



Fellowgram

Celebrating 50 years – 1959-2009

UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP OF HOUSTON

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

JANUARY 3 — *Hope for the New Year* - John Pepper

Sometimes things going on around us seem rather hopeless and sometimes I give into these feelings. But change is possible and we simply have to hold on to the possibility of positive redeeming change - it's happened before and it will happen again. Please join me as I reflect on the potential for positive change and actual changes from inspirational people who have changed for the good and the differences they made in their lives and in others'.

JANUARY 10 — *Is the US a Christian or Secular Nation* - Wayne Derrick

We keep hearing claims that the US is a Christian nation, but the framers of the Constitution clearly made our Constitution to be free of religious bias. The background for this action will be discussed.

JANUARY 17 — *Embracing Diversity* - Kim Willis

Do we want to tolerate differences or joyously embrace them? Truly understanding the concept of white privilege and recognizing how it oppresses everyone is a big step toward going beyond tolerance.

JANUARY 24 — *Celebrate Edgar Allen Poe.*

JANUARY 31— *Charles Peirce* - Dwight Raulston

Come "Early" for Our 10 AM–10:50 AM OFFERINGS!

Children's Religious Education RE wing. Details on page 2.

ADULT FORUM *Analyzing Our Times*–Workroom. Details on page 3.

Building Your Own Theology Group (BYOT) Discussion to help participants search for and develop a personal theology–RE Room 1.

FOCUS GROUP Book discussion group–Library. Details on page 4.

December 24, 2009

Volume 51, Issue 26

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Sleigh bells ring – are you listening? In the lane snow is glistening.

A beautiful sight – we’re happy tonight, walking in a winter wonderland!



Greetings from snowy cold Wisconsin, where my children are enjoying the winter wonderland and I am more into the line from “Let It Snow” – “The weather outside is frightful, but inside it’s so delightful...”

And yet we are all enjoying being with my family – Christmas Eve is just my sisters and their husbands and my parents, but Christmas Day is when we pull out all the stops – All of my dad’s siblings and their families coming together at one house – about sixty people this year. With a potluck. There are scarcely tables enough for such a feast!

But enough about me – here are some holiday wishes for you:

May you hug and be hugged!

May you find time to just sit and breathe and take it all in!

May you be open to surprise.

May you truly make somebody’s day.

May you get something you really really wanted, but had not even realized...

I am very excited to announce that this congregation came together admirably, donating funds enough to purchase all 150 umbrellas and deodorants for The Turning Point Center’s holiday bags! And even before the deadline! (Okay, so I got some weird looks when I went shopping for 112 deodorants...)

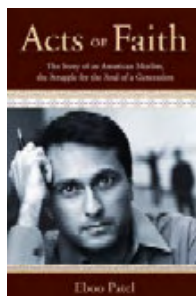
We hope you can find time in this busy holiday season to spend time with us! Come to the Fellowship at 10am this (and every!) week and let your spirit be filled! If you would like to learn more about faith development opportunities, come to our circle any Sunday, or speak with Bob Wiener or me! Our next committee meeting will be 7pm, January 14th in the workroom.

Yours in faith,
Katy Carpman
Director of Religious Education
ufhdre@comcast.net

UU Quiz

What Unitarian wrote *The Comedian*?

Answer on page 7



Beacon Press Author Wins Prestigious Award

Eboo Patel, founder and executive director of [Interfaith Youth Core](#), has received the [2010 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion](#) for his autobiography, *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*. Patel was selected from among sixty-seven nominations worldwide.

To read more about this article, go to <http://www.uua.org/publications/beaconpress/153857.shtml>

Tuesday Book Club

Here are our upcoming books:

January 5, 2010, “The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society” by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows (304 pp)

“Traditional without seeming stale, and romantic without being naïve” (San Francisco Chronicle), this epistolary novel, based on Mary Ann Shaffer’s painstaking, lifelong research, is an homage to book-lovers and a nostalgic portrayal of an era. As her quirky, loveable characters cite the works of Shakespeare, Austen, and the Brontës, Shaffer subtly weaves those writers’ themes into her own narrative. However, it is the tragic stories of life under Nazi occupation that animate the novel and give it its urgency; furthermore, the novel explores the darker side of human nature without becoming maudlin. The Rocky Mountain News criticized the novel’s lighthearted tone and characterizations, but most critics agreed that, with its humor and optimism, Guernsey “affirms the power of books to nourish people during hard times” (Washington Post)

February 2, 2010, “The Wordy Shipmates” by Sarah Vowell (272 pp) Although Puritanism is conflated with modern religious fundamentalism and its disregard for any learning that doesn’t come from the Bible, Vowell argues passionately that Puritans were as enamored of wisdom and knowledge as religious virtue. Focusing on the Puritans who settled in 1692 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Vowell laments the image of Puritans as “boring killjoys” when in fact they were “fascinating killjoys” who, aside from their belief that Catholics were going to hell, were much more open to new ideas than we’ve been led to think. Drawing on letters, essays, and sermons, Vowell offers a penetrating look at the tensions between John Winthrop, John Cotton, Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and others as they argued about the role of religion in government and everyday life. They saw themselves as God’s chosen people, a credo that set the

“There is no past, so long as book shall live!” ~ Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

tone for American history and notions of manifest destiny that have led to all manner of imposition on other lands and cultures. But they also vehemently debated separation of church and state and founded Harvard, even as they pondered the destiny of what Winthrop referred to as the “shining city on the hill.” A book dense with detail, insight, and humor.

March 2, 2010, “Little, Big” by John Crowley

Our books should all be available at the library and in paperback at your favorite bookstore. You can reach me at ufhlibrary@comcast.net . Jan

The **Fellowship Book Club** meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Fellowship Library of the Unitarian Fellowship of Houston, 1504 Wirt Road and is open to all book lovers.

ADULT FORUM

We meet Sunday Mornings at 10 AM. Our topics are unannounced. Our discussions are often lively and intense, but remain polite and friendly.

We gather in the workroom and ALL ARE WELCOME!

December 13th: Ø Houston Election Results. The group had an interesting discussion about the many factors influencing the election. Members expressed frustration that the turnout was low. Several members noticed that it was a good sign for Houston that the mayoral candidates were a lesbian and a black man, both well qualified. (*Topic: Wayne Derrick, 12 present*)

December 6th: Ø

Discussed the pros and cons of the President's plan. The group's opinions were evenly divided on whether the US should be in Afghanistan. (*Topic by Roger Ryan, 10 present*)



January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 John Pepper, 11 am	4	5 Book Club, 7:30 pm 	6	7	8 Blue Notes, 7 pm	9
10 Wayne Derrick, 11 am	11	12 Medical Focus Group, 7:30 pm 	13	14	15 Blue Notes, 7 pm	16
17 Kim Willis, 11 am	18	19	20	21	22 Blue Notes, 7 pm	23
24 Poetry Sunday, 11 am	25	26	27 Spring Branch Democratic Party, 6-9 pm	28	29 Blue Notes, 7 pm	30
31 Dwight Raulston, 11 am						

Schedule of Events

Recitals: Sun., Jan. 24th, 1:30 to 4 pm

Recital: Fri., Jan. 29th, 6:30 to 8 pm

Recital: Sun., Jan. 31st 1:30 to 3 pm

FELLOWGRAM DEADLINES

Jan. 5th
& Jan. 19th

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO . . .

Norma Auchter, Jan. 3rd

Gary Yokie, Jan. 7th

Peter Jagdeo, Jan. 21st

THE FOCUS GROUP

We meet each Sunday at 10:00am in the Library. We are reading and discussing, chapter by chapter, [The Thirteen American Arguments: Enduring Debates that Define and Inspire Our Country](#) by Howard Fineman. Come give us a try-our discussions are lively and stimulating and inclusive.

Who Are the Special Guests at My Table?

Jacinta is a tailor and mother of two living in Machakos, Kenya. With the help of her young apprentice, she weaves and sells school uniforms in a busy open-air market. A woman leader, Jacinta is also chairperson of the Machakos Group for Disabled Street Vendors. Jacinta and thousands of other street vendors are organizing to advance their right to safe working conditions and sustainable incomes.

Learn more about Jacinta in [Stories of Hope](#).



Remember this year gifts of \$100 or more are matched by the Shelter Rock Congregation!

JOYS AND CONCERNS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

12/13 – **Katy Carpman** lit a candle for one of our babysitters, **Simone Donnelly** – her friend’s father passed away last week. **Kim Willis** is delighted by the milestone election of **Annis Parker** as mayor of Houston. **Katy Haberman** visited her elderly father last year and he was rapidly failing. But this year – his 97th – and he is doing fine. **Katy** also enjoyed the tour of Houston’s thrift shops that she offered as an auction item. Eight of us had a blast! **Lynn** and **Sam Philpot** went to Georgia to help celebrate the 90th birthday of her brother, and it was a joy to be there gathering together for something other than a funeral or memorial service. **Sam** reminded us to bring flowers to the living! **Bert Golding** called **John Heard** yesterday. He is out of the hospital right now but very ill and loves hearing from people. Bert encouraged us all to call him. **Magdiel Martinez** is proud of his brother who graduated from HBU yesterday with a degree in Political Science. **Bob Wiener** let us know that his dad is in the hospital because of his ongoing health issues. **Doug Coleman** is grateful to celebrate the first mayor of Houston who is a Rice University graduate! **John Haberman’s** sister is re-

(Continued on page 7)

MONTHLY SCHEDULED EVENTS

Every First Tuesday: The Book Club, 7:30 pm (Library)

Every First Thursday: Ladies Luncheon, 1 pm (Hunan Chef on I-10, near Home Depot)

Every Second Thursday: RE Committee Meeting, 7:00 pm (Workroom)

Every Second Wednesday of the month: Medical Focus Group, 7:00 to 9:00 pm (workroom)

Every Second Sunday: Offertory goes to benefit lunch for Turning Point

Every Third Saturday: Volunteer to help serve lunch at Turning Point (sign-up sheet is located at the front desk or just ask Dodie or David O.)

Every Saturday: Church of God, 12 to 4:30 pm (ext’ed hours on calendar)

Every Third Thursday: Men’s Luncheon, 12:20 pm at Nam’s

Every Wednesday: the SSSC (RS) Society, 6:15 pm (Sanctuary)

Monday–Friday: Shining Star Waldorf School, 8:30-3:00 (RE Wing)

PROGRAMS

December 13th –*Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Power of Belief* – John Pepper

In 1492, after Columbus discovered the New World, a process of assimilation and exploitation took place and the losses were staggering. In just 50 short years, more than 200,000 indigenous people on the Island of Hispaniola, where Columbus first landed, were almost completely wiped out. Sadly, similar events began to take place on the main lands of the Americas as well. Indigenous people all over the New World were slaughtered and the only thing that could save them was conversion to Catholicism, and sometimes not even that helped. Some of the monks loved the local people and may have sought a way to bring the native people over to Christianity that worked for the natives as well as the Church.

On a hill near Mexico City called Tepeyac, for centuries the local people had honored and worshipped a local goddess of fertility known as Tonatzin. Some historians contend this female deity was somehow appropriated and turned into something very Catholic. The gradual transition of this female deity into Mary, the Mother of Jesus, provided a path to safety for the exploited people. Thus began a tradition that saved a people and inspired a nation. The Virgin of Guadalupe is probably the most revered Catholic image in all of the Americas, yet we usually pass it by without notice on store windows, in newspapers and on truck tailgates or airbrushed on car hoods and doors.

The Virgin appeared to the native people and performed a healing miracle and caused the miracle of the appearance of her image on Juan Diego's tilma. It demonstrated that the native people were on an equal footing with all other Catholics even the clergy. Her image speaks to them and their needs and worth as a people.

At a terrible time in our collective history, this image came to life and helped a people assimilate into a culture they did not know or understand. The image, a beautiful simple image of a native girl, helped to rescue them from their savage conquerors. This was a miracle. This story simply illustrates how religion can be used by the elite for terrible purposes, but it can also just as easily be manipulated by its own faithful to protect the abused.

John closed his service with a poem written by Jennifer Yopez, a member of the Huntsville UU Fellowship and a recent winner of a state-wide poetry contest.

December 20th - "The Journey from Fear to Peace" - Katy Haberman

Pat Humphries of Emma's Revolution wrote the song Peace, Salaam, Shalom in response to the 9/11 disaster. On October 7, 2001, at the first national peace rally in NYC after the bombing, 10,000 people sang along with them all the way from Union Square to Times Square. I believe it demonstrates the power of peace.

In 2008, I took a trip to Spain and to Morocco. When we left the ferry in the blazing sun in North Africa, we stood in the asphalt parking lot looking for our guide who just wasn't there. Trafalgar Tours quickly found another guide, but he was not very comfortable with American tourists. When we left the hotel for the bus trip out to the airport, I asked our group to sing this song, "Peace, Salaam, Shalom" along with me. Soon the guide was singing with us, and tears were running down his cheeks. He embraced us as we left for our trip back home.

The fourth candle in the Advent Wreath is dedicated to peace. Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu (570-490 BC) said: If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.

Our world is so much more secure. Yet, with our shaky economy and the unstable world situation, we feel powerless and anxious about the future. The first step, perhaps, away from fear and towards peace, is trust. Trust always takes courage. It takes courage to share our wealth - and yes, compared to 99% of the people in the world, we are all wealthy - with organizations, like the UUSC and UNICEF that pursue peaceful ends. We can help Sid George who wants to open a school in Kabal, Afghanistan and faces danger every day because he wants to educate girls.

Every human being longs for peace. We all want a world where our children and grandchildren and their grandchildren can grow and thrive. But peace does not rest in the charters and covenants alone. It lies in the hearts and minds of all people. So let us not rest all our hopes on parchment and on paper, let us strive to build peace, a desire for peace, a willingness to work for peace in the hearts and minds of all of our people. I believe that we can. I believe the problems of human destiny are not beyond the reach of human beings.

UU Quiz Answer: Rodman Edward (Rod) Serling (December 25, 1924 – June 28, 1975) “... was born in in Syracuse, New York. He was a prolific writer for television, best known for *The Twilight Zone*. Serling studied at Antioch college in Ohio, where he and his wife became Unitarians. Throughout his career, he used radio, television, and film as vehicles of social criticism. He won three Emmy Awards for early television programs before turning from serious drama (*Requiem for a Heavyweight* in 1956 and *The Comedian* in 1957) to science fiction. He produced *The Twilight Zone* from 1959 to 1964 and wrote 99 of 156 episodes. In that series, he addressed such social issues as prejudice, loss of identity, capital punishment, and censorship. Serling also wrote for the television series *Night Gallery*. He and his wife were members of the Community Church (Unitarian) of Santa Monica, California. Serling also supported the Unitarian Universalist Association and the American Civil Liberties Union. (*This Day in Unitarian Universalism History*, Frank Schulman)



More on Serling can be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rod_Serling

<http://www.danville.lib.il.us/pathfinder/serling.html>

Other December birthdays:

Mary Augusta Safford	12/23 Unitarian Minister
Benjamin Rush	12/24 Universalist physician and reformer

(Continued from page 5)

covering from an infection she got during surgery. She is doing better and they all hope for her complete recovery.

12/20 – **Julie Wilson** lit a candle for her husband’s recovery and expressed gratitude for Fellowship’s support. **Simone Donnelly** lit a candle for the life of her boyfriend’s father who died two weeks ago of stomach cancer. Another candle was for her successful completion of the semester. **Gloria Gunn** is joyous to be back home for six weeks from Ecuador where she has been living and will soon return. **David Oxman** thrilled to have been honored not only on the occasion of his 82nd birthday but for his faithful service at Turning Point. (He received The Iron Chef apron!) He expressed his thanks to **Dodie McKellar** and **Val Harrop** for their work at starting the Turning Point project. **Bob Wiener** was happy to report that his father is home from the hospital as well as their two sons being home from college. **Katy Haberman** pleased to announce that husband John’s sister is improving after heart surgery and a catastrophic infection.

On **January 16th** , 2010, **Unitarian Universalist** youth from all over the Southwest District will come together to create one of a kind quilts and no sew blankets to donate to **Project Linus**--
<http://www.projectlinus.org/>

Please consider sponsoring a blanket by purchasing items from the list below.

- Hand sewing needles
- Black and White Thread
- Polar fleece Fabric for a baby blanket (1.5 yards of 60”)
- Polar fleece for a child blanket (3 yards of 60”)
- Quilting fabrics (various colors and sizes needed)
- Quilt batting (40x60 or more)

Please bring your donations to the Fellowship between now and January 10th. Anyone with sewing or quilting experience who would like to help the youth on Saturday afternoon, please contact Katy Carpmann at ufhdre@comcast.net.



Unitarian Fellowship of Houston

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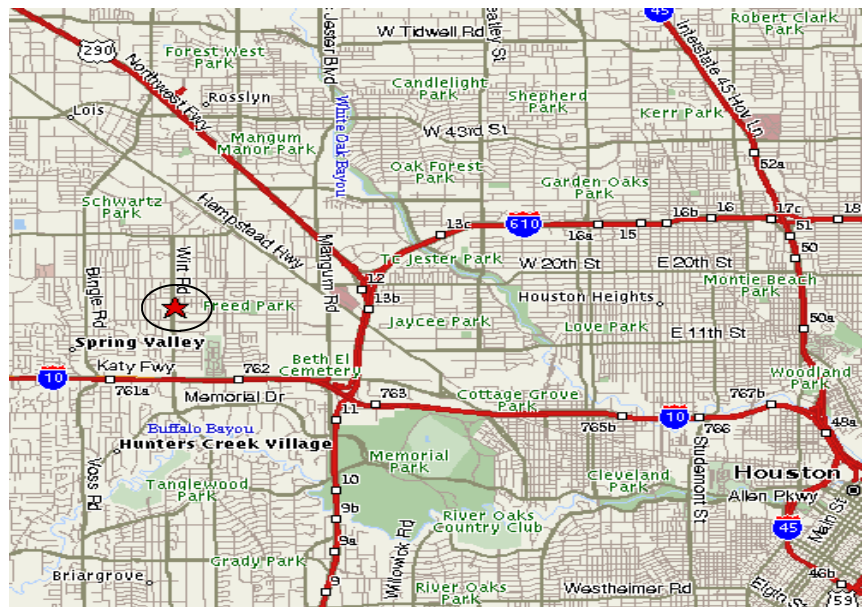
See us on our
Website!
www.ufoh.org

*GO GREEN! SAVE A TREE! If you wish to receive the Fellowship
by email or do not want to receive it at all, please send us a message or
call and let us know.*

Unitarian Fellowship of
Houston

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We seek to provide an atmosphere of warm companionship and respect for free and inquiring minds, searching together for finer religious, ethical, and social truths, and we work to apply the best we know in our lives, in the lives of our children, and in the service of our fellow humans.



A bunch of Agnostics, Atheists, Buddhists, Christians, Humanists, Jews, Muslims, Pagans, Quakers, Skeptics, spiritual non-religious seekers, and other random people all go to church together on Sunday....And you've been missing out.