



MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

GORGE UU NEWS – March, 2010

WRITTEN OFFERINGS from Rev. Craig Moro

I'd spotted a snake on a rare sunny day last week while I was out on errands. It was warming itself on a walkway, grabbing a few rays (like me) while it had the chance. So, when my son got home from school I asked him if he'd like to go out snake-hunting when he was through with his homework. He's a natural with garter-snakes—I've never seen one escape him since he was five years old. We always let them go.

We set off for some spots on the hill where our neighborhood sits that catch late afternoon sun, but had no luck finding snakes. I suggested that we try the sunny side of the cemetery at the top, where there would be less foot and vehicle traffic to disturb our legless friends. In we plunged, first checking out a service road on the west side near a dumping ground for landscape waste and old grave decorations, the sort of things that families place when they visit. It was just after Valentine's Day, so a number of heart-shaped Mylar balloons had collected there. Some had probably blown in on their own. Plenty of hearts. No snakes.

So we kept walking, now among the graves, taking special note of the dates of birth and death. We found quite a few recent graves of teenagers, lovingly cared for, often with a photo-likeness etched in granite by some clever new process. We had to wonder how they had died. It probably wasn't cobras or kraits. We guessed that for many it was cars, maybe combined with alcohol. They had been 15, 16, 18—just a few years older than Saad. I didn't have to give him any "lessons." Those teach themselves when you're by the grave of a teenager in last sun of a late winter day. If only they could have shed their skins, and come out fresh.

We continued on, noting the name a woman—a doctor—born in the mid-19th century, died in the mid-20th. Here's a headstone shaped like a tree, and Saad says, "I want one like that when the time comes." We talked about how no one knows when that will be. We passed the graves of several infants, and of a man who lived to be one hundred. He says he'd like to be at least 103, so he can live in three centuries: the 20th, 21st, and 22nd. I hope he gets his wish. And I recommend such a walk to everyone who can make it. It may not renew the skin, but it can be surprisingly good for the heart. May yours be refreshed in the coming spring!

In fellowship,

Craig

SUNDAY SERVICES

March 7 – The Evolution of Faith, Anders Liljeholm. Anders is a scientist at OMSI and comes to us as part of our ongoing pulpit exchange with Wy'East Fellowship in Portland. **Youth Worship planning downstairs**

March 14 Getting Your Goat, Rev. Craig Moro. Folktales, like religious scriptures, have a bottomless quality. There's no end to the meanings we can discover, if we keep looking. This morning, let's cross a river with The Three Billy Goats Gruff and see what we can find on the surface, underneath the bridge, and over on the other side. This story is definitely not just for children! (At our "Homily Grist" class after the service, we'll talk more about trolls, goats and bridges as well as about how other folktales can be important resources for life.)

March 21 – Peace Roadshow, Rod Krehbiel et al. A musical extravaganza with multiple musicians singing songs of peace. **Youth Sunday – join us upstairs for the music!**

March 28 – "Overwhelmeditis" Rev. Rick Davis. Rev. Davis coined this word to address this common malady of our times – feeling overwhelmed. Rev. Davis is the minister at the UU Church of Salem, Oregon.

LEADERSHIP LETTER

"What we ardently love, we learn to imitate"- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Hello, fellow MCUUF friends!

I am writing this letter after having returned from a truly lovely weekend at our district (PNWD) annual assembly in the Seattle area. Several of us went and had such an amazing time. While there, we saw things we love and want to imitate, and just came back inspired. It was more than I expected really, and the best ever for me, having been to three others.

We went to workshops about many different topics, we met and talked personally with our new national UUA leader, Rev. Peter Morales, and his sermon was so inspiring. I agree with him that "We can be the religion of our time". And I was privileged to sing in a 45 person choir accompanied by a live band and 3 opera-quality singer soloists with UU music arranged by a local extremely talented conductor/composer.

To me, there is just something really wonderful about singing in harmony in a big choir that makes my heart also truly sing and reminds me that I am part of something spiritually much larger than myself. And being there with 500 other like-minded UU people reminded us also that organizationally we are part of something much larger than ourselves and our little church. Yes, we really are still relatively small, even though we are the largest we have ever been, and our fellowship is now close to triple the size it was when I first started coming here nine years ago. And that encourages me to want to keep pushing forward toward having a place where all the many, many people out there in our community who agree with our values can feel welcome in our nurturing fellowship and we can be more of a force for good in the world. That takes all of us, so if you have not found your place of volunteerism in the church, please let me know as opportunities are arising. And as we start making plans for the new year, my hope is that we continue to imitate that which we "ardently love".

Peace, Cindy Horton

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Earth Day Sunday Service, planned and led by our youth, is coming up **April 18**.

CALENDAR

Newsletter Deadline – March 28 for April newsletter

The next **book discussion** will be **noon, March 7th** facilitated by Robbie Lapp. We will be sharing from the book *Pronoia, How the Whole World Is Conspiring to Shower You With Blessings* by Rob Brezsny. The group will be reading selections from the book during the session and then discussing them, so no homework. Just show up! We will also choose a new book for April.

What: Transition Towns Talk

When: 6 - 8:30 pm, March 10, 2010

Who: David Johnson from Transition PDX

A month ago Portland resident, David Johnson, spoke to a crowd at Springhouse Cellars about Transition Towns, an international movement to increase community resiliency. Now he's back as part of the Hood River Community Education Country Living Series speaking about creating that infrastructure of self-reliance here in the Columbia Gorge. On Wednesday, March 10, his 2 1/2 hour interactive workshop will discuss how we can relocalize many of our vital services and goods, including food, energy and transportation. For more info on transition towns, check out www.thedirt.org/tpdx and www.transitiontowns.org. David will be speaking at the Rockford Grange on March 10 from 6- 8:30. Register for this talk at Hood River Community Education.

Next Adult RE Forum will use the book **Rational Mysticism** by John Horgan as its focus. In *Rational Mysticism*, acclaimed journalist John Horgan embarks on an adventure of discovery, investigating the ways in which scientists, theologians, and philosophers are attempting to formulate an empirical explanation of spiritual enlightenment. The 5 sessions of this next series start March 17th and will continue every other Wednesday morning until May 12th from 10 AM to 12 Noon in White Salmon. The group is open to both members and non-members and there is no charge.

Sunday, March 21, 4:30 to 7:30, "This Emotional Life." Fellowship members, Myrna and Scott Clements will host a viewing of **episode three** of "This Emotional Life" a recent 3-part series produced by the Public Broadcasting System. Episode 3 examines **happiness and resilience** from different vantage points, happiness expert Edward Diener pinpoints some universal traits of happy people, one being religion. Says Diener: "We know that in most societies, religious people are happier than non-religious people. Not everywhere but almost everywhere in the world we found that." The production looks at prayer, meditation and altruism and their effects on the human brain.

What message did Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert and his production team ultimately hope to convey? (1) Social relationships are a key ingredient of happiness. 2) You can't be happy all the time. We have to experience negative emotions as part of being human. But it's HOW we experience negative emotions that count. 3) You can be happier than you are. There are universal traits of happy people that you can implement to raise your happiness level."

This event is potluck. We'll plan to eat about 5:00 and begin the viewing at 5:30. Optional discussion will follow the viewing.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

To all FISH Food Bank volunteers who helped serve during the week of February 8-12, a huge thank you to each and every one of you. Your work is much appreciated by the larger community. MCUUF is scheduled to next serve duty rotation during the week of April 19-23, announcements for sign-ups will be forthcoming.
– Tamara Thiel

We had our **Meetup** on February 2 to see Avatar and discuss it over dinner. Three of us went to the 3 pm showing - Robbie, Pam's husband Mike, and me. We were joined at the Crazy Pepper for supper by Pam and by Leanne Hogie and Mike Hendricks, all of whom had already seen Avatar. At the Crazy Pepper we had a wide ranging discussion of the movie as well as good, general conversation. And the meal was excellent. I can honestly say, "A good time was had by all". - Steve Castles

We enjoyed another **UU Meetup** in February. We met in Hood River at the Crazy Pepper for dinner and then walked down to see "What the Butler Saw" at the Columbia Center for the Arts. The Meetup group consisted of Pam and Michael Morneault, Jane and Tolya Fetisoff, Debbie and Lloyd Olson, Bonnie New, and Elaine and Steve Castles. The food was tasty at the Chili Pepper and the show was wacky and fun. We met Shelly Baxter and Ray Klebba at the show and enjoyed watching Tom Penchoen perform in one of the leading roles in the play. - Steve Castles

Our congregation's website, www.mcuuf.org, is getting livelier all the time. No blogs, no social networking, but a great resource to check out our photo album, a changing selection of writings by members, and upcoming events. Swing by once in a while and check it out!

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Spiritual Practice Group—Note day change! Tuesdays 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. Pam

UU Meetups is a grassroots casual social group meant to nurture friendships and a sense of belonging within the fellowship.

Grassroots means that whoever has an idea for an activity "announces" it by sending an email to the list. Interested participants reply to let the organizer know how many to expect. (Drop-ins are also welcome).

Planning is either in advance or last-minute spur of the moment.

Ideas: A movie, a play, lunch, a cup of coffee, skiing, a visit to a museum, a concert, or charitable and civic activities...

DISTRICT AND UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

West Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has extended an invitation to the women of MCUUF to join them at Menucha Lodge, in the Columbia Gorge, for our **21st annual Women's Retreat** this March 12-14.

Workshops Currently Scheduled (more to come): Gentle Yoga/Pilates - Rachel Walaskay, Writer's Workshop - Sulima Malzin, Knitting and Felting - Gail Lyons, Labyrinth Drawing &, Meditation - Kathleen Axline, Making a Soul Collage - (\$10 fee) Jeanette Parsons & Laurie Smith, Beading - Lee Richmond Panzer (fee),

Women's Circles - Norma Heyser, Watercolor Painting - Pat Gohier, The Art of Storytelling - Janet Liu ...and also... Megan Esler - Maze Walk, Kathy Kennedy - Walk in the Gorge
We will have our traditional "Non-Talent" show on Saturday night
Please respond directly to Loie, if you have questions or need more information.
In Peace,

Come to UU Celebration of Interdependence Camp!

MISSION: To provide UU's from the Pacific Northwest District an affordable and sustainable retreat, in honor of our 7th Principle: loving and caring for our blue green earth. This camp is an opportunity to share multi-generational fellowship, while rekindling our spirits and celebrating interdependence. Rich offerings of music, play, spiritual practices and learning abound in an alcohol-free and electronics-free setting.

WHAT: 3rd Annual UU Celebration of Interdependence Family Camp

WHEN: Fourth of July Weekend, Thursday, July 1 to Sunday, July 4

WHERE: Camp Cedar Ridge in Vernonia, 40 miles west of Portland in Tillamook Forest

WHO: Sponsored by UUCCWC/Hillsboro. Come Join Us! Rev. Sue Ayer, chaplain.

Early Bird Special (April 15-May17 postmarked): \$140 adults/\$145 for elder/accessibility issues housing; \$95, 5-9 yr olds, 4 & under free.

Regular prices (postmarked May 18 on): All adults/Children 10 and older: \$150 Include THREE nights lodging and NINE meals, along with all camp amenities: pool, slip-n-slide, athletic courts, 28 acres on a forested river under magical starry nights.

Registration: For information and registration form: www.uuccwc.org/familycamp or contact Sara Cloe, DRE, at UUCCWC, 503-648-1720.

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