

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork

December
2013

977 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike
PO Box 1444, Bridgehampton, NY 11932

www.uucsf.org

We are a spiritual community.

Winter Solstice Celebration

*Dedicated to healing the way
humans walk upon the Earth*

Saturday, Dec. 21, 2013

All are Welcome

A Potluck kicks off the celebration. Please bring a generous dish for 6 people. Candlelight ceremony honoring Winter Solstice led by Susan Bailey and Jeanne Wisner. Free dancing and bring an instrument of your choice.



Suggested adult donation: \$8 for the benefit of the Food Pantry and UUCSF. Children enter free.

UU Meetinghouse, 977 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike, Bridgehampton
For more info call 537-0132 or go to www.uucsf.org



**Everyone is invited:
December 15 Service
with our UUA Settlement Representative
It's Only Change**

Learn how we are going to find a new settled minister.

Memorial Bricks

My partner Tom and I first began thinking about a memorial garden shortly after the congregation moved into its new home, this building, in 2006. The idea came to us after we had attended UU services at both Stony Brook and Huntington, where we had seen their memorial gardens as well as the garden at the Rogers Memorial Library, the rose garden memorial. The use of imprinted messages on house bricks is very prominent in the library garden.

The opportunity to begin planning for this garden did not arise in Tom's lifetime, but shortly after his death. At that time Carolyn Willberg was chairperson of the garden committee. A section of the committee was asked to begin planning for a future site. An anonymous donation had been given specifically for this purpose. As a part of this committee I was assigned to investigate the use of house bricks, the cost, the forms to be used and a brick works that could supply these. I did my homework. Once we had a memorial garden designed and built by Erling Hope and then dedicated, I was approached and asked if I would be responsible for

Continued on page 2



Our Remembrance Service on November 3.

From the Interim Minister



A number of years ago my family was planning for a celebration – I no longer remember why. In my enthusiasm, I described to my sister how I imagined it would go, with all the family happily being together. My sister, who is not known for her sense of humor, simply replied, “And whose family did you plan to invite?”

I am mindful that the holidays often carry similar sentiments and expectations. Many of us were fed an ideal of Christmas – even if we weren’t Christians – which few of us, if any, have ever experienced.

Our families will be together and be happy.
Our children will be well-behaved and grateful...
We will have enough money.
We will have enough time.
We will have fun.
We will be warm.
We will be safe.
We will be truly loved.

(from *Unplug the Christmas Machine*
by Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli)

These are hopes and dreams that many of us harbor all year long. And yet, for some reason, they become focused on one day in the year when, magically, all our dreams will come true. The media blitz of Christmas specials and advertisements promotes a false image of what this season is really about.

The weeks before Christmas are known as *Advent* for Christians. Advent simply means “coming” or “approach.” Advent is a time of anticipation. It is a time in which we can nurture the promise that lies within each of us. Advent gives us an opportunity to “become” who we are truly meant to be. We are offered this time to help us discern what it is we value most. Advent is a gift – a simple gift of awareness –

that culminates in the birth of a child, the embodiment of the hope and potential that resides within each of us.

In a sense, this season mirrors quite well the transition process in which we find ourselves. In this time between settled ministers, we have an opportunity to reflect and consider the question, “Who do we want to become?” Through worship services, small group discussions and exercises, we will walk together to discern what it is you value most, and where you see areas in need of change. The culmination will be the birth of a new ministry with your next settled minister, ideally the embodiment of the hope and potential that resides in the heart of this congregation.

Hope plays a big role in making changes in the ways we honor Christmas, and this life we share together. Hope is an attitude “that looks for possibility in whatever life deals us. Hope does not anticipate a particular outcome, but keeps before us the possibility that something useful will come from this.” (Bruce Marshall, “Hope not Optimism,” from *Taking Pictures of God*, a UU Meditation Manual)

May the peace and hope of this season begin with each of us. I wish you and your families all the blessings of this holy season. And, may you be at peace.

Yours in faith,
Nancy
revnoka@gmail.com

Memorial Bricks, continued from page 1.

getting the imprinted bricks for our site made. Since it had been a ‘pet-project’ of mine, I readily agreed. Martha Potter designed and printed a request form. This includes examples of ideas and messages one can have printed on the bricks, as well as cost, etc.

The garden, as originally planned, is not complete. It is my desire to see this project completed, I hope, in my lifetime.

Jim Thurman

Willie and Me

The sole practical guidance I received from my liberal arts education was to avoid a career in sales. Everything I knew about a salesman's job began and ended with Arthur Miller's sad play, which in the 1960's was still fresh in my professors' minds.

A decade later, after two years in a Kafkaesque nest of cubicles as a welfare worker, and eight years writing direct mail advertising, I found myself caught up in a recession that left me without a job and three children to support. By then it was clear that despite my continued love and respect for my college teachers, if there were a Platonic ideal for a career I would probably never recognize it. So when a former supplier offered me a job selling his computer services I happily accepted.

The training he chose for me was a Dale Carnegie course which could have come from the pages of Miller's tragedy. My fellow students were mostly Pitney Bowes employees learning to sell Dictaphone machines, even then an obsolete technology: walking door to door through the low rent New York City office buildings. But perhaps because I had three boys headed for college themselves, or perhaps because I immediately sensed I could enjoy this sales job, I embraced the course and all the books I could find on the subject.

I learned to ask my customers questions and then ask more questions; to listen and respond to what I heard with more questions until I finally understood the value my product could provide, and only then to lead my clients to see this value through more questions; always giving them the chance to change direction. And I learned to give everyone I met, from the receptionist to the fresh-faced intern, the respect of assuming that they, too, would understand the value of my product.

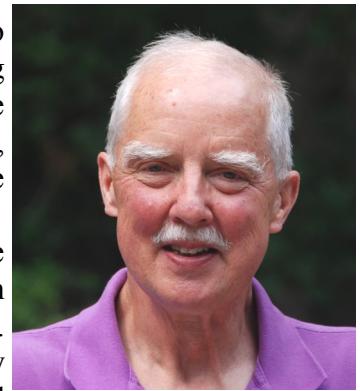
But the most important lesson I learned was to focus my efforts on performing the right action without dwelling on results, good or bad; to find joy in the act of communicating, and not through counting my sales. Right action meant that I kept many different concepts or strategies in play at any one time, a letter campaign to credit card issuers, another to auto rental companies, a third to fund-raisers. In this way if one concept faltered, there was always another opportunity in the wings.

For me this is also the significant teaching of Taoism: to follow the way, the right action, without tripping over the results.

It heartens me to see that our congregation seems to understand this. Although we recently lost a long term and much loved minister, as well as six active members, we are not searching for reasons, or dwelling on fears. We are instead continuing to offer the most effective Sunday services possible, encouraging our new children's educator, and filling our meetinghouse with activity.

Yet we can do more. If you have an idea you are willing to pursue, contact someone from the Board, bring it to a Social Justice meeting, or the Fellowship group, or email me. A glance at the calendar will show you that we still have plenty of unused time available in the meetinghouse, and you'll probably find someone willing to help you.

Mark Potter



From the Transition Team:

At our October meeting the Transition Team adopted the following Covenant:

As members of the UUCSF Transition Team, we represent the larger congregation in our work with Nancy. We agree to:

- Practice right relationship both in and outside Transition Team meetings;
- Do our best to fulfill our assigned task by attending all meetings (whenever possible), being on time and operating within the proposed time limits;
- Keep confidential anything discussed in meetings, e-mails, etc. unless otherwise specified;
- Listen well to each other, and to the larger membership of UUCSF;
- Allow space for everyone to speak his/her truth;
- Participate in the transition work and fulfill tasks in a timely fashion;
- Be mindful of UUCSF history to inform the future, but not be constrained by it.

December Service Calendar

December 8

Simple Gifts

The Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Musician: Bryan Campbell

In this service we will reflect on how we can simplify the holidays so that they are more of what we need and want, and less of what we don't.

December 15

It's Only Change

We host the Rev. Craig Hirshberg,

Our UUA Settlement Representative.

Musician: Irena Androskova

When a congregation searches for new ministerial leadership, it exercises one of the most important freedoms and rights that we grant ourselves in this denomination. Local Search Committees, chosen by their congregations, think deeply about their congregation's needs and dreams about the future through discussion, surveys, and church meetings. They then search and recommend a minister from among interested applicants whom they believe is the best match of ministerial skills and the congregation's vision, to achieve that new future. Rev. Hirshberg offers a service created to help make the search for our new settled minister as effective as possible. After the service she will meet with the Board.

December 22

A Winter Speech Choir

Valerie diLorenzo, Religious Educator; the Rev.

Nancy O. Arnold; Sue Penny and Kent Martin,

Worship Associates

Musician: Abby Fleming

This holiday service for all ages will feature our children, youth, and adults presenting portions of the play, *A Winter Speech Choir*, by Lois Van Leer. Music by Abby Fleming and singing by all will bring the spirit of the season to our midst.

December 24 4:00 pm

Christmas Eve Service

The Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Musician: Peter Weiss

All are invited to this service of stories, songs, reflections, and candlelight.

Service Date	Welcome Table	Greeter	Hospitality
Dec 8	Arden Edwards	Carol Mason	Myrna Truitt, Anita Baskind
Dec 15	John Andrews	Myrna Truitt	Carol Mason, Marla Liso
Dec 22	Carol Mason	Charleen Murphy	John Andrews, Kent Martin
Dec 29	Bev Krouse	Aubrey Burch	Edna Trunzo, Sara Gordon
Jan 5	Jim Thurman	Anita Baskind	John Andrews, Diana Lindley

Should you need to arrange a substitute, please notify Kat Gioia, our administrator, of the change you have made. 631-537-0132

December 29

It's All in the Attitude

Edna Trunzo, Worship Associate

Musician: Peter Weiss

As we prepare to turn the calendar page to a new year, many people reflect on their lives and the changes they want to make in the next year. Today's service will focus on attitudes and optimism. You will be invited to share your thoughts and feelings in response to questions about life's challenges and achieving your goals.

January 5, 2014:

Everyday Sacred

The Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Musician: To be announced

There are many symbols of "the sacred" from which we can gain insight and comfort. Today we will consider ways in which we can be mindful of what we need in order to experience "the sacred" in the everyday.

Upcoming Events

All events are at the meetinghouse

Sunday, December 8 Noon

Solstice Qi Gong

Free, and all are welcome. Tune yourself in to this time of deep change. Ready yourself for the cold of winter. Build strength, warmth and balance with ancient Chinese breathing and movement. For more information, call Tina Curran at 723-1923.

Thursday, December 12

Board Meeting, 7 pm

Board meetings are open to all members.

Saturday, December 21, 7 pm

Winter Solstice Celebration

“This gathering is dedicated to healing the way humans walk upon the Earth.” All are welcome. Admission is \$8.00 for the benefit of the food pantry and the UUCSF. Children are free. Bring a generous dish for 6 and an instrument of your choice. Jeanne Wisner and Susan Bailey will lead a candle-light ceremony honoring the Winter Solstice. (See notice on page 1.)

Sunday, December 22, 12 Noon after service

Dress down Sunday

It is time to put our garden to sleep.

Sunday, January 5, 12 Noon after service

Stone Soup Luncheon

The GAYT boxes will be collected at a **Stone Soup Luncheon*** Envelopes for donations are also available.

***Stone Soup** is made with whatever each person contributes. Please bring a ready-to-add vegetable for the soup pot. Your *GAYT* box (or donation) will be your admission to the lunch.

Highlights of the Board

- The Treasurer reported our finances look healthy, with perhaps \$6,000 or \$7,000 gained from the Gala. The President reported that part of the profits from Gala will be distributed to local food pantries. Margi will research which food pantries, and report to the Treasurer.

- There is a possible increase to our \$20,000 received from Rainbow School, as Sue Daniels has hired 2 professionals, and would like to run after school and summer programs, and use a third classroom. She will come back to us with a proposed fee. There is a possibility for joint projects with the school, such as the children's garden or teaching materials for ethical behavior.

- Mark is working to have Alison's name removed from signage.

- The Board agreed that the Art Committee could display revolving pictures of the congregation, which would include the minister. It was also agreed that Tuna Flores could display a wreath with a peace sign, but would prefer that it be mounted on the building or in a window.

- The Interim Minister will display an historical timeline in the sanctuary for 3-4 weeks, and will focus on a project examining our infrastructure.

- A special day with Alternatives is being organized by Chris Epifania on Dec 7 from 1:00 to 4:00 for kids ages 6-11. Volunteers needed.

- The Rev Craig Hirschberg will hold a service on Dec. 15 regarding how to settle a new minister, followed by meeting with the Board and a proposed potluck with the Board at Mark Potter's home that evening.

- For now, the Board decided not to nominate a new member of the Nominating Committee. The Board will telephone members and friends, asking whom they think would be good representatives on the Search Committee.

Myrna Truitt

This I Believe

I believe that there is an end to suffering; that there is no such thing as eternal punishment. The idea of hell was invented long ago by priestly classes as a means of social control. The only real hells are the ones we humans too often create in the here and now.

That's my belief number one. Actually, it's more than a belief. Traditional religious teachings about heaven and hell are logically inconsistent. Moreover, I do not understand how anyone who truly believes in a loving God could possibly believe in hell, except as the result of persistent indoctrination beginning in early childhood.

My belief number two is that as human participants in the interdependent web of life, it matters what we *do*. For better or for worse, we can make choices that other animals can't. Those choices will ultimately decide whether life on this planet, including human life, flourishes or is extinguished.

There is no hell. It matters what we do. These are the only beliefs I really need.

But what about other beliefs? Don't they matter? What about death? What about God?

Well, beliefs of that kind may affect how we feel, and how we feel is likely to affect what we do, so in that sense they are important. However, I've seen little correlation between belief in God and ethical behavior. Some of the noblest acts have been done in the name of God, and so have some of the worst atrocities.

If believing in God makes you a more virtuous person, then by all means believe in God. If disbelieving makes you more loving, then I hope you are an atheist. I think that both Confucius and the Buddha would approve of this.

I'm not saying it doesn't matter whether God exists or that we shouldn't ask the question. I'm talking only about whether it matters *what* we end up believing. Here's an analogy: It matters whether an asteroid is about to hit the earth, but my belief or disbelief in the asteroid only matters insofar as it affects how I feel or how I act. The asteroid will hit, or not hit, regardless of what I believe.

Continued in next column →

Don't Flush Those Medications!

For many years, we've been told that the safe way to dispose of unused or expired medications is to flush them down the toilet. However, recent water quality testing now shows that these medications, both prescription and over the counter, can end up in our drinking water and our local waterways. Very little is known about how the combination of these medicines impacts human health and the health of the ecosystems they may end up in.

Now, there's a safer way for East End residents to dispose of unused medications.

Through a partnership between Group for the East End, Suffolk County and East End Police Departments, the East End Medication Disposal Program was launched on October 21. This program allows residents to get rid of their unused medication in a Medication Drop Box at a local police station. You don't need to interact with the police in any way, and you may use any of the established drop boxes.

According to a recent press release by Group for the East End, the following medications are accepted:

- Expired or unwanted over the counter medications, including pet medications
- Prescription drugs, including antibiotics and controlled substances
- Pills, powders, liquids, and EPI pens.

Not accepted are: Syringes, medical waste and mercury thermometers

Taking advantage of this program ensures that our medications do not end up in the wrong hands, in our drinking water, or our bays and harbors.

For participating police stations and Drop Box hours, call your local police department or visit the Group's website at www.eastendenvironment.org

Anita Wright

This I Believe, continued

The good news is that we won't be punished for guessing wrong. How our beliefs about God affect our actions is more important than whether those beliefs are true.

John Andrews

Religious Education

We come together as a community to support the spiritual, moral and creative development of the children in the congregation. There's a place for everyone's time and talents to create an experience that embodies UU principles and beliefs, shapes young lives, and lays a foundation for the future of our congregation. With the use of age-appropriate curriculum, activities and committed teaching, we provide an opportunity for our youth to freely ask questions, express opinions, and explore.

Curriculum

Our RE program uses *You The Creator* (Richard S. Kimball) as a curriculum guide. Its message is in the title: that your child should be, and is, one of the creative forces of the world. Each Sunday the children will explore the creative side of themselves and how that creativity is connected to UU values.

Guest Adults

Parents and other Adults in the congregation are encouraged to volunteer as a guest adult, sitting in with the classes and offering assistance to the teachers and children. This is a great way to get to know some of our younger members, participate in the activities and joys of self-discovery, and support the RE program.

Classroom Conduct

Our teaching staff and volunteers spend much time and energy creating a supportive, nurturing, and positive atmosphere in the classroom. Each year, the children help create a covenant to guide how we treat one another in the RE program and we expect them to adhere to it. Parents can help by discussing appropriate behavior with their children and reinforcing the classroom covenant.

The Covenant

The promises we make about how we will treat each other and what we will do to create a safe and sacred space is called a covenant. This is our covenant:

1. We are kind to each other.
2. We respect everyone with our words and actions.
3. Only one person may speak at a time.
4. When one person is speaking, we give them the same respect we enjoy when we are speaking.
5. We do not judge or criticize each other.
6. We respect and support each other's ideas and suggestions.
7. We listen to the hopes and concerns of others.
8. We work together to make our time together peaceful, safe, fair and fun.
9. We care for the meetinghouse, the Earth, its creatures, and our surroundings.

Special Needs

If there are special needs for your children within our Congregation and RE program, please let us know so we can best accommodate your child.

For further information contact: Sue Penny, Kent Martin or Valerie diLorenzo



Minister: the Rev. Nancy Arnold
Phone: 516-612-7909

UUCSF Contact information:
Administrator: Kat Gioia
631-537-0132 admin@uucsf.org

UUCSF Board:
President: Mark Potter
Vice President: Sue Penny
Secretary: Myrna Pruitt
Treasurer: Imke Littman
Margaret Pulkingham
Pamela Wittenberg

Newsletter Information:
Deadline is the 15th of each month. E-mail copy, photos and events to Martha Potter mtpotter@optonline.net Please start subject line with "UU newsletter".

Editor: Martha Potter 725-0450
Copy Editor: Bev Krouse
Events Editor: John Andrews
Staff Writer: Anita Wright
Staff Photographer: Edna Trunzo
Graphic technician: Mark Potter

What's Happening

- Reverend Nancy has been helping the fellowship committee decide how we would best serve the congregation. We were excited to offer a luncheon workshop "*The New UU: An Intro to UU History and our UUCSF Congregation*" on Sunday, November 3 from 12:15 - 2 led by The Rev. Nancy Arnold to seven members and friends. This workshop will be a mainstay in what we offer each year.
- Our Fellowship lunches continue to be well received and are becoming an integral part of congregational life. Circle Dinners will be returning at the request of many in our congregation, while Neighborhood Groups continues to be rethought. Fellowship will also work on making sure that all of our more regular visitors have pin-on name tags to wear. The summer picnic is in permanent ink as a definite "to do." We regret the need to let go of the direct care of those who are sick or in need, but hope that what we can offer will nourish your spirits. As always, we welcome all ideas and your input. Join us.
- The social justice committee invited Gabriel Martinez, of Witness for Peace to speak on October 27 after a service led by Chris Epifania and Sandra Dunn of the Hagedorn Foundation. Gaby works for *Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes*. SJM's mission is to achieve full respect for the human and labor rights of migrants and their families in their communities of origin, on their journey, and

when they arrive at their destination. Gaby and SJM do this through trainings, education, community projects, and building networks of support for migrants and their families.

- Alternatives and the UUCSF hosted "Exploring Alternatives-A Fun Day for Kids ages 6 to 11" on December 7. Workshop leaders were teachers, artists and holistic practitioners many of them members and friends of the UUCSF, including Hilary Helfant, Nancy Remkus, Tina Curran, Pat Gorman and Sue Penny. Activities included movement, art, drumming and music. Children were taught the important skills of peaceful communication and meditation.
- The **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee** ***Guest at Your Table (GAYT)*** boxes were distributed at the Thanksgiving service on November 24. *GAYT* is one way in which we support the work of the UU Service Committee. For more than seventy years, the UUSC has advanced human rights and social justice in the United States and internationally. We are asked to "feed" the *GAYT* box at each meal as we would any guest – recognize his/her presence, and offer sustenance – in the form of at least fifty cents a meal. The boxes will be collected at a **Stone Soup Luncheon*** after the service on **January 5**. Envelopes for donations are also available.

***Stone Soup** is made with whatever each person contributes. Please bring a ready-to-add vegetable for the soup pot. Your *GAYT* box (or donation) will be your admission to the lunch.



Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of the South Fork

977 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike
PO Box 1444, Bridgehampton, NY 11932

December 2013 Newsletter