

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork

April
2014

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

www.uucsf.org

We are a spiritual community.

News from RE

Do you remember that beautiful weekend we had in February? The heavens opened and gave us two days of glorious sunshine, and everyone took to the outdoors for this brief and much needed respite from the long, cold winter.

So, all indoor lesson plans aside, RE went outside too! Four kids, one parent and I went on a nature walk down to our neighborhood pond. We looked for signs of spring and life out there on that pond and the water banks. We found buds on the trees, and also signs of a good time that must have been had by some local kids. Our RE youth gathered to clean up that mess; they didn't like the way it looked on the icy water. We imagined where the fish went for the winter, and wondered when we would see signs of our frog friends.

They wanted to walk around the whole perimeter of the pond; 4 kids; 3 pairs of boots; one pair of sneakers. It got icy and slushy as they neared the place where you had to cross the pond, so one brother walked across, and took off his boots. Finn gathered leaves and brush for him to stand on while Kaylie brought the boots to the other brother who then put them on to cross over. *Sharing begets Success!!!*

And now, onward. Large tree debris was found and another plan was hatched. But first - a sanctuary: a gathering of trees and bushes which, in the summer would be impassable because of the leaves, now provided a roomy and quiet place for

the kids to get away from it all, while still within our sight! Soon it was time to head back and for the plan to be revealed and executed. Instead of trading shoes, the dead tree trunk became a bridge; a crossing - filled in with twigs, branches and gifts of nature. The kids made a way for everyone to get across without getting wet, and without any instruction or help from the adults! It was a sight to behold. No arguing, just good ol' fashioned teamwork.



Valerie DiLorenzo

As we headed back to the meetinghouse, the youngsters talked about their adventure. They said that since they built a bridge, the whole Congregation would now be able to come down to the pond, get across and gather in their "sanctuary". Any takers?

Transition Committee Meeting

The Interim Ministry Committee (John Tusa, Arden Edwards, Kent Martin and Stuart Lowrie) met with the Rev. Nancy O. Arnold on Sunday, March 9 after service. Plans to convene neighborhood gatherings of congregation members and friends were discussed and completed. The purpose of these proposed gatherings for early April will be to reconnect as a religious community in transition, and to receive input from the congregation on its perceived and hoped-for position and stature in the larger community.

Chief among the desired outcomes will be proposals for a new vision of our place in the wider

Continued on page 4

April 2014 UUCSF Newsletter 1

Green up to save paper and stamps!

If we have your email address, you are now receiving the UUCSF newsletter by email. For those receiving only the snail mail version, please send your email address to our administrator Kat Gioia (admin@uucsf.org)

Martha Potter, Editor (mtpotter@optonline.net)

From the Interim Minister



There is a consistent theme in the conversations we've been having: you want to grow the membership. Even in congregations which have an official Membership Committee, I am a firm believer that it is comprised of the entire congregation, not just the designated

committee members. This is especially true in family-size congregations that may lack the resources to outfit such committees.

One of your greatest strengths is that you truly enjoy being together – *and you know how to have a good time*. Wouldn't it be wonderful if more people could experience this kind of fellowship?

Congregations like ours, that don't believe in heavy evangelism or missionary recruiting, are challenged when it comes to attracting more members. Just about every survey ever taken on the subject reveals that the number one way people find a church they love is through personal invitation from a friend.

I've adapted these suggestions from my colleague, Carol Meyer, to help us *all* get oriented toward growth:

- Bring someone to a Sunday service.
- Wear your nametag at every Sunday service.
- Make a point of sitting beside someone new and make him or her feel welcome.
- Greet return visitors or newcomers by name and tell them you're glad they came back.
- Volunteer to be a greeter, or staff the Welcome Table, on Sunday mornings.
- Talk with someone you don't know during the coffee hour.
- Tell your friends with children about our wonderful religious education program. Better yet, have your children tell their friends!
- Put a UU decal or bumper sticker on your car or home window.

- Wear UU jewelry and/or UU T-shirt.
- Use a UU coffee mug at work or at home.
- Display the UU Principles at home and/or at work.
- Carry a UU Principles bookmark or wallet card and give it to people when they ask about Unitarian Universalism.
- Practice your response to the question: "What do Unitarian Universalists believe?"
- Tell people about something you saw on the UUCSF website.
- Include UU content on your personal and/or business website or *Facebook* page.
- Write an article for a local newspaper about a congregational project in which you're involved.
- Host a party or dinner and invite members of the congregation and non-members.
- Participate openly as a Unitarian Universalist in a community event or effort that reflects UU Principles.
- Link your favorite social justice effort to the congregation.
- Volunteer to join – or start – a Membership Committee.
- Invite a friend to attend a church activity or program.
- Give a copy of a sermon you liked to a non-member.
- Talk to non-members about UUCSF.
- Give a copy of this newsletter or *The World* magazine to someone you think would like to know more about UUCSF.
- Share a meaningful thought or experience you had at the meetinghouse with a friend or colleague and invite conversation.
- Offer transportation to someone who can't drive to Sunday services.
- Visit a UU camp in the summer and bring a friend.

Let's draw inspiration from this season of rebirth and freedom, and act as if we have "good news" to proclaim. *Because we do.*

Yours in faith,
Nancy
minister@uucsf.org

President's comments:

It's April and Love Is In the Air

While driving Noyac Road back in February, a red object on someone's lawn caught my eye. A forgotten Christmas decoration? An election sign? A new political movement?

It was a heart, embroidered with red lights, and sure enough, I saw two other hearts before I reached my driveway. When did Valentine's Day become so important?

For me it has always been a day of angst. In first grade a girl whose curls I had noticed from across the room appeared in front of my desk and plopped a card on my pencils. While I was trying to decide whether or not to touch the card, another girl, the star of the class, spun through the room dropping a card on everyone's desk.

At that age the girls in my class were near strangers to me. They didn't play marbles, or climb the tackling bars, or wrestle, or play dodgeball. Too astonished even to smile, I could only wonder what was expected of me. Thanks? A card in return?

Yet even in that dumb-struck state I knew it was better to receive a card than to watch those curls bounce by on their way to another boy's desk.

My confusion about Valentine's Day continued through grammar school and my teen years. Even when I discovered the benefits of buying flowers, it seemed somehow underhanded; a form of cheating; an attempt to purchase a girl's affections with a card or a fistful of flowers. She should love me for something real, my clever repartee perhaps; my cool demeanor, or the James Dean flat top I cultivated then.

Which brings me to the reason I trip over Valentine's Day: just what is that something *real* which brings us together?

I remember watching an elderly couple in a Grand Central Terminal cafe, waiting for a train I suppose, each with their lips curled in disgust, acknowledging the other with a twitch of the head, as

they tossed angry phrases at each other. How could two people become so poisonously enmeshed?

Many years later I met another couple, friends of my mother, residents in an assisted living home, who in their mid-80s were still so enamored of each other that they were the envy of all who knew them; rock stars among the walkers and wheel chairs. As I learned more, I discovered there was a back story. They had been heartthrobs in their teen years, when she jilted him to marry another. They'd



both raised families, but apparently he had never given up hope. After his wife died he tracked her down to this home, and they lived there together until age finally claimed him, still with a smile on his face. But how had he lost her in the first place and how did that other man win her away?

When the Valentine's magic happens to us, we first notice the things we share; the common values, tastes and pleasures. These are obvious, and if they were all that were needed, our computers could match us with ease; predictable and boring. The mystery lies in our differences. How else can we explain the shy young man matched with the social butterfly; the spendthrift hand in hand with the frugal; the courageous with the timid; the shy with the bold; the forever tardy with her prompt mate? It is as if we are each a jigsaw piece, in search of that other person who somehow fits our own queer gaps and knobs.

Perhaps those who love best have learned to appreciate these differences; to admire the ways they mesh with their loved ones, giving the sharp edges which don't quite fit a chance to wear smooth before they become so tight they must be broken.

And if this is magic for Valentine's Day it will certainly be useful on a warm day in April. Or any other day of the year.

Mark Potter

April Services

We nurture the health of the earth.

April 6

Planting Possibilities

The Rev. Nancy O. Arnold and Valerie diLorenzo

Worship Associates:

Pat Gorman and Stephen Flores

CD Sunday

Transitions are a part of life. They can bring about a mix of anticipation, grief, and fear. They are also about hope and planting seeds for the future. Let us embrace spring and all its promise in this service for all ages as we plant seeds of intention to grow both in and out of the ground. All are welcome.

April 13

Honoring the Earth in Poetry, Song and Music

Worship Associate Christine Epifania

“We nurture the health of the earth” will be the guiding principle expressed in music, song and poetry. Sara Gordon, Megan Chaskey, and Margaret Pulkingham will bring their creative talents to honor Mother Earth with a musical service.

April 18 – Friday at 7:30 pm

Tenebrae- Service of Shadows

Worship leader: Eda Lorello RCWP

Tenebrae is a centuries old ritual, appropriate for Good Friday. There will be readings, reflections, music and silence.

April 20 7:00 am

Interfaith Easter Sunrise Service

All are welcome to gather with other people of faith on the beach at the end of Ocean Road in Bridgehampton. An alternate location will be announced in the event of drenching rain.

April 20

The Easter in Us

The Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Musician: Abby Fleming

We are in a season which speaks the spring-inspired words about life, death, and rebirth. The markers we see in the changing season are indicators of what can happen *within us*. We are offered the opportunity to take the seasonal celebrations into our hearts – Pass-over for freedom, Easter for life, and spring for rebirth. Easter is about a change of heart, and being at home in the cycle of life.

Service Date	Greeter	Hospitality
April 6	Ingrid Krinke, Mark Ewald	James Thurman, Marla Liso
April 13	Arden Edwards, Jeanne Wisner	John Andrews, Hilary Helfant
April 20	Myrna Truitt, Carol Mason	Bill Dalsimer, Michael O’Neill
April 27	Tom Murphy, Eileen McCabe	Linda Giordano, Jeanne Wisner

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

April 27

First Principles

Worship Leader: Stuart Lowrie

Musician: Abby Fleming

"First principles" from science can be woven into how we interpret and live our 7th Principle and the UUCSF mission statement, which flows from the UU 7th Principle. Just how far can we take our "respect for the interconnected web of all existence, of which we are a part"?

Transition Committee, continued from page 1

world around us, and suggestions for how we might begin to actualize that vision. The ideas from these conversations will be used by the soon-to-be-formed Minister Search Committee and the UUCSF Board to guide the search process in the coming weeks and months.

The Interim Ministry Committee urges all congregation members and friends to attend one or more of these conversations. Please respond with commitment and enthusiasm when you are contacted regarding this effort.

Upcoming Events

All events free, open to all and held at the meetinghouse unless noted.

Sunday, March 30, Noon

Congregational Meeting To elect members for our Search Committee (see details posted)

Saturday April 5, 9:15 am

Worship Associates Meeting

Saturday April 5, 11:30 am

Transition Team Meeting

Sunday, April 6, Noon

Finance and Stewardship Committees Joint Meeting. We will be reviewing the progress of the pledge campaign and preparing for the Budget Hearing (see below).

Sunday, April 13, Noon

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.

Thursday, April 17, 7 pm

UUCSF Council Meeting. The UUCSF Council is composed of Board members and committee chairs. Its purpose is to facilitate communication between the Board and the committees and to advise the Board on the needs of the congregation. It meets

quarterly. The Board itself may meet after the Council meeting to conduct business that can't wait until the next regularly scheduled Board meeting in February. Board and Council meetings are open to all members and friends of our congregation.

Friday, April 25, 6:30 pm

Caregivers Support Group

Compassionate caregiving of elderly parents, ill spouses/partners etc. is accompanied by stress and burnout. Caregivers need caring! Please join us for sharing and support. Bring a friend. For info call Eda Lorello, facilitator at 725-8093.

Sunday, April 27, Noon

Budget Hearing. As part of our annual budgeting process, the Finance Committee is charged with presenting budget information to the Congregation before the May Board meeting, at which our Trustees will prepare a budget for consideration by the Congregation at its annual meeting in June. Today's gathering gives you an advance opportunity to see spending proposals and income estimates. You'll also have a chance to suggest possible additional sources of income and to express your opinions to the Board on where the priorities should be if, as is usually the case, not all the funding requests can be met. This is your opportunity to be heard and to influence what we do with our money.

Highlights of the Board

Chris Epifania briefed the Board on the impact of search committee nominations. The Board will recruit two new members for the nominating committee and will suspend bylaws requiring new committee chairs. Imke Littman and Myrna Truitt agreed to continue as Treasurer and Secretary.

Discussion of Social Justice centered on focusing on other organizations to cooperate with, to look at suggestions from General Assembly, and to publicize individual members' work in the community.

The Treasurer reported that we have an excess in the budget for Music & Worship, which we will hold onto. All is going well, and money spent on

RE has been a wise investment.

The President reported that most of us agreed to receive the newsletter by email, representing a savings. He suggests we may be able to use Icon as our information database, and discontinue *ListServ*. There was no change reported with the Rainbow School, and the Synagogue will return in summer.

Margi Pulkingham is discussing an event with New Thought Center sometime in May. The April Council meeting will be April 17. The Metro District Meeting in Morristown, NJ, is May 2-3; the theme is youth. The Board Retreat is planned for Saturday, June 14. The Board will ask the Council to consider administrative chores, and possibly paying for some. Sue Penny continues to communicate with Erling Hope regarding the kids' animal mural.

Interview with Pam Wittenberg

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Pam Wittenberg about her experiences as a long-time member of the UU Congregation of the South Fork. She attended her first UU service in 1993 when she was in her early 30s, at the Watermill Community Center. The Reverend Randy Becker gave a talk on Transcendentalism and it was there that Pam first met the members of the UUCSF and has been attending their services ever since. Pam and her husband, Carl, brought their children to the UUCSF services to give them the opportunity to develop a religious identity.

Pam describes her feelings after attending her first service as realizing she had been a ship at sea and that the congregation was her North Star. UUCSF provides her with a compass/reference point of where to look for deeper answers to her questions in life. Coming to the services helps her to realize she is not alone; the congregation provides her with a collective way to search for a spiritual comfort zone, and then the support to move beyond it. Pam suggests that it takes a lifetime to develop a religion, and her beliefs are still developing.

She has a scientific approach to learning about religion. While she is not sure where we came from, she has a feeling of eternal gratefulness for her short time here on earth. Pam feels the vast universe is humbling, and that the spirit of life lies not just within her, but in all the interconnectedness of life.

One book which has been a significant source of inspiration for Pam is "*The Meaning of Life*," by Viktor Frankl, a holocaust survivor. His quote, "It's not what you expect from life, but what life expects from you," has taught her that life expects you to maintain your true sense of self no matter what happens. No one can take that away from you.

Attending UU services evolved into reading many books on UU principles. Over time these concepts became imbedded in her daily life and support her in the decisions she makes. Pam feels the UU principles have led her to a greater under-

standing of death. Not believing in an afterlife, she feels people live on in others' memories and thoughts of them.

A significant aspect of the services for Pam is the lighting of the candles. She also lights candles at home to stay present and mindful of what she and others might be dealing with at different times. Just by coincidence, I had lit a candle on my table just before phoning Pam, which added to the kindred spirit aspect of our conversation.

The biggest change Pam has seen in the congregation over many years is a greater openness to other religions and people. The congregational language has expanded and people are reaching out more and more. One example she gives is how the "Standing on the Side of Love" statement has grown from supporting Marriage Equality to meaning so much more to her. She notices the greatest growth in how people talk.

Pam has also experienced the wider UU world, which is a great resource for her learning experience. There are many UU publications, trips and conferences that reinforce for her that we are never alone; that there is always something to do, and that we are all connected. Pam has enjoyed two UU trips, one in Boston and the other in San Diego, and she has visited other UU congregations. She feels it is important to go out in the world and invite people to know about Unitarian Universalism.

Tina Guglielmo



The Journey of A Lifetime: The American Eel

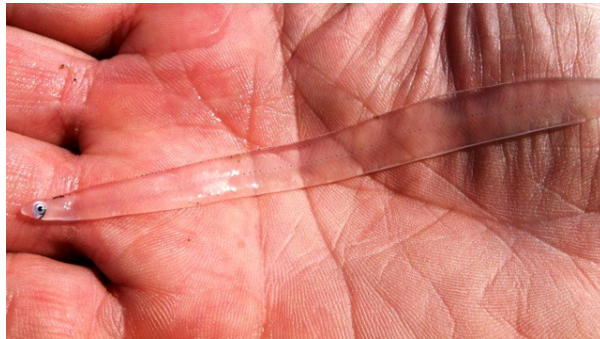
As I began to research more about the American eel, (*Anguilla rostrata*), I was struck by the difference between my recent trip from Long Island to Key West and back, and the eel's trip from the Sargasso Sea to Long Island and back. Although my trip happened in a short period of my life, and for the eel it's a life journey, I can't help but compare the two.

Both round trips are about 3,000 miles, give or take a few hundred miles. My trip was recreational; the eel's is for reproduction and survival. The American Eel's journey, to and from, can take from 4-

40 years. Mine was over in 6 short days. My trip was easy. I was driven to the airport, sat comfortably in a piloted plane, was fed and watered, and enjoyed four days of sunny, warm, fun adventures. The trip of the American Eel is anything but easy, but much more fascinating than mine!

The eel's life starts as an egg in the Sargasso Sea of the North Atlantic, between the West Indies and the Azores. The larvae hatch at the surface of the ocean, begin to drift north with the Gulf Stream, and arrive at the Atlantic coast in about a year.

By the time the eel reaches the coast, it has developed into a juvenile, known as a *glass eel*. What a perfect name! Last spring I discovered glass eels for the first time along the shoreline of Shinnecock Bay, near the Ponquogue Bridge. Just as their name



describes, they are transparent and are about 2.5 to 3.5 inches long. At the next stage of its life cycle, the eel develops a gray, green-brown pigmentation and grows to more than four inches. It's now known as an *elver*.

The American Eel is believed to be mostly catadromous, meaning it is born in the ocean, matures in fresh water, and returns to the ocean to spawn. At the yellow eel stage, it moves into freshwater ponds, lakes and streams where it sexually matures into a silver eel. This can take from 3-40 years! The complete sexual maturation (the eel is now 3-5 feet in length) happens on their swim back to the Sargasso Sea. Along the way, the eel stops eating and its gut degenerates, among other amazing physical changes. If it's lucky to make it back to the Sargasso Sea, the female releases 20-30 million eggs for fertilization by a male. And the journey begins again.

As I write this in the safety of my home, the American Eel is anything but safe. Overfishing, loss of habitat, introduced parasites and dams are a few of challenges this amazing creature faces. It is now listed as a species of special concern in Canada, which gains the species protection against harvesting in certain areas. Some U.S. states, including Maine, have also imposed restrictions on eel harvesting.

I encourage you to wander along the shoreline of Shinnecock Bay in late spring and look for glass eels. It's worth the trip!

Anita Wright



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 Truitt
Treasurer: Imke Littman
Margaret Pulkingham
Pamela Wittenberg

Newsletter Information:
Deadline is the 10th 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
Graphic technician: Mark Potter

What's Happening:

Let us know what our members and friends are doing to help the UUUCSF and the greater East End Community. Please send information to the Editor at mtpotter@optonline.net.

- **RE Wish List:** With all that RE does, they can always use your help. If you have any of the items listed below, please feel free to drop them off downstairs: paints, markers, fabric, felt, glue guns, paintbrushes, any kind of beads or jewelry, ziploc storage bags, compasses, flip charts, yoga/exercise mats, modeling clay, any kind of "costume" pieces (hats, gloves, boas, etc.) Thank you.
- **Erling Hope** has applied for a grant for the mural to enliven the concrete walls of the playground..
- On April 10 at 7:00pm in the Bay Street Theatre **Ken Dorph** will present *An Evening With My Friends, the Arabs*. It includes his personal and intimate overview of the Mid-East, followed by a Q&A session and refreshments inspired by the region's cuisine. Suggested donation is \$10. No reservations required.
- **Fellowship:** For those who do not know, the fellowship committee is comprised of three parts: Fellowship, Hospitality, and the Welcome Table. Sometimes things slip in between these three parts, and we meet to try and fill any gaps. Fellowship has stepped in to resolve the provisions shortage (i.e. milk, coffee, fruit, etc.) with a stopgap solution named "Jeanne." The coffee and milk should be flowing again, as usual. Hospitality has been doing

a great job getting the coffee hour ready and accommodating the lunches that Fellowship provides. Clean-up has become a joint venture between those doing Hospitality and any Fellowship members present, so that no one is still doing the dishes till the lights go out. The Welcome Table continues to facilitate newcomers but fails to have a workable follow-up system in place. We are fine-tuning this important component of being open, friendly, and communicative with everyone who walks through the doors.

- Fellowship plans to organize field trips to pertinent events relevant to UUs, especially for those who'd like to carpool. On Mon., March 24, the movie "*Wadjda*," by Haifaa Al Mansour (director) will be shown at 3pm, Southampton Library. Also, in honor of International Women's Day, Social Justice and Fellowship would like to show "*Arise*," in our congregation, date to be announced. Please call Pam 229-7521 if you are interested.

- **Pastoral Associates Program forming.** Pastoral Associates 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. If this is a ministry in which you'd like to participate, please contact Nancy, minister@uucsf.org for more information.



Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of the South Fork

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

April 2014 Newsletter