

**MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN UNIVERSLAIST FELLOWSHIP
GORGE UU NEWS
July 2009**

LEADERSHIP'S LETTER

Hello, compadres of MCUUF!

It is exciting to me to start a new year as your president (again) this month! It feels like some momentum is being generated around several issues and it feels great to be in the midst of all this at this time in our history.

First, I would like to extend a big THANK YOU to our out-going president, Scott Clements, as well as out-going board members, Judith Tenbrook, Rod Krehbiel, Ray Klebba and Debbie Olson; as well as our out-going Worship Committee members Myrna Clements and Don Hardin for all their great work over the last year or more on our behalf. Also, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our out-going administrator, Don Hardin as well. We have some big shoes to fill.

But myself, Joe Usatine, Holly Harrel, Margaret Newcomb, Paul Blackburn and Kristen Dillon as your new board, worship committee head, and administrator, respectively, are looking forward to addressing the issues brought up at the recent Visioning service, which include, but are not limited to, starting small groups (already in process), considering updating the Mission Statement, and considering getting a part-time vs. consulting minister.

And in lieu of what was working up to a fantastic retreat, thanks to Holly Harrel and her great group of volunteers, which has unfortunately been canceled due to unforeseen complications at the retreat site, we will have at least one fellowship-wide get-together for summer fun with a swim party at the Ball's house (date TBA). Things happen, and we deal with them; change is the only constant in life, right? We will look forward to this again next year.

Anyway, I am open to any further suggestions that any of you may have as your president. And I would like to put in another plug that if you value your experience here at MCUUF, that you consider volunteering to help in some small or big way. Together we make this what it is.

So have a great July, hope to see you as much as possible, and let's look forward to a great year together.

Peace,
Cindy Horton

REPORT ON FELLOWSHIP VISIONING MEETING

These notes are a summary of the suggestions and ideas that Fellowship members offered at our recent Visioning Meeting. They also incorporate the feedback from the fall retreat compiled by Bruce Bolme.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

There was broad agreement that our mission statement needs to be revisited and revised. The following specific suggestions were made:

- Incorporate language that refers to acting both within our own group (welcoming, nurturing community) and out in the larger world (justice, environment)
- Try to find a phrase that feels more inclusive than “spiritual beliefs” (“search for meaning” was one suggestion)
- Once it is revised, actually refer to and use the Mission Statement on an going basis

Suggested Action Plan: Solicit a few volunteers to work on revising the mission statement, incorporating the suggestions from the meeting.

2. CONSULTING OR PART-TIME MINISTER

There was broad agreement that we should consider hiring professional ministerial leadership of some type. However, there were different ideas about exactly what the functions of the minister would be—e.g., leading Sunday services, providing organizational help and consultation, providing pastoral care, etc. Since we probably can't afford to “have it all,” it is important that the Fellowship define more clearly what we want in a minister before proceeding.

Suggested Action Plan: (1) Board (or its designee) investigate the options available for the various models of ministry and the likely costs of each (2) Board convene a congregational working session (preferably a structured session with some sort of facilitator) to further explore this issue. The purposes of the meeting would be to review information from the Board about the various possibilities (and associated costs); to develop a prioritized list of expectations/roles for a minister; and to discuss honestly both our hopes and our fears about having a minister. The results of this meeting should hopefully provide clear guidance for future actions.

3. SMALL GROUPS

There was very strong interest in having more small groups of various sorts. Cindy Horton jump-started this process by providing sign-up sheets for many different groups and volunteering to help facilitate their formation. Several other people also volunteered to help lead groups. (Kudos to all!) The concern that the process for starting new groups is too cumbersome has been resolved. There was some interest in having the Grange Hall available for small group meetings.

Suggested Action Plan: Board contact Grange to explore possibility and costs of some extra rental time, perhaps on Sunday afternoons and one weekday evening.

4. COMMUNITY OUTREACH/GROWTH

There was general agreement that growth should not be a goal in and of itself. Rather, it will be the natural consequence of having a vibrant, active, and caring Fellowship. “Keep doing things better and better and growth happens.” However, having a wonderful group is not enough if no one knows we are here and if we are not successful in integrating visitors.

- Community outreach – there were a number of suggestions for how we might become better known in the community, including advertising, newspaper articles, fellowship participation in more community events, a possible scholarship, etc.

Suggested Action Plan: Solicit a group of people interested in forming a Task Force to implement some of these suggested ideas.

- Integration of new people – there were a number of ideas about how to welcome new people offered during the fall retreat, including recognizing visitors on Sunday and having the greeters connect visitors to Fellowship members. Some of these have been implemented, but there is still some room for progress.

Suggested Action Plan: Debbie Olsen has volunteered to head up a group to work on integrating new people.

5. SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES

There was widespread agreement that we are doing a very good job with our Sunday morning services. (Kudos to all of those who have worked to hard to make this happen!) However, there were a few ideas offered.

- Implement one “casual Sunday” per month (no formal structured service)

Suggested Action Plan: Invite those who are interested in this option to meet with Worship Committee (Paul Blackburn) to explore ways in which casual Sundays might be implemented on an experimental basis

- Energize and broaden our music program (ideas from retreat)

Suggested Action Plan: Recruit a music committee to suggest/implement ways to liven up our music and invite guest musicians

6. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There was broad agreement that we are currently doing a good job with our children and youth. (Again, kudos to all of those responsible!) We need to maintain this focus and keep up the good work.

7. PASTORAL CARE

Several people noted that we have some needs in this area (especially since we do not have a minister)

Suggested Action Plan: Recruit several people (preferably one from each geographic area) willing to serve as contact points for members in need of help.

7. FACILITY

Having a building of our own remains an important dream, and we should continue to keep our eyes open for good opportunities. However, there was general agreement that, considering our small size, this is not a realistic priority at the present time.

There were also several overarching themes that cut across several of the categories above.

1. NURTURING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY (with a special focus on being more accessible to young adults) – this has been addressed in the Mission Statement, Small Groups, and Community Outreach/Growth sections. Maintaining our strong RE/Youth program is also relevant here.
2. CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY – like almost all UU groups, we have a strong diversity of opinion as to how “spiritual” we wish to be. There are no right or wrong answers; it is important that all perspectives be honored. This is addressed in the Mission Statement. Small groups provide opportunities for people to explore diverse paths. More explicit attention to this issue might also be a good focus for some of our Sunday morning services.

Finally, the issue of developing a Covenant of Right Relations was an important focus of the fall retreat but did not come up in this meeting. The Board might want to consider whether to pursue this idea.

On a personal note, the members of this committee all felt that the Visioning Meeting was highly productive. (More kudos to those who made it possible!) Having meetings like this on a regular basis (maybe several times a year) might build on this success and help keep us focused and energized.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Olson
David Kao
Don Hardin
Trish Hardin
Elaine Castles
Steve Castles

Editors Note: Special kudos to Elaine Castle for a superb job of taking notes and synthesizing this report. Don Hardin

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Board Meeting Summary for Meeting of June 21st.

Members present: Scott Clements, Nicole Schrankel, Debbie Olson, Bruce Bolme, Judith Tenbrook, Rod Krehbiel, Ray Klebba

Ongoing Business:

1. Pledges: Bruce reported that 106% of the pledges for physical year 2008/2009 have been paid. The fellowship has healthy balances in both checking and savings.

2. 2009 Canvas: Monies currently pledged allow MCUUF to cover its “basic budget.” It does not cover some of the “growth items” that were included in the budget. The new board will be taking a closer look at the issue.
3. Annual MCUUF Retreat: USFS has notified MCUUF they are canceling MCUUF’s 2009 reservation due to renovation delays by USFS. No alternative locations have been found. Based on recommendations from the Retreat Committee the Board reluctantly decided to cancel the retreat for this year while the purpose for the retreat and alternative formats can be looked at. Many Kudos to Holly Harrel and her committee for the hard work they have done to date.
4. Holly Harrel is also resigning as coordinator for the greeter program.
5. The Board voted to create a separate line item for music in the budget. No amount was specified at this time.
6. Visioning Service and Subsequent Action Plan by Follow-up Team (See separate report above) was reviewed and placed on the agenda for the next board meeting as the major agenda item.

New Business:

1. Don Hardin is stepping down as MCUUF Administrator as of July 1st. Kristen Dillon has agreed to take the position.
2. Judith Tenbrook has resigned from Board-Member-at-Large as of July 1st. Judith has put in many years of service and her services will be sorely missed. Thank you. The new board will appoint a replacement.
3. The Board voted up to \$100 to cover incidental expenses of a fellowship gathering at the Ball’s on July 26th. (The Balls have a swimming pool!) Time to be announced.

Next Board Meeting July 12th, Time TBA.

SUNDAY SERVICES

June 28--MCUUF Member **Dr. Rod Krehbiel** will share his perspectives on **The Zen of Music**.

July 5--Join MCUUF members **Kristen Dillon, Paul Blackburn, Rosalie Dillon and Althea Dillon** as they share their last 6 months of adventures living and **working in Ecuador**.

July 12--Join Charter Member Pam Morneault and **Sarouch Kermani** as they share in Sarouch's **perspectives on the Bahai walk of faith**.

July 19—Service topic TBA. Join long time UU member Elaine Castles (recently joined MCUUF) as she leads our Fellowship Worship service for July 19.

July 26--Join Kristen Dillon and Holly Harrel as they share their **experiences at the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly** in Salt Lake City.

CALENDAR

July 26th Fellowship Gathering at the Balls. Time and details to be announced later. (Parkdale).

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Soups On First Sunday of Every Month—Plan to stay for a savory lunch after the service.

Book Discussion Group on Science and Religion: A new series using as the main reference Tanner Edis' book on Science and Nonbelief, 2008. Starting June 24th the Group will meet every 2 weeks at Don and Trish Hardin's home. Topics: Science, Philosophy, and Religious Doubt; An Accidental World; Darwinian Creativity; Minds Without Souls; The Fringes of Science; Explaining Religion; and Morality and Politics. For details and signup call Don Hardin, 509 493 4819.

Spiritual Practice Group—Mondays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The Teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky form the basis for study and discussion. Meeting place is at Tolya's home

Refreshments after service provide a welcome to visitors and give us all a reason to stay around and visit. Call Pam Morneault to arrange a week that would be convenient to host. She will e-mail instructions to you and make sure you have what you need

New Member Opportunity—If you have been considering becoming a new member of our congregation we can schedule a "New UU" introduction session if you will communicate your interest to Cynthia Horton or talk to a Board Member.

FORGOT WHAT IS HAPPENING, WHEN, AND WHERE? Goto <http://mcuuf.org/> .

WHO DO I CONTACT...?

Fellowship Officers

President	Vice-President	Board Secretary	Treasurer
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Board Members At Large

Vacant	Holly Harrel 509 493 2412 hollyharrel@yahoo.com	Margaret Newcomb 509 493 2412 mnewcom@yahoo.com
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Fellowship Administrator

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Coordinators

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vacant

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In Gratitude....

For over three years it has been my honor to serve you as your church administrator. I can say with honesty I enjoyed the experience, the warm support I felt from each of you, and the challenges encountered. As I move on to other projects the freed time will finally allow, it is with a big thank you from the bottom of my heart to each of you members and friends of the Mid-Columbia UU Fellowship. I am also glad my shoes will be capably filled by Kristen Dillon. Don Hardin