



# Uni-Verse

April 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

April 5	<p><b>UU Seder</b></p> <p>Today we will honor all those who suffer in bondage with the recitation of the UU Hagaddah, based on the Jewish Passover Seder. We will also share a special meal and remember our ancestors who struggled with oppression and a search for religious freedom. Please bring a dish to pass for the lunch that is incorporated into the service. No dietary restrictions are needed for the dish-to-pass.</p>
April 12	<p><b>Celebration Sunday</b></p> <p>Fifty years ago our fellowship, known then as the Chemung Valley Unitarian Fellowship, was incorporated in Chemung County. We will hear testimonials from our elder members and chart our dreams for the next 50 years. Don't forget to bring in your pledge forms that are due today!</p>
April 19	<p><b>Eyewitness Palestine</b></p> <p>An inside view of life in the Occupied Territories. Paula Silbey spent twelve weeks in Palestine during three trips to Israel's West Bank. She volunteered with International Women's Peace Service observing, reporting on and intervening non-violently in human rights abuses. She is an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills in Kingston, NY.</p>
April 26	<p><b>Let's Reform Welfare!</b></p> <p>Carl Parmelee has some ideas about this subject he'd like to try out on us!</p>

## *President's Ponderings*

*I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in which direction we are moving.* Oliver Wendell Holmes

This quote has always been a favorite. I have it on the wall in my studio where, about once a month, I catch a glimpse of it and ponder on the direction I am going. The last time I noticed it - I thought of the Fellowship. I've always thought that where we stand -- as articulated by the principles and purposes -- identifies our denomination. But as I grow older, I realize that it's the "direction we are moving" that most ignites me. I guess I've internalized the stance, after twenty years at the Fellowship, and it's not so revolutionary or unusual -- like I remember it was when I first encountered it. Now it's the momentum that intrigues me - where are we going? Where are our growing edges - where are spots of stagnation or retrograde? What's bubbling up, what new horizons are attracting us? When Karen LoBracco, member of the SLD Futures Team, was at the Fellowship on February 22, she facilitated quite a brainstorming session, including the following items in her report back to us. (Survey size was between 11 to 13 cards returned for each question.)

**1. What visions do you hold for the Big Flats congregation?** Seven responders talked of an expanded and accessible building, two specifically spoke of more people. Outreach to community was mentioned by two, one mentioned a minister. Five spoke of an accepting community, discussion, spiritual growth, etc. Opportunities for RE growth and meaningful youth activities, programs and inclusion were mentioned twice.

**2. What visions do you hold for Unitarian Universalism?** There was a desire that UU be better known in American society, a request for more publicity, and a hope that the denomination continues to be a leader in progressive interfaith areas. One person had a vision of broader diversity, both racial and socio-economic, and another wanted more involvement in the international political scene.

**3. How can the St. Lawrence District of the UUA help you grow spiritually and in your connections with other congregations and the larger faith?**

**Spiritually:** There was a great deal of interest in speakers coming in for worship services, with calls for circuit riders, intern ministers, "canned services", spiritual leaders from other faiths and other UU congregations. One card reminded us to include the children in spiritual growth. There was a call for offering spiritual district-wide gatherings, and another comment...such a long history of independence here - hard to imagine..."

**Connections with Other Congregations:** Most people were aware of and supportive of the Fellowship's participation in the Southern Tier cluster. Suggestions included joint celebratory and social events, as well as an occasional worship. There was mention of sharing leadership resources, appreciation for programs around small congregation's growth, and lively discussion around shared publicity and advertising on NPR, as well as connecting to the passions of members.

**4. If your congregation had the resources to spend, what one project would you try to accomplish?** With only two exceptions, all the responses were facilities centered. First and foremost was a larger building, with a circular sanctuary specifically mentioned. Other building improvements included an accessible bathroom, solar and/or geothermal energy, a labyrinth, inviting RE space for children and youth, larger well-lit sign, and a paved road.

Thanks to Karen, we now have a snapshot of the direction we are moving, ca. winter 2009. As we turn the corner on spring, I know some of these ideas will take root!

See you next Sunday!

*Jenny Monroe*

## **Fellowship News**

**Annual Meeting Notice.** The annual congregational meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats will take place on Sunday, June 7, at noon at the Fellowship immediately following the worship service which will be the Flower Communion. At the meeting, the congregation will be asked to approve the budget for 2009 - 2010 fiscal year, which begins July 1st. A slate of nominations for officers, trustees and members of the next nominating committee will be presented for a vote. Information about issues coming up at the UU General Assembly in June in Salt Lake City will be presented and your opinions will be sought. In accordance with our bylaws, active members can vote and are needed for a quorum. If you have questions or would like agenda time, please contact Jenny Monroe.

**Great news!** Niki Jardin and Derek Parsons and daughter Hannah will be joining the Fellowship at the Flower Communion. Please add them to your new directory at address: 208 Sly Ave. Corning, NY 14830, (607) 259-3020 and 259-3019, niki\_jardin@yahoo.com. Welcome to our family!

**Directory corrections.** New directories are in at the Fellowship and of course there are corrections needed! Please correct the Fellowship phone number to (607) 562-3017, and Tom Billingsley's phone to 607-734-4076, remove Marcia Cowles' email, and correct Carl Parmelee's email to bcparm@juno.com. Please alert Jenny Monroe of any other corrections needed.

### **SLD Annual Assembly**

Each year, the Saint Lawrence UU District, of which we are a part, holds a major conference on the last weekend of April. This year's meeting will be held at the UU Church of Albany, April 24-25, with the theme of Building the Beloved Community. Best-selling author and UU minister, the Rev. Tom Owen-Towle will deliver the keynote address. The Gould Discourse will be given by Rev. Karen Anderson, Twelve workshops are offered to choose from and child care is available on-site. For the past few years two members have attended this event. This year the goal is four! Go to [www.sld.uua.org/congrowth/2009DA\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.sld.uua.org/congrowth/2009DA_flyer.pdf) for all the details. Save money and register before April 10.

### **Religious Education News**

Special thanks to Terri Divens-Bruffey for sharing and teaching the Gift of Stewardship with the children as the adults kicked off their annual budget drive. The children now have a penny jar to collect funds for the fellowship. The Gift of Acceptance was taught by Corey McCall. Many thanks to our relief teachers!

### **Adult RE: Book Group**

April will be devoted to *The Invention of Air: A Story of Science, Faith, Revolution, and the Invention of America* by Steven Johnson (Riverhead Books, 2008). Come join us for a lively discussion of Joseph Priestley, a sadly neglected figure from our Unitarian heritage. We will be meeting prior to the service on April 12, 19, and 26 at 9:30am. If you have ideas for upcoming books or other things you'd like to discuss, send an e-mail to Corey McCall ([mccallcor@gmail.com](mailto:mccallcor@gmail.com)). Hope to see you there!

**Carl Parmelee honored at the Red Cross's Heroes Breakfast March 24.** Marcia Allen says "He has always been one of my own heroes, giving gallons of blood, working in disaster services both local and national, handling the Project Share program : all these at the Red Cross. He has also led the fellowship, taught Sunday School, worked in Civil Rights, in addition....oh, and been a literacy volunteer as well." Congratulations, Carl!

**Reminder:** financial commitment forms due April 12<sup>th</sup> to President Jenny Monroe or Treasurer Leslie Potter.

### **Spring/Summer '09 Rowe Retreat and Conference Center**

Rowe, Ma. Brochures available at the fellowship and [www.rowecenter.org](http://www.rowecenter.org).

### **In memorial: Reverend Max Coots of Canton**

We are deeply saddened to report the passing of Rev. Max Coots on Tuesday, March 3rd. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 25th. A card for Max's wife, Charlotte Ramsay, is at the Fellowship to sign. Rev. Coots was a favorite "circuit rider" minister who travelled to Big Flats annually through the 1990s to bring his poetry and compassionate voice of reason. He will be missed.

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

### **Part Four: 20 Years Ago (published April 2009 Uni-Verse)**

Last month we learned: the mortgage was paid off, the building was given amenities including municipal water, Women of Spirit was held and Carl Parmelee created a quasi-ministerial perspective.

In the early 1990s “growth” was the watchword at the Fellowship. There were many active families and board members who assisted with publicity activities, ideas for places to move, and a search for ministry. Marsha and Fred Kardon, Janet Ernisse, Tom Billingsley, Ruth Helfinstine, Dick and Coreen Slocum, Sally Immerman, Kevin and Cathleen Deery, Tina and Jeff Alves, Lee Richards, Doug Hall and Janene Cooper, Stafford Lyons and Henry Offerman, Bill and Celeste Busby, Nancee LaPlante and Joe Schneider, Vicki Kartychak, Ron Risley, Maria McMahon, Jeanette Kuehner to name some of the active ones.

The St. Lawrence District executive, Wendy Colby, was influential in leading us through the process of calling a sequence of part-time ministers. The first was Rev. Kenneth Mochel of Hornell who conducted at first once-a-month services (and later twice-a-month) and worked with the RE and Growth committees. He began in September of 1992. We were growing and space was tight, new chairs were purchased, new furnace, carpet and tile were added.

In 1993 a committee was formed to consider plans for an addition to the building and to oversee fundraising. Jeff Alves chaired an active group who with the help of an architect, identified that the Fellowship simply could not afford to build at its present site at that time – and continue the pursuit of professional ministry. We began to participate in activities beyond the Fellowship’s building. We had a fundraiser for CASA of Chemung County, a new program to place trained volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children lingering in the foster care system. We worked to refurbish and furnish an apartment at Second Place East, a first stop for families coming out of shelters. We sponsored a forum at Elmira College’s Hamilton Hall to feature a speaker that had been a former leader of a white supremacist group, and survived the embarrassment of the speaker not showing up!

In October of 1994 the membership voted to change the name from Chemung Valley Unitarian Fellowship to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats. With that, a new sign was needed and was erected in April. At the same meeting members voted to seek either an intern or part-time minister for 1995-96 fiscal year. In the job opportunity listing, the membership was listed at 45 with 17 children in RE. The job included to preach twice-per-month, increase our visibility in the community, enhance the spiritual direction of our meetings, build membership and develop RE to the point where we can afford a larger space and continued professional leadership. The ministerial search committee waited for responses to the advertisement; however none of the three received were workable.

A luncheon for area UU women was organized and participants from four regional UU churches attended. When the Southern Tier Interfaith Coalition called its first meeting in May of 1995, five UU members attended – nearly half of the entire group assembled! We successfully applied for a Chalice Lighter’s grant to support intern ministry and received over \$3300 in support from individual members of the St. Lawrence UU District.

In June 1995, a 12’ X 20’ free-standing building was delivered to our site to add a minister’s office. It was purchased for \$7500 after a congregational vote. Lee Richards had found it and he and Jeff Alves leveled the site and connected electric to it. The youth members redecorated and painted it. Also that summer we had a rummage sale, took an all-Fellowship trip to Joseph Priestley’s home in Northumberland, PA, decided to keep having services through the summer. We also replaced the shingles on the front half of the roof by a team of members who worked on a hot weekend under the direction of Henry Offerman.

Our first every-member canvas was arranged by Dick Slocum, complete with training from David Friedman of the District office. Each member received a visit from a canvas committee member. It was very successful – not only exceeding its goal to raise enough funds to support intern ministry – but by the collection of valuable information about how members were feeling about the direction the Fellowship was going. We were also delighted that two home-grown UUs, Janet Ernisse and Lee Richards, were both interested in pursuing their degrees in UU ministry!

A board retreat, September of 1995, was called to review the past decade and chart a focus for the next five. It resulted in the need to find or build larger quarters in a more visible location. In October, Rev. Wayne Walder of Toronto was offered a position of intern minister to begin in January. Throughout that fall, Dick Slocum and Celeste Busby were out looking for property that had “location, location, location” possibilities for rent or purchase. A dozen or so were inspected, but they all were either too small or needed too much work. We had a fundraiser for the building fund – we decorated fresh wreaths and sold them at Corning’s Sparkle of Christmas.

By 1996 – with Wayne Walder in the wings, we had a membership of 62 people and were looking forward to all that a minister could bring!

<b>Community Events</b>	
Friday, March 27 6:30 – 8:30 PM YOGA & MORE 139 Walnut Street Suite 101 Corning, NY	<b>Kirtan Singing and Chanting</b> to inspire your heart. Contact Retha Cazel, 607-962-9642. Fee \$10
Tuesday mornings March 31 – April 28	<b>Luncheon Lectures return to Watson Homestead</b> A program on the Media and the Message. Please look for a flyer at the Fellowship or contact Jenny Monroe for a flyer at (607) 524-8439 or <a href="mailto:jmonroe@stny.rr.com">jmonroe@stny.rr.com</a> . Special feature on April 22 - Come find out about famous UU Rod Serling.
Thursday March 26 7pm Chemung Valley History Museum E. Water St., Elmira	<b>Festival of Women in the Arts</b> An Evening With the Palmers; Anna Campbell and Georgianna Palmer
Saturday, March 28 4pm Trinity Episcopal Church, Elmira	<b>Festival of Women in the Arts</b> Sisters in Sound
Sunday March 29 1:30-4:30pm Valley Folk (Carriage House) 254 Baldwin St., Elmira	<b>Festival of Women in the Arts</b> All Female Jam Session <a href="http://www.cantatasingers.com">www.cantatasingers.com</a> for further details

**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
Mar 29	Monroe, McCall, Edwards
Apr 5	Stevenson, Swarthout, Cowles
Apr 12	Martin/Glen, Muffley, Brenner
Apr 19	Allen, Dodson/Miller, Young
Apr 26	Halm-Maloney, Divens-Bruffey, Wilson
May 3	Wosinski, L&J Potter, Mann
May 10	Spicer, Deery, Scopelliti
May 17	Monroe, McCall, Edwards

<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
Director	Dave Muffley	570-835-5133
Director	Gary Swarthout	607-377-2967
Uni-Verse Editor	Jeni Paquette <a href="mailto:jpaquette@stny.rr.com">jpaquette@stny.rr.com</a>	607-937-9809

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"Frisbeetarianism is the belief that when you die, your soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck."  
  
George Carlin  
U.S. Comedian and Actor (1937 – 2008)

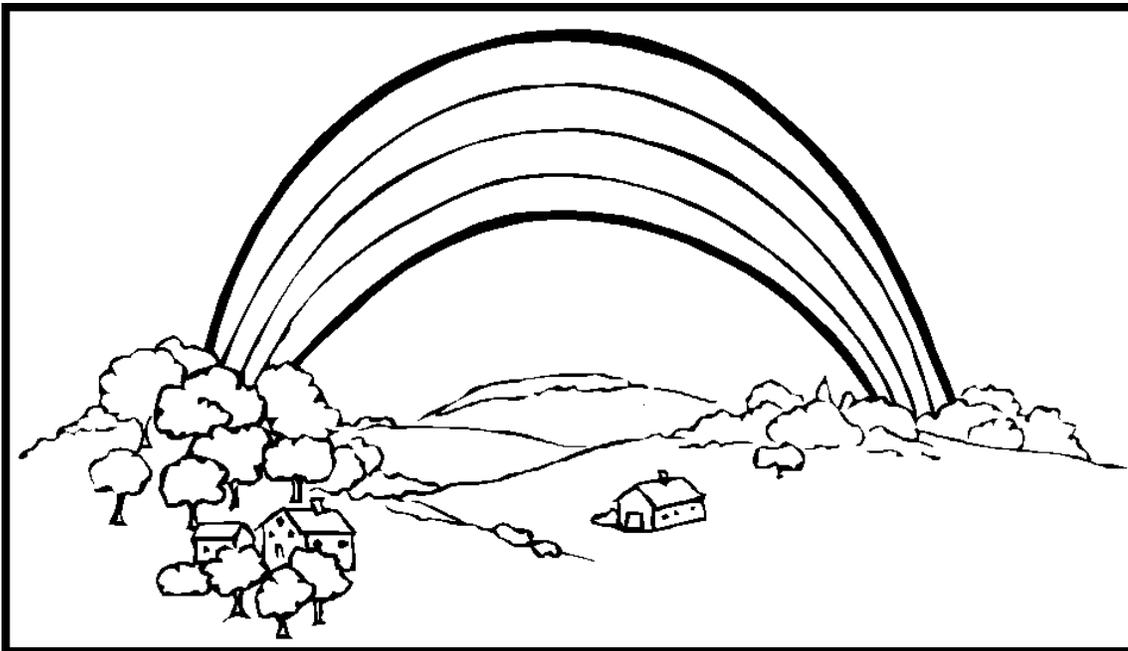
Lydia and Reeder, our Irish dancers



Steve Monroe plays a welcoming song

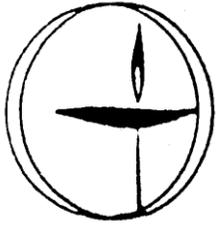


Both photos from 03/15/09 Gathering of the Green service, thanks to Terri Divens-Bruffey



**Golden is the rainbow which shines through and through.  
Its ray of hope is the spirit and the belief in me and you.**

*Address correction requested*



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