

# The Flaming Chalice

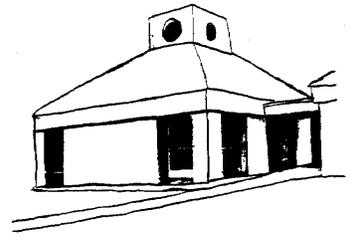
## Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2342  
Valdosta, GA 31604

Minister: Rev. Fred Howard  
<http://uuvaldosta.org/>

229-242-3714

e-mail: [uuvaldosta@yahoo.com](mailto:uuvaldosta@yahoo.com)



### What's going on... **August 2012**

W	Aug. 1	6:00 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing
Sun	Aug. 5	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "The Role of Stories in Spiritual Growth," Doug Tanner Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
F	Aug. 10	6:30 PM	Potluck and Book Discussion
Sun	Aug. 12	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "Spirituality, Health, and Healing," Dr. Michael Stoltzfus Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	Aug. 13	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
W	Aug. 15		<i>September newsletter deadline; however, please send during 1<sup>st</sup> week of August, if at all possible.</i>
F	Aug. 17	6:30 PM	Pizza and a Movie at the church
Sun	Aug. 19	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "Can We All Get Along?," Dr. Carol Stiles, Meet & Greet Coffee after the service <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i>
Sun	Aug. 26	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "Celestial Tropism," David Rogers, Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
Th	Sept. 6	6:00 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing

**August**... Although summer weather will be with us a while longer, school starts this month---precollege and university ---- so vacations for students and teachers alike are winding down. The church will remain on its summer scheduling until September, though the summer months have been busy with the volunteer programming Doug Tanner has provided us. Thanks Doug for your hard work! Thanks to Lars Leader, Fred Howard, and Dee Tait and others for what was a really successful Shared Sunday Service with Serenity last month. Watch for pictures and an article in September. Come when you can. Part of our community is missing when you are away!

## Sunday Services

### Sunday, August 5 - Doug Tanner, "The Role of Stories in Spiritual Growth"

Stories and Myths may be as old as civilization itself or even older. They reflect our shared experiences, dreams and struggles. But, do they play a role in spiritual growth and if so how can they help us learn and grow spiritually. Join us for a discussion of the use of stories in spiritual growth and how we can use them to build the beloved community.

### Sunday, August 12 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, "Spirituality, Health, and Healing"

We will discuss some of the contemporary research that investigates the role that diverse spiritual practices play in the quest for healing and health. In particular, we will attend to the unique, long-term dimensions associated with a variety of chronic illnesses. We will address the meaning of physical, moral, and spiritual cultivation, healing, and renewal when an illness is persistent and cure is unlikely.

### Sunday, August 19 – Dr. Carol Stiles, "Can We All Get Along?"

Rodney King uttered these words during the Los Angeles riots of 1992, which started after a jury acquitted four white police officers, who were on trial for the alleged – and videotaped - beating of King during an arrest for drunk driving. Some saw his plaintive question as a message of hope, while others ridiculed him for various reasons. How far have we come in the 20 years since? What drives us to take sides on one issue or another - and not be able to see the other side? Can we ever just get along?

*Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Our contributions this month will go to Hopes and Dreams Riding Facility, Inc., near Quitman, GA, which offers therapeutic services for veterans and their families, through horseback riding, camping, fishing, and other activities. The mission statement includes "to restore peace to their lives and heal the battle wounds that can't be seen." <http://www.hopesanddreamsridingfacility.com>*

### Sunday, August 26 – David Rogers, "Celestial Tropism"

Colors appearing in such Hubble images as Pillars of Creation arbitrarily depict different levels of information, such as various wavelengths of light, differences between the velocity of matter approach or receding from us, chemical composition, temperature, and so forth. As a result, colorful images tell us much about the active dynamics of the subjects we observe. This is not how the human eye sees these light sources, yet, the resulting aesthetic qualities overwhelm us with their unintended beauty; and, if one knows their astronomical code, they hint at beauty we cannot see directly.

Hubble's images arise as some of the first stained glass windows of the 21st century's scientific cathedrals; and the public embraces them as enthusiastically as evidence of the light of Jesus Christ and God the Great Architect as if they were supplicant peasants entering the kaleidoscopic color space produced by Chartres Cathedral's stained glass windows in the 12th century.

## Religious Education

**For Children:** The RE program for children under 15 years of age meets at 10:45 AM concurrent with the Sunday morning service. Older young people will remain with the adult service. Two adults are needed each Sunday to help with RE. – please see Sue Bailey to be put on a rotating list to volunteer for this activity.



### MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

Our minister, Rev. Fred Howard, takes a break during the summer months to "refuel" for the coming year. Watch for his regular column to return in the fall.

Fred Howard is our part time minister. You may contact Rev. Howard by email (preferable) at [fredhoward3622@gmail.com](mailto:fredhoward3622@gmail.com). He is available for consultations on Monday and Wednesday afternoons on most weeks from 2-5PM by appointment. Fred welcomes any questions you may have about membership in our congregation. He is also available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

### Sangha Tuesdays

5:30-7:00 PM at the church

The KTD Buddhist reading and meditation group continues to meet on Tuesday evenings at the church. Everyone interested in Buddhist practice and meditation is welcome. The group shares tea from 5:30-6, sits and meditates (Buddhist shamata meditation) from 6-6:30, and discusses the reading from 6:30-7. The group is currently reading Robert Thurman's book, "The Jewel Tree of Tibet." If someone is unable to sit on the floor, it is perfectly alright to use a chair. Otherwise, people should supply their own pillow for sitting. The group shares books and the liturgy.

### At the Church-in-the-Woods

**New Hope Christian Community Church-** Sunday evenings: Choir practice at 4:30 PM. Service at 6:00 PM.

<http://www.wix.com/nhccc1/nhccc>

**Taoist Tai Chi** – Monday and Thursday: (*Summer Hours*) 6:00-7:30 PM. Beginning Monday, August 20: *New Beginners Class* 7-8 PM; *Continuing Class* 5:30-7 PM. Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin.

**PFLAG Meeting** – 4th Tuesday each month, 7:00PM  
Contact: Doug Tanner The web page for PFLAG Valdosta:  
<http://community.pflag.org/Valdosta>

### INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

If you are interested in becoming a member of our fellowship, we encourage you to talk with our minister, Rev. Fred Howard or our President, Carol Stiles or Membership Director, Kimberly Tanner. We welcome your questions, and we extend an open invitation to all who want to join our liberal community of faith.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings for August! It has already been a busy summer - in June, several people participated in helping serve a meal and distributing clothes and food to farmworkers in conjunction with the South Georgia Farmworkers Health Project. Thanks to all who donated food and clothing or cash (as part of the June Share-the-Plate) to purchase items and to those who volunteered!

UU's have a great history of social justice and community organizing and I look forward to our continuing efforts over the next year. Please suggest to me or any board member, local organizations that could benefit from our monthly Share-the-Plate contributions, in which all non-pledge donations are contributed to the named organization.

Our thanks go to Doug Tanner for developing a great set of Sunday programs this summer! In the summer, all services are guest speakers and it can be challenging (Doug is always taking suggestions for speakers, btw). Rev. Howard will return to his normal schedule in September. Amy Wells is off to a great start as secretary, and we are glad to have her on the board - thanks, Amy!

Summer is also different in that we are joined by students from the Governor's Honors Program held at VSU - great to have the young people present with us in the sanctuary!

In community, Carol Stiles

## Social Action Activities

### Break Bread Together

Our date for meal deliveries with the Break Bread Together program is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday (and 5<sup>th</sup> when there is one) of each month. If you would like to help deliver meals beginning about 11:00 AM, please contact Frank or Rosie Asbury.

### South Georgia Farmworkers Health Project

Members of our congregation helped serve food at a migrant worker camp and also provided clothing and food items at several migrant clinics in our area sponsored by students from Emory University Medical School.



UU members helping serve a meal prepared by St. Barnabas Episcopal Church on June 27 at a worker camp in southern Lowndes County. Teagan Dunn was helpful with her knowledge of Spanish.

On the following day at another work camp, Doug Tanner brought tables to display clothes for adults, some of which were furnished by UU members and friends, and tables

full of beautiful clothes for children, furnished primarily by St John's Catholic Church. Doug and Dee Tait handed out bags for their items, when needed, and occasionally kept an eye on children while mothers "shopped."

### 5K Run/Walk, "Home Run" - August 4, 2012,

At the VSU North Campus parking lot (North Oak Street and Burton) Valdosta-Lowndes County Habitat for Humanity in celebration of their 25th year building houses, is holding its first ever 5K Run/Walk, "Home Run". Early Registration is \$15 a person or \$48 for families (children under 18 years); On Race Day - Everyone is \$25; \$10 for Ghost Registration (donation). Contact: Megan at 229-245-1330, ext 31 or email developmentdtr@bellsouth.net

## Thank You! Thank You!

**For layleading services:** Betty Derrick, Lars Leader, Valerie Webster, Dee Tait

**For Sunday Service music:** Keith Johnson, Doug Tanner

**For Stories for All Ages:** Sue Bailey, Amy Wells

**For helping with Children's RE:** Sue Bailey, Emmilee Bailey, Rosie Asbury, Teagan Dunn, Rosie Asbury, Sara Wells, Meredith Covert, Amy Wells

**For serving as Meet and Greet Hosts:** Betty Derrick, Doug Tanner, Dee Tait

**For greeting visitors:** Dee Tait, Lars Leader, Kimberly Tanner, Doug Tanner, Betty Derrick

**For delivering Break Bread meals:** Frank and Rosie Asbury,

**For cleaning the church:** Frank Asbury, Lars Leader

**For sweeping the sidewalk:** Doug Tanner

**For serving on the 2012-13 Board of Directors:** Carol Stiles, Doug Tanner, Amy Wells, Susan Bailey, Kimberly Tanner, Jim Ingram, Rosie Asbury

**For coordinating transportation for the Governor's Honors Students over recent weeks:** Lars Leader and others who may have helped with transportation.

**For helping with the church cleanup in July before the shared Sunday services with Serenity Christian Church:** Everyone who helped make the church sparkle!

**For helping with the potluck and other activities for the shared services Sunday with Serenity Christian Church:** Dee Tait for organizing our volunteers and coordinating with Serenity members and all who helped out and provided food and others who were involved to make this our third successful shared service Sunday.

**For helping with the Migrant Worker Clinics in June and donating clothes and food for workers and their families:** Dawn Renner, and Tim Dunn family, Dee Tait, Betty Derrick, Carol Stiles, Doug Tanner, and others who helped with this project.

## ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

*Keep in your thoughts*

- ❖ Our members and friends who have recently lost close friends who are experiencing health concerns...

## Let's Have Some Fun!!

### BOOK DISCUSSION AND POTLUCK

Friday, August 10 - 6:30 PM - At the church

*(This is a rescheduled date for the recently postponed gathering.)* The book is "The Orphan Master's Son" by Adam Johnson. This novel takes place in North Korea, a country of hunger, corruption, casual cruelty, where people's lives are constantly changing for no reason whatsoever. What if the "life story" you are "assigned" arbitrarily changes many times during your life? Whether you have read the book or not, there should be an interesting discussion, especially following Doug Tanner's service on stories and spiritual growth. Bring a dish to share. Coffee and tea will be provided. You are welcome to bring other beverages. We socialize over our potluck meal for the first hour and then promptly begin our book discussion drawing to a close with the selection of our next book by about an hour later. We have been selecting books that deal with difference. Contact: Betty Derrick.

### PIZZA AND A MOVIE

Friday, August 17 at the church

6:30 PM for pizza; movie starts at 7 PM

The movie this month is "Hotel Rwanda." We will meet at 6:30 and show the film at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Thank you for donating \$5.00 for pizza and drinks.

Irish Director Terry George co-wrote the script for Hotel Rwanda, a 2004 American film, based on the Rwandan Genocide arising during the 1994 civil war fought between Hutus, the 85% majority tribe, and the 14% minority Tutsis. The film won a number of awards including those from the Berlin and Toronto International Film Festivals. Tutu anger over Belgium's political decision on the eve of its departure from its former colony to hand rule to the Tutsis led them to slaughter of almost a million Tutsis after they came to power. Hotelier Paul Rusesabagina (Don Cheadle) manages the Belgian owned luxury Hôtel des Mille Collines located in Kagali, Rwanda. He establishes bonds and credibility among elite fellow Hutus through his under the table, slick business acumen. He is a man seemingly capable of catering against all odds to their expensive tastes, whims, and private affairs. Well informed about the pulse of political, business, and social events, Paul recognizes pending catastrophe led by the Interahamwe militia about to befall Tutsis threatens death to his Tutsi wife, Tatiana (Sophie Okonedo), and their children. Although European guests and staff successfully flee violent events engulfing the hotel, Paul and his family fail to escape as well. After gaining temporary safety by retreating to the hotel, Tatiana implores Paul to extend sanctuary protecting her and their children to include neighbors and friends. Left to his own devices as the remaining hotel administrator, and supported by its Belgian owners, he risks his life and his family's by taking responsibility for allowing Tutsi and sympathetic Hutu guests to check in. Word of this dangerous act begins drawing more and more people to the emerging sanctuary, especially when UN Colonel Oliver (Nick Nolte), (based on Roméo Dallaire) discovers to his disgust this organization and the world will not authorize him or other UN Peacekeepers to protect Tutsis under their direct authority. He appeals to Paul for his assistance. Rather than construct a panoramic portrayal of wholesale genocide and worldwide

indifference to it, George focuses on the courage of a handful of people who take inspiration from Paul's example. Their altruism and willingness to accept whatever fate befalls Paul enable him to save 1,268 Tutsi and moderate Hutu refugees. Contemptuously, George explains motivation for his film arises in part from his perception: "It's simple, ... African lives are not seen as valuable as the lives of Europeans or Americans." ("Hotel Rwanda Portrays Hero Who Fought Genocide." National Geographic. Retrieved 07.15.2012). In Paul's eyes, each human life is inherently valuable.

Contact: David L. Rodgers

**Games Night:** There will be no Games Night or Fire Pit until fall. Contact: Susan Bailey

### Let's talk kitchen and trash and volunteering!!!

First the volunteering--if you would like to know how to volunteer to help out at the church, contact Doug Tanner and ask to receive the e-mails requesting volunteers for Sunday morning activities like Meet and Greet. *(This is a special list, not the general announcements list you may already receive.)* Someone will be glad to fill you in on what your responsibility is if you volunteer. We appreciate it when you just bring something for Meet and Greet, but that means some Sundays we have a lot and other times very little. It's best when we know who has volunteered and know that each Sunday is covered.

When you do volunteer to help out in the kitchen, be aware that the church tries to be a good citizen, minimizing trash with recycling and reusing whenever possible. In the cabinets, we have plenty of dishes, cups, and flatware (and soon glasses) and a dishwasher. Throwaway paper products should be minimized and Styrofoam generally avoided. We have recycling containers available.

Be aware that the cups and dishes immediately to the left and right of the sink in the kitchen belong to the church. The three shelves in one of the cabinets to the left of the stove, which contain cups, tea, and some other items, belong to the Taoist Tai Chi group which rents our church. Do not use these cups as they belong to specific individuals in that group. The coffee pot underneath that counter also belongs to the Tai Chi folks.

Now the trash talk! The church does not have garbage pickup. We handle our trash and recycling by various ones of us taking it home after the services or other events to dispose of in our domestic garbage at home. If you are helping in the kitchen after an event take a bag home with you.

Since many of you helped out with making our church sparkle this past month, you realize that we depend on you to volunteer from time to time to clean our church. We do not have janitorial services at the church. All of the cleaning is handled by volunteers, including being sure the bathrooms are fresh and have paper and soap products each Sunday morning and for special events. Plan to help out from time to time.

Thanks to all who help with these mundane but important and necessary tasks. If you want to know more or volunteer let it be known and get your name on the special e-mail list for volunteers. You will get the messages and volunteer only as you are able to do so. Thank you to all who are already volunteering. BD.

## UU General Assembly Report-Lars Leader

General Assembly, our UU Association's annual meeting of congregations from across the U.S. and around the world, was held this year in Phoenix, Arizona. It was a much anticipated event, not only because GA is always educational and inspiring, but even more so because of its designation as "Justice GA". Our Association had earlier considered boycotting Arizona as a location for the Assembly, due to the recent passage in Arizona of legislation targeting undocumented immigrants. However, last year's GA delegates voted to go ahead to have GA in Phoenix, so that we could stand in solidarity with local organizations working for improvement in the conditions of marginalized peoples affected by the laws and attitudes prevalent in Arizona. So, the plan was for this GA to focus on justice issues. As UUA President Morales put it, this was "a chance to participate in workshops and trainings and hear speakers that help us learn how to form these powerful partnerships wherever we are in our congregations, in our communities, so that we Unitarian Universalists become an even more powerful force for good in our world."

And it certainly turned out to be a learning experience for me! I attended a number of training sessions on topics such as: creating just and sustainable communities that counter oppressions; partnering congregations and community organizations; and storytelling, mobilization, and social media. Both informative and engaging was a solo drama performance by Jose Torres-Tama, who created characters based on interviews of Latino immigrants.

A community celebration with partners Friday evening in a downtown park brought together GA attendees and participants from local Latino justice groups for entertainment and sharing of stories about the immigrant experience. We heard about struggles, losses, and steps toward justice from people in fear of family separation and barriers towards having normal lives. On Saturday evening, a candlelight vigil was held at Sheriff Joe Arpaio's Tent City Jail. More than 2,000 GA attendees, along with local partners and members of other faith communities sang, listened to speakers, and held up candles and signs just outside the jail where people were crowded together on wooden planks under tents in the heat of the desert summer. The vigil received local and national reporting.

As our UU Valdosta delegate, I attended UUA business meetings during the GA. At one of these plenary sessions, the delegates voted on the Congregation Study/Action Issue (CSAI) for 2012-2016. From five proposed CSAIs on the ballot, the one overwhelmingly chosen on a second ballot was Reproductive Justice: Expanding Our Social Justice Calling. Our congregation will receive more information about this CSAI in coming months.

A highlight of GA is always the Ware Lecture. This year Maria Hinojosa, a leading national journalist, told us about some of her interviews and reporting on the detention and deportation of immigrants, both legal and not. It was a sobering and revealing talk.



Phoenix tent city vigil at GA

## Notes from Kids' RE - Sue Bailey

We've been quite creative in RE over the last month as we keep learning together and search for what is true and right in life (Principles 3 & 4.) We've been wondering about the sun, moon, and stars, asking questions, and learning from each other. In one recent lesson, we shared what we know is true about the moon and also what is make believe. Some of the things we discovered about the moon are that it orbits the earth, it's really big even though it looks small in the sky, there is a lot of rock and dust on the moon, and it doesn't produce its own light. We also talked about the Man in the Moon and where the idea of it being made of green cheese came from. We all agreed that these two things are not really true about the moon, but they are fun to wonder about, too! During other lessons, we shared information about the sun and the stars and read several stories. One was a Nigerian creation story called "Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky." In our most recent lesson, we all shared what we know about the sun and made sunflowers out of coffee filters. We compared characteristics of the sun and sunflowers and wondered about all the possible reasons why sunflowers were given their name. As always, we welcome visitors and helpers to Kids' RE. If you haven't signed the list of volunteers and would like to, please see Sue Bailey.



Zaylee and Henna with their sunflowers from RE in July.

### Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Betty Derrick  
 Website Manager: Carol Stiles  
 e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles, [uuvaldosta@yahoo.com](mailto:uuvaldosta@yahoo.com)  
 Facebook: Kimberly Tanner  
 Local Publicity: Dee Tait

August 15: Usual deadline for September newsletter; however sending information earlier (the first week in August) would be helpful this month because your editor will be working on a tight schedule for this newsletter. Thanks.

*If you prefer reading this newsletter on the website, e-mail the editor to remove your name from the mailing label list.*

**Governor's Honors Program** Once again this year we were delighted to have Georgia Governor's Honors Program (GHP) students visiting our Sunday services over the past month. The students were at VSU June 24-July 21. Thanks goes to Lars Leader who organized the transportation again this year. We all enjoyed the presence of these students, who are often members of Atlanta area UU churches, along with friends they have made at GHP..

### UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News July, 2012

*(Note that some matters appear in articles and announcements elsewhere in this newsletter and are not repeated here.)*

Highlights of board meeting, July 5, 2012:

Amy Wells confirmed as secretary for 2012-2013.  
 Share the Plate for August will be the Hopes and Dreams Riding Facility Board seeking suggestions for future organizations for Share the Plate.  
 Website update – account established on DreamHost by Carol Stiles. Christine Clay has copied the archives and is working on designing the main pages. Thanks, Christine!  
 The full minutes are posted on the RE wing bulletin board after approval by the board.

**Sheila T. Harty – New book:** Sheila Harty, who has spoken at the church a few times has a new book out which she describes as “a collection of all the talks I ever gave to UU fellowships over the past 12 years!” She calls it a “graduate seminar in Religion 101.” For more information: <http://www.sheila-t-harty-speaker-editor.com/book.html>



### Treasurer's Report – Rosie Asbury

June 30, 2012

Receipts	June	July -present (12 mos.)
Plate	\$ 141.00	\$ 1898.10
Pledge	1305.00	19121.00
Rent	240.00	2510.00
Share the Plate(Farmworkers)	106.00	663.75
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>1792.00</b>	<b>\$24192.85</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>		
Speakers' Fees	150.00	2425.00
Minister Expense	0.00	9223.30
Maintenance/Repairs	0.00	821.73
Newsletter	0.00	77.10
Pest Control	35.00	670.00
Building Insurance	0.00	1425.00
Postage	0.00	579.04
Supplies	11.39	249.81
Utilities	240.45	2948.53
RE Program	0.00	67.12
Advertising	0.00	525.00
UUA Dues	0.00	2050.00
UU Conference	1309.00	1663.27
Donations (So GA Pride)	106.00	693.75
Others	0.00	85.00
<b>Total Disburs.</b>	<b>\$ 2072.95</b>	<b>\$ 23965.21</b>
<b>Net Receipt</b>	<b>\$ - 280.95</b>	<b>\$ 227.64</b>



“Who gets up early to discover the moment light begins?  
 Who finds us here circling, bewildered, like atoms?  
 Who comes to the spring thirsty  
 and sees the moon reflected in it?  
 Who, like Jacob blind with grief and age,  
 smells the shirt of his lost son  
 and can see again?  
 Who lets a bucket down and brings up  
 a flowing prophet? Or like Moses goes for fire  
 and finds what burns inside the sunset?”

“Jesus slips into a house to escape enemies,  
 and opens a door to the other world.  
 Solomon cuts open a fish, and there's a gold ring.  
 Omar storms in to kill the prophet  
 and leaves with blessings.  
 Chase a deer and end up everywhere!  
 An oyster opens his mouth to swallow one drop.  
 Now there's a pearl.  
 A vagrant wanders empty ruins.  
 Suddenly he's wealthy.

“But don't be satisfied with stories, how things  
 have gone with others. Unfold  
 your own myth, without complicated explanation,  
 so everyone will understand the passage,  
*We have opened you.*

“Start walking toward Shams. Your legs will get heavy  
 and tired. Then comes a moment  
 of feeling the wings you've grown,  
 lifting.” *Rumi*

## UU Activities and Announcements

August 5-10 Dwight Brown Leadership Experience, (SWC-UUA), Denton TX

August 5-9 – Mountain Family Camp, The Mountain, Highlands, NC

August 10-12 Beacon Youth Adviser Training, Orlando-University

August 17-19-CONjoin 4 JUUSTICE Young Adult CON, UU Congregation, Fairfax, VA for young adults from Joseph Priestly and Southeast Districts.

September 7-9 O.W.L Facilitator Trainings (all levels), Roswell, GA

September 21 End Of Life Care After Terri Schiavo Conference, Tampa, FL



### UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund

August 2012

[jlund@uua.org](mailto:jlund@uua.org)

GA has been over for a month and you have probably had ample opportunity to go on our UUA web site to read, listen, and learn about the many events, activities, workshops which are of interest to you. From my perspective and those with whom I have spoken GA was a marked success. I have written a report which will go out in the District e-news. In our on-going work looking at the long-term future of Unitarian Universalism, during the spring and through the summer the UUA Board of Trustees (BOT) has been involved in various aspects of a process called scenario planning.

The practice of scenario planning begins with the definition of a focal issue or decision. The BOT asked the question: What differences do we want to make in Unitarian Universalism, for whom and at what priority by the year 2050? The purpose of scenario planning is not to pinpoint future events but to highlight large-scale forces that push the future in different directions. It's about making these forces visible, so that if they do happen, the planner(s) will at least recognize them. It is about helping make better decisions today. The practice of scenario planning is not difficult to describe but is can be difficult to do with skill and expertise. The "issue": The future of our UUA. The BOT has brainstormed a long list of key factors and environmental forces that might influence the outcome of our UUA future and determined two trends: 1) more people becoming spiritual, not religious with less interest in organized religion; and 2) differences in wealth, class, and income, with an increasingly unstable economy. Each trend is assumed to either continue, or reverse, and the four different combinations then make up the four different assumptions of the BOT's self-selected four teams.

From the trends, four teams emerged: 1) As the income gap grows and the economy becomes unstable, more people turn to religious and church life. 2) As the income gap grows, and the economy becomes unstable, people continue to leave organized religion. 3) Greater income equality stabilizes the economy, with a substantial increase in religious and

church life. 4) Greater income equality stabilizes the economy, as people continue to leave organized religion. I am on this Team.

Each Team will meet three times by conference call prior to September with the end goal to write a "story" identifying trends and other issues related the assigned assumption. Youth and Young Adults will be invited to comment on the scenario work and add their own. After the scenarios are finalized and distributed to the BOT in September, they will be considered as part of our ENDS review in October.

Your Florida District Trustee realizes there may be questions and/or confusion regarding what has been described in the column. It's a lot to digest. Because I may write further on this topic and your thoughts are important, I would like to hear from you. Thanks...and continue to enjoy our long, hot summer!



### UU College of Social Justice Receives Major Support:

At the 2012 Justice General Assembly, the UU College of Social Justice (UUCSJ), a new UUSC-UUA joint venture, was officially introduced to thousands of people. Shortly thereafter, Brad and Julie Bradburd of Gwynedd, PA, announced their gift of \$1 million to UUSC in support of UUCSJ. Their incredibly generous contribution reflects their confidence in and enthusiasm for this new initiative that will increase the capacity of Unitarian Universalists to catalyze justice. Visit the new UUCSJ website.

### Greetings from the UU Buddhist Fellowship.

The UUBF holds a convocation every two years. These biennial convocations are an opportunity for Buddhist-inclined UU's to get together for conversation and mutual inspiration. We will gather in the greater Washington-Baltimore area, April 5-7, 2013, with our guest teacher, Tara Brach, founder of the Insight Meditation Community of Washington and a leading western teacher of Buddhist meditation, emotional healing and spiritual awakening. For further information: [www.uubf.org](http://www.uubf.org)

*From joy springs all creation,  
By joy it is sustained,  
Towards joy it proceeds,  
And unto joy it returns.  
—The Upanishads*