



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

Tom Hayden to Speak at First Church

Thursday, November 4 at 7 p.m.

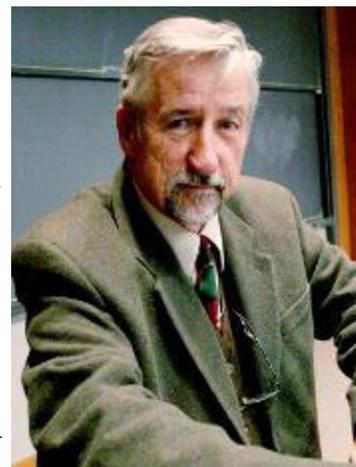
Sponsored by Peace and Democracy Action Group

Noted author, activist and California lawmaker Tom Hayden will speak on "Rethinking the Peace Movement in the 21st Century", dealing with the 50-year "Long War" in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Yemen, and how only a long peace movement can end it.

Hayden's 40 year career in activism began when he was a founding member of Students for a Democratic Society in 1961, and author of its visionary call, the Port Huron Statement, described by Howard Zinn as "one of those historic documents which represents an era." He was active in advocating an end to the Viet Nam War, and after helping lead street demonstrations against the war at the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention, where he was beaten, gassed and arrested twice, Hayden was indicted in 1969 with seven others on conspiracy and incitement charges. After five years of trials, appeals, and retrials, he was acquitted of all charges.

In the Seventies, Hayden organized the grass-roots Campaign for Economic Democracy in California, which won dozens of local offices and shut down a nuclear power plant through a referendum for the first time. The organization led the campaign for Proposition 65 (1986) requiring labels on cancer-causing products, and Proposition 99, tripling tobacco taxes to fund billions for public health and anti-tobacco initiatives.

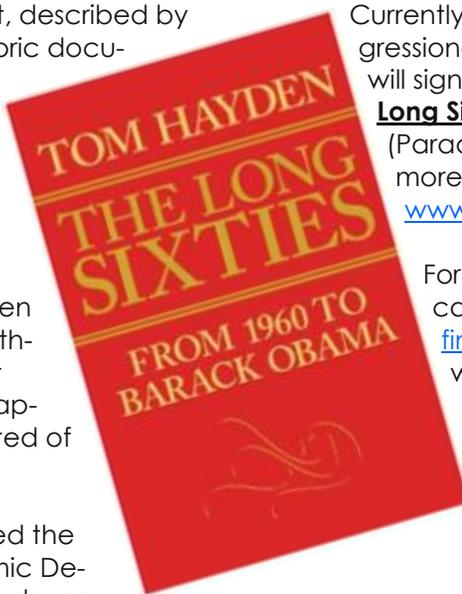
He went on to serve 18 years in the California State Legislature, and has served twice on the Democratic Party's national platform committee. He's the author of 17 books, and is on the editorial board of The Nation.



Currently he is writing and advocating for US Congressional hearings on exiting Afghanistan. He will sign copies of his most recent book, **The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama** (Paradigm, 2009), after the discussion. For more on Tom Hayden, go to www.tomhayden.com.

For information on this program you may call Rhea at 619-491-0664, or email at finebks2@sbcglobal.net. A \$10 donation will be requested.

John Schaibly, Rhea Kuhlman and Tanja Winter, co-chairs
Peace and Democracy Action Group



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Cultural Diversity in Oaxaca

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

Seventy-three languages are commonly spoken in Mexico. Of those, 68 are spoken in Oaxaca. Oaxaca is the state of Mexico that has the most indigenous groups. Many of these have essentially retained their pre-Colombian cultures despite Spanish influence.

Today Arturo, our conversation teacher, led a conversation about cultural differences. He showed us a map of the state of Oaxaca with pictures of the peoples in their native costumes located where those people live. We learned that the peoples of the Sierra Madre, east of Oaxaca, are extremely patriarchal. The men control the finances and are expected to be sexually promiscuous. Outed gays and lesbians risk death. The women do most of the work and have no power. This has been true since before the Spanish came.

By contrast, to the east, the peoples in the isthmus region of Oaxaca have been matriarchal since before the Spanish conquest and are to this day. The women control all the finances and have all the power and most of the status in the community. Whenever they get tired of their men, they just go on to a new one. Women do most of the work. Men might do a little fishing, but they mostly hang out with their buddies and drink. Women do not have the highest status in those communities, however. That position belongs to gay men. (It's OK to be lesbian, but they don't have any special status.) They are seen as special gifts from God and a two day festival honors gay men. As a consequence, Oaxaca became the first state in Mexico to legalize gay marriage.

Among the peoples around the city of Oaxaca, the genders have been more or less equal since pre-Hispanic times.

On a tour on Saturday, there was an incident that disturbed me greatly. Several tour vans, mostly of Spanish speakers, stopped at San Bartolo, a village famous for its black pottery. At a family business, the patriarch of the family was demonstrating how he worked the fresh clay into pots while his wife carved patterns into another partially-dried pot. One of the tour guides remarked to the man that he must have developed his strong hands by slapping his wife all these years. Just to make sure everyone got his 'wonderful' joke, he told it in English. (He hadn't bothered much with us English speakers before that.) Almost everyone laughed, including the wife. The husband, to his credit, only gave a wan smile. I told Arturo about the incident and asked if this was common. He said violence against wives and girlfriends was not uncommon in Mexico and most of Latin America. Before I take this as gospel, I'm going to ask some other people. But if it is common, then I think acceptance of diversity stops well before any approval of this behavior.

Follow Arvid's adventures in Mexico on his blog at <http://www.firstusandiego.org/ministers-blog>.

November Sermons

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

Sunday, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

South Bay Campus: Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

November's Transformational Theme is Democracy

November 7—Hillcrest Democracy

- Rev. Kathleen Owens (live)

November 7—South Bay Courage

- Rev. Kathleen Owens (pre-recorded)
Second in a series on Virtue

November 14—Hillcrest Compassion

- Rev. Kathleen Owens (live)
Third in a series on Virtue

November 14—South Bay Democracy

- Rev. Kathleen Owens (pre-recorded)

November 21—Hillcrest Coming of Age

November 21—South Bay Head, Heart, Hands

- Rev. Jim Grant (live)
Holistic Unitarian Universalism which combines good thinking with good feeling with good acting

November 28—Hillcrest Reconsidering the "G" Word

- Sue Magidson (live)

November 28—South Bay Compassion

- Rev. Kathleen Owens



The Power of Stories

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

Stories have been used throughout time and across cultures to help us understand where we come from, who we are, and why we are here. These are the basic religious questions of life - Who am I? Who am I in relation to you? Why am I here? Stories have a special way of answering these questions. They tell us how others have dealt with the same questions and issues and give us models and examples for ways to cope and how to live.

"I can't tell stories," I hear you say. But let me tell you, you're a story-teller already. When someone asks you, "How was your day?: you answer in a story. When we share about our day at the beach, or our last vacation, we're telling a story.

The stories we're talking about are stories that don't have to be memorized because they are a part of you. You experienced the event or dealt with the issue. I'm going to give you a few hints that may spark the start of your story-telling. The more you tell stories, the more comfortable you will become. You will soon see yourself as a story-teller.

Use some of these Story Starters as ways to prod your memory. Some may make great ice-breakers at gatherings or check-in questions at meetings when you have the time.

- ✧ Describe your favorite childhood toy or game.
- ✧ What nicknames have you had or wished you had?
- ✧ Describe your favorite family celebration.
- ✧ Tell about an aroma you recall from childhood.
- ✧ Tell a story about a favorite vacation experience.
- ✧ What is your favorite time of day? Why?
- ✧ Tell about a childhood friend.
- ✧ What was your favorite family dinner as a child?
- ✧ Describe one of the places you have lived.
- ✧ Describe one of your first memories.
- ✧ Tell about a religious service or experience in your childhood.
- ✧ Share about what brought you to First Church.
- ✧ Tell about a family tradition that you enjoy.
- ✧ Talk about a pet that is or was special to you.
- ✧ Do you have a piece of furniture or family heirloom? Is there a story that goes with it?
- ✧ Did you collect anything as a child? What? What happened to the collection?
- ✧ Did you ever go to camp?
- ✧ Do you have a special skill or talent? Share about how you discovered it and developed it.
- ✧ Share about a memorable moment in your life - a time you will never forget.
 - ✧ What memories do you have of school as a child?

These are only a beginning. You can create others to fit your particular situation. Just remember, stories are wonderful ways to make connections with others and to learn more about ourselves!

Blessings,
Liz

STORY
TELL YOURS

Greetings From The Philippines

BY Len Pelletiere

Recently a surprise package came from our sister church in Malingin on the island of Negros: emails from four kids, our "nieces and nephews," as it were. They're healthy, happy UU kids. None of them has ever received an email from the U.S. Would you like to be their first? It will make them so happy that if you would go visit them next March with Rev. Arvid. They may drag you into the clearing in front of their church and dance your butt off.



Hello!!! (three exclamation points needed for volume, because of the great distance, I guess)

First of all I would like to greet you a pleasant good day and a happy day. What's up there in San Diego, California? We are fine here in Malingin.

June is the opening of classes here in the Philippines. Sometimes, not all students can go to school because it's rainy season. March, April and May is very hot because the sunlight causes bad heat to the skin. In the afternoon, its heat subsides so it can't cause much harm anymore.

On the other hand, the months of June, July and August are rainy. When it rains in the afternoon especially when I am going home from school, my school supplies gets wet and also my school uniform and shoes.

How about there in San Diego? Is it Rainy or sunny? At what month does the snow falls? What time does the sun rises in the morning and sets in the afternoon?

And also, what does the children there in San Diego does? Renzo and Ela Marie would like to greet all the children there because we cannot see you. And I would like to greet Melanie, Carol, Len, John, and all of you who came here in Malingin.

Your friend,
Erwin Castaneda

(Age 12, another grandchild. He hand-crafts interesting floral bouquets out of plastic straws. One or two are in our RE Office)

Dear Friends,
Good day! Thank you because you visited us (March 2010 ed.) and thank you also for your message you gave to us. I can't forget my close friends who are Melanie, Vicky, Sam, Cathy, Susan, John, Len, Lee and Liz because you were so kind and you understand your friends. I am very happy because we danced and played and we even enjoyed talking to each other. Thank you very much to all of you.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Love,, Renzo

(Castaneda, age 10, grandson of Rev. Miguelito "Mike" Castaneda, minister of Malingin UU Church. When John Schaibley told Renzo he looked to us like a future leader he answered, "I will be patient and understanding with my group!"



Dear friend,

I am Ela Marie Castañeda, youngest of 4 siblings. I want to be a friend to kids there in First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. I am 9 years old and currently in Grade 4. I and my brothers join the Sunday school. We draw after a story. What do you do in your Sunday school?

Take care always,



The Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council will be traveling to the Philippines in March 2011. For more information, see their website <http://www.uupcc.org/trips.html>.

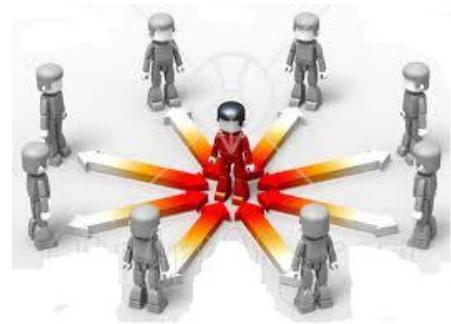
Living Our Covenant of Good Relations, Part II

Editor's note: For the article on triangulation, please see First Words for August 2010

Of the several negative communication patterns congregations practice, three habits are particularly problematic: triangulation, pass-through communication, and anonymous feedback. While these three may be strategies for getting needs met, they all block rather than help healthy communication. Even if well intentioned, they are deadly habits that in the long run allow people to dodge accountability, gain power, and alienate others. Once everyone understands how to break these habits, those who persist will eventually have to stop or they will become so uncomfortable and isolated that they will leave the congregation. To clean up bad communication habits, congregations can do three things: reduce the triangulation, eliminate pass-through communication, and reject anonymous feedback.

Eliminating Pass-through Communication

Some congregations get in the habit of pass-through communication. To get a message to someone, you tell someone else. Like triangulation, pass-through information also involves three parties, but the content of the information is less emotional and personal—sometimes as simple as the expected outcomes of a meeting.



With both triangulation and pass-through communication, few people take responsibility for what is accurate and few people speak directly to each other. Informal channels of pass-through communication lead to misunderstandings down the road. Like the children's telephone game, the content usually becomes distorted and often the necessary action delayed. Miscommunication may occur unintentionally, but individuals or groups also can use pass-through communication to divide congregations and stir up conflict. Giving the message to whomever is close by and expecting him or her to pass it on may seem expedient, but there is no substitute for the direct message. And like triangulation, pass-through communication must be stopped for healthy congregational functioning.

Again, the individual being asked to pass something on has the power to stop the pattern. A simple statement such as "I'm not comfortable carrying that message" or "I might mix up what you've said, so perhaps you could call him yourself" is very helpful. The intended messenger needs to clarify why that person is talking to him or her instead of the individual who needs the information. If he or she is dodging responsibility for direct communication, the intended messenger should be all the more determined to stop the pass-through effort.

Adapted from [Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communication Quandaries in Congregations](#) copyright © 2007, the Alban Institute. All rights reserved. Used with permission. More articles available at www.alban.org.

Kristin Kuriga and the Social Justice Endowment Fund

BY Joan Cudhea and Rev. Kathleen Owens

You have met Kristin, we hope, or at least heard her from the pulpit. She joined our staff one year ago as the half-time Social Justice Ministry Team (SJMT) Coordinator, and what a difference she has made! Warm, nimble, organized, effective, and ever so knowledgeable and generous with her time and caring!

We did not have money in our operating budget to hire a Coordinator to help the SJMT, one of the most active and outreaching of our several Ministry Teams. So how could her position be funded?

Thank goodness that in 1996 a Social Justice Endowment Fund (SJEF) was created! It came about because Helen Burke Thomas wanted to honor her late husband, Jesse Burke, who had been very active at First Church ever since the 1950's, and had been the first chair of the first social action committee. She issued a challenge: "I will establish a social justice endowment with a \$10,000 gift IF it can be matched by other gifts for another total of \$10,000." The Board approved this fund-raising plan in May of 1996, and by June members had actually contributed more than \$10,000 - \$11,000 plus, and Helen then matched that additional amount. So the Endowment was established with a beginning balance of \$21,309. In 1998, it received \$472 from the Art and Soul project of Beyond Racism from the sale of cards created by teens.

Then in 2004 the SJEF received an unexpected major infusion of \$21,594 with a bequest from Janet M. Mannion! Rev. Carolyn Owen-Towle, who officiated at her Memorial Service, wrote: "Janet endured many tragedies in her life and yet she believed in life and people. She was

deeply compassionate, and a lifelong struggler for justice where she saw justice denied."

In September last year, Rev. Kathleen Owens and leaders of the Social Justice Ministry Team, desperately needing a skilled Coordinator, had the idea to borrow from the SJ Endowment principal, and received written permission from Helen Thomas. So the church withdrew \$10,000 from the SJEF at the UU Common Endowment Fund, with a promise to pay back this principal within five years, paying 2 percent annual interest.

The employment search was on, Kristin applied and was selected, and a new era for Social Justice at First Church began! Another \$10,000 was withdrawn (and promised to be repaid) in July of this year.

"believe in life
and people"

As of July 1, 2010, the beginning of this fiscal year, the SJ Endowment principal balance was \$42,342. The fund was invested in three places:

1. \$21,514 with the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund;
2. \$10,828 at Neighborhood National Bank, a local San Diego bank that is certified by the U.S. Treasury as a Community Development Bank; and
3. A promissory note for \$10,000 to be repaid from the Social Justice Ministry Team.

If you have a special interest in social justice, we hope you will consider among your bequests one that specifies the First UU Church of San Diego's Social Justice Endowment Fund.



John and Sue Marberry

I recently had the pleasure to share dinner and a movie with John Marberry and his wife Sue. John has a great knowledge of music, movies and musings so I thought he'd make a great subject for our interview series. Here's what he had to say:

1. Tell us about yourself – where you are from, what you did for a living

In looking back at the past 71 years, I'm most struck by how quickly they passed. Perhaps that's because my maturing was late and hard fought. I was born in Chicago, my parents divorced when I was 2, my father largely absent, preferring his book-writing and bars. My mother became a journalist, feminist, humanist and leftist -- and our L.A. and New York dwellings were filled with socialists and discussions of politics and literature into the night. Because I got in so many public school fights, a necessity to survive, I was sent to a private high school in Manhattan, in which my main mode of study was how to get girls. After UW-Madison degrees in English, I taught college, married and had children, but the marriage dissolved and I wandered for years, trying to find my direction.

Then I met Susan Grossman, my lifelong partner and wife for now a third of a century. We lived in London for 6 years, taught high school, and traveled through Europe and Asia, finally returning to the States and settling in San Diego in 1985. I try to hide my work here in an international corporation, but it did pay the bills. Our beautiful daughter Katherine is 27, but Rebecca died last year at only 24. Our grief has finally begun to subside.

Interview with a Member

BY Robert McMahon

2. How did you come to be at first Church?

Susan joined 1st Church years ago. It was largely the concern, care and help for our grieving, given us from the church community, from Kathleen and Arvid, that spurred me to join late last year. Here I've found people who care for others.

3. What have been your best memories at First Church?

The music (full disclosure: Sue sings in the choir), occasional sermons by Arvid and Kathleen, and getting together with church members.

4. How does this community meet your needs? Or does it?

See my answers # 2 and 3. I'm also a classical music fanatic, and appreciate 1st Church's inclusion of good music, thanks to Dan, Ken and others.

5. Do you have a philosophy by which you live?

I try to live by the impossible goal of love and respect for my fellow man, which is challenged by the increasing polarization of American political life. There comes a point when one must resist evil, though the problem of who determines the truth remains. I don't believe in absolutes and am suspicious of agendas which include them and hurt others. I'm neither an optimist nor a pessimist, but as I can't see into the future, and dislike futurizing (sic), I'm uncertain that we'll solve the problems of our globe. So far, we've not done so -- we've soiled our own nest -- and human suffering increases, as does the overpopulation.

On a more limited view, personally, I value whatever love and matters of mutual concern I can share with others. I soothe my soul with good movies, books and music. Whose, you may ask? For a couple of each, I'll name Bergman and Kurosawa; Yeats and Kafka; and Bach and Mozart.

John Marberry

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