



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

September 2011

Service times are 9:15 and 11:00 am.

1015 N. Hyland Ave.
Ames, IA 50014
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Deadline for the October newsletter is September 20.

For a current calendar, see www.uufames.org

4 Labor Relations

Suzanne Zilber

In these times of economic uncertainty, Labor Day and its traditions have particular relevance for UUs. In the words of past UUA President William Sinkford: "Rewarding an honest day's labor with a just living wage is the right thing to do, and advocating for fair compensation is our religious duty. It is only when our most vulnerable sisters and brothers achieve a basic level of economic and physical security that they can embark upon a 'free and responsible search for truth and meaning.' Making that spiritual journey possible for all people is the heart and soul of Unitarian Universalism." Suzanne Zilber will talk about the moral issues around Labor Day, and we'll be hearing more about AMOS's Project IOWA, a labor intermediary that has received a \$25,000 grant to help disadvantaged central Iowans move into a higher-wage career path.

11 Working Together for Peace

Rev. Charlotte Cowtan and Sal Syed

Sal Syed is the Vice President of Masjid Darul Arquim, the Islamic Center in Ames. Charlotte and Sal will be sharing the service today as they focus on our shared values and our common focus on Justice, Equity, Compassion and Peace.

September 11: Between-Service Discussion of Muslim and UU Perspectives on Peace and Justice

September 11 Forum is now a Sermon Discussion! Join Rev. Cowtan and Sal Syed from Masjid Darul Arquim, the Ames Islamic Center, between services for a discussion of their shared-pulpit service. The discussion on their joint sermon will take place from 10:30 am - 10:55 am. This is a beginning step in building a relationship with the Ames Mosque for working on our common interfaith goals for peace and social justice.

18 DREAM Sabbath

Guest Speaker Gini Courter, UUA Moderator

The Interfaith Coalition for Immigration Reform has asked congregations of many faiths to recognize DREAM Sabbath today (DREAM Act, also known as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act). This is a chance to increase understanding of the circumstances DREAM students face, and their hopes and contributions to our communities. Gini will reflect on the need for immigration reform from our UU perspective. She may also give us a 'sneak preview' of Justice GA, 2012, in Phoenix, AZ.

25 Up In the Air

Guest Speaker Rev. Mark Stringer, First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Rev. Mark Stringer recalls a recent theological discussion he shared with a stranger at 25,000 feet. Poor visibility and turbulence sure make for a bumpy ride. How exactly do we land this plane anyway and arrive at our destinations in one...peace?

Charlotte will be leading the services at the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines this Sunday.

Update on Exciting Fall Forums/Discussions

September 11: Between-Service Discussion of Muslim and UU Perspectives on Peace and Justice

September 11 Forum is now a Sermon Discussion! Join Rev. Cowtan and Sal Syed from the Ames Islamic Center between services for a discussion of their joint presentation. See the Sunday Services descriptions for more information on this shared-pulpit service. The discussion on their joint sermon will take place from 10:30 - 10:55 am. This is a beginning step in building a relationship with the Ames Islamic Center for working on our common interfaith goals for peace and social justice.

For the October and November Forums: Same day, different time:

October and November forums will also be held on the second Sunday of the month, on Sunday, October 9, and Sunday, November 13. But the time is slightly different. They are scheduled for 11:00 am to noon, the same time as the second service. See below for October and November Forum topics.

Beginning October 9 the Forums will be held in the Barton/Channing Room, at 11:00 am. You may either take the elevator to Level 2, or take the stairs that go past the Hazelnuts' storeroom to the upper level. While the forum will run concurrently with the 11:00 am Sunday Service, we believe that this offering will provide a time and space for people who wish to engage in dialogue and discussion an opportunity to do so. And it goes without saying - we hope you'll want to attend both the 9:15 am Sunday Service AND the 11:00 am Forums when they're offered! As we continue to grow in programming, we know that we all will find a time and space to engage in meaningful and growth-promoting ways at the UUFA on Sunday mornings.

Topics for October and November:

Sunday, October 9, at 11:00: The Tea Party and its Historical Antecedents, the Anti-Federalists.

Discussion will be led by the UUFA's Clair Keller. Clair will put the contemporary Tea Party in historical perspective, revealing its affinity to the Anti-Federalist faction of the eighteenth century.

Sunday, November 13, at 11:00: Physicians for Social Responsibility Talk About The Health and Environmental Effects of Using Coal as Fuel

Lecture and discussion led by Maureen McCue, MD, PhD, from the University of Iowa. In addition to her work for Physicians for Social Responsibility, Dr. McCue is also a representative of Global Health Studies, and the Center for Human Rights.

Faithful Governance: A workshop With Gini Courter

What: Gini Courter, Moderator of the UUA is offering a workshop on Policy Governance

When: Saturday, September 17, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Who Should Attend? Congregational leaders, and all interested members and friends.

This is an opportunity to learn about Policy Governance from a master! Please phone or email the office to let us know you will be attending.

The Web

In 2000, First Unitarian Church of Des Moines made an intentional decision to grow out of a 30-year 250 member plateau. They called the Rev. Mark Stringer to be their minister in 2001, and by 2005 had grown to 300 adult members. Today they have 400 adult members and 150 children enrolled in their religious education programs.

There is no question that Mark is an extremely gifted minister, but he would be the first to tell you that no minister can grow a congregation alone. People may be initially attracted by the minister, but they stay because of the congregation.

The Unitarian Church of Des Moines has made many changes over the last decade. One factor in their sustained growth has been a shift in their organizational structure and their governance model to one used by many non-profit organizations, congregations, and the Unitarian Universalist Association (Policy Governance).

In August, Mark Stringer facilitated a retreat attended by the Board, Transition Team and Search Committee and full-time staff. Our goal was to learn more about how this governance model works and how it was implemented in Des Moines.

Here are the basic principles of Policy Governance:

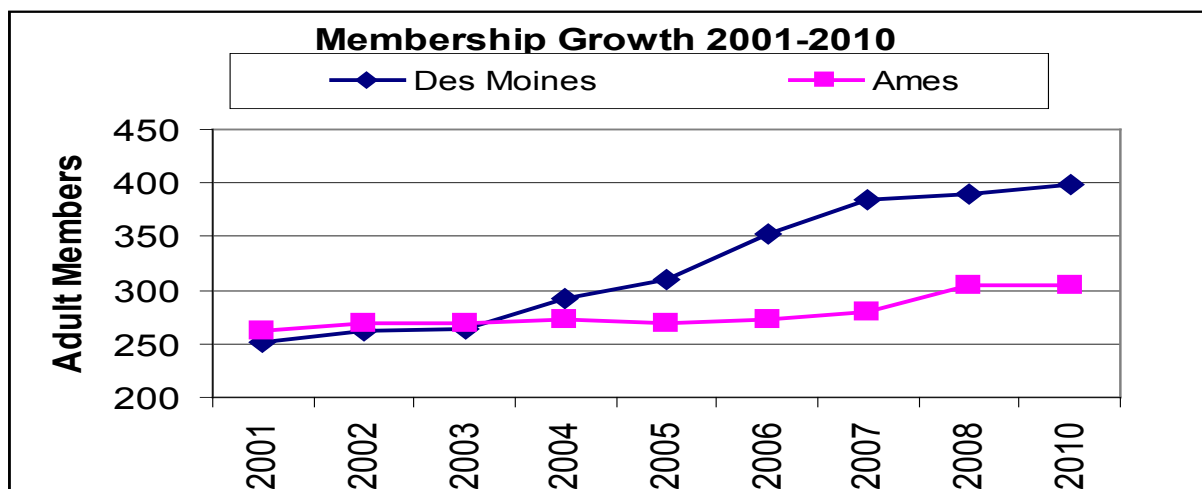
- The governing board shifts away from hands-on, day-to-day management and focuses instead on articulating vision, comprehensive policy-making, and oversight.
- Staff and volunteers are empowered to make day-to-day decisions. (Management) The board controls staff not by telling them how to do their jobs, but by setting boundaries (policy), and allowing staff and volunteers to design their work within those boundaries.
- The minister is held accountable for the implementation of the mission and vision by the Board.

It is possible that this kind of governance and structure would be a good shift for this congregation to consider, but it would require a considerable shift in understanding of the roles, accountability and responsibilities of the board, staff and committees.

“Should you consider Policy Governance? If your governing board agendas are overloaded, if there’s unclear accountability and your meetings are interminable, those are good clues,” says the Rev. Marge Keip, a Policy Governance advocate who thinks many UU congregations would find it useful. “Policy Governance frees all levels of leadership to fulfill their focused roles. It allows a board to safely empower others and to delegate, insofar as possible, whole jobs. I’d call it shared ministry in the most luminous meaning of that phrase.”

I look forward to the ensuing discussions!

Faithfully,
Interim Minister Rev. Charlotte Cowtan



From the President Friends,

Last weekend the Board, Transitions Committee, and the Ministerial Search Committee held a half day retreat at Mark and Terry's farm in the boondocks. Wonderful setting. Thank you Mark and Terry. The Rev. Mark Stringer was the facilitator for a little over half of the time. The focus of the day was around Fellowship structure and, Policy Governance (PG). Mark started with Des Moines' story and how they are evolving further down the road of PG. The general consensus of the group was that as we look and search for a new minister, we need characteristics in this person that will enable us to go down that path. Now, this is not an overnight transition and the Fellowship will have to mold the PG to what works for us. I hope, heck I know, that this paragraph will bring discussion of opinions for PG. Please attend one of the Cottage Meetings if you have not already done so. PG is one of the many aspects we as a Fellowship need to address in our Ministerial Search Packet.

We also as a Fellowship have to vote on a fair compensation package for the new minister with some sort of high and low range. We will convene a congregational meeting on September 25 between services. It is my understanding that we need 20% participation since it is less than half of our budget.

A hearing to gather feedback on the final Vision Statement will be held on Tuesday, September 13, at 7:00 pm. A vote to accept the Vision will occur during the congregational meeting on September 25 between services. Thanks to the Vision Writing Team for their hard work. The proposed Vision Statement is included below for you to study.

We are looking for someone to serve as our representative to Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance. If you are a social justice-type person looking for ways to help your fellow man, please let me know. GNEA meets monthly and our representative would serve on a committee and share information with our congregation. Thank you in advance for considering this opportunity.

Best Regards,

Steve Martens, President of UUFA Board of Directors

Proposed Vision Statement

Please read and consider the Vision Statement below. A hearing on this Vision Statement is scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, at 7:00 pm. A congregational vote to accept it will be held on September 25 between services.

Our Vision:

According to our mission, we envision the Fellowship as a beacon of social justice and liberal religion. As we fulfill this vision, we see growth in our individual spirits, our congregation, and our larger community.

- We see growth in our individual spirits as we strive to share more actively an excellent ministry for the inspiration and education of all ages, for service to life's higher purposes, and to honor the mysteries of life and death.
- We see our congregation, a beloved community, grow as we welcome others who share our mission. We accept our differences. We nurture a culture of generosity, outstanding music, engaging programs, transparent governance, and creative thinking about the future of our physical facilities.
- We see our larger community become more embracing as we reach out as advocates for people who may be marginalized by society, such as racial and ethnic minorities, the LGBT community, immigrants, the impoverished, and people with mental illness. We embrace the largest community of all, the interconnected web of existence. As stewards of the earth, committed to becoming a Certified Green Sanctuary Congregation, we encourage each other to eat locally produced foods and minimize our carbon footprints.



Ministerial Search Committee Report

Your Ministerial Search Committee has a lot to report on this month.

Ministerial Search Survey

The Ministerial Search Survey was launched at the end of August. Note that this is different from the member interest survey sent by the office a few weeks ago. Your participation in the Ministerial Search Survey is vital for two reasons:

First, we need to know what you want in a minister, and this survey is one of the main methods we have for learning that. The survey will collect different types of information than the cottage meetings, and the results will give us a quantitative picture of who we are. Taken together, the cottage meetings, survey and community interviews will provide us with a good picture of who we are and what we need.

Second, prospective ministers will be looking specifically at the response rate we get as one indicator of the health of our congregation. Lackluster response to the survey will really turn off prospective ministers.

So let's hear your opinions. Make your voice count. Email invitations to the web-based study will be sent around August 27th. Hardcopy questionnaires will be available to those who prefer them. If you prefer a hardcopy version please contact the search committee at search@uufames.org or call Andrew Williams at 515-769-2322. The study takes about 15 minutes to complete and your answers will remain confidential.

Cottage Meetings

There are still openings remaining in our final two cottage meetings, so please sign up for either September 14th or 17th if you haven't already attended. These meetings are another important way for you to express your thoughts about what we should be looking for in our new minister, and they're fun--one participant asked afterward, "Can our group meet again?"

Sign up by calling or emailing the office, or stop by our table in the Fireside Room any Sunday.

Beyond Categorical Thinking

Save the date of October 23rd for "Beyond Categorical Thinking." This workshop, presented by two trainers from the Unitarian Universalist Association is designed to help us get beyond categorical thinking that might limit us in choosing and accepting the right minister. Our trainers for this three hour afternoon workshop will be Michael Takada and Eddy Carroll. Michael and Eddy will also lead the Sunday morning service that day. This workshop is a highly recommended part of the search process to prepare our congregation for our new minister.

- Submitted by Mark Harmison on behalf of the Ministerial Search Committee

Rides Needed:

Additional volunteers are needed to provide transportation for fellowship members to Sunday services, meetings or other appointments. Some arrangements might be ongoing and others occasional. If you could provide this service, please notify Dave Fox at dmf@mchsi.com or the UUFA office. Please indicate the following: 1) which could you provide—rides to and from Sunday services, rides to other meetings and appointments around Ames, transportation to places outside of Ames or all of the above, 2) if you could provide Sunday morning rides, indicate which service you attend; and 3) also please indicate in what part of Ames you live (i.e. NW, NE, SW, SE, North Central, or South Central). Any help you can provide will be appreciated.

- Dave Fox



Who's Going to Church???

Earlier this week I posted a link on my Facebook page to an article that reported on a study by Brian Wilcox about church attendance. Not who you think, was the answer to the question in the headline. The article stated that, "contrary to popular perception, college educated white Americans are more likely to practice religion than the working class." The study focused only on white Americans because Black and Latino religious worship is less divided by education and income, researchers said.

I was not surprised to learn that people who have experienced any period of unemployment in the last 10 years experience the lowest church attendance. Stephanie Coontz (whom I also quoted in my sermon on August 14), a sociologist and professor of history and family studies at Evergreen State College, believes that there has been not only a general and widespread loss of faith in religion, but in many of our country's institutions. "I relate it to all the certainties [Americans once had], the sense of entitlement people held in the post- World War II era," Coontz said. "We thought the world would get better, and there was solidarity in this country. Inequality was decreasing and if you were willing to work, you could get a job. The wealthier one is, the more one is likely to think that this social compact, which included church-going, still holds. But for many, this no longer exists. As it has eroded, it has taken commitment to traditional religious institutions along with it."

So, what should we think of this information? It makes me think that we, UUs, are more like other religious communities than we think we are, at least when we examine our economic and educational make up. I do not mean for any of this commentary or information to be a criticism of our denomination. If anything, I think it is an opportunity for us to pause a moment and reflect on our individual UU congregations. Are we open and welcoming to people of all socio-economic groups who may have left their faith community and are seeking another? Are we a comfortable fit for those disillusioned with rhetoric from other religious traditions? I would like to think so. I have always found hope in a quote from the Universalist minister, Rev. Lewis B. Fisher, "Universalists are often asked to tell where they stand. The only true answer . . . is that we do not stand, we move." I believe that moving is what sets us apart from many other religious communities. We are a living, growing, and changing religion, responding to the world around us. May we always be moving towards inclusion and acceptance as we gather in our UU fellowship.

You can find the full article and links to the study at the link posted below.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44192469/ns/health-behavior/t/who-going-church-not-who-you-think-study-finds/#.TIYhTs29BUF>

See you Sunday!

~ Lori Allen

Director of Youth and Children's Ministry

A Rummage Sale Thank You!

Thanks to the many volunteers who helped make our UUFA rummage sale a success in August. Initial tallies indicate that we made about \$950. There were many people – Mary Sawyer, Jane Dupuis, Gwen Beattie, Betsy McLeod, Sarah Evans, Mary Raman, Anne Tepper, Peggy Earnshaw and most of the high school and middle school students – who made this event possible as they set up, sorted, transported and sold the merchandise. And, of course, thanks to all those who donated the great merchandise for the sale. We've saved a few items – some original art and dishes – for our UUFA Service Auction that is coming up in November. Do I hear \$50????

Boston Bound and Back Again

The biennial COA (Coming of Age) Boston Heritage Trip was a grand success. Lori Allen, Deb Kline, and Carter Slagell were the adults who shepherded our 16 middle school coming of age students and 6 high school mentors. Highlights of the trip were visiting the UUA headquarters at 25 Beacon Street, walking the Freedom Trail, going on a National Parks guided tour of the Black Heritage Trail, visiting Walden Pond, the Old North Bridge where

the first shot of the Revolutionary War was fired, Louisa May Alcott's home at Orchard House, Salem, the New England Aquarium and whale watching tour, the Judith Sargent Murray Museum (North America's first feminist writer) and the first Universalist church in America, founded by Rev. John Murray. Whew! And, of course there was the usual hanging out around Quincy Market, the Boston Commons and Harvard Square. Other than in transit to and from Boston, the food was fantastic. Many thanks are offered to the parents of COA students, COA students, high school mentors, and the people of the UUFA who think this experience is important enough to fund it. This is truly a transformative experience for our youth.

Children's and Youth Religious Education

Weekly Religious Education email updates are sent to UUFA families and people who are interested in keeping track of what's happening with our children's and youth programming. Information about this fall's sessions, how to register your children, and how to volunteer to help in these programs is available each week in these updates. Highlights will be posted in the newsletter each month, but if you'd like to keep your finger on the pulse of these programs, contact the office and ask to be added to the RE email list. As the new website becomes available, all RE programming information will be available at the UUFA website as well. Questions? Contact Lori Allen (dycm@uufames.org) or Diana Crosswait in the UUFA office (projects@uufames.org).

Sunday Childcare and RE Session Schedule

9:15 am Nursery Care (Children Birth – Age 3) in the UUFA Nursery

We Care – Preschool (Ages 3-PreK) in Classroom 1

Creating Home – Kindergarten, Grades 1 & 2 in Classroom 2

Love Connects Us – Grades 3, 4, 5 in Classroom 3

10:20 am Between Services

What Do You Stand For? – Grades 6, 7, 8 in Classroom 3

High School Classes – Potter Room, Upper Level

Watch the RE Weekly Email for notices about Orff practice, children's music experiences, and other "specials" for children that will take place between services.

11:00 am Nursery Care (Children Birth – Age 3) in the UUFA Nursery

We Care – Preschool (Ages 3-PreK) in Classroom 1

Creating Home – Kindergarten, Grades 1 & 2 in Classroom 2

Love Connects Us – Grades 3, 4, 5 in Classroom 3

Wednesday Night RE Sessions

1st Wednesday of Each Month

5:30 – 6:15pm Multigenerational Supper – Everyone is Welcome! Volunteer to help prepare, serve or clean up after the meal. Suggested donation for the meal is \$5 for one adult/youth; \$10 for two adults/youth; \$12 family.

6:30 – 7:30 Gather the Spirit multigenerational religious education experience. See the flyer included in this newsletter for information on topics, co-leaders and activities.

OWL (Our Whole Lives)

7:00 – 9:00 pm Each month on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesdays, the OWL sexuality curriculum will be offered for students in Grades 7 and 8. Kate Larson, David Slade, Andrew Williams, Andy Larson and Lori Allen will be facilitators for this class – supported by our long-time OWL teachers when needed. Watch the weekly RE email for info and updates on this class.

7:00 – 9:00 pm High School Youth Group meets. Check the weekly email for updates on this group. Also make sure we have your high school students cell phone number – we'll be sending out texts as well as emails to this group.

Welcome Freshman!!

It is with a sad and yet excited heart that we wave goodbye to our amazing graduates as they head off to the next chapter of their lives. Good luck Dylan, Hanna, and Melissa!

And it is with open arms that we welcome our new Freshman! Welcome Jasmine, Patrick, Ella, Zoe, Sarah, Dain, Sophia, Kristin, and Caleb! We are so thrilled to have you with us, and I am so excited to get to know each one of you!

This year things are going to look a little different, so here's a bit on what to expect this fall for youth group!

Wednesday nights will be planned by the newly elected Youth Adult Committee along with a new component. YAC members are Lori Allen and me as Ex Officios, Iris Brenner (Board Rep), Julian Thies, Charlotte Mann, Jonas Ewing, Paul Jasper, Emma Wilson, Claire Boeke, Melissa Jones, and Ella Bartlett. Adult members are as yet to be determined. This year each member of the youth group has been assigned to a "touch group." Touch groups are small groups that will meet every Wednesday for the first 20-30 minutes and will have an activity to do together, some kind of small group connection activity. This will help to build relationships where there were not relationships before, and will help anyone who may not know too many people to feel more comfortable in the large group. These touch groups are also going to be taking turns being a part of the service, to help our high school youth be more visible and involved in our fellowship.

Sunday mornings are going to be even shorter than in the past because of the shortened time between services. We had hoped to be able to offer two identical sessions each week, but unfortunately with the staffing allowances we have (I am the only paid staff for this group and am only 6 hours per week, which would not allow me any planning time if I lead both sessions and Wednesday nights) this was not a feasible option. We are committed to providing meaningful and useful programming for our youth and will re-evaluate if the feedback we receive is that this time is not enough to meet the needs of our youth.

Our Sunday curriculum is going to be partially focused on social justice items from General Assembly, and also have a component of deepening the self, and reflecting on what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

Our group has found its home in the Potter room upstairs, and is currently working with Lori Allen on getting the room decorated and furnished! We will plan a grand open house when we finally get it finished and you all will be invited!

This looks like it will be an amazing year, and please don't hesitate to contact me, Ruth Appleton, or our Director of Youth and Children's Ministries, Lori Allen, if you have any questions about this coming year.

~ Ruth Appleton

Multigenerational Cooks Wanted!

Does your family have a favorite dish or meal they'd like to prepare and serve on the first Wednesday of the month? Is there a friend or family you'd like to work with to prepare this meal? Keep it simple and it will be fun! We'll recruit people to set up tables and chairs for you and to do the clean-up if you cook – that's only fair. Funds are available for you to purchase groceries. Please contact Lori Allen (dycm@uufames.org) if you'd like to help her with the first meal on Wednesday, September 7. Lori will be making one of her family's favorites – Vegetable Upside Down Cake - as a main dish. It would be great to have a salad, and a desert to go with this. Beverages are always provided.

Small Group Ministry (SGM)

Small Group Ministry provides an opportunity to get better acquainted with Ames Unitarian Universalists; an opportunity to discuss (both talk and listen) spiritual growth topics such as sacred places, learning from failure, yearning, radical hospitality, our gifts, community building, and others; an opportunity to join other UUs to do a service project. SGM is different than other experiences at the UUFA. These small groups of 6-10 people are content-driven discussions led by a lay facilitator that stretch us to grow as individuals and as a faith community.

We have completed our first session of Small Group Ministry! We had twenty-five participants and seven facilitators for our first session. Our Fall session (Sept. 18 – Dec. 20) is open for registration now. You can either fill out a registration form at the UUFA on any Sunday, or you can contact the office (uufa@uufames.org). We know we will have a Monday night group this fall. Other group times will be decided based on the availability and requests of the participants. We hope you'll join us to talk about such topics as humility, patience, autumn – season of surrender, the examen, metaphors for the divine, the gift of the call. To learn more about SGM, you can contact the UUFA office or Lori Allen (dycm@uufames.org)

Many thanks to this session's SGM facilitators – Lisa Harmison, Faith Winchester, Fred Vallier, Barb Abbott, Debby Garwood, Donna Lutz, and Jess Higgins.

~ Lori Allen

Second Friday Fellowship Game Night

Second Friday Fellowship Game Night resumes Friday, Sept. 9. This time a main course will be provided on a strictly donate-as-you-can basis; bring a side dish if you'd like. (See the weekly reminder for more details.) Time: 6:00. We'll eat about 6:15. If those with young kids would like to come and play before we eat, that would be fine. Also, anyone who can come early to help set up would be welcome; help cleaning up is also welcome.

Please RSVP if you can to let us know how many to plan for; otherwise, just come. Also, if you'd like to get direct reminders, please let Sara (sarah.orley@gmail.com; 268-0579) or Nancy (nancytepper@yahoo.com) know (and include your email and phone number).

Remember, this is an event for ALL AGES! We're look forward to lots more fun in the coming year!

~ Sarah and Nancy

UUFA Photo Directory!

We are very excited to once again partner with Olan Mills to provide a new photo directory for our members and friends. Can you believe our last photo directory was in 2006?

We will have appointments available on October 5-8, and October 13-15. Sign up sheets are available Sundays before and after services in the Fireside Room and in the office during the week. You may also sign up on line at the following link - <https://signup.olanmills.com/familyinfo.aspx?chcontract=62638>

We encourage everyone to participate in the photo directory. There is no cost to be photographed and there is no obligation to buy photos. Each family will receive a \$25 credit, which would cover the entire cost of one 8x10 photograph or 12 wallet sized photos.

New Membership Classes

If you are ready to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and about becoming a member of the UUFA, we will have a series of classes, in October, so please contact Kitty Fisher, Membership Chair, at kafisher99@aol.com or stop at the Visitor Table on Sunday morning if you are interested in participating. The classes are scheduled for Saturday, October 15 at 8:00 am-12:30 pm, Tuesday, October 18, 6:30-9:00 pm, for the first part and Saturday, October 29, 8:00 am-12:30 pm, for the second part. New Member Sunday is November 13.

Gather the Spirit

An invitation to an Intergenerational Learning Experience at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

Today, there is no more compelling focus for our good works than the clean, drinkable, and accessible water that all life on Earth requires. *Gather the Spirit*, a UUA curriculum calls us to ask: Can water sources be owned? Why is clean water scarce in some parts of the world? If clean water is abundant where I live, what difference does it make if I conserve it? What can I do to promote global water equality? Stories, ritual, guest presenters, and the creation of a river mural - all activities that a broad range of ages can do together - are the vehicles we use to look at these issues.



The program is offered **the first Wednesday** of each month, **September - April.**

Join us for any part of this program -

5:30 - 6:15 PM

Light supper - Fireside Room

6:30 - 7:30 PM

Gather the Spirit - Fellowship Hall

Facilitating with Lori Allen:

September 7 - David Brenner, Creek Walk

October 5 - Dave Fox, WASRAG (Water & Sanitation Rotarian Action Group)

November 2 - Erv Klaas, Personal reflections on conservation

December 7 - Aaron Mann, Coming of Age Project; the movie "Tapped"

To suggest topics/facilitators for 2012, or to offer help with the programs or light supper, please contact Lori Allen dycm@uufames.org or the UUFA Office uufa@uufames.org

Iowa UU named rural ‘Champion of Change’

White House honors professor and seminarian Linda Barnes, who spreads the word about the importance of food diversity.

By Donald E. Skinner

Note: This article originally appeared August 15, 2011, online at <http://uuworld.org/news/articles/186150.shtml>

In the middle of Iowa, where biological diversity can consist of fields of corn next to fields of soybeans, Linda Barnes wanted more. More alfalfa, more chickens, more tomatoes, apples, and berries.

To make that happen, Barnes, a Unitarian Universalist, started a two-year degree program in Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture at Marshalltown Community College, where she is a professor of biology. The program trains farmers and aspiring young people to move beyond corn and soybeans, crops that are hard on the land.

Her program, now in its eighth year, caught the attention of the Obama administration, and last month she was summoned to the White House, where she was recognized as a “Champion of Change” for rural America.

Barnes’s interest in food diversity and sustainability goes well beyond the classroom. In May she presented information to a committee at the National Academy of Sciences about barriers to fruit and vegetable production in relation to obesity and the priorities of the Farm Bill. As a result of that presentation she may also be included in an HBO series on food issues (currently titled *The Obesity Project*) to be aired in 2012.

Good food is also personal to her. She and her husband, Mark Runquist, bought a farmstead and seven acres in 1994 where, with their three children, they have grown crops, including berries, flowers, livestock, and a wide array of vegetables. Some are sold and the rest feed the family. She blogs about the farmstead at highhopesgardens.com.

At the White House on July 6, Barnes and 17 other “Rural Champions of Change” met with U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Melody Barnes, the president’s domestic policy advisor, for more than two hours. Participants were invited to describe their work. There was also a discussion about how the USDA is helpful in their work and how it could be more helpful.

Barnes said she told Vilsack and Barnes two things—that the Farm Bill really only applies to large corporate farmers and that its name really should be changed to the “Food Bill” because farming and food production affect not only farmers but the quality of food everyone eats. Up for renewal by Congress in 2012, the Farm Bill is the federal government’s mechanism for governing food and agricultural policy, with provisions governing a wide range of food-related issues, including price supports for crops, agricultural research, and foreign and domestic food programs.

“Many people don’t connect farming to their food,” she said. “It seems to me that if we value healthy, regional, fresh food for all citizens and we value the resources used in production and distribution, then we need to insure those values are reflected in our policies. The most important piece of policy in the country to impact that is the Farm [Food] Bill.”

Her other point to Vilsack and Barnes was about crop insurance. “It’s hard to get insurance if you raise fruits and vegetables. Unless you have a three-year crop history you can’t get it. That’s impossible for many small growers. If this is your business and you can’t insure it, then you’re not being responsible. There’s a whole cadre of young people who want to be on the land, but they bump up against crop insurance. And the inability to get and pay for health insurance.”

President Obama joined the meeting briefly, she said. “He bounced in and said hello and shook our hands and had a real short discussion with each of us. I have to admit to being a little starstruck.”

Barnes said that the session gave her hope. “I put all this effort into creating the Entrepreneurial program and then to see all these other rural champions who did other things, that gives me hope. And the fact that this administration is listening to us.”

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Iowa UU named rural 'Champion of Change'

... continued

"I'm still somewhat afraid of what the future holds for the younger generation, including my students, but the good part is that they really get it about the condition of the planet. They're going to work really hard."

Barnes began her career on the opposite side of the plant diversity issue. In the 1980s, she worked for a company that was genetically modifying seed corn. "Then, in graduate school, I began asking myself why I was doing this," she said. After graduation she quit and soon thereafter she and Runquist bought their farm and she went to work for the college. The farm produces about 30 different crops.

She said when they bought the farm they felt pretty alone. Now there are other small farms in the area. "More people are raising eggs for sale as well as grass-fed beef, free-range chickens, even bison and goats."

Barnes and Runquist have three children, 10, 16, and 18. The farm has been a growth experience for them, she said. "They can all cut up a chicken and pick beans." Daughter Claire, the oldest, is a student at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn. She became interested in hunger issues in high school and spent eight weeks last summer on a food-related internship in India. This summer she has an internship with Vilsack's USDA office. "Growing up on the farm has shaped almost all of my passions for sustainability and agriculture," she said.

The family attends the UU Fellowship of Ames, Iowa, which hosts frequent "local meals." Barnes said, "We put placards in front of each dish to tell where the food came from."

There are many ways that UUs can become involved in food issues, she noted. "Be mindful of what you eat and where it comes from. Support local farmers and community-supported agriculture. Be outspoken about school lunch programs." Another way is to support the Unitarian Universalist Association's current statement of conscience on Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice, approved at the 2011 General Assembly in June.

Barnes noted the federal Farm Bill is coming up for consideration next year. Discussions surrounding the bill will include debate over whether to change the government's support programs for major crops and whether to increase support for fruit and vegetable growers.

She added, "Community colleges are in a great position to make a difference in creating regional food systems. They need support too."

In 2009 Barnes gave a keynote address at the Unitarian Universalist Association's Prairie Star District annual conference, urging participants to engage with nature and learn to live sustainably. In her address she said, "We have traded full participation in creation for safety and comfort. We have built communities that think only of ourselves. What species does that? We raise our kids on processed foods. Our skin is unaccustomed to the wind or the light. What phase is the moon in? Which planet now rests in the western sky?"

"It is not enough to have hope," she went on. "We need to live our values, living sustainably not because we hope, but because we are compelled by our convictions and connections and our sense of responsibility. The time of ignorance is over."

And after all these accomplishments, Barnes has a new goal. She has enrolled at Meadville Lombard Theological School, planning to become a UU minister. "I don't think I can answer what it is I want to accomplish as a minister just yet," she said. "Right now I find myself concentrating on the journey rather than its end. I do know there are plenty of opportunities for work in environmental justice right now. I have no doubt that regional foods and access to those foods and sustainable farming will be part of my life in the future."

UUFA Garden of Community Gets Off the Ground

Landscape Architect William Boon will be getting our Garden of Community off the ground, so to speak. He is preparing the master plan for the garden that we hope to build on the ground. He began with a general conceptual layout that identifies five general areas. First, the small area next to the Meeting Hall on the north would be developed as an outdoor classroom and place for weddings and art exhibitions. Second, the northwest part of the hillside in back of the Meeting Hall would be a large upland prairie garden that could include a sculpture garden. Down, next to the west windows of the Meeting Hall, would be a prairie-flower wall. Third, where the ground rises by the two-story part of the building, there will be a stage or terrace. The amphitheater-shaped part of the hillside facing it would have some rows of seating. The hillside farther up would be more natural area with trails through it. Fourth, moving to the left (south), most of the hillside in back of the one-story portion of the building would be a wild-flower meditation garden and, close to the building, a small, natural looking children's play area. Trails and improved walks and steps would interconnect the different areas. Fifth, the hillside in back of the new parking lot would be cleared out and left natural to serve mainly as a buffer area. The Master Plan will be completed by the end of summer. Then Bill will make a presentation to the Fellowship, and there will be opportunities for questions and input.

The Landscape Committee is happy to have Bill Boon to design our garden. A recognized authority on native plants of the Midwest, his design approach is to take advantage of the fine selection of native species already growing on the site and of the natural shape of the land. He says that we will need to plant few additional trees. On the contrary, the main site work is clearing away undergrowth and debris, and removing invasive species and unwanted trees. Already a number of volunteers have started the work, and Bill has been right there directing their work. It needs to be done soon so that he can identify all the major trees and plot their locations. This information will be part of his master plan. More volunteers are needed to help finish the job.

Looking ahead, Bill explained that the implementation of much of the master plan would be achieved by two more phases of design and construction. One would be the design and construction of the stage and amphitheater seating opposite the second floor. The other phase would be the design and construction of the small outdoor classroom and wedding area next to the Meeting Hall. For the more natural areas that make up the rest of the Community Garden, the general information in the master plan should be sufficient to guide the development and maintenance.

Looking ahead with respect to funding, we expect the master plan to guide the Fellowship in the use of additional gifts and memorials – we have received some already – for the continuing development of the Garden of Community and for its maintenance.

- Wes Shank

Dustin Berger Memorial Library

The Dustin Berger Memorial Library has two shelves of books dedicated specifically to Unitarian Universalist thought. Check out the Dewey numbers 289 through 289.5 for such titles as "Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age," by Jack Mendelsohn and "Growing a Beloved Community," by Tom Owen-Towle. There's also the Pocket Guide to Unitarianism and many more.

- Barb Abbott, chair, library committee

Thank You from the Floral Committee:

Summer UUFA contributions of flowers for the Chalice Table and other events have been wonderful! Thanks to all who signed-up and provided summer's bounty. The diversity of types of floral arrangements has been a gift to the eye and spirit of attendees. Special thanks to Lena Jennings for calling with reminders and to the office staff for assisting our coordination. Flower-on, sisters and fellows! Kind regards from the Floral Committee Co-chairs, Nancy Grudens-Schuck and Susan Franzen.

Matters of Life and Death: Part Three

One Session Book Discussion of *Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communication of the Dying*, by Maggie Callanan & Patricia Kelley

Thursday, September 29, 2011, 7-9 pm, Channing/Barton Room (upstairs)

Final Gifts is a book that could change how you think about death and how you relate to your own and others'. The authors, two hospice nurses, give moving accounts of how one's approaching death can change one's reality and how others can share those final experiences as gifts.

This part of the Matters of Life and Death series is planned as a one-session event. However, if participants wish, it may be followed-up by an on-going discussion/support group.

Register on Sundays at the coffee hour table, contact Rilla Fox, or call the UUFA office. A few books are available at the Coffee Hour table for \$10. It also may be ordered from Amazon. One copy is available in the UUFA Library.

UU Women's Book Group

We will have our first UU Women's Book Group meeting Monday, September 12 at 7:00 pm in Classroom 3 to the left as you enter the lower parking lot doors (former Dustin Berger Library) Bring two or three books that you have read this summer that you think would make a great discussion book for our group this year. We'll have mini book talks, make a list, and send it out to you so you can vote on your favorites for the coming year.

The dates for the 2011 - 2012 UU Women's Book Group: September 12, October 3, November 7, 10/3, 11/7, 12/5, 1/2, 2/6, 3/5, 4/2, 5/7, 6/4.

This group is an open group -- you are welcome to join us at any time -- for all the discussions or whichever interest you. We are passionate about books and always have lively discussions. Please join us!

~ Barbi Greenlaw

Gallery in the Round Exhibit Marking the Landscape/Points of Reference

Artist statement for exhibit coming September 10. Gallery in the Round hours are Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 9-5, and Wednesdays 1-7.

My intention was to select only recent pieces for this presentation, but there is no escaping my established method of working which is that of the "bricoleur" described in Levi- Strauss' "The Science of the Concrete."

"Once it materializes the project will therefore inevitably be at a remove from the initial aim (which was moreover a mere sketch), a phenomenon which the surrealists have felicitously called 'objective hazard'. Further, the "bricoleur" also, and indeed principally, derives his poetry from the fact that he does not confine himself to accomplishment and execution: he 'speaks' not only with things, but also through the medium of things: giving as account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities."

This is an exhibition from an archive of objects as well as performative documents. The Directions are found architectural fragments supplemented or made sensible by their sited placement. They point away as well as inward to their precept for handling and arrangement. Early Oceans/Ice Melt is a pairing of a new installation with a thirty year old installation. The H Tree is created from documentation of a landmark that no longer exists. These pieces are entrances to a body of work from all sides, – there is no difference between the recovery of an earlier experience in time and the discovery of the new in an old place. The narrative progresses as time moves or as I move, arranging and documenting my surroundings.

~ Dennis R. Swanson

Social Justice Committee

Lots of fun, interesting things to do in Ames and at ISU! This month UUFA is co-sponsoring 11 days of Global Unity with Ames Public Library. UUFA's Sunday collection is helping to sponsor this event. <http://11daysames.wordpress.com/category/upcoming-events/>

AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) a group UUFA belongs to and helps with nearly \$4,000 per year in funding, is hosting an introduction to AMOS this month. This is how the Fellowship can take our little tiny voice and turn it into a really big voice, and impact social justice issues.

AMOS Institutes on Public Life - Ames Session One <http://amosiowa.org/node/155> Why organize, why should I care?, September 1, 2011, Ames United Church of Christ, 217 6th Street

AMOS Institutes on Public Life - Ames Session Two <http://amosiowa.org/node/156> Why get involved, what's the use?, September 8, 2011, First Christian, Ames 611 Clark

AMOS Institutes on Public Life - Ames Session Three <http://amosiowa.org/node/157> How does AMOS work?, September 15, 2011, Bethesda Lutheran 1517 Northwestern

ISU Lectures on Social Justice, see entire schedule. <http://www.lectures.iastate.edu/schedule.php> Please join other UUs and wear your bright yellow, "Standing on the Side of Love" T Shirts!

FACES Multicultural Festival <http://www.unitedames.org/#/faces-of-ames/4541212027>

Saturday, September 24, 11 am to 5 pm in Bandshell Park (6th & Duff). UUFA will have a booth and you're invited to work the booth or just visit.

Peace Protest October 2, 2011

Please join the Dubuque Franciscans and all friends of St. Francis for a public prayer and action for peace at: STRATCOM (Strategic Command) Offut Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska on October 2, 2011 from 2:30-3:30 pm. Contact Mary Sawyer for more information and to RSVP as soon as possible to accommodate travel arrangements at marysaw@isunet.net. http://www.osfdbq.org/Peace_NonViolence.php

Coming in October: Used paperback book drive for Polk County jail inmates. Books of special interest: both Spanish and English--how to do, inspirational, spirituality of any kind and books of interest to people of color. Books cannot have hard covers or staples, per jail regulations.

Want to get involved in making the UUFA a community force for Social Justice? Email Terry Lowman at TerryLLowman@aol.com

Social Justice Trip to Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico!

The UUFA Social Justice Committee is arranging a service learning trip to the Yucatan for Thanksgiving break 2011, early January 2012, or March 2012, depending on the schedules of our group and of our hosts in Mexico. We will work and live in Maní (where the Maya sacred texts were burned in 1562) at the agro-ecology school, "U Yits Ka'an" ("Dew from the Sky"). The school was started by priests to combine liberation theology, traditional Maya culture, and modern agro-ecological concepts. The school has many ecological projects (and new Heifer International funding): Maya stingless bees, Yucatan hairless pigs, composting, traditional medicinal/culinary herbs, and there is a local women's group that we can work with. We have scholarships for UU youth. If you have questions, contact Sue Jarnagin: jarny9@gmail.com or Semakaleng Lebepe-Mazur: semakaleng.lebepemazur@ars.usda.gov.

Social Class Issues Awareness Workshop : 2 sessions

Facilitator: Suzanne Zilber

Two Thursdays: October 6 and 13th, 7:00-8:30 pm in the Channing-Barton room (upstairs)

Join congregation members to explore how socio-economic class influences affect our values, coping styles, and expectations about others. In the second session, we will discuss more specifically how we can make the UUFA a welcoming place for people of all social class backgrounds. This interactive workshop has been offered in several settings, most recently at the Midwest UU Summer Assembly. The workshop is based on psychological research and concepts and usually results in an illuminating experience for all.

If you have questions about workshop content, please call Suzanne at 232-5340. Please sign up by calling the office at 292-5960 or emailing uufa@uufames.org.

Changes to the Website

During the month of September, we will be transitioning our website to a new design. It will have most of the same content, but it will look different and be better organized. Please note that as we move our website to the new design, several parts of the website will not be accessible at times. Some parts, like the online directory, the various groups' and committees' individual pages, and the library directory, will take longer to move. We will try to move the parts that are most important first and are open to your suggestions on priorities. Please be patient with us as we make the move. If you have any questions or would like to check the progress on the move, please contact the office.

~ Lisa Harmison

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

Our Mission

We are a diverse community of caring individuals who come together to provide an environment that nurtures and educates our children, stimulates the study and practice of ethical and liberal religious ideals, supports the creative spirit in us all, and demonstrates concern for the environment and the broader community.

Interim Minister: the Rev. Charlotte Cowtanminister@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
Director of Youth and Children's Ministries: Lori Allendycm@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
Office Administrator: Lisa Harmison..... uufa@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
Projects Coordinator: Diana Crosswaitprojects@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
Music Coordinators: Jen & Jim Coppocmusic@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
Caring Concerns caring@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
Campus Groupcampus@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
Youth Advisor: Ruth Appleton youth@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

Officers of the Board

President	Steve Martens
Vice president	Lisa Larson
Past president	Deb Kline
Secretary	Jo Ann Masterson
Treasurer	Fritz Keinert

Board Members

David DenHaan	through 2012
Kay Puttock	through 2012
Amy Slagell	through 2012
Bob Haug	through 2013
Raj Raman	through 2013
Iris Brenner	youth representative

Next Regular Board Meeting:
7:00 pm, Wednesday, September 14

The UUFA office is open Sundays 8:45-12:30, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays 9:00-5:00, Wednesdays 1:00-7:00.