



We are a spiritual community.

How Many UUs Does It Take to Change a Light Bulb?



This headline was suggested by Tip Brolin, who worked with Mark Potter and me to install new lights in the sanctuary in November.

We replaced 24 bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs. They are brighter than the old ones, and because of that we plan to normally turn on just these 24 instead of all 34 of the old ones. (The veteran ten will be reserved for special effects: a candlelight service, for example, when a very dim ambience is sought.)

The full bank of the old bulbs drew 3,000 watts of power, while the 24 new ones, which will do essentially the same job, draw just 500 watts. Per bulb, that's 20 watts versus 90. This substantial difference means we can expect a rebate from LIPA, to defray the new bulbs' cost.

The replacement went smoothly, thanks to the super-tall ladder provided *gratis* by One Source Tool in Southampton. This is not the first time One Source has contributed equipment to benefit our meetinghouse, and we're very grateful.

John Andrews

Harvest the Power

"A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm." These words of Henrik Ibsen opened our fall "Harvest the Power" workshop, brilliantly co-facilitated by the Revs. Alison Cornish and Dr. James Macomber. Participants from UUCSF and the First Universalist Church of Southold attended. A second session will be offered in the spring. You are invited to sign up, whether or not you attended the first session.

"What I liked best," Imke Littman said, "was to meet members of the Southold congregation." Mark Potter described "an interesting program which Alison and Jim delivered in a clear manner that was often lots of fun." Laurie Ullmann, a mem-

ber of the Southold congregation who's quite new to Unitarian Universalism, found the group exciting. "To hear all the diverse opinions was enlightening, and I enjoyed listening to everyone."

Leadership, our work made clear, can be learned by anyone because it is a problem-solving process that draws from our unique experiences, beginning at any age or stage in life. And leadership is more about listening than it is about speaking. When we listen well, we understand from where others are coming, which gives us a clearer idea of when, why, and how to go forward. Plain and simple, good leaders listen first and lead sec-

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A Cornucopia of Gratitude

Because January is a sabbatical month for Alison, she suggested using her newsletter space to review the congregation's expressions of gratitude from our November 18 service. Alison had sketched, with tape, a capacious cornucopia on the sanctuary wall, and it overflowed with 143 colorful post-its.

Common ground emerged readily, though not invariably. Topicality had some influence. Surviving Sandy, mentioned four times, included "I'm awed and grateful by how the community of LI/NYC helped needy people." Election outcomes inspired three citations for the President, one for Tim Bishop, and one for Elizabeth Warren.

The largest grouping, by far, was family. Citations - "Loving parents," "My marriage," "My expanding family," "Family's success, with everyone able to support themselves," "The teaching and memories of my parents" - numbered 29. Other post-its gave 15 proper names. (Though each post-it was unsigned, most of these names were recognizable family members.)

Next largest, with 17 citations, cited communal and personal support. "Having all kinds of love in my life - deep, abiding, familial, animal." "My own strength and willpower." "Justice - fighters, activists - blooming everywhere." "A peaceful childhood." "Caring and sharing strangers." "The great honor of being part of existence." "Friends" "My best friend." "Good friends."

Material well-being, with 12, included "Prosperity," and "I'm grateful to have enough work to pay my bills and to have a safe place to live with a car." Five other people mentioned their house, with "My (warm) house" possibly looking ahead to winter, or back to Sandy's outages.

Unitarian Universalism's 9 included "UUCSF for a million reasons, including friends, fun, compatible values." One note simply said, "Alison!!"

The natural world also had 9. "The ocean." "Woodland." "The beauty and changes of the earth." "Grateful for conservation." "This morning's sunrise."

Seven noted their work ("Satisfying," "Fulfilling"), study (Completion of *Ist Semester By*

the Sea) or occupation ("A meaningful livelihood." "Expanding opportunities and enjoying new horizons.") And the work of others was also cited. "Boston University taking good care of my son." "Our nation's farmers."

Four noted the single word, "Health." Some expanded this: "My health and joy in doing triathlons at my age." "Grateful for a bit more time to be alive."

Four focused on animals. "Horse lessons." "Dogs." "Guinea pigs." "Dog survived terrible bacterial infection."

Some notes resisted categorizing, and I celebrate this as a demonstration of our congregation's infinite variety which age cannot wither nor custom stale. "Inquiring minds." "Choices." "Empathy." "Good humor." "My life." "Life." "Beauty." "Food." "Indians." "Coffee." "The sacrificial turkey." "That we are aware." "Basically safe in America." "Optimism - a gift of my father." "Not being dizzy - and cured by a roller coaster at Great Adventure!"

Margaret Logan

Len Harmon, loved member of our congregation, died at home in East Hampton on November 27 after a long illness. He was 93 years old. A memorial service to celebrate his life is being planned, the date to be announced soon.

John Andrews' Gift

At our December Board meeting, we voted to accept John's gift of \$14,000 that was raised by the sale of his father's coin collection. This sum makes a wonderful launch for our recently established Building Maintenance Reserve. This money is reserved for capital improvements or substantial emergency repairs that have been authorized by a majority vote of the Board. Many, many thanks to John, who has helped all members of UUCSF, the common owners of the real property we call our meetinghouse, to feel much more secure about maintaining its physical integrity into the future.

Mark Potter, Vice President

President's Letter

I would like to pick up on something Alison said in her sermon on September 16, namely that prayer is not asking for something we think we want, but for personal transformation in ways we cannot imagine.

There are several reasons why I long ago concluded that prayers begging God for favors are foolish. It seems to me the height of vanity for a finite being to presume to influence, cajole, or harness the Infinite to one's own purposes. Moreover, if the Infinite is benevolent, as most religions assert, wouldn't He/She/It do what is for the best, regardless of what my petty ego demands? Should He/She/It bestow favors on the friend I pray for while ignoring the friendless one in the adjacent hospital bed? Praying for favors may make us feel better and help us get through the day, but I have little confidence in any practical effect it might have.

Well, then, is praying for personal transformation any better? Yes it is, I believe, because in so praying I open myself to the Infinite in a way that, in the absence of such prayer, I am closed.

None of us, of course, can form a conception of the Infinite. For some, a particular image may prove helpful, and as long as they don't confuse the image with the reality (and thereby, in Paul Tillich's formulation, practice idolatry) it's probably okay. My preference is to empty my mind of images and words and simply open myself to change. Needless to say, this doesn't always work, but sometimes it does.

I'm old enough now not to look for any great transformation such as took hold of prophets ancient and modern, but once in a while a little one comes along. And when it does, I am grateful.

Peace,
John Andrews



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ond. They forge a connection with those around them based on care. Ultimately, then, leadership is our least self-centered act. This makes it both personally challenging and extremely rewarding. As Mark reflected, "The workshop helped us understand our own personal skills and expectations, which tend to make us better leaders, as well as better understanding what could hinder us."

We also dealt with the inevitable stress that goes with any leadership role. As John Andrews so knowingly put it, "On the surface we look like we have it all under control, but just underneath we have stress. This workshop taught me that it's good to bring all those things to the surface."

In small groups, we drew pictures of what leadership looked like. I was in a group with John and a woman named Ruth from Southold. We drew a serenely floating swan on a sunny, picture-perfect day. Lurking below its feet were torpedoes, schools of fish swimming in opposite directions, and a sunken ship. Each group's pictures were different but there were some constants: an unhappy face in the crowd; various representations of the hurdles we face in leadership roles.

Still, there's a silver lining. Leadership is meant to be shared, or delegated. In fact, being a "facilitator" is the best definition and goal. "Facilitate" means "to make an action or process easy or easier." The leader strives to enable everyone to have the opportunity to learn new skills and to apply them for the benefit of all, ultimately putting the ship's well-being in everyone's hands.

Laurie Ullmann commented on the final quiz we all took. "When I added up my answers, I was surprised to see I had a high score for leadership." While she had taken leadership roles in the past, it had always seemed to her it was by default, that she was the only one willing to put in the time. Now she sees leadership differently and looks forward to the spring workshop.

"Harvest the Power" met its goal of welcoming anyone in our UU community to learn to "take the helm," one step at a time, with the knowledge that we are all in this together.

Pam Wittenberg

January Service Calendar

Services begin at 10:30 AM

Sunday, January 6, 2013

What Time Is It Now?

**The Rev. Jennifer Brower and
Worship Associate Sue Penny**

Flashes of insight come without warning, and often through an unexpected source - a casual conversation, a glimpse of some fleeting phenomenon of nature, or the words tucked into a Chinese fortune cookie. No matter how they come - if we are fortunate - moments of insight enhance our thinking about life and prompt our spiritual growth.

The Rev. Jennifer Brower serves as the Minister for Pastoral Care at UU Shelter Rock. She will be our minister on call for emergency pastoral care while Alison is on sabbatical leave during the month of January.

Ancient Wisdom

**Aiyana Williams of The Red Fox Clan and
Worship Associate Chris Epifania
Musician, Jason Johnson, Eastern Shore Drum-
ming Group**

The universe governs itself by a set of natural laws, values, and principals which keep all things in balance. This is a polarity system that does not judge, but strives to maintain equilibrium. Fish know exactly how to be fish; they do not try to be bears. As human beings, we can learn from the ancient teachings about the natural world to help us create a life of harmony. Traditional Native American Drumming will accompany the service.

January 20

The King Legacy: Beyond Civil Rights

**The Rev. Ned Wight and
Worship Associate Myrna Truitt
Abby Fleming, Musician**

In honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King, we explore what his messages mean for us today. Ned Wight is the Director of the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, in Manhasset.

Service Date	Set Up/ Greeters	Hospitality
Jan. 6	Mason	Potters
Jan. 13	Hoenigs	O'Neal/Jackson
Jan. 20	Logan/Coulter	Curran/T. Brolin
Jan. 27	Krinke	Schmitz/Penny
Feb. 3	Lindley	Ettlinger/Dailey

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

January 27

**A Political Diamond
and the Civic Virtues of Confucius
Worship Associate John Andrews
Sally Block, musician**

Instead of the usual left-right sorting, today's politics are better illuminated with a frame that's both left-right and forward-back. Think of a baseball diamond enclosing the different outlooks we normally lump into "the center." The five civic virtues of Confucius urge us beyond simply looking for politicians who feel right in policy terms. Which virtue, in particular, is the most needful to advance social good?

February 3

**Imbolc and the New Normal
The Rev. Alison Cornish
Peter Weiss, Musician**

The ancient holiday of *Imbolc* marks the beginning of the season of *via creativa* - a time when new life is beginning to stir underground, yet isn't quite visible above. We'll need all the creativity we can muster in these times of radical and profound change, so let's peer into the darkness together and see what is starting to grow.

Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, all events are at the meetinghouse, open to all, and free of charge.

Sunday, Jan. 6, noon

Congregational Business Meeting to consider a bylaw change affecting the Finance Committee. We will also begin a conversation about changing the name of our congregation.

Thursday, Jan. 10, 7 pm

UUCSF Council Meeting

Friday, Jan. 11 and 25, 10-11 am

Nonviolent Communication Practice Group

For details, call Jaki Jackson, 631-267-8556.

Saturday, Jan. 12, 9-10:30 am

Caregivers' Circle for congregants and those in the larger community who are caring for aging family members.

Sunday, Jan. 13, noon

Qi Gong in Winter. Learn to love your body. Build strength and reserves for warmth and balance with these ancient Chinese exercises, walks, and self-massages, practicing the art of breathing your movement.



Saturday, Jan. 18, 7 pm

The Grotto Coffeehouse

Card and board games, chess, checkers, and backgammon. Good talk and group singing. Coffee, tea, and cakes for all to enjoy,

all for free. Bring yourself, your family, and your friends!

Save the Dates:

Fourth Annual Holistic Healing Clinic, free and open to all. Friday, Feb. 22, 3 - 7 pm and Saturday, Feb. 23, 9 am - 1 pm

Details to follow in the February newsletter.

Highlights, December Board Meeting

- John Andrews noted that we now have fresh opportunities to see the big picture, thanks to our visit to the New London congregation and new directions taken by the Nominating and Fellowship committees. The January Congregational meeting will be important to this momentum.
- Alison expressed gratitude to those taking over while she is away.
- Imke Littman reported that assets now include a Building Maintenance Reserve. Bluegrass Concerts made \$1,400; pledges are running ahead; the coin donation had positive effect; expenses are a little behind and so are rentals.
- Sue Penny and Kent Martin are working on a Safe Congregation Policy, using UUA recommendations.
- The Helping Hand Fund will develop a written policy, publicize their donations, and will meet more regularly.
- The Board voted to place Peter Morales' name on the ballot to be nominated as our national president.
- Outreach plans: inviting Adas Israel Synagogue to The Grotto, continuing to support the work of Maureen's Haven, and considering the request of The South Fork National History Museum, regarding a day camp for children in July and August.

Myrna Truitt,
Secretary

Food Pantry News

The Bridgehampton Food Pantry is beginning a new chapter of its life as an independent 501(c)3 organization, and is seeking input and involvement from all of Bridgehampton's faith communities as it moves forward. Volunteers and potential volunteers are invited to a reorganizational meeting on Wednesday, January 9, at 1:00 pm in the parish house at St. Ann's Church, Main St., Bridgehampton. For more information, please contact Joan Marcincuk at 283-2251 or Gene Scanlon at 516-459-1099.

New Member Profile

I remember spending time with Ken Ettlinger as far back as 1994 when UUCSF held services in the Water Mill Community House. The man I knew then, and the one I know now, is reassuringly the same. Ken demonstrates with his life that he is committed to the long term, involved as he is in projects that will outlast his lifetime. I suspect that he keeps geological time in mind when working on all things.

Ken was in fact trained as a geologist, and holds a degree from the South Dakota School of Mines. In addition to geology, he also learned about political activism during the famous occupation of the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973, by about 200 Oglala Lakota Indians. This was an incident that Ken observed up close. In the '60s Ken was active against the war in Vietnam, and supported Eugene McCarthy's 1968 anti-war primary campaign.

Ken is originally from Long Island, where he grew up on a small farm in Deer Park. His mother grew dahlias, cultivating species of this flower that can no longer be found. This loss influenced his interest in plant preservation.

In 1974 Ken was teaching geology, oceanography, human ecology, and biology at Suffolk Community College in Brentwood, which began his long association with Suffolk Community College. Currently he teaches courses at the Eastern Campus in Riverhead. He has also taught at Stony Brook University, where he earned his Master's Degree in geology.

I've discovered in talking with Ken that he has been involved in too many important progressive activities for me to detail. But of all of these, clearly his passion is seed saving. Around 1979, he founded the Long Island Seed company, which was a reaction to the irresponsible practices of the major seed companies (Monsanto, Shell, etc.) and an endeavor to preserve the utility, flavor, and beauty of

plant varieties which were at risk of being lost. Then and now, commercial seed was being engineered so that it was impossible for seed to be saved and propagated by farmers without unpredictable results. In addition, the big seed companies were breeding vegetables more for shipping, handling, and appearance than for flavor and natural hardiness. Seed saving, and with it the preservation of heirloom vegetable varieties, counters this trend and protects the diversity of the edible plants upon which humankind relies.



To support his interest in seed saving Ken acquired the 1820 house and farm in Flanders, where he still lives. This land has been his resource for continued activities in propagating heirloom varieties of tomatoes, pumpkins, zucchini, and other vegetables. Farmers all over the U.S. are currently growing strains that Ken discovered and saved, such as the Brandywine Tomato and the Long Island Cheese Pumpkin. Ken is active in the Northeast Organic Farmers

Association (NOFA). It is not by accident that UUCSF's new Children's Garden was thriving this summer, producing plentiful tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, and multicolored carrots, since this project was his brainchild.

When I knew Ken back in the '90s, I got to meet his son Zak, whom Ken raised on the farm in Flanders. Perhaps Ken's proudest cultivar, Zak is now a documentary filmmaker and cinematographer whose work has appeared in the *New York Times* multimedia features and in countless commercial productions. If you don't see Ken on Long Island, there's a good chance he is in Los Angeles visiting his son.

Ken also serves UUCSF as co-chair of Building and Grounds. Our newest member has certainly made his mark with his energy, knowledge, skill, and hard work.

Carl Wittenberg

Sins of Our Fathers

In a protected hollow above Mulvhill Pond in Sag Harbor is an American Beech nearly four feet in diameter. It was a seedling at the time the first Europeans arrived on this island, a spectacular tree. Its massive gray trunk is slate smooth, finished as if it were a piece of decorative art. In a circle surrounding it are the young trees which often retain their leaves until spring, bleached and fluttering in the sunlight like notes to the forest gods.

Out here in Long Island we find European copper beeches and others planted near the old estates and at least one ancient native in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, but most of our wild beech trees are in the hollows among our gravel hills. I suspect these pockets of rich topsoil were too small to support a farm and too distant from good transportation to tempt the wood cutters. We can thank them for saving these remnants of a virgin forest from the improvements of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Among their leaves, beech trees grow small burrs which open in the fall, dropping a downpour of nutlike seeds, *mast*, each as large as your fingernail. It is a Thanksgiving spread for the deer, squirrels, turkeys and the bears in the North Country.

Indulge me for a moment and imagine lying under this tree, staring into the branches 50 feet above us. The leaves in the canopy play like memories through shafts of sunlight, now green then black in silhouette, in and out of focus.

I recall a path paved with beech leaves where a cousin lit a pack of matches to frighten a bear who wanted her to step aside. In another memory: a black and white photo of two boys, our sons, tumbled down a waterfall in the shade of the beech

trees. In another: a compass course four miles over a hardwood ridge to a marsh we called the flow grounds, which my great-grandfather had flooded to bring logs to market.

In the early 1900s when men first logged the Adirondacks, they took only the virgin spruce, maple and birch, leaving the American Beech to take over the forest.

By the 1950s it was the predominant tree of the northern hardwoods, wherever loggers had touched the virgin forest. In our Adirondacks the forest floor was as clear of undergrowth as an English park. With a compass and a map we could follow highlands anywhere through towering pillars of gray beech.

Today all this has changed. The same forest is an almost impenetrable jungle of toppled trees and broken tops with sickened young beech, weaving it all together. In the 1970s and 80s the beech bark disease, which involves a beetle and two kinds of fungi, swept out of Nova Scotia through the monoculture beech forests of our North Country, reaching as far south as Pennsylvania and Ohio.

My grandfather and his partners had no idea they were making a mistake. They were following the same practices as logging companies throughout New Hampshire, Vermont and New York State. But by concentrating the population of a single species, they left us vulnerable to a single disease.

We can be grateful that our pockets of American Beech in the deep woods of the East End are separated by acres of mixed oak, ash and locust, which for now provide a protective buffer. If this holds, our great-grandchildren will be able to walk into the Mulvhill trail system and find this massive tree, perhaps 400 years old.

Mark Potter



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Newsletter Information:

Deadline is the 15th of each month. E-mail copy, photos and events to Margaret Logan marlogan@optonline.net
Please start your subject line with "UU newsletter".

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Readers' Forum

About 40 men and women attended the memorial vigil UUCSF organized for Friday morning, December 21, just one week after the mass murders of 27 children and adults in Newtown, Connecticut. The American Legion kindly offered shelter from the heavy rains, which made original plans to gather in Sag Harbor's Marine Park untenable.

Alison spoke wisely to us of grief, mourning, and the innocence of the slain. She noted that the coming night marked the solstice, and used the metaphor of returning light to express hope and action for positive change. A handout was available for those wanting to petition the Obama administration to immediately sign an Executive Order banning the sale of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines until Congress acts on this.

After the vigil, a group of us talked among ourselves, expressing bafflement about assault weapons. Our game laws forbid hunters from using them for waterfowl, deer, elk, or any animals not considered pests, so what's their appeal? Are they useful for anything other than mass murders or open warfare?



Trip Gabriel's account of one shooter in the December 20 *New York Times* offers an explanation:

Patrick Mason, 23, is an assistant manager at a Yoga studio in Las Vegas. Every couple of months, when he's saved enough money to buy 500 rounds of ammunition, he drives to the desert with a friend or two, a barbecue grille, his AR-15 rifle, and a haul of fruit. "I don't want to shoot holes in a piece of paper, I want to watch a watermelon be destroyed...It's fun and it makes you smile but it's a skill, its own art form. I don't want to make it sound weird, but it's almost like holding a live animal. You've fired the thing, and it's kicked around, and there's the smell."

Mr. Mason does not hunt and does not consider this shooting a sport. It gives him an electrical charge of excitement, he said. "When I put 20 rounds downrange, I'm like, man, I need a burger, yes!"

It's always good to hear from readers. Send comments to marlogan@optonline.net



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