



Uni-Verse

December 2008

"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

December 7	The Preaching of Mark Twain Ron Owens returns to reveal Twain's moral goodness that transcended all the preaching of his time and ours.
December 14	Children's RE Sunday The younger kids will perform a play about <i>Frederick the Mouse</i> , and the older kids will do a radio show production of <i>Twas The Night Before Christmas</i> .
December 21	Annual Winter Solstice Celebration
December 28	Retha Cazel, of Yoga and More, will bring her Singing Bowls

The Guest at Your Table boxes are here and will be available one per family. Please pick yours up at the Fellowship. We will collect all boxes on January 11th. Please see Kevin Deery with questions.

President's Ponderings

What an abundance of things to commemorate and celebrate during the month of December! World AIDS Day on the first, a day to pray for healing for all those suffering from AIDS and HIV. Mindfulness Day on the second, in the Zen Buddhist tradition, a day for mindful seeing and acting with compassion for the poor and oppressed. The Feast of the Immanent Feminine Divine begins on the third, when Hindu's honor the goddess *Maha Devi Shakti*, Sufi's honor *Allat Ruh Sakinah*, and Jewish mystics honor *Eloah Ruach Shehina*. On the fourth, Christian advent candles are lit to keep vigil for the Cosmic Christ, while pagans celebrate the full snow and fire moon. On the seventh, Buddhists celebrate the Buddha's enlightenment while Muslims celebrate in Arafat the *Hajj*, beginning a month of pilgrimage to Mecca followed by *Eid ul Adha*, commemorating Abraham's sacrifice of a lamb, rather than his son. December 10th is the day Universalists celebrate the birthday of John Murray, the Father of Universalism in America. Both the Baha'i feast honoring the one Deity as mystery and Catholic Our Lady of Guadalupe (mother of the oppressed) are commemorated on the eleventh. *Posedas Novidenas* begins on the fifteenth through the 24th for Christian in Latin America, a reenactment of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. Wiccan Yule is celebrated on the 20th. The ancient celebration of Winter Solstice is December 21st as Europeans and Americans plant trees and hang wreaths symbolizing eternal life. The Jewish Festival of Lights, known as Hanukkah begins this year on the 22nd and continues for eight nights. Also on the 22nd, the Taoists honor the Empress Mother who symbolizes compassion and wisdom. Christmas Eve on the 24th and Christmas day on the 25th mark the time when Mary gave birth to the child Jesus. Kwanzaa begins on the 26th, an African-American multi-day holiday of family, faith and community. The Muslim new year, *Muharram*, begins on December 29th. And on the last day of the month the Shinto's exorcise evil from the world in the Grand Purification rite, Baha'is feast for *Sharaf*, the deity of honor. And even those among us who aren't very religious will probably maintain a New Year's Vigil for Father Time!
 Happy Holidays! *Jenny Monroe*

Fellowship News

Board Shorts

At the November 2nd meeting, the Board recognized Carolyn and Colleen for meaningful RE activities and Jeni for the fabulous newsletter. A group of five travelled to Barneveld for a growth workshop on Nov. 1. Next step approved will be an application for "Planning for Growth Pilot Project" due Dec. 1. Board accepted resignation of Terri as chair of the program committee. New leadership for programs will be sought. Updates were heard about the sign, the SET FORTH committee meeting with the architect, and Sparkle event. Next board meeting will be held December 7th at 9:15 a.m.

The good news and the bad news

We've had great attendance this fall - usually around 30 adults and 8 to 10 children weekly. Hurray! However, that does make it challenging at coffee hour. Let's be proactive by thinking about clearing chairs away from the immediate area and being mindful of the need to keep the access clear between sanctuary, kitchen and bathrooms. Gracious hospitality requires everyone - and thanks.

Music task force

Wanted: Three people to serve on a music task force to find resources to increase live music at worship at services. If interested, sign up on the committee wall.

Welcome new members!

Rick Edwards and Maggie Young joined the Fellowship on November 9th.

News From Boston

In light of the defeat of Proposition 8 in California and similar blows experienced on election day which restrict the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, and transgender people, the Unitarian Universalist Association has produced a video which makes clear the support of people of faith for marriage equality. The video uses images, gathered from Unitarian Universalists across North America, who have advocated for marriage equality or been joined in equal marriage; the video also celebrates the role of Unitarian Universalist clergy in officiating at these services. See the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz8omkCTvQA>

Children's RE

Dec 7 the kids will be rehearsing for their productions on the 14th.

Dec 14 the kids will perform 2 shows. The younger kids will perform a play about Frederick the mouse and the older kids will do a radio show production of Twas The Night Before Christmas.

Dec 21 the kids will be revisiting the hearthstone project for those who didn't get a chance to make one before.

Dec 28 the kids will be learning about Hanukkah.

Adult RE

In October, we discussed the book "Religious Literacy" and in November we discussed "The Education of Little Tree". Would you like to lead a discussion group? All you need is a topic (hopefully related to UU principles or religious education), pick a date and time and let us know! It could be a book, video, current events, whatever. Or, if you have suggestions for Adult RE programming, send them to Carolyn Scopelitti.

Sparkle of Christmas, the annual winter street festival held on Market Street in Corning, this year on Saturday, December 6, from 5 to 9 p.m. The Fellowship will set up its booth featuring the usual pins and bumper stickers, but we'll also be selling UUSC Christmas cards and Equal Exchange fair trade coffees and chocolates.

We still need volunteers to work at the booth, especially during the 8-9 p.m. shift. If you can spare even a half hour during that time, consider signing up at either the fellowship or by calling Leslie at 739-9624. And if you can't help out in the booth, please stop by anyway to offer encouragement and maybe take a picture!

The Elmira Small Group Ministry is now meeting at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month; in December that would be the 16th. We'll be getting together at Alta Stevenson's house at 417 Euclid Ave. No need to reserve a seat; just show up to share what's happening in your life and discuss an issue ranging from local to global interest

Sponsor a family for Christmas

Our Fellowship will sponsor a needy family for Christmas. The family composition is a mother, father, and four children under age ten. Fellowship members can sign up to provide gifts for family members. Their sizes will be posted on the Fellowship bulletin board. If you would rather, you can donate toward a grocery store gift card. Gifts will need to be wrapped and brought to the Fellowship by Dec. 15th. Please see Kevin Deery to donate cash, or with questions.

Community Events	
Monday, December 1 12:00 – 1:00 PM Triangle Lounge Corning Community College Corning	World AIDS Day 10th Annual Service of Remembrance Program will be "Leading with Compassion to End HIV/AIDS" with speaker Elaine Corwin, CCC Professor Health and Wellness. A gathering of concerned persons to share music and words to strengthen on-going efforts to "Stop AIDS and Keep the Promise" Co-sponsored by Corning Vicinity Faith Communities, CCC Academic Divisions, Campus Ministry & Health Office. In addition to this annual event, our Fellowship is also supporting the bringing of four squares of the National AIDS quilt to be on display at the Corning Public Library again this year.
Tuesday, December 2 7 PM First United Methodist Church Corning	Science and Religion Group Program by Rev. Gary McCaslin about Michael Dowd's recent presentation "Thank God for Evolution," about Evolutionary Spirituality.
Saturday, December 6 5:00 – 9:00 PM Market Street, Corning	Sparkle of Christmas (see Fellowship News) 
Saturday December 6 10:30 AM Lake St. Bridge Elmira	International Day of Global Warming Action! On Dec. 6 th one hundred community members will meet on the Lake St. Bridge in Elmira at 10:30 AM to unveil a large banner that will be hung over the side of the bridge. The banner will let world leaders know that people in the Southern Tier of NY care about Global Warming. A picture will be taken that will be sent to the International Global Warming Summit in Poland, where our friend John Deans and other Greenpeace workers will share it with the world. Elmira City officials have agreed to close off the bridge for our event. The photographer has been scheduled. This is big for our community. Please come and bring friends to show the community that the UUF of Big Flats supports efforts to stop Global Warming. Call Kevin Deery at 732-1427 for details.

**Second Place East:
News from the homeless shelter**



This past year we UUs have supported the clients of Second Place East with financial contributions and material support. Thanks especially to Diane and Dave Muffley, who have built and donated starter kits for folks leaving the shelter for their own apartments, and provided also much-needed pots and pans for the kits. Thanks also to all who have donated items and money to help meet the needs of the shelter residents or potential residents. With some new storage space, for donated furniture and other supplies, the group is able to accumulate items until new kits are ready to be assembled. The kits contain many of the things needed to cook, sleep, and eat when starting from scratch. The hardest to find items are pots and pans.

With winter coming, additional needs of adult sized gloves, hats, mittens, and warm socks arise. Socks and underwear for adults are also a continuing need. More residents of the shelter are male, but both men and women rely on the shelter in time of need.

Second Place East Inc. is the former Friends of Second Place East. While the shelter's administrative costs are parent agency Catholic Charities responsibilities, some of the extra support for prevention of homelessness and to meet some additional needs of shelter residents comes from the community through the Second Place East Inc, representing a group of churches. Trinity Episcopal Church, in Elmira, houses our meetings and is the mailing address for this group.

Marcia Allen is the current representative of the UUFBF with the SPE Inc. group. You can see or call her for information and updates; Marcia and the Muffleys have the list of items for starter-kits.

Ready for the Holidays?



Karen LoBracco, St. Lawrence District UUA Program Consultant for Lifespan Faith Development, sends us this Christmas Pledge taken from *Unplug the Christmas Machine*, which may be helpful in keeping you centered during this frantic month.

Believing in the true spirit of Christmas, I commit myself to.....

- Remember those people who truly need my gifts
- Express my love in more direct ways than gifts
- Examine my holiday activities in the light of my deepest values
- Be a peacemaker within my circle of family and friends
- Rededicate myself to my spiritual growth.

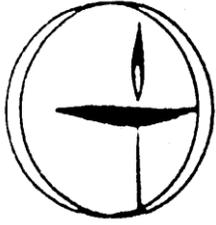
FELLOWSHIP HOSTING SCHEDULE - Hosting is a service that we provide each other. If you are unable to host on a day that you are assigned, please make arrangements for someone else to take your place.

DATE	HOST
Nov 30	Halm/Maloney, Divens-Bruffey
Dec 7	Wosinski, L&J Potter, Mann
Dec 14	Spicer, Deery, Scopelliti
Dec 21	Monroe, McCall, Edwards
Dec 28	Stevenson, Swarthout, Cowles
Jan 4	Martin/Glen, Muffley, Brenner
Jan 11	Allen, Dodson/Miller, Young

Board Members		
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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Address correction requested



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