



# The Flaming Chalice

NEWSLETTER OF STARR KING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH DECEMBER 2007

## A Month of Sundays

### December Celebration Previews

**Two Sunday Services at 9:30 A.M. & 11 A.M.**

**2: Unplug the Christmas Machine** ~ Rev. Katie Kandarian & Carol Bodeau

Let's face it—we need a whole community to help us let go of some of the consumerism that has become Christmas. Today, we'll begin in worship, and continue afterwards with a two hour workshop for those who would like to delve deeper.

*Immediately following the service, the minister will hold a brief informational session in the Library for those with questions about Unitarian Universalism or interested in membership.*

**9: Waiting in Wonder** ~ Rev. Katie Kandarian

It's not only children who have a hard time waiting at this time of year. Does the season of advent teach the same thing as acquiring the virtue of patience? What are the gifts? *Chalice Deadline*

**16: A Season of Light** ~ Carol Bodeau

The winter solstice is the darkest time of the year, greeted around the world with many holidays of light. How can we both deepen into the darkness and welcome the returning light? *Bookstore Open*

**23: Christmas in the Barn** ~ Rev. Katie Kandarian & Carol Bodeau  
INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICE

Come join in celebrating the spirit of Christmas in an intergenerational service. We'll create a pageant on the spot, and special participation from members of the congregation of all ages.

#### **Monday 24 December - Christmas Eve - 7pm**

*Silent Night, Holy Night* ~ Rev. Katie Kandarian & Carol Bodeau  
Starr King Church holds its traditional Christmas Eve service with carols, candle lighting and stories of this very special night.

**30: Compassionate Living and the Food We Eat: Is There A Connection?**  
~ Paul Henderick

Today's focus is the relationship between trying to live a more compassionate life and one of the most fundamental aspects of living: the foods we eat. Mr. Henderick is the son of member, Zelma Nunez-Borja.



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# Katie's Bay View Rev. Katie Kandarian

A Naturally Lit Christmas

Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.  
~Confucius

After we've all gathered our coffee and goodies on Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, our intern minister, Carol Bodeau and I will lead a workshop inspired by the book, *Unplug the Christmas Machine*. We'll wait until then



to give you the list of things designed to make your holiday season a more meaningful one, more devoted to the religious and spiritual values we espouse and less driven by someone else's skill in marketing and advertising.

But I want to share with you here, as we begin the month of December with all of its myriad activities as well as its celebrations of Christmas and Hanukah and Solstice and Advent and Kwanza, that our focus *for the entire month of December* will be on a simpler, more sane holiday season. Our activities will attempt to support our goals, and we'll try to go with the less is more approach.

We welcome you to not only purchase from, but support with your creations, the holiday bazaar on the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup>, and come sit in peace on the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> for the "Festival of Lights," and you are invited to trim our tree with homemade ornaments at our gathering for all ages on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

We'll have an intergenerational service on Sunday morning the 23<sup>rd</sup> and our usual carols and candles on Christmas Eve night at 7pm.

It seems that everywhere I look I see things that are designed to lead me away from this goal of a simple, sane, less commercial Christmas, and I don't expect myself to do it perfectly, nor should you, but I believe that, with the mutual support of this community, we can move toward a more meaningful holiday season.

I hope that the important things are in your heart this year. May you experience, hope, beauty and joy. May you feel the love of a deep abiding mystery. May we all pray and work for peace in our world.

Love,

## Wheel of Life

- ✿ Mike Kanninen is recovering at home from gall bladder surgery.
- ✿ Mike Kanninen and Mary Lanzone welcome a new grandchild —congrats!
- ✿ Congrats also to Jody and Jens Dill who welcome a new grandchild.



## December Birthdays

Best birthday wishes to . . .

- 3 Meadow D'Arcy
- 4 Devin Clark
- 7 Mary Lou Schuler
- 13 Zelma Nunez-Borja
- 24 Chris Selig
- 25 Holly Robinson
- 27 Natasha Bugosh
- 29 Glen Jacob
- 30 Bill Gaylord
- 31 Janet Durant



# The Board Bulletin

Meg Jurich, President, Board of Trustees



## An Update on Unitarian House Replacement

The Architect, Dave Byrens, is proceeding through our project in a seven-phase process to completion. We are roughly in phase four. On November 15,

2007, the Unitarian House subcommittee of the Board of trustees (Frank Satterwhite, Darryl Ray, & Meg Jurich) met with Dave and his associate Dong Kim to review our conditional use submittal package.

This package includes a site plan largely similar to the drawings that have been on display in the sanctuary and published in the September issue of our newsletter. The plan's primary purpose is to satisfy the county as to the size and occupancy use of the addition. Our project has required this application for a new conditional use permit because the previous conditional use permit, associated with our expansion plan designed by Tim Steele, has expired. Following a comprehensive review, the committee gave the go ahead to submit for the conditional use permit. The submittal is expected to take place during the week of November 19.

Once the county receives the submittal package, we are told to allow two to three months for their review. When our architect receives county approval, he moves on to phase five in which he prepares drawings and specifications for building permit and construction. It is his expectation to have requirements in place to start construction in late March/early April.

Well before moving into phase five, the subcommittee will be posting the site plans in the church building, and eliciting in-put from interested members and staff. We'll want ideas about the office, the classrooms, the kitchen, the landscaping, and green building to name a few.

On Sunday, January 6, 2008, after second service, the subcommittee will hold a congregational informational meeting, which will feature a presentation by our architect and his staff. He will walk us through the site plan development and project additional benchmarks to be reached in the early spring. This will be an important opportunity to voice your questions and concerns. We also expect to look at the question of financing construction at that time. Our treasurer is currently exploring the feasibility of self-financing our building project by means of loans from interested members of the congregation to be repaid over fifteen years at a very attractive rate.



## OUR CHURCH BOARD IN ACTION

November 2007

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

- 1. Unitarian House:** The architects indicated it will take 6-8 weeks to obtain a Special Use Permit. The architects will get bids from builders, thereafter.
- 2. Special Plate Policy:** The Board passed a motion for a special plate for the Pacific Southwest fire fund.
- 3. Rental Policy:** The Board passed a motion to update the rental rates for the church. Church members and their families may use the church at no charge for life passage events (except for a cleaning and key deposit).
- 4. RE Report:** RE is drafting a new safe congregation policy and will begin searching for a DRE next year.
- 5. Membership Report:** Darryl Ray developed a counting template to resolve problems with counting procedures. Usher training is planned. Greeter training has taken place.
- 6. Finance Report:** The Finance Chair will be stepping down. Marion Babbidge will coordinate next year's canvas. Keith Lewis will coordinate the budget development. Terri Owen will coordinate the service auction.
- 7. RE Clerical Position:** \$1,360 was allocated in the budget for RE administrative support. The Board passed a motion to hire M. Nemeth for this work.
- 8. Position on the Power Plant:** The Board agreed that taking a position on the power plant in Hayward would be divisive and decided not to take a position.
- 9. Green Sanctuary:** The Green Sanctuary Committee plans to perform an environmental audit of the congregation. The Board moved to support this committee and its work in the church.
- 10. Guidelines for Use of Community Table, Bulletin Boards, and Display of Literature:** Board members complimented the Interior Committee on the upkeep of these areas.
- 11. Minister's Report:** The Board approved a motion that lets first time visitors know that they are not expected to give during the offertory. Information was given on the Martin Luther King parade.
- 12. Intern's Report:** The Youth did a great job on the Dia des las Muertas service. They are planning a service for the spring and middle schoolers will do a service in November.
- 13. Treasurer's Report:** We are \$157 overdrawn and are very short on pledges. September was a particularly slow month. It was suggested that a bar chart be added to the newsletter showing the cash flow position.



# Refrigerator Page

## Children's Religious Education

This month, our article comes from the wonderful online resources of the Church of the Larger Fellowship. Rev. Ungar serves as the Minister for Lifespan Learning.

Rev. Ungar writes. . . 'People tend to refer to December as "the holiday season," meaning that we have festivities for Christmas, Hannukah, Kwanzaa and more at this time of year. But the oldest holiday of this season, and the one that many December holidays hark back to, is the Winter Solstice, sometimes called Yule. The Winter Solstice is really a scientific holiday, since it is based not on any particular story or belief system, but rather on honoring the point in the year when we have the shortest day and the longest night. You can find out more [details about the solstice here](#).'

If you follow this link it will take you to an article by Karen Barss entitled "**Solstice Understanding the Winter**" where she writes. . . "No one knows for sure when Jesus was born. Selecting December 25th to celebrate [Christmas](#) was probably no accident. Non-Christians celebrated the rebirth of the sun at this time, traditionally a male god or celestial ruler. Romans celebrated Saturnalia, honoring their god Saturn, with a weeklong December feast beginning December 14th and including observance of the solstice. Homage was also paid to Mithra, an ancient Persian god of light. Similar examples come from numerous cultural and religious traditions. Some scholars believe that Christians chose to celebrate Christ's birth on December 25th to make it easier to attract pagans to their faith.

Many seasonal symbols that today are connected to Christmas have their roots in the solstice and pagan celebrations. For example, the yule log came from a pagan ritual. The log was lit on the eve of the solstice—to conquer the darkness, protect against evil spirits, and bring luck—and burned for 12 hours. The log was later replaced by a tree, adorned with burning candles (don't try that at home!).

The Celts thought the sun stood still for 12 days in the middle of winter (could that be the source of the 12 days of Christmas?). Holly, with its bright berries and rich foliage, was an important symbol because it could withstand the harshness of winter and maintain its color and life, as could mistletoe and evergreens."

## Association Affairs

by Ramon Urbano

### UU NATIONAL CAMPAIGN!

Did you know that the Bay Area Marketing Campaign is being done in concert with our UUA National Advertising Campaign?

This effort is the first national media campaign in over 50 years. The main goals of the campaign is to:

- Inspire members to take greater pride in their identity as Unitarian Universalists
- Encourage UUs to invite friends and family to visit congregations
- Raise name awareness of Unitarian Universalism
- Give Unitarian Universalism a voice in the national discourse about faith, spirituality and values

TIME magazine was selected as the main vehicle for the media campaign because TIME has a weekly circulation of 3.25 million and a weekly readership of 21.4 million. TIME is the oldest and most widely read news magazine in the country. The readers of TIME are "influencers" or thought leaders. TIME's key audience is adults age 30 to 44 who listen to, watch or have contributed to NPR/PBS. This audience has also participated in, or contributed to, environmental organizations or causes.

The UUA will run one full page ad and one "advertorial" in two December issues of TIME - the 3rd and 31st (the TIME Person of the Year Edition). This "advertorial" is a two page spread which includes a 1/3 page ad on the far left and a 2/3 page ad on the right (between the ads is a Time magazine story). The 2/3 page will make reference to Time's archives of over 16,000 religion articles located on the Time.com website.

When you open [www.time.com/religionarchive](http://www.time.com/religionarchive), UU advertising and content will be featured prominently. It will also include links to [uua.org](http://uua.org) and articles sharing our Unitarian Universalist perspective on many of the topics covered in the archive pages. In addition, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations will be recognized as the sponsor of the TIME's Religion Archives. The "advertorial" implies an endorsement by TIME Magazine.

Keep tuned in and look for TIME magazine issued on December 3 & 31.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

¶ The **Outreach Committee** suggests recirculating the *UU World*. Leave old copies in waiting rooms, or put them in the Outreach Committee box in the church office for use at public events.

¶ **Do you know our Church history?** *An Ordinary Miracle* and *The Miracle Continues* are available in the church office, \$15 each or two for \$25.

¶ **Help make our website brilliant!** Please submit your contributions of photos of church events and/or activities for the website (<http://starrking.org>) to [webmaster@starrking.org](mailto:webmaster@starrking.org).

¶ **Babysitters Needed.** The Religious Education Committee is in need of babysitters during Sunday services. Can you provide this valuable service on a regular or occasional basis? Please contact Karen Kramer (783.2221).

¶ The Worship Committee reminds us that the **musical postlude** at the end of the service is a part of worship; please remain seated to maintain a reverential quiet until the last note.

¶ To preserve a sense of worship on Sunday mornings, please remember to **switch off cell phones** and other devices before entering the Sanctuary.



¶ **Committee chairs/events coordinators:** To avoid schedule conflicts, notify the Church Office Administrator of dates and times of ALL meetings and events (even if ongoing or off-site).

¶ **How are chalice lighters and readers for services chosen?** The Worship Associate for the service asks someone to do it. If you would like to participate in worship by lighting the chalice and/or reading from the pulpit, just tell any Worship Associate, who will add your name to the list of interested participants. *Please note* that you must be at church 15 minutes prior to the start of the service in order to be asked.

¶ Our **SKUUC Food Donation Basket** for South Hayward Parish Food Pantry is located just inside the eastern entry door in our Sanctuary. Please be generous every week and donate healthful nonperishable food items .

¶ The Religious Education Committee would like to remind parents with small children that **the service can be heard in the library** should you need to leave the sanctuary due to crying or antsy children. The volume adjustments are near the speakers in the library.

¶ Please submit written announcements for the Sunday bulletin to Nancy by 1 P.M. on Tuesday. Office contact info: [office@starrking.org](mailto:office@starrking.org) or 510/581.2060.

¶ **A Gentle Reminder** from the Worship Committee: Candles of joy, sorrow and concern should be brief and pointed, or the service may run too long.

¶ Stuart Fink has placed a Lions' Club collection box on the Community Table. **Eyeglasses you no longer use** will go to Latin American countries, along with eye doctors who will fit people in need.

¶ Donate interesting books in excellent condition to our **Church Bookstore** for resale. Shop in our bookstore on third Sundays. See Evelyn Cormier.

¶ **To schedule an event**, visit the online calendar at our church website ([http://www.starrking.org/skuu\\_committee\\_meetings.htm](http://www.starrking.org/skuu_committee_meetings.htm)) to check availability, then call the office and we will add your event. You can view the website calendar for all church events.

¶ Our Sanctuary serves the church as an all-purpose room; things get moved several times each week to accommodate various meetings and activities. *PLEASE* if you use the sanctuary for an event or meeting, **leave the Sanctuary in the worship configuration**. Put the chairs back *each time* they are moved.

## 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 first service, start the coffee and set everything up, then remain and serve coffee after first service. Please let Terry Babbidge (889.9462) know if you can fill this important slot on Sunday.



♣ Join our **Grounds & Landscape Enhancement** activities at Church. Lately we have been keeping our weekends free and are working on Fridays from 9:30 A.M. into the afternoon, as well as one other weekday TBA. We're flexible and can find a way to include you. Our project is to create a beautiful, water-wise environment of native and Mediterranean-adapted plants that affords inspiring beauty and spiritual solace, while providing habitat. Work ranges from light weeding and cultivation to irrigation maintenance to vigorous weed-clearing and mulching. We always have fun! Contact Carol Henrie (886.1018) or Walt Korus (487.8362).

♣ Please see Betsy Dye 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).

*Our Church Here . . . All are welcome to participate!*

## EVENTS

### ▲ **Unplug the Christmas Machine Workshop.**

Sunday 2 December at 1-3pm. Join our minister, Rev. Katie Kandarian, and our intern minister, Carol Bodeau, in this playful exploration of ways to simplify our holiday celebrations.

### *It's a Holiday Happening*

**Sunday 16 December at 12:30 p.m.**  
**SKUUC Holiday Tree Trimming Party**  
**Come Deck the Halls!**

Join us for our annual tree trimming party and potluck (after 2nd service) on December 16th at 12:30 p.m. Bring your favorite cold potluck dish (salad, plate of sandwiches, dessert) and enter into the fun for all ages as we join in the fellowship of this magical time of year. Conviviality encouraged!

### ▲ **Festival of Lights Tuesday 11 December**

Come to the SKUUC sanctuary to honor a time of peace, tranquility, and prayer hosted by Ruth & Bill DeSmidt.

▲ **Brown Bag Documentaries! Sunday 20 January at 12:45 pm** “Curitiba Urban Solutions from a Developing City” about a rapidly growing Brazilian city that transformed its conditions from another slum east of Sao Paulo to a beacon of livability...almost beyond belief.



### ▲ **MISSING Vacuum Cleaner**

If you borrowed the green vacuum cleaner from SKUUC— Please, please, return it!

### *Save the Date!*

### ▲ **2007 Christmas Bazaar 9 & 16 December**

This year we want to offer a bazaar that features the talents of our membership. What do you create, cook or grow that would make a unique gift? Gifts for kids, youth and adults to give and receive. Donate your talents! Please no garage sale items.

Volunteers are needed on Saturday 8 December to set-up and price all the gifts and to host the Bazaar on the 9 and 16th. Any questions or info contact: Ruth DeSmidt (510/582.7297).



### ▲ **SKUUC Service Auction 16 February 2008**

If you haven't experienced the SKUUC Service Auction, you have a wonderful experience to anticipate. You will have an opportunity to discover the many talents of our congregation and to purchase goods and services that those talents create. This is a major fundraiser for SKUUC. If you have goods and services to donate, please contact Terri Owens at [terri\\_07@yahoo.com](mailto:terri_07@yahoo.com).

### ▲ **Annual Trek to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon 15 & 16 March 2008**

A great weekend getaway — fun, educational, relaxing.

The Starr King Plan includes:

- Two nights lodging (with breakfast) at the Plaza Inn two blocks from the theater.
- Tickets to three plays
- A pre-trip overview of the plays
- A talk by one of the actors (for our group only) on Sunday morning.

Plays to be seen are:

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespearean comedy  
*The Clay Cart*, a world classic from India  
*Fences* by August Wilson

Cost for this weekend is \$205 per person, double occupancy (\$95 deposit). Make checks payable to *Starr King UU Church*; deliver at church or mail to Doug Sprague or Donnie Rett.

NOTE: Open to non-members. Invite your friends!



**ONGOING ACTIVITIES**

**▲ South Hayward Parish -  
How You Can Help**

This holiday season, we can all help support South Hayward Parish in its important work. Here are a few things you can do:

- Drop some non-perishable food items in the basket at the rear of the sanctuary
- Contribute to the SHP wish list for supplies they need
- Attend a first-Friday Vigil of Caring
- Attend the 21 Dec witnessing
- Help out at the Day Laborer Center or at the Food Banks that South Hayward Parish runs
- Write a check to contribute to this great organization (and thanks to all of you who did so at our special November collection).

**Notes on Being Green**

- Tips from Evelyn Cormier:
- For Your car-
  - Keep your car tuned up and running efficiently
  - Keep the tires properly inflated (this can save 400-700 lbs of CO2 a year)
- In Your home-
  - Use compact fluorescent bulbs (they are 75% more efficient than incandescent and produce 75% less heat)
  - Use low-flow shower heads
- In Daily life-
  - Reduce, Re-use, Recycle
  - Shop locally or online
  - Visit the local farmers markets



▲ **SKIFFLE Meets Monday Nite** Starr King Instrumentalists for Fun, Laughter and Entertainment gather in the Sanctuary for instrumental music every Monday evening from 7 to 9 P.M. All instruments and levels invited.

▲ **Morning Discovery** meets at Church from 10 to 11:15 A.M. on first and third Wednesdays (5 & 19 December). All are welcome to join us to explore community and spirituality, discussion and shared silence.

▲ **Evening Discovery** meets at Church at 7 P.M. on first and third Wednesdays (5 & 19 December).

▲ **SKIT** improv group meets in the Sanctuary on second and fourth Thursdays (13 & 27 December) at 7:30 P.M.



▲ The **Book Group** will meet Thursday 13 December at 7 P.M. at the home of Evelyn Cormier, (510) 471-0475, to discuss the book *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen.

All are welcome! Please ring to let the host know you will be coming.

▲ The **Film Group** will gather on Friday 14 December at 7 P.M. We will watch the modern fable, “Edward Scissorhands” starring Johnny Depp, Vincent Price (in his last film), Winona Ryder, Alan Arkin and Dianne Wiest. All welcome! Let host Stuart Fink (510)537-4421) know you are coming; bring a movie snack to share.

▲ The **Social Justice Committee** meets on second Sundays (9 December) after second service. Green Sanctuary, Global Warming, and Hayward power plants are likely topics. All welcome.

*... Our Church There*

¶ Join the **No Room for Racism** vigils that are held in Hayward every third Friday (21 December) 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.

¶ **Vigils of Caring.** South Hayward Parish holds vigils of caring the first Friday of each month to remember those who have died as a result of violence. Meet us Friday 7 December at 12 noon at the intersection of D Street and Grand Avenue. All are welcome to attend.

¶ **The Pagan Interest Group** Pagan Gathering Circle will be held Sunday 30 December at 1:30 p.m. “Yule” hosted by Regina. All are invited to attend this ritual circle gathering. For more info, contact Bill and Ruth DeSmidt.

¶ **Prices are rising for Fair Trade Coffee** due to new guarantees to coffee farmer cooperatives. Please keep this in mind as you make your coffee donation on Sunday morning. Benefits of Fair Trade affect 28 farmer cooperatives in 14 countries. For background about how Fair Trade puts our principles into action: <http://r.vresp.com/?EqualExchange/da95ca45fb/950275/d0f9d32d6b/40328cb>.

¶ **Ministries to Incarcerated UUs.** The Church of the Larger Fellowship, a cyber-space congregation providing Unitarian Universalism to isolated religious liberals, offers a spiritual lifeline to incarcerated UUs. Over 300 prisoners across the US have joined the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship. With no access to the web or UU Sunday services, their only way of learning more about UUism is through written publications and letters exchanged with other UUs. Members of any UU congregation who might like to write to a CLF prisoner-member are invited to visit the CLF website ([www.clfuu.org](http://www.clfuu.org)). Click on *Prison Ministry* to learn more about CLF’s Prison Programs and apply for the Letter Writing Ministry.

# Committee Highlights

## News from Earth Ministry

By Karen Urbano

Earth Ministry at Starr King Church is off to a good start! We met for the first time to learn about the Green Sanctuary program.

So what is the Green Sanctuary program? It is an accreditation process sponsored by the independent UUA affiliate called Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth.

The Program invites congregations to:

- Build awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues
- Encourage personal lifestyle changes
- Engage in community action on environmental issues
- Strengthen the connection between spiritual practice and Earth consciousness
- Work to heal environmental injustices

After establishing a charter, the first steps of the process are to assess where we are right now through an environmental audit. In the audit we look at our facility, current management practices such as recycling or grounds maintenance and programs such as religious education and worship. We also have an opportunity to examine our own environmental awareness and practices.

If you are in charge of a specific area of the church, we invite your participation. For example, what kind of disposable products are used in the kitchen?

Once the audit is complete, we will develop our plan of action of twelve activities in four separate areas:

- Worship and Spiritual Practice
- Religious Education
- Environmental justice
- Sustainable living



Participating so far are Doug Sprague, Darryl Ray, Walt Korus, Evelyn Cormier, Carol Bodeau, Marla Bacina, Carol Henrie & Dick Albert. We invite you to join in.

By popular request, the next general meetings will be on Sundays. They will be on January 27 and February 24 from 12:30 until 2 p.m. Check your Chalice and the website for updates.

Feel free to contact me with questions @ 510-632-7625 or [karenjean@earthlink.net](mailto:karenjean@earthlink.net).

## Intern Reflections

Carol Bodeau



As the holidays arrive, I know that we are all juggling so many beloved and important activities and tasks—visiting with family and friends, creating special events and special gifts to share, sprucing up ourselves and our homes in anticipation and celebration of—this season. But what is it we are celebrating,

after all?

For Christians, the season is all about the birth of a savior, who not only redeems but also inspires, who teaches and heals and gives hope. For Unitarian Universalists, the holiday season may or may not include truly honoring the birth of Jesus of Nazareth; many UUs find the holidays a time to honor the broader themes of shared hope through community and shared commitment to loving life and one another.

We recognize the ways that these themes are echoed in many of the world's seasonal holidays—Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Divali, and many others—and enjoy traditional activities from these in the form of music, foods, and ceremonies.

Traditional holiday activities offer us a chance to act out our remembrance of important values. Perhaps we can hold to these broader meanings, then, in the face of such busy-ness:

*Family (both biological and chosen) and community matter more than trimmings and trappings*

*Love, not shopping, is the message of the season*

*Beauty can be found in simple things—in a smiling face, in nature, in a color or a texture, and in the sound of music.*

*We each, every one of us, has the light of teaching, healing and hope inside of us that we can share with others*

Celebration can heal, when it reminds us that we are connected, and that we care about one another. May your holidays be blessed with the simplest, and the richest of blessings.

# What's the Word? *Al Murdach*

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

## No. 22: **Virgin Birth**

During the holidays, UU's find themselves caught up in a swirl of strange sounding Christian doctrines—incarnation, salvation, redemption, etc. Possibly one of the strangest sounding doctrines to UU ears is that of the virgin birth, or the belief that Jesus was conceived through divine intervention and not through ordinary human means.

This doctrine, as well as the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, is beloved by Roman Catholics, the Orthodox, and Muslims but is regarded as naive and laughable by those outside these faiths. It is a curious fact of our modern sensibility that it seems perfectly acceptable to have lots of sex without the possibility of having children but ridiculous to believe that one could have a child without ever having sex. The idea that a deity could make this happen is dismissed as impossible, and the faiths that maintain this are accused of being prudish about sex, since otherwise why would they even speak of such an idea.

Sex, in other words, is viewed as so important and essential to human life that no one can do without it, not even God.

Nevertheless, during the holidays, we often speak and sing in traditional ways of the "Virgin Mary", simply skipping over all the implications of this phrase. Although she is typically forgotten during the rest of the year, particularly by UU's, maybe Mary is trying to tell us something during these holiday times. Maybe she's saying that sex isn't as important as nurturing and caring for others, that maybe standing up for the poor and the dispossessed (see her "Magnificat" song in the book of Luke in the Bible) is of more enduring significance than a good roll in the hay, that maybe, in spite of Freud, life isn't all about sex after all and that it's OK to be so devoted to God, a cause, or another person that sex may be the last thing that one thinks about.

With these thoughts in mind, Mary and her baby may really give us a clue to something other holiday figures like Rudolph and Frosty don't readily call to our attention: that the Christmas holidays alone give us a unique chance to recommit ourselves to ideals that can take us out of ourselves and make us think, not just about how to improve our sexual performance, but how best to always love and care for others and ourselves.



### **Mystery Dinner a Huge Success**

The 2007 "Mystery Theater" was a huge success, bringing in substantial funds for our church.

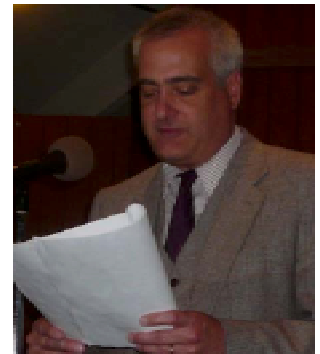
In this years play, Glen Jacob departed from the usual scenario....no actors were murdered this year!

Many people who attended felt that this was Glen's best effort yet, and this included non church members who've attended past performances.

The cast really enjoyed it, as well. Even the losing Christublican candidates, (Stuart Fink, Bob Meyerson) were pumped up after the performance. And of course, the winning Peaceocrat team, (Glen Jacob and Bill DeSmidt,) are looking forward to a productive administration.

A delicious meal was presented by Executive Chef Rene Ray and her wonderful staff which featured selective favorite receipts of past Presidents. The meal was expertly served by members of the Secret Service (aka SKUUC Youth).

Thanks to all of them, and for those whose attendance helped support our Church.



### ***Election: 2084***



## Committee Highlights

# *Friends of FESCO* (Family Emergency Shelter Coalition)

by Diane Meyerson

### In appreciation of Nancy Schluntz . . .

This month we, with great hesitation, say good-bye to Nancy Schluntz, who has been Executive Director of FESCO – The Family Emergency Shelter Coalition for the past 13 years.

As Executive Director, Nancy—tenaciously managed the fine details of running an ever growing and evolving organization. She promoted and attended every community fundraising and after care event while meeting the multiple Federal, State, City and County grant proposal deadlines. The overriding goal, whatever the task at hand, was to ensure that the needs of the FESCO families were met and that the families would be given the opportunity to restore their dignity.

How does one thank Nancy for the depth of her dedication and vision, which transformed FESCO into the organization it is today? In 2007, FESCO has a budget of one million dollars and owns and operates four facilities, which support and provide alternatives to homeless families with children.

Twenty-one years ago the organization converted a two story Victorian home on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in Hayward, into a 24 bed multi family dwelling fondly referred to as The Shelter. This facility provided food, shelter and services on an emergency basis to homeless families with children for stays up to 3 months.

As the needs of the families became apparent, programs were developed to meet those needs. Some programs reached out to the community for permanent housing and job training assistance. Other programs addressed the personal development of the families such as instruction in household budgeting, creating a savings plan and parenting skills. Multiple programs were developed for children including tutoring and story time. Over time, counseling services became available for parents and children.

In the years that followed, four apartments next door to The Shelter were purchased and converted into transitional housing which provided stays up to 18 months and more independent living.

Subsequently, Banyan House, also a transitional housing facility, was opened which provides housing to 8 families and a full range of services.

The Counseling Center, next door to The Shelter, provides services to FESCO families from all three housing facilities.

We rejoice with Nancy as she explores her new endeavors, but she will be missed. We humbly thank her for all that she has given. We appreciate all that she has done.



### FESCO -- The Family Shelter

#### *Holiday Adopt A Family*

**Create family joy this holiday season  
by donating NEW warm clothing for  
FESCO families - children, youth and adults  
(Gift cards are welcome)**



**Bring donations to SKUUC by  
9 December 2007  
Feel the warmth of  
Families helping Families**



Diane Meyerson represents Starr King UU Church on the FESCO board.

# How to Reach Us

## **Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church**

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Church President: Meg Jurich  
510/886.3080  
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Chalice Editor: Carol Henrie  
510/886.1018  
[editor@starrking.org](mailto:editor@starrking.org)

### **Church Administrative Hours:**

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday  
9 A.M. – 1 P.M.

### **Minister's Office Hours:**

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday  
9 A.M. – 1 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](mailto:editor@starrking.org)

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

## **Church Leadership**

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### Church Committee Chairs

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Adult Religious Education — Andy Hansen  
Bookstore — Evelyn Cormier  
Buildings — Dick Albert  
*Chalice* Newsletter — Carol Henrie, editor  
Endowment/Memorial Fund — Bill Schwab  
Finance Chair — Kay Athos  
FESCO — Diane Meyerson  
Grounds — Carol Henrie & Walt Korus  
Interior — Lavon Hodges  
Intern — Bob Meyerson  
Kitchen Manager — Sherry Thomas  
Membership — Wendy Robertson  
Committee on Ministry — Lee Berger (Convenor),  
Doris Haskell, Carol Henrie, Keith Lewis,  
Kirk Smith, Karen Yearout

Nominating — Bob Stortz

Outreach — Susan Blanc

Pastoral Care — Bob Stortz, Convenor

Pledge Secretary — Marilyn Mosher

R.E. Chair — Carey Sanchez Para

Social Justice — Evelyn Cormier

South Hayward Parish —

Jim Forsyth & Barbara Storms

Sunday Coffee — Terry Babbidge

Sunday Service Setup — Mary Richards

Volunteer Coordinator — Karen Cook

Welcoming Congregation — Mary Lasack

Worship — Betsy Dye

