



Blue Hills Bulletin

The Blue Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is a multigenerational congregation, guided by the principles and liberal traditions of Unitarian Universalism, that promotes an environment of acceptance, inspiration, and action in order to create a sense of greater community.

December 2017
Next Issue, March 2018

Social Action

Dana Lind

Every month, the Social Action Committee will introduce a different organization to be the recipient of voluntary BHUU donations. For December, we will be supporting “The Family House” in Rice Lake. As an example of what kindness and hard work can do in our community, The Salvation Army, Saint Vincent de Paul, and Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis worked together to open the warming house in 2015. It continues to house up to 14 people each night, regardless of qualifications needed at some other shelters. Located near Benjamin’s House, overnight guests check in at New Directions, are given a ride to the shelter, and are returned to town where they are warmly accommodated by the Rice Lake Library.

In January, BHUU will combine efforts to raise money for the Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary in Sarona. As many of our members know and are very familiar with, Hunt Hill offers so much to the community including outdoor educational experiences for grade-schoolers, summer camps for all ages, and various events year around that are hosted by knowledgeable and dedicated

educators, many of whom are volunteers. Unique in the natural beauty that makes up the sanctuary, Hunt Hill’s 600 acres encompasses bogs, glacial lakes, prairie, old growth forests, and more. Additionally, there is a million dollar donation-matching grant in progress with the purpose of creating a \$2 million endowment from which the interest alone can continue the amazing impact of Hunt Hill!

In February, the Free Clinic in Rice Lake will receive donations. Their mission is to “create a healthier community by providing healthcare for uninsured and under-insured people” and they have been doing so since 2010 with financial donations from local hospitals, grants, and individuals. The Free Clinic is run entirely by volunteers and is open Tuesdays from 5 to 9 pm. From the physicians, nurses, lab techs, and pharmacists to the interpreters, media specialists, and fundraisers that donate their time, there are very special volunteers in our community that we can support financially so that everyone is guaranteed quality care.

In March, we will raise funds for the International Rescue Committee, a non-profit organization that has been “helping to restore health, safety, education, economic well being and power to people devastated by conflict and disaster” for 83 years. With locations in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and the United

States, the IRC sees crises especially apparent in the conflict-induced famines of South Sudan, Nigeria, and Somalia, the cholera outbreak of Yemen, and the displacement of those in Niger and Syria. Not only does the IRC offer resources, care, and education to affected areas, it also connects those people's voices to the powers of Washington and even relocates some refugees to the United States where they can achieve economic and physical security.

We hope you approve of our choices for the first four months of our ongoing fundraiser! A suggestion sheet will be posted for later months, so that hopefully we can offer support to a variety of organizations that represent our fellowship. If you would like more information on the groups listed above, the Blue Hills UU website and Facebook page will share their respective links. Thanks so much in advance for your donations!

ERADICATING BLACKBERRIES

Judy Barisonzi

Anything worth doing
is worth doing twice, or however
many times it takes
to free a path.

How unassuming they look,
small soft leaves, unfurling
on fuzzy stalks. Hidden in the closet
are the elderly cousins
with thick hide and spikes.

You, in hiking boots and work gloves,
rip them out
now.
Vigilance
is the price of freedom:

terrorists
blackberries
anything that wants more
than we are willing
to give.

The Beloved Community

Kent Shifferd

“Without a Vision, the People Perish” (Proverbs, 29:18, Old Testament)

We had an interesting forum on Creating the Beloved Community. One observation was that we live in many nested communities from local all the way to global, including the biosphere and its community of animals and plants. One of the outcomes was the suggestion that communities fall on a continuum from brutal and violent to “beloved,” a term we struggled to define—at peace, harmonious (?), but which April suggested was “aspirational.” Another suggestion was that to move our various communities toward the “beloved” state, each of us might make good use of a daily practice, in the Buddhist sense of mediation, reflection, mantram. A sample mantram is provided below, and a list of words to substitute follows. Of course, you may add your own words.

“Peace My Very Being”

Reverence my very being
Reverence in every breath I take
Reverence in every thought.
Reverence my intention.
Reverence my practice
Reverence in every word I speak.
Reverence in every step I take.
Reverence in every undertaking.
Reverence in every relationship.
Reverence in every situation.
Reverence in every moment.
There is no way to reverence—
Reverence is the way.

Healing, love, peace, compassion, grace, silence
non-attachment, patience, integrity, Buddha, Christ,
humility, reconciliation, acceptance, remembrance,
kindness, hope, resolve, faith dependent arising,
gratitude, repentance, joy truth

Getting Through Wisconsin Winters

Jude Genereaux

*“The Light does not shine on us, but within us” ~
John Muir*

Younger folk still in the work-day world will not be able to relate to this – their lives being crammed full of children and needs and rarely enough time for all of it. But for those of us blessed with retirement and days of choice, I write of my experience with winter at this stage in life.

For many years I anxiously looked forward to the months of snow and cold ~ years downhill skiing, serving on Ski Patrol and the family with me out at Mt Hardscrabble. Too much fun!

When that ended, another couple of decades followed when I hardly noticed what season it was, so caught up I was in life with my One-&-Only and work that fulfilled my goals and dreams. Both retirement (which I truly enjoy) and his death (which I don't) changed life again. Dramatically.

Age and loss, plus having to give up or forego former passions, takes a toll. A new caution and concern comes now with winter, diminishing former cavalier joys: just *walking* requires the mantra “D.N.F.D.” (Do Not Fall Down!) ~ a rather expected occurrence in Wisconsin winters.

I confess my mood takes a dive when October appears and I envision months yearning for sunny afternoons planting petunias and time at dusk sitting in the screen porch, watching the sun set. I don't need a lot of hooHAH to engage me – but warmth and light – yes. One attempt at escape to the south for an entire month taught me that being on vacation for weeks at a time has little appeal for me ... I spent the last two weeks marking off the days until I go home! (Bohunks: we just want to be Home).

So short of running off to a tropical isle or the southwest - what *does* one do to turn weeks of feeling sequestered, limited, isolated by dark and cold, into a productive, uplifting time? Here is my plan:

#1. Most important thing: be with people. I'm

fortunate to have my kids & theirs close by – but we can't spent *all our time* with them - so FRIENDS and activities become key. More time together walking, more pot lucks, more road trips, seek a workshop to attend together, discover places you've never been to, near or far. Mineral Point? Richland Center? Quebec? Someone to share fun with is that tree falling over in the forest thing – does it make a sound if no one is there to hear?

#2. Make a list of indoor tasks one doesn't have discipline to accomplish when the weather lures us outdoors:

- paint walls in-house or finish those languishing home projects;
- clean out closets, drawers & cupboards and eliminate at least one bag of stuff no longer needed -every week. A side benefit comes from seeing again many treasures we've forgotten (keep those);
- all those broken bits & pieces of ceramic, games and detritus saved in a box to be repaired? Do it. That snowman with the broken arm, the stick pin with blue beads fallen off, re-attach drawer pulls on a jewelry box / the kitchen cupboard – we all got 'em. FIX 'em!
- Books: sort and winnow. Donate all you don't need to save for whatever reason and take to the local library for fund raising;
- sort those piles of paper, articles saved, bills paid and notes made and discard or organize them – either on computer, in boxes or files – but eliminate the heaps.
- In that regard: ORGANIZE everything! The garage, cupboards, book shelves, photo albums ... opportunities are endless.
- Now: check these off your list and feel the joy of being OCD (that's half the fun – checking them off).

#3. Feed your creative streak. Write that letter or poem or essay; learn to paint, draw, knit, quilt, wood carve – set up a table in some corner where you can leave it stand, and plan to spend a couple hours a day at it. You won't want to when the trees begin to bloom.

#4. Bring more music into your life – learn an instrument, find an outlet to SING! “Singing ten minutes a day clears the sinuses, lifts the heart, lowers blood pressure and prevents depression.” I heard this on NPR, so it must be true.

#5. Most worthy: volunteer time for projects or groups you believe in - (get a dog) and train it for elder care visiting, work at a food pantry, be a helper at elementary schools. Opportunities are endless.

When these most important tasks are complete it will be March 1st, and while March is not all that glorious, I become invigorated knowing I'm on the downside of that hill called Winter - and all that I yearn for is again in front of me.

“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that there was within me an invincible summer”

~ Camus



Universalism

Valerie Grant Rude

On September 17, 2017, Rev. Kalen Fristad, a United Methodist minister, spoke to our BHUUF congregation on the topic of “Universalism Past, Present, and Powerful”. I thought he gave an interesting talk. I bought his book, Destined for Salvation, for \$10

after the service. I was surprised and disappointed by the writings of the book; I felt that it presented Universalism differently than the view presented in his service. In the book, Rev. Fristad writes of his belief that sinners go to hell until they accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. He interprets Universalism as that everyone who accepts Jesus, even those in Hell, will go to Heaven. He writes that God loved us so much that he sent Jesus to save us from Hell, even those who went to Hell as sinners. If a sinner is in Hell, all they have to do is accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior in order to leave Hell and go to Heaven.

Years ago I bought the book, 100 Questions that Non-Members Ask About Unitarian Universalism, written by John Sias based on interviews with Rev. Steve Edington. I bought the book to facilitate my being able to explain UU to others. In Chapter 3, “Life, Death, Salvation, Sin”, Edington states “Most UUs regard death as the final and total end of our existence. Rather than seeing this in a morbid or despairing sense, we view the finality of death as a compelling reason to live life as fully as possible. Although we regard death as the end of our conscience life, we hope that we will live on in the minds and hearts of those whose lives we enriched during our earthly life.”

To the question of “How do we regard sin?”, Sias writes “We do not believe that a person is born and enslaved in the manner that the doctrine of Original Sin teaches. We believe that people are punished by their sins, not for them, and that the evil people do lives with them. We also believe that we are enriched by our virtues, and that the good we do lives with us and helps make the world better.”

To the question “Can UUs go to heaven or hell?” Sias writes “Since there is no way to know for sure if we go any place if we die, very few, if any, believe in a physical existence of a place called heaven or hell.”

To the questions “What about salvation? Can a UU be saved?”, Sias writes “We do not believe that people are born in a state of sin from which they must be saved in order to avoid spending an eternity in hell. Since we do not believe in original sin nor hell, we do not feel a need to be saved from either. When we do use the term 'salvation' it refers to a sense of personal wholeness or fulfillment, or being at peace with oneself.”

Ten Commandments Of Staff Meetings

And as the conclaves multiplied and lapped one upon another, they were delayed in starting and delayed in ending, and were postponed to be called again when those whose presence was required could be made free. For the message was clear, but the ways were hidden.

Then from all sides came voices crying out --

"Though I labor from my coming in to my going out, I cannot attend the meetings for which I am summoned."

"It concerned me not, yet was I called into meeting."

"My need for decision is great, yet am I denied, for all are in meetings."

"Can the meeting not start by the mark on the glass?"

"In the meeting for which I made ready, no person came."

"Is thy servant a fool, that thou summonest him to a meeting to schedule meetings?"

And then at last the chief, hearing of these things, decreed that the axe be laid to the root of those meetings which brought forth bad fruits. And he sent forth a scroll, saying:

I. Thou shalt not meet if the matter can be resolved by other means.

II. Thou shalt make the purpose of each meeting known to those thou summonest.

III. Thou shalt summon only those whose presence is needed.

IV. Thou shalt start at the time announced.

V. Thou shalt stop when it is meet and right to do so.

VI. Thou shalt not run beyond.

VII. Thou shouldst combine into one those which need not be separate.

VIII. Prepare thy thoughts, that the minutes not be wasted.

IX. Schedule not in haste, for the day is short in which to do that which thou hast to do.

X. Fear not to cancel if need disappears.

And in the time the people learned and obeyed these writings, and followed them, putting to and taking away as suited their needs. For as they forsook their old ways, new hours were given unto them, and they were free to do their things, and they saw that it was good.

Kent Van Houten

(Kent Van Houten was a friend and colleague of Valerie's decades ago when they worked together in a state institution.)

Patience And Silence

How quiet it is when we have the patience to be silent.

How much we can learn in moments like these.

We can learn to have patience with ourselves, to better understand and like who and what we are.

We can learn to have patience with others, to better understand what they say and how they say it.

We can learn to have patience with life, to better work with it, rather than against it.

How much do we need silence:

silence for truth so that we may learn wisdom.

Silence for wisdom so that we may learn love.

Silence for love so that we maybe just.

Silence for justice so that we may live fully.

May we be more patient and more silent, so that we may proceed with courage and compassion.

Charles A Gaines, 73 voices, 1972

P.O. Box 614
 Rice Lake, WI 54868
 715-234-6337
 Meeting at 230 W. Messenger Street
 Rice Lake, WI



December 2017 Calendar

December 3,	9:15 AM	Forum: Syria Simplified	Judy Barisonzi
	10:30 AM	Service: CRISPR: benefits & challenges,	Waldo Asp & Jim Bradley
December 10	9:15 AM	Forum: Talking with People you Disagree With, Part 5	Colton Schmidt
	10:30	Service: Sanctuary Everywhere	Bob Hasman
December 12-20		Hanukkah	
December 17	9:15 AM	Forum: Discussion, Sanctuary Everywhere	Bob Hasman
	10:30 AM	Service: What Scares You Most?	Pat Barry
		RE: Kids (young or old!) will decorate Christmas cookies	
	11:30 AM	Third Sunday Potluck: all invited	
	12:00	Board meeting: all invited	
December 21	10:28 AM	Winter Solstice	
December 24	4:00 PM	Christmas Eve Gathering	All
December 31	4:00 PM	Reflections on the New Year	Ken Hood

Please note the special times for our two holiday observances: 4:00 p.m. instead of our regular meeting time.

On Christmas Eve, we will sing carols and share our favorite readings. If you have spare Christmas cookies or other goodies to share, please bring them. We will provide something to drink.

Similarly, New Year's Eve is a time to gather for reflections past and future.