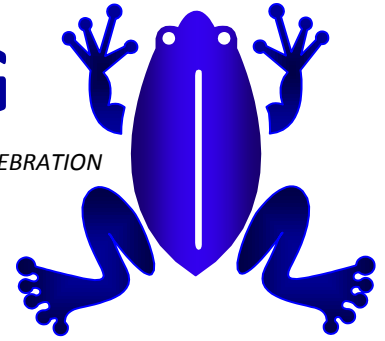




# THE BIG BLUE PHROG



**Our Core Values:** COMPASSION, INCLUSION, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, INQUIRY, AND CELEBRATION

**Mission Statement:** *The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco is an inclusive spiritual community that reaches out and inspires people to live meaningful, joyful lives of service toward the creation of a more just and loving world.*  
(Adopted by UUFW on 5/23/10)

We have just passed through what we call the "Holiday Season." For most of us in the continental United States, not much is going to happen holiday-wise in January except Martin Luther King day in mid-month, and then Valentine's Day in February. If we lived in country where it got really cold (which we [thankfully] don't), this is "hunker down" time. Yet, for most of us, at New Year's, there's a sense that something "new" is happening. New Year celebrations bring with them new perspectives, even though they are not at all intrinsic to the day *per se*. There's really nothing different about January first. It's just one more of the 365.25 "days" it takes for the earth to circle the sun. If we look for a "reason" for choosing a particular day to be "New Year's Day," we *might* choose the actual date of the *Winter Solstice* as the perfect time. The solstices are when the Earth is farthest from, and closest to the Sun. The farthest distance is called apogee and its closest is perigee. But we start our New Year on January 1, about 10 days after the Winter Solstice.



Actually, Julius Caesar declared the solstice to be December 25<sup>th</sup>. Isn't it interesting that that is the very date we celebrate Christmas. As is so often the case with various religious movements, celebrations and events are often chosen to happen on days of special religious observances from other traditions than their own. While some consider this blatant stealing of another's holiday, that sort of language is only necessary when someone has some critical "ax to grind" that underlies the observation. Another word for that ax is "personal baggage." We all have some. But folks have coterminously celebrated holidays since dirt was young. It's not a big deal for any reason. So let's just all be happy now, y' hear?

But regardless of the date, it is a new year. We do think of newness. We think of fresh starts. We think of new "resolutions" and new purposes and new intents. There is something crisp and fresh about it, just like January air. We begin thinking that way for not only for our own personal lives, but also for those of our families and for other endeavors as well. It is an auspicious time to do so for our congregation.

In fact, there could be no better time for us to Re-Vision our future. We've lived through times that have taken their toll. But in spite of difficulties, hardships, hurts and regrets ... we've survived. We look around. As the proverbial dust continues to settle, we see a new field-of-vision coming into view.

Kudos! We are resilient. We have processed to this point in time remarkably well, considering all that could have or might have happened. Take the time to step back and be grateful for that. We've even exceeded our own expectations at times. And most of us are getting ready to turn our faces and energies to a new future with new goals, new programs, new ventures, new hope and new successes.

It is my sincere hope we will use the spirit of New Year as an opportunity for a serious and deep introspection about who we've been in the past, and follow that up with as clean a break as possible with all that might stand in the way of accomplishing really new and profound things. If we seek a truly visionary evaluation of what we want for the future, and commit ourselves to radically new solutions to implement our hopes and desires to bring them to fruition, we will succeed. Nothing we decide could be more radical than what we've survived. It is *Phoenix* time.



I remember a history seminar at the University of Chicago where I stated: "If there's anything I've discovered through all of this research, it is that whatever we thought about it and wrote about it in the past, it's wrong and it needs to be totally redone." That's probably true in 95% of all the UU congregations in existence. If it weren't, we'd all be growing like weeds. That is the challenge before UUFW. 'Tis not the time to faunch and cry, This is when we do and fly. Blue Phrogs just don't croak and grieve, Blue Phrogs leap 'til they achieve! Yea, I know. Bad Poetry. But let's "Make it so!" anyway!

Reverend Byron Miller, Interim Minister  
[Byron.Miller@uuwaco.org](mailto:Byron.Miller@uuwaco.org)

## Ethiopian Well

The official kickoff date for the UUFW Bengolt Water Well Project is **January 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Waldo's Coffeehouse featuring Albert and Gage.** The *proceeds will help fund a shallow-borehole water well for the village of Bengolt, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.* The well will cost \$8500.

The opening for Waldo's will be Grace London. She is very familiar with water wells in Ethiopia, as her brother Max had one dug with his Christmas and birthday gifts. Grace's dad, Eric Schmidhauser, works for Glimmer of Hope, a non-profit based in Austin that implements projects in Ethiopia. The family had the opportunity to go to Ethiopia last Christmas to see the country and the village in which Max's well was dug.

Carol and Dutch shared their pictures of the trip in the Summer RE sessions. The photos of their trip told of the long trek for water made by the women of the village. I was haunted by pictures of women skimming mud holes to collect water. I heard the stories of the girls of the village that from the age of nine had to leave school, collecting the water with the rest of the women. A young girl was so overcome with gratitude over the opportunity to return to school, she gave Max the only thing of value she had to give: her chicken, the source of protein for her family.

Look for the digital frames in the Fellowship. There will be pictures of the Ethiopian villages, people, wells and the countryside... even of Max's chicken!



If you would like to be a sponsor, or donate time to the project, email: [randy.culp@uuwaco.org](mailto:randy.culp@uuwaco.org), or call 315-6444.

Dig it!  
Randy Culp,  
RE Teacher

[randy.culp@uuwaco.org](mailto:randy.culp@uuwaco.org)

See also page 5 story: January 28<sup>th</sup>  
Mardi Gras dance to help fund well!

**Waldo's Coffeehouse featuring Albert and Gage will be January 13<sup>th</sup>! Don't miss it! (←See article at left.)**

## Meals on Wheels Update

2011 was a great year for the UUFW Meals & Wheels program. We delivered approximately 4,400 meals for the year!

The UUFW Park Lake site delivers each Wednesday and Friday to about 43 people which is about 6% of the meals served in Waco by the MOW program. Our delivery area is central/north Waco, from about Pine Street to Lake Shore and MacArthur to just east of 19th.

There are 13 people who deliver for us each week (6 routes on Wednesday and 4 routes on Friday). Only 7 of those are associated with UUFW.

The fab 13 are supported by a wonderful group of sub drivers - and a special thanks goes out to all of those who are available for last minute routes.

Cheryl, Rob and a mixed bag of volunteers drop by to pack up meals and organize the routes. Our drivers then spend about an hour delivering meals and checking on our clients.

We are a vital means of support for the recipients, making sure they are well and have the resources they need. Often the MOW driver is the only person that sees them during the day. We are the eyes and ears for the Central Texas agencies that help disadvantaged, elderly and shut-in people.

Thanks to all those UUs who help: Dawn & Ben McCauley, Steve Bailey, Paul & Jane Derrick, John Nobis, Jim Harris, Marty Van Wagner, Joe Ahlers, Ashley Spicer, Susan Yoder, Jim Spencer, Kathy Overby, Jane Saunders & Sam Hyden.

For more information:

<http://www.seniorministry.org/mealsandwheels.htm>

Cheryl Foster

[cheryl.foster@uuwaco.org](mailto:cheryl.foster@uuwaco.org)

## Treasurer's Report

Greetings to all UUsers and friends. As of the end of November our finances look like this:

Expenses to date: \$82,083.22  
Income to date: \$88,060.75  
Net income so far: \$5,977.53  
Current assets: \$47,475.16 (including dedicated accounts)

Many, many, many thanks to everyone who stepped up to give of their time and labor so that we could reduce our bills this year. Shine on!

Marty Van Wagner,  
Treasurer

[treasurer@uuwaco.org](mailto:treasurer@uuwaco.org)

## MLK Candle-Lighting Event

UUFW has participated in the annual **Martin Luther King Candle-lighting at MLK Park, north side of the Waco Suspension Bridge** for many years. Plan to gather once again on **MLK Day, Monday, January 12, 2012, at 6:30pm**, rain or shine, bringing candles and hearts aglow!

## Social Action in 2011

The social action team helped UUFW accomplish great things this year.

**January:** Several members converged with other members of faith 2011 for the **Martin Luther King Candle Lighting Celebration** at the Waco Suspension Bridge. Waldo's Coffeehouse gave us the opportunity to donate funds to **Planned Parenthood** of Central Texas.

**February:** We participated in the national **Souper Bowl Sunday** with a very successful soup potluck.

**April:** Suzie Seibel and Kris Cervantes initiated the first UU team for the **Susan B. Komen Race for the Cure**.

**May:** We hosted our third **vermicomposting community workshop**. Red wrigglers are popular!

**June:** We participated in the **Fan Club for Caritas** to help needy Waco residents beat the heat.

**July/August:** Several members took training to participate in Planned Parenthood's annual **Nobody's Fool conference**. UUFW has long been a partner with Planned Parenthood in this important community event.

**October:** We participated in the **Crop Walk Against Hunger**. Along with other communities of faith, UUFW members and dogs stepped out for a walk along the beautiful Brazos River while raising funds to help fight hunger. Emily Fau of **Habitat for Humanity** presented information on their Interfaith Build. We began the **Guest At Your Table** program to support UU Service Committee programs.

**November:** Over two weekends, teams of members worked on the **Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Build** in North Waco. Many folks worked behind the scenes to have another successful **Community Race Relations Coalition** Dance and fundraiser. **Guest At Your Table** culminated with the annual Thanksgiving Potluck dinner.

**December:** **Angel Tree** provided a bright Christmas for 29 special angels from Talitha Koum Nurture Center in South Waco.

Ongoing activities: **Cereal Sunday for Caritas** continued this year. Cheryl Foster and Rob Cervantes have kept **Meals On Wheels** running smoothly, organizing the delivery of meals twice weekly in North Waco.

Many thanks to all who participated on the social action team this year: Carla Carr, Mary Cunningham, Sarah Connelly, Terri Jo Ryan, Suzie Seibel, Marty Van Wagner and director April Hull. And, many thanks to all who participated in any social action event: from donating your time and money, to walking and caulking, to just showing up! We appreciate you and your dedication to "service is our prayer."

Becky Warren, Social Action Chair,  
[Becky.Warren@UUWaco.org](mailto:Becky.Warren@UUWaco.org)

## New UUWaco Members: Stories Next Page



(Front row: Jordan and Juliette Young, Sean McCauley  
Back: Gary & Cindie Young, Dawn & Ben McCauley, and Sammie Hyden. Not pictured: Jennifer Seagle)

## Wider UU Events in 2012:

**Registration for the annual Allies for Racial Equity Conference is now open!**

**Colonization, Privilege and Resistance:** This year's annual Allies for Racial Equity Conference will be held February 17-19 in Ft. Worth, TX. Keynote speakers are Robert Jensen (author of "The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege") and Megan Dowdell (Starr King School for the Ministry adjunct professor). Scholarships for youth and limited scholarships for adults are available. To request one: [AlliesRacialEquity@gmail.com](mailto:AlliesRacialEquity@gmail.com)

To learn more and to register:

<https://sites.google.com/site/uualliesre/news-and-events/2012-annual-conference>

Peace,

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer, UU Church of Kent

**If you'd like to travel to Haiti with UUSC's JustWorks Program**, next trip is April 28-May 5, 2012 (**deadline: February 5, 2012**). Apply at <http://actnow.uusc.org/site/R?i=H5OH132EJGZ66kwFJSjTnw> or call Sam Jones at 617-301-4326 between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (EST).

Website:

[http://actnow.uusc.org/site/R?i=G\\_OJPuqqAkPUkGoD7OU3CA](http://actnow.uusc.org/site/R?i=G_OJPuqqAkPUkGoD7OU3CA)

## A Fond Farewell to Ashley Spicer

Ashley Spicer is moving home to Arkansas to be with her family. She will starting a new career in insurance with her mother, who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer.

Ashley was a regular member of the Reading Circle and a Friday driver with Meals on Wheels.

We wish her well in her new job and future.

Cheryl Foster

[cheryl.foster@uuwaco.org](mailto:cheryl.foster@uuwaco.org)

## Meet Our Newest Members:

**Cindie Young:** I have lived in Waco since 2001.

Previously I lived in New Orleans, Bakersfield, Houston, Austin, College Station, Ottawa, New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Boston. As a child, my religious upbringing was a mixture of Protestant, Jewish, Catholic and anything else my parents wanted to try. As an adult, it was various Protestant/Evangelical churches. I married Gary Young in January 1993 and have two daughters, Juliette & Jordan. I have been a flight attendant with American Airlines since 1997 and am a full-time wife to Gary and mom and teacher to my girls. My interests and hobbies are hanging out with family and friends, eating good food, knitting, and homeschooling. Although I am a flight attendant, I like staying home as much as possible to be with my girls while they are growing up.

When I found the UUFW, I was looking for a community of people where I could be who I am, learn what I believed, and search without judgment. I wanted a place where my girls had the same freedom to search and ask questions without pressure or judgment. My dad, whom I greatly admire and love, introduced me to the UU church in Houston. He shares my ethics and values, those same values I share with the UU church. What I hope to get out of being a member of the UUFW is living life with people of similar values, including the value of every human being, regardless of any race, religion or any other box people put them in. I have found a home here.

**Gary Bryan Young:** I lived in Waco from 1969-1988 and then 2001 - the present. I have previously lived in College Station, Austin, Ottawa Ontario Canada, Chicago, Washington DC, and Boston. My previous religious affiliation was Baptist/Evangelical. My wife is Cindie J. Young and my children are Juliette E. Young and Jordan G. Young. My occupation is web development. I am an avid shoe-wearer and have a great appreciation of good music. Hopefully when I'm re-incarnated I can play and sing much better. Cindie's Dad is a UU in Houston. I was drawn to UU because his attitude reflects what I wanted in a church: open-minded, non-judgmental, and kind. In evangelical circles this would be called the "fruits of the spirit": patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I find more of these traits in UU than I've found previously. Fame and fortune would be nice. However, I think better would be genuine relationships with open-minded and kind people. The fact that many of us have different ideas of God and eternity is a good thing and something we should all share openly and honestly without judgment. The biggest thing for me is honest and open communication. No one at UU has ever upset me in any way. However, if they did, I would approach them one-on-one and explain directly what about them has upset me so we can move past it. Unspoken kind words and spoken harsh words create barriers.

**Dawn McCauley:** I was born (Feb 1980) and raised in Waco. I lived here until Jan 2004 when I joined the USAF. I met my husband and we returned to Waco in July 2009. While in the Air Force we were stationed at Elmendorf AFB Alaska and Beale AFB California. I was brought up Catholic but separated and stopped attending in 1998. I have two handsome boys--Sean 5 years and Shane 2 years--and a wonderful husband Ben. I am currently a full time student studying social work at Tarleton State University. I enjoy writing, reading, scrabble, movies, and helping out in my community. I heard about UU from Kris Cervantes while working for her as a work study at McLennan Community College. I was attracted to Unitarian Universalism because of their principles of inclusion, compassion, and inquiry. I would like to learn more about putting our values into practice and growing spiritually.

**Benjamin Aaron McCauley:** I have lived in Waco for 2 1/2 years. I have lived previously in California 2 1/2 yrs, Alaska 3 yrs, and was originally from St. Louis, MO. I was raised Baptist, but never really affiliated! My wife is Dawn and we have two boys, Sean and Shane. I am a US Air Force Veteran and am currently a full time student. My hobbies and interests are video games, Legos, The Daily Show and Colbert Report, and comedy! Kris Cervantes invited my wife and me to attend the UUFW. We really like how accepting this church is of others. Since attending I have not felt any pressure to change who I am to fit into a certain idea or dogma. I'm me, you're you, we may not see eye to eye, and that's okay! I am looking forward to being a part of this church and growing spiritually.

**Jennifer Seagle:** My husband Jason and I have a family ranch between Clifton and Valley Mills that I visited every summer growing up. We moved out there permanently 3 years ago. We have three children: Zoe (8), Fox (5), Piper (2). We have lived previously in North Carolina, Ohio and Kentucky. I was previously a Christian Methodist. My occupation is message therapist and mother. I love to sew and create things, knit, read, hike and explore, and play with my kids. I found the UU Website online. We were disillusioned with the traditional Christian churches and looking for something spiritual, open-minded and inclusive. We found you. It is very important to me that my children grow up in an environment rejoicing in the differences in people, beliefs and cultures. I not only found that here, but also a place where they are encouraged to find their own spiritual path and respect other's journeys. As a member of the UU, I have found wonderful people, whom I am looking forward to getting to know better. What I want here is a liberal social outlet, a place of spiritual growth and a healthy, fun environment for my children to discover themselves. We are very grateful to be here. Thank you all so much for providing such a wonderful haven in Waco!

**Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Waco, Texas**

4209 N. 27th Street  
Waco, TX 76708

Phone: (254) 307-2001

Website: <http://uuwaco.org/>

Email: [information@uuwaco.org](mailto:information@uuwaco.org)

Newsletter: [phrog@uuwaco.org](mailto:phrog@uuwaco.org)



[uuwaco.org](http://uuwaco.org)

**Sunday Services:**  
*10:45 am-12:00 pm*

**Nursery care provided**

**Snacks for all before and after  
in the Fellowship Hall**

**Youth and Children's  
Religious Education:**

*Approx. 11:20am-12pm*

(See Contact Information, R.E.  
Children's and Youth Group,  
third column of this page)

**Choir Practice:**

*Sundays, 10:00 am*

(POC: [jane.kittner@uuwaco.org](mailto:jane.kittner@uuwaco.org))

**Adult Programs**

**Reading Circle Covenant Group**

*Second Mondays, 6:30 pm*

POC: [Cheryl.Foster@UUWaco.org](mailto:Cheryl.Foster@UUWaco.org)

**What are we reading and doing?**

**Find out at**

<http://uuwaco.org/index.php/community/reading-circle>

**Humanism Interest CG**

*Every 4 (±1-3) weeks, more or less*

*Next Meeting: January 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:30p*

**Krewe UUFW**

**Mardi Gras is coming!**

UUFW member, Cheryl Babers Hagar, had a brain child! Why not a Mardi Gras dance? Indeed! Why not a Krewe? Today, Mardi Gras Krewes hold balls and parties as well as participate in Mardi Gras parades. Often, they raise money for charities and causes.

***Krewe UUFW will hold its first Mardi Gras dance and gumbo party on January 28<sup>th</sup>, from 6pm until 11pm.*** Put on your Mardi Gras costume! Come on down! Laissez les bon temps roller! Bring a Mardi Gras appetizer, salad, gumbo, etouffée or King Cake! We will have a fais do-do... and call it "Like Water For Gumbo".

***We will take donations to fund the water well that will benefit the village of Dengolt, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Bring friends!***

Want to help? Join the Krewe! Contact [Randy.Culp@uuwaco.org](mailto:Randy.Culp@uuwaco.org) or call 315-6444.