



The Flaming

Chalice

NEWSLETTER OF STARR KING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH JULY 2008

A Month of Sundays

July Celebration Previews

Summer Schedule: One Sunday Service at 10 A.M.

- 7:** *Why Worship?* (The Worship Committee) We use the word *worship* in our services all the time, but what does it really mean? Members of the Worship Committee will share their personal interpretations of the word, the act and the meaning of *worship*.
- 13:** *Readers' Theatre: Jesus in Hell* (with apologies to George Bernard Shaw) (Al Murdach & stellar Starr King cast) Today members of the congregation will take part in a bit of acting for your worship pleasure. Using a riff on GBS's play-within-a-play, "Don Juan in Hell," our play explores what happens when Jesus returns to Hell again to rescue some infamous characters. Unfortunately, he's in for a surprise! Come and see what happens and enjoy something a little different, designed to delight and inspire. *Chalice Deadline*.
- 20:** *Does It Improve the Silence?* (Rev. Katie Kandarian) Our youth group has considered this quote by Hindu guru Sai Baba, "Before you speak, ask yourself, is it kind, is it necessary, is it true, does it improve on the silence?" Somewhat similar is the inspiration for the purple bracelets of A Complaint Free World. What would it be like to utter more positive speech? Shall we try? *Bookstore Open*.
- 27:** *Making Stone Soup: A Cook's Guide* (Doug Vakoch) In the parable of Stone Soup, a community comes together to create a meal that nourishes its members in body and in soul. Making the soup required faith, courage and vision. Today we will explore some ways that we, as individuals and as a community, can and already do make our own Stone Soup.



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Katie's Bay View Rev. Katie Kandarian

Vacation on the Cheap

*There is no frigate like a book
to take us lands away.*

EMILY DICKINSON



There are certainly many reasons to vacation close to home, this year even more so. The fact that gas prices are traveling at light speed to the moon is just at the top of the list. I'll be taking my annual agreed-upon four weeks of vacation beginning the last week of July, returning the fourth week of August. During that time, I'll be venturing off a bit when I have to, taking my daughter to her final dance competition in Tahoe and later taking her to college in Chico on the days just before I return. For the rest of my time away, I'll probably be close to home, working on projects at our family's new house or simply settling down with a good book.

Every year I like to come up with some kind of book list to work on. I find that when I don't, I can get lost in an endless stack of magazines, as I have a tendency to be a little short on attention span. So if I list my books to you, and actually stack them up on my dresser, I enjoy their company more and look forward to reading them. Here is what is beginning my stack:

I want to start with the book I was so intrigued with in the late spring when Darryl Ray inspired me to look at the slow food movement. It's Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. This time, I'll read it from cover to cover. The other

books I've got on that stack are Michael Pollan's *In Defense of Food* and Carlo Petrini's *Slow Food Nation*.

I'll no doubt go back again to *Writing as a Way of Healing* by Louise DeSalvo. I got started with some of these writing books last year but didn't make it through this one. Wouldn't it be fun to get a little book group to read this together and talk about writing our own stories?

My friend Michelle has been talking about the book that won the 2007 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. She was telling me that the other best book she read most recently was *Forever in Blue: The Fourth Summer of the Sisterhood* by Ann Brashares. This series has been my daughter Natasha's favorite. She also loved *The Color Purple*, and I think there's nothing so great as re-reading the books your kids are reading.

Finally, I bought the book *Better* by Atul Gawande, which is the non-fiction writing of a surgeon exploring the practice of medicine. I doubt I'll get to them all, and I may change my direction as I begin, but this is the goal.

I hope you have some plans for a restful summer. And if your plans are more for an adventurous summer, then I hope you take some time for rest on your adventures. Whether your frigate takes you far away or only through the pages of your book, I hope you enjoy as many moments as is possible.

Love,

Katie



July Birthdays



- 3 Jo Murdach
- 15 Evelyn Cormier
- 24 Doug Sprague
- 26 Lillian Carrell
- 27 Laurie Matthews
- 28 Natalie Forrest
- 30 Dave Berman
- 30 Nathan Ray
- 30 Jessica Schuler

Wheel of Life

*Please send information to the Pastoral Care Committee.
Good news is welcomed, as well as your sorrows.*

- ★ Please send Mike Kanninen your well wishes as he deals with a life-changing diagnosis of cancer.
- ★ Congratulations to the Schwabs whose son Ray Blake was married last month to Carmen Abad. They also have the joy of a 6-month-old baby, Marcus.
- ★ Also to the Schwabs, son Gregory Blake is recovering from a serious abdominal operation. Healing thoughts and prayers to him.
- ★ Karen Kramer continues to recover from the back surgery she had in May.



My First Year as Vice President

I must confess that I was reluctant to accept the nomination for vice president. René and I had concerns about the amount of time required, as well as the length of the term. When you sign on to be vice president, you are also committing to be the president-elect. This means you are will-

ing to be actively involved with church governance for four full years.

A year has now passed and I think that this is a good time to reflect on what I have learned and done this past year and to discuss my current perspective as VP. I have focused on the following four areas: supporting the church president, participating as a board trustee, facilitating communication between committee chairs and orienting new chairpersons and trustees. This first year has been spent trying to come up to speed in all of these areas.



In providing support to our president, I have tried my best to assist Meg as much as possible. However, I suspect that I have been getting more help from her than she has gotten from me. As VP, I meet with her the week before board meetings to go over the agenda. Also present at these meetings are Frank Satterwhite (treasurer), Rev. Katie and during this past year, Carol Bodeau (intern minister). The agenda meeting gives Meg a chance to get agenda feedback and suggestions for the following week's board meeting. It also gives all of us a chance to discuss other issues that are on our minds (both church and personal in nature).

As a trustee, I attend board meetings. Although it has not been necessary this past year, if Meg is unable to attend, it is my job to chair the meeting in her absence. This past year I have also served on two board subcommittees. The first is the Unitarian House Subcommittee, which is tasked with gathering information that the board needs in order to make decisions regarding the replacement of our old church office. The second subcommittee is the new Personnel Subcommittee, whose function is to make sure that the board has all the information it needs to perform its employment duties as directed by the church by-laws.

I convened four Committee Council meetings this past year. At these meetings, committee chairpersons are invited to come and discuss issues of concern and find areas where they can assist one another. We also make sure that our various committee meetings do not conflict with each other and with important church events. Finally, this also is an opportunity for chairs to get briefed on current Board of Trustees issues.



Lastly, whenever new committee chairpersons, or new trustees are brought on board, it is the VP's job to meet with them and provide orientation materials.

Luckily, I have had a lot of assistance this past year. Meg has been terrific bringing me up to speed and forgiving my faults. In addition, Karen Cook has been training and mentoring me in the various responsibilities. She has attended all the committee council meetings, helped me be better organized, and helped me orient several new chairpersons.

This past year I have had a chance to become more comfortable in my duties as vice president. I have enjoyed working with Meg, Karen and the other board members. Over the next year I hope to create a more detailed job description and job manual for the next VP. I also will be paying a lot of attention to what I need to know when I follow in Meg's footsteps!

OUR CHURCH BOARD IN ACTION

June 2008

The following is a summary of the Board's business meeting. Feel free to discuss any of these items with Board members.

1. Approved the contract with Carol Bodeau to serve as Interim Director of Religious Education commencing on 18 August 2008.
2. Authorized Carol Bodeau to perform weddings until 31 August 2009.
3. Agreed to designate June's special plate collection for UUSC to aid victims of the cyclone in Myanmar (also known as Burma).

Committee Highlights



Association Affairs, Ramón Urbano

PACIFIC CENTRAL DISTRICT

“The mission of the PCD of the UUA is to provide services and resources that will grow the District in terms of its membership, the deepening of our faith, the effectiveness of our structures, and the power of our service to the wider world.”

PCD serves 38 congregations from Nevada and northern California across to Hawaii, and approximately 6,700 members. In keeping with the mission, services include the Chalice Lighters Grants, Conflict Management, Lay Leadership Development, Leadership School, OWL training, *PCD Currents* newsletter, Regional Marketing gUerillas, support to Search Committees, Workshops and Conferences, YRUU and UUYAN, to name a few that we might be familiar with.

PCD is affiliated with the Association of UU Administrators, LREDA, Unitarian Universalist Association, Pacific School of Religion, Starr King School of Ministry, UU Legislative Ministry, UU Ministers’ Association, UU Musicians Network and UU Service Committee. This is just a partial list.

PCD is governed by an elected 13-member Board of Directors who work with staff and volunteers. I was just elected to the board and from the onset can note that I will have the pleasure of working with a group of dedicated and experienced district leaders. Presently the staff consists of Cilla Raughley, District Executive, and Chuck Rosene, District Administrator. There soon will be a search for another staff person to compliment the team. Our staff is co-employed by the District and the UUA, supported by paying our Fair Share to both the district and the UUA.

At the annual PCD meeting and board retreat, it was noted that the finances of PCD look good, with no cash flow problems. However, there is concern that some congregations seem to be experiencing pledging and budget issues, reflecting the current economic situation.

Some highlights of this year were the multi-media marketing campaign in the greater San Francisco Bay Area with 17 participating congregations raising over \$300,000; initial results seem quite positive. The Chalice Lighters program is evolving into a stronger mode. Association Sunday was a highly successful experiment, with our district being one of the more supportive in the country, getting a pay back of \$22,000 to spend on regional growth programs. Our new initiative, the Umbrella Council, was started for our children, youth and young adults. The innovative networking mailing list *PCD Connections* is in place to connect congregations. On that theme, two new cluster groups were started. Various workshops were very successful, and our informative District Assembly brought our congregations together.

For the coming year, there will be an experiment holding smaller focused program events around the district. Subjects could be RE teacher training, effective canvassing, going green, antiracism and other subjects of importance to congregations. Another idea is to have more web-based workshops. Besides this support for the programs, there will be special emphasis on growth, antiracism and youth, and you can expect to see the UUA presidential candidates at our District Assembly next year.

Committee on the Interior, Lavon Hodges

Reminder Regarding Posting and Providing Fliers

Please date any fliers you wish to share with our Starr King community. Also, please ask a member of the Interior Committee before posting or placing any fliers or posters, so that you can be directed to the appropriate display location. Your cooperation is appreciated!

Grounds and Landscape Enhancement

Carol Henrie & Walt Korus

PLEASE JOIN US for All-Church Grounds Work Days in July on Saturday 12 July and Saturday 26 July. We’ll work on both days from 9 A.M. into the afternoon, but we will be grateful for ANY time you can contribute.

We will be tackling those lovely weeds and invasive plants, using Green Sanctuary methods to preserve habitat and to create enjoyable social space. ALL are welcome; we will be able to find meaningful work for you, whatever your physical stamina. Bring your gloves.

A special big *thank you* to Dick Albert, Terry Hunt and Walt Korus, who recently provided the labor to dig up and transport 800 more bricks to church through Freecycle.

Summer Activities . . . All Welcome!

RE Summer Program Has Started!

In the lay-led Children's Religious Education summer program, members of the congregation share their talents and enthusiasms with our youngsters. During June, Renée Ray helped children get close to Mother Earth. Please be sure to take a look at our garden in the making by Ornea Cottage. The photo below (*courtesy of Betsy Dye*) shows the box newly planted on 22 June. Chloe and Renée are describing the plants, including the "pizza corner" featuring tomatoes and basil.



Have You Ever Heard about Unitarian Universalism?

That's the icebreaker we often start with at the Starr King UU outreach tables. Often people answer "no" and then we're off and running with an introduction to our principles. You do not need to be a Unitarian historian in order to do a good service at these events. Most people are intrigued by the notion of a liberal religion that is strongly grounded in ethical, secular principles. Add in a short anecdote about how you personally became interested in Unitarian Universalism and you have the makings of an effective conversation that can motivate a casual passerby at a community event to visit our church and check it out. Plus, it's extremely fun doing the bean bag toss with the children who stop by!

Intrigued? Think you could invest 2 hours in taking a shift at our attractive booth on June 19, July 17 or August 21? You will be part of a 3 person crew, so you will have lots of company and back-up, not to mention a great bonding experience with a fellow congregation member.

Susan Blanc (510/610.4644) is the person to call for this important outreach activity. Try it, you'll like it!

Circle Suppers



Enjoy getting to know other church members! Bring a dish to share dinner with other members at someone's home. The next Circle Supper will be on Saturday 19 July (about 6 P.M., depending on the home). Sign up by Sunday 6 July to be a part of this fun event; a sign-up sheet is on the Community Table in the Sanctuary.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES & FUN

♣ **SKIFFLE meets weekly!** Starr King Instrumentalists for Fun, Laughter and Entertainment gather in the Sanctuary for instrumental music every Wednesday evening from 7 to 9 P.M. All instruments and levels of musicianship are welcome.

♣ **Morning Discovery** meets in the Library from 10 to 11:15 A.M. on first and third Wednesdays (2 & 16 July). All are welcome to join us to explore community and spirituality, discussion and shared silence.

♣ **Evening Discovery** meets in the Library at 7 P.M. on first and third Wednesdays (2 & 16 July) for thoughtful reflection on different topics that focus on the spiritual, the religious or the personal.

♣ **SKIT improv group** meets in the Sanctuary on second and fourth Thursdays (10 & 24 July) at 7:30 P.M.

♣ The **Film Group** will gather on Saturday 26 July at 7 P.M. We will be viewing *The Court Jester*, a 1956 family comedy classic starring Danny Kaye, Glynis Johns, Basil Rathbone and Angela Lansbury. Let host Stuart Fink (510/537.4421) know you are coming, and please bring a movie snack to share.

♣ The **Social Justice Committee** meets on second Sundays (13 July) after the service. All welcome.

♣ Join the **No Room for Racism** vigils that are held in Hayward every third Friday (18 July) from 4 to 5 P.M. at the intersection of Jackson-Mission-Foothill. An opportunity to stand for your values! Sponsored by South Hayward Parish.

♣ The **Book Group** will meet Thursday 10 July at 7 P.M. at the home of Evelyn Cormier (510/471.0475) to discuss *Serpent in Paradise* by Dea Birkitt. All welcome! Please ring to let the host know you will be coming.

Marriage Equality

Regina Fassano

In a landmark decision on 17 May, the California Supreme Court decided it was unconstitutional not to allow same sex couples the right to marry. California is the second state in the nation, after Massachusetts, to allow same sex couples the right to marry.

I was certainly surprised when I heard the news. I had to keep telling myself it was really true. After years of protesting for our rights, we are finally beginning to be recognized. I've heard that people all over the Bay Area are beginning to plan their wedding ceremonies. I'm seeing posts all over the internet for wedding photographers, reception sites and everything else that goes into planning a wedding. The newspapers have speculated that they believe there will be more people showing up at city hall this time around than there were a few years ago. So...on the evening of 16 June we can officially get married!

UU congregations all over the Bay Area celebrated upon hearing the good news. Editorials were submitted to several Bay Area newspapers. The UU church in Walnut Creek even celebrated with a wedding cake. I'm blessed that I can participate in a liberal faith that values **all** of who I am.

Additionally, please take the time to call the governor's office and let him know how you feel about gay marriage at 1-916/445.2841. *Press Option 1 for English, Option 5 to express your opinion on a hot issue, then Option 1 for the marriage equality issue, and Option 1 to register your support. It's fast (under 1 minute) and easy, and you **do not** have to be a resident of California to participate.* There is also an internet alternative at <http://gov.ca.gov/interact>.

Although we have already crossed a big hurdle, there is still one more issue to be tackled, and that is the anti-gay marriage initiative being put on the November 2008 ballot. I'll keep you posted as I get more information.



Welcome New Members

Roy and Diana Dickerson have both lived in the Bay Area most of their lives. They met when working at Alameda Naval Air Station and romance blossomed. They have always considered themselves socially liberal and fiscally conservative so see their views generally being echoed by the congregation. They don't have children but seem to acquire stray animals and often tutor kids in the neighborhood, finding joy in that and events surrounding children of friends and relatives. They enjoy reading, plays, movies, cards, dinner with friends and the occasional stay at a cozy hotel or Reno. Roy works for the FAA at SFO maintaining the equipment there, which he describes as "fun though the phone often rings on dark and stormy nights." He has worked all his life in aviation maintenance, while Diana has worked as an office manager and in graphic design and has even repaired missiles. She is retired but has a variety of interests which keep her "out of trouble most of the time."



This monthly column explores today's meanings and significance of some important words from the Christian tradition.

No. 28: *Sacrifice*

The notion of sacrifice, or the giving up of one's most valuable possession(s) for the sake of others, may today seem like an unimportant and even harmful idea in religion, reeking of altars, incense, blood and wine, wafers and long communion lines — images of religious life now transcended by our new and more enlightened view of spirituality. My mother, an orthodox agnostic to her dying day, once dismissed the idea of religious sacrifice with a shudder, saying, "It sure sounds like cannibalism to me!" Some UU feminist theologians have also recently observed that the Christian emphasis on redemption through sacrifice smacks of granting official approval to physical abuse and torture. Yet a recent religious author in the conservative Christian tradition writes: "Sacrifice is the most inescapable, impenetrable and off-putting theme in Christianity ... (yet I argue) that is also the central principle behind life itself, and that all existence depends upon it." Why the stark contrast between these views of religious sacrifice?

Since time immemorial, sacrifice has been a central feature of world religions. The ideals of self-denial, abandonment of the world, forfeiting of position and possessions, etc. all for the sake of a "higher calling," a selfless devotion to God and an intense love for others, has for centuries been a central feature all great religious movements. This theme has been carried to its extreme in Christianity where, in a most graphic and gruesome way, the founder and leader of the movement physically sacrificed himself so that others might live.

Today, however, in a world increasingly dominated by the values of a secular culture, such notions seem outdated and misguided. In the perspective of a culture which now values personal fulfillment over sacrifice and the advancement of material security over devotion to duty or country, the sacrifice of Jesus now makes little sense. Modern observers note that if he had really wanted to challenge the Jewish and Roman authorities of his time, he would have been better off to form a rival political party or take to the hills in open revolt against an unjust established order. According to some current theologians, the sufferings of Jesus, taken literally, were pointless and can provide no worthwhile guidance for today's religious seekers. To die passively on a cross like a criminal might have served to inspire his followers, but in actual fact his death achieved no basic change in the social and religious order of his day and left the mass of the common people without real guidance or relief. In this view Pontius Pilate,

who saw Jesus as a pious fool willing to die an unnecessary death, was right.

Such viewpoints are gaining wider acceptance, and hence fewer people today express interest in a life characterized by "giving up" social and physical pleasures in exchange for a life dedicated solely to the relief of the suffering and exploitation of others. The spectacle of young men today willing to die for their country, even in a war regarded by many as unjust and morally wrong, is not seen as courageous and noble but as sadly mistaken and delusional.

Unfortunately, it is only in a truly religious context that sacrifice makes any sense. Absent that complex of ideas, the ideals and gestures of sacrifice become trite and artificial. With the waning of Christianity and other world religions, possibly only Islam today preserves intact the ancient notion of sacrifice for a transcendent good. However, even in Islam, the notion of personal sacrifice through martyrdom for the good of the community has become corrupted by worldly goals and has given us not saints or Mother Teresas working selflessly for the poor and downtrodden, but suicide bombers.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

▲ **Serving Sunday morning coffee** is a great way to meet members and spread happiness! *Your help is needed* in the set-up position. This person would arrive at church about 35 minutes before the service, start the coffee and set everything up, then remain and serve coffee after the service. Please let Terry Babbidge (889.9462) know if you can fill this important slot on Sunday.

▲ Please see Bill DeSmidt if you would be interested in operating the **sound system** one or two Sundays a month.

▲ Sign up at the Community Table to bring **flowers or plants for the altar**. Let us know if you are honoring a loved one or celebrating a special occasion.

▲ **Volunteer pianists:** Share your talents when our regular accompanist is off. Contact Joyce Kinnear (885.0781).

▲ **Babysitters needed!** The Religious Education Committee is in need of babysitters during our Sunday services. Volunteer to offer your services on a regular basis or on occasion. Please contact Karen Kramer (783.2221).

How to Reach Us

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church

22577 Bayview Avenue
Hayward CA 94541

Church Office: 510/581.2060
office@starrking.org

Parish Minister: Kathryn Kandarian
minister@starrking.org
Home Telephone: 537.6565

Church President: Meg Jurich
510/886.3080
margaretjurich@yahoo.com

Church Website: <http://www.starrking.org>
Crystal Carroll, webmaster
webmaster@starrking.org

Chalice Editor: Carol Henrie
510/886.1018
editor@starrking.org

Church Administrative Hours:

Summer Schedule

Church Administrative Hours:

Tuesday & Wednesday
8 A.M. – 12 P.M.

Minister's Office Hours:

Tuesday & Wednesday
8 A.M. – 12 P.M.

Note: Please observe the minister's *uninterrupted* reading & writing time on Monday.

How to Reach Your Chalice Editor

Deadline is the second Sunday of each month. Please put your contribution in writing.

Post to: Carol Henrie
24929 Minnie Court
Hayward CA 94541

Email to: editor@starrking.org

Leave in: The box marked *Newsletter Editor* in the Church office

Church Leadership

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Bookstore — Evelyn Cormier
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Pledge Secretary — Marilyn Mosher
R.E. Chair — Carey Sanchez Para
Social — Robin Fink
Social Justice — Evelyn Cormier
South Hayward Parish —
Jim Forsyth & Barbara Storms
Sunday Coffee — Terry Babbidge
Volunteer Coordinator — Karen Cook
Welcoming Congregation — Mary Lasack
Worship — Betsy Dye

