

Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

September 2006 Newsletter

Presidents Report

This has been a very busy and successful summer for the Fellowship. Our monthly Wednesday evening services had good attendance and were an excellent opportunity to enjoy social time with our members and get to know some Springs' members. Rev Paul Beckel, from the Wausau First UU, led each service. We are indebted to him for his generous gift of his time and talent with us.

The Strategic Planning Committee met all summer. The committee started their work with a "Visioning Workshop" in early June and then met regularly to work on a five year Vision Statement based on the feedback received at the workshop. The committee is getting close to a finished DRAFT document. Once the DRAFT Vision Statement is completed it will be shared with the membership for feedback and editing with an eventual Fellowship vote. I'd like to take the time to recognize the individuals who are on the Strategic Planning Committee and those fellowship members who attended specific planning meetings.

Dave and Marcia Johnson
Jean Rumsey
Chuck Rumsey
Joanie Hanson
Julia Weiser

Steve Bjella
Tim Ginnett
Michele Bjella
Dorothy Ginnett
Carol Weston

Ron Chapman
Larry Weiser
John Rendall
Mary Arnold

The Program Committee has also been meeting this summer and has scheduled a wonderful mixture of guest UUA ministers and community professionals to lead our services. The schedule of services will follow later in this newsletter but you can also view the schedule online at: <http://spuuf.org/calendar.htm>

Happy Birthday Stevens Point UU Fellowship - Sept 10th

Join us on September 10th as we recognize the 40th birthday of the founding of this Fellowship. We'll have a celebration service at 11:00 am followed by a birthday party pot luck. An invitation to the event is available online: <http://spuuf.org/40th.pdf>

Please help spread the word and invite those who might have been a part of the Fellowship these past 40 years to join us!

This celebration service will contain the "**Mingling of Waters**" ceremony. Bring water you have collected from your summer travels or you can simply bring water from home that represents your travels. We will "mingle" our waters and celebrate our return to the Fellowship.

Board Secretary Needed

At the end of the last fiscal year, no one had stepped forward to fill the board secretary position. The secretary position is an important position for the fellowship to insure accurate records of the business and to help with administrative tasks for the fellowship. I am concerned that the lack of a secretary will create too much extra burden on the rest of us board members, who are busy enough as it is!

Is there a member of the Fellowship who can fill the board secretary position? Board meetings are generally once a month, on Sunday mornings before the start of the service. Please contact either Julia or Carol if you can volunteer as secretary.

Adult RE Program

Steve Bjella will start off this year's adult RE program by leading a five part series entitled "**Articulating Your UU Faith.**" The first session will meet Sunday, **September 24th at 9:00 am.** Those in attendance will decide whether the class meets every other week or once a month. Questions, contact Steve at 715-345-9779 / sbjella@uwsp.edu

Children's Religious Education News

We have a wonderful multi-age RE curriculum planned for the children this year. We'll be focusing on **UU Super Heroes (and Heroines)**, complete with a catchy theme song, "**I'm a Super Hero!**". The children will learn about UU's who have helped to make the world a better place and the connections of their stories to the 7 UU Principles. We'll also intersperse lessons on the UU Principles from the

We Believe: Learning & Living our UU Principles curriculum. This year's RE program connects well with the Rainbow Path (7 UU Principles for Children) that we have studied in past years.

Calling all RE Volunteers! We will be having a sign-up list for volunteers to teach RE lessons. The lessons this year are all part of a pre-planned curriculum and ready to go. Of course, we always welcome your creative input too. We hope that many of our SPUUF members will consider volunteer service in the Children's RE program this year. We schedule two volunteer teachers per lesson, so that makes it easier for new volunteers to give it a try by partnering with an experienced RE volunteer.

Parents - We welcome your visits anytime in the RE classroom. We'd also love to have you work as a RE volunteer, whenever you can.

RE lessons will begin at SPUUF on Sunday September 17th. Children attend the first 10 - 15 minutes of the service with their parents, and listen to a **Children's Story**, then we go to the RE classroom. We have a lesson of approximately 45 minutes. Generally the children rejoin their parents towards the end of service for the **Closing Circle**. Parents and children, who are new to SPUUF, may want to arrive a bit early their first Sunday to meet the RE volunteers. We are asking that parents take a few minutes when they arrive to fill-out a brief "getting to know your child" information form for our RE volunteers.

Board Meeting

The next SPUUF board meeting is Sunday, September 17th at 9:00 am. in the library at The Springs.

Strategic Planning Meeting

The next strategic planning meeting is Sunday, October 1st at 12:30 pm, immediately following that day's service. The focus of the meeting will be on "Growing the Fellowship." Place of meeting TBA.

Church Growth Seminar

Our Fellowship has a fantastic opportunity to participate in a one day church growth seminar being offered by Central Midwest District. Members have articulated that membership growth is a primary goal for our Fellowship. The seminar is Thursday, September 28th at Countryside UU Church in Palatine, Illinois. This daylong workshop will address the following aspects of welcoming and integrating visitors:

- Discover how to assess the first impressions visitors have of your church
- Identify how and when first time visitors decide to come back to your church
- Increase the number of your first-time visitors who return
- Explore the differences between new members and long-time members and what they mean for your church
- Define the characteristics of an assimilated member, and how to guide your new members in this direction
- Learn to listen for clues in your new members conversation as to whether they feel assimilated
- Understand why most people who drop out of church do so in the first six months of their membership, and what to do about it
- Recognize the dynamics of the drop-out track
- Identify six steps to dramatically reduce your back door losses

This workshop will be most effective if we can send a team of at least 3 people from our Fellowship. We will need to drive to Illinois the night before in order to be ready for a 9:00 am start time on Sept 28th.

Please let Carol Weston know if you are able to attend this important seminar. Additional information on the seminar is available at:

<http://www.cmwd-uua.org/>

Community Action

Peace Ed Group

Included in the No Child Left Behind Education Act is a little known provision that requires schools to forward student contact information to the military branches for recruiting purposes. Families can opt out of this provision but they must do so in writing at the beginning of the school year. A local subcommittee of The Wisconsin Network for Peace called "Peace Ed" has been working locally trying to educate families and teachers on this little known component of the education act and the process for families to block the release of student information to the military. In addition, the committee has been promoting

careers in peace and social justice fields, what it means to be a conscious objector and how to get money for college without joining the military.

If you would like to find out more information about this local effort and please contact Bonnie Beverstock, 425 Bukolt Ave, Stevens Point, WI 54481 bbeverstock@charter.net / 715-345-7065.

Suicide Prevent Week

Healthy People Portage County's Suicide Prevention Team is hosting its first "Walk for Hope" September 16th starting at 9:45 am from St. Michael's Hospital with registration at 9:00 am. Participating in the 3.7 mile leisurely walk can gain you greater awareness of suicide prevention and mental health services and a free t-shirt to the first 100 persons who pre-register. To pre-register, call 345-5958 or visit www.HealthyPeoplePortageCounty.org.

Environmental Films

A new film documentary, "*Who Killed the Electric Car*" was released in June by Sony Pictures. The film was an official selection of the 2006 Sundance and Tribeca Film Festivals. Information about the film is available at: <http://www.sonyclassics.com/whokilledtheelectriccar/>

Al Gore's film on global warming, "*An Inconvenient Truth*," will be shown on Wednesday, September 13, 7:00 p.m. in room 170 of the College of Natural Resources (CNR) at UW-SP. A discussion session will follow the showing.

Point of View

Point of View is the member section of the newsletter. Information shared in the Point of View is diverse and does not reflect the official position of the Fellowship on any topic. The intent of this section is to provide a forum for sharing all points of view on spiritual, religious and other issues which relate to our 7 Principles in order to facilitate continued personal search for truth and discussion among members and friends.

Henry Louis Mencken's "Creed" - Submitted by Jane Shoup:

"I believe that religion, generally speaking, has been a curse to mankind - that its modest and greatly overestimated services on the ethical side have been more than overcome by the damage it has done to clear and honest thinking. I believe that no discovery of fact, however, trivial, can be wholly useless to the race, and that no trumpeting of falsehood, however virtuous in intent, can be anything but vicious. I believe that the evidence for immortality is no better than the evidence of witches, and deserves no more respect. I believe in the complete freedom of thought and speech. I believe in the capacity of man to conquer his world, and to find out what it is made of and how it is run. I believe in the reality of progress. But the whole thing, after all, may be put very simply. I believe that it is better to tell the truth than to lie. I believe that it is better to be free than to be a slave. And I believe that it is better to know than to be ignorant."

Henry Louis Mencken (1880 - 1956) was a prominent newspaperman, book reviewer, and political commentator of his day. Henry Louis Mencken was a libertarian before the word came into usage.

Contact Jane Shoup at jrssps@frontiernet.net or 715-754-4833 if you have questions or comment on this submission. Additional information: <http://www.io.com/~gibbonsb/mencken.html>

Algernon Black "Are We Religious" Submitted by Carol Weston

Why not let people differ about their answers to the great mysteries of the Universe? Let each seek one's own way to the highest, to one's own sense of supreme loyalty in life, one's ideal of life. Let each philosophy, each world-view bring forth its truth and beauty to a larger perspective, that people may grow in vision, stature and dedication.

The religions of humanity should be a unifying force, for all the great religions reveal a basic unity in ethics. Whether it be Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism or Confucianism, all grow out of a sense of the sacredness of human life. This moral sensitivity to the sacredness of human personality -- the Commandments not to kill, not to hurt, not to put a stumbling block in the path of the blind, not to neglect the widow or the fatherless, not to exploit the servant or the worker -- all this can be found in the Bibles of humanity, in all the sacred books. All teach in substance: "Do

unto others as you would that others should do unto you." There is, then, a basic unity among the great religions in the matter of ethics. True, there are religious philosophies which turn people away from the world, from the here and now, concentrating life-purposes on salvation for one's self or a mystic union with some supernatural reality. But most of the great religions agree on mercy, justice, love -- here on earth. And they agree that the great task is to move people from apathy, from an acceptance of the evils in life, to face the possibilities of the world, to make life sweet for one another instead of bitter. This is the unifying ethical task of all the religions -- yes, of all the philosophies of humankind. There is no need to force our own theological points of view upon one another or to insist that the moral life grows out of final, absolute authority.

Algernon D. Black (1900-1995) was a member of the Board of Leaders of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, and Head of the Ethics Department in the Ethical Culture Schools. He became Senior Leader of the New York Society in 1965, and concluded some seventy years of active service to Ethical Culture and social activism as Leader Emeritus.

Contact Carol Weston at cweston@charter.net or 715-345-1735 if you have questions or comment on this submission. Additional information: <http://www.ethicalculture.org/uer/arewe.html>

Dates to Remember

- Sept 10th 11:00 am Start of Sunday morning services – Happy 40th SPUUF!
- Sept 15-17 [Northwoods UU Fellowship Fall Splendor Weekend](#) –: Support the expansion of the Northwoods Fellowship by participating in their weekend retreat. Additional information is at <http://www.nuuf.com/news/>
- September 16 "Walk for Hope" Suicide Prevention Week
- Sept 17th, 9:00 am SPUUF Board Meeting, The Springs Library
- Sept 24th, 9:00 am Adult RE "**Articulating Your UU Faith.**"
- Sept 28 "*Church Growth Seminar*" Additional information is available at: <http://www.cmwd-uua.org/>
- Oct 1st 12:30 pm Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- Nov 3-5 "[Heart to Heart](#)" A couples' Enrichment Weekend \$360 / couple, Koinonia Retreat Center, South Haven, MN
- Nov 10-12 "My Body – Live, Love Laugh" UU Women's Connection Fall Conference, Williams Bay, WI. Contact rhi_connection@yahoo.com or Cecilia_haasis@yahoo.com for more information.
- Feb 23-25, "Roots Hold me Close, Wings Set Me Free" Woman Spirit 2007, Women and Religion Committee of the CMwD. Tecny, IL. More information at: <http://www.womenandreligion.org/>

Schedule of Services

Date	Service
9-10-06	"Happy 40th Birthday Stevens Point UU" Intergenerational
9-17-06	"To Subdue the Arrogant" Rev Glenda Walker, retired UU minister Wausau
9-24-06	"Just How Much? A Sermon on Faith and Freedom" Rev. Dr. Bobbie Groth, Milw
10-1-06	Intergenerational "Defining Your Spirituality" Service
10-8-06	Rev Daryl Richie James Reeb UU Madison, topic TBA
10-15-06	"Engaging Our Theological Diversity" Richard Olsen Wausau UU
10-22-06	"Proposed Marriage Amendment WI Constitution" Cindy and Greg Chelcun
10-29-06	"End of Life Issues through a UU Perspective" Jim Jaeger First UU Madison
11-5-06	TBA
11-12-06	Rev. Paul Beckel Wausau UU Topic TBA
11-19-06	Intergenerational "Thanksgiving - Guest at Your Table" Service
11-26-06	Rev Scott Prinster, First UU Madison, Topic TBA
12-3-06	TBA
12-10-06	Rev. Paul Beckel, Wausau UU Topic TBA
12-17-06	Intergenerational Winter Holiday Service
12-24-06	Christmas Eve Service With The Springs
12-31-06	No Service

STEVENS POINT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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Stevens Point, WI 54481

www.spuuf.org

info@spuuf.org



Services are held at The Springs, 2820 Plover Springs Dr., Plover, WI 54467
Services and religious Education start at 11:00 a.m. Sept through May
Summer services are individually scheduled.



The Uncommon Denomination