

**We are a spiritual community.**



Ken Dorph and Nancy Remkus led us in Pete Seeger's *If I Had A Hammer* to open our February 2 Congregational Meeting.



Testing colors for the mural in our January 26 service, Spiritual Community as a Creative Process.

**Green up to save paper and stamps!**

To receive the UUCSF newsletter by e-mail, please inform Administrator Kat Giogi (631-537-0132 or [admin@uucsf.org](mailto:admin@uucsf.org))

Martha Potter, Editor ([mtpotter@optonline.net](mailto:mtpotter@optonline.net))

**Summary of February 2 Congregational Meeting.**

This meeting was run as an informational meeting about the search process.

**Transition Team Findings:** The team consists of Kent Martin, Arden Edwards, Stu Lowrie, John Tusa, Jeanne Wisner, and Nancy Arnold. They have been meeting monthly to help the congregation to move forward. They reported the results of their recent telephone survey of members and friends. In the survey they asked what we value most about UUCSF, and what challenges we face.

The characteristics we value are: warmth and openness, invitation to find truth, sense of community, generosity, participation in spiritual organization and a humanitarian organization, truth, intellectual stimulation and diversity.

Challenges are: a need to grow, to let the South Fork know we're here; need a minister who lives nearby; offer consistent quality of Sunday services, improve ethnic/racial diversity; lack of social action; attract families with children. Many expressed concern for the elderly and ill; the need for an improved public relations program; some of us hope for a full time minister.

At the next Transition Team meeting, Nancy will ask the group to recommend steps which can be taken to meet our challenges. Input from the congregation will be welcome.

**Search process:** Mark Potter gave an update of the status of the search process. We need to add new members. Certification process showed 57 members last year, this year we certified 48. All of our departing members had decided to leave before Alison's departure. The Board proposed that we search for a Developmental Minister. In this process the UUA Transitions Office acts like a headhunter to help us find a minister who can help us grow. The person would be hired for 3-5 years; at

**Continued on page 5.**

## From the Interim Minister



These are exciting days for the UUCSF. You are working together to prepare for what comes next in the life of the Congregation. You've decided to pursue a path toward Developmental Ministry, and you're putting your house in order to prepare for the next chapter in

your congregational life.

The recent telephone survey conducted by the Transition Team revealed that what you value most are the people who make UUCSF such a caring community. This is a definite strength on which to build, for while you can change the ways in which you manage the business of the Congregation, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to teach people to care for one another.

The greatest challenge you identified is the need to grow the congregation. You want to have enough hands to carry the load of managing the business of UUCSF and maintaining your beautiful meetinghouse and grounds.

In response to the question, "What do you value most about UUCSF?" one member said:

*"Generosity is central. I have been amazed over the years at the personal acts of generosity that characterize this small band of dedicated individuals. We love and support this congregation and its works in the wider community."*

There were other questions related to the growth challenge:

*"We are not known on the East End for our principles..."*

*"We need ... to find creative ways to let young families on the East End know about our program..."*

*"We need a plan, including a public relations program, to develop a strategy to get families with kids to join."*

This last, developing a strategy for attracting

families and children to help grow the membership, is most likely to be the focus of your developmental ministry.

There are several actions we will take during this interim time to lay the groundwork for that task. Among these is the process of discerning how it is you wish to be known in the community outside the walls of the meetinghouse. Once you agree on a vision of the UUCSF you wish to become, we will be able to put some legs under another identified challenge, "to find an area of outreach that we can get behind and be energized by."

There is no better time to consider your future than this month in which you will make your annual financial pledge as part of the stewardship campaign. The Transition Team is organizing small group meetings to initiate the visioning process. Because you will be asked to make your pledge on Celebration Sunday, March 30, before the process is complete, your commitment will be an act of faith for the future of UUCSF.

When you receive your call to participate, in discussions and as stewards, I hope you will respond with the generosity and caring for which you are already known. This would be a good start to fulfill at least one person's dream, "to seat a... minister *and* have a budget that allows for building improvements." Won't you be part of UUCSF's future?

Yours in faith,

Nancy

[minister@uucsf.org](mailto:minister@uucsf.org)

## Roads Not Taken

I am a hapless linguist. Yet even I notice that "adroit" in its Latin and French roots refers to my right hand, and "sinister" to my left.

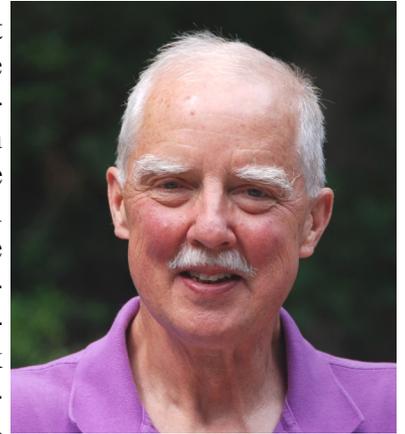
We like things to be either left or right, black or white, good or bad. And, if good, all good; not meddling with definitions or watering down our doctrine in some way. It makes us particularly uncomfortable to consider that the people on our side, our own friends, may have some good ideas, and some not so good.

We see this phenomenon wherever we look. The front section of the *New York Times*, Sunday January 5, included the story of an editor of *Guns & Ammo* magazine. (Yes, there is such a magazine.) This editor suggested in writing that it might be worthwhile for people who handle firearms to receive sixteen hours of training before receiving a permit, a kind of driver's license for deadly weapons. When we consider that hunters in every state are required to complete a hunter's safety course, which is in fact a weapons safety course, we might expect the gun-owning community to consider this proposal in a rational manner. Not so. Within days of publishing his column, this 67-year-old writer lost his job with the magazine, his television show; his entire career. Advertisers withdrew their commitments, subscribers cancelled their subscriptions, and some even sent death threats by email. *The Times* shows him sitting in shock among his stuffed deer heads.

This is not an isolated case. In 2012 another writer was driven out of the industry for suggesting that a submachine gun designed for law enforcement was "unavailable to citizens, and for good reason." And another even more prominent writer who has published twenty-three hunting books, lost his television and endorsement deals when he wrote that military-style rifles were terrorist weapons, best avoided by hunters.

You might think this is the kind of behavior we should expect from a community which lets the National Rifle Association represent it. But in the same edition of the *New York Times*, immediately under this article, was a story about the battle over G.M.O.s in Hawaii.

Here we read that scientists, who in the past relied on support from liberals in battles over climate change, stem cell research and the teaching of evolution, now find themselves under attack from G.M.O. opponents. A plant pathologist from the University of Hawaii, who runs the risk of losing his life's work, is quoted as saying, "These are my people; they're lefties. I'm with them on almost everything...it hurts" to testify against them. So we see that partisans on both sides of the cultural wars don't hesitate to demonize their friends to keep their doctrine clean.



I suppose it is futile to hope we can end these culture wars. Political parties have too much to gain from the simple messages, hyperbolic rhetoric and outright lies.

But perhaps we could take small steps on both sides of the divide if we were to allow the friends we have on "our" side to consider a doubt; a diverging opinion; another interpretation of the facts; and still keep them as friends. Instead of black and white, let's allow for shades of gray; instead of two roads diverging in the wood, let's allow for three roads, or four; and one or two well-traveled trails. It doesn't make good poetry and it would make our inner lives more complex, and perhaps at times uncomfortable.

But it is likely to lead us to decisions which best square with reality.

Mark Potter

## March Service Calendar

*We act against exclusion, oppression, and violence*

### March 2

#### UU Women's Voices

#### Worship Associate Christine Epifania with UUCSF Women Members and Friends

March is the month that we honor Women's History and focus on our mission statement which says, "We act against exclusion, oppression, and violence." Visiting us today will be UU Women from our history talking about their roles throughout the years in promoting social justice. Bringing us to the present, we will highlight the women's social justice issues we face in today's world.

#### Musician: Abby Fleming

**March 9** *Daylight Savings Time begins; set clocks forward one hour*

#### Reaching Out/Reaching In

#### The Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

#### Worship Associate: Sue Penny

As Unitarian Universalists we believe in acting on what we believe to promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations. We act against exclusion, oppression, and violence. For people who believe that we are here to *do*, effort can be its own reward. But as human beings, we may be fearful of giving away more of ourselves than is healthy. How can we move from a place of fear to trusting that the well will be replenished when we draw from it?

### March 16

#### All Around the World: A UU Celebration of International Women's Day

#### The Rev. Carol Huston

Rev. Huston will share stories from our Unitarian Universalist Congregations in Transylvania, India, and the Philippines about the way that UU women are working together to empower their communities. She is President of the International Convocation of UU Women. After 20 years of parish ministry in Michigan and in Westchester County, she is now a community minister living in New York City. She has traveled in Transylvania and the Philippines, and has a deep interest in building connections among women of liberal religious faith around the world.

#### Musician: Abby Fleming

Service Date	Greeter	Hospitality
Mar 2	Pam and Carl Wittenberg	Don Schmitz/ Sue Penny
Mar 9	Carol and David Holstein	Myrna Truitt/ Ken Ettlinger
Mar 16	Hilary Helfant/ Kent Martin	Sara Gordon/ Anita Wright
Mar 23	Eileen McCabe/ Tom Murphy	Carol and David Holstein
Mar 30	Mark and Martha Potter	Carl and Pam Wittenberg
Should you need to arrange a substitute, please notify Kat Gioia, our administrator, of the change you have made. 631-537-0132		

### March 23

#### We're in This Together

#### The Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

As a congregation, UUCSF members share common dreams and visions. Today we'll explore how well we work together toward these common ideals. What does it mean to belong to this Congregation?

### March 30

#### Being in the Ensemble

#### Carl Wittenberg

This is our Celebration Sunday service. Stewardship chair Carl Wittenberg will look back on his own experiences being a member of musical ensembles, large and small. How did being in these groups teach him something about being a member of a UU congregation?

#### Musician: Abby Fleming

## **Upcoming Events**

**All events are free and at the meetinghouse.**

**Saturday, March 8, 10:15 am**

**Worship Associates Meeting.** Planning worship services for the upcoming three months.

**Sunday, March 9, Noon at the Meetinghouse**

**Qi Gong in the spring.** Clarify your vision and your direction in this time of renewal. Be as flexible and strong as a new young branch with these simple movements and self-massages for balance and healing. Free, and all are welcome. For more info, call Tina Curran at 723-1923.

**Sunday, March 9, 12:15**

**Transiton Team Meeting**

**Thursday, March 13, 7 pm**

**UUCSF Board Meeting.** Board meetings are open to all members and friends of our congregation.

**Saturday, March 15, 1-4 pm Exploring Alternatives: Take Two! A Day of Creativity, Choice and Fun**

A variety of workshops for adults and children will be offered including movement, art, drumming and music. Each workshop is designed to help kids and their families learn ways to manage stress.

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### **Transition Team Minutes, February 9**

Present: The Reverend Nancy Arnold, Arden Edwards, Stuart Lowrie, and John Tusa.

Members thanked Jeanne Wisner for her time on the Transition team. She resigned for personal reasons.

Nancy said she's had good feedback on the Team's survey and presentation. The Team centered on how to build on this momentum to grow the congregation. Suggestions included holding small group meetings about growing the congregation, continuing the successful health fairs for the wider community, and renewing neighborhood group meetings at a host's home. These meetings would "look in," reviewing the congregation's wants and needs, and discussing what it is to be a Unitarian Universalist. They would also "look out," at the larger community's view of the UUCSF, and at how sister UU congregations view themselves.

### **Congregational Meeting continued from page 1.**

the end of that period the congregation could then call this minister, or engage in a search process. The search process is much less demanding of the Search Committee, and is less expensive. A budget for the search will be about \$1,000 vs the \$8,000 for a classic search.

What are our special needs? We need a minister who can help us to reach out to the community to recruit new members, as well as leading meaningful services.

The congregation will meet again to vote on a slate for the Search Committee. The Board will recruit this slate, building on the work which the Nominating Committee has begun.

We are financially sound; our cash cushion is the same as six years ago, but now we have paid off our mortgage.

#### **Questions from the Congregation:**

What if we don't like UUA recommendations? (*We will continue the search.*) Will the Congregation have a chance to see our application to the UUA? (*Yes.*) Can applicants come from any part of the country? (*Yes.*)

The Board will continue to notify the congregation at each step of the process. The Newsletter will be a critical informational source. We have budgeted for a three-fourths-time minister. Some felt positively about this. The Board will post minutes of all their meetings on the bulletin board. We will take a hard look at salary requirements.

The Developmental Minister can be given goals for growth. Even if we were to move to a full-time minister, that person would not be in the pulpit every week. Concern was expressed about the difficulty of finding affordable housing on the East End.

In a vote of confidence, the Congregation voted unanimously in favor of the Board's proposal to hire a Developmental Minister. Since the vote did not require a quorum, no roll call was taken, but the meeting was well attended with over 40 members and friends.

Myrna Truitt, Secretary

## The Green Corner:

### Lichen: A Lesson in Partnership

Back in December, as my boys and I walked the trails in Sagg Swamp Preserve, I marveled at the unique beauty and variety of lichens growing on trees, logs and on the wooden walkways.

Lichens are composites - a permanent merger of organisms from up to *three* different kingdoms. The dominant partner is a type of fungus (kingdom Fungi) and the other partner is either algae (kingdom Protista) or cyanobacteria (kingdom Monera), and sometimes both!

Since a fungus cannot make its own food, it relies on photosynthetic algae or cyanobacteria to provide it. In turn, the fungus provides the structure, or the “home.” The relationship is permanent and necessary. Apart, most cannot survive in the environments where they grow as lichen, and lichens grow virtually everywhere on Earth, including both the Arctic and Antarctic. Lichens survive in all climates and altitudes and can grow on bark, sand, soil, rock, plastic, wood, metal, cloth, bones, leaves and even on the backs of some insects! They are sometimes thought of as “*the* pioneer species” because of their ability to grow on bare rock, providing the basis for soil formation. Fossil records of the first lichens date back to 400 million years, and possibly earlier. According to the book, “Lichens of North America” (Brodo, Sharnoff & Sharnoff 2001), “There are close to 14,000 species of lichen in the world, tremendously diverse in size, form and color.” What makes this partnership so successful? The answer is complicated, but my research revealed a few unique traits of lichens that seem to contribute to their hardiness: (1) the ability to survive long periods without water and (2) their complex chemistry. Lichens contain more than 500 unique compounds that, among many other functions, discourage most herbivores from eating



them, protect them from disease, and have antibiotic and other healing properties. Their complex chemistry also makes them “canaries in a coal mine,” because many lichens are sensitive to air pollution, particularly the sulfur dioxide released by fuel oil combustion, as in car exhaust and paper production.

The relationship between the organisms that make up lichen is commonly thought of as mutualistic symbiosis, meaning that both organisms benefit, a sort of win-win situation. But not all scientists agree with this simplistic view. What they do agree on is that lichen is more than the sum of its parts, having traits that emerge only as a composite.

I have learned that examples of composite organisms are fairly common in nature. (Not all are win-win relationships. Parasitism, where one organism benefits and the other is harmed, is also a form of symbiosis.) These relationships have led scientists like Lynn Margulis to propose an additional theory of evolution called symbiogenesis, one that differs from Darwin’s theory of change through competition. Margulis writes, “Symbiogenesis brings together unlike individuals to make large, more complex entities... Symbiosis is not a marginal or rare phenomenon. It is natural and common. We abide in a symbiotic world.”

So, thanks to lichen, I have a different perspective on partnership. Change through uniting: complicated, sometimes beneficial, sometimes not; but always new and different.

Anita Wright

## What's Happening:

- **News from Fellowship:** Fellowship's main endeavor has been the renewal of Circle Dinners, by popular demand. We always appreciate your feedback so that we can make them even better the next time, and there *will* be a next time! We are hoping for two per year. It has been brought to our attention that the month of March is Women's History Month. Our congregation has an opportunity to screen "Arise," for International Women's Day on March 8. If enough of us are interested in viewing this film, then we can watch it together for a nominal fee. To see the trailer and read reviews, please go to: [www.arisethemovie.com](http://www.arisethemovie.com). Please let John, Jeanne, Carol, Jim, Marla, or Pam know if you are interested. As always, you are welcome to join in any of our committee meetings. The next scheduled committee meeting will be announced.

- **Pastoral Associates Program forming:** Pastoral Associates will assist the minister in providing pastoral care to the members and friends of the Congregation through a listening ministry of presence. The purpose of the program is to extend the care of the congregation through one-to-one caring and helping activities by lay members of the Congregation to those who are in special need.

Qualifications: a commitment to shared ministry...a sense of compassion and empathy for others...a good listener who can be comfortable with feelings of loss, pain and anxiety in others...non-judgmental, and able to keep confidences...the UU Congregation of the South Fork is a primary source of your spiritual life and community

For more information, or to request an application, contact Nancy ([minister@uucsf.org](mailto:minister@uucsf.org)). Initial training will take place March 29 from 9:30am - 5:00pm at the UU congregation in Stony Brook.\* Registration fee: \$40 per person covers the workshop and breakfast/lunch (see flyer on bulletin board in foyer)

- **UU Congregation of Charleston, W. Virginia needs our help!** The UU Congregation of Charleston, W. Virginia requests our assistance to aid those affected by the Freedom Chemical Spill

on January 9. While the initial spill was thought to be cleaned up, it has now been discovered that water remains contaminated and is unsafe for consumption and normal use. The congregation is working with the United Way and business and union groups to have an area-wide fund campaign to help residents with water and utility bill payments. Folks are now paying both for tap water they aren't sure is safe to drink, cook with, or bathe in, *and* purchasing bottled water. The impact of the spill is ongoing. It is uncertain when the water will be safe to drink and use again.

**Please direct your donation to:** UU Congregation of Charleston with the notation "Water Relief," and mail to: UUC of Charleston, 520 Kanawha Blvd W., Charleston, WV 25302. Thank you for whatever help you can provide. The Charleston congregation is grateful for your care and support.

## Snapshots from our Circle Dinners

35 friends and members joined each other in four different homes.



## Results of the Transition Team's Survey

47 members and friends responded to these two questions.

### What do you value most about the congregation?

People/friendship/sense of (caring) community/ acceptance	24
Non-traditional approach to religious experience	9
Messages that feed both intellect and spirit	9
Freedom of belief and search for truth and meaning	3
Humanitarian social values	7
Respect for religious diversity	5
Safe, supportive environment	2
Generosity	2
Variety in worship and leaders	3
Building and space	2
Activities of the congregation	2
Sunday services	3
Music	2
Well-organized	1
RE program for youth	1
Singing	2
Extraordinarily welcoming	2

### *What challenges the congregation, going forward?*

Size and age of congregation – need to grow the membership	32
Attracting families with children (RE)	12
Lack of ethnic/racial diversity	4
Consistent quality of Sunday services	5
Communication	2
Honoring commitments	1
Turning friends into members	2
Finish what we've started (i.e., memorial garden)	1
Volunteer follow-upon (good) ideas	4
Events (like Gala) that highlight cliques in the congregation	1
Lack of coordinated leadership	3
Living up to our mission	2
Governance structure (i.e., too many committees)	2
Sustain the congregation	1
Finding a focus that energizes the congregation	1
Being more welcoming to those who are different	1
Burn out of member volunteers	1
Congregational development (i.e., outreach to community)	2
Needs of older members	1
Clerical privilege	1
Better integration of local environment into the life of the congregation	1
Attracting a permanent minister	3
Financial support for full-time ministry	2
Hearing accessible enhancement in sanctuary	1
Music (i.e., hire a pianist)	1
Lack of social action	2
Clean up and paint (i.e., pulpit)	1
Sharing of worship responsibilities more equitably	1
Use physical space in different ways to enhance worship & sanctuary	1
Outreach program to the ill	2
Projects youth can do	1



For Valentine's Day, Stephen (Tuna) Flores and Pat Gorman led a contemplation of love for our service on a snowy Sunday morning in February.

## RE News

RE has become more free-form and “in the moment,” which has its advantages...such as a really cool conversation on the Butterfly Effect and Chaos Theory, and then illustrating that with clay...or making a movie poster for “My Life So Far”...or an impromptu Story for All Ages about The Mystery of Life with mother and son reading side by side.

But there are also disadvantages: planning and setting up for activities in which no one participates; lack of continuity; and not being able to build a real plan or program for our youth. What do they want? What is important to them? What makes them laugh? Or think? What would make them want to come together, week after week?

In talking about this with UUCSF associates, we recognize that it’s time to open this up for discussion with our kids and their families. But why stop there? All ideas, input and involvement are welcome.

The youngsters mentioned at the beginning of our year that they wanted more Intergenerational Events, like a multicultural night or Creative Play night, where young people and adults do activities together. All great ideas. I’d love to see them happen. Wouldn’t you? Stay tuned, stay warm, and we’ll see you soon.



After Kent Martin explained the background of Mardi Gras the class built Mardi Gras masks. From left: Leyla Dorph-Lowrie, Martha Potter, Flynn Martin and Caleb Wright.



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**Newsletter Information:**  
Deadline is the 10th of each month. E-mail copy, photos and events to Martha Potter [mtpotter@optonline.net](mailto:mtpotter@optonline.net) Please start subject line with “UU newsletter”.

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## Exploring Alternatives: Take Two! A Day of Creativity, Choice and Fun

Saturday, March 15, 1 pm - 4 pm

At our meetinghouse

Alternatives Counseling Services, Inc. and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork are hosting “Exploring Alternatives – A Fun Day for Families” at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork on March 15. This free event is held to involve kids and families in an intergenerational day of fun and play. Each workshop is designed to help participants learn ways to manage stress.

Youngsters and adults can attend workshops of their choice, which include songwriting with Nancy Remkus, yoga with Jaki Jackson, painting with Hilary Helfant, drumming with Daniel Bailey, and Qi Gong with Pat Gorman and Tina Curran. Alternatives’ Kim Jones is leading the “Stress Busters” workshop which teaches participants how to identify their stressors in order to better deal with them. The goal of Exploring Alternatives is to let participants explore what works best for them, whether it is with words, or art, or movement.

The Exploring Alternatives Event day is designed to be a collaboration with community and faith-based organizations. We hope to schedule additional events throughout the coming year with community partners.

**Register by Calling Alternatives Counseling at (631)283-4440** Linda Huber of Alternatives and Sue Penny of the UUCSF are the event coordinators

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### Highlights of the Board

The Treasurer reports that while events are short, finances are in good shape. The Rainbow School suffered an embezzlement by an employee, but most of the funds were returned. Some future plans will not be possible, but they may offer an extended day school.

There is too much activity on *ListServ*. Material submitted needs to be reviewed by an editor. Mark will research how to do this.

The Minister reported that the interim team approved her proposal to guide the Congregation

through a vision for a new minister. The Transition team will pull together neighborhood groups to focus on this vision, with March as a goal. The Board is making telephone calls to finalize a search committee.

A proposed event with the New Thought Center, with similar principles as ours, was approved. We have received one estimate for \$4,500 for an office, which could need more electrical work and possibly a window for \$3,500. The Board approved \$100 for framing a congregational picture.

Myrna Truitt



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