



## 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.

June 2018

Next issue September, 2018

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### A Wee Little Story

Irene Asp

One lovely summer night last summer, I pulled into the driveway of my daughter's home. There in the dark I met her tenants standing outside. Surprisingly, the parents, as well as their young son, were clad in their pajamas. At first I wondered if something was amiss inside. Fortunately that was not the case as the mother explained to me they were releasing a centipede back into nature. The five year old boy excitedly emphasized, "It was on the wall in **MY** bedroom." The father, capitalizing on the moment to share invaluable information with his son (and me), commented on the helpful and positive attributes of centipedes. As this was contrary to my previously held opinion, I asked, "But don't they eat book bindings and other materials?" The mother responded, "No, that is silverfish. In contrast, centipedes are good guys because they eat insects more harmful to us." I was quite impressed that this young couple, both employed full time, were simultaneously giving time, education and love to their offspring. They were giving their son an important lesson about the

value of a small life while at the same time demonstrating that it is not necessary to be afraid of bugs. My hope for the future generation was buoyed that night.

Of course, this event prompted me to google "centipedes" as I do not easily give up my erroneous ideas. Some have described centipedes as a sadly misunderstood species; clearly I fell within the category of the unenlightened. I now know that centipedes love munching on cockroaches, flies, moths, silverfish and other bugs. I also learned that house centipedes 1) groom themselves by cleaning their legs from base to tip, 2) like to dine at night, 3) have been known to reach speeds of 16 inches per second, 4) are effectively harmless to people, 5) have one pair of legs on each segment (they never have 100 legs), 6) like to live in damp habitats, 7) can be beneficial in your garden (they eat slug eggs for example), and 8) are reportedly kept as pets by some people in Japan (we could say a kind of natural pest control).

Based on this happenstance, I am delighted to report that our Seventh Principle is followed by many, some of whom have probably never heard of the Seventh Principle. And, I think we should all give a cheer for the centipede!

# Korea Korner

Dave Hart

A big THANK YOU to all who have shown interest in, and have given money for the Canadian charity “First Steps Canada,” which supplies soy milk and nutrients to children and adults in North Korea. I personally send \$50 per month to this organization. Through the interest, support, and financial contributions of many of you, I am able to double that investment every other month. Thank you for thinking of children in another land who, without this aid, would be left with a future more difficult than that which they already face. Here is a summary from the latest newsletter [First Steps News, Spring 2018]:

“It was a cold, snowy morning when the First Steps team arrived at the Wonsan Yangji Daycare. The children arrived one by one, some on their mothers’ backs, others walking beside their grandmothers and some proudly marching on their own.

At the front door of the daycare, the children stopped to bow to the director, who greeted each child by name. After taking off their boots, they were met by Mrs. Ro Jong-shim, a health worker, who squirted a shot of saline-garlic solution into their mouths. None of the children balked—they swallowed it and headed to class. The director explained that the children had received this simple remedy for years, to boost their immunity. ‘We haven’t had any cases of influenza or pneumonia this year,’ she said proudly.

The children received their morning serving of soymilk in their classrooms. When the soymilk can was brought into the room, they settled down, sitting expectantly. As they drank their soymilk, all we could hear were sips, gulps, and slups of satisfaction. The director told us that they check the height and weight of each child on the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month. ‘None of them are underweight,’ she said. ‘Please continue to support the children.’

There are so many loving hands involved in the provision of soymilk, from the teachers and health workers who are with the children every day, to

workers who prepare and deliver the soy milk, to supporters in Canada and around the world who give and pray. Thank you for your part in providing nourishment to these children.”

You can find more information online at [www.firststepscanada.org](http://www.firststepscanada.org) and see some of the results of your generosity. Another worthy charity is MannaMissons of the UK—they provide a hot roll/bun for North Korean children as well. Their website is <https://lovenkchildren.org>.



## The Joys and Concerns of A Paper Wasp Enthusiast

by Bob Hasman

One cool early summer morning, awakened by the alarm, I dressed, put on my winter jacket and heavy gloves, placed mosquito netting over my head as well as a straw hat to hold the netting down. I picked up my needle-nosed pliers (I left the clothespin in the tool shed) and walked quietly down my long drive way to my mailbox.

Our family had arrived at our summer home the preceding day to find a note attached to the mail box indicating that the mail delivery will continue when I get “rid of” (destroy?) the wasp nest inside.

At that time I discovered two bullet holes in the back of the mail box that tempted an imaginative queen paper wasp to begin her colony in a new steel sanctuary.

I gently opened the mailbox door and peered inside. The two holes let in enough light so that I could see that the pliers could fit between the sleeping adult wasps on the roof of the one tiered nest and the ceiling of the box. That was my first joy. I reached in and pressed the plier nose on the stalk that attached the nest to the ceiling. I gently snipped off the stalk. The wasps remained motionless. My second joy. I withdrew the nest and carried it by the needle-nosed pliers to the wood shed. I lifted the nest to a pole barn nail I had hammered into one of the tool shed rafters and clamped, with the clothespin, the shaft to the nail. It held. The relocation operation appeared to be a success. My third joy. But not the final one.

About a week later, during one of my daily nest checks I saw a wasp head sticking out of one of the cells, followed by front legs and watched a re-born grub fly out of the tool shed door. It was a wasp. That final joy did it. I felt that moment a connection to the wasp's world. It felt good. Some years later at a different stage in my life—I was retired now on a different property, had built my own home, garage, and wood shed. They all had eaves at least a foot long and no soffits. A sort of wasp heaven. I soon had a number of active wasp nests. Sometimes there were two nests above each door. The first day that I had to get lumber out of my wood shed I was not mindful of my surroundings. I got stung. Several times. And I began to worry: who have I invited here? Do I want wasp neighbors?

I thought I had the answer to these questions when I started to put on a pair of blue jeans that had been drying on the clothesline in the yard. The moment I put my leg in one of the pants, I felt a sting, and another sting, and another sting, and by the time I got my leg out I must have been stung a dozen times or more.

I was concerned. But while I was mulling over what to do—and that included “getting rid of the nests,” I remembered the wasp head exiting the grub's cell.

And that image alone led to my opening,

slowly and gently, any door that had a wasp nest anywhere near it. That was not easy. I was civilized. I felt too safe.

Fortunately, it became a habit, what I have come to think of as a learned instinct. But it took a long time. Today, with the wasps practically gone, I still pause before opening the door to my lumber shed. I still feel the need to open it slowly and gently.

There is another ending to this story—the final words of Aldo Leopold's essay, “Axe-in-Hand”:

“Our biases are indeed a sensitive index to our affections, our tastes, our loyalties, our generousities, and our manner of wasting weekends. Be that as it may, I am content to waste mine in November, with axe in hand.”

## Call to Worship

What if there were a universe, a cosmos, which began in shining blackness, out of nothing, out of fire, out of a single, silent breath, and into it came billions and billions of stars, stars beyond imagining, and near one of them a world, a blue-green world so beautiful that learned clergymen could not even speak about it cogently, and brilliant scientists, with their physics, their mathematics, their empirical, impressionistic music, in trying to describe it, would begin to sound like poets?

What if there were a universe in which a world was born out of a smallish star, and into that world (at some point) flew red-winged blackbirds, and into it swam sperm whales, and into it bloomed crocuses, and into it blew wind to lift the tiniest hairs on naked arms in spring, and into it at some point grew onions, out of soil, and in went Mt. Everest and also the coyote we've spotted in the woods about a mile from here, just after sunrise on these morning when the moon is full? (The very scent of him makes his brother, our dog, insane with fear and joy and ancient inbred memory.) Into that world came animals and elements and plants, and imagination, the mind and the mind's eye. If such a

universe existed and you noticed it, what would you do? What song would come out of your mouth, what prayer, what praises, what sacred offering, what whirling dance, what religion and what reverential gesture would you make to greet that world, every single day that you were in it?

Victoria Safford, White Bear, MN, UU minister  
Walking Toward Morning,

## Recommended Reading

by Jane Shoup, "Homo Sapiens: Clever But Seldom Wise" Spring 2018 sermon

Brannen, Peter, 2017. The Ends of the World, Volcanic Apocalypses, Lethal Oceans, and Our Quest to Understand Earth's Past Mass Extinctions. - a tour of the "Big Five": what they can tell us about our not too-distant future and what steps we might take to mitigate anthropogenic CO2 driven climate change.

Diamond, Jared, 2005. Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed - Diamond identifies five factors that have contributed to collapse of human civilizations: climate change, hostile neighbors, collapse of essential trading partners, environmental problems and failure to live within the limits of the local carrying capacity.

Dilworth, Craig, 2009. Too Smart for Our Own Good; The Ecological Predicament of Humankind - taking up where Darwin left off on human evolution, Dilworth argues that our ecologically disruptive behavior is rooted in our very nature as a species. Through his invention, the "Vicious Circle Principle" (VCP), he describes how scarcity/need leads to technological development, which leads to population growth, which leads to more scarcity/need - and around again.

Hanson, James, 2009. Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming

Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity - One of the nation's leading climate scientists warns that the planet is speeding even more rapidly than acknowledge to a point of no return. Hansen argues that we must phase out all coal and achieve a goal of 350 ppm CO2 if our descendants are to avoid global meltdown and storms of catastrophic proportions.

Hardin, Garrett, 1993. Living With Limits: Ecology, Economics, and Population Taboos - focuses on the neglected problem of overpopulation, making the argument for accepting the limits of the earth's resources, i.e., living within the limits of the carrying capacity, recognizing as did Darwin that "there is no exception to the rule that every organic being naturally increases at so high a rate that, if not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair!" A real primer on ecological problems by one of our foremost intellects and critical thinkers, the late ecologist Garrett Hardin.

## Utah Adventure

Dana Lind

I learned so much in the twelve days I spent in Utah on a school research trip. The goal was to volunteer with a local group in stopping the spread of the invasive tree species, Russian olive. We also set out to perform research that would give insight into the effects this species has on the riparian ecosystem and if its removal is worth the time and money. Russian olive was introduced in the United States during the late 1800's as an ornamental and wind-break, but also for erosion control in southwestern US. These purposes, which humans consider beneficial at one point in time, can actually have detrimental effects over a period of time. In the case of Russian olive, the long-term effects can be more subtle than a 3-inch-long Russian olive spike penetrating your foot, although that happens, too.

## The Need To Be Still

Our research looked at several factors along the Escalante River in the small town of Escalante. Terrestrial, flying, and aquatic invertebrates were the main focus of the study, as their abundance and species richness can be used as a metric for overall riparian health. In addition, we looked at bank angle to gain some insight into the tendency of Russian olive's dense root structure to channelize streams, resulting in altered water dynamics that may not be suitable for native vegetation like Cottonwood.

The riparian zone of the Escalante River is improving, thanks to timely and consistent efforts by the Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) and the volunteer groups that work with them, like my biology class. As invasive species become more established, it becomes more difficult to eradicate them due to both sheer numbers and more abundant soil seed banks. As not all rivers in southwestern United States have such a dedicated group of people to restore or protect them, some have a monoculture of Russian olive or tamarisk, another invasive species. Biodiversity is important for ecosystem health, services, and resiliency, and it is important to have a variety of both plant and animal species that are able to coexist rather than competitively exclude each other.

The lessons presented in this trip went far beyond biology. Our class spent time adventuring through a slot canyon, Coyote Gulch, Upper Calf Creek Falls, the Kaiparowits formation, and hiking many miles with nature's art shining around us. We saw rock art, both original and modern, and signs of life even in the most treacherous of places. We reveled in discovering pieces the ancient past of the dinosaurs. I was inspired by the passion, knowledge, and stewardship of those who live in Utah simply for their love of the land, and I am more conscious than ever of my own footprint on this earth.

Some of us with muscles and nerves singing in the full flush of youth,  
Some with quiet confidence, and some perhaps weary,  
Worn with the failures, the years, and the passing of strength,  
And still others, the men and women determined,  
Filled with the zeal of battle for justice yet to be  
And for truth still denied or undiscovered-  
Each and all of us, whatever we be,  
Must come to the time when we need to be still.  
There comes a time when we must know the need  
To go apart and meditate, to seek the meanings of our lives,  
To reconsider the purposes we have accepted  
And to establish each within ourselves.  
The world presses on us too insistently,  
The appetites too imperiously demand of us  
And we forget to be real persons in ourselves.  
May this moment be one of redemption.  
Of renewal of faith in life and the living of it,  
May the disciplines of humility and courage  
Be strengthened from this time.  
May it bring a rediscovery of self  
And a lifting of the heart  
With a sense of newness from that discovery--  
New courage, fresh vigor, and a deeper thoughtfulness  
For the living of life from this day.

Robert T. Weston  
Seasons of the Soul, 1963

## Those Shopping Carts

Valerie Grant Rude

When you find an empty shopping cart in a handicap parking space, please bring the cart back to the store. It will probably be in the way of the next user of that space.

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



#### Calendar, June - August 2018

June 3, Annual Meeting. Potluck breakfast 9:15, meeting 10:00, clean up to follow.

June 10 We would like as many as possible to drive down to Menomonie to attend their Henry Doty & Ada Maxson Celebration. This is a day-long affair, cosponsored by the Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts etc. The formal program starts at 10 am, there are tours of various sites, a lunch for which reservations are needed (\$15, call 235-0001), a reception, more tours, and a concert with organ etc. at 4:00. You can see the detailed explanation and program at [unitariansocietyofmenomonie.com/wp/maxsoncelebration](http://unitariansocietyofmenomonie.com/wp/maxsoncelebration)

For those who do not wish to go to Menomonie, we will have a Soapbox Sunday at BHUU.

June 17, Linda Thompson, title & type of program not known yet.

June 24, John LaFarge from Nukewatch.

July 1, soapbox led by Judy Barisonzi

July 8, Colten, forum, Conflict Resolution

July 15, Dana, forum, The Utah Experience

July 22, Valerie, forum sharing from GA

July 29, ? This might be a good date to invite the other 2 congregations as it is a 5th Sunday, and have a picnic after the program.

Aug 5, Waldo Asp, presentation of the Minnesota Valley UU Mens Fellowship

Aug 12, Irene, Presentation & Discussion, What Does the Bill of Rights Mean to You?

Aug 19, Nadine, forum, Sharing from GA

Aug 26, Marty Sozhansky, service, How Reading Literature Helps Me Grow Spiritually.