



In this issue:

Cover Letter	1
Sabbatical Corner	2
Happenings	2-4
Sabbatical Update	3
UUMAN Writes	4
Nominating Update	4
Signs	5
Governance Policy	6
President's Letter	6
RE News	7
Youth News	7
Worship Schedule	8

TO THE GLORY OF LIFE

For Everything There is A Season

I've been with UUMAN nine months now and, I must say, I am REALLY looking forward to the Summer. Armed with a new landscape plan, I intend to spend some time in my yard. There will be a couple of baseball games I've promised myself, a Santana concert and the bicycle will definitely come down off the hooks in the garage. And I've saved the best for first: a trip to Ireland with my sister and my daughters in early June.

With the change of the season my work will shift as the religious education program shifts gear. I'll be around, of course, but the Sunday responsibilities will be shared with the RE Committee and I will be free to do program development and some writing, things I really love to do.

There was a time when our UU churches closed for the summer and ministers and staff were not to be found. That practice was a holdover from a time in New England when families packed up and went to the Cape for the summer with dad joining them on the weekends. Many of us still travel during the summer, but we've learned that our church needs to be there with doors open because we need it even in the summer and there are others who need us. The families that we are saying goodbye to this month will be visiting UU churches in July and August in other communities. Let us hope they find open and welcoming congregations. The new families that will find their way to our door this summer will find a relaxed bunch meeting at 10:30 a.m. Coffee Hour will feature lemonade and Sunday School attire is often swimsuits.

Swimsuits, by the way are optional attire for the adults even on Water Days. Summer Fun will run from May 29th to August 8th and will have a camp-like atmosphere with lots of outdoor activities and singing. I hope

those of you who are making your summer plans now will consider signing up for a couple of days of Summer Fun at UUMAN. I think you will find it enormously rewarding if you have not done it in awhile. Personally, I have found that children always challenge me to live in the present. They want you to be with them in the here and now. Their uninhibited expression of affection and their willingness to receive it can pull you directly into the moment and invite you to celebrate life where it is to be found. This is not to be missed!

Below is a prayer (excerpted) by my colleague Elizabeth Parish that conveys my wishes for all of us this summer.

O spirit of baseball, of sunny days and endless summers, spirit of hope and humor be with us always even in the off season.

Remind us to keep our time open-ended – not to rush our plays too much, or those of others either. Teach us to relish our food, and to not focus too much on the scoreboard.

Remind us that we are forever children, that we always have one more base hit left in us, that summers always begin full of hope and endless if we want them to, that we can always thrill to the sounds of the game and the warmth of sunlight on our face.

And in all our forays into the world, guide us through the obstacles we must face, and bring us safely back home again, to people who greet us with open arms, claps on the back and even high-fives.

May it be so for you,

Amen

Joan



Happenings

Cystic Fibrosis Walk:

It's not too late to donate or sign up to walk in the charity walk at the Atlanta Zoo on May 21st at 8:30am. Donations should be made out to CFF (Cystic Fibrosis Foundation) and can be turned into Jessica Baker or Patty Odom. Jessica Baker is heading the walking team. Contact her for more info at jessa@uuman.org

Letter from the Editor

This month we have a new member's ceremony, and while this is always an exiting and important event at UUMAN (one that should remind us to be mindful & welcoming); I'd like to advocate that we also pay homage to the older members of UUMAN. These are the people that built UUMAN with only a dream and the willingness to sacrifice, work hard and stumble forward through trial and error. If not for these founding fathers and mothers; there would be no UUMAN community to welcome newcomers into today. Newness is always exotic and exciting, but we can learn much from our history and from those who helped shape it.

Growth is a wonderful thing; but not at the expense of forgetting our roots. So as you set out to welcome the newbies, also take a moment to reconnect with the familiar "oldtimer", who may be taken for granted. I give to them my personal thanks for planting the seeds that blossomed into such a wonderful community!

Patty Odom

Sabbatical Corner

It is so hard to believe, but we are halfway through Greg's Sabbatical and it will soon end in July. Boy Howdy, do we have work to do. We have two (2) meetings to attend as a congregation.

I recently asked for convenient (is anything convenient any more?) dates for a meeting between Greg, the congregation and a facilitator in August. I'm afraid that I characterized it rather light heartedly, as I am wont to do, but this is no "Pie and Hi" meeting. At this meeting we will do some MAJOR community work about re-integrating Greg back into UUMAN. What has he learned? What have we learned? How has Greg changed? How have we changed? How is our relationship different as a result?

This is what we must do. We have spent months preparing for Greg's leaving: taking on all his responsibilities as our own, and becoming, within the Church, independent. Now it's time to figure out what we want our future relationship with Greg to look like. We won't go back to the old same-o same-o because it isn't the same. We are different. And he will be different.

But before we meet with Greg, we need to talk among ourselves about his imminent return: about our experience, how it has changed us, what we missed, what we learned, what we are looking forward to with Greg's return, and so forth.

Look for upcoming announcements for a Town Hall meeting in June or July and attend that meeting. Look for the announcement of the facilitated meeting sometime in August.

When I was younger I lived in Honolulu and during that time we were in (another unjust) war (only a little editorializing here) with Viet Nam. It was easy to meet young men in the military. It was common knowledge that the guys in the submarine section of the Navy had high divorce rates. Aren't we a bit like those families? The men, away under the sea and incommunicado for months at a time, (Greg on Sabbatical) came back to families (our Congregation) that had closed ranks behind them. The women (all of UUMAN), out of necessity, became stronger and took on all the duties of the household (Church). It took work and love to get back to a new place of cooperation and respect.

Let us work together.



Sabbatical Update

“I found him, Nancy!” he shouted, as though he were part of a rescue party sent to save the lost. I was out flying a kite on the shore of Kiawah Island.

She and Ralph had, apparently, been watching me from their balcony and when they noticed that I was making my way back on the trail that led past their house, Ralph came outside. He found me as I wandered past.

I hadn’t realized I was lost, but after accepting his invitation to join the two of them for a drink, realized I was, after all. I had never been in an 11,000 square foot mansion that overlooked a beach-front golf course. It dawned on me that I had been searching for something on this sabbatical. I suddenly wondered if this were it.

When I began the sabbatical, I was aware of a yearning. Something calling me. I thought it might be just the feeling of wanting to get away. Wanting to surround myself with comfort or something exciting.

Going with that thought, I set out traveling at the beginning of my sabbatical. Beaches were calling me. And prior to Kiawah, I found myself on another one - one very unlike the resort-like setting of Kiawah. Sayulita, MX resembled more of a third world town.

There, on the beach in Mexico, I thought I would find contentment. And I did. Except for reading a very profound and disturbing book called “Confessions of an Economic Hitman.” The book is the true, remorseful account of how an economic forecaster, worked for monstrously huge multinational companies, went into third world countries, lured them with visions of surrounding themselves with American-type-wealth, saddled the countries with insurmountable debt and then assumed a controlling interest of their resources – including most of the people – until they became richer and richer, while the countries he worked with became poorer and poorer.

I found that, even in an incredible place like that beach in Mexico, it was hard to be content knowing such unfairness was at

work. I had almost chalked it up to my inability to let go – a difficulty in leaving behind my connection to work – and the people doing it – the curse of an over-active social conscience and the people it connected me to.

And then I entered the world of Ralph and Nancy: a world that knew every comfort imaginable, every convenience, every luxury, including beautiful décor and beautiful views from every room in the house. They lived a life that lacked nothing, or so it would seem. Except that they were out trolling for company. Looking for connection.

In the course of our visit in the Kiawah estate, I discovered that Ralph had spent thirty years working for one of the very same multinational companies profiled in the book – for the greatest part, as an officer in the company. I wondered if the good life had come at the expense of connection. At the expense of his conscience.

My initial impulse was to judge Ralph; condemn him for making personal luxury out of other people’s labor. But it dawned on me that was too easy. We were more alike than that. We both saw the other as a little lost. We both have spent our lives looking to surround ourselves with something that brought comfort. We both still yearned for connection. And while sharing a glass of wine across a small counter, we both were looking for ways to bridge an enormous gap. We had just chosen different ways. And held different perspectives.

One of the things I walked away with that evening is the realization that I didn’t want to find perfect contentment if it means getting further away from my conscience. There is no distance – and no fortress – that will keep us from what our lives are trying to remind us – that everything we do is about being in relationship. No one is entitled to lord over another – in privilege or in judgment. No one ever earns enough to exempt them from the need for connection – not in wealthy retirement. Not even on sabbatical.

Happenings

YOGA with Lisa @ UUMAN

On-going yoga classes in our beautiful sanctuary. Develop strength, flexibility and balance in mind and body. Learn poses, breathing & relaxation techniques & meditation to reduce stress, calm your mind, strengthen your immune system, and find more joy in life! Beginners & intermediates; men, women & teens. Newcomers welcome anytime. Sunday 4:45-6 p.m., Wednesday 10-11:30 a.m. 8 classes for \$80. Contact lisa@uuman.org or 770-395-7166

Happenings

Mindful Meditation

You deserve a few minutes to sit still; to turn off the phone; to stop thinking about what you have to do next; to be in the present moment; to let other people’s needs wait a while. You deserve to be mindful for a few minutes. I’d like to invite you to be still with us every second and fourth Thursday night at 7:30pm in the sanctuary. You don’t have to bring a thing. Just you. See you there! Merri Beth



Happenings

UUMANDRUMS

Classes will be 1st & 3rd Sunday's from 1:30-3:30 with practice on alternate Sunday's. Class price \$15. Loaner drums will be available.

Pamela Reich –
770-552-2526

uumandrums@uuman.org

Contribute!

If you are interested in submitting a piece for UUMAN Writes (creative writing, letter to the editor, etc.), please contact **Patty Odom** or send and email to newsletter@uuman.org.

UUMAN Writes

True Community Care

I recently encountered a bump in the path of my life. A quagmire might be more of an accurate description; the kind that threatens to suck you under forever. My latent depression and anxiety reemerged from its slumber with a vengeance.

As a result, I stopped attending services at UUMAN and retreated like a wounded animal under my bed hissing; daring those that love and care about me to risk reaching out and being bitten or scratched. I thought that I could not walk through these doors with the fissures in my life so blatantly exposed and face all of you. I was afraid of disappointing everyone and of being rejected in an already vulnerable state.

Yet once again, you proved to me how foolish those fears were. Through my unofficial "care circle", I received emails, calls and invites to lunch. I received supportive words reassuring me that I was missed at UUMAN and that my role here mattered. That my work was important and valued. That I mattered to you. I received offers to try yoga and meditation, to help ease my burdens. Probably the most touching thing was that those of you who have battled depression or anxiety, shared your personal experiences and advice with me. You reminded me that this is a community that accepts me as I am- whether I am wounded or able to

contribute 100%.

This is not only the ideal of UUMAN, but of Unitarian Universalism itself. The 7 principles reflect that. Giving care and outreach in the good and bad times. Not just grouping ourselves with those who are in our personal demographic or those who share our common interests, but breaking down the walls and labels that separate us all and coming together on the grounds of our inherent humanity. Reaching out and being mindful of all around us.

Supporting each other's weaknesses and lending our collective strength to one another and our community.

As I work my way out of my personal quagmire and back onto my true path, I know that I do not walk it alone. And I thank this community for its care and for its members, who struggle so valiantly to live up to their ideals.

"The only reason we don't open our hearts and minds to other people is that they trigger confusion in us that we don't feel brave enough or sane enough to deal with. To the degree that we look clearly and compassionately at ourselves, we feel confident and fearless about looking into someone else's eyes."

-Pema Chodron

patty@uuman.org

Nominating Committee Update

The Nominating Committee (Cliff Brown, Bill Horton, and Dave Lakly) have been tasked with proposing a slate of candidates to serve as leaders under our new organizational structure. If the new bylaws are passed, the following people have agreed to run for office:

President: Kirk Bogue

Vice-President: Marty Harvey

Past-President: Bev Jordan

Treasurer: Steve Shanahan

Secretary: Julie Wooley

Operations Team Chair: Open



Signs

I'm a very visual person. My brain thrives on the written word, diagrams, symbols, pictures and images. As such I find it near impossible to pass any billboard, advertisement or sign without reading its message. That's quite a task in our society that throws messages at us from every angle and at every opportunity.

I don't need to go far outside of my home before I am confronted by such messages. When I take my dog for a walk around my community apartment complex an assortment of bumper stickers are on display for my brain to feast on. Astonishingly I can see the political affiliations, religious beliefs, music tastes, supported charities and occasionally the sense of humor that my neighbors are passionate about; Passionate enough to pronounce on their vehicles; Some even in their apartment windows. Why is this astonishing?

Well, most of my direct contact with my neighbors takes the form of passing by each other with casual greetings and occasional chats about the cuteness of my dog or how much my daughter has grown. It's extremely unlikely that any of my neighbors would directly enter into a dialog with me about anything deeper than the weather. Yet splashed on their cars are large, important issues that they feel a desire to share, to proclaim, to voice.

Perhaps it's even a need; A need to share one's beliefs and opinions. I think we all share that desire or need to announce, "Here I am! This is what I believe in!" It's a way in which we establish our relationship to the world and to others. It's an attempt to connect, I believe.

Now as interesting and varied as my neighbors' bumper stickers are, my journey to Church on a Sunday, appropriately one might think, offers me an intriguing array of theological messages. On my ten-minute car trip, I pass approximately six Churches before arriving at UUMAN. The majority of these Churches are in the habit of posting questions or statements designed to communicate their beliefs. So it seems its not just individuals who possess this desire to share their beliefs. Our religions are also desperate to find a forum to state, "Here we are! This is what we stand for!" Now, let me tell you, some of these Church messages make me want to screech to a halt, turn the car around and march into their place of worship and demand to know what they were thinking when they posted such a statement. Others make me shake my head or roll my eyes. Some make me ponder. Some make me want to stop by and discuss how they came to these beliefs. Some make me want to go and listen to a sermon to find out if they are after the shock value or genuinely embracing of such beliefs. Either way, I'd prefer it if I had an opportunity or forum to respond or discuss these theological offerings. This method of

communication falls short, in my opinion. It feels disconnected, yet I can't quite explain why. Perhaps because I am usually left with more questions than understanding from the messages posted.

Having been jolted into several reactions from these proclamations, I arrive at UUMAN. As I pull into the car park I often think how nice it would be if our billboard contained some kind of response to the latest round of religious announcements along Crabapple Road. Especially since we're at the end – it seems fitting that we should have some clever piece of scripture that embraces and encompasses all of the ideas presented (in line with our inclusive ideals) yet challenges them also (in that wonderful paradoxical way that we do).

Or perhaps we should just have a sign that says, "If the previous announcements weren't a good fit for you, perhaps we will be."

But as I examine the front of our place of worship and community, I see little of the "Here we are!" messages. We have a few words of scripture, which does little to communicate what we believe in. We have our beautiful rainbow flag, which is and can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. So why are we lacking in adornments which illustrate our beliefs? Are we simply shunning the tradition, popular methods adopted by religion because we like to be different? Perhaps, since swaying from the norm is usual for us. In our attempts to please and embrace everyone are we reluctant to display specific beliefs? I hope not, as we do cherish some beliefs that we hope everyone can embrace. Or perhaps there is another reason: Perhaps we do such a great job of sharing, exploring and examining our beliefs within UUMAN that we feel no need or desire to display them in the way our neighborhood churches do.

Maybe our covenant groups, discussion groups, committees and coffee times are enough to satisfy our "Here I am!" urges. I like the idea that our communication methods are healthier and more satisfying than writing on a billboard. I hope its true.

Yet there is still part of me that would like to see UUMAN promote itself more prominently. Mainly because I'm proud of what we stand for; I am excited by it. We may be a small fish in the large Crabapple pond, but we're a fish with big, great ideals and beliefs that has the potential and capability of growing limbs and climbing out of the pond.

Kara Sweeney



Governance Policy

The Governance Committee held two meetings in April to inform and gather input from the Congregation on the potential new governance structure. The first meeting focused on the Operational Parameters, how the Board will interact with the Congregation and the Congregation's structure. The second meeting was a presentation of "A Week in the Life of the New UUMAN" – a series of vignettes each followed by an explanation and question/answer period. The vignettes were designed to show how UUMAN would operate under the new governance structure. After the vignettes, the participants broke up into small groups to discuss the Complaint/Inquiry Process, and the meeting concluded with a longer question and answer period.

Now, there are but a few meetings left. On Sunday, May 15th, at the Congregational business meeting, the Congregation will participate in a mediated discussion about all of the changes being proposed. We will then schedule a second

Congregational Meeting at which we will vote on a new set of bylaws and then, if approved, a new slate of candidates to fill the new structure. If adopted, the new governance structure will take effect on July 1, 2005.

LOTS of information on the potential new governance structure is available at the Governance table in Fellowship Hall and on our website www.uuman.org. Please be sure to read the draft bylaws, the draft policies, and the draft organizational chart and job descriptions. There are also many other useful materials! As always, if you are confused, have questions or concerns, or positive feedback, you may contact any Board member or any member of the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee includes Robyn Henry, Karen LoBracco, Dave Lakly and Lisa Haynsworth.

Presidential Musings

APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS...

My mother used to tell me that when I couldn't go outside to play on those April days when it was cold and rainy. My contention was that nobody appreciated the March and April flowers; what was so special about those May flowers? And why was April warm on one day and cold the next? And why does April not have an abbreviation? During my string of annoying questions my mother would usually turn up the radio and start singing her favorite Roger Miller song, "Dang Me" and just smile and tell me to go play with my dolls.

But the point remains that April is a weird month. One day we're in short sleeves and the next day we're lighting the pilot light on the furnace again. On the one hand, the world is blooming again and turning green and beautiful. On the other hand, nobody can breathe freely and our eyes feel like they're filled with sand. We open the sun roof on the car, but then the upholstery is covered with yellow pollen.

I think what my mother understood then, and what I'm just beginning to fully learn, is that suffering and bliss walk together hand-in-hand. Heck, the only way we can make it through the agony of allergy season is by enjoying the breathtaking beauty that Mother Nature shows us.

Suffering and bliss walk together in our congregation too. Sometimes the only way we can see the sun is by looking through the pollen-filled haze. But the sun is there, and so are the flowers. We just have to suffer through the sneezing and maybe take an antihistamine or two.

Okay, so my metaphors often fall apart. I mix them up in a big bowl and then see what comes out! Y'all are probably used to that by now. But I think you get the point. Please come to the May 15th congregational meeting. Robert E. Smith, Ph.D., Healthy Congregations Consultant for the MidSouth District will be helping us name some of the issues that have arisen as a result of this very busy year!

The meeting starts at 1:00. Bring food. There will be childcare available. This is important - - please be there.

Your interim president,
Merri Beth Stephens



RE Registration, Kids Together Days and Summer Fun Information

Summer Fun will run May 29th to August 8th, at 10:30 a.m. consecutive with the worship service. No need to register for Summer Fun, but we do need you to sign up to help. Lessons and activities are fun and simple, but you could get wet! Sign up at the RE Help Desk.

May 29th and July 3rd are Kids Together Days. On these days we will make lunches for MUST Ministries to be distributed to children in Cobb County who usually rely on the availability of school lunches.

Religious Education Registration for 2005-06

RE Registration for next year begins next Sunday, May 1st and will run through the month of May. We will also be taking applications from those adults who wish to teach next year.

This is what's new with RE Registration:

1. Teachers (current and potential) are encouraged to register their children during the first two weeks of May. Registration will be open to all families on May 15th and through the end of the month. Thereafter the registration form will be available on the website, www.uuman.org

2. Classes will be limited to prevent overcrowding. We anticipate having plenty of room for our children and youth, but early registration will ensure that families have ample opportunity to choose which session their children attend.

3. Although the registration fee remains the same this year - \$40 per child - there will be a limit of \$120 per family.

Questions? Please contact Joan Armstrong or a member of the Religious Education Committee.

RE Calendar

May 1	RE Registration begins
May 29	Summer Fun begins with Kids Together Day
June 12	Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
July 3	Kids Together Day
July 30	Teacher Orientation for new program year
Aug 14	Return to two services / Ingathering Sunday

Youth News

UUMAN Youth Graduation Congratulations!!!

- Zach Anderson
- Lauren Bogue
- Eleanore Busse
- Christina Cambre
- Neil LoBracco
- Kristen Ross

We love you and are so proud of you!

Also Farewell and Best Wishes for a happy move to

- Jimmy Costello,
- Casey & Shannon Clowes
- Sandon Hamnett
- Ben Howard

Our love goes with you...

We will miss you ALL!



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

Our minister, Rev. Greg Ward, is on sabbatical until the end of June. When he is here, he does not have specific office hours; he is available to meet with people every day of the week except Fridays, at a wide variety of times by appointment. While he is away, we will contact him in the case of dire emergencies (deaths or death-threatening or severe illnesses). For other care needs, please contact your Care Circle coordinator or Diantha Horton, our Crisis Intervention Coordinator, who will find the most appropriate care resources.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.uuman.org

Worship Schedule

May 1st – “The Meaning of Life in Two Words”

Speaker– Lisa Earle McLeod - Service Leader – Merri Beth Stephens

Join inspirational humorist and syndicated columnist Lisa Earle McLeod to learn the two words that will provide you with enough passion and purposes to fill a lifetime. You'll also discover the four-letter word that is the secret of all success and why grace is the most relevant business, personal and spiritual tool you'll ever need. Lisa is the author of the hilarious book *Forget Perfect* (Penguin/Putnam) and weekly commentator for Lifetime Radio. She has been seen on Good Morning America and featured in the New York Times, Essence Magazine and the Christian Science Monitor.

Children and Youth begin in the sanctuary.

May 8th - A Tribute to Women

Speaker – Rev. Dana Reynolds; Service Leader – Cliff Brown

Rev. Reynolds is the minister of the UU congregation of Gwinnett. On this Mother's Day, we examine the role women play and have played in our human experience. For many, women have had a significant role in our lives too, whether our mothers or other roles models. These women deserve our tribute.

Children and Youth begin in the sanctuary.

May 15th - “Living with Conviction”

Speaker – Rev. Rhett Baird; Service Leader: Vince Teeter

Rev. Baird is the minister of High Street UU Church in Macon.

“Rev. Baird's sermon is an invitation to think deeply about ways in which each of us is now acting on and living out the moral and ethical convictions that are important to us as individuals and as members of a faith community. It is also an invitation to investigate the truth about some of the factors that tend to hold us back from living out those convictions

and how we might overcome those barriers and move toward a greater sense of meaning and purpose.”

Children and Youth begin in the sanctuary.

May 22nd – Passover/Social Justice

Speaker – Rev. Dr. David Johnson; Service Leader – Randy Blasch

In this post-9/11 world, contradictory messages bombard us: “Fortify the barricades.” And “Welcome the stranger.” How shall we maintain clear & healthy boundaries, while practicing radical hospitality to those who seem different? Our guest speaker, Dave Johnson, is interim minister at the UU Church of Birmingham AL. Previously he served congregations in Portage MI and Overland Park, KS. In his former career he was a marine geologist on Cape Cod, Scripps Institution (CA), and the National Science Foundation.

Children and Youth begin and end in the sanctuary.

May 29th

Speaker – Lisa Macy; Service Leader – Jim Saunders

Children and Youth begin in the sanctuary.



UUMAN
11420 Crabapple Road
Roswell, GA 30075

Get up-to-date information!
Sign up now and
join UUMAN
@ www.uuman.org.

