



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

October 2014

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1015 N. Hyland Ave.
Ames, IA 50014
515-292-5960
www.uufames.org
uufa@uufames.org
Office hours:
Monday - Thursday,
1:00 - 4:30 pm



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Deadline for the
next newsletter is
October 20. Please
send articles to
news@uufames.
org. For a current
calendar, see www.
uufames.org

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

5 *Do Everything: Inspiration and Challenge in the Legacy of Frances E. Willard*

Amy Slagell

Arguably the most famous woman in America in the 1880s, Frances Willard, longtime President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and First President of the National Council of Women, called a generation of women to realize and exert their power to create positive change. With statements such as "Woman will bless and brighten every place she enters, *and* she will enter every place," Willard negotiated the challenge of adapting to nineteenth-century beliefs about women's roles while calling for an evolution of those beliefs and for women's right to participate fully in public life. By examining her life and words we can find new inspiration for our commitments and see with fresh eyes the potential for transformation that comes from working together for social change.

12 *National Coming Out Day*

Rev. Kent McKusick

This service celebrates the 26th anniversary of the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. One of the most deeply affirming and meaningful acts for many people is coming out as part of the LGBTQ community or as an ally. One out of every two Americans has someone close to them who is gay or lesbian. For transgender people, that number is only one in 10. When people know someone who is LGBTQ, they are far more likely to support equality under the law. Beyond that, sharing stories of our identity and relationship is powerful and supportive of lives and the changing cultural climate of America. Much progress has been made. There is still much work to accomplish. Every person who speaks up changes more hearts and minds and creates new advocates for equality.

19 *Good Without God*

Rev. Kent McKusick

In a world full of unsettling challenges and questions, many people find answers through belief and faith in the divine and religion. It has been reported that half of the US population holds prejudice against non-believers. Living an ethical life as a good person is difficult with or without God. What might non-believers find in a search for commonality with others and something to believe in? How might a belief in life *before* death make a difference?

26 *Service as Stewardship*

Rev. Kent McKusick

Typically, a stewardship service introduces the annual pledge campaign. How might responsible managing of our time, talent and service to the fellowship serve the congregation as a primary form of stewardship? Non-monetary gifts become stewardship when we each find the something in the Edward Everett Hale quote: "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." How might regular gifts of time, talent and service become a spiritual practice, and not a road to resentment?

The Fellowship Voices will sing.

Embrace Complexity!

During the month of October, our theme is *Embracing Complexity*. We will explore topics in Sunday services and other programming that reflect on one of our core values and principles as Unitarian Universalists: acceptance and encouragement of each other on this journey of spiritual growth. The Religious Education classes and congregation have embraced gathering together in Fellowship Hall every Sunday to begin each service with music and merriment in community. What a wonderful and complex time of sharing time and space! The Coming of Age program for youth (and a mirror program for adults) begins this month and offers ways to explore the complexities and mysteries of life. The Youth Group is preparing to participate in Reggie's Sleepout and by doing so, contribute to raising awareness and addressing the issues of homeless youth in our state. How we accept and encourage each other can make a lifetime of difference for each of us as individuals and as a community.

Like many UUFA members and friends, I found acceptance and encouragement in a UU community. The congregation is where my coming out journey began with support and safety, and later, the community helped me navigate through a cloud of change which was confusing and intimidating.

In 2003, I was recovering from the unexpected shock of being laid off from my job of 19 years and wondering what to do with my life. The minister at the UU Society of Bangor, Maine, insisted that I read *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer. It's a wonderful book, and I will always be thankful that she took this text off her shelf and placed it into my hands! The title comes from an old Quaker adage that calls each of us to live the life that wants to live in us. It was a difficult time for me emotionally, professionally, and spiritually. A UU minister and Parker Palmer's book helped me find the path where I would be able to embrace the complexity of my life.

What captured and excited me was a brief stanza from the poem *Now I Become Myself* by May Sarton. Her words sparked my imagination and emotions. The resultant trip to the library changed my perspective on the life I have been blessed to live. To gain this perspective from the writing of a gay Maine poet heightened the sense of spiritual kinship I feel with Sarton and her words. The poem and my reaction to it gave me a sense of wholeness and peace as I reviewed where I had been and where I was going. Some people viewed my life as a boat without sails, adrift and reacting to the strongest winds and currents wherever they led me. Changing career aspirations multiple times over thirty years had mystified peer groups as my roles changed: skier, musician, restaurant manager, raft guide, actor, director, glass crafter, church lay leader and financial manager. Sometimes, I did feel lost and wondered how I could have made such a tangled web of my life. The phrase "Now I become myself..." had an intense truth that took my breath away and brought full-circle the "authentic me" seeking to be expressed in the multiple paths I had taken. They all made sense when confronted by the call to ministry. Each vocation provided opportunities for small community or shared ministries that encouraged me to use the gifts I was born with or had developed. The currents and winds that drove me flowed from my soul and spirit, bringing me to this "new" path. As Sarton says later in the poem:

"All fuses now, falls into place
From wish to action, word to silence
My work, my love, my time, my face
Gathered into one intense
Gesture of growing like a plant."

The call to become myself supplied and continues to supply rich and challenging opportunities. I still feel inspired and thankful to be on this path.

Embrace complexity!

- Rev. Kent McKusick

See Embracing Complexity suggested reading list on next page.

From the President

Connections and interconnectedness is something that we as Unitarian-Universalists hear about frequently, starting with our 7th principle: “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”. As we heard from Kent in late September, it obviously applies to our relationship with nature and the spiritual aspects that relate to that, but I think it can be used for more than that. While we like to think we are independent as an organization, we really depend on our community and our community depends on us.

I go to the farmer’s market and run into people from our UU community, I turn on our local radio station and hear members from our UU community, I receive mail regarding many local organizations and see that more from our UU community are again involved. It is these connections that make us vital to our communities, make us feel at home, and support us when needed.

I challenge you to strengthen those connections both within and outside our UU community, as well as make new ones. Our UU, local, and larger communities’ life depend on it.

- Amber Anderson Mba, President, Board of Directors

Compassionate Companions

Being Mortal: Conversations about the End-of-Life is an upcoming, two-part UUFA series scheduled Tuesday evenings, October 21 and 28, 7-9 p.m., in Fellowship Hall. During the first evening, two magazine articles will be used as conversation-starters. The articles, *How Doctors Die* and *The Long Goodbye*, will be provided to participants at sign-up. The second evening, the brochure *Five Wishes* will be used. It will be distributed at the end of the first session. The second conversation will be about what participants consider to be a “good death” and some strategies to make a “good death” more likely.

The two-part discussion is sponsored by Compassionate Companions, a UUFA group which grew out of the first end-of-life event in Spring 2010. Each year since, the group has sponsored an event focused on issues associated with life’s end. The aim of the group is to counter our cultural taboo against accepting and conversing about death. The group works to accept death as the normal culmination of life, to help each other deal with the pains of death, and also to see it as an opportunity for beauty and connection.

A sign-up table will be available during Sunday morning coffee hour. Participants will be provided copies of the magazine articles when they sign up. Participants can also sign-up and receive the articles by email; contact Rilla Fox (rillalou@mchsi.com). It is also possible to register by contacting the UUFA office. Please register at your first opportunity so that we can make sure to have adequate materials and space.

- Submitted by Rilla Fox

Embracing Complexity: Suggested Reading

Block, Peter. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2008.

Buehrens, John. *Universalists and Unitarians In America*. Boston: Skinner House, 2011.

Epstein, Greg. *Good Without God*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Gore, Susan and Kron, Keith, eds. *Coming Out In Faith*. Boston: Skinner House, 2011.

James, Jaqui and Morrison-Reed, Mark. *Voices from the Margins*. Boston: Skinner House, 2012.

Pearson, Carlton. *God Is Not a Christian, Nor a Jew, Muslim, Hindu...* New York: Atria, 2010.

Wikstrom, Erik. *Serving With Grace*. Boston: Skinner House, 2010.

Wise, Tim. *White Like Me*. Brooklyn: Soft Skull, 2005.

Dustin Berger Memorial Library

Bridging the God Gap by Roger Christian Schriener has been newly-acquired by our library (Dewey 211). It's an excellent, practical and timely discussion on the seemingly, ever-present divide in most Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations, i.e. the theists and the atheists.

Personally, I found the book compelling for several reasons: first, the writer is both a retired UU minister with experience in congregational dynamics, and has extensive experience as a pastoral counselor. But secondly, I enjoyed reading this book because he treats both theists and atheists with equal respect. This fact may seem obvious but there are scores of theoretical, and theological/philosophical books that are practically useless for average, lay members of a UU congregation.

Schriener is conversant and has substantive knowledge on theological/philosophical topics but wisely seeks in this book to offer everyday UU's practical, usable means for both educating and empowering people to overcome this longstanding divide between UU theists and atheists. He offers some discussion and analysis of the reasons for the theist/atheist divide but more helpfully provides specific tools and methods for helping the two sides talk with civility and respect; and after all, if we as UUs can't do that, then what hope is there for growth in our congregations as a compelling alternative to traditional religious offerings in American culture.

- Reviewed by Paul Nelson

Conscientious Crafters

Let's get together on Sunday, October 12 after second service at Terry and Mark's country home for a Conscientious Crafters Retreat! Mary Richards will make soup and the rest of us can bring a side dish or dessert to share. Bring your own beverage. This annual tradition gives us a chance to catch up from the summer, make plans for this year, work on a handicraft of our choice and enjoy good food and company. Contact Mary Richards (708-3034) for directions to our venue or with any questions. Carpooling can be arranged.

-Sue Ann Peck

Grounds & Landscape Committee

The Grounds & Landscape Committee is planning an all congregation **Clean Up Session** on Saturday, October 25th from 9 a.m. until noon. Many tasks need to be completed as we prepare the grounds for winter. Raking leaves, cleaning the garden shed, preparing garden tools for winter storage, tidying up the planted areas - the more people involved, the easier the tasks will be. Please join us! Youth are welcome. The rain date is November 1st.

- Submitted by Jane Lohnes, co-chair of Grounds and Landscape

Skadberg Science Circle

The Fellowship's Skadberg Science Circle meets twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings at the home of Susan and Fritz Franzen. The first meeting this fall will be on Tuesday, October 14. We invite all comers from the Fellowship who are interested in partaking of science discussions. Sam Wormley maintains at http://edu-observatory.org/uufa_science/ a listing of dates and discussion topics. Please join in.

- Submitted by Sam Wormley

Religious Education October Schedule

All children begin each Sunday in the service. Younger children are encouraged to sit on the green rugs at the front of Fellowship Hall.

October 5 - RE at 9:15 for PreK-Kindergarten; Grades 1-3; 4-6; 7-8; childcare at 11 for PreK-Grade 5

October 12 - RE at 9:15 for PreK-Kindergarten; Grades 1-3; 4-6; 7-8; childcare at 11 for PreK-Grade 5

October 19 - RE at 9:15 for PreK-Kindergarten; Grades 1-3; 4-6; 7-8; childcare at 11 for PreK-Grade 5

October 26 - Large group activity at 9:15; watch the weekly email for more details

Building Committee

This article is a summary of Building Committee activities for the past year. It had been many years since the Building Committee met as a formal committee; in previous years, building maintenance issues were addressed in an ad-hoc, informal manner by one or several of our members. So, with the Board's help and support, I count this Committee's activities over the past year as at least one part of our Fellowship's efforts in transitioning toward a more transparent and effective program congregation.

While our building has begun to show its age, we have accomplished several tasks and are making significant progress in other areas of building maintenance needs. I list several building maintenance items (some routine and relatively inexpensive and others rather significant and at least potentially expensive items):

- recent signing of a lease agreement for a needed, new copier
- replacement of the front door locking system and needed upgrades
- ongoing consideration by the Committee of the means for addressing water leakage problems in the building
- several Grounds & Landscape members have recently offered to fix the wobbly railing on the entrance walkway to the upper level entrance (Thanks!)
- hiring of an exterminator for the ongoing issue of mice who like to "hang-out" in our building
- consideration of possible contractors to fix our badly-deteriorating concrete steps at the upper level entrance
- ongoing discussions on the necessity of establishing a Building Capital Fund
- some discussion on the need for metalwork repair to the exterior of the building
- repair of frozen hot water pipes in the kitchen
- repair of uneven interior steps from the lower to upper levels

I'm sure there are other items that make themselves known to Committee members and others --- and we welcome suggestions and constructive feedback. In addition to myself, our members include our Board Liaison, Wes Shank, as well as Craig Mushel and Dennis Lindeman. Thanks for your help and support !

- Submitted by Paul Nelson, Chair

Partner Church

When you hear the word Tordátfalva, I hope you immediately associate it as the name of the village in Transylvania where our Partner Church is located. I have had the opportunity of visiting Tordátfalva twice and now when I think of the village, I transport myself to a tree stump that some good person cut off at just the right height for a seat. I am sitting on it under another tree on a slight hill overlooking Tordátfalva. I see the church steeple tall on the skyline while in the field immediately in front of me are haystacks. It is a most restful pastoral scene and very, very quiet. A beautiful spot. Go see if you can find it on the next trip to Tordátfalva. 2015? Tell Kitty Fisher you are ready sign up for the trip.

- Submitted by Joan Mathews

Coming of Age Program for Adults

Members and friends of the Fellowship are invited to "come of age" along with our youth in a separate but tandem COA program lead by Reverend Kent McKusick and other adults of the Fellowship. This adult component will mirror the COA topics and programming at the same time in separate meeting space. Childcare will be available for younger family members as needed. Presentations and discussions will address some of the major theological questions we ask throughout life such as: Why religion? Why do we exist? Is there a special purpose in life just for me? Why do bad things happen? What is "god"? The 12 session program will meet twice a month and begins on Sunday, October 5. Please e-mail minister@uufames.org or uufa@uufames.org to register or for more information.

Schedule for first half of program: Sunday October 5, 1:30-3:30 pm; Wednesday, October 15, 6:00 pm pot luck meal, 7:00-9:00 pm class; Sunday, November 2, 3:00-5:00 pm; Wednesday, November 19, 6:00 pm pot luck meal, 7:00-9:00 pm class; Sunday, December 7, 3:00-5:00 pm; Wednesday, December 17, 6:00 pm pot luck meal, 7:00-9:00 pm class.

The Caring Corner

The Caring Network reaches out to our membership through several subdivisions. One subdivision is the Compassionate Companions. This group has taken on the mission of reaching out to UUFA members who are experiencing bereavement and/or who are approaching the end of life. In addition, the group presents a yearly event that explores ways to come to terms with death, both our own and others'. This year's event is coming up soon, October 21 and 28. Look for more information about it in an article elsewhere in this newsletter.

~ Submitted by Rilla Fox



UUFA Caring Network

caring@uufames.org
515.292.5960 (main office)

The Rev. Kent McKusick
minister@uufames.org
515.292.8929

Sharing Our Caring

Women's Book Group

Please join us at the October 6 UU Women's Book Group meeting from 7:00 - 8:30 pm at the UU Fellowship. We meet the first Monday of the month. You are welcome to attend one or two discussions or join us every month. We have chosen a great list of books for the coming 14-15 year!

Our October selection is *Orphan Train: A Novel* by Christina Baker Kline. Kline weaves the stories of two lost young women into a coming of age tale set in early Minnesota and current day Maine. Vivian Daly is sent to Minnesota on an Orphan Train after a family tragedy in New York and finds a harsh life. Flashing forward as an elderly adult in Maine, a young Penobscot foster child, Molly Ayer, is asked to help her as part of her community service. Together they go through boxes in Vivian's attic that reveal the past and yield a nourishing friendship.

October 6 *Orphan Train: A Novel* by Christina Baker Kline
November 3 *Ready Player One: A Novel* by Ernest Cline
December 1 *Here if You Need Me* by Kate Bruestrup
January 5 *One Summer: America 1927* by Bill Bryson
February 2 *Empire of the Summer Moon* by S.C. Gwynne
March 2 *Orange is the New Black* by Piper Kerman
April 6 *100 Year Old Man Who Climbed Out a Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonassen
May 4 *Mary Coin: A Novel* by Marisa Silver
June 1 *The Wives of Los Alamos* by TaraShea Nesbit

~ Submitted by Barbi Greenlaw

Good Neighbor News

I want to say THANK YOU to the Unitarian Fellowship of Ames for hosting the Good Neighbor Italian dinner on August 31st. We raised \$4000 for Good Neighbor Healthy Voucher Program. This was a dinner formerly held at Lucullan's Italian Restaurant owned by Terry Lowman and Mark Kassis. Since we no longer could hold it at the restaurant, the Fellowship stepped up to host it. Terry provided all the food at no charge to Good Neighbor and he arranged for Michael Kraemer, his former chef and someone who "grew up" at the Fellowship, to cook the meal. Mary Richards played the piano during the social hour and we had a wonderful dinner. We had 15 members who purchased tickets for this dinner. We had many members help with various parts of the dinner, especially the clean up. I have never been prouder of the Fellowship, its space, its members and helping a great organization raise money for an important part of its mission.

The second Sunday in November will be the choir concert of several faith groups to raise money for Good Neighbor. I will give you more details in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, thank you if you support this important organization!

~ Submitted by Lynne Van Valin

UUFA In Home Potlucks to begin in October!

Would you like to get to know other UUFA members and friends better? What better way than sharing a meal together. We have opportunities for hosting and attending in home potlucks from October through May!

UUFA Fellowship Potluck Signup 2014-15

Attendee Information

Names: _____ Number in your party: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I/we would like to attend potlucks in the following months:

___ October ___ November ___ December ___ January ___ February ___ March ___ April ___ May

It is 100% OK to sign up just to attend! You don't have to host.

Hosting Information (optional)

How many guests can you accommodate (not including yourself/your family): _____

Are you able to accommodate children at your event: Yes No

General location of your home (i.e. West Ames, Downtown, etc.): _____

I/we would like to host a potluck in one of the following months:

___ October ___ November ___ December ___ January ___ February ___ March ___ April ___ May

I'm really into potluck hosting, so I could host more than once: Yes No

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.

- Minister:** the Rev. Kent McKusickminister@uufames.org – 515-292-8929
- Youth Coordinator:** Julia Collett youth@uufames.org - 515-292-5960
- Congregational Administrator:** Lisa Harmison uufa@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
- Projects Coordinator:** Diana Crosswaitprojects@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
- Caring Concerns** caring@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
- Campus Group**campus@uufames.org – 515-292-5960
- Board of Directors** board@uufames.org

Officers of the Board

President	Amber Anderson Mba
Vice president	(open)
Past president	Joel Geske
Secretary	Becky Coppoc
Treasurer	David Slade

Board Members

Joydeep Bhattacharya	through 2016
Andrew Denison	through 2015
Jill Mortensen	through 2016
Wesley Shank	through 2015
Jan Vine	through 2016
Thea Brenner	youth representative

Next Regular Board Meeting:
October 8, 2014, 6:30 pm