

FELLOWGRAM

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

APRIL 10 — *This service will explore religious themes and social commentary found in the American Musical.*

Peggy Tennyson and Melissa McEver

APRIL 17 — *The Business of the Church* - Now that tax season is behind us we can focus on the business of the church, but first, what is the "business" of our church? Are we a corporation in the strictest sense of the word or are we something more? And if we aren't a business, what can we learn and apply from the business world. What should we acknowledge and understand and at the same time choose to ignore or handle differently? Please join me as I reflect on the "business" questions of a church, I mean Fellowship. Namaste! **Rev. John Pepper**

APRIL 20 — **Annual Seder Dinner.** We will use the Olives and Oranges Haggadah and share a "kosher-ish" potluck - please sign up on the clipboards or email Katy Carpman at uukaty@gmail.com to get the full details.

April 24 — **Easter Sunday.** Special guest, **Gretchen Weis** is a seminarian at Meadville-Lombard and a member of First Church Houston.

APRIL 30 — **SATURDAY, 3pm to 9pm - Houston Area UU Spring Music Fest**

Two stages (sanctuary and outdoors) of great music, plus arts and crafts, great snacks, and fun for all ages! Free admission! Learn more at <http://uuhouston.org/Music-Fest-2011>

More information on page 6.



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.*

FOCUS GROUP

Book discussion group—Library. Details on page 5.





FAITH DEVELOPMENT

One of the reasons I bought my house was the spacious kitchen with its vast storage space. We swore that sooner or later we would do some repainting to refresh the space.

Fourteen years later, with my father's urging and assistance, I'm finally painting all the cabinetry – and ugh, but it is slow work. Take it all down, remove hardware, sanding and patching and more sanding, priming, and then two coats of a fresh white enamel. (My husband asked me what I was doing last night. I said, "Waiting for paint to dry.") Once the final coat of paint has cured, we install the new hardware and get it all back in the frame... as level as we can in a house not necessarily built to the most exacting of specifications. We do not have space to paint 24 doors and 10 drawers all at once, so the work has been staggered. I have seen my dining room table exactly once in the past week, and my countertops are covered in all the canned goods and pots and pans usually stored in the kitchen island.

It would have been easier to continue our inertia – the ugly cabinets weren't really hurting anyone. They still held our stuff and kept out most of the dust. Or, we could have saved a lot of time with a quick slap of paint or just hired somebody to take care of it. Heck, we could have taken out a home loan, ordered brand new cabinets, and left the country for a few weeks while the work was done – then we could be spared the chaos entirely!

A congregation, in ways literal and figurative, is much like a house. Reconfiguring a playground to pass inspection, expanding programming, or considering a new vision for the congregation - these all require engagement, perspiration, and some measure of faith. In the past five years this congregation has changed a lot, in terms of demographics and outreach and even the variety of Sunday worship services. How have you dealt with the change? What role have you played?

As we move forward, how are you doing? Are you open to a little mess? What do you trust Fellowship leadership to take care of, and where will you engage personally? Are you more likely to make it to Second Saturdays Workday or a Visioning workshop? Will you step up to teach a single summer Sunday, or would you prefer to teach every other Sunday next school year? What are you still interested in learning? What project might give you a sigh of satisfaction when you know the work is done?

With love,

Katy Carpman
 Director of Religious Education
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UU QUIZ

What Unitarian helped found the 54th
 Massachusetts Regiment?

Answer on page 9

Upcoming Books:

May 3, 2011, "Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel" by Jeannette Walls

Lily Casey Smith, this novel's feisty Texas protagonist, is a frontier teacher, a rancher, a rodeo rider, a poker player, and bootlegger. In *Half Broke Horses*, she survives droughts, tornados, floods, poverty, a bigamous husband, and whatever else fate can throw against her. Based on author Jeannette Walls's grandmother, Lily is a plausible character because she has a voice that synchronizes with her history.

June 7, 2011, **"Piano Player" by Tim McGregor**

In the exciting new novel by Tim McGregor, Roland Newman is a metaphor for the insatiable appetite for power that dominates many people. The character has the means to be wildly powerful but not the will; controlling others makes no sense to him, he prefers cooperation over dominance. He is built as a clone in a lab by weapons designers but wanders off the reservation when his operator dies in a traffic accident. He believes he has a personal history due to the mental implants that he has been given by his designers and is beset by the big questions that we all face; "Now that I have the ability to determine the course of my life, what do I do, where do I go, what do I want?" He falls in love with two different women, one on the heels of the other, who do not have his best interests at heart so love can't grow. He gets dumped twice and learns heartbreak firsthand.

He finds a third woman, Hiroko, or they find each other; she plays the piano, hence the title, and they fall in love, it is mutual and they are happy. Hiroko's sister is enmeshed in a slavery ring in Tokyo and Roland gets together with his new found family to counter the threat and free her. Can they counter the threat of the Yakuza without resorting to Yakuza methods? Can a nonviolent man succeed in a violent world? Read the startlingly entertaining new novel; "Piano Player" to find out.

*****NOTE: Yes, this is our very own Tim McGregor. If you'd like to read the book, please contact me so I can get you a copy. This book has not been published yet, we will be the first readers and we can provide feedback to Tim on June 7*

The Fellowship Book Club meets on the first Tuesday of each 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. 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



ADULT FORUM

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

March 27: Ø "The Singularity: What Does Watson's Victory Really Mean?": What is the real significance of the victory by the IBM computer "Watson" on the quiz show Jeopardy.

There was a far-reaching discussion on the implication of this development for future development of computers in their ability to interact with humans. Presenter: Gary Putnam

All are Welcome!

OUR PROGRAMS

March 20th — *The Long Strange Trip*. David Garver

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the merger of the Universalists and Unitarians into the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. This is a time when many in our faith tradition are struggling to understand just where we came from, what it is we represent, and where we ought to go from here.

I want to credit Jacques Barzun, whose excellent book, "From Dawn to Decadence: 500 years of Western Cultural Life, was indispensable to me in preparing this talk which is the first of four.

The modern era begins with a revolution, commonly called the Protestant Reformation. The last thing Martin Luther wanted to do was break up his church. Luther's hope of reform might have foundered like many others, had it not been for the invention of the printing press which totally transformed the ability of people to spread new ideas through the populace. Why, then, were his heretical ideas persecuted vigorously by all local officials? It happened that at this time, the German nobles were also testing their ability to exercise secular power independently of the church, and, this sort of merging of interests between reformers and secular leaders played out in most of Europe and led to a massive transfer of power from church to secular authorities.

Acting in tandem, then, we see three elements that will come to define liberal society: individualism, secularism, and freedom of expression. Also present is another idea: that by returning the "real" spirituality of Jesus as described in the bible, and eliminating the corrupting layers of church tradition and dogma, a more perfect society will result. This is an example of the primitivist impulse. It is notable that all four of these are enshrined, in varying phrasings, in both the US constitution and the UU Seven Principles.

The Protestant Reformation, with its evangelical fervor, was certainly a massive change to society, and it was by itself important enough and powerful enough that one might think that we need talk about nothing else. But it was not the only significant cause for changes in opinion. This same period saw the first flowerings of another important concept, one near and dear to us, the idea of Humanism. If we look for what is common to the Humanists over the centuries, we find two things: a body of accepted authors and a method of carrying on study and debate. The two go together with the belief that the best guides to the good life are Reason and Nature.

However, one must not overlook opposites and contradictions. Humanists were not indifferent to religion or wanting to replace Christianity with paganism. Those called Humanists today may rule out the divine and make Man the measure of all things, but humanists such as Petrarch remained deeply religious.

These two strands, protestant evangelism and humanism, will weave and knot their way through the next five centuries as we examine, in future presentations, just how they bore fruit in the Unitarian and Universalist traditions that led to us being here today.

March 27th — *Your Life Belongs to You -- So How Ya Gonna Live It?*

Inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches and life work, **Patti Henry** spoke to us on Sunday on the importance of letting the Golden Rule rule our lives. She pointed out that a version of the Golden Rule exists in every culture and here are her two favorites:

A Nigerian proverb: Before you take a long stick to pinch a baby bird, turn it on yourself first to see how it hurts.
And Judaism: Do not to others what you do not want done to yourself. This is the entire law; the rest is just commentary.

When we understand the magnitude of that last statement -- this is the entire law, the rest is just commentary, we then begin to realize how very important the Golden Rule is. We must at every juncture ask ourselves: how would I like to be treated in this situation? We then must take action and actually do that.

Patti challenged us to look at our investments and make sure we are invested in socially responsible companies. To look at our work situation and if we are being asked to do something dishonest or not right, to either speak up or look for a better company to work for. In relationships, to take a good hard look at whether we are treating our partners, children, bosses, friends, the way we would like to be treated.

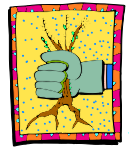
It is, afterall, your life -- if you decide to let the Golden Rule rule, you get to have a good one. As Martin Luther King stated: The time is always right to do right.

FOCUS GROUP

The Focus Group has chosen Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer's book ***Making Our Democracy Work: A Judge's View*** as our next book for discussion. Because the Supreme Court's decisions have often been in the news, we think this a timely choice. We meet each Sunday at 10:00 in the library and hope you will join with us in our lively and open discussions. You are invited to join us--even if you have not had a chance to read/obtain the book. Our discussions are open and lively.

WORKDAY—APRIL 9TH, 9:30 AM TO 12:30 PM

We will be working on the sign posts, RE area, and general cleanup in preparation for the UU Music Fest. We will have a schedule of the work, or just policing the grounds for debris or pruning dead branches. *Don't forget your gloves!*



Whatever the task, it's a great way to meet your Fellows and build relationships.

The second Saturday of each month will be a work day at the Fellowship.

JOYS AND CONCERNS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Joys and Concerns: 03/06— Sue Needle asked that we collect the box tops that some corporate sponsors are placing on their products and pass them on to her to benefit HISD. Wayne Derrick happily announced that Roger Ryman has gone home! Harold Rud's mother told him that he should always thank people while they are still alive, so he thanked all the women of the Fellowship. Judy Emerson announced that her granddaughter is a mom again making Judy a great grandmother for the second time. Jan LaRocque let us know that her daughter, Carol, has a new job as a probation specialist in Denver. Katy Haberman is glad to be back and lit a candle for caregivers. Her brother was their father's caregiver for 20 years, and now a cousin is Larry's caregiver as he battles cancer. David Garver and his wife have a contract on their house. Coupled with that good news is the difficulty of finding a place to move into by the 25th!

Joys and Concerns: 03/20— Bob Wiener lights a candle of joy that his brother was able to visit his mother in Rhode Island this weekend. Bob will go up there next weekend. Michelle Wambaugh (check spelling, please!) lights a candle for her grandbaby "still in the nest". Katy Haberman was happy to have dinner with the Rymans and find Roger doing so well. Also, her brother is doing better. David Garver and his wife are packing up their home of thirteen years. They will be living in his parents' home for a month while working on the contract for a different house. Krishna Dronamraju lit a candle of concern for the country entering war in Libya, for those who will die and damage to life and society. Arturo Meza lit a candle of joy that the family will be going to Peru on Friday to show off Coraline.

Joys and Concerns: 03.27— Val Harrop remembered two strong and dedicated wome on their passing: Geraldine Ferrar and Elizabeth Taylor. Pat Ballinger's husband is making sure that their great-granddaughter will be born on Texas soil - they have prepared a "soil jar" to be placed under the birthing tabel in the hospital. Elizabeth Christian lit a candle of silence. Harold Rud mourned the loss of his friend, Gerald Michalski - electrician, baseball coach, Catholic, and all 'round hard worker. Harold was happe to announce his own 59th birthday on Tuesday. Ralph Lambert's new job is a happy event in his life after too long a spell of unemployment. Marie Sharp is so pleased to have rented an apartment. Lina Wilson (our guest from Martha's Vineyard) mourned the loss of her dear dog, Annie. Jan LaRocque reports that Monarch butterflies have laid eggs in her yard and now the caterpillars have chewed up the milkweed completely!

MONTHLY SCHEDULED EVENTS

Mon.—Thurs.: Waldorf Kindergarten School, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm (RE area)

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

Every First Thursday: Ladies Luncheon, 1 pm (Olive Garden on I-10)

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

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

Every Third Saturday: Volunteer to help serve lunch at 10 am -Turning Point (sign-up sheet is located at the front desk or just ask Dodie, John P., or Wayne D.)

Every Second Saturday: Bible Book Study, 12:30-2:00 pm (Library)

Every Second Saturday of Each Month: **WORKDAY!** (inside & outside) from 9:30 to 12:30 pm

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

Every Third Thursday: Men's Luncheon, 1:00 pm (Yao's)

Every Fourth Wednesday, the SBDC, 6:30—8:30 pm (Sanctuary)

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



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE OCTOBER 15, 2011

Tis' the time to start saving your JUNK! Or, get ready to clean out your garage (Spring Cleaning); after the summer is over look over the clothes closet to see what you don't want anymore! We will start collecting things from you starting at the Beginning of September (please, no sooner, but if there are big items you just don't have room for, call me!) Patricia B will be in charge of this event and I will be her right-hand person.... as we get closer, more info will be in other issues. *Dorene*

HOUSTON AREA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Spring Music Fest

Nuturing Our Liberal Mojo



Saturday, April 30, 2011

3:00 to 9:00 pm

Rain or Shine



Unitarian Fellowship of Houston

1504 Wirt Road, Houston * www.uuhouston.org

Come have free family fun with UUs from all eight Houston area congregations at the annual **UU Spring Music Fest**. Enjoy music of all sorts by UU performers indoors and out, arts and crafts vendors, belly dancers, hula-hoopers, and the kids' playground. Hotdogs, ice cream, magical popcorn and beverages will be offered for a donation.

***Bring kids, a picnic, cooler, lawn charis, blankets,
hand drums, hula hoops, and a Large Smile!***

Sponsored by the Houston UU Network and the 8 local UU churches

April 2011

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

This Month's Scheduled Events:				1	2
April 2: Musicale Reh., 9-11:30 am		Ch of God: April 17, 5:30-9:30 pm			
April 3: Recitals, 1:00-7:00 pm		Ch of God: April 18, 5:30-9:30 pm			
April 10: Musicale, 1:45-4:45 pm		Ch of God: April 19, 12-4:30 pm			
April 17 & 24: RSS, 8:00-10:00 am		Ch of God: April 25, 9:30 am-4:30pm			
3 <i>Joanna Crawford, 11am</i>	4	5	6 G.G. Gunn's BD <i>Bob Wiener's BD</i>	7	8
10 Melissa McEver & Peggy Tennyson, 11am	11	12	13	14	15
17 John Pepper, 11am <i>~Board meeting~</i>	18	19	20 Seder Dinner, 6:30 pm	21	22
24 Gretchen Weis, 11am	25	26	27 Jimmy Dunne's BD	28	29
					30



VISION, MISSION AND COVENANT TASK FORCE

The Vision, Mission and Covenant Task Force held a work shop on February 13, 2011. The topic of discussion for this workshop was “Where will this Fellowship be in Fifty Years”. Approximately a dozen people participated or about 18% of the Congregation. Two groups were formed and separately discussed the topic and came up with a list of “Visions”.

After compiling the “visions” and notes taken during these sessions, I have come to the conclusion that time travelers we are not. In fact, from the outset, in one of the groups it was established that fifty years was too far ahead to look. With our eyesight, five year visions were agreed to be a safe.

We started the workshop by going over previously agreed upon values: Community, Acceptance, Caring, Knowledge and a Democratic process. All agreed that these would be important in the future as they are now. There was some discussion that the definition of community would need to be more precisely defined in regards to congregational community or the outside community as a whole.

Membership population is expected to increase from these groups visions. The magic number is somewhere near one hundred and fifty members. This could be accomplished as suggested by canvassing the neighborhoods, have more greeters at our Sunday services in order that visitors and greeters will have an opportunity to make connections with one another. One brilliant attendee made the observation that the neighborhood around our Fellowship will see a more Hispanic population. This falls in with a desire to be more diversified and may lend to opportunities of offering English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for our neighbors and diversifying ourselves.

Besides a cultural diversification, attention to a diversified age group was also thought to be important. Along with the Religious Education opportunities already offered, more is needed to attract young adults. Some suggestions were to use the Fellowship grounds for picnics and campouts, young members with children will share houses for support and fun activities and movie nights at the Fellowship to develop the bonds for the future generations.

Another focus in increasing and servicing our congregation is thought to be through the electronic Medias. From Face book pages, recorded services and services broadcasted live through the internet to members and surfers who cannot make to the Fellowship. Something as simple as a mother friendly communications for the nursery, to enable the mothers and care givers an opportunity to hear the service was discussed. It certainly has to be agreed that this will become part of our future.

With an increase in the congregational population one might expect that our financial responsibilities will be met. To approach this reality the support of our physical plant must be considered. Our visionaries expect that all appliances and fixtures will be energy efficient. Our building and occupancy will become “green”. This includes lighting, air conditioning, kitchen appliances, window treatments and products used on a daily basis. All of course to reduce the utilities and maintenance cost. Conservation also includes what happens outside of the building with water usage, plants that can be grown and mulch that can be harvested. Leadership was discussed and changes that may be take place. Along with the board, volunteer coordinators are needed to develop and build membership skill and interest lists. Skill lists to be tapped into for expertise for maintenance problems, teaching and music for example. An interest list for the development of groups and volunteer opportunities. Some workshop attendees thought we should be defined by our volunteer programs while others thought of the Fellowship as a recharging station to continue their

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Vunteer! At Turning Point

The goal of the Turning Point Center is to utilize a variety of supportive services to return the homeless elderly to productive society.

Every **2nd Saturday of the month**, Fellowship members have the opportunity to serve their community by cooking and serving lunch to the people at Turning Point Center. This has been a very successful program and is also very rewarding. If you haven't experienced doing this 'good deed', you can always sign up for next's month date.

The signup sheet is located at the kitchen counter or the front desk. For more information, just ask John P. or Dodie M. They would be more than happy to tell you all about the program.



UU Quiz Answer: John Albion Andrew (March 31, 1818 – October 30, 1867) “was born in Windham, Maine. He was reared orthodox but became Unitarian at the Church of the Disciples in Boston during the ministry of James Freeman Clarke... A lawyer, Andrew also visited prisons, took on many cases pro bono, and became an advocate of prison reform. He was an outspoken opponent of slavery, and became the governor of Massachusetts in 1860, after raising funds to support abolitionist John Brown's family. Andrew also helped found the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the first African-American fighting unit. A transcendentalist, Andrew was active in the Unitarian denomination, often speaking at conferences and annual meetings ...” (*This Day in Unitarian Universalist History*, Frank Schulman).

More Andrew can be found at:

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

<http://myweb.wvnet.edu/~jelkins/lp-2001/andrew.html>

Other March birthdays:

Paul Howard Douglas	03/26 U.S. Senator and civil right advocate
Thomas Gold Appleton	03/31 Author and philanthropist

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volunteerism on a personal bases. In either case both can be complimentary.

The Sacred Cow of not having a minister was brought up too. We may need a minister or maybe a minister as a consultant to tap into for ideas to increase membership, consoling members and help those whole may need professional guidance. Again another thought to consider.

Over all the workshop was well received and all participants were productive and still held fast to their UU values.

As a Task Force our next endeavor will be to develop a Fellowship Vision we can all live with. Should you have any additional insights to where we will be going please contact one of the Task Force members and express yourself. Bob Wiener, Val Harrup, Katy Carpman, John Pepper, Harold Rud and Darcy Ford will be all ears. Stay tuned.

*Harold Rud
Board Trustee*

UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP OF HOUSTON

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**We're on the Web!
www.ufoh.org**

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

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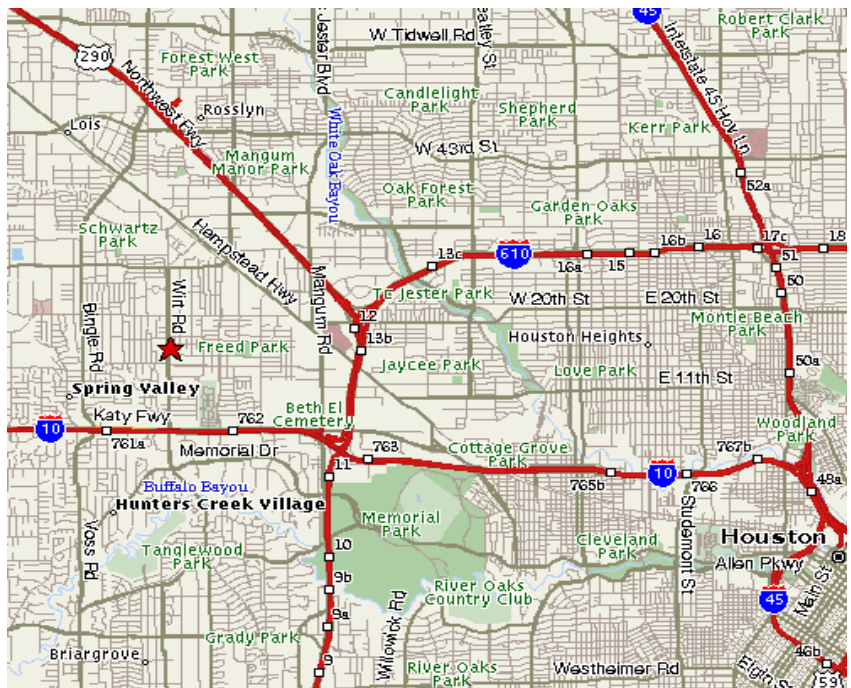
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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.