



Blue Hills Newsletter

The BHUUF 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.

September 2106

Next issue December 2016

New Newsletter editor

by Valerie Grant Rude

"Hello!" from your new editor of the Blue Hills UU Newsletter. First, I want to thank Gerri Nedland for her fine work as the previous editor. I encourage all members to submit articles to this quarterly newsletter; let your voices be heard! Articles, poems, essays, thoughts of the day can be submitted to me at brianrude@hotmail.com or handed to me at church.

Membership Committee

by Jude Genereaux

Key to any organization is having an active roster of members, one that continues to grow. The record shows that our BHUUF has reached out to many individuals over the years, but, of course, we know

it is critical that we continue to do so.

Valerie Rude has offered to chair our Membership Committee, and recruited this writer as helper. What we've accomplished so far is a bit of re-organizing in the records-zone, reviewing and archiving such, and contemplating "what now?"

A first step is to engage all of you to play a role. We'll soon have a pile of updated BHUUF "Visitor" packets on the table by the front door; if at any time a new person graces us with their presence: please! Take it upon yourself to give one to them, if Valerie or I are not there to do so, and encourage them to leave their name and address as well. Also if you know of someone who may be interested in UU, please give Valerie their name so we might begin a contact.

This is basic of course; - Step One in accomplishing the contacts that are critical if we are to continue to exist in northern Wisconsin. We all know this . . . so let us all commit to "find one/bring one" and make sustainable growth a goal for 2017.

Report from GA 2016

by April Nielsen

I attended the 2016 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association June 22 - 26 in Columbus, Ohio. General Assembly (GA) is the annual gathering of members of the Unitarian Universalist Association and includes the annual business meeting, workshops, lectures, social witness process, worship services and much more. The geographic location changes each year and rotates through different parts of the United States, in host cities with hotel and convention center facilities large enough to accommodate the 3,000 to 5,000 attendees.

This was the 4th time I have attended GA and was reminded on the first day how overwhelming (GA) can be, especially for first time attendees, so I want to encourage anyone who is considering attending future GAs to talk to me about tips for making the experience more enjoyable and manageable. My first tip would be: “plan ahead”. Is anyone interested in going to GA in New Orleans next year? GA programming runs from around 7:00am through midnight each day. There is an abundance of choices in how to focus one’s time, attention, and energy. I will share a few of the events that were highlights for me this year in this article and plan to share more in future newsletters and Sunday Morning programs at BHUU Fellowship.

Ware Lecture – This is one of the events I have learned to plan ahead for, both in terms of planning that day to be awake and alert for a 7:30 pm lecture and in learning something about the Ware Lecturer before I go to GA. As part of this process, I shared some of Krista Tippett’s work in a Worship Service I led at BHUU in March 2016. For this year’s Ware Lecture, Krista Tippett spoke to the theme of this year’s GA, Building Interfaith Connections. Video recording and transcript of the Ware Lecture is available at this link: www.uua.org/action/ga/ware. Rev. Dr. William Barber, leader of the North Carolina NAACP, and founder of the Moral

Mondays Movement was the Key speaker for this year's GA Social Witness event that was originally scheduled to include a march from convention center to Capital Square, an outdoor concert and demonstration for Black Lives Matter and local Ohio Student Association. Due to thunderstorms forecast at event time, the speakers were moved indoors, removing the “public witness” component that usually is included at GA. I also attended the workshop featuring William Barber who I found to be a very dynamic and intelligent speaker. His Movement is planning a multi-city tour in the coming year including Madison and Twin Cities. Rev. Barber's recently published book, The Third Reconstruction, was chosen as the new UUA common read. I expect it will be a very interesting book.

I am always interested in the UUA social witness process. I did not attend the break out workshops for crafting the proposed items this year in favor of other workshop choices, but discussion and debate in General Session was passionate and interesting to me. Passions got so high around choosing the next 4-year Congregational Study/ Action Issue that multiple breaks were taken to sing songs and have a reminder that this business sometimes gets messy because it is important to us. The topic chosen as the 2016-2020 CSAI is "The Corruption of Our Democracy" The Commission on Social Witness will publish a study guide on this topic by November 15.

One of the things that I am particularly impressed with at GA is how much attention is given to covenantal concerns. As UUs, we promise and expect to relate to one another in a loving and respectful manner, even when we have strong disagreements on particular issues. “GA Talks” are a new feature that has been added in recent years to demonstrate how 2 or more individuals can sit down together and have a conversation around a disputed issue. Some of these GA Talks were pre-planned and scheduled, and some were put together on short notice to address an issue that had become heated. One such hot issue was the debate around a

proposed Business Resolution to divest from American companies that profit from activities that violate human rights and endanger the lives of people living in Palestine and the Gaza Strip. These GA Talks were embedded in the general business sessions. I hope to share one or more during a Sunday morning discussion this year.

All of the 2016 GA video recordings that have free access are linked to this webpage:

www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2016

As a paid registrant, I also have free access to the full library of recordings. I would be happy to talk with any of our BHUU members and friends about any GA related issues you would like to hear more about.

CRISPR: A New Era of Genetic Engineering

Jim Bradley

In December, 2015, a new gene-editing technology called CRISPR was named "Breakthrough of the Year" by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an honor reserved for "a rare discovery that profoundly changes the practice or interpretation of science or its implications for society." CRISPR stands for *clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats*. Enough said on that. More important than CRISPR's name and how it works is what it can do, and the attendant ethical and social implications. With CRISPR scientists, and perhaps others, can rapidly, inexpensively, accurately, and easily alter the genome of any organism that can be handled in the laboratory, including *Homo sapiens*. A related technology called "gene drive" can propagate a CRISPR-mediated mutation through an entire population of sexually reproducing individuals. Potential benefits of CRISPR range from new cancer treatments and genetic disease prevention to

elimination of vectors transmitting malaria, the Zika virus, and Lyme disease. But with benefits come risks and possible applications with unknown consequences. Genetic bases for aspects of what we sometimes call "human nature" are beginning to be uncovered including altruism, empathy, aggression, and even religiosity. Ought traits like these be enhanced or dampened in future generations without the consent of the unborn? How about other non-disease traits like hair, skin, and eye color, stature, musculature, and cognitive abilities? Purposeful or unintended alteration of entire ecosystems by adding, deleting or modifying particular species could stabilize fragile, endangered ecosystems or could irreversibly disrupt them. Finally, a community of so-called biohackers, amateur biologists with fully equipped bioengineering laboratories, is rapidly developing and poised to begin using CRISPR for . . . ? On September 18, Jim Bradley and Waldo Asp will present a Sunday morning program on CRISPR for the Fellowship.

2016 Congregational Fall Retreat

Beaver Creek, October 7-10, 2016, Sponsored by the UU Congregational Church, Eau Claire, WI.

Connect with UU members, with nature, and with yourself. Activities include Hobbs Observatory Program, nature walks, Kubb, kickball, in-gatherings and a special service, campfires and sing-alongs.

Applications are due in the UUC office September 15 to 421 Farwell, Eau Claire, WI 54701-3722.

Phone 715-834-0690 for further information or to register. Include the camper's names, cell phone number, and allergies/dietary restrictions. Or contact Valerie for the official form.

The Truth About Cancer

by Sondra Lewis

On September 25, the last Sunday in Sept, I would like to invite everyone to view the first of a set of DVDs I purchased called "The Truth About Cancer." Practically everyone is touched in one way or another by cancer these days because it is so prevalent. There is a lot of very valuable information here to help you make truly informed decisions if you, or friends, or loved ones, are faced with cancer in particular, or other diseases in general.

There are many, many effective ways to treat cancer that we seldom get to hear about. The author of this series lost both parents and several relatives to cancer. This prompted a quest to find out more about causes and treatments. In this series he has traveled all over the world, interviewing researchers, doctors, and patients, and has edited these interview into an extremely well done presentation.

The first DVD lasts almost 2 hours, so the forum hour and the service hour will be used to view it. We will still have announcements, joys and concerns, etc. in the service hour.

Poetry

Crossing

Moises Villavicencio Barras
(submitted by Judy Barisonzi)

It was one of those cold nights,
the Coyote said to us:
*Think about your family
before you jump on the train,*

*their faces of joy
when they know
that you are on the other side.*
The night fell over us and
we did not have time to think about anything.
At three in the morning
we heard that dragon
of iron and smoke,
we felt it strike our eyelids,
strike the earth
with its long tail.
We were the four
lucky ones
who got on the train.
The cold scaled our bones
with clips and bolts.
The Coyote said to us:
*Two hours from here! Why not?
A beer to begin the morning well!*
That night I stopped
in front of the bricks of my home
and the beams full of abyss.
I paused in front of our son's tricycle.
*Do not trust the Coyote.
Keep your eyes on his back.
not fall asleep. The Coyote waits for the right
moment to strike.*
*If you close your eyes
he will pick you clean
and abandon you
in the middle of nowhere.*
*Do not trust him.
Do not trust him.*
At six in the morning,
frozen to death,
with darkness in our eyes,
we descended the train
like first class passengers
slowing along the rail,
handcuffed.

When Will The Kingdom Come?

by Kent Shifferd

When will the kingdom come?
Surely I do not know.
He said, "like a thief in the night,"
But I have my suspicions . . .
Perhaps it will be
After the last hand with its finger on the last trigger
has let it go.
After the last sortie of the last warplane;
After the last little old lady dies alone and
unremembered in her delapidated rural home
and no one cares enough to know it for a
week:
After the last crazy homeless man is allowed to
freeze to death under the highway bridge;
After the last hungry child misses a meal for the last
time.
Perhaps it will be after the last forest habitat is clear
cut to make paper for the junk mail stream;
Or after the last styrofoam cup is thrown into the
mountain stream;
Or perhaps
After the last can of drain oil makes it way into
the living water of the ocean.
Perhaps it will come after we love the last crazy
man, the last prisoner,
the last soldier, the last hungry child.
Perhaps we are the thieves who can come in the
night and steal away the world's sorrow.

A Baptism

She called to ask if I would baptize her infant son.

I said, "What we do is like baptism, but not exactly.
And we normally do it only for people who are part
of the church family. The next one we have
scheduled is in May."

She said, "Could we come to talk with you about it
anyway?"

They came to see me, the very young woman and
her child and the child's very young father.

She explained that the child had been born with a
heart defect. He had to have a risky heart operation
soon. She had asked the clergy man of her own
church if he would baptize her son, and he had
refused because she was not married to the baby's
father.

I told them that there not being married would not
be an impediment to anything we might do, but that
our child dedication ceremony still might not be
what they were looking for.

I explained that our ceremony does not wash away
any sin, it does not guarantee the child a place in
heaven, it doesn't even make the child a member of
the church.

In fact, I said, it doesn't change the child at all.
What we expect is that it will change the rest of us
in our relationship with the child, and with all
children.

She listened patiently.

When I was through she said, "All I want is to know
that God blesses my baby.

In my mind I gasped at the sudden clarity in the
room.

I said, with a catch in my throat, "I think I can do
that."

And I did.

Robert R. Walsh
Excerpt from the book, A Day Of Promise



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

Our Church Phone

The BHUUF phone, 715-234-6337, is currently maintained by Valerie and Brian Rude. Usually the phone is at our home and answered by one of us. We bring it to church on Sundays. We try to keep an ear open for the ring, but very few calls come in, and most are telemarketing, so it is easy miss a call. We try to check for any missed calls or messages each day and follow up on them.

If someone else would like to keep the phone that would be fine. Another possibility is to leave the phone always at the church. The problem with that is that someone would need to call the phone at least once a day and check for messages. That would increase the cost slightly, because of the extra minutes in checking for messages each day, and would mean any callers would always get the answering machine.

The current situation is satisfactory, but if some one

who is unlikely to miss any rings would like to keep the phone, that would be a better arrangement.

Sept Calendar

Sept. 11 Forum: Video Series: UU and Transcendentalism, Part I
Ingathering Service: Faith, Spirituality & Religion from a UU Perspective, Phil Lund, Congregational Life Consultant, MidAmerica Region

Sept. 18 Forum: Do Black Lives Matter?, BHUU Board
Service: CRISPR, Waldo Asp & Jim Bradley

Sept. 25 Combined forum & service, The Truth About Cancer, Sondra Lewis
