



News & Notes

Music makers of all ages, levels, and instruments are welcome to join our **Monday Music Gathering**, which meets every other Monday evening in the high school classroom from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (January 12 & 26). For more information, contact Lee Criscuolo.

Warm up with the **UU Women's Group** on Monday, January 19 at 7:00 p.m. at **Taj Indian Cuisine** in the Greenbrier Shopping Center, 2032 Plank Rd. Enjoy casual conversation, with no agenda, no action items, and no reservation needed—just drop by! This is a great way to get to know people, so newcomers are always welcome. Check out "**UUFF Women's Group**" on Facebook.

The **UU Men's Group** meets each Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. at **Prima-vera Pizzeria & Grill**, 600 William Street. Newcomers are always welcome to join the group.

The **Insight Meditation Community of Fredericksburg** meets on Thursdays in Dragonfly Yoga Studio (810 Caroline Street) at 7:00 p.m. for sitting and walking meditation, or Mindful Listening. Visit www.meditatefred.com for the schedule and details.

In case of inclement weather, call the Fellowship at 310-4001 to see if services or events have been cancelled, visit our website, www.uuffva.org, listen to radio station B101.5, or check www.b1015.com.

Throughout the year, don't forget to make your **Amazon.com** purchases by visiting www.uuffva.org first, and clicking on the Amazon logo there. We earn money with every purchase that results from a click-through from our site. It is simple, free, and adds up to a nice income for the UUFF.



CHILI Cook-Off

Saturday, January 31 ▪ 5-8 pm

Think your chili is something special? Put your recipe to the test against fellow UUFF chefs in a battle of the best in our first-ever, soon-to-be-legendary Chili Cook-Off on January 31.

Talk about chili can get serious, with regional loyalties and level of heat sparking plenty of debate. To satisfy all chefs, we'll have two categories, standard and vegetarian, and every possible variation is welcome. We'll have a "celebrity" judging panel and a "people's choice" award. Judging will take place from 5:00-5:45, after which we will eat and enjoy each other's company. Fabulous prizes will be awarded!

If you would like to join the competition, please contact Susan Lovegrove by January 29 with the category you'll be entering. Your chili must be fully prepared and in a crockpot. Nothing can be heated or cooked at the Fellowship.

If you do not want to prepare a chili, please bring cornbread, salad, or another side dish to contribute to the occasion. The Friendship Committee will provide drinks and there will be a cooler available for BYOBeer.

—Friendship Committee

beyond categorical thinking

Sunday, January 25

Service at 10:30 a.m.
Workshop at 12:30 p.m.

Join the conversation to promote inclusive thinking and prevent unfair discrimination in the ministerial search process.

All are encouraged to attend.
Lunch and childcare are provided.

For more info, see Ministerial Search Update, pg. 5.

think outside the box!

FROM THE Minister's Desk

Rev. Walter Braman



"May you live in peaceful times."

—An ancient curse

Did I just say that was a curse? Peaceful times – a curse? After all that I have preached on peace? Yes, I did say that is a curse, and, in its way, it is. This is the concern that we might live in a time when we get so wrapped up in our ruts and our status quo that we become numb to the needs and the pulse of the world around us.

Good news! You are not so cursed. As I look at the year ahead for you, I see a very exciting time and a time of change.

Some time ago in this column I wrote of an experience I had with a visitor from Russia. This was about a year after the Soviet Union had broken up and he was telling me of the work ahead for Russia and of the work that he himself was doing during this change.

After listening to him for a while, I said, "I do not envy you what you must be going through."

He grabbed me in a huge embrace and yelled at me, "Oh, but you should envy me! We are making great changes on our own – WE are doing it – ourselves!"

I got the point and wished him well.

This year I take what I learned from my Russian friend and pass it on to you. For the year ahead, members of UUFF, you should be envied! You have an exciting year ahead (and, I hope, many exciting years to follow). You make the changes – they are yours to make. And through all the work, the drudgery, the (sometimes) frustration, you may wonder at times whether it is all worth it and may even find yourselves yearning for those "peaceful" times. (Really? Did they really even exist?)

In the new year, may you grow—physically, caringly, in learning and programs, and, most of all, spiritually.

A rich and meaningful new year to all of you.

Love to you all,
Walter

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



The year was 1997 at the UUFF on Caroline Street in lovely historic downtown Fredericksburg, VA. We had gotten our first full-time minister several years before and, well, things weren't going well. The Rev. John Rex was our extension minister and his continuation with us as called minister of the UUFF was put to a vote at the annual meeting that year. Only 57% voted to keep him. The vote "exposed a deep split in the UUFF," according to past member and historian, Bill Lakeman. Morale was low.

Into this situation in 1998 comes Rev. Walter Braman, an interim minister who was sent to us by the UUA to help us get back on our feet. That is the purpose of interim ministers—to help struggling congregations reinvent themselves. Rev. Braman's job was to convince us that we were not a dysfunctional congregation. I remember him telling us that we could do whatever we needed to do. He would compliment us, tell us we were doing a great job, and we slowly began to feel better about ourselves.

Rev. Braman was very popular and most of us would have loved to keep him permanently, but that is not in the job description of an interim minister. We were only supposed to keep him for one year, but he was allowed to return for the second year by popular demand. He had to move on to serve other congregations who were going through a rough patch.

The second year with Rev. Braman gave us time to search for our first called minister. We were a healed (for the most part) congregation, fully functioning, and ready to welcome Rev. Jeff Jones. Years passed: we bought land, we fussed over building plans for a decade, we had building fundraisers, we sold our building on Caroline Street, we moved to the strip mall, Rev. Jones left, Rev. Jennie Barrington came and went.

In the meantime, Rev. Cathie Braman, Walter's wife, had moved to Fredericksburg. They bought a house here but Walter continued as an interim minister, serving many congregations over the years. Until his retirement in 2009, he would find temporary housing near his current congregation, and return to Fredericksburg whenever he could.

The year 2010 found us with a building under construction, our funds depleted, our congregation stressed from the strip mall and losing Rev. Barrington. Things weren't going well, again. And into this mess steps Rev. Walter Braman. He was prepared to enjoy his retirement, but, when asked, he accepted a part-time consulting minister position at the UUFF. And he didn't do it to get rich, for sure. He did it because we needed him to ease our transition into our new building. We needed a minister, but were not ready to search for one and not yet able to pay for a full-time position. Rev. Walter Braman came again to our rescue.

And now he is retiring again. The UUFF is now growing, really humming along, and will vote on a called minister in May. What can we do to show our appreciation for Rev. Braman, who has rescued us twice? The Board of Trustees and I, the president of the Board of Trustees, would like to bestow Rev. Braman with the title Minister Emeritus of the UUFF. It is an honor and meant to show our deep appreciation. It does not mean that we are pulling him out of retirement again, as there is no work expectation associated with this title. It is simply a way to say thank you for a job well done. We will all vote on this honorific title at our next annual meeting in May.

The new year is a good time to look back, as well as forward, and thank those who have come before us. Rev. Walter Braman is only one of many who have worked hard to create this sanctuary of liberal religion that we all enjoy.

—Jane Ellen Teller

COFFEE TALK

Congratulations to **Ivanka Antolin** and **Judy Lynn**, who were married on October 10. The couple has been together for 28 years, and we send them every wish for continued happiness.

Congratulations to **Miriam Liss**, professor of psychology at UMW, who received a "2015 Outstanding Faculty Award" from the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia.

As I write this, I am watching one of the final rehearsals for the 2014 holiday pageant (which you have already seen by the time you read this!). The theme of the pageant brings together rather nicely a lot of the things we have been working on with the kids over the past 12 months. But what strikes me most is that the cast of this production is almost equally adult and child. It is a wonderful reminder of what I feel Religious Education should be about – children and adults, learning and playing together. After all, we are along on this journey together.

In the coming year, in 2015, I have some high hopes for the RE program. But before I start on all of that, I would like to first say what a marvelous group of parents and volunteers we have supporting our efforts in the classroom. We have a relatively large number of children in our RE program for a fellowship of our size, and we rely heavily on volunteers to make our program go. It is no exaggeration to say that we could not do it without you!

The other secret to our success is really no secret at all, our Director of Religious Education, Chris Johns. This past year, she has somehow squeezed out the time to work on her Associate level DRE certification, which she will complete in June 2015. This is the first time we will have a credentialed DRE and it is a big step for all of us, especially Chris! She and I

have also had a marvelous time working together since I became RE Committee chair, and I think I can speak for both of us when I say this coming year is going to be a good one.

Another big step for our Fellowship is hosting a youth conference, which we have dubbed DramaCon. At press time, we only have a tentative date set, so I can't say it out loud quite yet. But it will be in the early spring, and will be open to high school aged UU kids in our district.

On a smaller scale, I would like to plan more fun things to do, some of which will probably be fundraisers for the play yard. We are in the process of setting up an ad hoc committee to plan a phased approach to making the yard a really fun place for kids. The first phase would be to address outside storage for toys and other things, while the second phase would be "creative play," in which we identify non-structural play items that can be kept in the storage purchased in Phase 1, and taken out and enjoyed by the kids. The third phase is the "structure" phase. Part of this phase would be to consider if we, as a fellowship, even want to undertake the purchase and installation of a structure because it would have several implications for the Fellowship financially.

Obviously, all of this will take lots of time, probably several years by the time we are done. Several members have

mentioned establishing a garden with the kids, and this is an idea that would be worth pursuing with the right kind of volunteer support.

Our current fundraising effort has been going along well – the first Parents' Night Out was in October and was a huge success. As I write, the second PNO is a week away, and it is shaping up to be a fun time, too. So, keep your eye out for future dates. We have one scheduled for February and one in May. The kids love them, and even the volunteers had a great time!

I am sure you have noticed a common theme running through this little report, a word that keeps popping up here and there. Yes, that would be "volunteer." Of course we need you and your talents, or just your time. Whatever you have to offer, whether or not you currently have children in the RE program, we want and need your efforts. Teaching is definitely the most critical need we have, but it is not the only one, so if you have an idea or something you would like to do with the kids (or the adults – we are always looking for Adult RE ideas), don't be shy! Thank you all for reading this, and I am so looking forward to my second year as the chair of the RE Committee. This is the most fun I have had in a long time! Happy New Year!

–Kirsten Willis

IN OUR HEARTS

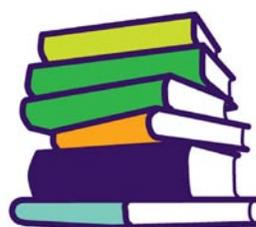
Healing thoughts go out to **Bill Wood's** son **Brett**, who has been hospitalized following a series of heart attacks. We will continue to send love and prayers as Brett faces a difficult road ahead.

We send our condolences to **Bernadette Jones**, whose brother, **John Nawrot**, died in November. John was a Purple Heart recipient, and his remains will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. We're keeping Bernadette and her family in our thoughts.

Nina Thompson's mother, **Frances L. Chidester**, passed away on November 13 in Charlottesville. We send our sympathies to Nina and her family.

Parenting Community Circle Meeting & Book Swap - Sunday, Jan. 4

Looking for a supportive space to discuss parenting? Looking for a good read? Please join us after the service on Sunday, January 4, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. in the Preschool classroom. Our topic for this meeting will be



"Beating the Post-Holiday Blues." We will also be doing a book swap – bring a book to share, and leave with a new one. We will provide drinks and snacks; bring a sandwich. Babysitting is provided for a small fee in the Nursery. For more information, please contact Mandolin Restivo-Walsh or Susan Park.

–Susan Park

SHARING OUR *Abundance*



Have you ever paused to reflect on how much abundance we have as a Fellowship? There is the beautiful space in which we gather, both the building and the land. There are the many opportunities we have for personal and spiritual growth – Sunday services, the music and religious education programs, and a broad array of discussion groups and circles. And of course, there is us – our Fellowship community in which we find support and challenge. The UUFF is a congregation of abundance.

In our own way, we each contribute to the Fellowship's abundance and we each also partake of that abundance. *Sharing Our Abundance* is the focus for the 2015 Stewardship Campaign, which will occur in late February and early March. How do we, and can we, share our abundance within the UUFF? How

do we, and can we, share our abundance with the larger Fredericksburg community?

The highlight of the 2015 Stewardship Campaign will be a Stewardship Gala "Budget Gourmet," the type of potluck event we last held in 2010. Wondering what it is? Then you might ask someone who you know has been around for a while. Briefly, it's a sharing of our time – spending an evening with our Fellowship friends and acquaintances; a sharing of our talent – preparing a tasty dish or two for those at our table; and a sharing of our treasure – making a commitment of financial support to the UUFF. The date of this event will be either February 21 or 28. (We will know which soon.) So mark your calendars as you will not want to miss it.

—bill brooks, Stewardship Chair

COMMUNITY ACTION CORNER

A YEAR OF GIVING

Here is a list of the Share the Plate contributions for the last year:

December: Hazel Hill Health Care for the Disadvantaged, \$276

January: Mental Health America, \$190

February: Moss Free Clinic, \$311

March: La Ceiba Microloans for the poor, \$172

April: Friends of the Rappahannock, \$149

May: Hope House for homeless women and their children, \$67

June: YMCA Summer Camp for Disadvantaged Kids, \$230

July: School Dressing Days, \$125

August: Heifer International, \$94

September: UU Congregation Norfolk Disaster Recovery, \$245

October: Moss Free Clinic, \$200

November: Christmas Gifts for Unaccompanied Minors of Refugees, \$220

—Curt Swinburne

Sunday Discussion Group



The Sunday Discussion Group meets after the service on most first and third Sundays from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. in the Clara Barton room. If you are not on the regular discussion group e-mail distribution and wish to be informed of the meetings, please e-mail Steve Brown. Please visit our website at <http://uuffva.org/home/congregational-life/interest-groups/sunday-discussion-group>. All are welcome to participate or just sit in on discussions of interest. The topics scheduled for January are:

Jan. 4: *Should internet sales be taxed?*

Jan. 18: *Where do human rights come from?*

—Steve Sanders

VEGETARIAN GROUP



At our December meeting of the Vegetarian Group, a UUFF member who was attending for the first time asked, "Are all attending (more than 35) members of our Fellowship?" The answer was, "No, the majority of people who attend the Vegetarian Group are not members." This makes the Vegetarian Group a wonderful outreach of our Fellowship to the community.

Others have asked, "Are all who come to the vegetarian meeting vegetarians?" The answer is, "No, some are vegetarians, some are vegans, however most come for the encouragement and support to eat less meat and animal products." The follow-up question is usually, "Why eat less meat and animal products?" The answer is, "Some people choose this option for health reasons and others for ethical reasons." To learn more about ethical eating, go to the Unitarian Universalist Association website: www.uua.org/ethicaleating.

Please join us on **Saturday, January 3, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.** for the opportunity to share a vegetarian potluck ("best lunch in town"), meet new people in our community (encourage to come to a service), enjoy the interesting conversations, and learn about Ayurvedic eating.

The cornerstone of health in Ayurvedic tradition is food. An Ayurvedic proverb says "When diet is right, medicine is of no need. When diet is wrong, medicine is of no use." This 3,000 year-old system of traditional medicine grew out of the teachings of Samkaya philosophy in the Indian subcontinent. It is frequently referred to as the sister of yoga.

Ayurveda provides guidelines for choosing foods for specific times of the day, seasons of the year and periods of life. Tradition characterizes every food by one of the six tastes (sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent) and recommends that every meal include all six.

Our presenter is Liz Ritoli, who in 2012 received certification through the Himalayan Institute as an Ayurvedic Yoga Specialist. By the end of 2015, Liz will have completed an additional three years of advanced Ayurvedic studies and will be eligible to sit for the National Ayurvedic Medical Association's examination.

For questions or additional information, please contact Gloria Lloyd.

—Gloria Lloyd

MINISTERIAL SEARCH UPDATE



SUNDAY, JANUARY 25: Beyond Categorical Thinking Service & Workshop

When you think about our next minister, does an image come to mind? Do you picture a person of a certain gender, race, ethnicity or age? Do you imagine a particular sexual orientation or gender identity? Does a person's physical limitations or appearance play a role? As inclusive as we hope to be, are there ingrained expectations that might hinder acceptance of our next minister?

On January 25, the UUFF will present the Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) service and workshop offered by the UUA to congregations involved in the search for a new minister. The search committee invites everyone—leaders, members, and friends—to attend the service and participate in the workshop which follows.

The BCT program is a highly recommended part of the search process, designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination. Credentialed UU ministers who are people of color, LGBT, ethnic minorities, young, old, or differently-abled still face discrimination as part of the ministerial search process.

UUA-trained facilitators Amanda Schuber and Mary Esther Johnson will lead the January 25th service at 10:30 a.m., and following a lunch break, will facilitate a 3-hour workshop starting at 12:30 p.m. We will explore our biases so we can avoid letting prejudice affect how we view ministerial candidates, and will see how our own history (both personal and congregational) might interfere with our efforts.

Lunch will be provided by the search committee for participants staying for the workshop. Childcare will be available so all may attend.

The Next Steps

Our Congregational Record has been unveiled in the UUA's online system for consideration by ministerial candidates. In January, we will be in contact with those ministers who express an interest in us. We will review their ministerial records, and identify potential candidates that look to be a good fit.

We then exchange informational packets with these candidates. Our packet details key aspects of congregational life, while ministers will provide us with

a comprehensive look at who they are and how they approach ministry. If you are interested in seeing our packet, a display copy will be available for perusal in the UUFF foyer in January.

The process of evaluating candidates includes careful consideration of their materials and interviews via phone or video chat. In February and March, the committee will meet our most promising candidates face-to-face, see how they handle Sunday services, and consider their sermons.

At this stage of the process, search committees like ours must keep all information about candidates strictly confidential. Often, ministers in search are currently serving congregations, and if an appropriate position isn't found, will continue to serve in that capacity. As you can imagine, we must protect their privacy as they engage in the search for a possible new position. We will continue to be as open about the process as we can, but ask that all respect the search committee's adherence to confidential practices at this point.

—Ministerial Search Committee

MEMORIAL GARDEN CONTRACT SIGNED

We are so pleased to announce that at the December 11, 2014 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the President of the BoT signed the contract for the Memorial Garden!

The Memorial Garden is a place for those who have a sense of closeness to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, which they would like to preserve after death. It is hallowed ground, sacred to the memory of those who have departed from our midst.



In 2011 Ruth Carver, a long-time member of our community, left provisions in her will for a small bequest for a Memorial Garden. Based on this bequest, the BoT established the Memorial Garden fund. A committee was formed and in 2012, Artscapes, a local landscaping company, submitted a design. Artscapes designed this garden at no cost on the promise that if we approved their plan and built it, they would be the company we hired for the build. The BoT approved the plan and it was presented to the congregation for approval. At the same time, the BoT gave permission to begin raising money for the garden.

Today through the generous contributions of a few of our members, we have \$25,000. Phase 1 of the Memorial Garden will break ground in January, weather permitting. This first phase's actual cost is \$26,910. We are proceeding on the faith that we will build it and the money will come.

This first phase will include the memorial wall, the firepit, the seated wall around the pit, and the stand and armillary dial. The armillary dial is a very large type of sundial with moveable parts.

Phase 2 includes the pressed concrete walkway, priced at about \$5,000. Phase 3 is the pergola built over the armillary dial. All of this is just the hardscaping; the landscaping has to be provided for as well. As you can see, this is a work in progress and contributions are still needed and greatly appreciated.

—Kit Carver

JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>Happy New Year!</i>				NEW YEAR'S DAY 1	2	Veg Group 11:30 am 3
Service 10:30 am 4 UUth Choir 11:45 am Parenting Circle 11:45 am Sun. Discussion 12 noon Teen Girls' Group 12:30 pm	5	Adult Choir 7 pm 6 Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Mood Support Group 10:30 am 7 Handchimes 7:15 pm	Joint Coc/Board Meeting 7 pm 8 RE Comm. 7 pm Great Books 7 pm	9	Knitting Circle 2 pm 10
Service 10:30 am 11 UUth Choir 11:45 am	Sunday Services Comm. 6 pm 12 Music Gathering 6:30 pm Community Action 7 pm <i>Marriott</i>	Friendship 6:30 pm 13 Adult Choir 7 pm Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Handchimes 7:15 pm 14	Membership Comm. 7 pm 15	Drum Circle 7 pm <i>Hugh Teller's</i> 16	17
Service 10:30 am 18 UUth Choir 11:45 am Social Justice Comm. 11:45 Music Comm. 11:45 am Sun. Discussion 12 noon Teen Girls' Group 12:30 pm	Women's Group 7 pm <i>Taj Indian</i> 19 Finance 7:30 pm	Adult Choir 7 pm 20 Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Mood Support Group 10:30 am 21 Bldg. & Grounds 7 pm Handchimes 7:15 pm	Great Books 7 pm 22	23	Knitting Circle 2 pm 24
Service 10:30 am 25 UUth Choir 11:45 am BCT Workshop 12:30 pm Life Preservers, 3 pm <i>Pinschmidts'</i>	Music Gathering 6:30 pm 26	Adult Choir 7 pm 27 Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Handchimes 7:15 pm 28	29	30	Chili Cook-Off 5 pm 31

Activities are held at the UUFF unless otherwise noted. All are subject to change. For contact information for individuals, see the UUFF Directory or call the office.

SUNDAY SERVICES ONE SERVICE AT 10:30 AM

JAN. 4

All This and Potluck, Too? Rev. Walter Braman
Reflections on the anniversary of my ordination.
Handchimes Choir performs.

JAN. 11

**Reclaiming God from the Fundamentalists
and New Atheists Alike**
Dan Spiro

Dan's talk will include ideas from his new book, *Liberating the Holy Name: A Free Thinker Grapples with the Meaning of Divinity*. He is no stranger to our Fellowship. He has done a service at Caroline St. on Baruch Spinoza and done seminars at SUUSI on Spinoza as well.

JAN. 18

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back, Rev. Walter Braman
It's been more than one step back this year; why?
Adult Choir performs.

JAN. 25

Beyond Categorical Thinking
Amanda Schuber & Mary Esther Johnson

This UUA-sponsored program is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. Amanda and Mary Esther are UUA-trained facilitators who will speak about how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF FREDERICKSBURG

25 Chalice Circle, Fredericksburg, VA 22405



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg fosters a welcoming and intentionally diverse community of those who seek philosophical, spiritual, intellectual or religious growth in a forum of mutual respect. Affirming the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we value social justice, respect the interdependence of all life and are united by a desire to make ethical decisions on issues of mutual concern.

Minister:

Rev. Walter Braman 310-4001

Treasurer:

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Religious Education:

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Website: www.uuffva.org

OFFICE HOURS: Mon., Wed., Fri., 9:30 am-3:00 pm
Announcement deadline: Wednesday at Noon (firm!)

REV. BRAMAN'S OFFICE HOURS:

Tues. & Thurs., 9:00 am-3:00 pm

February Newsletter Deadline: SAT., JAN. 17, 4:00 pm

Feb. Publication Date: Jan. 23.

Submit articles to Maryann Brown.