



# The Big Blue Phrog



*“BOND OF UNION: The purpose of this Fellowship is to bring religious liberals into closer acquaintance and cooperation for the study and practice of religion, and for the diffusion of the knowledge of Unitarianism and Universalism and the furthering of their principles.”*

-- From UUFW Bylaws, Section II



## The Big Kahuna— Thinking Out Loud with Rev. Nathan L. Stone

I am being intentional these days --- intentional about many things.

I am being intentional about allowing our UUA to coach me about what OUR UUA is thinking about and doing. I have before me the *UUA Social Justice Calendar 2008-2009*.

There is an “Action of the Month” listed for each month in 2009. January’s was “Living Wage.” February’s is “BGLT (Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender) Justice”. The holiday and observance our UUA lists for February is “Freedom to Marry Day” (February 12) and “Valentines’ Day/National Condom Day” (February 14).

In light of February’s “BGLT Justice” emphasis I found an article entitled, *Sinkford Writes ‘Memo to Obama’ for Tikkun Magazine*. Sinkford is the president of our UUA. *Tikkun Magazine* is a bimonthly critique of politics, culture and society. For the past 22 years *Tikkun* has been the pre-eminent North American publisher of analytical articles on Israel/Palestine, Jewish culture, and the intersection of religion and politics in the United States.

Here is his memo to Obama. It is our right and responsibility to listen in:

*January 9, 2009*

*I learned of your election on a late-night flight to Africa. When the pilot announced that you would be the 44th president of the United States, many of us wept with*

*joy. The hopes Americans have placed in you are so high, and the challenges are so daunting. You will lead us during a critical period of war, recession, and mounting ecological threats. Some might say you have taken on a thankless job; I am deeply grateful for a president who seems equal to these challenges.*

*And I am hopeful that your vision will encompass all of us. During the campaign, the rights of same-sex couples were downplayed even among progressives. While I understand the strategic reasons for this, I feel called to witness on behalf of those Americans whose rights were trampled and whose dignity was assaulted by state ballot initiatives preventing marriage or adoption.*

*Before the presidential campaign began in earnest, back in the summer of 2007, you said something that gave me great hope: “Too often, the issue of gay rights is exploited by those seeking to divide us. But at its core, this issue is about who we are as Americans. It’s about whether this nation is going to live up to its founding promise of equality by treating all its citizens with dignity and respect.”*

*I rejoiced at those words then, and I want to lift them up now. Some people—including some wise and experienced leaders—are still seeking to divide us. They*

(Continued on page three)

### Upcoming Sundays at a Glance

**Feb. 1 – “A Journey, a Race, a Search, a Scavenger Hunt: What Is It?”**– Kris Nobis Cervantes  
*UU Principle #4 “We promise to honor and uphold a free and responsible search for meaning and truth.”*

**February 8 – “Dream On: Peace, Liberty, and Justice for ALL?”** – Rev. Nathan L. Stone  
*UU Principle #6 “We promise to honor and uphold the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.”*  
**(COLLECTION OF GAYT BOXES)**

**February 15 – “Darwin Recalls the Story of His Life”** – Dr. Henry Walbesser

**February 22 – “The Joy of Mardi Gras”** – Joy Hayes-Gates (An Intergenerational Service)

UU Fellowship of Waco  
4209 N. 27th Street  
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254-754-0599

[uufw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uufw@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.uuwaco.org](http://www.uuwaco.org)

### Weekly Events

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

(Nursery care provided. Snacks  
for all before and after in the  
Fellowship Hall)

Children's & Youth RE:  
Approx. 11:20am-12pm

Choir Practice:  
Sundays, 10:15 am

International Folk Dancing:  
Thursdays, 7:30 pm

**For Board Member and  
Committee Chair contact  
information, please request the  
most up-to-date membership  
list from Kay H. Wilson:**

[uufw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uufw@sbcglobal.net)

### **Staff**

Minister—  
Rev. Nathan L. Stone, 753-3995  
natpat@grandecom.net

Web Manager—  
Kay H. Wilson, 756-7223  
uufw@sbcglobal.net

R.E. Director—(Vacancy—  
Contact R.E. Chair Liz Turnage)

Senior Youth Advisor—  
Brian Tankersley, 723-0109  
demandtruth@gmail.com

## Covenant Groups

### INTERESTED IN MAKING CONNECTIONS?

*Join a Covenant Group!*

“Exploring Spiritual Pathways”

Bruce Allen (776-3036)

3rd Tuesdays

“Humanism Interest Group”

Jane Derrick (753-6920)

Every Four Weeks on Wednesday — Next meeting Feb. 11th, 6:30 pm.

“Let's Go To the Movies”

John Nobis (756-4653)

3rd Wednesdays

“Music as Spiritual Practice”

J.P. DeMeritt (756-1010)

(or email [jpdemeritt@att.net](mailto:jpdemeritt@att.net))

“Reading Circle”

Kris Cervantes ([kris.cervantes@gmail.com](mailto:kris.cervantes@gmail.com))

Second Mondays, 6:30 pm.

## **Board Members**

President—Bruce Allen

President-Elect—Jane Derrick

Secretary—Terri Jo Ryan

Treasurer—Joe Ahlers

At-Large Director—Kay H. Wilson

At-Large Director—Becky Fox

At-Large Director—Claudia McLatcher

At-Large Director—David McLatcher

Feel free to send the editor  
articles, thoughts, ideas or  
other contributions:

**Phrog Editor—**

**Brian Gates**

[bluephrog@yahoo.com](mailto:bluephrog@yahoo.com)

## An Official Disclaimer

*The opinions expressed  
and the ministries  
described on our  
website or newsletter  
do not necessarily  
represent the opinions  
of all members of the  
church, nor the  
organizations with  
which it affiliates, but if  
you are a Unitarian  
Universalist, you  
already know that.*

**(Adopted by the  
UUFW Board,  
01/15/06)**

## **Committee Chairs**

Care Team—Judy Hendry

Finance—Joe Ahlers

Hospitality—Terri Jo Ryan

House & Grounds—Mark Pantle

Membership—Robyn Morrison

Ministry—Vacant/Being Reassessed

P.R.—Kris Cervantes

R.E.—Liz Turnage

Social Action—Becky Warren

Strategic Planning—Jane Derrick

Waldo's—Jane Kittner

Worship Team—Joy Hayes

**WELCOME!  
WELCOME!!  
WELCOME!!!**

**From UUFW's Membership  
Committee**

To all Members, Friends of the Fellowship, and Newcomers to UUFW!! Hello!

The 2009 Membership Committee is comprised of Lois Crook, Paul Derrick, John Hendry, and Robyn Morrison. I want to thank all committee members for agreeing to be a part of the committee. I am excited to be a part of this wonderful team!

I would like to invite anyone else interested in becoming active with the Membership Committee to please contact any of these committee members and let us know.

I want to take this opportunity to let all of you who are newcomers to UUFW know how wanted and welcome you are. We are always so excited to see guests come through our doors and always look forward to getting to meet and know each of you. We believe UUFW is the place to be! We hope you will too.

The Membership Committee hosts "Becoming UU" twice a year. Our next Becoming UU session is scheduled for Sunday, March 22, 2009. Food will be included. We'll begin about 12:00 and end about 3:00. Everyone is invited to this event including Members, Friends of the Fellowship, and Newcomers!

This event provides an overview of the history of UUFW, the different groups and events held at UUFW, and a better understanding of Unitarian Universalism. We have wonderful presenters, including Paul Derrick, who'll conduct his Spiritual Odyssey segment. This is an exciting exercise to help everyone understand each of our spiritual journeys. You'll learn a little about others and maybe even yourself.

I wish all of you a very happy Valentine's Day and all the love that comes your way!

Robyn Morrison, Membership Chair

(Continued from page one) *are cautioning you not to overreach as you set new policies. These people may advise you that legal equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people is a luxury, and they may urge you to put civil rights on the back burner for now. Wait, they are saying. Wait for a better time.*

*But we know there's never a better time to end discrimination. It wasn't the right time in 1954 when Brown v. Board ended segregation in public schools—the critics then said that too many states and cities weren't ready for a change as big as racial integration. And yet change came—not because we were ready but because—in the words of abolitionist Unitarian minister Theodore Parker that were echoed by Dr. King—"the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Progress may be delayed, but its course is unstoppable.*

*In 1967, if the United States Supreme Court had waited for "the right time," Loving v. Virginia would not have been decided in favor of committed couples who wished to marry but happened to be of different races. Before this decision, in many states I would not have been allowed to marry my wife. Today, just a generation later, it is unthinkable that we would ever again adopt such laws that keep loving people apart. And yet that's exactly what happened in California and in several other states last November. You have the opportunity to correct this injustice and to put us back on course.*

*Yes, America is facing big problems, but I urge you not to view our country as a hierarchy of competing needs, with minority rights taking a backseat to issues like the economy. Instead, I pray that you will see our society as a diverse, interconnected web, where the health of our nation depends upon the well-being of each of its citizens. It will take an act of deep faith to believe that protecting individual rights and strengthening a small percentage of families will benefit the entire country. But it will.*

*During my visit to Africa, I learned much from Unitarian Universalist congregations and other religious communities in Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya. I was humbled by their commitment to addressing dire social problems—extreme poverty, gender inequity, epidemic diseases, and profound racial and ethnic discrimination. They understand that social problems and health problems are also economic problems, and that addressing one issue means tackling them all.*

*Against tremendous odds, and within just a few short years, South Africans dismantled apartheid, legalized same-sex marriages, and rebuilt their entire society, and they did so by radically reimagining every economic, political, legal, and moral component. Surely we Americans can confront an economic recession, end an unjust war abroad, and advance civil rights at home. We don't have to choose peace and prosperity for the many at the expense of justice for the few. Instead, we have to understand that peace, prosperity, and justice are vitally interconnected.*

*You have my support and that of millions of justice-seeking Americans. With your leadership, we can be the country that finally lives up to its founding promise of equality for all. (<http://www.uua.org/news/newssubmissions/128077.shtml>)*

*There it is: just as I said in my sermon of January 18 --- We affirm and promote the right of conscience and the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large. UU Principle #5.*

*Do we need to agree with everything our UUA president says? Of course not. Absolutely not. But we will affirm his right to speak.*

*Remember the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*

*In the name and spirit of democracy,*

*Nathan*

## Time to Revise Our Elevator Speeches Based on What UUFW Has Written into our Hearts

An elevator speech is what you give when you only have the length of an elevator ride to explain something. (Now you know why I have always wanted to live in a high rise, but that is beside the point). Due to our strategic planning work, the Big Event and the “wordsmithing” work that has occurred since then, I am revising one of my favorite elevator speeches, no not the one about the miraculous curative power of banana, horse radish and elm bark puree or the one about Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping (Google it). The elevator speech I am talking about is the one explaining Unitarian Universalism to those who ask the question “You are a Uni-what?” In the past, my elevator speech included statements about creedlessness, progressive religious values and the secret lives of blind salamanders. Thanks to a recent sermon of Nathan’s and our strategic planning work, my UUFW elevator speech is changing. My new UUFW elevator speech will soon be based on our statement of core values and our covenant of right relations (and maybe a few of my favorite horticultural theories). Again, I like high rises.

In our efforts at strategic planning we are not doing some new fangled, hippie UU thing. In fact, our work brings to mind one of my favorite verses from Jeremiah 31 “See, the days are coming . . . when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel. . . . Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts.” It also brings to mind my recent reading of the 1648 Cambridge Platform. Our own religious history is related to this platform and its call for covenantal relationships as the foundation of religious life. (Okay, I don’t really have a favorite verse in Jeremiah 31 and I haven’t read the Cambridge Platform. However, I did go to

<http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/visionmissioncovenant.pdf>)

In the Big Event in October, we shared what has been written in the heart of our liberal religious community. Currently, a team of wordsmiths is translating the findings of the Big Event into a statement of core values and a covenant of right relations. In keeping with the democratic spirit of our religious community, the congregation will have the opportunity to give the wordsmiths feedback. The Board and then the entire congregation will vote on these statements (hopefully at the April Congregational meeting). After we adopt a statement of core values and covenant of right relations, the work of the strategic planning committee and the UUFW board will be to help us write these values and covenant deeper into our hearts (and actions) before we move on to renewing our shared sense of mission and vision. I am looking forward to hearing your new elevator speeches and to the continuing dialogue in this process of building beloved community.

Bruce Allen,  
Board President

## UUFW invited to “make like a tree” and leaf, for Tu B'Shevat

Congregation Agudath Jacob, Waco’s Conservative shul, has invited the congregation of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco to attend a special celebration at 4 p.m., Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, at the synagogue, 4925 Hillcrest Drive.

Tu B'Shevat, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat on the Jewish calendar, is the day that marks the beginning of a "New Year for Trees." This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle. Some call this holiday “Jewish Arbor Day,” and in recent years, it has taken on a “green” meaning for many houses of worship.

Jews mark Tu B'Shevat by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. Our minister, Nathan Stone, has about a dozen folks signed up to join him at CAJ, but he has room for a few more. See him for more details.

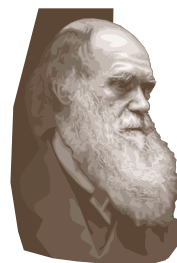
## Darwin: He made a monkey out of us

UUFW will celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of Charles Darwin (Feb. 12, 1809) with a Potluck 200th Birthday Party in Fellowship Hall following the Feb. 15 service. Our own evolution educator, Dr. Henry Walbesser, is poised to present a program on the life and times of dear Darwin at the service. But we need members to contribute to the fun and festivities by bringing their best cookery to the kitchen for a potluck meal.

Hospitality Chair Terri Jo Ryan will have the sacred sign-up sheet going around, starting Jan. 24. She requests help from the congregation in coming up with a Darwin-themed game or two for the kids (Does anyone still have a “Barrel of Monkeys” perhaps?) and Darwin-inspired décor for the hall. Ed Canning has generously underwritten most of the cost of Chuck's birthday cake, but donations are always gratefully accepted.

Don’t forget to invite your secular humanist, free-thinking, atheist/agnostic pals to this wonderful outreach event! For more information, contact TJ at work, 757-5746.

Terri Jo Ryan, Board Secretary and Hospitality Chair



I cannot believe they named something so heinous after me!

[Darwin Awards.com](http://DarwinAwards.com)

Sigh...



Every Sunday morning I drag my sorry self out of bed and get me a dose of that ol' time liberal religion at UUFW!

**Souper Bowl**

On Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, UUFW will join churches across the country to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting. In 2008, over 14,000 groups participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring generating over \$10 million. All of the money collected at UUFW will be donated to our local Meals On Wheels. Since the Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990, more than \$50 million has gone to help people in need. Please support this effort to “love our neighbors” by dropping your dollar (or more!) in the soup pot on February 1<sup>st</sup>. As a reminder, this is also our monthly Cereal Sunday, which also benefits the hungry in our area through Caritas!

**Treasurer’s Report**

We had another month in the black in December. Receipts exceeded the monthly budget and expenses were within \$25 of the budget.

For the calendar year we ended in the black by \$1,900. Having budgeted for a loss of \$4,100, that is pretty good. The lack of a DRE accounted for much of that along with \$1,100 more in receipts than we budgeted for.

House and Grounds was \$1,700 below the budget and that helped make up for Utilities which were \$2,400 over the budget. Conference & Travel, RE, and Publicity were all below the budget by a healthy amount.

We ended the year with \$59,000 in the bank.

Joe Ahlers, Treasurer

**Honoring the Guest at your Table**

***UU Principle #2: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations***

Kay Wilson, in her recent sermon, encouraged our embracing principle #2 with the annual Guest At Your Table program of the national UU Service Committee. UUSC is an independent human rights organization. As such, this organization strengthens workers' rights; protects the right to safe, affordable water; defends civil liberties and democratic processes; and preserves the rights of vulnerable people after terrible disasters. After the devastating tidal wave in Sri Lanka, UUSC was there. After Katrina, UUSC was there. Each of us becomes part of the moral force through which UUSC moves the world when we participate in Guest At Your Table. This is our UU faith in action on a global scale. As Kay stated, "peace cannot flourish when hunger, fear and despair abound." So, let us "rekindle hope," as Kay suggested. Let us remember our moral duty not only to our local, but also to our world community. Please make your Guest a welcome member of your family, and remember to return your boxes on Sunday, Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>!

*THANK YOU!*

Becky Warren, Social Action Chair

Pictured below is Eli Fox helping count pennies for GAYT. Photo courtesy of Becky Fox, via Kay Wilson.



Pictured to the left are Catherine Gordon and Rev. Nathan Stone at the Martin Luther King, Jr. wreath laying ceremony. Photo Courtesy of David McLatcher

“One of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites—polar opposites—so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love . . . What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

## IN COMMEMORATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

DINNER AND A MOVIE - Film and discussion presented by the Community Race Relations Coalition. Dinner provided by the CRRC Board. Donations accepted. Watch the powerful movie CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY, starring James Earl Jones and Richard Harris, with discussion following. Monday, February 2, 2009, 5:00 to 8:30 PM, Central Waco-McLennan County Library, 1717 Austin Avenue. To reserve a space or ask questions, call April at 750-5774 or email [aprilh@ci.waco.tx.us](mailto:aprilh@ci.waco.tx.us).

## UU BIRDING GROUP

The UU Birding Group is off and running (should I say walking). We went on our first outing on Sunday, January 18, a gentle stroll around the Pecan Bottoms near the HOT Soccer Fields. We saw 11 and heard one additional species, with the most uncommon being the pine warbler. And there were lots of eastern bluebirds, always a treat. Beginning in February the group will meet regularly on the 4th Sunday of the month at 3:30 pm at the Fellowship and carpool to a birding spot from there. For more information contact: Jane Derrick, 753-6920, [pjderrick@aol.com](mailto:pjderrick@aol.com)

Jane Derrick, President Elect

UU Birdwatchers below.

Photo courtesy of Jane Derrick.



**The Reading Circle Covenant Group** will hold a special Kids and Adults meeting on Monday, February 9th, at the slightly earlier-than-usual time of 6 p.m. Young readers are invited to join us, bringing one or two of their favorite books to share with the group. Our regular members will be there, too, ready to share some of their favorites from the children and young adult genres. Come prepared to speak briefly about your choice of book(s) and listen respectfully as others share their own favorites. Questions? Contact Kris at [kris.cervantes@gmail.com](mailto:kris.cervantes@gmail.com).

On Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, the Board had a very productive and successful retreat facilitated by Meryl Gunter, a district consultant who specializes in facilitating such events. Below is our new board covenant crafted at the retreat. Brian Gates, Immediate Past President

## 2009 Board Covenant for UU Fellowship of Waco

As members of the 2009 Board of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco, we covenant to:

1. Be respectful of each other's time
2. Be encouraging, appreciative, and assume good will
3. Refrain from crosstalk
4. Be calm, non-anxious, and fully present
5. Honor commitments
  - Be prepared
  - Complete assignments or
  - Ask for help
6. Listen respectfully to all opinions
7. Remember the joy of our work
8. Focus on board work (the "big picture"), not committee work (the details)
9. Speak up to express concerns (encourage and support sharing of our concerns)
10. Allow sufficient time for deliberation on important issues (big picture, needs and desires, goals and mission)
11. Maintain confidentiality in sensitive matters, i.e. in personnel matters, etc.
12. Speak as one voice.

Photo courtesy of Jane Derrick.



Our January Circle Suppers were a hit. Pictured at one of the several suppers hosted that night are, standing, Shirlee Meadows, David McLatcher, Joyce Nobis, Claudia McLatcher, hosts Cathyren LanQuist and John Provine, and Terri Jo Ryan. Seated are Claudia McLatcher and John Nobis.

### Why We Do What We Do

At the January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Board Retreat, UUA consultant Meryl Gunter asked the members of your board why they signed on to serve the congregation of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco for 2009.

Some members are new to the job, and some had been absent from the board for a couple of years. Some, frankly, are suckers for serial commitment. But it was decided after the gathering to share some of the motivations driving the folks the congregation voted into office last fall.

See if some of these reasons resonate with you as well (after all, we'll be looking for devotion and new blood in about nine months!)

- I've been out of leadership for a few cycles and it's time to jump back in
- I was asked
- I can offer historical perspective
- The opportunity to give direction as the fellowship moves forward
- My soul has a home in this space; I love this place.
- I'm honoring the sweat equity of myself and others
- I believe in the power of religious liberals to change the world
- I want to give back to the greater community by growing UUFW
- I have a sense of personal responsibility to the group
- I feel an obligation to serve after the fellowship funded my advanced training
- I'm devoted to the well-being of the entire congregation
- If not me, then who?
- I want to give back to a community that has given much to me.
- I have lots of leadership experience, both professionally and in community activism.
- I believe in the power of religious community to enrich lives and build beloved community
- I tend to want to be involved in everything and I am hyper responsible.
- I want to model the change that I seek
- To be more than just a passive pew-sitter
- I like being in the loop
- Different personality types are needed to govern the group
- Belief in the shared values and goals
- Unfinished business
- It's good to be needed
- This is my home, socially and spiritually
- I have the professional skills to do the job
- I make the time and have the energy
- My sense of commitment to the fellowship
- The need was expressed for my experience and talents
- Very persistent recruitment effort!

I love this place

I want to give back...

I was asked

If not me, then who?

I believe in the power of religious community...

This is my home...

I like being in the loop

My soul has a home in this space

Belief in the shared values and goals...

needed

Terri Jo Ryan, Board Secretary

opportunity

Very persistent recruitment effort!

community

devoted

responsibility

obligation

commitment

Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Waco, Texas

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Put mailing label here



Every institution finally  
perishes by an excess of its  
own first principle.

*Lord Acton*



**Sisters on a Journey** is a group of eclectic womyn who meet to help each other follow the yellow brick road. Sisters meet the third Monday of every month. 6:15 is a pot-luck meal. 7pm Session! For more info or to be added to the list contact [goddesschriste@yahoo.com](mailto:goddesschriste@yahoo.com)

**Girl's Night Out (GNO)** meets the 1st Monday of every month. Show up at 6:30pm to join the fun. We talk, laugh and sample the tasty treats. For more info contact Christe Hancock [chn2books@yahoo.com](mailto:chn2books@yahoo.com)

### **Unitarian Universalist Principles**

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association,  
covenant to affirm and promote:*

- I. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- II. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- III. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- IV. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- V. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- VI. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- VII. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.