

July 2009



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

3773 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, IL 62526
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www.uufd.org
www.myspace.com/uufd_il



Minister:

Rev. John Biedler
Office: (217) 875-5442
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Cell: (217) 972-2184
jsbiedler@aol.com

Office Hours:

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

President:

Heather Stoa

Past President:

Julie Pajer

Vice President:

Tim Rooney

Treasurer:

Mark Sorensen

Secretary:

Mary Lovell

RE Director:

Cassandra Meyen

Board Members at Large:

Jeanne Robertson
Rita Schwake
Judy Thistlethwaite

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.

July 5, 2009 No Service because of July 4th weekend

July 12, 2009 – “Robert Ingersoll’s Thought” by Roger Leiser

Ingersoll was a prominent politician from Peoria, Illinois, and nationally known as “the great agnostic orator” during the Golden Age of Freethought in the late 1800's. In this service Roger, fascinated with the writings of Ingersoll, will share many of his ideas. Roger is a past President of the Fellowship, a retiree from Staleys (1991), and a graduate of the University of Illinois. A discussion to follow the service.

July 19 2009 – “Apatheism” by Rev. John Biedler

Nothing less than “a major civilizational advance” is said to be occurring across America according to Jonathan Rauch of the The Atlantic Monthly. Many call it apatheism, a concept not concerned with what one believes religiously, but how one believes it. It is an attitude towards religion to which Rauch, himself an atheist, subscribes, along with people of all faiths. Could you be an apatheist and not know it? Today you'll find out.

Showing few signs of apatheism at UUFd, we will also be welcoming new members into the Fellowship this day.

July 26, 2009 – Church-wide Potluck at the home of Heather and Terry Stoa

With the Stoa's home just up the driveway from the Fellowship in their beautiful gray house on the hill, it will be easy to park at the Fellowship and walk you and your favorite dish to this all-church potluck. Feel free to bring your family and a friend to enjoy a time of great food and always interesting conversation.

Next Newsletter deadline: July 15, 2009

Congregational Meeting July 12, 11:30

When the Fellowship held its annual meeting in April, we voted to meet again in July if there was still a budget deficit. We are indeed in the position of having to make difficult financial choices. Please make every effort to attend this important congregational meeting. The meeting will begin at 11:30 following the service and refreshments. More information will be mailed to you prior to the July

Joint Board and Committee Chairs Meeting:

July 12th Following the Congregational Meeting

All committee chairs are encouraged to attend the July 12th Board meeting to share in greater detail the work of the committees. Committee chairs are asked to mark their calendars to meet with the Board at the first Board meeting each quarter: July 12th, October 11th, January 10th, and April 11th.

Books, Bites and Botanicals

Books, Bites and Botanicals will be our major fund raiser on Saturday, October 10. Save your discarded books and tell family, neighbors and friends that we would appreciate book donations. Eric Devore will be in charge of book sales. We have limited storage, but Vern Thistlethwaite (429-5923) will pick up book donations that cannot be held over. Marge Evans will be in charge of the plant sale, so if you can get some of your house plants separated and started now, they will be pretty for BBB. Plants being discarded make good starter stock. Rita Schwake will be in charge of the "Bites" (delectable homemade breads, cookies etc.). Many of these can be prepared ahead and frozen. Judy Thistlethwaite will be the general chairperson for our fundraiser.

UUFD.org

The UUFD web site is up and running. Visit it to learn about upcoming services and activities. Read the latest newsletter or check out back issues. Confirm upcoming events on the calendar. Visit the Members Section for minutes from Board and committee meetings, read the Constitution, Organizational Manual, and Trust documents, and peruse the monthly financial reports. If you have not looked at the Members Section, log in with your first and last name in the user box and then click Forgot Password. You will receive your password via e-mail. Once you log in the first time, you can edit your profile and choose a password of your liking. If you encounter difficulties with the Members Section or the Web site, please contact Heather Stoa at: hhstoa@gmail.com or call her at home: 875-3752.

Rev. Biedler's Hours

Rev. Biedler attended the minister's conferences of the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association the end of June and begins vacation immediately afterwards, his office hours will be Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. only on July . You may reach John at (217) 972-2184 or by leaving a message at the church office at (217) 875-5442. John also makes himself available at other times and welcomes your calls.

Religious Education Classes

Sunday the 12th

Sunday the 19th

Sunday the 26th

July 2009 Calendar of Events

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

Visitors are always welcome!

Tuesday, July 7th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group

Wednesday, July 8th

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

Thursday, July 9th

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Tuesday, July 14th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group

Tuesday, July 21st

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group

Wednesday, July 22nd

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

Thursday, July 23rd

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Tuesday, July 28th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group

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 July 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 will not be meeting during the summer months and will resume in the Fall with the reading of "Jesus for the Non Religious" by Episcopal Bishop John Spong. Contact Joan Brown or Rev. Biedler if interested – guests are always welcome.

The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group—The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group normally meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, but in July it will meet the 8th and 22nd, 10 a.m. to noon. We are reading and discussing the book "Living Buddha, Living Christ" by Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh. We always welcome guests, setting out an empty chair for anyone who would like to visit.

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...

Did you notice on page 1 of this newsletter the title of the sermon for July 19th? Without giving away the sermon, I'd like to wade into these waters just a little because I found the ideas of combining apathy and theism fascinating – I hope you do too.

According to Jonathan Rausch of the Atlantic Monthly, there is an ever growing attitude of what he calls religious “apatheism” in America. He defines it as “a disinclination to care all that much about one’s own religion, and an even stronger disinclination to care about other people’s.” Rausch is an atheist mind you. He went on...

Apatheists care less about what anyone believes, but more about how one believes it. So apatheists are more comfortable viewing religion as a personal preference and do not like to get caught up in the details of different perceptions of God, or a lack thereof. Apatheists are not anti-religion; they just don't care enough about it to want to insert themselves in the religious lives of others.

As I understand the concept, apatheists would end up at one end of a continuum of religious attitudes, the other end of which would hold evangelical fundamentalists of many stripes, those people who not only follow the cut-and-dried answers of their rigid belief systems, whether they be Christian, Islamic, Jewish or even atheistic, but who expect others to agree with them or (and here's the kicker) suffer the consequences (hell, jihad, or intellectual insignificance, as the case may be).

As one delves into the concept, you find apatheists comfortable viewing religion more as a personal preference, refraining from getting caught up in the details of different perceptions of God, or a lack thereof. So. apatheists are not anti-religion; they just don't care enough about it to want to insert themselves in the religious lives of others.

Among those who you would think would quickly claim apatheism would be atheists and agnostics, but perhaps even more importantly, and the real triumph of apatheism in Rauch's view, is that he says they can be believers, too. The major qualifying factor that makes someone an apatheist, then, is not their belief system per se, but their attitude about their belief system, and about belief systems in general.

On the surface, apatheism sounds like a good idea, and compared to the rigidity of most branches of fundamentalism, it is definitely a cultural improvement in my opinion. But I have some critiques, which I will offer in my sermon on July 19th.

In faithful service,

John

Really, Plain, Old-Fashioned Soap is All You Need

Submitted by the UUFD Green Sanctuary Committee

It seems like most items found on the grocery store cleaning shelves these days has that word, “antibacterial” on the label. In fact, about 75 percent of liquid soaps have that word ever so proudly displayed, and so we are led to conclude that it just make perfect sense that we ought to add these new antibacterial products to our cleaning arsenals. But are we really cleaner than ever before? No, not necessarily.

At issue are antibacterial products that include chemicals such as triclosan, which is known for its bacteria-fighting properties. According to Peter Vikesland of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, in research published on Environmental Science & Technology’s Research ASAP website, he found that the triclosan antimicrobial agent used in household dishwashing soaps reacts with chlorinated water to produce unacceptably high levels of chloroform, which is known to be a highly probable human carcinogen.

Using antibacterial cleaners also may be hurting your baby’s immune system rather than keeping him healthy. A recent Italian study found that exposure to bacteria is essential for development of an infant’s immune system. A baby must be exposed to germs during its first year in order to develop the antibodies needed to fight infection later in life. There are also environmental problems with the over-use of antibacterial agents, which may, in turn, lead to health problems later on. (Sadly, I’ve known of some who’ve used antibacterial dishwashing liquid as a substitute for their children’s “Bubble Baths!”)

Antibiotics kill more than the disease-causing bacteria to which they are directed, but, they kill other susceptible bacteria, as well. Once the ecosystem is cleared of susceptible bacteria, resistant bacteria can multiply and then dominate the environment due to lack of competition, resulting in drug-resistant “superbugs”.

Since the overuse of antibacterial soaps has led to the resistance to such antimicrobial disinfectants & medicines, US scientists and health experts have recently asked the FDA to pass restrictions on antibacterial soaps. It has been recommended that antibacterial soaps should only be used in medical facilities or in homes of the elderly and the sick, if at all.

There is a great deal of evidence that the use of antibacterial soap in the normal household is unnecessary and causes far more harm than good, both to human health and the environment. Science has produced a growing body of studies showing that standard soap removes bacteria just as effectively as soaps with antimicrobial chemical additives. Plain, regular soap gets rid of bacteria, by adhering it to the soap’s fatty acids, which become encapsulated in droplets of water and then washed away. The really great news for old-fashioned soap lovers is that there are now USDA Certified Organic soaps commonly found at your local natural products and grocery stores. A trusted online site for you to consider is this one...

<http://www.drbronner.com/> You’ll find a lot of useful information there, as well! So, enjoy trying out those safer, natural varieties of soap in every room of your home!

From the President..

Greetings,

Several years ago I attended the Rotary International Conference in Copenhagen. The Rotary International president highlighted membership as a key concern for Rotarians. Using the Winter Olympics as an example he talked of the sold out venues for snow boarding. As the athletes flew down the mountainside, they did all kinds of daring flips, turns and jumps, and with every new move, the crowd whooped and cheered. The crowds were made up of young people, and there was great excitement in the stands. In contrast, the cross-country skiing venues were never sold out. The athletes shushed through the snow – and when they completed the race, there was polite applause at the finish line. The crowds were older, and there wasn't much excitement. The president warned that Rotary is much like these two venues. He told us we must increase the excitement and the number of younger members. If we don't, in 30 years there will be no Rotary.

Like most service organizations and mainstream denominations, membership is a concern for UUFd. We have a wonderful congregation with many dedicated individuals, but the reality is that we are getting older. In order to sustain the Fellowship, we must focus on membership, and that means attracting younger people to UUFd. To do that, we must have quality Sunday programs and a viable Religious Education program.

The best way to increase membership is one-on-one face-to-face. Ask others to join us on Sunday morning or invite them to one of our affiliated groups: Humanists group, Christian Covenant group, Buddhists group, UU Men's Lunch on Fridays, Drumming Circle, Children's Group on Tuesday evenings, Women's Book Club or the Wednesday Morning Covenant group. We have a UUFd family picnic scheduled for July 26th at 11:00. What a great time to invite a guest. This is an excellent opportunity to mingle and have fun while getting to know others in the Fellowship (and we also know that we have the best cooks at UUFd!).

Responsibility for membership falls to each of us. This is not a function solely assigned to the minister. Jennifer Sekosky has developed a terrific flyer that will be posted around town. The message on the flyer about what we offer as a Fellowship is clear, "If you are looking for an open minded congregation that allows you to seek your own spiritual truth, while upholding the worth and dignity of every person, we are the religious home for you." There are additional copies of the flyer at UUFd and one is included with this newsletter. Pick up a copy and share it with a friend or neighbor or post it at work or on a community bulletin board.

Volunteer to be Service Leader or to give the Children's Message during Sunday services. For most of us, it has been a while since we have had children in RE, but we are all still needed. Sign up to teach or assist on Sunday mornings. We have curriculum materials and a schedule of activities that the children follow each week. An important component of growth is providing a strong RE program. To attract younger families, we must have programming for the children as well as their parents. When parents and children see all of us helping with RE, they know that we value RE and care for the youngest members of our congregation.

If you haven't seen members or friends on Sundays for a while, give them a call and ask them to join you. Offer to stop by their homes and pick them up. Membership is not only about attracting new members, but also about retaining our current members. Please consider what you can do to keep the Fellowship alive as a valuable liberal religious presence in our community.

In Service,

Heather Stoa

New Policies Adopted

The UUFDF Board voted to adopt three new policies at its June meeting: the Affiliated Groups Policy, the Parking Policy, and the Designated Funds Policy. The Affiliated Groups Policy affects groups who use the Fellowship on an ongoing basis. Groups must request and receive approval from the Board to meet at the Fellowship. This includes groups comprised entirely of UUFDF members as well as those comprised primarily of individuals who are not members of the Fellowship. The Parking Policy is for the safety of members and guests attending UUFDF activities. It protects the Fellowship from liability if an unauthorized person is injured or causes injury to another person or property or if a vehicle belonging to someone not attending a UUFDF event is damaged while on our property. The Designated Funds Policy ensures that monies received by the Fellowship are in keeping with the needs and desires of the Fellowship. The policies are as follows:

Affiliated Groups Policy Adopted

Voluntary organizations of UUFDF members and friends, designed to further interests of UUFDF may be formed with the consent of the Board. The affiliated groups may use the facilities of UUFDF under the supervision of the Board. Affiliated groups will establish their own guidelines and select their own leaders. Each affiliated group shall submit a written annual report of its activities to the Board by March 31st. Affiliated groups are strongly encouraged to make a donation to UUFDF to offset building usage expenses.

Parking Policy

Church parking is provided for the use of members and guests who are attending functions at the Fellowship. The parking policy sign is posted on the lot and listed on the UUFDF Web site to inform the general public that all other parking is prohibited.

In the event that there is use by someone other than the members and guests, the vehicle will be towed by the company under contract to UUFDF. Vehicle owners will pay the towing fee directly to the towing company.

The towing company may be called by the Minister, Board President or Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee upon ascertaining that the vehicle in questions is in violation of the posted parking policy. Members should notify the Minister, Board President or Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee if they are aware of a violation.

Designated Funds Policy

The UUFDF Trust has been established as an instrument for long term investments and receives gifts from friends and members of the Fellowship. However, there are times when individuals wish to give funds directly to the Fellowship for specific needs. Before the Board accepts designated funds, the Board will review the offer and may choose to:

1. Accept the funds according to the donor's stated purpose,
2. Ask for modifications of conditions, or
3. Reject the funds in their entirety

A separate account shall be maintained by the Treasurer for designated funds.

If designated funds are not used within 10 years, they will be transferred to the UUFDF Trust unless specific provisions were made at the time of acceptance.

Is religion keeping you from going to church?



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is a welcoming congregation made up of a variety of spiritual beliefs.

- Christians
- Buddhists
- Humanists
- Earth-Centered Religions
- Those without a religious label
- And many others

Joining together for community, fellowship and thoughtful discussion on topics of interest.

If you are looking for an open minded congregation that allows you to seek your own spiritual truth, while upholding the worth and dignity of every person, we are the religious home for you.



Learn more at www.uufd.org, call 217.875.5442 or join us for Sunday services at 10:15 a.m.

3773 North MacArthur Road - Decatur, IL 62526

AMUUSE 2009 Summer Camps: A great place to be single

Saugatuck! Sea Cruise: August 9 - 15, 2009

If you have never taken a cruise, let this be an introduction. We'll have many fun excursions, beautiful sunsets over the bow of our ship, walks on the sandy beaches of our ports of call, and our chef will please your palate every day with delectable dishes. Psst: This isn't a real cruise ship, but we can always pretend!

Get your Pass port (camp registration) ready and join us at the dock (front porch of the activity center) at our August Saugatuck Camp (<http://www.amuuse.org>).



The following are excursions happening every morning of the week, from which you can choose for your week's schedule.

SECOND CHANCES: Mary Repass - As the years go by, we may regret chances missed or be proud of chances successfully taken. In this group, we'll look back over our past "second chances" and then look forward to our chances yet to be taken.

IMPROVISATION : Len Proctor -Get in touch with the intuitive, authentic fun-loving side of yourself. We will learn to do improv by playing interesting games and fun exercises.

SOUL WORK : Jill Lange - Contemplating the end puts the beginning in perspective and offers insight on what to do with the middle where we are now. Sessions will include brief meditation, some activity and shared personal experiences. We will explore ways to nourish spirit and pay attention to soul.

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT: Janet Chandler - Bring your voice, musical instruments, percussion and a body ready to move to enjoy mornings of music and movement. We will sing, drum, jam with instruments and otherwise create sound and music.

DANCING: Floyd Colosky - This will be for beginners, but intermediates are welcome. We will learn some basic steps of several dances, learn to listen to the beat of the music, but primarily learn to relax and have fun dancing.

MASSAGE: Sue Breen - If you have never given or received a massage, or if you are experienced, you will enjoy this group. You will be taught a variety of strokes and techniques in a safe supportive environment.

Sexuality and Aging – Bonne Sue Adams. Using the new 2004 SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States) curriculum, entitled "New Expectations - Sexuality Education for Mid and Later Life", this Group will look at the topic of Sexuality and Aging. The group will explore sexuality as a rich and complex area of human behavior that continues throughout our entire lifespan.

The **AFTERNOON ACTIVITY STEWARD** will see to it that there is a long list of possible afternoon activities. If you have an activity or a skill to share bring it along.

Each **EVENING** will be different, from theme costume party, to crazy camp show, to a special Captain's dress up dinner, and on and on. One or two evenings we will also experience Dances of Universal Peace. Of course every evening ends with dancing to our DJ's music as well as table games.



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

July 2009 Issue

**“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.



July Birthdays

Linda Shroyer, July 06



John Hays, July 21



Ron Shafer, July 25



For

Contact

At:

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Tim Rooney

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Website suggestions

June Allison

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