

FELLOWGRAM

VOLUME 52, ISSUE 9

April 30, 2010

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

MAY 9— *Don't Let Your Kitties (and Doggies) Grow up to be Mamas – Lisa Gilchrist & Kim Willis*

We will forego the traditional Mother's Day type service this year and focus on the issue of pet overpopulation and the resulting outcomes. We will discuss the movement to No Kill sheltering and how the seeming paradox of too many and decreasing euthanasia can be successfully addressed. (*The Children & Youth of the fellowship will offer a tea party for the caregivers of their families & congregation following the service.*)

MAY 16 — *Some Days are Diamonds, Some Days Are Stones. Don Levit*
Some days are better than other days. Regardless of what may happen in our lives, we will discuss two ways of responding to life's challenges. Both responses can be effective in our pursuit of meaning and personal growth.

MAY 23 — *Fearless Fuller. Laura Emerson*
In May, the UUA is celebrating the 200th birthday of a fascinating Unitarian, Margaret Fuller. She was so famous that the biography rushed to print after her tragic death was the best selling biography of the decade (and went through 13 printings by the end of the century). She died at age 40. Let's look at her life and then look in the mirror. What do we find? What do we learn, besides humility?

MAY 30 — *They Also Serve Military Families. Gary Yokie*

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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.*

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

As I pursue professional credentialing as a Unitarian Universalist educator, I am doing an awful lot of reading. In this month's stack was Nurture Shock: New Thinking About Children by PO Bronson and Ashley Merryman – it examines many common ideas of parents and educators, from the power of praise to white people talking about race. It's an excellent, well-researched yet accessible read, and I highly recommend it to anyone nurturing children or just fascinated by the way our brains work.

Useful to nearly all of us is Chapter Two – The Lost Hour. Kids these days are getting a full hour less sleep than they used to, and school schedules are set up for the convenience of parents and bus routes – not for any *educational* purpose. This lack of sleep makes it harder for the brain to “file” new learning, and may be behind the recent rises in depression, obesity, and impulsivity. Sleep deprivation can cause kids to have the academic functioning of a child two years younger than they are.

Teens are told to start school a full hour before their brains are awake. Not only does this mean that they're learning less in first period, but they're also driving to school half-asleep—with all the crashes that entails.

But sleep is still the thing we are willing to sacrifice, so our children can fit in ballet and soccer and violin lessons, not to mention mounting piles of homework. Our culture has a strong ideal of “Sleep is for wusses” – probably because we as adults do not realize how WE are affected. One study knocked adults' sleep down to six hours per night for two weeks. All the adults claimed to be doing fine, but their performance on tests “showed they were as impaired as someone who has stayed awake for 24 hours straight.”

So aren't you glad that Sunday programming at the Fellowship doesn't start until 10 AM? To learn more about faith development opportunities, join our circle any Sunday, or speak with Bob Wiener or me! Our next committee meeting will be 7 PM, Thursday, May 13th in the workroom.

In faith,

Katy Carpman

Director of Religious Education

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UU Quiz

Who is known as the “Father of American Universalism”?

Answer on page 7

**The Tim and Bob Show**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Huntsville is pleased to present The Tim and Bob Show concert at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 22, 2010 at the new church building at 144 East Mosley Lane. All proceeds from the concert by this impressive group from San Antonio will go to the church's building fund. Please come and help the church celebrate their new building.

The Tim and Bob Show is a dynamic quartet consisting of Steve Feinstein playing lead/rhythm guitar and providing tenor vocals; Don Hymel playing rhythm guitar and singing baritone; Kathy Feinstein singing soprano and playing percussion and bass guitar; and Mary Lou Hymel singing alto and playing percussion. These four performers are members of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio. They have been playing together professionally for almost five years.

TUESDAY BOOK CLUB

Here are our upcoming books:

April 6, 2010, “The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance” by Kristin Downey (available in paperback in February, 2010)

Much of the social reform that has made President Franklin D. Roosevelt so beloved—Social Security, fair labor practices, minimum wage—were actually ideas conceived and pushed by his labor secretary, Frances Perkins, the first female cabinet member and a woman constrained by the sexism of the era as well as her personal circumstances. Drawing on extensive archival research, Downey offers a riveting portrait of a determined social reformer who pushed a shrewd politician to make substantive changes in the American workplace.

May 4, 2010, “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” by Stieg Larsson, Reg Keeland

Combine the chilly Swedish backdrop and moody psychodrama of a

Bergman movie with the grisly pyrotechnics of a serial-killer thriller, then add an angry punk heroine and a down-on-his-luck investigative journalist, and you have the ingredients of Stieg Larsson's first novel...It's Mr. Larsson's two protagonists—Carl Mikael Blomkvist, a reporter filling the role of detective, and his sidekick, Lisbeth Salander, a k a the girl with the dragon tattoo—who make this novel more than your run-of-the-mill mystery: they're both compelling, conflicted, complicated people, idiosyncratic in the extreme

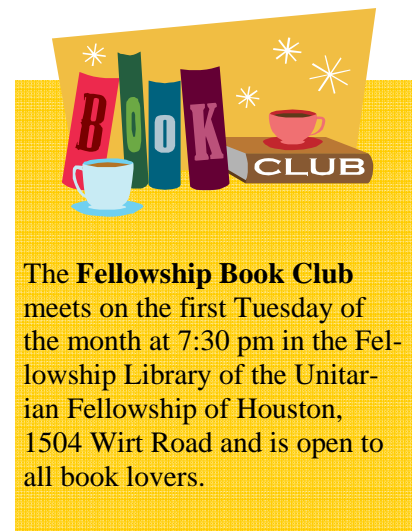
June 1, 2010, “Strange Angel: The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons” by George Pendle

George Pendle tells Parsons's extraordinary life story for the first time. Fueled from childhood by dreams of space flight, Parsons was a crucial innovator during rocketry's birth. But his visionary imagination also led him into the occult community thriving in 1930s Los Angeles, and when fantasy's pull became

stronger than reality, he lost both his work and his wife. Parsons was just emerging from his personal underworld when he died at age thirty-seven. In *Strange Angel*, Pendle recovers a fascinating life and explores the unruly consequences of genius.

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.

April 18: Ø Campaign Ad Regulation. The discussion evolved around whether campaign ads should be regulated or if all political speech, including that in TV and radio ads, protected by the first amendment. (*Topic by Liz Covalla, 12 present*)

April 25: Ø Revoking the Marriage License. We discussed marriage & the high divorce rates, people with multiple marriages, 7-8, and how to lower divorce rates. Should the government be involved? The group said yes to enforcement of contracts & child support after divorce. (*Topic: Jimmy Dunne, 10 present*)

We gather in the workroom and ALL ARE WELCOME!

MAY 2010



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>Happy Birthday to: Gay Cosgriff, May 16th Katy Haberman, May 30th</p>						1 UU Spring Festival, 3-9 pm
2 John Pepper, 11 am	3	4 Cooking Cls, 2-4 pm Book Club, 7:30 pm	5	6 Cooking Cls, 2-4 pm	7	8
9 Lisa G. & Kim W., 11 am	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Don Levit, 11 am	17 DRUM Recital, 6:30-8:00 pm	18	19 GUITAR, Recital, 6:30-8:00 pm	20	21	22
23 Laura Emerson, 11 am	24	25	National Guild of Piano Teachers—Judging May 5-7 & May 26-28, from 10 am to 6 pm			
30 Gary Yokie, 11 am	31 Memorial Day—Office Closed	<p>RECITALS: May 2, 2:30-6 pm, May 8, 5-7 pm May 15, 5-7 pm, May 16, 1-6 pm, May 22, 5-7 pm May 23, 1-6:30 pm</p>				

FOCUS GROUP

We meet each Sunday at 10:00am in the Library. We are starting a new book by David Loy, Money, Sex, War and Karma, reading and discussing a chapter each week. Come give us a try--our discussions are lively and stimulating and inclusive.

JOYS AND CONCERNS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 18 – We lit a single candle to commemorate the milestones of the day.

April 25 – **Katy Haberman** has returned from a visit with her family in Florida and lit a candle of concern for them. **Barbara Derrick** is very proud that her daughter and son-in-law led their *Destination Imagination* team from Plano into the global finals to be held in Knoxville, Tennessee. They have been doing this for seven years and have had great success. **Tom Rowan** lit a candle to honor good education and excellent teachers. DeBekay High School is the top high school in Houston, and **Treena Rowan** was the Art Teacher of the Year there in 2004.

Hi everyone! **It is Pride Parade season again!**

This year the festival is on June 26th, from 12 pm to 7 pm. I have the times needed broken down into 1 hour increments to make it easy for people to volunteer.



If 1-2 people from each of the area churches were to work the booth and tell the general public about being a UU when they visit the booth, then we would have the spaces covered and all of the Houston area represented at the festival. Please also bring some non-carbonated, non-caffeinated beverages to the booth to keep hydrated.

This year's theme is "**Pride, Not Prejudice**". We will be UU Spring Festival to sign up people and sell T-shirts for the parade. We have also ordered car magnets this year for the parade to increase our name recognition. It looks like we are all set to have a good presence at Pride and show our support for the GLBT community! Please come out and help us! See you there! *Sharon L.*

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)

OUR PROGRAMS**April 18th – *Biofuels and the Web of Life* – John Haberman**

Almost any living thing can be harvested and processed in some way to make biofuel. Wood is a traditional biofuel and it can be processed into many forms. Liquid biofuels include ethanol from sugar cane and biodiesel from soybeans. Algae are currently a hot item in various stages of R&D. Liquid biofuels have been proposed as potential replacements for fossil fuels, for transportation.

One concern is that they will increase the cost of food, at a time when population increases are already straining agriculture. Another concern is tropical deforestation to produce biofuels for global markets. On the positive side, concerns about global warming and sustainability have recently increased the interest in using biofuels to provide sustainable energy, remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and improve marginal agricultural land.

There is very little, if anything, that is new to science in the current discussions about energy supplies and constraints. Most of our current energy comes from coal, oil and natural gas, and nuclear energy, but biofuels are still significant and they are growing rapidly. And however you feel about global warming, replacing fossil fuels is critical to sustainability, and biofuels represent a viable prospect.

Botanical plants are solar collectors that transform atmospheric carbon dioxide and the energy of sunlight into chemical bonds in plant tissues. In the U.S., ethanol and biodiesel are produced, on a large scale, from corn and soybeans, respectively. The most efficient biofuel is currently ethanol from sugar cane. Brazil produces more than it uses and exports a large percentage of its total production. The expansion of sugar cane production in Brazil is primarily on underutilized pastures, cleared long ago. Automobile engines designed to burn ethanol get about the same mileage per gallon of ethanol as gasoline engines get for gasoline.

Another important concept is that of sequestering carbon, which means fixing it, so it doesn't reenter the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. This is relevant to the removal of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Coal is cheap and plentiful, but produces much more carbon dioxide than natural gas for example. Can it be captured and then stored? Solutions are being studied.

I asked myself, "Why couldn't carbon dioxide from biofuels be sequestered to permanently remove it from the atmosphere?" Since biofuels remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, if the biofuel is combusted to produce electricity and the carbon dioxide is sequestered, then carbon dioxide is permanently removed from the atmosphere.

Biofuels can also be carbonized, on a large scale, to produce a mixture of charcoal and plant ash. This is a much simpler process, for sequestering carbon, compared to separating it from the exhaust. It could also put it to good use to permanently convert marginal land to fertile agricultural land. Archeologists have discovered huge areas of the upper Amazon jungle where this seems to have been done by pre-Colombian indigenous populations apparently using a slash and char method of burning biomass.

To conclude, biofuels are very much in the running, to help provide future energy needs, and they have some advantages compared to alternatives. Agricultural techniques discovered by pre-Colombian Indians might contribute significantly to this technology. I understand Al Gore supports this basic concept.

April 25th – *Belief and Truth*– David Garver

Suppose you're driving down the highway in farm country, and through your windshield you see the building which is pictured on the front cover of today's program. You say "Oh, look at the old barn!"

How do you know that it's a barn? Suppose that someone was making a movie and constructed a bunch of false fronts that would photograph well as barns.

For several thousand years, philosophers who have been thinking about knowledge have believed that there are 3 elements which must be present before we can claim to "know" something.

(Continued on page 7)

- 1) We must believe that something is true.
- 2) It must actually be true
- 3) The reason we believe it's true must be a "good" one.

How DO we know whether something is true?

One way is what we call scientific evidence; we can apply some test repeatedly and get the same result every time. Another way to determine truth is to take the word of someone we trust. The last way is to look within ourselves. Whatever the methodology, it's an attempt to reach a conclusion that "feels right".

All three of these tools are part of our own UU tradition – we talk about "direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder" and "wisdom from the world's religions" and also "the guidance of reason and the results of science."

As you can see, except for that subset of questions which can be and have been rigorously tested scientifically, there is a whole lot of room for people to disagree over what is true, because any two people may have different ways of assessing truth which result in conflicting answers.

I want to take a brief look at justification. In my opinion, in our normal lives, generally, if we can agree that something is true, we're not going to have any trouble in deciding that we're justified in believing it.

So, finally we get to belief.

In the original version of *Miracle on 34th Street*, a very young Natalie Wood has had a hard morning where she didn't get what she really wanted for Christmas, and her belief that Kris Kringle is really Santa Claus has been sorely tested. After a pep talk from her mother, Natalie says "I believe, I believe, I know it's stupid but I believe."

This sums up what I think is the 21st century view of belief: unless we can prove it, it's stupid to believe it. But, beliefs are what give people the enthusiasm to go out and do something. Because we decide that things are "true" using different methods, and because we have an innate bias to justify that our beliefs are true, it's fairly easy for us, as humans with inherent frailties, to believe things that aren't necessarily true, or to slip into the error of thinking that something must be true simply because we believe it. Because after all, we surely wouldn't believe it if it weren't true! Right?

What I hope you take away from today is that the search for truth is at the core of what is human – but so is the drive to form beliefs about what can't be proven. Both truth and belief are important. The truths keep us on the right track, and the beliefs help us decide how we ought to act even when we don't know all the answers. Don't make the mistake of thinking that your beliefs are stupid if you can't prove them – but be very careful to distinguish between what you "know" and what you believe. Thus we can affirm the 4th principle and promote "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning."

UU Quiz Answer: Hosea Ballou. (April 30, 1771 — June 7, 1852) "was born in Richmond, New Hampshire. Known as the "father of American Universalism," he was reared Baptist and became a Universalist at age 19. He founded the Second Universalist Society in Boston and served as its first minister from 1817 to 1846. Ballou published catechisms as well as *Notes on Parables* (1804) and *A Treatise on Atonement* (1805), which recast universal salvation in terms of Unitarian divine benevolence rather than as a modification of Calvinist Trinitarianism. Ballou engaged in numerous religious controversies and edited the *Universalist Expositor* with his great-nephew, Hosea Ballou 2nd... He and John Murray... are the most famous early organizers of American Universalism, although the details of their beliefs were not the same." (*This Day in Unitarian Universalist History*, Frank Schulman).



More on Ballou can be found at:

<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/hoseaballou.html>

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

Other April birthdays:

Edwin Markham - 04/22 American poet and reformer

Earl Morse Wilbur - 04/26 Unitarian minister & his-

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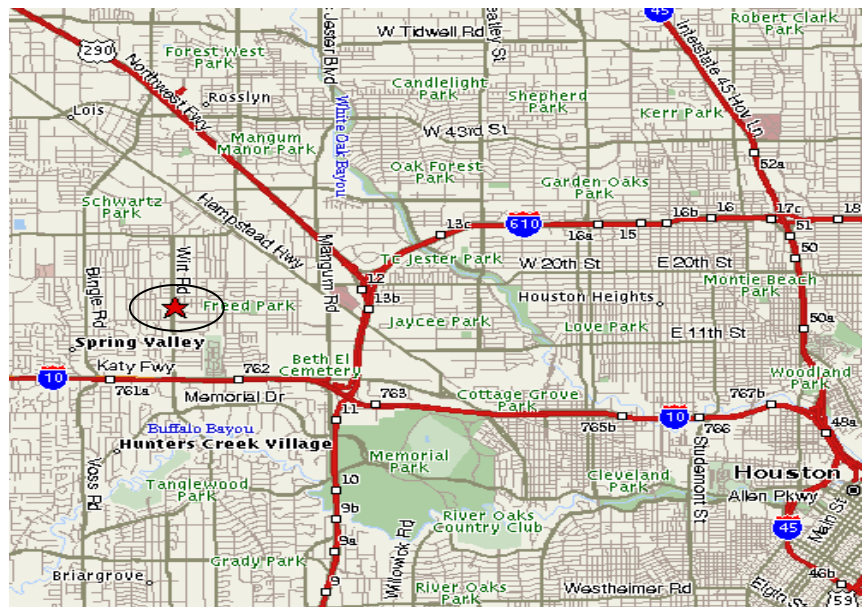


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Unitarian Fellowship of Houston STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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.