

# UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford  
January 2008

Visit us at: <http://www.uuoxford.com>  
e-mail: [uuoxford@uuoxford.com](mailto:uuoxford@uuoxford.com)

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## -----HOW TO FIND US-----

1. Travel on College Hill Road towards Clear Creek.
2. At the intersection with Old Sardis Road, go past stop sign and continue straight on CR 314 for 3.5 miles.
3. Turn right onto CR 198 (you should see a white sign saying Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford).
4. Go .2 miles. UU Hall, a light-colored building with a trailer next to it, is on your left immediately past CR 145.

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**TUPELO GROUP:** The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Tupelo welcomes visitors. They meet the first, second, third and fourth Sundays of each month at 11 a.m. in Temple B'Nai Israel, 1301 Marshall Street. Website: [www.UUTupelo.org](http://www.UUTupelo.org).

## ---SUNDAY SERVICES FOR JANUARY---

Our services start at 11:00 a.m. and childcare is provided.

January 6 - Dr. Howard Lenhoff

Dr. Lenhoff, author of *Black Jews, Jews, and Other Heroes*, will be our guest speaker. He will tell us how grassroots activism led to the dramatic and amazing rescue of Ethiopian Jews, and also about how individuals and small organizations

can profoundly influence governments to do the right thing. A short DVD about Darfur from the UU Service Committee will be shown at 10:15 a.m. before the service.

January 13 and January 20

Service topics are still open for these Sundays, and will be announced via e-mail.

Sunday, January 27 - Visiting Minister

The Reverend Barry Whittemore from Outlaw's Bridge Universalist Church will be our guest speaker. Reverend Whittemore serves a congregation with more than 100 years of history in North Carolina and will talk to us about the heritage of covenants.

With the new year, the UU Programming Committee is looking for people interested in service on the programming committee!! Please contact Sharon Walls for this interesting and important opportunity. You can reach Sharon via e-mail at [skwalls921@bellsouth.net](mailto:skwalls921@bellsouth.net).

## -----SPECIAL JANUARY EVENTS, IN OXFORD AND BEYOND-----

January 11-13, Friday evening - Sunday noon, right here at UUCO: The Youth Adult Planning Committee will hold a retreat and planning workshop at UU Hall. The YAC is an intergenerational, district-wide group devoted to planning conferences for our youth, and we welcome them to Oxford and to our congregation!

January 12, Saturday evening, time TBA, again here at home: We will host an open potluck dinner for all members and friends of UUCO to meet and get to know the YAC! We will give you an update with the exact time.

January 19 - Saturday in Jackson, Mississippi!  
Plan to attend "The mouse that roared: small congregations raising money to support their mission." This is a Mississippi UU congregations' workshop on stewardship that will be held in Jackson and led by the Reverend Fred Hammond. It will start at 9:30 and end at 4:30.

The program outline:

"That frame is just perfect but not with picture" - reframing the issues

"Does this dress look good on me?" - tailoring to meet your needs

"I don't like peas" - finding alternate choices to ensure proper nutrition

"If you say you can, you can; if you say you can't, you can't; either way you are right"- instilling success and vision into the process

If you are interested in participating, please contact Gail Stratton at 281-0868 or at byges@olemiss.edu. There will be at least one car going from Oxford!

#### -----SUNDAY SCHOOL AT UUCO -----

As this newsletter goes out, our Sunday schoolers and parents are enjoying some time off from the daily routine. Sunday school for January is being planned, and we will e-mail an update with dates and themes.

#### -----NEW MEMBER PROFILE-----

In last month's newsletter we learned about two of the eight new members we welcomed on Membership Sunday in November. This month we're pleased to share this profile of Charlene Dye.

Charlene tells us: "I was born in 1938 in Georgia but left when I was 28 as a single mom with my seven-year-old son, Preston. This was in 1966 and the South was in the turmoil of the civil rights movement. My father was a card-carrying racist and so were most of the people I knew. I wanted Preston to know a different kind of

world. So, we loaded up the Fiat station wagon and headed out to Los Angeles where friends I had met at Huntingdon College (1956-1958) in Montgomery had moved. One of these friends was Ed Dye whom I had met in Montgomery in 1957 and with whom I had been in love off and on for ten years--on up to today, actually. Ed became one of the original members of the UUCO.

"I moved in the late 1960's from Los Angeles to Cave Creek, Arizona, and owned/ran a hippie "head" shop in Tempe called Earth Imports and Trading Company. I traded beads for jewelry with the Native-Americans in Arizona and New Mexico, and I traveled often to Mexico and Guatemala buying clothes and trinkets for the shop until the early 1970's. In 1973, I decided to return to college in Santa Barbara, California, and in 1976 I graduated with a BA in English and a secondary teaching certificate in English. I later earned an MA in English from Sonoma State University in Santa Rosa.

"From Santa Barbara, I moved to Santa Fe where I met the second big love of my life, John Gill. John was a cowboy (a real cowboy) stunt man whose first movie was "The Alamo." John and I dated from 1977 to 1983 when we were married at St. Vincent Hospital in Santa Fe. John had a disease called amyloidosis and had been fighting it for several three years when it brought him down on Christmas Day. He underwent emergency surgery on December 26, 1983, and the doctors were unable to repair the damage to his organs. They told us he had hours, maybe a day, to live. When they told John this, he asked me to marry him. Romantic cowboy--did I mention that? So, we were married in the hospital where our honeymoon stretched out to four months! No one could explain why he lived or even how, but in April of 1984, they kicked us out of the hospital with an oxygen tank and good wishes. We left Santa Fe because John couldn't breathe well at that altitude and moved to Kerrville, Texas where John died in August, 1985. We were married 22 months.

“I moved back to Santa Fe and bought the Santa Fe Weaving and Knitting Center on Canyon Road. My best friend from the Montgomery college, Marinell, and I ran the shop until the high price of rent put us out of business. I began teaching in Santa Fe, and it was during this time that I learned of the Faulkner Conference in Oxford, which I attended in 1992. I was intrigued by Oxford, the program on Southern Culture at Barnard Observatory, and what was happening in Oxford around racial reconciliation.

“In 1995, I took a year’s leave of absence from my teaching job in Santa Fe, and Ed and I (did I mention that Ed Dye and I were married in 1994?) came to Oxford to spend a year while I studied in the MA program at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. I only had one year off from my teaching position in Santa Fe, so I knew I would not be able to finish the MA, but that didn’t matter. However, it turns out it did matter to me and we never went back to Santa Fe. We bought a house here in Oxford. I finished the MA at Southern Studies with a thesis on African-American jug bands and burlesque performance after the Civil War up to WWII. I also worked as the Coordinator for Programs on the South, which included coordinating the Faulkner Conference. I taught a year at M..S. Palmer High School in Marks (1998-1999) and returned to Ole Miss to work as program coordinator at Croft Institute for International Studies (1999-2004). While working at Croft, I also taught Advanced Composition on campus, and in 2004, left Croft to teach full time.

“I retired from The University in August, 2006, and since then have been taking art classes there. I love being retired and having all the time I want to spend with my six dogs and three cats. Ed and I are now divorced but are still good friends, and I am glad to report that he is still living here in Oxford.

“I have left out major portions (probably the most interesting parts like spending four months of my pregnancy in a home for unwed mothers, working

in L.A. as a radio/TV copywriter, being arrested in Mexico and deported, smuggling a Coatimundi from Mexico to the States, working as respiratory therapist, and on and on). I am happy to be a new member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford, and I hope to be a productive and supportive member.

“Charlene Nash Neel Gill Tompkins Dye (each name carries a story of its own)”

Welcome, Charlene!

-----**MISSISSIPPI CONGREGATIONS RECEIVE GRANT TO SPREAD THE GOOD WORD ABOUT UU**-----

UUCO is the happy recipient of a grant made available through the UU advertising initiative, set up to help our congregations get out the word on what we have to offer. Gail Stratton and Paula Shanks did the legwork for us, with support from Luanne Buchanan, and formulated a plan to use the funds to reach potentially over 30,000 newspaper readers within a 30-mile radius of Oxford. In addition to our ads here in town, we plan to advertise in eight regional newspapers, highlighting our program offerings from late January through February.

You can help us take the next steps with this effort, since ads can bring people but they’re just the beginning. Be on the lookout for visitors in late January and February, and do what comes naturally to our congregation: make them feel welcome and right at home! We’ll be glad we did.

-----**A GREEN SANCTUARY!**-----

Thanks to the superlative efforts of our Green Sanctuary Committee, the UUCO board is pleased to announce the board’s support and approval of the committee’s initial proposal and funding request to make our congregation a UU Green Sanctuary.

Our Green Sanctuary status is already on the road to becoming a reality, with step one completed: we have a committee led by Charlene Dye, with Linda Iorio, Greg Johnson, Pat Miller, Mary Queyja, Martha Ann Schuster, Sarah Sheffield, Gail Stratton, and Dinah Swan as members. (Interested but not on this list? Contact Charlene at [chickenranch@peoplepc.com](mailto:chickenranch@peoplepc.com). There's room for more!)

Step two requires an environmental and energy audit of the church, and step three involves an action plan for the congregation to affirm. The audit and action plan affect all the vital areas of our church life: our use of environmental and economic resources, religious education, worship and spiritual practice, and community involvement.

The board is looking forward to the committee's guidance as UUCO works to become a UU Green Sanctuary. Thanks to all who have turned this long-held wish into action for change!

-----**UUCO BOARD**-----

Your UUCO board met on December 18. The board activities will be summarized in the February newsletter.

**NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT  
2008 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUMMIT -  
January 26<sup>TH</sup>**

From Karen LoBracco, RE Trustee, MSD Board: Mid-South District's annual Religious Education Summit, a one-day event about religious education for all ages, will be hosted this year by the UU Fellowship of Mobile and will explore *Tapestry of Faith*, the new UUA curricula.

Join a fine crowd on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, and discover ways to create religious education for 2 or 200 children, for youth and for adults! Find out how to use easily available resources to grow and nurture UUs of all ages. Best of all, spend

time with other UUs from congregations like yours!

The RE Summit is FREE to ministers, seminarians and board presidents. The rest of us pay only \$15 advance registration or \$20 for walk-in registration. The fee covers lunch and all materials and handouts.

The Summit's keynote speaker is Jessica York, *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum writer, UUA Youth Programs Director, and former DRE at the UU Church of Birmingham.

The district website ([www.msduua.org](http://www.msduua.org)) will soon have registration information. Contact Karen LoBracco for more information ([klobracco@mindspring.com](mailto:klobracco@mindspring.com) or 770-642-7252).

See you in Mobile on the 26th!

*Mid-South District - UUA*  
*On the web at [www.msduua.org](http://www.msduua.org)*

-----**OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**-----

In the green sanctuary spirit, many of us would like to know how to bring the green concept home. Charlene Dye has forwarded a web site that you can use to stop unwanted catalogs. It's easy to use and saves you from contacting each catalog provider individually. Go to <http://catalogchoice.org>.

UUCO has been blessed in its resident and far-away members. Recently we received word from Billy and Toni Stevens, currently living in North Carolina and traveling very far away, through India on a goodwill music trip. Toni and Billy were instrumental in the purchase of our building and its wonderful transformation into our church. For those of you who would like to catch up on Toni and Billy, or get to know them, John Schuster has printed out copies of photos and descriptions of their current journey in Asia which are available for view at UUCO.

-----**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**-----

Please let Luanne know of corrections, additions, and any news that you might have for our next newsletter, due out at the end of January. We love to hear about our youth, about members far away, about accomplishments and activities of us all. Luanne can be reached at [lbuchana@olemiss.edu](mailto:lbuchana@olemiss.edu), or at 234-3833. A healthy and peaceful 2008 to you and yours!