

UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford

May 2008

Visit us at: <http://www.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 the 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.

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.

-----SUNDAY SERVICES FOR MAY-----

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

May 4 - Youth-led service and potluck after the service

Please note that a potluck in honor of Terry and Dinah Swan, our good friends who will be moving from Oxford, will be held immediately after the service at the house of Julia Rholes. Julia lives at 109 Lakeway Drive (fifth house, two story, on left) in Lakeway Gardens, just up the road from Terry and Dinah's home. Folks would be welcome to drop off dishes on their way to the service or they could bring them with them.

May 11 - Mother's Day Service

Shanna Flaschka is the service leader for this annual event.

May 18 - Evolution and the Creative Process: A Divine Paradox!

David Smith is the speaker and Gail Stratton the service leader.

May 25 - Reflection Sunday

Interested in programming? Our committee is always looking for new talents and energy! Please contact Sharon Walls at skwalls921@bellsouth.net regarding this opportunity to serve.

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

This month marks the end of the school year for our young students as well as for our middle, high school and college students. Sunday school will meet on May 11 for its 2007-2008 grand finale.

-----APRIL 2008 BOARD MEETINGS-----

The April UUCO Board meeting was held on two evenings to ensure that all board members could participate in developing the 2008-9 budget. President Gail Stratton and Treasurer Paula Shanks showed their dedication to UUCO by participating in both meetings.

The April 7 meeting was attended by Gail Stratton, Paula Shanks, Luanne Buchanan, Shanna Flaschka, and Larry Shaffer. Board members first reviewed the established policy of maintaining a surplus large enough to cover approximately six months of expenses.

Also discussed in general terms was the need for ceiling insulation in order to lower heating and cooling costs. The board agreed that collaboration with the congregational Green Team would be advisable.

The board discussed possible sources of income other than pledges, including the possibility of obtaining a Chalice Lighter grant for our insulation project. The board developed preliminary figures for several budget categories.

The April 11 meeting was attended by Stratton, Shanks, Susie Adams, Sharon Walls, and Hans Sinha.

Members present discussed the revised congregational mission statement and voted unanimously to put it to a vote of the congregation and discussed the format of the annual congregational meeting.

Members then plunged into the budget, completing the “wish list” budget begun at the previous meeting, then trimming and pruning to attain the budget presented at the congregational meeting. Members present at this meeting agreed that the congregation should apply for a chalice lighter grant to cover the costs of insulating the ceiling and replacing windows, adding that this would be another way to spread the word about our efforts to become a “green sanctuary.”

-UUCO BOARD CHANGES FOR 2008-2009--
Larry Shaffer, our board vice president, will step down as the new board enters in June. Thank you, Larry, for your hard work, great ideas and building savvy!

We are fortunate to add three new members to the board. Beth Boerger will take over as vice-president. New co-trustees are Anne Quinney, who will serve with Sharon Walls for Sunday service programming, and Susie Pedigo, who will serve with Hans Sinha as religious education and youth co-trustee. Welcome to Beth, Anne and Susie!

-----CONGREGATION APPROVES REVISED UUCO MISSION STATEMENT-----

At our April 13 congregational meeting, members present voted unanimously in favor of the revision of the UUCO Mission Statement, as follows:

To provide a caring intergenerational community that:

- Celebrates diversity,
- Fosters spiritual growth through free thought and discussion with respect for personal beliefs,
- Seeks the wisdom of many religious traditions and of ourselves, and
- Encourages the expression of personal ideals in service to people, other life, and our planet.

--GREEN EFFORTS CONTINUE AT UUCO--

The Green Team submitted an update for the April newsletter which, unfortunately, was omitted by a distracted editor. Several of the items have been presented and discussed with the congregation already, and what follows are the results of a brainstorming for our congregational home. The team hopes that many of these ideas can be implemented:

Traveling: carpools to church, connect to bikeway or Sunday bus route, a bus or van that meets people in town or on campus to drive out.

Education: educational speakers on all topics during services, green education for the children in RE, active community outreach activities including an Earth Day fair, various how-to workshops.

Greening the congregation: Indoor container gardening, organic community garden, fruit trees,

blueberries, collecting rain water for gardens, planting shade trees, green-scaping the property to reduce mowing, composting and compost sharing, planting native plants and trees, planting for wild life, ivy on the walls of the building, local/organic snacks, use of a push lawnmower and composting of grass clippings.

Building concerns: Ceiling fans, insulation in the ceiling and walls, replacement windows (energy efficient with screens), energy-efficient appliances (dishwasher, hot water heater) and lighting fixtures and bulbs, purchase of blocks of green energy, revisiting thermostat settings, standardization of recycling (plastics, metals and paper), recycling center for glass, placing building use instructions on the web site, low water toilets.

Top priorities: Carpooling, ceiling insulation, replacement of windows, education of adults and children, community garden, green-scaping.

Please remember to fill out your personal Green Sanctuary Survey and Audit form, available on our web page under UUCO documents.

----MEET A NEW MEMBER OF UUCO!-----

UUCO is pleased to welcome Terri Wright, who joined the congregation this spring. Here's what Terri has told us about herself:

"I've lived in Oxford for approximately five years. Although I now consider this home, I have lived in a variety of places, within the US, throughout my life. I'm very grateful for the fact that I moved frequently and was exposed to a variety of places and people, beginning as a child. I feel as though it gave me adaptability and I seem to be able to make it home no matter where I am.

"I've done a variety of work in counseling and social services over the span of my career life, so I'll offer the short version. I am a counselor and hypnotherapist and now have a practice, in Oxford, and I absolutely love what I do. In the mid to late nineties, I worked for Planned Parenthood. I also

loved my work there and remain a strong supporter and advocate of Planned Parenthood. I truly believe in doing work that has meaning for oneself.

"I love to read and usually do so for about an hour every morning, while having my coffee, before I begin my day. I enjoy writing poetry, music and singing, and also do a little knitting on the side. I've only recently taken on the endeavor of taking piano lessons. Wish me luck with that!

"I always hated that question that I know we have all gotten at one time or another, "What religion are you". I learned over the years to jokingly reply, "Confused", backed with a brief and somewhat comical synopsis of my quite varied family (religion) background. Albeit, I knew what I believed and felt, but it (I) just didn't fit anywhere - Until now!"

A warm welcome to Terri Wright!

-----CASEY QUINN ATTENDS UU CON-----

Many of us are unfamiliar with the term "con" as a positive word. It's an abbreviation for a kind of event that enriches the lives of our youth. UU "cons" are conventions in which the youth can meet, learn and have fun with other UU young people across the region. Casey Quinn and mother Susie Adams, intrepid chaperone and chauffeur, sent in this report on Casey's recent con:

Casey Quinn, age 12, and his mother, Susie Adams, age 29, attended a junior high convention (the Millenium FalCon) at the UU church in Huntsville, Alabama from April 18 to 20. More than 20 kids from across the Mid South came together to celebrate Star Wars. "I had lots of fun and I want to go to the next one," says Quinn, a highly-respected member of the congregation. The kids played "Wink" and "Mafia", two traditional UU Con games. They also did many activities geared toward Star Wars.

We look forward to more cons, and more reports, from our youth!

-----**ACCOLADES FOR UUCOers**-----

There's a place that's known for its strong women, good-looking men and above-average children. Surprise: it's in Oxford, Mississippi. And here's some fresh evidence:

Congratulations to Susie Adams and Elaine Gelbard, UUCO's valiant triathletes! They ran, swam and cycled their way to success in a recent competition.

Congratulations to Dr. Skadi Snook who survived, excelled and triumphed in the ordeal to earn a Ph.D. UUCO was privileged to hear parts of her research in Sunday talks.

We also congratulate Ross Haenfler for his appearance on National Geographic to discuss the Straight Edge Movement.

And, as if the recent talent show weren't enough proof of what our youth can do, we proudly add the news of William Miller's successful completion of his BFA in interactive game design at the Savannah College of Art and Design. On Memorial Day weekend William will become an official college graduate.

Finally, accolades go to a group too numerous to count. The annual Double Decker Festival on April 26 was witness to combined efforts of many UUCO members and friends – who painted more than 500 faces!

This event, which earns money for our youth and our congregation, does even more for the church's presence in Oxford. Present and past board presidents, present and past board members, our youth and youth advisers, past youth advisers, congregation members, pets on break from the best-dressed pet contest, and friends showed up and worked to make face-painting one of the favorite events for children at Double Decker.

We can't list all the names, but we will give special thanks to two people. Ann Phillippi, thank you for getting the UUCO this gig years ago and for

supporting it ever since! And another special thanks to Susie Pedigo who, for yet another year, organized and saw through the most successful face-painting event ever!

**-NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT-
It's UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY time!**

The 2008 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations happens in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, June 25-29. GA is a gathering of UU congregations and a feast of Unitarian Universalism worth at least one pilgrimage for any Unitarian Universalist!

You can find more information about this rich annual event and register to attend at: <http://uua.org/events/generalassembly>

Right before GA begins there is a two-day educational event called UU University. Congregation leaders current or upcoming will find this time well spent. **More information is available at** www.uua.org/events/uuuniversity. As usual, we will host a Mid-South District Ingathering at the very beginning of GA, on the Wednesday afternoon before the Opening Session and Banner Parade, so we hope to see many folks who are attending at this event!

The General Assembly is where the democratic governance of our Unitarian Universalist tradition is lived out. It is the place where the voices of individual Unitarian Universalist congregation are heard. Your congregation can elect delegates to General Assembly, to represent you in the votes taken during the plenary sessions.

With the 2008 GA happening as close by as Ft. Lauderdale, folks from our region can imagine attending so give serious consideration to this opportunity this year! See you in Ft. Lauderdale!

Mid-South District Office
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**-----RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WORKSHOP
OPPORTUNITY FOR MS UU'S-----**

On Saturday, May 24, there will be a workshop for Mississippi UU congregations on RE Visioning, entitled "Small Power". It will be led by Connie Goodbread, Acting Lifespan Program Consultant of the Mid-South District. It is sponsored by the Mississippi UU Planning Team, and more information will be forthcoming.

-----A CLOSING THOUGHT-----

Thanks to Han Sinha for these words, which were part of the April 13 Sunday service:

May there be peace in the celestial world.
May be there be peace in the intermediate region.
 May there be peace on earth.
 May water be peaceful.
 May medicinal herbs be peaceful.
 May plants and trees breath peace.
 May wise men disseminate peace.
 May knowledge be peaceful.
 May all this be peaceful.
May peace inherit in peace for the peace of all.
 Om. Peace. Peace. Peace
 Yajur Veda 36.17

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

Please let Luanne know of corrections and additions. We also welcome any items that you might have for our next newsletter, due out at the end of May. We like to hear about personal as well as congregational news. You can send submissions to uuoxford@uuoxford.com, putting "for the newsletter" in the subject line, or to Luanne at lbuchana@olemiss.edu. She also welcomes phoned-in news, and you can reach her at 234-3833. Special thanks to this month's contributors: Susie Adams, Casey Quinn, Hans Sinha, Gail Stratton and Terri Wright.