

MMUUS letter

December 1, 2009 Vol. 72 No. 10

May Memorial
Unitarian Universalist Society

View from the Study Window...

May the earthy joys and unearthly peace of Christmas be yours this year

May the lights and miracles of Hanukah
The colors of Kwanzaa
The stillness of the Solstice find their home in you.
May the sun and moon illumine all the days of your New Year,
And may the stars which have ever guided seekers and sages
Shine through your inner skies.
Peace and joy to you.
Blessed be.

Happy Holidays
To you and yours
From the staff at May Memorial
Unitarian Universalist Society!

Jean

Glen

Jennifer

Leslie

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Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.



December 6 Buddhist Insights

Rev. Jean L. Wahlstrom

Many UUs have found wisdom, growth and healing in Buddhist practice and teachings. Here is a "religion without God" very different from western religious humanism.

First Sunday luncheon and Special Congregational Meeting.

December 13 Winter Music Servic

Glen Kime

Join the choir for a feast of holiday music, crossing the world from sacred to secular and featuring Clement Moore's "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

December 20 Prince of Peace

Rev. Jean L. Wahlstrom

How did Jesus of Nazareth come to be known as Prince of Peace – and how has that association fared through the history of Christianity, into the twenty-first century?

December 21 Winter Solstice Celebration

CUUPS and Rev. Jean Wahlstrom

Come share a circle of winter magic as we witness the turning of the wheel of the year.

December 24 Christmas Eve Service

MMUUS Staff

Join, young and old, in a celebration and simple recreation of the Christmas story. We will have music and plenty of "joyful noise" and – of course – a closing circle of candlelight.

December 27 Year's End

Worship Committee



Wheel of Life



Seven Weeks Of Unity

Charlie Jorgenson

Long-time member, Charlie Jorgenson 94, died in Rochester on November 19. Charlie had been in hospice care. A memorial service will be held at May Memorial. Details to be announced.

Our sympathy goes to BOB ROHDE, whose mother died recently.

Dr. Richard Weiskopf is recovering at home after undergoing open heart surgery. Dick is reported to be doing well and looking forward to a full recovery. Cards are always welcome.

Howland Auchincloss has been released from a hospital stay. Howland is presently residing at Menorah Park at 4101 E. Genesee Street in room 360. There is presently no phone in Howland's room but visitors are welcome. Menorah Park's phone number is 446-9111.

Len Finn was admitted to University Hospital where he was treated for acute renal failure. His kidney functions have been restored to normal and Len has been released to 6th floor of the Cunningham at Loretto. He continues to improve and is allowed visitors.

The office phone numbers are 413-3310 and 413-3350.

Ask **Joan Weiser** about the H1N1 flu; she had it a few weeks ago, the only one among us that we know of.

Continued p 6

December 6th we will be starting our Seven Weeks of Unity term of Religious Exploration here at May. For the folks who stay upstairs this term looks the same in many ways. Our children are still with us for the first 15 minutes of service; they still go downstairs for class; parents or guardians pick them up at 12 noon. But downstairs we have a workshop rotational model or RE. This means that in the 7 weeks of Unity there are 5 workshops (plus one intergenerational and one Special Programming Sunday). Class groupings stay the same and each of the classes will rotate through the workshops by going to a different one each Sunday. Each Sunday is a celebration focused on one of our principles, the stories told draw upon our sources. We try to plan the activities so that there is a tie in to our principles also.

During December we are encouraging the children of our congregation to bring in extra shelf stable food and personal care items for the two food pantries that we help support, one at Plymouth Congregational, UCC, and the other Beech St. Baptist. Food is always a critical need as are personal care items. Our children are amazingly generous. Personal care items that are in particular need are toothpaste, shampoo, soap, and toothbrushes. Shelf stable food that is needed is canned meat, peanut butter, pasta, canned vegetables and fruit.

On November 14-15 our OWL group (7th and 8th graders) had their first overnight of the year at Fred and Chris Fiske's house. 10 youth attended and their learning activities focused on Gender, and on sexuality and disability.

There are some simple ways that you can help support RE. We are now using re-usable plates and cups in RE. It would help if parents or other interested adults could sign up to wash the dishes. The signup is located on the Re Bulletin board downstairs. Using May's dishwasher is pretty easy and this is a big help to the DRE! The RE committee will be hosting the Fund-raising soup and bread luncheon on December 6th. Don't forget to come, eat and have some fun!

I was fortunate in October and November to be able to go to two different national conferences. The first was the LREDA (the national DRE association) conference *A Time to Exhale: Breathing Transformation into the Challenges and Opportunities of Professional Unitarian Universalist Leadership* and the second was the UU ministers convocation *Tell a tale ... Touch a life ... Transform the world*. As you can see both focused on transformation. We are at a pivotal time in our UU Association. How is it we will transform ourselves, our congregations, our Association in order to be ready to greet the world that will be?

Thank you to all who made my time away possible. It is good to be home and now time to ponder what I have learned and find ways to share that learning with all of you.

~ Jennifer Hamlin-Navias



Marvelous History Corner

Path to Peace

As President Obama struggles with a possible path for peace in the Middle East, I thought about Sam May's own path to his work with peace. Growing up he would have been introduced to such ancients as Homer, Plutarch, Ovid, and Seneca who all argued for peace. There are, of course, comments about peace and avoiding war in both the Old and New Testaments, but Sam's early connections with religion would have shown that this often was a bit hypocritical with Popes, Kings, and the Crusaders frequently using war as a means of settling various differences.

His actual involvement with peace probably began when he heard of Rev. William Channing's sermons or it may have been when as a Harvard student he became aware of the recently established Massachusetts Peace Society. His father, Joseph May, became a member of that Society in 1816, right when Sam was studying at Harvard and beginning to think about many things and becoming acquainted with many people. One was a college friend, Gorham Parsons, who was a neighbor of Rev. Noah Worcester. Noah printed around the same time a famous peace tract entitled, *The Solemn Review of the Custom of War*. Upon being introduced to Rev. Worcester during a visit to Gorham's home, Sam later talked about how inspired he was during this meeting and thus began a long friendship with Rev. Worcester.

Soon after Sam became an officer in the Windham County Peace Society and within a short time published his very first of what would be many tracts, entitled the *Exposition of the Sentiments and Purposes of the Windham County Peace Society*. From that point he began accelerating his work through publications, attendance at peace movement meetings, and various sermons in his first pastorate. These latter created some problems for him as many in that congregation objected to a minister who was so vocal on a complicated issue.

Thus began the ridicule that Sam was to face throughout most of his remaining life for his strong stands on societal issues. Not only did he face criticism within his own church, but within his community of Brooklyn, Connecticut, and increasingly throughout much of the east. His views on peace were greatly enhanced when in 1827 he met William Ladd, who was known at the time as the "Apostle of Peace." William then enlisted Sam to help form a national peace organization, what would become the American Peace Society.

That beginning led naturally to Sam's work with injustice of any sort and the abolitionist movement. When he was considering the move to Syracuse, he let our ancestors know exactly what his views were on peace, slavery, and the injustices he saw even in his initial visits to our community. Knowing all of this, our forbearers eagerly invited him to continue his ministry here and the rest is history. It is no wonder that May Memorial has had such a long and rich involvement with social justice issues. Thanks, Sam! To read more about Sam's path to peace advocacy read the biography, *God's Chore Boy* at <http://history.mmuus.org/galpin-may.html>

~ Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

Annual Martin Luther King Dinner at Syracuse University's Dome

Annual MLK Dinner at SU will feature Gwen Ifill, moderator of PBS Washington Week and correspondent for the NPR Newshour, as the keynote speaker.

Tickets for the **Jan. 24** dinner at 5 o'clock are \$25.

The program is free and open to the public.

Call Vicky 479-5751 for reservations or sign up at MMUUS table in the social hall. Deadline Dec. 15.

What in the World Discussion Group

Do you experience transcendent moments in your life? What are they? How many? What techniques do you use to make yourself "pay attention"?

We will discuss these questions at **10:00 am on December 15**, in the Memorial Room. Our focus article is "Be Present" on page 33 of the Fall issue of UUWorld, the magazine of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Copies of the article are in the foyer. Everyone is welcome, the more the merrier!

Alice Aylesworth

for the UUWorld group

Men of My Memorial

The next gathering of the Men's Fellowship will take place on Wednesday, **December 16th**, beginning at 6:30 with a potluck. We will follow that with friendly conversation and planning for the January First Sunday Lunch. All men are cordially invited.

Don MacKay



Do You Have Questions about Unitarian Universalism?

UU 101 is a one-hour class offered throughout the year by the Membership Committee. It is designed to give newcomers and prospective new members a brief overview of Unitarian Universalism, to provide information about May Memorial, and to answer questions. Pre-registration is not required and child-care is available.

The next class will be on Sunday, **January 10, from noon to 1 p.m.** in the Memorial Room. Stop by the Welcoming Table for further information or e-mail Lee Ann McKinney : membership@mmuus.org.

Art Gallery Update

The two artists showing their work in our gallery this month are Roscha Folger and Karen Kozicki. Roscha works in many different mediums and has mainly done representational work in the past but now is branching out into abstracts as well. Karen, a Syracuse native, and graduate of Syracuse University will exhibit her black and white infrared fine art photos. The show opens Sunday Nov 29.

~ Bev Adams

New MMUS Directory

A new directory of MMUUS members and friends is now available. Pick up your copy from the foyer shelf under the nametag cupboard

Report from Your Board of Trustees

The year has started well at May Memorial. We have a dedicated board in place. We have a terrific minister and minister of Religious Education and most all of our standing committees have chairs.

The Board of Trustees met in retreat this summer at Liverpool Public Library where we were fed and cared for by Mary and David Fulton, and where we dedicated our efforts to figuring out ways to increase the financial stability of our congregation. We created a list of several actions that should bring us closer to this desired goal and we are spending extra time at each of our board meetings further refining our plans. Items such as increasing the rental revenue from our building, enhancing our community profile through our web page and adding to our endowment fund are included on our list. We would love to hear ideas from the congregation as well.

~ Alexa Carter, President

Congregational Meeting December 6th

We will be holding a congregational meeting on December 6 for the purpose of updating Article VII of our constitution and adopting our mission statement. Proposed wording for Article VII is:

The Society may engage the service of a minister or ministers as the members from time to time deem advisable for the conduct of services, religious instruction, personal guidance and counseling, and the performance of such duties as usually pertain to the office. The minister(s) shall be non-voting ex-officio members of all Society organizations and committees.

Proposed Mission Statement

We are committed to being an inclusive, respectful, caring community of faith that reaches out in welcome as we come together for mutual inspiration, empowerment and life-long learning.

Solar Liberty

We came very close to working with Solar Liberty to install solar panels on the roof of our social hall. The application to be included in the NYSERDA sponsored grant was in and we were hopeful we would be able to benefit from funds available to nonprofits. Unfortunately, it was determined that our roof space was not large enough for the project as it was designed and we did not qualify for this round of offers. There is hope that we may fit the specifications of future programs and we will be ready to apply as they become available.

Our energies right now must be directed to getting our Stewardship team in place and looking ahead to a possible capital campaign to carry out much needed work on our building. Please consider offering your services to work in these two areas. We need the help of all our members to keep our community strong.

~ Alexa

St Lawrence District Social Justice Conference

Early November sunlight flooded the beautiful sanctuary of the UU Church of Amherst, where seventy UU activists were gathered to participate in the fourth annual St Lawrence District Social Justice Conference. The conference theme is reflected in a letter from Rev. Peter Morales, President of UUA read from the pulpit to open the service.

Rev Morales wrote;

Dear Friends in the St. Lawrence District,

I regret that I cannot be with you for your conference on social justice. These are trying times for us all. We are suffering the consequences of the malfeasance and irresponsible speculation of the economically powerful. The consequences are real human suffering. Unemployment stresses families in our communities and serious harm is done to institutions that support the common good and that seek justice and compassion in our world.

Every religious tradition upon which we draw teaches that compassion is the central value among human beings. We are one. We share a common fate and a common destiny. What hurts my neighbor also hurts me. Compassion begins as a feeling, as empathy, literally as "suffering with." Our Unitarian and Universalist faith tradition has always taught us that everyone is worthy of love.

Yet compassion that remains only a feeling is powerless and empty sentimentality. True compassion moves quickly from a feeling to action. If I truly feel the pain of another, then I must act to ease that pain.

Social justice is compassion in action. Our work for social justice is grounded in our capacity to feel deeply and on our deepest sense of connection to all of life. Our work for justice is an expression of our deepest spirituality.

I wish you blessings and success. These times cry out for action. Thank you for your commitment. This is sacred work you do.

Faithfully,

Peter Morales

The guest speaker Rev. John Buehrens, past two-term president of the UUA delivered a memorable key note address titled "Maintaining a House of Hope." Rev. Buehrens dedicated his keynote to his ministerial colleague, the late Forrester Church, with whom John served at New York City's All Souls Church. He noted Church's motto: "Want what you have, be who you are and do what you can."

cont. above



Rev Buehrens went on to describe our culture as full of addiction, addicted to programs and instruments of control, a culture also deeply in denial of its faults. It is a "casino economy" addicted to speculative gambling. But many of the American people are co-dependent – enabling this gambling to take place by our own greed.

What should we think of a society that spends more on incarceration than on education, where privatization of the "prison industrial complex" has incentivized imprisonment for profit?

Metaphorically, Rev Buehrens spoke of the garden we all desire, withered from our neglect; yet it is still there for the cultivating. We nurture hope by being gardeners. To change the metaphor, *the moral arc of the universe does not lead to justice by gravity, but by the "stubborn ounces of our weight."*

As we prepare for the coming holiday season let us remember the growing numbers of our brothers and sisters who are experiencing difficult times. We cannot alter the course of history, provide shelter for all of the newly homeless or provide food for the masses' but it seems to me that we would do well to heed Forster Church's words;

"Want what you have, be who you are and do what you can."

Happy Holidays—

~ Harsey Leonard, Chairman,
MMUUS Social Justice Committee



go n green

Dr. Richard Weiskopf, long-time member of Physicians for Responsibility, recently wrote a letter of concern to Onondaga County Health Commissioner, Dr. Cynthia Morrow relating to gas well drilling in Marcellus shale using a recently developed method called "hydro-fracking."

From: Richard Weiskopf MD
5031 Onondaga Road

To: Dr. Cynthia Morrow, Commissioner, Onondaga County Health Department,
421 Montgomery St Fl 9, Syracuse, NY

CC: Onondaga County and New York State legislators, NYSDEC

*I am writing to you because of my concern about potential public health issues, relating to the leasing of land in Onondaga County and New York State for gas drilling, using the technology referred to as underground hydraulic fracturing (hydro-fracking). This drilling process uses large amounts of fresh water under very high pressure. During the process toxic chemicals are added to the water, such as diesel fuel, benzene, industrial solvents and endocrine disruptors or other unknown chemicals, which may contaminate our drinking water and water used in food production. The Endocrine Disruption Exchange, Inc. (TEDX), a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded by **Dr. Theo Colborn**, who has written and lectured widely on the human health and environmental threat posed by endocrine disruptors and other industrially-produced chemicals at low concentrations in the environment. Dr. Colborn serves as the President of TEDX and holds the academic rank of Professor Emeritus, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Enclosed is material for your information.*

There are also the problems of how to dispose of, detoxify or store the huge amounts of "flow back" water created by this process. Protecting the water supplies used in food production relates to protecting public health.

As a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), I am concerned that public health be our number one priority. PSR is a national organization of physicians and health care workers which has educated and advocated for public health on many issues including nuclear weapons, above ground testing of nuclear bombs, environmental health effects of contamination with both chemicals and radiation.

It takes years and extensive detailed studies to absolutely prove that an industrial process is definitely harmful to the environment and human health. However, when there is strong evidence of probable harm, as in this case, PSR adopts the Precautionary Principle.

Because of the environmental contamination caused by hydro-fracking, I strongly urge that this type of drilling be prohibited in Onondaga County and New York State.

Sincerely,
Richard Weiskopf MD

Please consider Dr. Weiskopf's concerns and Submit Public Comment to NYS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION BY DECEMBER 31.

~ Geri Aird,
Green Sanctuary Environmental Justice Subcommittee

Better late than never: Congratulations to MARY and BOB BURDICK, whose son Alan has achieved contributing editor status on the NRDC* publication *On Earth*. He wrote the cover story for their Spring 2009 issue. Check out his book *Out of Eden* in the MMUUS library.

Visiting a Dying Friend

The library in the Memorial Room has copies of *Visiting a Dying Friend* put out by the Canton, NY, church, offering sensitive suggestions for those visits.

*Natural Resources Defense Council

Candlelight Vesper Services

Candle light vesper services will be held at First UU this holiday season. Vespers will provide an opportunity for a quiet few moments of music and readings to enrich your experiences of the season. Drop in for a few quiet minutes or stay for the entire hour. All are welcome. Vespers will be held on the two Thursday preceding Christmas on December 10th and 17th from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Join our fellow UUs at First UU Society, 109 Waring Road, Syracuse, NY 13224.

Universalist Study and Reflection Group

First Unitarian Universalist invites you to a Universalist Study and Reflection group that will meet on a regular basis to share readings and learn about some ways to lead a deeper spiritual life. All are welcome and though a commitment would be nice, guests are welcome.

One emphasis for the group is to explore our Christian roots and study ways that progressives have been addressing the Jesus message without the bondage of past creeds. Call Gracia Sears for more information at 445-1242 or call First's church office at 446-5940.

Calendar Continued from back page...

Sunday, Dec. 13

10:30 am	Service-Music Sunday	Sanctuary
10:30 am	Teenz	Teen Room

Monday, Dec. 14

Tuesday, Dec. 15

10:00 - 12:00	What in the World	Memorial Room
3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside

Wednesday, Dec. 16

6:30 -	Men's Fellowship	Social Hall
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Thursday, Dec. 17

3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
7:30 pm	Choir	Sanctuary

Friday, Dec. 18

Saturday, Dec. 19

7:00 pm—9:00 pm	Twisted Sisters	Social Hall
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Sunday, Dec. 20

10:30 am Service		Sanctuary
10:30 am	Teenz	Teen Room
12:15	Spanophiles	Teen Room
2:30 pm	Nancy Pease Recital	Sanctuary

Monday, Dec. 21

Solstice Celebration

Tuesday, Dec. 22

3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
6:30 pm	Writers Group	Teen Room

Wednesday, Dec. 23

Thursday, Dec. 24

3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
6:00 p & 8:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service	Sanctuary

Friday, Dec. 25

Merry Christmas

Saturday, Dec. 26

Sunday, Dec. 27

10:30 am Service		Sanctuary
10:30 am	Teenz	Teen Room

Monday, Dec. 28

Tuesday, Dec. 29

Wednesday Dec. 30

Thursday Dec. 31

3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
7:30 pm	Choir	Sanctuary

News from Building & Grounds

Front door update: Our front door now has a power opener for use by people on crutches or with walkers or wheelchairs, or arms full of pot-luck food or babies.

This power door opener is unique because it has no external power supply. It contains a battery which gets recharged when the door is opened manually. If 3 out of 4 times the door is opened, it is opened manually, that should be sufficient to keep the battery charged.

So if you need a powered opening, just push the button. Otherwise, think "empathy" and open it with your own muscles so it will be powered up for those who need to use it. Please explain this to our children.

If you think the length of time the device holds the door open needs to be adjusted longer, or if you have questions, contact Peter Colman. And as always, if the door is locked, it won't open.

Parking Lot update #1: The connector is in, between our lot and the physicians' lot next door. If our lot is full, you are welcome to park in their lot. Also, please do not park so as to block this connector. It is at the far back corner of our lot.

Parking Lot update #2: If you park between our fenced trash enclosure and the ramp leading down from our lot, pull forward so the back of your car is even with the wall of the trash enclosure. This lets us park many more cars in our own lot.

Bookenders Schedule

Dec. 3 **A Drinking Life** Pete Hamill

Jan 28 **Better** Atul Gawande

Feb. 25 **Home** Marilynne Robinson

Group meets at 1:30 in the Teen Room

May Memorial

Unitarian Universalist Society

May Memorial is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Visit our website at www.mmuus.org

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MMUUS Office Hours

9-1 Monday–Friday

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315.446.8920

MMUUSletter is a publication of events and information at May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society. To be included on our mailing list, please contact our office.

The deadline for the next newsletter is the 15th of the preceding month. The deadline for the mid-month is the 5th of the month.

To submit an article, please leave it in the newsletter box on the office door or email to newsletter@mmuus.org.

Note: Articles may be edited for length and/or content. If the deadline is missed, please submit your article for reconsideration at the next deadline.

May Memorial
Unitarian Universalist Society
3800 East Genesee Street
Syracuse, NY 13214

TIME VALUE

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Tuesday, Dec. 1

10:00 am	Writers	Teen Room
3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
7:00 pm	Social Justice Committee	Teen Room

Thursday, Dec 3

3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
7:30 pm	Choir	Sanctuary

Friday, Dec 4

8:00 pm	Folkus	Social Hall
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Saturday Dec. 5

4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Teen Holiday Party	Social Hall
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Sunday, Dec 6

10:30 am	Service	Sanctuary
10:30 am	Teenz	Teen Room
Noon	First Sunday Luncheon	Social Hall
12:15	Spanophilles	Teen Room

Monday, Dec 7

7:30 pm	Worship committee	Memorial Room
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Tuesday Dec. 8

3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
5:30 pm	Membership	Teen Room
7 pm	Program Council	Memorial Room

Thursday Dec. 10

3:00 pm	Tai Chi	Creekside
7:00 pm	Yoga	Social Hall
7:30 -	Choir	Sanctuary

Saturday Dec. 12

9:00 am to 1:00 pm	Choir Rehersal	Sanctuary
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