



Unitariana

Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation
2200 East End Street NW Olympia, Washington 98502

This Month's Highlights

One worship service on Sunday, March 2 at 10:00 am. We hope that many of you will be enjoying the Unitarian Universalist – Pacific Northwest District Annual General Meeting in Tacoma on that day.

Contact Us

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 11 AM – 4 PM

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Email: liberalfaith@olyuu.org

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Rev. Carol McKinley, Endorsed Community Minister

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Deadline for Newsletter

Submissions: Third Sunday of the preceding month. Email articles to liberalfaith@olyuu.org

Sunday Worship Services: 9:15 & 11 AM

March 2nd “What is at the Center of Unitarian Universalism?”

The Annual General Meeting of the Pacific Northwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association will be held in Tacoma on the weekend of March 2nd. You are encouraged to attend. However, if you can't make it to Tacoma, the single 10:00 service at OUUC will bring home some of the wisdom from the keynote speaker, Rebecca Parker. She asks, “In the midst of all our diversity, our affirmation of pluralism, and our celebration of individual freedom of conscience in matters religious, what holds us all together?” We will explore the question of what's really at the core of UU beliefs. Please join us as we look beyond the seven principles to find a center.

March 9 “The Coming of the Compassionate Community” Rev. Alex Holt

We live in interesting times and “compassionate community” may be a saving feature of the 21st century. How might this be so, and how might this affirm the great mythic stories of Second Comings and beyond for all of us.”

The Reverend Alex Holt serves as part-time minister at the Woodinville, Washington Unitarian Universalist Church and has been in the ministry for over 18 years. He is currently helping to plan the District Addictions Ministry project that will present its first conference at the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Church in April. He is a Buddhist student of long standing and continues his training in Oregon.

March 16 “We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For” Bill Scarvie

In this service we will explore the moral imperative of the Earth Community described in David Korten's recent book, “*The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*.” Bill Scarvie serves as Coordinator of Outreach for the Earth Community Initiative of Korten's People Centered Development Forum, has preached on this subject to congregations in the Pacific Central and Northwest Districts, and conducted workshops for UU congregations, district meetings, interfaith groups, and the 2006 UU General Assembly.

March 23 “The Story of Easter” Ed Brock

In this sermon I want to reflect on the words and lives of two masters of the art of the possible, M.L. King and Gandhi, who helped us understand how hope can be converted into change. The lessons they give can bring some guidance to understanding what our faith means in these days of hope and possibility.

March 30 “Celebrating Courage in the Face of Injustice.”

Rev. Emily A. Champagne will speak about our own personal courage which we may often forget or fail to appreciate - for the many times we have quietly made a difference in the world, and how important this has been. Rev. Champagne served several UU churches before returning to school to study the Bible and complete the PH.D. coursework at the Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, CA. She presently is developing a community ministry in areas where the Bible and our UU values overlap

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF OUR OUUC NURSERY WORKERS

On any given Sunday, the OUUC nursery is a bustling place. The laughter of children can be heard down the halls during service as they play, read stories and sing songs.

The energy in that little room can be contagious - and four teenagers (Anisa, Lauren, Ray & Erin) are the masterminds behind the entertainment. Our four nursery care workers come every Sunday morning, ready to care and play with the youngest members of our Unitarian congregational family. In this edition, we will spotlight our hard working and fun loving nursery workers. I asked about how they came to the Unitarian church and why they enjoy working in the nursery.

Anisa Bentlemsani:

Attends Black Hills High School, where her favorite course is geometry. Anisa has worked in the nursery for 6 months.

Q: How old were you when you became a Unitarian?

A: I was born a Unitarian. Unitarian people are very interesting because they are not judgmental. I also like the Unitarian principles because they are very logical & like the golden rule, where you would treat people as they want to be treated; to respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person, which is a value that I appreciate.

I've been going to this church since I was a baby.

Q: Why do you enjoy working in the nursery?

A: I love to work in the nursery because the kids are so entertaining. I also enjoy spending time in the nursery because the children remind me of my childhood. My co-workers are also really great to work with, and it feels personally satisfying to have a job and be independent.

Erin Finch

Attends school at South Puget Sound Community College where he studies computer science and philosophy.

Q: How old were you when you became a Unitarian?

A: I was born a Unitarian, and I've always identified as a Unitarian. As an atheist, Unitarianism meets my spiritual needs. I also feel intellectually stimulated when I am here. I've been attending OUUC since I was 9 months old.

Q: Why do you enjoy working in the nursery?

A: It brings out the inner child in me. I love playing with bright blocks and stuffed animals. I also love to entertain, and children always laugh at my jokes.

Mr. Bear is my alter ego. He is also an entertainer, though a bit more theatrical than I am & Mr. Bear supports neo-liberal economic policies and is a bit on the conservative side, which I don't know if I can get behind. But we forgive him because he is entertaining to the kids.

Ray Campbell

Home schooled by dad and his favorite topic is maritime studies - sailing is his primary source of education.

Q: How old were you when you became a Unitarian?

A: I was 13 when I first identified as a Unitarian. I am a Unitarian because no matter what you believe, it is accepted in the church. I really enjoy the people who go to this church: It is easy to believe something but not be active in what you believe - that is not true of the people in this church. They act on their beliefs.

I started attending **OUUC** when I was 14.

(Continued on next page)

Q: Why do you enjoy working in the nursery?

A: I enjoy working in the nursery because of the kids. At first I thought it would be hard to work with kids that don't talk, but my first time in the nursery I sat down and said to the kids "I'll be entertaining you for the next hour", and they loved it. I realized that I was good with kids.

Mr. Bear says & "*Stop by the nursery anytime for a discussion on politics, childrearing practices or a theatrical reenactment of various Broadway musicals.*
*You're guaranteed to have a good time at the **OUUC** nursery!"*

Lauren Jones

*Attends Olympia High School and South Puget Sound Community College.
Her favorite course in school is abnormal psychology, and has worked in the nursery for 3 years.*

Q: How old were you when you became a Unitarian?

A: I became a Unitarian when I was born, and I've been going to OUCC since I was 6 months old. The Unitarian community is a great community to belong to.

Q: Why do you enjoy working in the nursery?

A: I enjoy working in the nursery because I get to spend time with the kids - they are fun. It is also a good routine to have, because it encourages me to come to church every Sunday. It is great to be connected to the families and parents of the children, and spending time in the nursery is always a refreshing experience.

***The Word from Out of the Woods***

Out of the Woods is running out of storage space! Please discontinue all unsolicited donations. We will make any specific needs known as they arise. Our clients can obtain clothing AT NO EXPENSE from St. Vincent de Paul, so that would be a great place to take clothing donations. Food donations can go to Bill Arensmeyer for use in the OUUC food pantry. Our congregation has been simply wonderful in support of Out of the Woods and homelessness efforts in general. THANK YOU!

The families in the shelter are preparing to celebrate the arrival of a new baby expected any day now. This will be the third baby born to a guest at Out of the Woods, and our mentoring program is responding by offering experience and mentoring for the new dad.

Chris Biondolillo, the shelter's Homeless Advocacy Assistant (and a former New York EMT), is organizing First Aid and CPR classes for Out of the Woods and the Family Support Center, which will offer this important training for our residents. In addition to the support and mentoring our guests receive; they will be able to take new life-saving skills with them as they move on into the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: "READ ALL ABOUT IT!"**Blessing the World***Janine Larsen, District Executive*

How does our presence, as individuals and as a religion, bless the world? This is the question and challenge we will be exploring in community at our Annual General Meeting (AGM), February 29 through March 2, in Tacoma, WA.

If you don't have your mailing handy, check our website www.pnwd.org to learn more about the opportunity AGM offers for shared governance of our congregations, leadership learning and personal spiritual deepening.

The elected delegates of our PNWD member congregations are called to this our 46th annual business meeting to discuss our shared goals as a religious body, to elect the district Board of Directors, and to receive news to bring back home. District dues will be increasing with the 2008/09 fiscal year for the first time since 2001, and the Board will hold a special forum to review rules for the UUA Trustee election in 2009. We will also participate in the governance of the Pacific Northwest UU Growth Foundation, which provides loans and grants to stimulate growth of Unitarian Universalism in the Pacific Northwest District and British Columbia.

Be sure to arrive early this year! Opening ceremonies are held on Friday evening, and all delegates **MUST** register and pick up their credentials by 8:15 AM on Saturday, since our business meeting begins early (8:45 AM) this year.

The planning team from our South Sound host congregations, Olympia UU Congregation, Tahoma UU Congregation, and Saltwater UU Church, has created a rich experience for us at the newly remodeled Hotel Murano in downtown Tacoma. Saturday offers *three rounds of workshops* on a variety of topics related to congregational strengthening, spiritual growth and social action and witness. We are very fortunate to have the Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, author, theologian and President of Starr King School of the Ministry (UU) as our keynote speaker for Saturday evening's banquet.

Please share our enthusiastic invitation with UU Youth and Young Adults in your congregation! Youth in High School will focus on leadership and spiritual expression, and Middle Schoolers will enjoy creative religious exploration as well as a variety of fun activities. Along with participating in all AGM activities, Young Adults will have the chance to meet with peers to deepen fellowship and meaningful congregational connections.

We encourage congregations to financially support delegates and others in attending AGM. PNWD will offer travel equalization grants to delegates once again this year – see the "Business" section of the AGM website to learn more.

Tacoma offers a wealth of cultural opportunities while you're in town for AGM, including the Museum of Glass, Tacoma Art Museum and the Washington State History Museum – and several tantalizing restaurants and shops within walking distance of our meeting site. See "Details" for info on public transportation and more on our website!

We look forward to being blessed by your presence at AGM this year – SEE YOU ON "LEAP WEEKEND" IN TACOMA, WA.

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Workshop: Sunday, March 16, 2008 1:30-4:30 p.m.

“Change the Story, Change the Future”. – Bill Scarvie, Coordinator of Outreach for the Earth Community Initiative of Korten’s People Centered Development Forum and member of the Cedars UU Church, Bainbridge Island. Bill has preached on this subject to UU congregations in the Pacific Central and Northwest Districts, and conducted workshops for congregations, district meetings, interfaith groups, and the 2006 UU General Assembly.

A three-fold crisis looms before us. Today’s parents of young children will almost certainly experience the effects of global climate disruption in their lifetime. They will also almost certainly suffer the catastrophic economic consequences of dwindling resources and a possible collapse of the US dollar. Given our grim prospects, is there any hope? The Chinese ideogram for *crisis* has two components, the characters meaning *danger* and *opportunity*. What opportunities exist to shape a positive future for our children and grandchildren? What actions can we take now that will improve the likelihood that their lives will be prosperous, secure and meaningful? What is the role of religious communities in this great work?

Inspired by David Korten’s recent book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, this workshop will explore these questions through introspection, intimate conversation and group discussion.

Pre-registration for this workshop is required. There will be a light meal provided prior to the workshop. The fee is \$15.00 payable in advance or at the door. Please contact Jean Phillips; e-mail: jeanieph@comcast.net Growth Fund, and special meetings and receptions for our ministers, DREs and congregational board presidents.

Coming to OUUC on April 5: the first ever District Addictions Recovery Day! **Arlene Colerick** is coordinating home hospitality for us, so give her a call if you’d like to offer space, or contact **Patti Pomerantz** at ppomerantz@uuma.org with other questions.

DUUB

If you go to your computer and type those four letters into Google, you will receive a special online gift: entry to the DICTIONARY OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST BIOGRAPHY. This twenty-first century achievement of the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society is an amazing miracle of cooperative community uniting our researchers, writers, and editors. Already hundreds of several-pages-each biographies of greater and lesser-known religious liberals are ready for you. Many are by **Alan Seaburg** of Tufts and Harvard. The dozens of authors include the **Rev. Peter Hughes**, the eminent editor of this series of articles that stretch back the series limit of the year 1500. In this series you will find not puffs of UU hagiography but true tales of our heroines and heroes with strength and weakness disclosed.

FREE ONLINE — UU BIBLIOGRAPHY

Conrad Wright’s excellent bibliography of major and minor works of Unitarian Universalist history—1946-1995—is available without charge online. Just go to Google to reach *UU HISTORICAL SOCIETY* and then click on *Conrad Wright’s Bibliography of UU History*. This literary service is made possible by *The Journal of Unitarian Universalist History* published by the Unitarian Universalist Society.

Conrad Wright, the leading historian of liberal religion in America, is Professor *Emeritus* of Church History at Harvard. He is an *ex-officio* member of the UU Historical Society Board, which publishes the *Journal*. Incidentally, a subscription accompanies your UUHS membership. Dues are: Individual \$25, Household \$40, Student \$15 payable to: UUHS Membership Office, P.O. Box38, Duxbury, MA 02331.

Herb Vetter, Minister at Large, *Emeritus*, The First Parish in Cambridge, MA.

Auction tickets on sale NOW

Tickets for the 2008 OUUC “**One for the Money**” Auction are on sale NOW. Tickets are \$25 per person and include your bid number along with a Blue Plate Special dinner and your first libation. Bid cards without dinner are available at the event for \$5, so you are welcome to join the bidding even if you decide not to join us for dinner. And if you can't appear in person, our team of absentee bidders will take care of your interests—contact the folks below for more information.

Hurry! This is the OUUC social event of the year and tickets go fast – we can only accommodate 130 diners, and we sold out last year. Children are welcome to attend, but must have their own tickets as we will be unable to provide childcare (babes-in-arms excepted). Tickets may be purchased on Sundays between services, or contact Ticket Chair **Jane Wilson**, 481-0472, wilsonjkw@comcast.net, to make other arrangements.

Join us at the Exposition Hall at the Thurston County Fairgrounds on Saturday, March 29! The Silent Auction will open for bidding at 4:30 p.m., the Buffet Dinner will start at 5 p.m., and the fast-paced Live Auction will start at 6 p.m.

One+ week before the event, your auction catalog will arrive in the mail, loaded with enough parties, outings and unique collectibles to spice up your whole year! Check your calendar, mark your favorites and come to the auction ready to bid the night away!

For more information or to volunteer for day of the event tasks (we need set –up and clean-up help), contact Auction Volunteer Coordinator **Sonja Johnston**, johnstonsonja@gmail.com , or Auction Chair **Emily Ray**, emilyrayjimlengfelder@msn.com.

Meantime, dig out those old blue suede shoes and get ready to go, go go!

PLEASE MAKE AN EFFORT TO GO AND CHAT WITH PEOPLE THAT YOU DON'T KNOW

Remember when you were the new kid in the classroom? That awkward 'who will talk to me' feeling? We can all help alleviate that sensation here at OUUC by noticing the peel and stick name tags on our visitors and making a point to go and chat with them. The Membership Team thanks you in advance.

2nd Annual Easter Egg Dying Party!

Join us March 22nd, 2-4pm for a fun and creative time!

Bring your own hard-boiled eggs, and we'll have lots of fun supplies for decorating them. This was a great event last year, and we anticipate just as much fun again. And don't forget - this is a great way to get those eggs dyed without setting up your own mess at home! If you would like to volunteer for set up or clean up, or you know a special egg decorating technique you'd like to share, or for more information, contact **Sara Lewis**

Adult Education are Good Company

Seventy-two members and friends of OUUC have signed up for the Adult-Education classes so far this year, so there is plenty of good company. Classes beginning in March (all meet at OUUC) are **Global Gourmet**, 6 sessions, Tuesdays 7:00-9:00 pm, [begins March 10](#); **Hinduism**, 6 sessions, Wednesdays 1:30-3:30 pm, [begins March 12](#); and **Our Heritage of Heresy**, 3 sessions, Tuesdays 7:00-9:00 pm, [begins March 11](#). These and classes starting later may still be open. Consult the Winter-Spring 2008 Adult Education Program Guide to find descriptions of all classes and how to register for them. Copies are available at OUUC, or the same information can be viewed on the OUUC website www.olyuu.org (see More About Us, Our Religious Education Programs, Adult). **Meditation**, a continuing class, will meet Friday, March 14, 7:00 pm at OUUC; registration is not required.

Green Sanctuary Corner

It Takes a Congregation to Raise a Village

You may not have noticed, but we have a village in our midst. Last October the 2nd-3rd grade Religious Education students built a village for worms! Students ripped newspaper into strips, and soaked the newspaper and straw in water to make them moist. They collected dry leaves and dirt from outside the classroom. They then mixed all of these materials together and placed them in a plastic bin with drainage and ventilation holes. Finally, they introduced about half a pound of red wiggler worms to their new village.



OUUC now has its very own wormy vermiculture center for kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, and other compostable goodies! Our red wiggler worm village is capable of eating about two pounds of garbage each week. The village will become even more productive as their population grows - if we help them stay healthy during the warmer months ahead.

Red wigglers eat all kinds of leftover foods and turn it into compost. The compost is rich in nutrients and minerals for plants. We can harvest the worm casting compost about every three or four months. As long as we feed the worms and keep them safe and warm, they will keep on giving us their 'black gold' in return.

What can we do with their wonderful gift? We can use it in our landscaping, grow vegetables with it at OUUC or Out of Woods, donate it to a community garden, give it to our members in a lottery system, or auction it off to raise money for the congregation!

Our worm village is using the leftovers we had been sending to the landfill. About 12 percent of the tonnage sent from Thurston County to the landfill in eastern Washington is food waste. Food for thousands of worm villages! The worm village is helping OUUC be a better steward of the earth by supplying us with compost that otherwise would have been lost in mountains of mixed wastes – not to mention saving the energy costs from trucking the wastes, and reducing air pollution from the trucks and heavy equipment at the landfill.

But it's our responsibility, as a Green Sanctuary-seeking congregation, to keep our new worm village fed and healthy. We must remember to put leftovers, coffee grounds, and tea bags in the yellow pail with the white cover in the kitchen area. This allows hot grounds and hot foods to cool. The pail needs to be emptied into the worm bin and cleaned, so it doesn't begin to stink-up the kitchen. The worm bin lid needs to be secured tightly to prevent flies and predators. And finally, we need to remember to harvest the compost and renew their bedding so the worms don't get sick. This is turning our 7th principle in action!

The next meeting of the Green Sanctuary Committee is Sunday, March 9 at 11:30 a.m. Join us to learn about all the projects in our Green Sanctuary Action Plan. Please contact **Joe Joy** to learn more about worm bins and food composting at OUUC.

Classified:

FREE (with donation of your choice to Camp Quixote): used Sylvania DVD-CD player. Call **Eunice Walker** at 705-3573.

How Does Our Pastoral Care Team Serve This Congregation?

The Pastoral Care Team is a lay ministry group that works in cooperation with our ordained ministers to create a more caring congregational community in which members reach out to support one another. The Pastoral Care Team seeks to put UU principles to work, assisting people within a framework of confidentiality. We seek to promote an atmosphere of hope and to ensure no member of our community fear being alone in a time of crisis.

We are trained communicators and listeners who provide a ministry of support and caring during life transitions, both happy and sad, such as illness, hospital and nursing home stays, loss of a loved one, marriage, divorce or separation, job loss or transition, or a new baby. Sometimes it is just nice to have a “caring someone” to listen and provide a personal supportive presence. Pastoral Care Team members can also put you in touch with other supportive church and community resources if necessary.

Current members of the Pastoral Care Team are the **Reverend Carol McKinley, Sydne Cogburn, Shelley Ferer, Anita McIntosh, and Jean Phillips**. If you have a need or just wish a visit or someone to talk with, please contact the office at 786-6383 and the church administrator will put you in touch with a Team member.

Healthy Communications Key to Healthy Congregations:

Our openness to engage in constructive dialogue about our church community is central to our congregation’s covenant and manifested in the very principles governing Unitarian Universalism. Recognizing the important role our church leadership plays in identifying and responding to issues affecting the health of our congregation, last Fall, OUUC’s Conflict Management Team hosted a Healthy Congregations Workshop for the church leadership. The **Rev. Anna Joy Grace**, Minister of Olympia’s Unity Church and a Healthy Congregations qualified instructor, facilitated the workshop.

The Healthy Congregations Workshop Series was developed based on a book by **Dr. Peter Steinke**, a Lutheran pastor and counselor. The workshops are designed to help church leaders be effective stewards of their congregations. Specifically, the workshops are intended to help participants

- Gain a renewed sense of purpose and mission
- Cultivate strong leadership capacities to challenge the congregation
- Learn how to develop healthy patterns of living together in community
- Learn to focus on strengths, resources, and options for the future
- Boost confidence in responding to challenges and opportunities
- Learn how to lead calmly and with thoughtfulness
- Reflect theologically about relationships
- Move the congregation toward healthy functioning

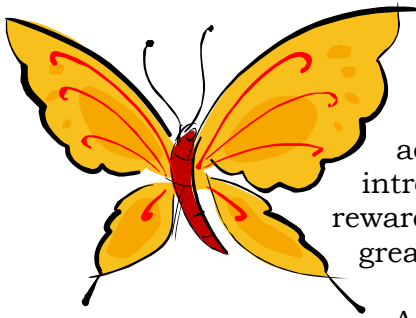
One of the key principles discussed during the training **Anna Joy Grace** conducted was “systems thinking.” Systems’ thinking encourages us to consider our behavior in the broader context of the entire system in which we operate. What other issues may be contributing to the current situation? What consequences may flow from our potential responses? How will our own behavior best support our core values and mission? Systems’ thinking encourages us to consider problems and solutions with an eye toward the long view. It demands our patience but promises rewards in terms of greater understanding and growth of our congregation.

You can find out more about the Healthy Congregations Workshops at http://www.hcongregations.net/?gclid=CK_N9-Hky5ECFRQtYAodQhWKiA

The Conflict Management Team hopes to provide additional training to the congregation in the year ahead. Conflict Management Team members are **Linda Eschels, Carol McKinley, and Joe Shorin**. *Got Conflict?* Give us a call.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

GROWING NEW WINGS



I have had the most delightful experience recently. We had a house guest stop by for several days on her way to a conference in Florida. She is an architect from Malaysia and went to high school with my husband there. Besides the fact that she is just a wonderfully accomplished and friendly person, the way she has been able to introduce me to some parts of her Muslim traditions has been very rewarding. Learning new things and growing my understanding has been great fun.

An interesting article, produced with Valentine's day in mind, caught my attention. It said that couples in a long term relationship can rekindle romance by trying out and learning new things together. Somehow, the chemicals in our brain that make the first part of falling in love and the excitement of a new romance are similar or the same as the stimulator substances we get a charge out of from new or novel experiences. The first clumsy attempts to learn something and happiness from growing competence are some of the best fun we can have.

At OUUC, I have had that experience, in common with quite a few other folks, by participating in the voice class Troy teaches on Saturday afternoons (at 1:40 pm). All of us sound pretty wobbly some of the time, but we are all growing and learning together and it is great fun. A lot of the charm is in trying something new and in doing it together.

We have a huge resource of competence and knowledge in our congregation. Adult Religious Education classes are another great opportunity for the teachers and students to learn from each other and grow new wings to fly. When we work together on projects or in committees to accomplish things for our congregation, we must remember to mix it up and challenge ourselves to try new arenas of learning. Part of getting burned out in volunteering is when you are in the same old rut and not working with new folks and new exciting ideas. Like a baby bird, we may look a bit clumsy at first, but just think how adorable we are when, with enthusiasm and effort, we learn and make even better results than doing things the same old way.

Together, let us keep learning new things. Looking a bit silly. Failing some of the time. Growing new wings and enjoying each other more all of the time. At OUUC, we make a pretty safe environment for growing, so plunge in and grow in some new direction. It will be fun.

Melissa Denton
OUUC Board President

P.S.

I am very excited to tell you that our miraculously successful stewardship drive provided enough funds so the board has authorized the hiring of a new position (for nine months): VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR! We all have great hopes that the individual filling this position will make OUUC friendlier and more able to connect folks with experiences they will enjoy. Thank you so very much for the generous and loving gifts to our congregation that made this possible. The position announcement will be out very soon and we hope the person will begin in April 2008.



I ended last month's column saying that by the time you were reading it, I would be heading out of town for a two-month retreat where I would be "trying to have very little on my mind."

**Rev. Arthur Vaeni
Minister**

As I write this column I have yet to depart, but, as I won't be able to write while on retreat, I'll share with you my imaginings about what I will be doing based on past retreat experiences and the description provided by the retreat center.

Once the retreat begins, we're expected to respect "the deep silence of other retreatants." That means we neither talk nor communicate non-verbally. Most of the day is taken up with periods (usually 45 minutes) of group-sitting meditation alternating with periods (also usually 45 minutes) of walking meditation. Walking meditation is done individually. You find a location either inside or out-of-doors and proceed to walk back and forth within a span of 20-30 feet, bringing your full attention to your walking.

There will be about a dozen teachers with us over the two months. Some will be present for two months while others will be there in either February or March. Throughout each week the teachers take turns giving dharma talks. The best of them are a blend of information and inspiration. I experience these talks as the Buddhist version of sermons only these speakers have the luxury (or hardship) of an hour-long address. Two or three times each week -usually in groups but sometimes individually- retreatants meet with a teacher to check-in and ask questions about their practice.

If things in the kitchen haven't changed since I last attended a retreat here, I'll find the food much to my liking. They serve lacto-ovo vegetarian meals. We eat three times a day although the evening meal tends to be lighter fare. For most retreatants breakfast is followed by a one hour "work as meditation" practice. Jobs include helping with meal preparation and cleanup in the kitchen, housekeeping and grounds-keeping. Some of the kitchen jobs occur later in the day.

For retreatants whose jobs were completed in the morning, the hour following lunch is free. If the weather is agreeable I'll walk up into the surrounding coastal hills where small groves of oak and bay trees grow in ravines surrounded by open fields. It's a beautiful setting. Although this hour offers a break from the normal meditation routine, the idea is to continue one's practice -that is, maintaining awareness of the moment- regardless of the nature of the activity. The evening usually concludes with the dharma talk I mentioned before and more sitting and walking meditation. Most are in bed by 10:00 PM. Each morning we arise early, repeating this routine for 58 days.

Some will look at that schedule and wonder, "Why on earth would anyone want to do that?" The short answer is to seek enlightenment. It's unlikely, of course, that participation in a single two-month retreat would result in full-blown enlightenment as Buddhists understand it. Nonetheless, I'll be pleased if my awareness grows in ways as described by one of the retreat's teachers, **Jack Kornfield**, in his book, *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*:

We already know how to let go -we do it every night when we go to sleep, and that letting go, like a good night's sleep, is delicious. Opening in this way, we can live in the reality of our wholeness. A little letting go brings us a little peace; a greater letting go brings us a greater peace. Entering the gateless gate, we begin to treasure the moments of wholeness. We begin to trust the natural rhythm of the world, just as we trust our own sleep and how our own breath breathes itself.

My hope is to learn to let go a little more, and learn to trust life's natural rhythm a little more that my heart might know a little more peace and love.

If it pleases you, may you live in that spirit, as well, **Art**

OLYMPIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATION

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Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation Mission Statement

Our community is a place to grow in mind and spirit.
We promote a loving, just and sustainable world through service, learning and action.

Visitors: If there is a color on your mailing label, this is your last issue. If you would like to continue to receive the newsletter please call or email the church office or sign up for the on-line version at <http://www.olyuu.org/MailingLists/>

MARCH CALENDAR

Voice Class	03/01/2008	1:40 PM
Worship Service	03/02/2008	10:00 AM
Partner Church Committee	03/04/2008	6:15 PM
Covenant of UU Pagans Monthly Circle	03/04/2008	7:30 PM
PUGS (Powerful Unitarian Gals)	03/05/2008	10:30 AM
Worship Arts	03/05/2008	5:30 PM
Alliance for Democracy	03/05/2008	6:30 PM
Pastoral Care Team	03/05/2008	7:00 PM
Choir	03/05/2008	7:00 PM
MUG (Mighty Unitarian Guys)	03/06/2008	10:00 AM
The Reawakening of Hope Class	03/06/2008	10:00 AM
Earth Scouts	03/06/2008	6:30 PM
Committee on Ministry	03/06/2008	7:00 PM
Poems That Give Us Hope Class	03/06/2008	7:00 PM
Taiji Class	03/07/2008	6:00 PM
Voice Class	03/08/2008	1:40 PM
Worship	03/09/2008	9:15 AM
Worship	03/09/2008	11:00 AM
Green Sanctuary Committee	03/09/2008	12:15 PM
Out of the Woods Executive Committee	03/10/2008	7:00 PM
Build Your Own Theology Class	03/10/2008	7:00 PM
Global Gourmet	03/10/2008	7:00 PM
SSAU	03/11/2008	6:30 PM
Communications Committee	03/11/2008	7:00 PM
Our Heritage of Heresy	03/11/2008	7:00 PM
PUGS (Powerful Unitarian Gals)	03/12/2008	10:30 AM
Hinduism	03/12/2008	1:30 PM
Small Group Ministry Facilitators	03/12/2008	5:30 PM
Choir	03/12/2008	6:00 PM
MUG (Mighty Unitarian Guys)	03/13/2008	10:00 AM
Board Meeting	03/13/2008	7:00 PM
Book Group	03/13/2008	7:00 PM
Taiji Class	03/14/2008	6:00 PM
Meditation	03/14/2008	7:00 PM
Five Year Goal-Setting Workshop	03/15/2008	8:00 AM
Voice Class	03/15/2008	1:40 PM
Newsletter Deadline	03/16/2008	11:00 AM
Worship	03/16/2008	9:15 AM
Heritage Class	03/16/2008	10:45 AM
Worship	03/16/2008	11:00 AM
Workshop	03/16/2008	12:30 PM
Choir	03/17/2008	7:00 PM
Global Gourmet	03/17/2008	7:00 PM
Our Heritage of Heresy	03/18/2008	7:00 PM
PUGS (Powerful Unitarian Gals)	03/19/2008	10:30 AM
Hinduism	03/19/2008	1:30 PM
MUG (Mighty Unitarian Guys)	03/20/2008	10:00 AM
Earth Scouts	03/20/2008	6:00 PM
Out of the Woods Board	03/20/2008	7:00 PM
Living by Heart Class	03/20/2008	7:00 PM
Taiji Class	03/21/2008	6:00 PM
Voice Class	03/22/2008	1:40 PM
Easter Egg Dying Party	03/22/2008	2:00 PM
Covenant of UU Pagans	03/22/2008	2:00 PM
Worship	03/23/2008	9:15 AM
Worship	03/23/2008	11:00 AM
Choir	03/24/2008	7:00 PM
Build Your Own Theology Class	03/24/2008	7:00 PM
Global Gourmet	03/24/2008	7:00 PM
Our Heritage of Heresy	03/25/2008	7:00 PM
PUGS (Powerful Unitarian Gals)	03/26/2008	10:30 AM
Hinduism Class	03/26/2008	1:30 PM
MUG (Mighty Unitarian Guys)	03/27/2008	10:00 AM
Adult Education Committee	03/27/2008	1:00 PM
Taiji Class	03/28/2008	6:00 PM
Voice Class	03/29/2008	1:40 PM
Worship	03/30/2008	9:15 AM
Worship	03/30/2008	11:00 AM
Global Gourmet	03/31/2008	7:00 PM