



The Big Blue Phrog



“Love is the doctrine of this Fellowship, the quest for truth is its sacrament, and service is its prayer. To dwell together in peace, to seek knowledge in freedom, to serve others in community to the end that all souls shall grow into harmony with creation—thus do we covenant with each other.”

--Adopted From Universalist Minister J. Griswold Williams’ Covenant, written in 1933.



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

Here it is: January 2009 so Happy New Year and all that.

But I am still in December. My mind and heart are still caught up in that *Mastering Life’s Energies* (MLE) workshop I attended December 1-5.

There was something magical about learning to think ontologically --- that is, to think about living out of our being rather than our doing. I can’t really explain it all. All I can say is that some of what I learned and experienced keeps calling to me. I keep sensing that the whole notion of mastering life’s energies has lessons for the church. More specifically it has lessons for us at this wonderful place called the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco.

As I apply these lessons to my life I do believe that they will impact the way I do ministry; not sure what shape that will take but I am willing to trust the process.

Let’s scroll through the items that keep dancing in my heart and head. Like this basic question: “Would it be alright with you if life got easier?” Of course. And what about this: “Would it be alright if church got easier?” Absolutely.

One of the ways that things can get easier is to understand, master, and harness the six forms of energy: Money, Time, Physical Vitality, Creativity, Enjoyment, and Relationships. Imagine UFW tapping all of that in each of us.

What about learning to live in a goal-oriented way? I am the world’s greatest “To-Do” list maker. I discovered that so much of what I’ve been doing comes under the category of tasks. And when a task is done one feels relief. But when one works with goals the result is joy --- especially if you define a goal as “an area or object toward which play is directed in order to score.” I like that. Apply that to our strategic planning. What if all of our planning had the flavor of play and reaching goals and experiencing joy? That would certainly make life in the church easier.

We even learned how to forgive in an ontological sense. It’s all about seeing with fresh eyes and new perspectives. It’s all about dismantling our structures of knowing. It’s about learning to see others as heroes. The creator of *Mastering Life’s Energies*, Maria Nemeth, says it like this:

A hero is someone who has goals and dreams, who wants to make a difference and leave the world a better place. A hero is someone who loves and is loved --- and each one of us is a hero.

What would church be like if we saw the hero in one another rather than seeing the other as a hindrance or a pain or someone to change or to avoid? Wow.

(Continued on page three)

Upcoming Sundays at a Glance

Sunday January 4 – “Seeing People in Green: UU Principal #1” – Rev. Nathan Stone

Sunday January 11 – “The Audacity of Hope” – Kay Wilson

**Sunday January 18 – “Fascinating Combo: Conscience and the Democratic Process”
– Rev. Nathan L. Stone**

Sunday January 25 – “Acceptance and Encouragement: UU Principle #3” – Rev. Nathan Stone

UU Fellowship of Waco
4209 N. 27th Street
Waco, TX 76708

254-754-0599

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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

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 Jan. 14th, 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)

“Reading Circle”

Kris Cervantes (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

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An Official Disclaimer

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and the ministries
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website or newsletter
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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

Happy 2009!!!!

Jane Derrick has done an amazing job (as always!) as Membership Chair in 2008. Now she is moving into the role as UUFW's President Elect. In 2009, I've agreed to act as Membership Chair and Kay Wilson has offered to continue as the Membership Committee's At-Large Director on the UUFW Board.

Many huge thanks to Jane, Kay, committee members, greeters, bulletin ushers, and all volunteers who served the Membership Committee in 2008. I also wish to thank all those who are offering to serve the Membership Committee in these roles in 2009.

If there are others who believe they may wish to serve the Membership Committee or have questions regarding Membership's responsibilities, please let me know. It takes many individuals to handle all of the responsibilities involved with Membership and we are so fortunate to have those who are so forthcoming with help.

Welcome to our newcomers! UUFW is a wonderful place to be a part and I look forward to meeting and getting to know you.

I wish all of you all the very best of new years!!

Robyn Morrison,
Membership Chair

(Continued from page one)

We learned about how we are conclusion-making creatures. That is, we begin with conclusions and basic assumptions. We then spend our time gathering evidence to validate our conclusions. And then we behave in ways that support our conclusions. And then people around us, interestingly enough (!), begin to behave as we had already concluded. It's an interesting way to understand the way we operate.

What would it be like to be aware of our predetermined conclusions and then to curb that way of being in advance? Such an awareness would make life so much easier.

When we begin to learn some of these improved ways of living I think we will see miracles. Yes, miracles as defined by Willa Cather in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*:

Miracles rest not so much upon healing power coming suddenly near us from afar but upon our perceptions being made finer, so that, for the moment, our eyes can see and our ears can hear what has been around us always.

In 2009 I intend to do ministry by looking for the hero in every person I meet and by expecting Willa Cather-type miracles and by mastering life's energies. I intend to dance with clarity, focus, ease, and grace. Will you join me?

What shape will all of this take and how will I/we get there? Who knows? I think I will begin by putting on my dancing shoes.

Nathan

COMMITTEE LEADERS

At the Dec. 14, 2008, meeting of the UUFW board, congregational elders made the following appointments to the 2009 lay leadership team:

Finance Chair– Joe Ahlers
Hospitality Chair – Terri Jo Ryan
Care Team Chair – Judy Hendry
Membership Chair – Robyn Morrison
Social Action Chair – Becky Warren
Waldo's Chair – Jane Kittner
Publicity Chair – Kris Nobis Cervantes
House & Grounds Chair – Mark Pantle
Religious Education Chair – Liz Turnage
Worship team Chair – Joy Hayes-Gates

There is still a vacancy for chairmanship for the Committee on the Ministry, but we expect that void to be filled soon. Stay tuned for updates.

Meanwhile, expect to hear from your committee chairpeople soon as they assemble their work teams for the tasks ahead.

Terri Jo Ryan,
Board Secretary



**We did it!
We reached our pledge goal!
Thanks to all who pledged!**

Got Hospitality?

Hospitality Chairperson Terri Jo Ryan needs your help in extending the warm friendly welcome of UUFW in 2009. Signup sheets will be coming around soon for people to assign themselves a Sunday during which to provide refreshments.

Since Hospitality has no budget with which to work its magic in 2009, we are dependent upon your volunteering to provide snacks, or donate funds to do so. Don't forget, we can always use your HEB "bonus dollars" as well.

Good food and good company are essential for projecting the image of UUFW as a haven of happy heretics in a sometimes hostile world. Please make it your mission as well to welcome the strangers in our midst.

Thank you!

Terri Jo Ryan, Board Secretary

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE KICK-OFF 1-11-09

Americans discovered in a big way in the last presidential election what hope means. It brought people out in record numbers to vote for something as nebulous and seemingly resistant to definition as hope.

There are people around the world, including in the United States, who may begin their day with the hope that today will be better; but by nightfall that desire is as gone as the sun. It is replaced by grinding fear, gnawing hunger, lack of heat or fresh drinking water.

They can't imagine the hope with which their day began.

Who will help these people, both here and abroad? Many people do; but it takes so many. Unitarian Universalists should be proud that a sister organization to the Unitarian Universalist Association is helping to fulfill those needs world-wide. "The UU Service Committee is an independent human-rights organization whose work is guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principles of Unitarian Universalism" (From *Stories of Hope*, GAYT booklet)

UUSC, through their Environmental Justice Program has brought hope to people in Africa whose rights to water have been limited, hope to people in the Mideast through the Civil Liberties Program that someday they can write and say openly what is on their minds without fear of recrimination. Right here in the US of A the UUSC's Economic Justice Program has helped immigrant workers become more versed in their rights as employees, sometimes something as simple as getting paid the wage they were promised.

Over the next few Sundays you will be hearing people's stories of hope around the world that have been made possible by UUSC through fundraising programs like Guest at Your Table.

When we pass out the boxes on January 11, be sure to take one. Put it on your dining table. When you sit down to eat, show your gratitude for food on the table, for heat in your house and for freedom from fear by dropping a few pennies in the box.

Talk about what Guest at Your Table means with your children. About what hope means to people and how they can help with just a few pennies a day to restore hope to people all over the world.

Kay H. Wilson, At-Large Director

Our next CIRCLE SUPPER will be January 17, 2009. Please put it on your calendar now. Members, potential members, and guests are all welcome to these small, informal and fun events held at various members' homes. **The last day to sign up will be Sunday, January 11.** For more information contact John Nobis at 756-4653 or jrandjo@hotmail.com.

Pledge Report

In spite of all the bad economic news our congregation said "Yes We Can" when it came to meeting our Pledge Goal.

With five Pledge Units still outstanding (these are the true UUsers who do not respond to arbitrary deadlines) we not only met our pledge goal but we beat it with a stick. You may recall that our goal was \$67,000. As of December 14 (the arbitrary deadline) our total was \$70,953. Forty-one pledgers pledged and thirty-four of those actually increased their pledge over the previous year. Pat yourselves on the back, light a candle, have a glass of wine or whatever it is that you do to celebrate.

Joe Ahlers, Treasurer

Albert & Gage at Waldo's!!

Waldo's Coffeehouse welcomes back singer/songwriter favorites Christine Albert & Chris Gage on Friday, January 23, 8-10 p.m., doors open at 7:30. Join us for a wonderful evening of country songs, French chansons, with a little honky-tonk piano thrown in. Refreshments and child care provided. A donation will be given to Planned Parenthood of Central Texas. Sign up to help set up or bring food. Go to www.albertandgage.com for more information on the artists.

Children's Choir Forming at UUFW

2009 brings a new group to the fellowship. Kris Cervantes and Jane Kittner are starting a children's choir to showcase the talents of our youngest singers. Stay tuned for more information and contact Kris or Jane to get on the email list.

New Choir Members Needed

Join us on Sundays at 10 am or come to a scheduled Friday practice, that's all you need to do to be able to hang out with this great group. The ability to read music is nice, but not required. Contact Jane Kittner for more information.

Jane Kittner, Waldo's Chair and Music Director

New Board President Boldly Predicts Tremendous Growth for UUFW in 2009!

Before addressing my bold prediction, let me stop and say thanks to our outgoing UUFW President, Brian Gates. Brian stepped into the role of Board President 20 months ago when our last President's work pulled her away from Waco. Thanks to his keen intellect (and Dwight Brown leadership training), as well as his gracious personality and gentle nature, he has done a great job of "herding the cats" on our board. Brian has a deep love for and a deep understanding of our unique liberal religious movement. He will continue to be a great asset for our fellowship in 2009 and beyond.

In our congregational self assessment, many members noted that we don't seem to be growing in numbers like we thought we would a few years ago. As a psychologist by trade, of course I know that if you want to predict future behavior of an individual or a group your best bet is to look at the past, particularly the recent past. That is why I am predicting tremendous growth for the UUFW in 2009. What do I mean? Everywhere I have looked in our fellowship in the last year, I have seen the kind of growth that matters most to me, i.e. countless acts of breathing life into our UU values by living them out with each other and with our neighbors. The examples of this growth are far too many to list in this short article but include the heartfelt sharing in the "Big Event," our new and thriving Reading Circle Covenant group, the mythology curriculum for our children, and our last Adult RE offering of Judaism for Gentiles. Think about just this December. We have shared our wealth with those in need through Cereal Sunday. Our Meals on Wheels team has shared love and kindness along with the meals they deliver. We have stood with our brothers and sisters in the GBLT Community in the local World AIDs Day ceremony. Our kids and adults have held a sleepover that was both fun and helped our kids reach deeper understanding of UU values. Our choir has inspired us with wonderful music. We have enjoyed each other's company at our Christmas Party. We have had a successful pledge drive. We have had great response to our "Committee Drive." Just today, we had a beautiful intergenerational service in which we connected our journey with countless others across time, religions and cultures. Just a few hours before I wrote this article, a group of UU carolers shared the love and joy of this season with those in local nursing homes.

I am looking forward to the growth that we will share together in 2009. I am particularly excited about the ongoing work to transform what we learned in the Big Event to a statement of Core Values and a UUFW Covenant. As the President of the Board, I look forward to the growth that will take place as we develop these statements and as especially the growth that will happen as we move them from paper into all that we do together.

Namaste,
Bruce Allen



Photo Courtesy of Terri Jo Ryan

The Carolers of UUFW banded together on Dec. 21, 2008 to spread some holiday cheer at two area nursing homes. Some 16 adults and half as many merry munchkins met in PT Barnum Hall to plan the songs they'd sing, then visited the residents of St. Catherine's nursing center at Providence and those of Woodland Springs on Dallas Street. The hearty carolers were greeted back at the fellowship after their melodious rounds by Kay Wilson and delicious snacks and beverages.

Treasurer's Report

We had a pretty good month in November. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$1500 but came in with a surplus of \$600. Receipts for the month were \$1200 over the budget and that makes the 11 month total about \$500 over the income budget. Expenses were \$1000 below the budget for the month and they are \$4900 below the budget for the 11 months.

So instead of having a \$4100 deficit as the budget showed we have a surplus of \$1300. We may just finish the year in the black (that's a good thing in accounting.)

Our bank balance has been helped by some folks paying their 2009 pledge early so our cash on hand is \$59,000.

Joe Ahlers, Treasurer

Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waco, Texas

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Put mailing label here



"Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."

— Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Signature Line for the New Year:

*I have not yet begun to
procrastinate!*



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

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

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.