



# Uni-Verse

## February 2009



"Providing a safe and inviting space for religious freedom"  
 UUFBF Vision Statement

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats**  
**P.O. Box 103**  
**Big Flats, NY 14814**  
**Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association**  
**607-562-3017 www.uuonline.net**

**Sunday Services:**  
 10:30 a.m. at the Fellowship just off Hibbard Road, located on the north side of Interstate 86 between exits 49 and 50.

All are welcome for coffee and conversation following the service.

**Children's Religious Education Classes:**  
 10:45 a.m. Sunday mornings, September through June.

### Sunday Service Schedule

January 25	<b>Jennifer Johnson</b> , snowed out on January 11th, will offer a musical program of drumming and Native American flute, stores about nature and the cycle of life, and introduce Greensprings Natural Burial of Newfield NY. <i>Pot-luck lunch to follow. Please bring a dish to pass.</i>
February 1	<b>What's It All About, Rumi?</b> Jenny Monroe will explore the life and work of one of her favorites, the most-beloved, mid-thirteenth century Persian poet and mystic. Four readers are needed to assist with recitation, please advise.
February 8	<b>A Valentine for your Congregation: Watching Over the Love</b> with Rev. Darcey Laine, minister at our sister congregation of Sayre-Athens.
February 15	<b>Darwin's 200th birthday</b> (and 150 year anniversary of the publication of <i>Origin of Species</i> ) with Corey McCall.
February 22	<b>Feb. 22 – Saving Paradise</b> Based on a new book by UU theologian Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, we will explore how Christianity's change in focus from creating paradise on earth to redemptive violence is still a part of our American culture. Karen LoBracco, St. Lawrence District Program Consultant for Lifespan Faith Development. Pot-luck lunch to follow. Please bring a dish to pass. Karen will also meet with the board and other interested adults and youth for a short workshop after lunch.

## *President's Ponderings*

Our fellowship has been accepted with a group of eight other small congregations in the St. Lawrence District to participate in a "Planning for Growth" three-year group consultancy. Six members of UUFBF will work together analyzing our past efforts and, with congregational input, planning strategies to grow into the future. Our team will meet at least twice a year with the other eight teams to synergize the efforts of all. If you'd like to join this team, please tell me. You don't have to sign up for a three-year commitment; one year at a time is the plan. The first meeting of the nine teams will be March 20 and 21 in Auburn. **So** one might ask - what does it mean to grow? Naturally, more people in the building is a sign of growth, but also we can grow wiser, broader and better focused. We can continue to be the little fellowship by the interstate that provides a place for folks who hold diverse religious, spiritual and political views to come together once a week to connect with each other, hear interesting speakers and provide religious education to our children. That has been our tradition for fifty years and it's a valuable resource for us personally and for the community. In addition to that, we can grow in square feet of program and worship space; we can grow wiser and more experienced leaders; we can grow active committees where people choose to work together in a group to achieve more than they could alone; we could grow deeper in commitment to the principles of our faith and then decide how those principles inspire us to create the future of our congregation, our community and our world. I'm excited about **all** the prospects! Grateful for the tradition, I'm even more grateful for a place to grow! See you next Sunday.

*Jenny Monroe*

## *The District Futures Team Needs Your Input!*

Please come to a conversation after the service on February 22 to meet with Karen LoBracco, the St. Lawrence District's Program Consultant for Lifespan Faith Development. Karen will be facilitating a discussion as part of the work of the District's Futures Team. But of course first things first, so after the worship service but before the conversation we will share a potluck lunch.

UU Fellowship of Big Flats is a member of the St. Lawrence District, which is a group of 34 UU congregations in upstate New York and northern Pennsylvania. The District's mission is to serve its member congregations, develop connections between those congregations, and grow Unitarian Universalism. The District has created a Futures Team and charged it to develop a five-year plan for the District to meet the present and emerging needs of our congregations. The Team's beginning vision is to create beloved communities that are sustainable, theologically inclusive, multigenerational, multicultural, justice oriented and engaged in right relations. That's certainly a tall order, so it's important to have lots of voices (like yours) be part of the conversation. What direction does the district need to be moving? If you are a teen or an elder, a parent bouncing a baby on your lap, a member for 52 years or 52 days, please share your perspective!

The Futures Team is starting its work by visiting congregations across the District over the next few months to discuss where each congregation is today, its vision for itself and UUism, how the District can better connect with it, as well as new opportunities and specific topics of interest to this fellowship. See you there!

## **Fellowship News**

### **Board Shorts**

At the January 4th meeting: Monthly pot luck lunches to begin Feb. 22. Rev. Karen LoBracco, from St. Lawrence District UUA staff wishes to solicit our input about how SLD can better serve us at a workshop that day. Fifty percent of annual pledge budget has been received - on track with our budget. Adult RE for January will begin Jan. 11 with book group discussion of John Buehrens' *Understanding the Bible*. Our tenant Suzanne Maschmeyer has vacated the little office building. Idea of a 50th anniversary sign discussed. Jenny will request help from the congregation for Sunday program ideas and assistance. Moved that the SET Forth committee investigate the design and financing of a round sanctuary kit building to be constructed on the property and bring schedules, budget and plans back to the March 1, 2009 board meeting. Moved that the Stewardship / Membership committee bring detailed plans for implementation of annual canvas and fund drive for winter/spring '09 to the Feb. 1, 2009 board meeting. A preview of the roll out presentation to the congregation was given. Next meeting: Sunday, February 1st, 9:15 a.m.

### **January 4th SET Forth Roll Out**

If you missed the January 4th service, please take time to look over the posters at the Fellowship detailing our process thus far with the proposed round sanctuary space to be constructed behind and adjoining our current structure. Tamara spoke of the committee's vision that our efforts to provide additional worship space be **Welcoming, Accessible And Green (WAG)**. The committee is inspired by the Sugarloaf UU congregation in Germantown, MD who built a 34' diameter structure, using a kit from Oregon Yurtworks, which the Monroe family has toured. Specific tasks for the first phase of the process include researching potential solar heating of water with equipment installed on the roof of the current building to heat water for radiant floor heat in concrete pad for new building. Initial design of structure with help of Oregon Yurtworks to determine size, capacity, wall layout of windows/doors, etc. and costs. Determine with architect the site location, utilities, design for pad/foundation. Obtain estimate from general contractor for foundation and pad. Bring financial plan and schedule to board and congregation for approval. Future steps would be to design the connecting foyer/hallway between the buildings and wheelchair-accessible bathroom, assure financing/mortgage, final design, purchase and delivery of kit to the completed pad/foundation. Schedule and recruit members and friends for work parties to connect wall units and roof segments. If you'd like to see what we're talking about go to [www.yurtworks.com](http://www.yurtworks.com) and [www.scuu.org](http://www.scuu.org). Anyone with expertise or interest in any of these steps, please contact Tamara.

### **Are you a member?**

We've had a few questions recently about the difference between friends and members of the Fellowship. Members are friends who have taken the conscious step to sign the membership roster. This signifies that they wish to support the Fellowship's mission, programs and future. We ask members for their time, talents and treasure. Members are expected to attend Sunday morning services, volunteer in an area of interest, share in the hosting duties on Sunday mornings - which include set-up, greeting guests, coffee hour and clean-up. We also ask for an annual pledge of money, the amount and schedule of payment is up to the individual, so that the board can use best practices of forecasting and budgeting of our resources. Benefits of membership include voting at annual and congregational meetings, serving on the board or nominating committee, and the pride of being the lifeblood of our congregational presence. If you're a friend who's ready for membership, please let Jenny know!

### **RE News**

Thank you Cathleen and Kevin for working with the young children in January. They introduced a new curriculum called "Wonderful Welcome" which focuses on simple gifts the children can develop to welcome others into their lives. Last month Cathleen shared the gift of love, covenant and forgiveness. Kevin shared the gift of kindness. In February we will talk about the gift of invitation and friends. Lydia and Anna will also guest teach a lesson about families. To learn more about the new curriculum, visit

<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/wonderfulwelcome/index.shtml>

The middle group, 8-12 year olds, continue to learn about world religions through studying their holidays and celebrations.

## 1959 – 2009 Fifty Years of Unitarian Universalism in the Chemung Valley

### Part Two: 40 Years Ago

*Last month we learned....* Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on May 15, 1965 with president Bruce Simson officiating. The whole fellowship turned out on a bright, sunny day to witness the first shovelful of dirt turned, with a gold plated pick and shovel. Now it's really going to happen, thought the members. However, the contractor took his time and it was another 18 months before the building was to be completed.

Frequent pilgrimages were made to the site to see what progress had been made. At times it could be measured in inches. The year wore into winter and then into the next spring and then into the summer before the building was completed. The great day finally arrived and the fellowship moved into their new home on September 19, 1966. The new building was dedicated on October 15, 1966. Reverend Ralph Halverson of the First Unitarian Church of Cambridge, Massachusetts was the guest speaker.

We enjoyed the novelty of meeting in our own building all that winter, little knowing that, come the thaw, a great pitfall awaited our members. Our parking lot thawed and became a gooey sponge that trapped our members' cars, some having to be pulled out by our friendly farmer's tractor. So we rushed out and purchased a couple loads of gravel to keep from losing all of our members.

In 1969, Reverend Grant Haskell, member of the fellowship, performed the first marriage at the fellowship for an out-of-town Unitarian couple. Dr. Charles Reitell, one of the oldest members of the fellowship, died in 1970 and the fellowship held its first memorial service at the Reitell home. Later in 1971, a memorial service was held at the fellowship for Harold Yahn.

An item of annual consternation was balancing the fellowship budget, and we were hit particularly hard after the Hurricane Agnes flood of June, 1972. Many members had to cut back on their pledges. However we were generating income by renting our building on Saturdays to the Church of God, Seventh Day and to the Montessori School during the week.

The school's residence explains why we have the large wooden play structure in the back yard.

In looking back, it's interesting to note that the major objection for those voting against the purchase of the Big Flats parcel cited its rural location, impression of remoteness and bleak, treeless landscape. In the intervening years, the Village of Big Flats (planned and growing) now bustles with activity on both sides of the interstate. NYS DOT changed the location of Daniel Zenker Drive (moving it north of its original proposed location – which would have abutted the Fellowship property line) which made our entrance, via Hibbard Road Extension - and behind Pool World - a little difficult to explain to would-be visitors. However, the sign in the front yard has been visible to millions of motorists traveling west since the 1970s.

The treeless landscape changed shortly after the congregation moved into the new building when members of Explorer Scouts, Post 51, led by Post founder and fellowship member, Jim Farrell, planted 1000 red pine seedlings in rows in the back portion of the property. A few dozen were cut for family Christmas trees, however most grew very tall and had to be thinned beginning in the early 2000s when dead ones began to fall and became a hazard. They are a great source of wood for bonfires, however!

Renting the building to the Montessori school was a good match for a few years, but like the later rental to the Big Flats Day Nursery, the tenants took over the space with furniture and equipment that had to be moved or worked around each Sunday morning.

During the 1970s and early 80s, a number of fellowship members began to serve on the St. Lawrence district boards and participated in district programs. Dale and Anna Rice and Carl Parmelee were three of these members. A youth group was formed in 1973 headed by June Brock and Jacqueline Mansfield. Many activities engaged youth and parents such as camping at Camp Iroquois on Keuka Lake, going on field trips and providing service to the fellowship. Traditional annual social events on Sundays included picnics, a pancake breakfast on Easter Sunday, and annual Halloween and Christmas parties.

*In the next installment...Carl Parmelee becomes a regular in the pulpit and the fellowship gets a new kitchen.*

Updates added to *The Unfinished Story of the Chemung Valley Unitarian Fellowship* compiled by James W. Farrell, 1987 and *The Search for Faith Fellowship and Forum* by Celeste Busby, edited by Sally Immerman, ca. 1997.

<b>Community Events</b>	
Sunday, January 25th CVFC business meeting 4 PM Music from 4:30-6 PM First Presbyterian Church of Big Flats 95 Main Street, Big Flats	<b>Who says Annual Meetings have to be boring?</b> Following the annual meeting of the Corning Vicinity Faith Community, will be JOYFUL NOISE! An Interfaith Devotional Chanting Experience featuring Kirtan, Zikr, and uplifting chants from a rainbow of spiritual traditions. Free and open to the public--donations welcome. This event is a co-sponsored by Corning Vicinity Faith Communities and Southern Tier Interfaith Coalition.
Thursday & Friday, Jan. 29 and 30 <sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM Cheney Lounge First United Methodist Church Corning	<b>Public auditions</b> will be held for the upcoming dinner theater production of <b>"The Reckoning"</b> which will be staged on Feb. 21 as part of the Second Annual Mardi Gras celebration. "The Reckoning" is a comic look at our personal short-comings and will be staged in the round and in the midst of the dinner guests. There are parts for eleven adults, most of which have fewer than ten lines. The play will be directed by Rick Sivers, who comes to the Corning area with over 40 years experience in community theater as a writer, director, actor and designer. Persons coming for the auditions should enter by the First Street entrance and proceed downstairs to the lounge. Auditioning will be from the script of "The Reckoning". For further information contact: Richard Sivers, 962-4608
Saturday, February 1 <sup>st</sup> 1:30 – 3:30 PM SE Steuben County Library Corning, NY	<b>Forum on Gas Drilling Impacts</b> A public forum on the health and environmental impacts of horizontal drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing. A 31 minute film will be shown, followed by discussion. Sponsored by the Sierra Club Finger Lakes Group.
Saturday, February 28 12:45 – 5:00 PM Hamilton Hall Elmira College campus	Elmira College will be hosting a symposium honoring the life and work of <b>Charles Darwin</b> . Panelists will highlight the scientific and cultural impact of Darwin's work. This event is free and open to the public. Contact Corey McCall at <a href="mailto:cmccall@elmira.edu">cmccall@elmira.edu</a> if you have any questions.

**FELLOWSHIP HOSTING SCHEDULE** - Hosting is a service that we provide each other. If you are unable to host on a day that you are assigned, please make arrangements for someone else to take your place.

DATE	HOST
Jan 25	Wosinski, L&J Potter, Mann
Feb 1	Spicer, Deery, Scopelliti
Feb 8	Monroe, McCall, Edwards
Feb 15	Stevenson, Swarthout, Cowles
Feb 22	Martin/Glen, Muffley, Brenner
Mar 1	Allen, Dodson/Miller, Young
Mar 8	Halm/Maloney, Divens-Bruffey
Mar 15	Wosinski, L&J Potter, Mann

<b>Board Members</b>		
President	Jenny Monroe	607-524-8439
Vice-President	Corey McCall	607-846-2574
Secretary	Lori Dodson	607-737-8082
Treasurer	Leslie Potter	607-739-9624
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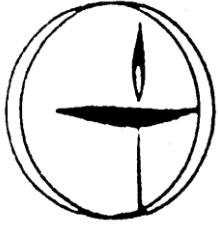
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**"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."**  
President Barack Obama

Bee  
Mine!



*Address correction requested*



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