



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

"Nonsense" Cast Can't Break the Habit

BY Paula Johnson



When the musical "Nonsense," about the singing, dancing, double-entendre-wielding Little Sisters of Hoboken, opened Off Broadway in 1985, it was a somewhat risky venture. When the curtain goes up on Friday, October 7, 2011 at First UU Church of San Diego, it arrives as the flagship of a comic mini-empire that shows little sign of slowing down. Besides making audiences laugh, however, "Nonsense" has proved to be a boon for small theaters nationwide, which have relied on this dependable hit to put audiences in the seats during precarious economic times.

"Nonsense" director, Robie Evans, has pulled together a dynamite crew of Looking Glass Theatre (LGT) veterans and talented new blood to bring this surefire hit to First UU Church of San Diego.



Clockwise from bottom left: Carol Angell, Andrea Newall, Paula Johnson, Natali Bialostozky, and Kelly Mustain

The Reverend Mother, Sister Mary Regina, is well known at First UU Church of San Diego as Carol Angell and has been involved in LGT for over 15 years. Her favorite role was the Wicked Witch in "The Wizard of Oz." Most recently, she enjoyed roles in "Honk" and "Seussical". She also appeared in "Our Town," "Christmas Carol," "Fiddler on the Roof," "Music Man," and "Oliver". She particularly loves inter-generational shows and singing in JUUL Tones.

Sister Mary Hubert, formerly known as Andrea Newall, made her debut in the leading role of "Alice in Blunderland," LGT's first show. Since then, she has directed LGT's "Androcles and the Lion," conducted and provided music direction for several shows as well as played various instruments in the orchestra. She is a speech-language pathologist working with elementary students, but she indulges her musical habit by directing choirs, playing instruments, and participating in musical theatre.

Sister Robert Ann is also known as Paula Johnson at the First UU Church of San Diego where she has been a member since 1985. She has been active in LGT since 1996 when she played Marian in "The Music Man." Her last role was Widow Corney in "Oliver." Paula also directed the "Thanksgiving Turkey Extravaganza" and designed the sets for "Seussical." She plays the bells in Las Campanas and sings soprano in the Chalice Choir and JUUL Tones.

Sister Mary Leo has also been seen at First UU Church as Natalie Bialostozky singing in LGTs "Get In On The Act" Variety Show in July 2011. Although Natalie is relatively new to the stage, she has been actively pursuing acting for film and television and is thrilled to be acting and singing in "Nonsense." Natalie enjoys ballet, a talent that qualified her to play the role of Sister Mary Leo. Currently, Natalie is studying at Mira Costa College and hopes to transfer to NYU or UCLA.

Sister Mary Amnesia can't remember who she is after a crucifix fell on her head but in LGT, she is well remembered as Kelly Mustain, who played the mother duck, Ida in "Honk." Kelly was musical director for "Seussical," and more recently portrayed Judy Garland in LGT's "Get In On The Act" Variety Show in July 2011. Kelly has her Master of Music Degree from SDSU and is a full time voice instructor.

"Nonsense" opens at First UU Church of San Diego on Friday, October 7 and continues on October 8, 14, and 15. For more information call 619-298-9978 x8003, click <http://www.lookingglasssd.org/> or search for LGT San Diego on Facebook. Buy tickets on the patio or click the "On-line Order" button at the LGT Website.

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Arvid's Arcania

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

Did you know that we are a regional church? We have members who come regularly from as far north as Oceanside, as far east as Jamul and as far South as Tijuana. They are willing to come from that far away because they see First Church as a place to create community and to grow spiritually. But for many of the people who live far away, from either our Hillcrest or South Bay campuses, Sunday's are the only time they can make it to church. This is also true for many other single parent households, or two working parent households. For those folks the small group ministries, adult education classes and support groups that go on during the weekdays at our campuses are just not practical. A lot of the community building and personal transformation opportunities are just not available to them.

If you've been at our Hillcrest campus lately, you know that the construction of our new Bard Hall has finally begun, after years of permitting delays by the city. We are not building a new Bard Hall only because the old one was falling down around our ears, or because we wanted a nice new building, or bathrooms that were not a disgrace. We are building the new Bard Hall so that we can better fulfill our mission of building community, nurturing spiritual growth and acting on our values to help heal the world. The new Bard hall will have well designed meeting and community space and a great kitchen. Most important, the new Bard Hall will have more than 50% more meeting rooms. This will make it possible for individuals and families to have a full church experience in one trip on Sunday. It will be possible to attend worship and a small group or adult religious education class, with programs for children and youth happening at the same time. No need to rush home for lunch. Our fully equipped kitchen will make it possible to enjoy a simple, inexpensive meal along with the fellowship that goes with it. What a great opportunity for programming relevant to our busy lives today.

Because this is such a compelling vision, we're expecting a miracle. A miracle is described by the dictionary as an improbable event or development with welcome consequences. We expect a miracle on Miracle Sunday, November 6 when we raise \$700,000 in gifts and pledges in a single Sunday to complete the Bard Hall project. We already have commitments of over \$180,000 toward that goal. The service will be an extravaganza, a true celebration of First Church and its mission. It will include a lot of special music and a retrospective of the history of our church and a vision of our future. Please make plans to be there at worship that Sunday and think about your gift between now and then.

October Sermons

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

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

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

October's Transformational Theme is Death and Loss

Sunday, October 2—Hillcrest Campus

"Grief Is A Form of Love"

- Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live).

Sunday, October 2—South Bay Campus

"Mindfulness"

- Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube (pre-recorded).

Sunday, October 9—Hillcrest Campus

"How We Die"

- Rev Kathleen Owens (live).

Sunday, October 9—South Bay Campus

"Grief Is A Form of Love"

- Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live).

Sunday, October 16—Hillcrest Campus

"Actions"

- Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live).

- 6th in our Compassion series.

Sunday, October 16—South Bay Campus

"How We Die"

- Rev Kathleen Owens (live).

Sunday, October 23—Hillcrest Campus

"Theology Ablaze"

- Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Minister Emeritus
(live)

Sunday, October 23—South Bay Campus

"Actions"

- Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded).

Sunday, October 30—Hillcrest Campus

"Masks"

- First Church Young Adults

Sunday, October 30—South Bay Campus

"Theology Ablaze"

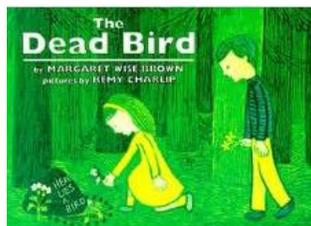
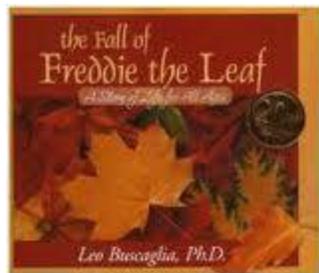
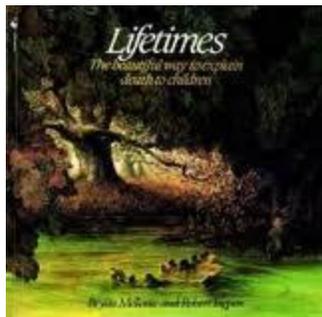
- Rev Dr Tom Owen-Towle, Minister Emeritus
(pre-recorded)

Talking with Children about Death

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

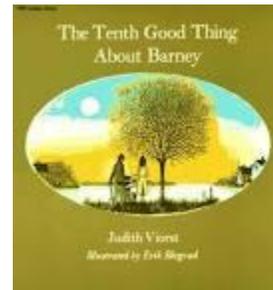
The worship theme of the month of October is Death. There is probably no subject that parents ask me about more frequently. And, it usually happens when they are in the midst of the anxiety of answering difficult questions or their own personal feelings of loss which makes it all the harder. So, I'm taking the opportunity of this month's theme as a time to offer some resources that parents and anyone who has children in their life should know about.

Very young children have no real concept of death. It is important to help them understand that things live and die as part of the natural cycle of life. Coming to some understanding of the impermanence of life before encountering it in the death of a beloved pet or family member may help to ease those times. My favorite resource is the book *Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* by Bryan Melonie and Robert Ingpen. Through beautiful illustrations, and gentle verse, these authors explain that "There is a beginning and an ending for everything that is alive. In between is living." They explain that for plants, people, birds, fish, animals, and insects there is birth, life and death. It's done with a gentle matter-of-factness that is comforting. If children can be introduced to the naturalness of death as part of life before there is a painful loss for them of one of their friends, it can ease the fear of the unknown and help them accept the fact. A similar book for slightly older children is *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages* by Leo Buscaglia.

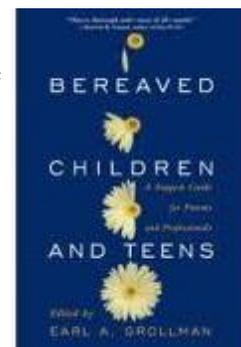
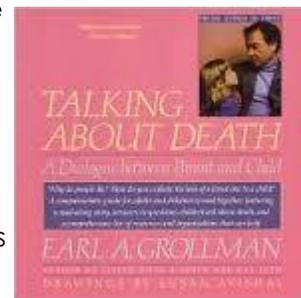


Two other books that can provide help to children are *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown, and *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judith Viorst. In *The Dead Bird*, children

find a dead bird and bury it with ritual, bringing flowers to it and singing it songs. It can be used to help children become comfortable with the idea of a funeral or burial. In *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*, a child's pet cat dies and to help him with the pain of loss, the mother encourages him to think of 10 good things to say about Barney when they bury him in the yard. This story can help children focus on the positive aspects of having a pet or person in their life, rather than focusing on the loss alone.



For adults who need to help children deal with the death of a loved one, there are two books by Earl A. Grollman that I would recommend. The first is *Talking About Death: A Dialogue between Parent and Child*. This book includes not only information and suggestions for parents; it also has a story to be shared with your child. The other book is *Bereaved Children and Teens: A support Guide for Parents and Professionals*. This book is far more detailed and offers a broader perspective on helping children through this difficult time. I'd recommend this book if you anticipate a death and want to explore ways to help and look for further resources.



Please feel free to call me if you have questions, or know of other resources I should be aware of. And know that I am available to listen to your concerns, and offer suggestions if you want them. Helping our children learn this difficult life lesson is part of our role as parents. If I can help, please call.



A Prevalence of Hunger in the US

BY Victoria Sleeter

A prevalence of hunger happens only in other countries, right? Wrong! Hunger is very prevalent here in San Diego. We've all heard about those organizations who want us to donate money to their cause so that they can help starving kids in African countries, but what about those starving kids who are here in San Diego?

The San Diego Food Bank distributed 15.3 million pounds of food in San Diego County in 2010, that's the equivalent of 12 million meals. That sounds like a lot of food to me! According to the food bank, of the 3.1 million people who live in San Diego county 483,000 people live at or near the federal poverty level. Approximately 273,000 of those people are children. These individuals face "food insecurity" which means that they have little to no food at home and at times may not know where their next meal will come from. People who are poor often move three meals a day to the backseat because of the need to pay for other items such as gas, insurance, rent, clothes, and other similar items. In 2010 48% of people served by the food bank were under 18. 16% were children ages five years and younger. 22% were senior citizens, and 50% of households had at least one parent who was in the low income job. Children, families, seniors, and the working poor are all examples of people who turn to the food bank.

To put these statistics into perspective I would like you to look at the front of the order of service. You will see an empty bowl, a stack of tortillas, or a full meal. If you have a picture of a stack of tortillas or an empty bowl please raise your order of service

and wave it. [Pause] Take a moment and look around the meetinghouse - if this was San Diego, everyone whose order of service is raised would either have no food, or would have had a very minimal meal today. That's surprising isn't it? Starting local will make it much easier for us to move to the national/international level when helping to eradicate hunger. Eradicating hunger is more than just giving someone food for a day, a week, a month. I feel however that if we start by giving people food for that day, that week, that month we can help them to go get on their feet so that they can go out and find a job, go to school, support their family etc. I may only be 17, but I know that I am very lucky to have food on the table every day.

Think of one of those ads that you see for those organizations that help starving kids in other countries. As you think of that ad I want you to put the face of the child from the US into that commercial; does that change your perception of hunger in the US? If it does I'm glad because we need to help those kids who are starving here in US just as much as we need help starving kids in any African country or any other country around the world.

What can you do to help feed people here in San Diego? Donate non-perishable food items, or donate your time to organizations like the [San Diego Food Bank](#), or support other group's efforts, like the [Western Service Workers Association](#) or [Mama's Kitchen](#), to help feed the poor and the "working poor" in San Diego. If we each do a little, we can make a big difference in the lives of many.



First Unitarian
Universalist Church
of San Diego

**to create community
to nurture spiritual growth
to act on our values
to help heal the world**



The Human Right to Water

BY Susan Weaver

In August, many members of First Church, acting in support of AB 685, the Human Right to Water bill, made phone calls to California state senators and assembly members and signed postcards and letters urging that that AB 685 be enacted into law. Kathy Smith, in her roles both as a member of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry (UULM) and Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) representative, coordinated much of those efforts. Unfortunately, the bill didn't make it to Governor Brown's desk for signature at the end of the 2011 term-- AB 685 remains on suspense with the Senate Appropriations Committee. More on what happened with the bill can be found at <http://www.brownmillerpr.com/AB685.htm>.

Broad collaborative efforts brought AB 685 this far, and the coalition of sponsors of the bill are now strategizing on how best to move the Human Right to Water in California forward in 2012. Sponsors of AB 685 include the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of California, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, Clean Water Action, the Community Water Center, and others.

AB 685 is the lead bill in a package of 5--the others make needed changes in state policies-- to assist communities most in need in connecting to safe water sources. At this point, the four other bills have made it to Governor's Brown desk.

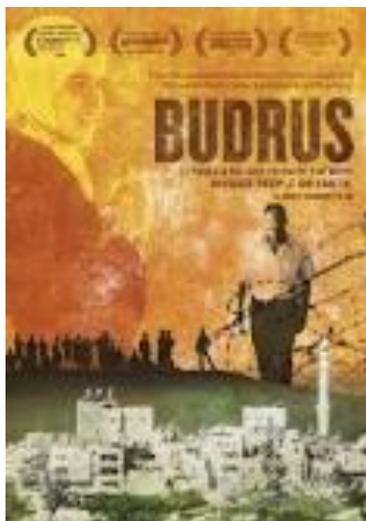
Yet it is AB 685 that will cause state agencies to focus its priorities to ensure clean water for all Californians. If passed, it establishes a policy in California that "every human being has the right to clean, affordable, and accessible water for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes." California had detectable nitrates above regulatory standards in the drinking water supplies of more than 11.2 million Califor-

nians from 1997 to 2001, while the drinking water of 8.5 million Californians was subject to five or more violations of those standards. That groundwater pollution means that Californians, many of whom are in some of our poorest communities in the Central Valley, must spend extra to purchase bottled water or for expensive onsite treatment--or else use contaminated water.

In 2010, the U.N. General Assembly and the Human Rights Council voted to recognize water and sanitation as a human right. In reporting on her mission to the United States last winter, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation Catarina de Albuquerque cited "enormous challenges" in the San Joaquin Valley, particularly with nitrate contamination of drinking water. (The full U.N. Report is available online at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/WaterAndSanitation/SRWWater/Pages/SRWWaterIndex.aspx>.)

Last August 31, frustrated at the California legislature's inability to pass a bill providing for a basic human right, members of the coalition sponsoring the bill took time to demonstrate at the Capitol. Their dedicated efforts to move AB 685 forward in 2012 still continue.





Film Showing: Budrus

BY Rhea Kuhlman

Of the many daunting issues facing the Middle East today, none has seemed more intractable than the long standing struggle between Israel and Palestine. As Israel continues to build settlements and barriers on Palestinian land, the Palestinians have seemed powerless to resist the unceasing expansion.

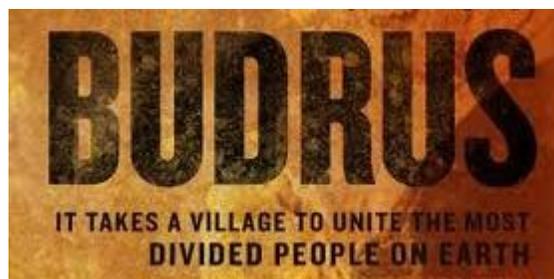
But the people of Budrus, a Palestinian village on the West Bank, thought otherwise. When Israel began to build a security wall through Budrus, which would separate villagers from the olive groves that are their main source of livelihood, one man spoke out. Ayed Morrar called a community meeting regarding the Wall. He said, "We have two options: Either call it fate and give up like we usually do, saying 'This is the will of God.' Or we consider it an injustice that must be faced and challenged."

Morrar's words inspired the people of Budrus to begin a months-long movement of peaceful resistance to persuade the Israelis to move the location of the Wall. Men, women, and children organized to defend their olive groves on a daily basis, and hold off the destruction of their way of life.

On Sunday, October 9 at 1:15 p.m. in Room 113, the Peace and Democracy Action Group will show a one hour film about Budrus. The film will be followed by a brief discussion. The Unitarian Universalist Association has prepared a study guide based on the film and the events at Budrus, raising questions about the wider implications for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among the topics to be discussed will be the role of women in the Budrus resistance movement and its implications for the power of women in Islamic cultures, and the role of religion versus land as the root of the conflict.

Before Tunisia, before Egypt, before the Arab Spring, there was Budrus. Please join us to find out what happened there.

For more information about the event, contact Rhea Kuhlman, Peace and Democracy Action Group, (619) 582-1962 or finebks2@sbcglobal.net.





Funny, isn't it, how a seemingly insignificant scrap can trigger a slew of memories. Ten years ago UUSD published a weekly newsletter on two

sides of two 8 ½ by 17 sheets of copy paper, printed, folded, labeled, and sorted by a faithful crew of volunteers for our weekly bulk mailing to every church member and friend. The reams of copy paper arrived wrapped in sturdy, wax-coated stock which was not acceptable for our recycling bins. But that didn't stop me from collecting them, taking them home, and saving them for some "higher purpose."

When we moved to Maine at the end of 2001 to companion my aging father I used those papers to wrap every breakable worldly good we owned. A nearly 4000 mile trip in the back of an ABF truck and nothing broke. As we unpacked for our new home, we smoothed and saved every one of those pieces of wax-coated paper. Again, for a "higher purpose." There was much painting to be done. Those papers, taped together, became movable, cleanable drop cloths. The waxed areas wiped clean, but edge splatters record the various shades and rooms in which they served.

Still, I smoothed and folded and saved the papers. Last week we were repainting the exterior trim on our front porch, using those papers to protect vulnerable areas. Thus the memories.



Grace and Anya

Ten Years Ago

BY Grace Lewis-McLaren

My father celebrates his 97th birthday this weekend. Though his pace is slower, he continues to inspire. We are a family of three; four, if you include Kali, the cat. John & I work on the garden during the warmer seasons. Just harvested 3 bushels of potatoes. We have nearly doubled the living space of the house, and love to have guests any time of year. Music is a constant companion, though we play mostly for enjoyment rather than employment.

Elinor Weed gathered the cards and letters from my retirement party, celebrated in Bard Hall on Oct. 21, 2001. She created a gorgeous keepsake scrapbook which stays on top of a desk in our living room. What a gift! So many good friends left behind. So many memories. Such is life. We hold our celebrations, we say our thanks, we deconstruct, we mourn, we rebuild.

Yes, that was our UU Church of Brunswick that burned in June. The UUCB facebook page has lots of photos. We're planning to rebuild. More unknowns than knowns at the moment. Grateful that nobody was in the building and that it wasn't winter. Still, it is a painful loss. But it is also a wide-open opportunity.

I'm not very skilled at the facebook stuff. So please forgive me this old fashioned way of touching base. I know, I'm a bit behind the curve. My cell phone number is still in area code 760 (822-4450). But I do have a smart phone so I guess I'm making progress.

Visiting Maine? Come and stay with us!

Grace Lewis-McLaren
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