rev. Biedler at any time by calling his cell ph. at (217) 972-2184 or by leaving a message at the church office at (217) 875-5442. John makes himself available at other times by appointment and welcomes your calls.

Religious Education Classes

Sunday the 5th
 Sunday the 12th
 Sunday the 19th
 Sunday the 26th

Meet Marion van der Loo

Marion van der Loo is Music Director and Conductor of the 70-voice Springfield Choral Society and Artistic Director of Prairieland Voices, a 21-voice chamber chorus dedicated mainly to the performance of music of the renaissance. She's also in her 6th year as Adjunct Assist. Prof. of Voice at Millikin.

April 2009 Calendar of Events

All activities take place at the Fellowship, unless otherwise noted.

Visitors are always welcome!

Wednesday, April 1st

- 10:00 a.m. — Wednesday Morn Covenant Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Humanism

Tuesday, April 7th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 4:30 p.m. — Christian Practices Covenant Group

Thursday, April 9th

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Tuesday, April 14th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m.—decREADgrp

Wednesday, April 15th

10:00 a.m.—Wednesday Morn Covenant Group

Tuesday, April 21st

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 4:30 p.m. — Christian Practices Covenant Group

Thursday, April 23rd

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Tuesday, April 28th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m.—decREADgrp

Group discussion topics:

Buddhist Group—The UUFD Buddhist Group will be meeting at Terry Ankrom's house, 2480 West Main Street, Decatur, Illinois, 62522 on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Further information? Call 217-428-1807 E-mail terryankrom@gmail.com

Youth Group—Youth Group meetings are every Tuesday from 5-6 pm at the UUFD. The 1st and 3rd Tuesdays are Science Group, and the 2nd and 4th are Community Group. All ages are welcome. For more information email Cassandra at meyen@peoplepc.com

Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group—The Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7 pm in the Fellowship sanctuary. This month we will meet April 7th and 21st. 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 Copenhagen, Denmark in 2004 and entitled "The Art of Presence." All are welcome and no prior knowledge of Tolle's teachings is required. Contact Mel Weinstein (763-0509) for additional information.

The Christian Practices Covenant Group—The Christian Practices Covenant Group meets the first and third Tuesdays of the month April 7th and 21st from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Fellowship. All are welcome to join for discussions on the life and teachings of Jesus as viewed from a UU perspective.

The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group—The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, Apr. 1st and 15th, from 10 a.m. to noon. The group is reading "Living Buddha, Living Christ" by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Guests always welcome—we set out an empty chair symbolic of our welcoming new members.

Women's Book Group—The Women's Book Club will meet on Wednesday, March 11 at 6 pm at Eileen Ruski's home at 2431 W. Forest Ave. Please RSVP to tilopal@comcast.net. The book is *Loving Frank* by Horan.

Humanist Group—The Humanist group meets the first Wednesday of each month. All meetings begin at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur at 7:00 p.m.

Letters from John...

“On the rainy night of March 30, 1953 a group of 16 religious liberals met in the Dubonnais Room of the Hotel Orlando in Decatur. Two of them, John Regan and Kenneth Campbell, are said to have arrived drenched.”

What you are reading is from a booklet entitled A HISTORY [of the Unitarian Fellowship of Decatur] by O.T., Banton. I quote excerpts as a comparison of our beginnings to current issues at UUFD. This HISTORY was first published in 1973 on the occasion of our twentieth anniversary. It continues:

“The group gathered [at the Orlando] in response to a notice in the Decatur newspapers inviting all religious liberals in the community to meet at the hotel that night. The notice was authored by Monroe Husbands, field organizer for the American Unitarian Association [AUA] in the Midwest states. Husbands led the discussion, and invited those present to become the nucleus of a Unitarian church or Fellowship.

“Their ranks being thin, it was decided to form a Fellowship, and Husbands gave instructions on how to apply to AUA for a charter. The hotel meeting was on a Monday night, and it was agreed to meet the following Sunday night in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Swarm to sign the charter application.

“Husbands is said to have come to Decatur because Mrs. Eva Douthit and Paul Swarm were members of the Unitarians' Church of the Larger Fellowship, whose members are scattered in many countries around the world and to whom copies of sermons and other Unitarian literature are sent regularly from AUA (now the UUA) headquarters at 25 Beacon St. in Boston. Most of the 16 who attended the two meetings had not known each other...

“The going was tough, particularly during the first year when the group had to get along without even a part-time pastor, and finances were meager. Efforts to recruit other liberals in the community brought disappointing results. A religious survey had been held in Decatur the winter before the Fellowship was formed, and the Fellowship sent letters to all in the survey who listed themselves as "no religion." Only one person responded, and he never became active in the group. Letters were sent to 800 teachers, but none came.

“During that period the writer of this history heard about the group and began regular attendance. Within a short time Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Robertson...and a few others became active.

“...Although sources on which the Fellowship drew for Sunday programs were generous and often included persons with expertise on social problems, filling the pulpit on Sunday mornings still weighed rather heavily on members who were willing to take turns at it. So it was with considerable relief that finances in 1955 permitted hiring as part-time minister a student from Meadville Theological Seminary, a school of training for the Unitarian ministry at the University of Chicago.

“...A practice that built up slowly at first but since has become what most members regard as the highlight of the Fellowship's entire program, was a meeting after the services for discussion of the topic the speaker had presented. This soon was accompanied by coffee, tea and cookies or other light refreshments. The ‘coffee hour’ after services gained greater and greater interest and importance...

“It would be hard to overemphasize the importance of the Sunday morning coffee hour over the last 10 years; these sessions often are quite animated, and run for about an hour. Both the student pastors and guest speakers have come to expect to be ‘shot at’ rather sharply and views they have expressed in presentation of the morning topic taken apart. Such attacks from around the table always are friendly and in the flavor of a constructive effort to get at or near the bottom of the subject

Letters from John... (continued)

under discussion, and the speakers like it. Some have said that this period of defending the ideas they had presented was more fun than occupying the pulpit.

“Sometimes the speaker's views on his subject were obviously modified during the coffee hour discussion, and divergent views of Fellowship members also were changed. Contributions of individual members of the group, most of whom have a wide reading background, have been helpful to each other and even more to the student pastors. Nearly every one of them has testified that he did considerable ‘growing’ during his pulpit service in Decatur, and much of it had to take place in the coffee hour discussions.

“Visitors to the Fellowship always are invited to stay for ‘coffee and discussion,’ and in numerous instances have found the sessions so interesting as to prompt them to become members of the group.

“These discussions have become a strong ‘institution’ with the Fellowship, and it is interesting to note that the same thing has happened elsewhere; coffee hours, accompanied by discussion of the morning topic, have come to be an important item in the programs of many Unitarian churches and Fellowships.

“...As the membership grew stronger, the need to acquire meeting quarters of its own came to be recognized by the Fellowship, and a ‘steering committee’ to look for a site was named. Ed Seymour, a Decatur realtor, was made chairman and others who served on the committee were John Heil and David Macarus. After much searching early in 1961, the membership agreed to purchase the two story residence at 716 West William Street, at a price of \$13,500. A down payment of \$2,500 was made, with the remainder to be paid off monthly under a land contract.

“Raising the down payment and getting the building ready for church use gave the membership a busy summer in 1961. The Fellowship gratefully accepted from the few remaining members of the old Shelbyville Unitarian church an offer of the furniture and carpets from their church building, which was no longer in use. This was arranged through Mrs. Douthit and Dr. and Mrs. Elvin Clark, who had been among the last half dozen of the Shelbyville church congregation.

“...Unitarian House, as the church building was named, was dedicated on Aug. 13, 1961, with Karel F. Botermans, then pastor of the Unitarian church in Flint, Mich., delivering the dedicatory sermon. Rabbi Leo F. Turitz, of Temple B'Nai Abraham, extended greetings of himself and his congregation, with whom the Fellowship for several years held joint services once a year, alternating in their church buildings.” [end]

There is of course much more...and you may find the full booklet in our church bookshelf in the minister's office.

Things have changed in many ways, yet in others, these 56 years have kept many traditions intact. In future columns I hope to bring you more excerpts to give you a sense of history and context to what you find still true about UUFD Hope you enjoyed this journey back in time.

John

Themes for the Coming Calendar Year

During the church year (September-June), Rev. Biedler fashions his sermons around special themes. This provides a set of common stories and ideas for an ongoing community conversation among members and friends of the Fellowship. Rev. Biedler supports these themes with newsletter articles, handouts of suggested reading on the themes and spiritual practices. With guest speakers each month as well, there are many different topics covered in any given month. Each Sunday you are invited to a discussion after the service on that day's topic. Please join us. The themes of Rev. Biedler's sermons for 2008-2009 are:

September -- Vision

October -- Creation

November -- Democracy

December -- God

January -- Evil

February -- Authority

March -- Redemption

April -- Freedom

May -- Mercy

June -- Transformation

The General Assembly (GA) of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

You too can attend the General Assembly (GA) of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, which will be June 24-28, 2009 in Salt Lake City. In these four days of GA, you can select from hundreds of fascinating workshop on everything from Humanism to Christianity, from Buddhism and to Earth Centered traditions, with drumming, worship services and lots of time to meet with others from around the world. Also, at these assemblies the overall policies for carrying out the purposes of the Association are determined. Voting on issues before each GA shall be by accredited delegates from certified member congregations. Our delegates this year will be June Allison and Chelso Frescura who have never missed a GA since 1996. Go on line and find out more at:

<http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/>

Green Sanctuary Eco-Corner

[Submitted by the UUFD Green Sanctuary Committee]

If you have 20 minutes to spare, here's great little story all about "Stuff." It's engaging and enlightening and explains a lot, from where stuff comes from to where Stuff goes, to why exactly we buy all that stuff.

Enjoy!

<http://www.storyofstuff.com>

Humanist Monthly Meeting

The Humanist group will meet Wednesday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m. All meetings begin at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur. This month, the topic of discussion will be putting Humanism to work in the community. We will learn where and how the principles of Humanism can be applied around Decatur to aid in our "chief end of human life ... to work for the happiness of humans upon this earth and within the confines of the Nature that is our home." (Lamont)

2009 ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SERIES

- WHAT:** **Everything's Cool**
- WHERE:** Sanctuary, Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Decatur
3773 N. Macarthur Road (Corner of Mound & Macarthur), Decatur, IL
Screen Projection with stereo sound [for info contact 217-620-2134]
- WHEN:** 7:00 PM, Saturday, April 4 (89 minute film)
- ADMISSION:** Donations Accepted -- No One Turned Away
- CONCESSIONS:** Fresh theater-style popcorn sold; healthier drinks available



Sponsored by the Audubon society of Decatur

Everything's Cool is a 2007 documentary that examines the media strategies, on both sides, that have resulted in the US government's failure to take decisive action on global warming. The film is a "toxic comedy" about the most dangerous chasm ever to emerge between scientific understanding and political action - Global Warming. The good news: America finally gets global warming; the chasm is closing and the debate is over. The bad news: the United States, the country that will determine the fate of the globe, must transform its fossil fuel based economy fast, (like in a minute). While the industry funded naysayers sing what just might be their swan song of scientific doubt and deception, a group of self-appointed global warming messengers are on a life or death quest to find the iconic image, proper language, and points of leverage that will help the public go from understanding the urgency of the problem to creating the political will necessary to push for a new energy economy. Hold on -- this is bigger than changing your light bulbs. "There are no carbon dioxide graphs in Everything's Cool. Instead, the film tells the fascinating story of the message itself... All of this alone makes for compelling documentary. But what really makes this film significant is its unique perspective on the surprising shift in public perception that has transformed global warming from a fringe issue to a mainstream concern in just the last two years...The result is a remarkable time capsule." (The Austin Chronicle)

NEXT SHOWS: Wolves in Paradise & Affluenza, Saturday, April 18, 7 pm

[All proceeds will be donated to the Green Sanctuary Committee of the UUFD]

2009 ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SERIES

DOUBLE FEATURE NIGHT

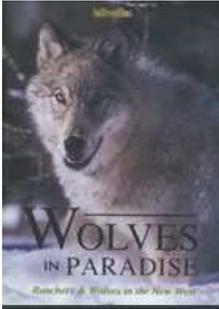
WHAT: #1 Wolves in Paradise
#2 Affluenza

WHERE: Sanctuary, Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Decatur
3773 N. Macarthur Road (Corner of Mound & Macarthur), Decatur, IL
Screen Projection with Stereo Sound [for info contact 217-620-2134]

WHEN: 7:00 PM, Saturday, April 18 (57 and 56 minute films)

ADMISSION: Donations Accepted -- No One Turned Away

CONCESSIONS: Fresh theater-style popcorn sold; healthier drinks available



Sponsored by the Community
Environmental Council



Sponsored by
the Audubon
Society of
Decatur

Wolves in Paradise is a 2007 film about ranchers and environmentalists who team up to protect open space from developers and to learn how to share with wolves this last wild corner of the West. Set in the soaring mountains and majestic valleys of southwest Montana, this is a tale of survival as ranchers face the challenge of living with wolves in the decade after the top predator was reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park. The documentary follows the growing wolf packs as they leave the sanctuary of the park and make their first incursions into Paradise Valley. "How can we have the rancher and the wolf together? That's the part we need to get figured out, all right. That's the tough one," says Paradise Valley rancher Martin Davis. Davis copes with the frustration of running livestock in wolf country, while fending off another threat to his way of life: encroaching development. His traditional, family outfit is contrasted with the vast Sun Ranch in nearby Madison "The quality of this production is excellent, cinematography, editing, sound, much as we've grown to expect from projects sponsored by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Valley, operated as a conservation experiment that tries to accommodate both wolves and cattle with unexpected, dramatic results. This film is highly recommended for its balanced treatment of a very controversial subject." (Cliff Glaviano, Educational Media Review)

Affluenza is a 1997 film that diagnoses the "disease" of materialism and prescribes its antidote, simple living. We have more stuff, but less time, and our quality of life seems to be deteriorating. By using personal stories, expert commentary, hilarious old film clips, and "uncommercial" breaks to illuminate the nature and extent of the disease, AFFLUENZA has appealed to widely diverse audiences: from freshmen orientation programs to consumer credit counseling, and from religious congregations to marketing classes. With the help of historians and archival film, this documentary reveals the forces that have dramatically transformed us from a nation that prized thriftiness - with strong beliefs in "plain living and high thinking" - into the ultimate consumer society. "If every American watched AFFLUENZA our Gross Domestic Happiness would rise in no time." (Peter Barnes, Founder, Working Assets) "The people with whom I watched the film...chuckled throughout, injected a few cries of outrage, and wanted to hang around and talk about it afterward. They wanted a copy to show to their kids, their parents, their class at school, their church group. They not only got the point, they loved the point." (Donella H. Meadows Amicus Journal) "An intelligent and original take on very serious issues - No one's done this better." (Deanna Kamiel, Film Professor, New School for Social Research, NYC)

NEXT SHOW: King Corn, Saturday, May 2, 7:30 pm

[All proceeds will be donated to the Green Sanctuary Committee of the UUFDF]



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

April 2009 Issue

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“Promoting freedom, reason,
And tolerance in religion”

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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.



April Birthdays

Ken Robertson April 06



Shana Zaker April 06



Kathy Sorensen April 21



For

Contact

At:

Name Tags

Kathy Kline

kkline923@aol.com

Address Changes

Tim Rooney

uufdnewsletter@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions

Tim Rooney

uufdnewsletter@gmail.com

Website suggestions

June Allison

JuneChelso@springnet1.com or (217) 423-1813

APRIL 2009 ISSUE