



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

Tell Me What You Value

BY John Holl

Unitarian Universalists are never at a loss to discuss and pontificate on subjects such as money, especially when it comes to its corruptive effect on government, its waste, where it might be used better, and its misuse (by others). Yet money still remains possibly the best way to define and track one's habits, aspirations, and values.

Without the Church infrastructure that maintains the campus, pays the salaries, and funds our links to the greater world, we would be in no position to do social justice projects, program outreach, musical and artistic celebration, care ministry, ministerial counseling, and adult education. Our community must bond together in support of the operational aspect of the Church.

Especially during the current economic downturn, the Church administration, the ministers, the Finance Committee, and the Board have worked hard to steward our financial resources and to limit Church expenses, while at the same time offering many programs and services to which we have become accustomed. To do this, they must anticipate, plan and budget in a manner similar to what we expect of any well run business. To accurately budget, they must record the *Consistent Identifiable Commitments*.

Call it *CIC*, pledge drive, annual campaign, or whatever you prefer - this process has become an onerous task in this Congregation. The annual fund drive has become perhaps the most awkward time of the Church year. Few UUs enjoy a direct approach solicitation. Fewer still are willing to volunteer as a solicitor. Some have assumed that the availability of parking lot revenue and the largesse of a few relieve them of significant participation in support. With the recent shortfall of the parking lot and the prospect that this will continue, we are presented with an opportunity to reeval-

Don't tell me what you value - show me your budget (checkbook) and I'll tell YOU what you value" -- Joseph R. Biden Sr.

ate our committed support of our Church community.

I offer a **proactive** approach for this year; one that will involve much less time and expense to the Church administration and to your fellow congregants who volunteer for this process and one that might lead to a less onerous ongoing process.

1. **Become knowledgeable** of the church budget and financial situation: read the communications from the Church (written and electronic).
2. **Ask questions** of the Generosity Ministry members (Susan Harding 619-281-3815, Peggy or John Holl 619-546-6525, Dave Hunt 858-273-2006, George Klinke 858-521-0748, Board members, and the ministers).
3. **Review your own** situation and your giving record: consult your spouse/partner if your commitment is joint.
4. **Consider if you can push yourself** to little higher level to compensate for our brothers and sisters who have already been pushed to the limit.
5. **Make a decision:** you will sleep better and avoid stewing as the campaign progresses. Remember a commitment is a pledge, not a contract. It can be altered as the situation necessitates.
6. **Act** now or deliver your pledge on Commitment Sunday, March 21. Don't wait for the volunteers to contact you. Commitment forms may be downloaded from firstuusandiego.org, mailed, e-mailed, or picked up at the church office.



-John Holl, Annual Fund volunteer



Arvid's Arcana

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

The business of the First Unitarian Universalist Church Of San Diego is the creation of whole human beings. Our product is healed lives that help heal the world.

March 21 is Celebration Sunday. You are especially invited to attend church that Sunday, to hear Kathleen and me speak about our vision for First Church. You will be asked to participate in that vision by making an estimate of giving to the church's Annual Fund Drive at that time. A celebration brunch will follow each service.

These are uncertain economic times. Many worthy causes call for our support. I'm asking that you make First Church the main beneficiary of your giving this year by joining Sonya and me by pledging 5% of your income to the church or to consider raising your giving to 5% gradually over the next 5 years. Other causes like universities, social service agencies, the arts and politics are all worthy of our support. But only the church is there for you to marry your children, bury your loved ones, inspire you every week to live up to your highest values and help you raise your children and youth to responsible and compassionate adulthood. The church community is here to help you bear your troubles and celebrate your joys and triumphs. This church stands up in the community and the world for justice, equality and tolerance. It helps us to consecrate our lives in useful service. It is worthy of your support.

I am very aware that some of you cannot contemplate a gift of this level. You have lost your job or fear foreclosure or your business is down because of the challenging economic times. We want those of you in these circumstances to know that any gift is welcome. And you may request a waiver with full membership rights by a confidential communication with one of the ministers. Times will get better for you and you can give more then. If you are doing ok this year, we need your gift more than ever.

March Sermons

Service Times:

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

Vespers: Second Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.

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

March's Transformational Theme is **Letting Go.**

"Religion Beyond Belief" - Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President

March 7—South Bay

"Non-Attachment" - Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

March 7—Hillcrest

March 14—South Bay

"Letting Go of the Person You Used to Be" - Elka Cartmell Ladd

Vespers, March 10—Hillcrest

"The Spiritual Task of Aging" - Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

March 14—Hillcrest

March 28—South Bay

"Celebration Sunday" - Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube and Rev. Kathleen Owens will share this sermon in Hillcrest. Elka Cartmell Ladd will preach in South Bay.

Everyone is invited to a celebration brunch after each service. On this day everyone will be invited to make an Estimate Of Giving to the church for the 2010-11 church year.

March 21—Hillcrest and South Bay

"Broken Open: How Difficult Times Help Us Grow." - Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

March 28—Hillcrest

Sabbatical

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry



When this issue reaches you, I will be into my second week of a month-long sabbatical and on my way to the Philippines. I want to share with you my understanding of what a sabbatical means and what I plan to do with my month away.

The term Sabbatical comes from the word Sabbath. Most of us are familiar with the Biblical story of creation in which God rests on the seventh day following the creation of the world and all its creatures. The story is the foundation for the tradition of taking the seventh day of the week as a Sabbath to step away from the daily toils for both rest and reflection. In our culture, religious and academic institutions have taken the idea of Sabbath and created the Sabbatical. This time provides for personal and professional rest, reflection, and renewal. It's different than a vacation because it can provide a significant amount of time for intentional professional renewal.

I have chosen to take the time I have accrued as Sabbatical in small segments which best fit both my personal life and my work here at the church. I'm taking four weeks away beginning February 22 and returning March 22. The major portion of this trip will be as a participant on the Partner Church Pilgrimage Trip to the Unitarian Universalist Churches of the Philippines, including our partner church in Malingin. Six other individu-

als associated with First Church will be going, as will seven others from around the country.

I have chosen to truly approach this time as a pilgrimage. For me, a pilgrimage begins with preparation for the journey. I started that preparation by reading Rick Steve's Travel as a Political Act. This book helped me to understand the importance of preparing myself for entering a different culture and being open to the gifts available to me on the journey. I then read Rev. Fred Muir's book, Maglipay Universalists: a History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines, and a travel book about the island of Negros where most of the Unitarian Universalist churches are located. This preparation has helped me to recognize how different the culture I will be entering as a guest is from ours, and how different the theology is. I have developed a great respect for the strength and dedication of the founding and sustaining members of this minority faith in the Philippines. Like our Universalist ancestors, the members of the UU Church of the Philippines are mostly from among the poor and rural. Their theology is much closer to that of our Universalist forbearers than the Unitarian Universalism we recognize today. I plan to read the book Art of Pilgrimage: the Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred by Phil Cousineau before I leave.

I have been asked to lead some workshops while there about teaching religious education to children. But my main goal is to be a sponge. I hope to soak up many experiences and personal stories, and to develop an understanding of how we can truly be partners. I plan to share my experiences with you when we return, and help build a broader network within this congregation for our partner relationship with Malingin.

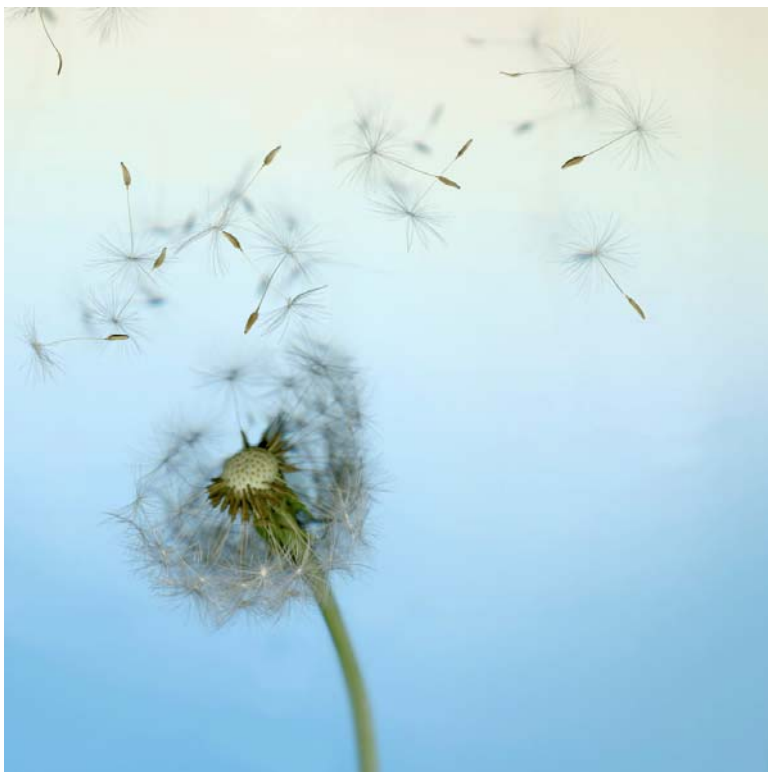
Blessings,

Liz



Bard Hall Project Update

BY The Campus Project Oversight Team



We are all excited about the prospect of the new Bard Hall. Our campus renovation and wonderful new building will provide a warm and beautiful space for all of our community gatherings. Bard Hall will be a building we're proud to bring our friends and colleagues to for special events. Our growing congregation will be able to meet and be together in community.

As with any ambitious project it takes time to get through all the bureaucratic red tape. Staff and CPOT have been working closely with our contractors and architects to move the project forward as quickly as we can. The permitting process is well underway and we've had several rounds of back and forth with the City on site layout and building design. We've been through several intense information gathering/report generating processes over the last few months that is a normal part of the City's process, but it has delayed the City's go-ahead of our project. To highlight a few of these:

- ✧ We are blessed to be located on a beautiful canyon here in the heart of San Diego. We underwent a biological survey to make sure construction won't upset any sensitive species. While we may need to do some sound abatement if we are lucky enough to have any gnatcatchers nesting on our property, we are confident our project is ready to move forward from a biological perspective.
- ✧ Our consultants, together with a yeoman's effort from Betty Boone, spent a great deal of time exploring whether Bard Hall qualifies as an historical resource. It is over 45 years old, after all, and it has affected many of our lives in great and wondrous ways. While our consultant is confident that the building does not have historical significance, we are still awaiting final word from the City in this regard.
- ✧ Parking has also been a significant issue with the city. They would like us to have just a few more spaces to meet the needs of our congregation. We are working on agreements with UCSD and Mercy Hospital to resolve this issue.

Should things continue to go smoothly with the City, we are hoping to start demolition in the fall. A detailed and up-to-date timeline can be found outside of the Meeting House and on the Church Website. Look there for information over the coming months.

There will be CPOT representatives at all the Generosity meetings that will be happening throughout March to answer any questions regarding the construction plan.

Being Called: A Vocation or A Busy Signal

BY Rev. Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister

I no longer think only clergy hear a call. In fact, I believe every one ... has been called – for some called by your God, for some called by a greater sense of purpose and meaning, some are called to serve the world while others are called to serve, right here, in this community. We are all called to mature spiritually, to broaden our compassion, to be and act from our better self. The challenge is to first be able to hear the call and then the hard decision comes – to act upon it...or not.



this mission to keep us focused. This mission becomes our touchstone for decision making. The first question we ask before offering another program, another class, another service is, does it fit within our mission; how will this (class, program, service) help transform people's lives

so they can help heal the world?

I believe that each one of us is called to action – called into service for the greater good. For each of us there is a voice that calls us to our better selves – that asks us to extend beyond our comfort level and reach out to another. And with each call there is some fear,

“Our mission is to help transform people’s lives so that they can go out and heal the world.”

some risk and a sureness that comes with saying yes, with answering that call. And for me, there is the questions that quietly persists: how relevant is this church? I wonder...how do we prevent our purpose for existence from becoming lost amid the details and problems of self-maintenance?

And have we Unitarian Universalists become a taillight rather than a headlight in the mist of the social evil around us?

I think one of the ways we become more than a self-maintaining institution is to keep our mission before us at all times. Our mission is to help transform people's lives so that they can go out and help heal the world. We need

Working with, living and practicing this mission allows us to continue building the beloved community. We gather together in small groups for ministry, not just for committee meetings. We listen to the stories of our lives and widen our circles to include one more. We minister to each other in caring support and learn how to support others beyond our walls. We begin to care deeply about our neighbors – not because we want them to join us, but because they are our neighbors; and every week we meet more and more of our neighbors and learn that they live beyond the limits of Hillcrest. They live in downtown San Diego, in the Barrio Logan area, in Chula Vista, in Tijuana...they are our neighbors.

I think we become a headlight by taking a stand and acting on it. You know, sometimes, in our effort to be inclusive, reasonable and respectful, we tend to study an issue more than act on it. Yes, we need time for study and reflection. We need to educate ourselves on the issues and to think through some of the consequences of our actions – and we need to act – from that spiritual place that says this is an issue to us because of justice, coming from compassion and our faith.

Excerpts from a sermon given on October 11, 2009

Peace and Democracy Embraces Compassion

BY John Schaibly, Peace and Democracy Co-Chair

The Peace and Democracy Action Group of the Social Justice Ministry Team was formed by Tanja Winter after the September 11 attack in 2001. The immediate objective was to provide a place for our members to grieve, talk and express fears about the attack and try to understand why the tragedy happened.

"We will provide a forum for individuals and organizations that are finding solutions rather than just talking about problems. They will give us concrete ways that we can join them in their efforts to alleviate suffering and oppression."

Out of this grew the "Matters of Controversy Series" – giving investigative journalists and activists a forum to report stories not making the traditional press. Speakers over the years have included Blase Bonpane, executive direc-

tor of the Office of the Americas; Marjorie Cohen, law professor at Thomas Jefferson Law School; Greg Palast, journalist; Chalmers Johnson, professor and author from UCSD; Robert Jenson, School of Journalism professor and author, Amy Goodman, internationally acclaimed news journalist from Democracy Now; Daniel Ellsberg, whistleblower for the Pentagon Papers; and Dr. Helen Caldecott, nuclear activist, and many more. The series is very popular with members of the San Diego Activist Community as well as our own congregation.

This year, we are launching a new series "Acts of Compassion" growing out of Karen Armstrong's Charter of Compassion. It will provide a forum for individuals and organizations that are **finding solutions** rather than just talking

about problems. They will give us concrete ways that we can join them in their efforts to alleviate suffering and oppression.

The first program in this series was "Women Preventing Poverty" cosponsored with the Women's Federation of First Church in February 2010. This program presented the work of Women's Empowerment International (WE) as they support micro-financing in the third world and here in San Diego. We were told of the work of WE among women entrepreneurs in San Diego and in the third world. Other Acts of Compassion programs may feature our recipients of the Generosity offerings as well as other worthy groups finding creative solutions to community and world problems.

We need you and your ideas. If you would like to volunteer your help to the Peace and Democracy planning team for these events, we would appreciate it. Please contact John Schaibly (john@schaibly.com or 858-453-5990), Rhea Kuhlman (finebks2@global.net or 619-582-1962) or Tanja Winter (twinter@san.rr.com or 858-459-4650). We have planning meetings the second Tuesday of each month. All are welcome to attend.



An Goodbye Interview with Kay Furrer

BY Robert McMahon



"The 70's for me was a hot bed of feminism activities. I was a charter member of NOW and a fervent subscriber to MS magazine. I toured the state of Wisconsin giving seminars to teachers and administrators on 'Sexism in Education.' I marched in Washington for ERA and was disconsolate when we lost the vote.

In April 1980 my friend and I left Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I settled in San Diego and started attending First Church. The use of inclusive language resonated with me and I enjoyed the idea of both female and male ministers. I joined the Book Room and became its Chair for a brief period, and officially I became a member of First Church.

Ellie Stein and I had started the Women's Theatre Collective and the ministers asked if we would be interested in directing and producing a musical. The show, 'Alice in Wonderland' had been presented at General Assembly we read it and said yes.

'Alice' was an anti-nuclear war musical allegory with a humongous cast of 44 people. Occasionally the cast outnumbered the audience, until one night we drew 3 local television affiliates. The Chernobyl nuclear power accident had just happened and our musical message was extremely relevant, we were the first news item on all newscasts for the next 24 hours. Jim Boone (the Walrus) and I were interviewed as to the plays messages. We called our troop the Looking Glass Mobile Theatre, and for 7 years were on the road with our production. Cast members grew older or moved on. Andrea Newall was our first Alice and John Wead our first technical director.

After about 7 years on the road with 'Alice' we stopped traveling, dropped the 'Mobile' from our troop's name and eventually concentrated on musicals such as; Oklahoma, Wizard of Oz, Fiddler on the Roof and Music Man, where 7 year old Sean Jones was first introduced to the public as the lisping little boy, Winthrop.

Now I am producing my last musical for Looking Glass Theatre, 'Honk,' which plays April through May 1st. For I have decided to move back to Eau Claire where I spent my first 40 years. I have family and friends there and some theatre opportunities. It is a town of 56,000 and is the 'big city' among smaller farming communities. It is also home of a state university where I got my double major in Elementary education and Theatre.

I leave for Wisconsin on June 13th. I will be very sad to say farewell to Looking Glass Theatre but it is the people that I love so very much that I will be most sorrowful saying goodbye to, that will be quite difficult. It is impossible to replicate the love and kindness and joy I have experienced with my friends in San Diego.

However, I truly am excited about this next great adventure in my life. I hope to journey back here on a regular basis and have just (gulp) joined Face Book and will be able to keep abreast of local friends in that fashion. And I will take my lust for life, the love of friends, my spiritual light and always, always – the laughter!"

"It is impossible to replicate the love and kindness and joy I have experienced with my friends in San Diego."

Staff

Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Lead Minister
Rev. Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister
Elka Cartmell Ladd, Intern Minister
Martha "Mar" Cárdenas, South Bay Ministry Leader
Karen Walter, Director of Operations
Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry
Käthe Larick, Youth Program Coordinator
Chris Christenson, RE Assistant/ Adult Education Coordinator
Kenneth F. Herman, Director of Music
Suzette Southfox, Director of Community Life
Alice King, Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator
Rev. Dr. Carolyn and Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti
Patty Eshleman, Director, Unitarian Cooperative Preschool

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The Window submissions (Church bulletin):

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