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TO THE GLORY OF LIFE

Dear Friends,
I recently looked on a website that asked people to write in and say what it is that they hope to do in 2007. A lot of the replies were typical:

- "I want to lose weight."
 - "I want to stop biting my cuticles"
 - "I want to get up when the alarm goes off"
 - "I want to make more money"
 - "I want to exercise..."
- A few within the listings were a little more unique:
- "I want magical powers so that I can fix things"
 - "I want to organize a pro-bald apolecia meetup"
 - "I want to 'glamour-bomb' someone"
 - "I want to learn to sky dive and join a sky-diving club"
 - "I want to chat with Maya Angelou about poetry"

But a lot of the things were really very familiar to me:

- "I want to be more honest and feel more authentic in how I present myself"
- "I want to let go of the need to be perfect, admit my mistakes and learn from them"
- "I want to learn how not to hate"
- "I want to risk at least one personal sharing with at least one person every day"
- "I want to make a daily devotional practice out of helping someone other than me"
- "I want to center myself spiritually"
- "I want to find a church"

This last part is a little more familiar because I hear people around UUMAN saying these things. And not just for the new year. That's what they're wanting. And that's what they're looking to their church for.

Attaining magical powers notwithstanding, all of these are attainable and very worthwhile goals. They're the kind of goals that if we just made a little progress on any *one* of them, it would add great value to our lives.

I also see a progression in these lists. It starts out with things that we do for ourselves where we don't need anyone's help. The second list begins to connect with others so that we can help meet our needs. But the last list offers the hint of desire to connect with ourselves to meet other people's needs and serve the common good.

The last list is the mark of a spiritual progressive – someone who is on a path toward growth and service. It is the mark of people who do great things.

There was an interesting thing about the website. All of the goals were things you could click on. When you did, the profile of the person who posted that goal would appear—as well as the profiles of all the people who shared that goal. In that way little communities would appear—all centered upon a common call.

But in the first group, it doesn't seem likely the community that appeared would be able to gel together because they are all focused on their own individual needs. The second group had some common interests but I am not sure the group would really find anything vital enough to hold them together.

But the spiritual progressives... that is a real possibility waiting to happen.

The talk around UUMAN is taking shape as the kind of conversation that leads to some common goals that include personal growth and service to the larger world. I believe if we clicked on any of those goals there would be a good chance that the profile that appeared would be one of us. And I believe that the other profiles that appeared would contain many members of our community. I also believe that there would also appear countless others who have not yet found this



Happenings

Thursday Evening Potluck

Thursday evenings at around 6-6:30 people have been arriving at UUMAN for a weekly pot luck, fun and fellowship. Quite often there are gatherings that happen afterward which give people a chance to talk, learn, think, grow or experience something new. Add to that the kind of culinary diversity you'd expect from our sometimes far-flung pot-luckers, and you just never know what kind of delights you'll be able to sample. So come and indulge!

Success

COOL YULE BAKE SALE FUNDRAISER:

Our December 17th bake sale fund raiser was a smashing success, getting us that much closer to funding the new air conditioner needed for UUMAN. Please take some time to thank Julie Lepp or any of the wonderfully talented and conscientious bakers who contributed to the planning and preparing for this event. Along with much needed funds, we generated a lot of smiles and holiday spirit as well. Thank you Julie and everyone!

place who believe that people like us are out there and goals like ours are possible.

It will take some more conversation to find out what worthy goals we would choose to come together for. But the important thing to know is that what will ultimately unite us is not self interest – not even engaging with others to meet our self interest – although these will be served as well. What will unite us is the desire to come together for personal growth and service to the common good.

I look forward to more of those conversations that will help us see the next steps.

To the Glory of Life.

Notes on Being UUMAN

I was royalty. I had no cares, my every need and want was met. I had many of the finest cars, and many of the finest motorcycles. My house was spotless, and I never had to do a chore. The yard was immaculate. I took vacations that would rival President Bush. I went hiking, canoeing, skiing, sight-seeing, anything my heart desired. I was in charge and I had people to do my bidding. My commands were carried out nearly as fast as I could think them. My people loved and respected me. My every wish became a reality.

And then I woke up.

I found that in reality I was merely president of a congregation. I had no cars, no motorcycles, no maid, no yard man. No vacations. And that thing about my every wish? Not happening.

So where does that leave me as royalty? Not really different from you. Turns out that The People are the real leaders. It's my job to help The People discern their direction and achieve their future.

I also found that The People is us. It is you and me together. We are the ones who will shape UUMAN as we continuously move into the future. And it is up to us to create that future in a manner that serves all of us.

What will it take for us to create our future?

First, a recognition that we are all in this. Most of you have probably heard the story about Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, And Nobody.¹ We are all of those. There is work that each of us must do.

Second, we must make our opinions and desires known. I know we can't meet everyone's wishes, and I know we can't even try if we don't know what they are. We must speak up when asked, and sometimes not wait to be asked.

Third, when our wishes appear to be mutually exclusive, we must engage in those hard conversations openly, honestly, and respectfully. Sometimes we will come up with creative ways to solve our differences, and sometimes we will continue to disagree. In either case, it is important to speak our minds, gently.

The only difference between the president and The People is that I have the joy and privilege of finding out what The People want, and helping them achieve it. I have great faith that the future we create together far surpasses any future that one of us could create. I look forward to seeing you there.

—Marty Harvey, President

Editor's Note

With the new year comes a new regular **Ministry with Children & Youth** section on religious education news, notes and meditations. We can expect about two pages' worth of useful and fun information each issue.



A Happy New Year Note from Toniann

The New Year is a time of transition. Transitional Moments are key points on our life journey. Transitional Moments offer us an opportunity for visioning & reflection. We can appreciate what we have learned & notice where have come from as we plan for & anticipate all the things that we want to experience as we go forward. Our treasured UUMAN Religious Education (RE) Program is going through a major transition as we implement the changes that our community has envisioned for our shared Ministry with Children & Youth. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve the UUMAN community in the new role as Director of Ministry with Children & Youth (DMCY). I am looking forward to working with our amazing MCY Committee to provide guidance & support as we develop our new Vision & Mission.

I am grateful for the continuing work of our RE Council (REC) under the dedicated leadership of Sue Kleinfelter. We are actively seeking new members for the Council who will join us in helping to bring our vision to reality each week. We would love to have YOU on the REC if you can commit to meeting once a month & your share of supporting the work of fellow MCY volunteers & programs. **Please see me, or Sue, if you are interested in serving UUMAN in this way.**

As I prepare to take on my new role & duties, I am also saying goodbye to my current job as UUMAN's Youth Director. I have treasured my experiences with our Youth, their families & Advisors for the past 5 years...we have come a long way together! Words cannot sufficiently express my gratitude and love for you all!

As I look forward into this New Year, I find myself ready to make room for new experiences with the many gifts for transformation that they will bring...

Most of all I am looking forward to a New Year that offers new ways for us to be TOGETHER as we go from strength to strength in this, our shared Ministry!

—Toniann Read



'TWELTH NIGHT' TEACHER & ADVISOR APPRECIATION PARTY!

Saturday January 6th (7.00pm)

at the home of Kim Palmer & Marty Harvey

The UUMAN RE Council invites all RE Teachers & Youth Advisors, Childcare staff and Volunteers to an evening of celebration & appreciation for the many gifts we bring to our shared Ministry with Children & Youth.

MCY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Jan 6 - '12th Night'

Teacher/Advisor Party!

Jan 7 - C-MCY Meeting (6.a30-8.30pm) DH

Jan 9 - RE Council Meeting (7-9pm) DH

Jan 12 -14 - MSD YAC Meeting

Jan 14 - UUMAN YAC Meeting (12.30pm)

Jan 19 – Jr Youth 'Open Door' (7-10pm)

Jan 21 – 'Secret Friends' Kick-Off!

Jan 27 – MSD RE Summit (Jackson, MS)

REGISTER NOW! Jr Youth Mountain Con (Feb 2-4)

Been to these web sites?

My current short list of bookmarked web pages includes:

www.uua.org

www.uua.org/yruu

www.uua.org/clf

www.freechild.org

www.SpiritualParenting.com

www.handinhandparenting.org

www.consensual-living.com

www.suelebeau.com

www.teachingtolerance.org



“SECRET FRIENDS” BEGINS JANUARY 21!

Each year UUMAN folk get together to participate in a very special program that we call ‘Secret Friends’. Adults & Young People sign up & each one is given a ‘*secret identity*’. Matches are then made, we have a Kick-Off, and then the fun really begins! Over the next 4 weeks ‘Secret Friends’ exchange letters & small treasures with one another...it is so exciting to come to UUMAN on Sunday morning & check your mailbox to see what surprise is waiting there for you...and what fun to deliver your notes to your friend, telling all about yourself, such a wonderful mystery! Then, after 4 weeks of mysterious messages, we gather together after our Sunday Morning Worship & RE classes for a grand celebration where all is revealed!

Join the fun & register by January 7th...

You can find *registration forms* at the MCY Table outside the Sanctuary in Fellowship Hall or ask any of the ‘Secret Friends’ team for help or information.

Many Thanks to Laura Keck, Kirsten Moore, Dee Ruff & Naomi Braff for weaving their magic for us this year!

Mid South District RE Summit **Saturday January 27th** **(Jackson, MS)**

“The Gifts We Bring – The Gifts We Receive” **Lessons from the LREDA Fall Conference...**

This will be a time for sharing our stories and learnings around issues of diversity and plurality in our congregations. How do we acknowledge our differences without prejudging and stereotyping? How do we work together to create spaces within our congregations where everyone can feel invited to share the unique gifts they bring?

In many of our congregations, Children, Youth and Families are our most diverse population. So it is very appropriate for us as Religious Educators to work with others in our UU community (like Justice, Membership and Welcoming Committees) to not pretend our ethnic, gender, affectional and ability differences don’t exist but learn to appreciate them for the strengths they can be. Because our work for justice and plurality crosses into all areas of congregational life, **consider bringing teams to the RE Summit this year** to spread the learning around and discuss ways to integrate practices into the whole life of your congregation. Religious Educators, Volunteers, Ministers, Presidents, Worship and Membership Committee chairs, as well as Youth, Teachers and Justice Leaders are all invited!

—Jessica York (MSD RE Trustee)

MLK Day March

Unitarians to Lead the Faith Contingent and Honor Civil Rights Martyrs

Organizers of the annual Atlanta MLK Jr. Day March have selected the Unitarian Religious Community to lead off the Faith contingent this year. We will be gathering at Peachtree and Ellis streets at **12:30 p.m. on Monday, January 15th**. We will be carrying our banners and pictures of Civil Rights martyrs Rev. James Reeb and Viola Liuzzo, both of whom died during the Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March in 1965. Please join in this Intergenerational Memorial.

For more information, contact Rev. Marti Keller at mkeller@uuca.org



Global Giving: our Social Action Committee's Heifer connection

Respecting the human dignity of every person, supporting community development, caring for families and gender equity, caring for the environment and building a world of peace and justice for all people. Sound like basic UU principles? Actually, these are the key components of an amazing non-profit organization called Heifer International which was founded in 1944 by Church of the Brethren educator Dan West. About a decade earlier, West served as a relief worker in the Spanish civil war ladling cups of milk to displaced families. Forced to decide who would receive the limited rations and who wouldn't—literally, who would live and who would die, West was profoundly affected by two realities: Relief aid was never enough, and that handouts robbed the recipients of their dignity.

Following in the "Teach a man to fish" philosophy, West developed the "Not a cup, but a cow" concept in which Heifer provides families with livestock and training that allows them to feed and care for themselves. Today, Heifer operates in 50 countries and plays a special role in gender equity. According to UN statistics, women constitute 70% of the world's poor, own less than 1% of the world's property; earn 1/10 of the world's income but do 2/3 of the world's work. Recognizing that women usually tend the family's livestock and crops, Heifer provides hundreds of women with resources and training they would not normally have access to so that they may equally share in the benefits of ownership and income. But it doesn't end there, Recipients agree to share some of the offspring of their animals with others in need through a requirement Heifer calls "Passing on the Gift". It multiplies the benefits of every donated animal while making program participants equal partners with Heifer in ending hunger and dependency on relief aid. Heifer International has provided millions of alpacas, yaks, trees, honeybees and a multitude of other animals and crops to needy families and communities anywhere from Nepal to Brooklyn, N.Y. Realizing the scope of this organization is enough to make you hear strains of "We are the World" in your head and believe that Heifer International might realize their ambitious goal to completely end poverty and hunger across the globe.

UUMAN heard the call for helping Heifer fulfill the quest started by Dan west over 60 years ago. We purchased rabbits, llamas, trees, goats, sheep, heifers, ducks, honey bees, chicks and geese. Thanks to all of you who helped: the Creechs (2 purchases), Pat Shea, the Hortons, Margot Harding, Alice Caldwell, the RE Council, Kim Reid, the Lees, the LoBraccos, the Woestens, the McMahills, the Danielaks and the Popp family. There will be less hunger in the world because of you. Thanks!

—Jennifer Tangney

New Year's Evolution, or: Taking ourselves seriously

New Year's Eve brings with it the tradition of hoisting our glass, watching the ball drop, stealing a kiss at midnight, and often a "to-do" list for the upcoming year that reflects our yearning to grow and become better people. It is with a sense of hope and optimism that we make these pledges to change ourselves and lives for the better; even when we know our track record on keeping resolutions might not be that stellar.

The problem with keeping resolutions is not that we are not earnest in intent in making them, rather, it is more a matter of framing expectation so what we attempt is realistic. If you have never exercised, resolving to become an Iron Man might be a stretch and doomed to fail; yet resolving to start exercising a few times a week is practical and reasonable. We must also take the promises we make to ourselves as seriously as those we make to others. We would not want to suffer the consequence of breaking our word to another, yet we don't hold our own pledge to ourselves in such high regard. Another problem is that we tend to make negative resolutions—such as "I will not.." or "I'll stop.."; instead of framing our objective in a positive action. Instead of pledging to "not get stressed out"; try listing the actions you will take to lessen stress—such as meditation.

Yet even if the effort does not last past February, making resolutions allows us to take stock of where we are and what we hope for. While the most common resolutions usually involve losing weight, exercise and spending more time with our family; it is truly an opportunity to connect with our spiritual self as well. Issues such as inner peace, faith and social action can come to light. It can offer us the chance to renew our commitment to our own inner growth as well as helping those around us.

To truly appreciate the resolution making process, one can look back at its origins. The first of January was sacred to god Janus and janua means "the gate that openeth the year." The God Janus was revered by the Romas as the "God of beginnings". He was the presiding deity over the month of January. Janus was represented as a double faced God—with one old face and one young—signaling the past and future.

(continued on pg 6)

UUMAN TIMES

Editor:
Dirk Bender

Assistant Editor:
Dave Lakly

Contributors:
Greg Ward, Lars Olsson, Lisa Macy, Marty Harvey, Joan Armstrong, Toniann Read, and others

Submissions:
We welcome all types of newsletter submissions. Please send us your articles, editorials, announcements, poetry, creative writing, or anything else! Please send an email to our newsletter editor, at newsletter@uuman.org



UUMANTIMES is the monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North Congregation.

Minister's Office Hours

Greg wants a chance to speak with everyone at UUMAN. Although he doesn't have specific office hours, he is available to meet with people every day of the week, except Mondays and Fridays, at a wide variety of times. You are welcome to call him between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. at 770.754.5848 to make an appointment. (In case of emergency, you are encouraged to call 678.849.4844 any time of day or night).

We're online!

at:

www.uuman.org



UUMAN
11420 Crabapple Road
Roswell, GA 30075

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Worship Schedule

January 7th Randy Blasch and Kelsey Bogue

“What Was I Thinking”

Reflections of a man with gifts to share, searching for the best place, the best time and the best way to share them.

January 14th Rev. Greg Ward and Shelley Serdahely

“Spiritual Growth and the Doppelganger Dilemma”

With the new year come new resolution and new hopes. And yet, inevitably, we will face the challenge of the same old problems. Oftentimes recurring problems are just old hurts or traumas that haven't been healed. In this sermon we will explore how to heal the wounds that keep us stuck.

January 21th Rev. Greg Ward and Toniann Read

“The Secret Friends of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”

Whatever we can say about what was accomplished in the civil rights movement, we can say that Dr. King did not do it alone. Many people came together and offered many sacrifices. Some lost their lives – including two UUs. This service is about them and how their role had a direct effect on changing the law and our way of seeing the beloved community. We will also kick off our Secret Friends Program

January 28st Rev. Greg Ward and Suzanne Rezelman

“We are Human First”

There are many ways – many perspectives – from which human beings have sought to make meaning from existence. We have made Gods and made wars, created art and trained our mind to see things in holistic or even holy ways. But oftentimes we have made the mistake of overlooking our first calling: to first be honestly, fiercely and compassionately human.

Needed—A few more good Chalice Choir voices Come, come, whoever you are. (And join our half-day retreat)

We are blessed to have an unusually dedicated and talented group of singers who make up the Chalice Choir. Week after week this group of some 30 members comes together to prepare and present choral music for worship services and for special musical events. We keep the door of membership wide open as there is always room for new voices. Some previous singing experience and the ability to read music are both desirable but not mandatory. January is a great time to visit the choir since a whole new season of music will be started.

On Saturday morning, January 6th, a half day retreat will be held for returning and prospective new members. The morning will start at 10:00 am and will conclude around 2:00 pm. Lunch will be available for a small contribution.

Please, feel free to join the choir for this short retreat and/or drop in to a rehearsal during January to see what the “buzz” is about. The choir rehearses either at 8:45 am on the Sunday mornings it is scheduled to sing, or at 6:30 pm on Sunday evening when the choir has not sung that morning. For more information, call Randy Wilbur at 770-814-8800 or email at randywilbur@remax.net

NY's Evolution continued from pg 5

The tradition of making resolutions dates back to the Babylonian period, when the most popular resolution made was to return borrowed farm equipment.

While our resolutions have evolved over time from returning farm equipment to spiritual and physical self improvement, the importance and difficulty of self discipline remain the same. Yet we strive ever hopeful, towards another new year and a better place. Good Resolutions are mind painted pictures of good deeds: fancies, day-dreams, whisperings of the Buddhi to the Manas. If we encourage them they will not fade away like the dissolving mirage in the Shamo desert, but grow stronger and stronger until one's whole life becomes the expression and outward proof of the divine motive within.

—Patty Odom