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○ MARCH/APRIL ○ 2009

Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist *fellowship*

President's Message

The Fellowship has experienced lots of changes in the past year, but some things remain constant like the high quality and varied services. Music Sunday was a wonderful example of all the talent of the members.

We have had seven new members join the Fellowship in the past few months. The most recent are Bonita Swan who was a UU member in Arizona, and Sean and Sue Ann Niland who are rejoining us after being gone a few years. This growth in membership is something to celebrate. Thanks to one of our new members, Alphonso Cantu, who has stepped up to chair the Membership committee. We have also had lots of repeat visitors, some of whom are the ones who joined us. Some have asked what are the benefits to being a member? The first and most important is that one decides to participate actively and contribute their gifts and talents to the group. We support the Unitarian Universalist movement and its seven principles. Some join because they want religious education for their children and participate actively in these activities. Others want to be involved in the decision making for the Fellowship. Visitors can be involved in committees, work on the building, and participate in services.

But in order to vote and have a voice in the direction and actions of the Fellowship one needs to be a member. There is no minimum financial contribution, so do not let funds deter you from joining. If you are interested in becoming a member, please speak with Alphonso, Carol Weston, or Julia Weiser.

In March we begin the annual canvass of members. This is a chance to make suggestions, criticisms, and comments on the services and programming of the past year. We take the results seriously and use them to assess the past and to plan for the future direction of the Fellowship. The canvass itself is anonymous, so you can feel free to comment all you like. In the canvass packets there will also be a form to list your gifts and talents and to volunteer for various committees and offices. **We are always looking for members to present and/or suggest future service topics.** There will also be a pledge form to indicate your financial support of the Fellowship; this information is used to plan and write our annual budget. Since we are an all volunteer organization, we need the help of everybody. If you would like to work on the canvass questions, put together the packets, and/or collate the results, please contact Julia Weiser at 344 7769 or weiserj@charter.net.

A big thanks goes to Kelly Mortenson for putting together the classy directory. We hope to have the additional pages for the new members done soon. If you want changes made to your page, contact Kelly or Carol Weston. If you are unable to pick up your directory on a Sunday, let us know and we will mail yours with the canvass packet.

Special thanks go to Jenny Howard who is frequently setting up the reception area and then cleaning up afterwards. Please consider signing up to open and close and clean up, bring a snack, greet visitors. Each task requires a minimum commitment on any given Sunday. The sign up board is right next to the refreshment table; you can't miss it.



The Fellowship has a library!

The board agreed to join a community effort to save the books from the old St. Stephens rectory library. This community effort is called "Personal Connections". Leo Jacoby, long time librarian for the rectory, has spearheaded Personal Connections to save the books. Individuals, churches, businesses and agencies have stepped forward to help host the books. Some of these local organizations are: Frame Presbyterian Church, First Law Group, Ann & Frank Leahy, Church of the Intercession, Justiceworks, and Newman Center to name a few. The Fellowship has agreed to host books from the following categories: peace, global anthropology and culture, and religions of the world, which includes a large collection on Islam. There are databases that list the books within the different categories. Bill Hettler has loaned the Fellowship bookcases for our collections.

Is there someone who would like to be the "librarian" for the Fellowship? We need a volunteer who would be willing to cross check the database listings with the actual books on hand. The books in our collections are available for people to take home to read. There is no formal check out policy for the books. People are encouraged to take the books home to read and bring them back when they are finished. As Leo says, "I'd rather see the books being used and circulating in the community, than being concerned about whether each book is returned to its proper location." If you are interested in being the SPUUF librarian, please see Julia or Carol.

Welcoming Congregation

On January 25th, members of the Fellowship voted 21 – 0 in favor of initiating the process of becoming a Welcoming Congregation. Our bylaws define a quorum for conducting business as "20 members or one-third of the membership, whichever is less." Current membership stands at 40.

A committee has been formed to work on the Welcoming Congregation process. Members are: Mary Arnold, Michele Bjella, Shannon Chronister, Clara Cleve, Jan Nitz and Carol Weston. The committee will schedule a minimum of four workshops staggered across the next nine to twelve months. The first workshop, lead by UWSP members of the Faculty/Staff Gay/Straight Alliance, was held March 1st and focused on "*Creating a Safe Zone*."

The goal of the committee is to have the Welcoming Congregation process completed so an official vote to be "A Welcoming Congregation" by the membership can occur by next January. The committee will be following the guidelines established by the national UUA for implementing the Welcoming Congregation process. Multiple copies of "The Welcoming Congregation Handbook" have been purchased and will be used as our guide.

If you have any questions or would like to get involved in the committee, please contact a committee member.



Building Committee

A new building committee has been formed. The first meeting occurred on February 15th. Anyone who is interested on planning for future improvements to the building, how improvements could enhance our space utilization or actually doing the physical work on the building is welcome to get involved in this committee. The recently completed energy audit on the building is guiding the immediate actions of the committee. Committee members are investigating the cost involved for implementing the energy improvements suggested by the audit. Committee members are also checking into occupancy numbers per room based on square footage and zoning/fire codes, and reviewing the buildings architectural plans. Information gathered by the committee will be shared at its next meeting, at 11:30 am March 8th. It is the goal of the building committee to bring forward building improvement recommendations to the UU Board this spring. If you're interested in participating, please join the committee at their March 8th meeting.

SPUUF SOCIALS!

The Social Action/Green Committee is committed to hosting monthly socials for the Fellowship on the first Saturday of each month through May. The next social is scheduled for Saturday, March 7th, 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Come and enjoy an evening of interactive games and social time for adults *and* children. We provide the popcorn and drinks, but additional simple snacks are always welcomed. Any questions? contact Michele at michelebj@yahoo.com.



Welcome to SPUUF!

New Member Profiles

Bonita Swan

Friends know her as "Swan." Bonita has been influenced by Unitarianism most of her life. She grew up in Chicago in one of the Jane Adam's Hull House tenements. Bonita was married, and had five children. After a divorce she earned her RN degree while raising her children. She specialized in child psychology and adolescent chemical dependency. Bonita lived in Topeka, Kansas and worked at the Menninger Clinic. She also lived and worked in Scottsdale, AZ, where she was an active member in the Scottsdale UU. She moved to Stevens Point in 2004. She enjoys reading and photography. Bonita views her membership in the Fellowship as a way for her to do something positive in her life and develop family in the community.

Sue Ann and Sean Niland

Sean is from Milwaukee but has been in Central Wisconsin for twenty years. Sue Ann respectively says it doesn't matter so much where she is from or what she has done in her lifetime; but to know her thoughts regarding the choices she has made in how she lives her life. They first joined a UU fellowship in Appleton for their daughters' spiritual education. They were members of our Fellowship before but are rejoining because there are so many new faces and the Fellowship is a different group of people. Sean is interested in religious and philosophical growth and really enjoys social time after service. Sean believes in individual integrity, the rights and justice of employee groups and values community. He has been a union steward, feels strongly in strengthening the community and is involved in the Mankind Project which holds their meetings in the fellowship building. Sue Ann believes in "paying it forward" with anonymous Random Acts of Kindness, as often as possible. She states: "when it seemed it would be most impossible time to do so, it was often the best time to have done it." She believes that Unitarian Universalism is very open to the common thread of all religions. It is that infinite common thread which makes her grateful to be here.

Child Care Workers

We've hired two new childcare workers to work with Julie Canfield in the childcare room: Meghan Gerosa and Brittany Titel. Meghan is a junior Communications/Public Relations major. Meghan has been babysitting since she was in middle school, when she went through the Red Cross Babysitting classes. Meghan has been a volunteer with childcare program at her church back home. As she says, she has "great communication skills with children and adults."

Brittany Titel is a sophomore majoring in Psychology. Brittany has worked extensively with the Stevens Point YMCA Childcare Room and the Portage County Boys and Girls Club. Through her work, she helps serve snacks and lunches and feed infants, creates activities, assists with homework and reading. I have also sang songs and read stories with the children and motivated children to work for badges as a Girl Scout Co-Leader.

Julie, Meghan and Brittany provide an important service to the members of our Fellowship. They are helping to nurture the children of the Fellowship. Please introduce yourself to these young adults and let them know how much you appreciate their work!



Social Change and Green Sanctuary Happenings

"Skills & Visions", a sub committee of the Social Change and Green Sanctuary committee, met on February 22. They discussed their vision of supporting Fellowship members. One idea is to have a "Clearing House" for possible bartering skills with no exchange of money. Every person's work would be exchanged hour per hour. Your time spent would be equal to any one else's time. The sub-committee discussed having a master copy of the skills exchanged.

This idea is in the brainstorming stage; more time is needed to refine it. The committee welcomes any additional ideas. The next meeting will be held at SPUUF on Sunday, March 8th at 9:00 AM. If you have any questions, feel free to contact any member of the sub-committee: Bev, Clara, Steve, and Michele.

Upcoming Services

This is a list of the upcoming Sunday morning services at the Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Please visit www.spuuf.org for a calendar of services.

March

March 1
"Islam, Rumi, and Loving God"
Presented by Fizza Razvi

March 8
"Introduction to Integral Thinking"
Presented by Alphonzo Cantu

March 15
"The Current Economic Crisis: Villains, Heroes, and Innocent Bystanders"
Presented by Larry Weiser

March 22
TBA

March 29
Justice Sunday
Presented by Katherine Munck of Justiceworks

April

April 5
"A Lesson in Buddhism"
Presented by Andrew Agacki

April 12
Environmental-themed Service
TBA

April 19
Earth Day
Intergenerational Service

April 26
Annual Meeting

STEVENS POINT
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
FELLOWSHIP



Services are held at the Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, located at 3116 Algoma Street, Stevens Point, 54481. Services begin at 10:00 a.m.

Child care and Religious Exploration classes for children are available.

Visit www.spuuf.org for more information.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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The Uncommon Denomination