



The Oak Leaf

July 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF OAK CLIFF

FATHERS' DAY SERVICE

Touching tributes to fatherhood were made by Ed Stofko and other members of our congregation.



Photo by Rex Fountain

SEE THE ONLINE CALENDAR FOR MORE INFO...

COMING UP

www.oakcliffuu.org

July 7

First Tuesday Social Action Film, 7pm. See p. 10.

July 12

Social Justice Ministry Meeting, 12:15pm

July 21

Coordinating Council Meeting, 7pm

Want to get more involved in the workings of the church? Come to a CC meeting!

July 28

UUCOC Board Meeting, 7pm

Who runs the church? Its members! Come and see!

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Sunday Services • 10am–11am

Re-Creating Our Holy Church

July 5th – *The Uniquely American Religion* – Unitarian Universalism was conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all (men) are created equal. Rev. Mark Walz will preach the sermon.

July 12th – *Deeply Rooted* – Our faith is deeply rooted in the whole of human experience. Is our personal spiritual journey rooted as deeply and firmly in the principles we share? Rev. Mark Walz will present the homily.

July 19th – *Our Social Gospels* – Join us as we celebrate the sermons and oracles of free religious prophets. Rev. Marcia Shannon will preach the sermon.

July 26th – *Meditation Lies at our Core* – Spiritual journeys require a special grounding. Congregants and our RE Children will present a special Sunday Service. (See page 5 for how you can participate!)

Welcome Visitors!

We hope you find our services and programs stimulating and interesting. We extend a warm invitation to you to come often, and hope you will help us get acquainted with you!

Remember that in addition to after-service discussions, Guided Meditation is offered in the Yoga Room most Sundays.

Please feel free to contact our minister, Mark Walz at (214) 337-2429 with any questions you may have.



Mark's Trail

*Please join me
on the journey...*

REPRINTED FROM JULY 2007

One of the most intense memories I have is of the time my grandmother Ruth and I were waiting for the bus to take us into downtown Dayton, Ohio. I was up from Texas and spending the summer with her and my grandpa Norb. She had dressed me in my oh-so-smart white linen suit and two-toned summer shoes. I was quite the dapper three-and-a-half year old. Our destination was a café that happened to have an off-track-betting parlor in the back. So while she went off to bet the ponies, I held court in one of the featured booths. While I ate my hamburger (mustard and pickles only, please), potato chips, and 7up, the other patrons made a genuine fuss over me.

I can only describe the subsequent trips I made to this OTB/café as experiences similar to the ones depicted on the TV sitcom *Cheers*, when Norm would walk in and everyone knew his name. My grandmother and I would enter and the entire congregation would yell "Mark!" and the party would begin.

But the intense memory wasn't our visits to the eatery; it was the sounds and smells of the bus that took us there. The sounds of hissing air brakes, coins jangling into the glass and metal drop, the doors closing and opening — combined with the smell of diesel fuel — grabbed at me and held me close in a truly magical way. Adventure was in the air!

That feeling came rushing back to me the first time I traveled by train. I was much older then — twelve! — but my sense of adventure was still intact. Willie Nelson's version of *Far Away Places* evokes those sacred memories every time I hear it playing on the radio.

Last month my wife's mom declared that she wanted to take the bus back to San Antonio for a visit with some friends. She wouldn't hear of traveling by plane. And it was in the Greyhound bus station, helping her board for San Antonio, that those amazing buses of my summer in Dayton came rushing into my soul. I closed my eyes and I was almost there! Almost!

We can get so awfully busy in our everyday lives that sometimes summer can seem like any other time. But it isn't. It is a time for adventure. Kids know this instinctively. And I hope you will wake up the child in you and treat yourself to an adventure.

Only you know what conjures up the adventurer in you. I am thinking of a day trip on our buses and trains to Fort Worth to visit the museum district. Or perhaps taking the train to Houston to visit my mom and siblings. I don't even know if you can still do that. Perhaps you have something bigger in mind for this summer, but if you haven't made any plans, please do. And plan to share your adventure with us at our annual In-Gathering Service in September. This tradition also includes sharing some water from your journey to add to our 'holy' water that we collect then. Some of us bring water from exotic sources, and others from the hotel swimming pool. It all gets added to our sacred font. And it is all special.

Getting back to my grandma Ruth....She won a lot of money on one of those afternoons in the betting parlor on a horse named Pinto Pal, and we headed to her favorite department store. She decided on a pair of women's pumps with tiny green feathers swirled from toe to heel. She was, after all, an ex-Ziegfeld Follies girl. I had never seen anything like them. They were amazing, and terribly expensive. When we arrived home my grandpa Norb threw a fit, but that's a story for another day.

Have an adventure this summer. And share it with us in September.

See you Sunday - *Mark*



Thank you to all who contributed to Chalice Lighters!

Our members came through once again—and this time all contributions return to our church for our new Memory and Meditation Garden!

Finally out of the closet!

All the clutter that's been accumulating for years, that is! Check out the closet in Faith across from the kitchen. Thank you to Rev. Mark Walz for purchasing AMY WILLIAMS' closet-organizing services at our recent fundraising auction!



Possible Climate Fix: I heard an interesting article on NPR while driving home from work the other day. The subject was “**Engineering Climate Change,**” the topic of discussion at a recent National Academy of Sciences meeting. Scientists are beginning to debate potential geoengineering fixes that might work to cool the earth, much as it is cooled by a volcanic eruption. When a volcano erupts, sulfate particles are blasted into the air. These particles reflect sunlight back into space thus shading or cooling the earth. Could spraying similar particles into the earth’s atmosphere create a similar effect? Could this be a cheap, easy solution to runaway carbon emissions? Of course there are many questions requiring answers and much to be learned before any experiments are attempted.

Toying with global climate could have catastrophic consequences. Particles sprayed into the atmosphere might damage the ozone layer, leaving Earth’s inhabitants unprotected from the Sun’s deadly rays. Or precipitation might be reduced in certain areas, setting off droughts and famines. On the flip side, the experiments could actually help agriculture. Nobody really knows. And who gets to decide what is done and when? Should scientists wait for a crisis to act, or are we already in a crisis that can’t be averted without drastic action? As you can see, there is much work to be done. Nonetheless, engineering climate change offers some hope that there may be a solution to the monumental mess we have created for ourselves. See www.nationalacademies.org.

Green Jobs Study: The Pew Charitable Trusts published a study on June 10th that calculated growth of the “**clean energy economy**” in the U.S. between 1998 and 2007. “Green jobs” grew 9.1% to 777,000 jobs nationwide, although they still make up only .50% of total jobs. California ranked first in clean-energy jobs with 17.6 million or .71% of its

Remember to check out my blog at
www.drwm.blogspot.com.

Leave a message and let me know what you think!

workforce, and Texas ranked second with 11.7 million jobs. Although only a small percentage of total jobs make up “green jobs,” the study determined that this sector is “Poised for Explosive Growth”—mainly because of the change in governmental policy. The study cites the \$787 billion **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**, signed into law in February, “as a significant force driving the clean-energy economy.” Of the Act’s total, \$85 billion is allocated for energy and transportation-related programs. More at www.pewtrusts.org.

Composting: As fairly new UUs, the Stofkos have been attempting to become better stewards of God’s green Earth. Our first major change was giving up paper plates and cups—we didn’t want our garbage contributing to any more landfills. Next we took on the recycling of all plastics, cans and glass. It was remarkably easy. At the beginning of January, we gave up our dependence on TruGreen Chemlawn and switched to organic fertilizer. We have been pleasantly surprised by the results, although I’m sure the amount of rain has helped. Our next green venture will be into the realm of composting, thanks to an article in the San Antonio Express written by Siobhan Walsh titled “**Composting is a Welcome Improvement.**” Siobhan suggests placing a sealed container on the kitchen counter to collect daily organic wastes consisting of “vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds, tea bags, and crushed egg shells.” When it is full, dump it into a shady corner in your backyard. Siobhan doesn’t recommend adding meat products or coated paper, although cardboard toilet and paper towel rolls are fine. Once the mix has had a chance to compost, add it to house plants, landscape, flower and vegetable gardens as a nutrient-filled fertilizer.

Spotted in the Teen Room

Escaping the heat, or helping us become a Green Church?



MORE GREEN NEWS



UPDATE FROM
Downwinders
reducing toxic air pollution in north Texas *at risk*
downwindersatrisk.org 972-330-3185 PO Box 763846 Dallas, TX 75376

June 17th National EPA Hearing on
Cement Plant Pollution

***“More like a 10-hour rally
for clean air than a
Government hearing”***

Approximately 80 speakers

Testimony from 10 am to 8:15 pm

All but 3 speaking slots went to supporters

Best attended of three national hearings!

Whether it was the large and diverse turnout, the support from elected officials, or expectations for a new administration, almost everyone who came agreed that after years of protest, there was something different about this event.

Click here for the full report:

http://campaign.constantcontact.com/render?v=001T_q_u0WvBMEF3syXGMETR7muuXAq5RbGvKieBln0VKU7IBhUlnENF9e08Pj3qidVjpD42n6unhAj2LNBDqKvz54NhXmzg0nNNR5oGZY8VYel%3D



Our Demo Garden

continues to provide information on what to do and what not to do!

DO plant more tomatoes, and earlier. The Sweet 100s and Early Girls have been delicious.

DO plant pumpkins, but later. They're beautiful, but a little early for Halloween.

DON'T make the bed quite as wide next time.

DON'T bother planting lettuce unless you can get it in *really* early.

NO MOW ZONE

In May, orange and yellow predominated in the Wild-flower Meadow; June saw a proliferation of purple!



Checking on
Arbor Day
Plantings

“Many hands make light work”

Thank you to all who helped weed the Labyrinth bright and early on June 27. Our goal was to to start at 7:30am, do what we could, and STOP before anyone suffered heat exhaustion. The good news is that many weeds met their demise, but no volunteers collapsed. The bad news is that many weeds remain. We agreed on several strategies: 1) the more the Labyrinth is walked, the more the paths will stay clear, 2) we can encourage everyone to spend just five minutes every Sunday morning pulling weeds, 3) we can find a way to make tools, gloves, etc. easily accessible. Our next scheduled work day is July 11.



Thank you to Vivian, Kimberlyn, Faye, Bill, Kelley, Dorian, and Kathy for their hard work last Saturday, and to Mark for the earlier application of vinegar. It helped a lot!



And many volunteers make a great service!

Our congregational service on

Sunday, July 26th needs you!

The topic is **Meditation**, and we need volunteers who can lead music, song, prayer, chanting, reflection, or movement as a form of meditation.

We are also seeking reflections about the inception of the Labyrinth and the Meditation Room at UUCOC, as a way to celebrate these gifts. Interested? Please contact

Marcia or Mark by phone or email before July 16, 2009.

The youth and teens will be presenting three musical “meditations.”



Mark: (214) 755-4315 walzact2@aol.com

Marcia: (214) 929-2094 onewithriver44@sbcglobal.net



Look at her now!

Last month's newsletter reported on Charlotte's successful surgery for a ruptured appendix. She'd spent more weeks in the hospital than at home. But look at her now! She made her first appearance at church on Fathers' Day. More than a few happy tears were shed as proud dad Carl gently carried her to the podium and thanked everyone for their support.



Covenant and Activity Groups are a great way to meet people who share a common interest!

Women's Birthday Dinner

Second Tuesday at 6:30pm. Next: **July 14**. Please contact Mary K. at (972) 891-2830 to RSVP.

Out to Lunch Bunch - All are invited for lunch at a local restaurant after Sunday service—look for the crowd gathering outside.

Munch with Mark - 2nd Wed. at noon. Bring your lunch and enjoy some spirited conversation on **July 8**. Mark: (214) 755-4315.

A Course in Miracles - Mondays at 7:30pm in the Faith lobby. Dee Lewis: (214) 337-3946.



NEW COVENANT GROUP! Common Threads

Every Sunday after R.E. in the Hope Chapel's rocking chair circle, Kimberlyn Crowe leads explorations of the art, science, and therapeutic value of knitting and other activities involving needles and thread. Info: (214) 339-0585.

Special Games Night

July 11 at the home of **Gene and Judy Dailey** (off Robinson and I-20 in Grand Prairie). 6:30pm - ? **BRING YOUR SWIMSUIT!** Call Judy to RSVP (972) 264-4298

JULY BIRTHDAYS

**Aria Biehl • Doreen Borden • Judy Dailey
Brenda Fielding • Marjorie Flowers • Scott Grey
Bill Holloway • Marisol Leach
Glorian Mulligan-Stratton • Sajeev Prelis
Mathias Schmassmann • Eileen Winkelman**

Sunday in the Yoga Room

11:15am – noon. No need to sign up — just come!

Stretching On the **first Sunday** of the month, Tanja Evans, former professional dancer/dance teacher, will lead a stretching class. Guaranteed to be easy on joints and muscles!

Singing Bowl Meditation Songwriter, mystic poet, and spiritual folksinger Heather Hood leads a Singing Bowl meditation the **last Sunday** of each month. With her lovely voice and white quartz or Tibetan singing bowls, Heather helps create a meditative space filled with love and peace.

Guided Meditation On the remaining Sundays, Vivian Walz leads a Guided Meditation class. Relax, re-center, de-stress.

Got Blog?

Yes, we do! Go to the church website and look for "CONVERSATIONS" under UU Connections. (Or click on "Got Blog?" above!)

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



A Deepening Group is now forming...

Who can participate?

Anyone interested in learning more about thinking theologically, and willing to commit to a twelve-week group process. Participation in a previous Credo Group is desirable, but not required.

Sign up this Sunday, July 5th in Faith Chapel or via email to **Tara Laxson at taralaxson@hotmail.com.**

What is a Deepening group?

Twelve, *mostly* consecutive weeks, of intentional reflection on religious beliefs. The program will focus on three areas: ethics, building a theology, and understanding major theological controversies.

Where will the group meet? Hope Chapel

When will the group meet?

Each Sunday from **11:15am – 12:30pm, July 12th – October 25, 2009.** **No meeting** on July 26th, August 9th, and September 13, 2009. *One additional Sunday will be reserved for any unforeseen scheduling conflict.* Thirty minutes of childcare / supervision (after Children's RE) will be available to group participants; however, childcare needs must be negotiated at the first group meeting.

Why would I join this group?

To get to know others members of our Oak Cliff church community.
To help form and articulate your personal theological creed.
To learn how your beliefs intersect with the beliefs of other theologians on major issues.

D.H. Lawrence once wrote, *"Whatever the queer little word 'god' means, it means something we can none of us quite get away from, or at; something connected with our deepest explosions."*

I believe that religious education is a life-span process of building our own theology and harnessing those "deepest explosions"...

Marcia Shannon

"Now, don't faint if you read this, Mom, but I went to Bible Study. Mind you this is a UU take on study that's really shared reading and shared impressions with a touch of critical analysis. **NO INDOCTRINATION.** Part "Bible as Myth" and part "Getting to Know You." I liked that there was no judgement, that everyone's contribution to the table was accepted with respect. I also liked that there were many versions of the Bible in use – the language differences were fascinating. Even mild intellectual pursuits like this invigorate me so much that when I got home, I took out all the trash, even though it's really [husband] Fuzzy's job."

From new UUCOC member Melissa Bartell's blog (www.missmeliss.com) after her first UUCOC "Bible Study" class. Used with permission.

**Come see for yourself any Wednesday at 7pm in Hope
The Study of Sacred Texts: The Bible**

**VAUDEVILLE
NIGHT**
is coming soon!
Sunday
August 23
6pm



CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Chalice Lyters

A New Program for our Young Leaders

Many of the children, youth and teens have participated in worship this year by lighting the chalice or holding the Building Fund box.

The Ministry of Religious Education wants to continue to encourage our young people to develop leadership skills. Towards that end, each class will participate in learning and practicing different ways to assist in worship. Traditionally, such young assistants are called acolytes.* Ours will be known as Chalice Lyters.

As the children take on their roles as Chalice Lyters, we hope this leadership experience will give them an opportunity to develop skills in planning, communication, and public speaking, as well as personal characteristics such as dependability, commitment and integrity.

Please encourage your children to participate in the acolyte training experience by attending Religious Education as regularly as possible for the next eight weeks.

At the end of the training period, the Chalice Lighters will be dedicated during a church service and provided with special recognition of their new roles.

* **ac·o·lyte** - *noun*

1 : one who assists a member of the clergy in a liturgical service by performing minor duties

2 : one who attends or assists



RE Theme for July: LEADERSHIP

July 5

A Welcoming Chalice

Bring "found objects" for our chalice art project!

July 12

Children: Using your worship map

Youth: Delivering the Joy

Teens: So you think you're a director?

July 19

Children: Collection box maze

Youth: Lighting the Chalice

Teens: Talking so kids will listen

July 26

Children: Lighting the Chalice

Youth: Collection box maze

Teens: Spinning words and weaving a sermon

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS DURING WORSHIP:

Song written & performed by Teens

Rap written & performed by Youth

August 2

Children: Delivering the Joy

Youth: Knowing your cue!

Teens: Shake, rattle, and roll

RE Teacher's Planning Meeting

Saturday, July 25, 1-3pm

Questions, comments?

Marcia Shannon, M.Div.

Director of Religious
Education (DRE)

(214) 929-2094

onewithriver44@sbcglobal.net

PARENTS:

Do we have your child's Registration Form? If not, see Marcia.



loans that change lives

Kiva's mission is to **connect people through lending for the sake of alleviating poverty.**

Kiva is the world's first person-to-person micro-lending website, empowering individuals to lend directly to unique entrepreneurs around the globe. Read more at www.kiva.org.

Loan Update

The RE Teen Class, with the help of the **Social Justice Ministry**, has been making micro-loans through Kiva.org. Here's some information on three. Loans have also been made to entrepreneurs in Togo, Indonesia, Bolivia, Palestine, and Ghana. Watch for more updates in the near future.

BAKHTIYOR SAIDALIEV – Tajikistan

Saidaliev purchased land in Istaravshan, Tajikistan to cultivate vegetables such as potatoes, onions, carrots. He and his wife sell their harvest at market. The Kiva loan of \$675 (UUCOC/\$25) will be used to purchase seeds and fertilizer, so that the young couple can grow their business.

Loan made: March 11, 2009

Repayment will begin after the fall harvest.



DORA – Peru

Dora and her partner raise citrus fruit, coffee and cacao. The purchase of a car has helped Dora get her harvest to market, and she earns additional income by transporting her neighbors' crops as well. Dora requested a \$325 loan to buy new tires for her car. UUCOC's loan: \$25.

Loan made on March 10, 2009

Amount paid back to date: \$8.35



SISTERS IN BUSINESS GROUP – Sierra Leone

David, the group leader, is married to a businesswoman, and the two have eight children. He sells pepper and palm-oil. His \$1000 dollar loan will be used to buy four bags of peppers and three barters of palm-oil. David says his business is going fine and smooth. To David and his colleagues in the group, an increase in profit means making their lives better. They will be able to take good care of their children, specifically with their educational and nutritional needs, and save some money for emergencies.

UUCOC loan of \$25 made on March 17, 2009. Repaid to date: \$3.13.



Multi-Generational Religious Education Program

Sunday, August 9, 2009 • 11:15am–12:30pm

Gay Revi, a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer and member of our church, will introduce us to **Sierra Leone**. Makeni, Sierra Leone is the location of one of our church's Kiva loans (see above). Gay lived and worked just a few miles from Makeni.

We'll learn about the religion and culture of Sierra Leone, and taste a traditional West African meal: groundnut (peanut butter) stew. Music will feature Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masakela, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Sammy Kamara and the Black Diamonds, and Sangare (she's not just the finest female singer in Mali, but the African Queen of Soul).

Be There or Be Square!



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Claudia Klipp, and Vivian Walz
Past President: Connie Fountain

Peaceable Kingdom

The Journey Home



<http://www.oakcliffuu.org/filmfestival.shtml>



1st TUESDAY SOCIAL ACTION FILM July 7, 2009 • 7pm FREE

Peaceable Kingdom follows the story of a cattle rancher turned vegetarian and the transformation of his ranch into an animal sanctuary. This moving film will make you laugh, cry and re-think your world. The filmmakers provide a factual movie which educates but does not judge.

The film is at times sad, shocking, and depressing, but is ultimately uplifting and inspiring, filled with love and hope for a better world.

Our cosponsors for this film:

[Dallas Peace Center](#), [Spiral Diner & Bakery](#) and
[Animal Connection of Texas](#)

YOUR OAK LEAF CO-EDITORS are Rex Fountain and Kathy Grey.

Please send information to uucocnews@yahoo.com (Rex) with a CC to kmgrey2@tx.rr.com (Kathy).
Next deadline for submissions: July 24 (if at all possible). Thanks!