

The COMMON

The United Nations: Now, More Than Ever



With 51 nations signing on, the United Nations came into being on October 24, 1945, in San Francisco. Now counting 193 national member states, the UN is simultaneously indispensable and maddeningly ineffective. Of course. The UN was designed to be hamstrung by the

big powers; it would not be possible otherwise. But if the UN has not prevented war, it has run refugee camps, supported children in need, backed women’s rights, been the overseer on climate change, recognized indigenous peoples, and more. Still indispensable.

CALENDAR

Pulpit

October 6
Rev. Charles Stephens

October 13
Sonia Turanski

October 20
UN Sunday
Kent Price
Rev. Charles Stephens

October 27
Rev. Charles Stephens

Events

October 10
Board meeting

October 19
Poverty workshop
Blue Hill

FROM THE BOARD

Members of the Board, the Transition Team and Charles met on Saturday, September 14, at a retreat led by a consultant from the Northern New England District of UUA. I think all present would agree this was a very positive session examining where we have been and where we want to go as a

DELACROIX DAVIS III, PRESIDENT

congregation.



By the first of October we will have the consultant’s notes summarizing what was discussed at the retreat to share with the congregation.

continues on page 7

THE OTHER PIANO

Gena Churchill
(with thanks to Fran Bos)

While everyone is familiar with the Steinway piano, presiding over the performance space in the Meeting House, the 5-foot Knabe grand piano in the Parish House boasts a history of its own. Built in 1937, the Knabe was *the* church piano for some 15 years before 2002, when the Steinway arrived. Displaced, but not at all forgotten, the Knabe is played weekly during choir rehearsals and provides a range of music at receptions, dinners, and special occasions.

Originally purchased by Castine's Hooke family, the Knabe was moved around 1970 by Kay Hooke to the family home on Water Street. The piano was donated to the congregation during the 1980s, and it has served us well.



Interesting notes:

Sylvia Larsson's mother passed away at an early age, leaving three young children--Sylvia, Lois, and Richard. Kay Hooke became their stepmother and raised all three, in addition to her own son, Roger.

In the mid 1970s, Joan and Laurent Torno moved to Castine. While her husband remodeled their new home, Joan kept up her piano practice at the Hookes, on the Knabe.

The Tornos moved to Castine after visiting here many years ago because they were friends of Fran Bos's parents in Illinois. The Tornos lived in St. Louis, where Laurent directed the St. Louis symphony.

Regarding her deep roots in Castine, Fran writes, "We were able to come here most every summer as my mother insisted that my father--a UU minister--only serve a church that was closed during the summer! Mother's father was born here."

SING, SING, SING!

Excerpted from Stacy Horn, Time Magazine online
August 16, 2013

When you sing, musical vibrations move through you, altering your physical and emotional landscape. Group singing, for those who have done it, is the most exhilarating and transformative of all. It takes something incredibly intimate, a sound that begins inside you, shares it with a roomful of people and it comes back as something even more thrilling: harmony. So it's not surprising that group singing is on the rise. According to *Chorus America*, 32.5 million adults sing in choirs, up by almost 10 million over the past six years.

As the popularity of group singing grows, science has been hard at work trying to explain why it has such a calming yet energizing effect on people. What researchers are beginning to discover is that singing is like an infusion of the perfect tranquilizer, the kind that both soothes your nerves and elevates your spirits.

Get high with a little help from your friends

Yes, you too can reap the benefits of group singing, right here in your church community. Our choir is small in numbers, but we blend well and we do indeed experience transformation of a sort. Our first rehearsal of the fall & winter season is on Thursday, October 3, at 4:30 pm, in the Parish House, and most every Thursday thereafter until summer break.
NO AUDITIONS!

We are: Leslie Fairbank, Anne Price, Del Thomas, Stan Bourne, WG Sayre, Charles Stephens, and Kent Price.
We would be delighted to have you join us!



CHARLES' COGITATIONS



Rev. Charles J. Stephens

Interim Ministers are encouraged to learn as much as they can about the congregation they come to serve. The best way I know of learning about a congregation is to ask a lot of questions and to listen without assuming I know the answers. This attitude is captured in what is called "Socratic Irony." Socrates practiced the art of asking questions from the position of not knowing. From such a position he was able to expose the errant beliefs of others.

For me, Socrates was, of course, the king of questioning. Gregory Vlastos, Socrates scholar and professor of philosophy at Princeton, described Socrates' method of inquiry as "among the greatest achievements of humanity." And according to Christopher Phillips, author of *The Six Questions of Socrates* and *Socrates Café Dialogues*, Socrates "models for us *philosophy practiced* - philosophy as deed, as way of living, as something that any of us can do."

What has come to be called the "Socratic Method" is an *open system* of philosophical inquiry that allows one to ask questions from many different vantage points to clarify a given concept. As noted, I have been asking lots of questions during the time I have been here in Castine and will continue doing so to gather more

information to help discern together both the identity and the mission of UUCC.

Christopher Phillips bases the Socratic Method he uses in *Socrates Café Dialogues* on his confidence in the power of open honest questioning within the context of the human community. He trusts that we inherently know that which we need to know and understand within that community. There are many important questions that we encounter and ponder. I agree, we can reach ethical clarity by the means of open honest questioning.

Starting this month, I will introduce a sermon series on the Six Questions of Socrates. On one Sunday a month, I will focus on one of Socrates questions. The first sermon will focus on what virtue is, what it means to practice virtue, and why this or that is so.



Schedule for October

Sunday, October 6 "What is Virtue?"
Our Unitarian Universalist openness to dialogue and questioning aids us in helping to clarify what virtue is for us and what it means to practice virtue in our time.

Sunday, October 13 Rev. Stephens off;
Sonia Turanski will be our guest.

Sunday, October 20 United Nations Sunday
Kent Price and Rev. Stephens will collaborate

Sunday, October 27 Rev. Stephens

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Kay Hansen
Religious Educator

During September, our class began an exploration of Islam and some of the traditions of the Muslim culture. We have learned that the Islamic religion has its beginnings with Abraham---the same Abraham of Judaism and Christianity.

We have learned that Muslims had a teacher named Muhammad, who was enlightened by Allah, in much the same way that Jesus was chosen to spread the word of God in the Christian religion. We have found that their book of "the words of Allah," called the *Qur'an*, is written in Arabic. We tried writing in Arabic and found it hard. Their writing can be very fancy and can be written over buildings and books.



During October, we will learn about the Islamic month of Ramadan, which is celebrated at a different time each year but always in the ninth month of the Muslim calendar; this past year it was celebrated in August. It is a very important holy time because many years ago, during the month of Ramadan, Muhammad received the words of Allah. During this month, Muslims fast, pray, read the Qur'an, ask forgiveness and give to a charity, much like the Jewish people during Rosh Hashanah. At the end of the month, the fast is broken, and there is a three-day celebration called Eid al-Fitr.



In our explorations, we are finding differences and similarities in the religions we have studied. We also find that the people are alike in many ways, with different traditions and beliefs. We are learning about this to better understand others and the ways people make meaning out of their lives.

"There will be peace on earth when there is peace among the world religions." (Hans Kung)

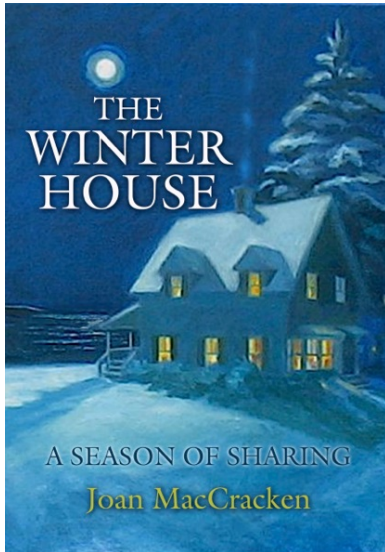
To begin our classes Sunday mornings, we have been reading an Islamic version of what we know as the Golden Rule:

"Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself."

The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith

THE WINTER HOUSE

Recently retired pediatrician and friend of the congregation Joan MacCracken has written a novel that is creating a lively buzz in local media. *The Winter House*, emotionally affecting as well as a “good read,” might well serve as a vital guide to women “of a certain age.” An author’s synopsis follows.



“...heartwarming, carefully crafted...proves...that successful aging should be a team sport.”

Dr. Erik Steele

The Winter House

What does an older woman do when she finds herself alone in her later years? Will she live by herself for the rest of her life? Will she look for another husband or partner, or move in with her children?

Now alone after the sudden death of her husband, Elizabeth Sloan decides to fulfill her dream of living year round in a small, coastal town in Maine. After considering the long dark, winter nights and the inefficiency of heating her large home for just one person, she hatches a plan: she will invite three other older women to move in with her for the winter.

The Winter House A Season of Sharing transports the reader into the living quarters where four new housemates grow in friendship, sharing intimate and

sometimes difficult, conversations — as only women can. Elizabeth learns how a community can come together to support and appreciate one another.

Joan will discuss her book at the Witherle library at 12:30 pm on Monday, September 30--no reservations needed.

Joan and her husband, Dr. Bob Holmberg, live in Brooksville, where she edits and produces the community’s quarterly newsletter, *The Brooksville Breeze*. As of now, *The Winter House* may be purchased at BookStacks in Bucksport ,the Northern Bay Market in Penobscot, and through the website, www.tiffinpressofmaine.com

* * * * *

On Autumn

Autumn is a second spring
when every leaf is a flower.

Albert Camus

Jen McKenney lauded

On August 18, at its annual meeting, the Castine Golf Club awarded to Jen McKenney, our religious education aide, the Caldys Award.

The Award reads,

Presented to Jennifer P. McKenney by the Hatch Community Fund:

You exemplify the qualities we remember in Caldys Whitridge--

Love of sports,
Striving always to do better,
Finding fun and fulfillment in winning or losing.

Warmest congratulations, Jen!

MEET THE PHILIPPINES

Lee Boeke Burke

UU Partner Church Council

For an in-depth introduction to the people, programs and hopes of the UU Church of the Philippines, you need to visit there. It will be a joyful feast for your mind and your heart.

The UU Partner Church Council (UUPCC) invites travelers to join our March trip in one, two or all three of the segments we offer; see boldface, below. You will need to pay for your travel to and from Manila, but all of your flights and ground transportation once you arrive in the country, will be paid for by the trip, as will all of your meals, accommodations, entertainment, travel food and various other expenses. You will need to pay for alcoholic beverages, gifts, personal expenses, airport transfers as you leave the country, and extra in-country expenses before/after specified tour dates. There also is a \$150 charge to compensate the UU Church of the Philippines (UUCP) and the UUPCC for their efforts in arranging this trip. The memories and friendships you make come at no charge!

The trip coordinators are Rebecca Sienes in the Philippines and Lee Boeke Burke in the States. We plan to make your visit the most rewarding it can be and to help you achieve your personal/congregational goals.

Pre-trip Manila March 7 -10, 2014...\$460 (a single supplement of \$90 if desired)

Enjoy the warm hospitality and lively culture of Manila. Visit one of the newest congregations of UUs in the Philippines. Learn about the history of this amazing country that has seen so much – from the Spanish who colonized it to the Japanese who invaded during WW II and the Americans who rebuilt the city after the war. You will explore the unique heritage and architecture of Manila and get to know the energetic, young UU presence in Manila as well as a congregation in the poor area of metro-Manila for an experience you won't soon forget.

March 10 – 17, 2014...\$870 (a single supplement of \$120 if desired)

Travel to Negros Island, from Manila to the heartland of Unitarian Universalism in the Philippines. Here you will meet the courageous UUs who are working hard to grow faith and hope in their communities. Enjoy the tropical warmth of this beautiful country and the amazing hospitality of your hosts. We will visit with many congregations—some who need partners—and also enjoy the tropical environment of these lovely islands. During the road trip you will travel in air-conditioned vans driven by expert drivers and stay in nice hotels. Some of the oldest coral reefs in the world lie just off the shore. Dumaguete, home of the headquarters of the UUCP, is a college town known as the friendliest city in the Philippines. Our hosts from UUCP welcome us with open arms and smiling faces. The farewell ceremony is always very touching. If you have a partner church in the Philippines, sponsor a student, are considering partnership, or would just like to know more about the Unitarian Universalist faith in this culture, join us for this memorable pilgrimage.



Post-trip March 18 – 21, 2014 (can be extended as desired... expenses to be arranged with the UUCP)

Extend your visit with a few days in your partner village or in exploring the beauty of the Islands, home to some of the world's most beautiful beaches and premier dive sites. If you would like to consider a trip extension, please let us know and we'll see what we can arrange.

Interested? In Castine, talk to Elaine Gerard-Climo, who has been on our pilgrimage and who may be able to recommend UUCP financial help. If you have any questions, please contact me, Lee Boeke Burke, at leeboekeburke@gmail.com or [920 915 1667](tel:9209151667). We will support you every step of the way. Sign-up deadline is January 3, 2014..

THE SCOURGE OF POVERTY

Gil Tenney

Poverty is not someone else's problem. I personally have had many lengthy conversations with someone who lives within a 10-minute drive of Castine who struggles to feed a disabled spouse and five children.

I hear of too many local families forced to live in their car, too many children in area schools who cannot focus on their school work because their minds are on lunch.

Last year, Blue Hill Memorial Hospital paid some \$750,000 for charity care--a lot for such a small hospital. The number of families being served at area food pantries is growing at a disturbing rate.

Whether your passion is social justice, support for families in need, economic development, our school system, or enabling every child to be ready to learn and succeed when starting school, please consider joining us on October 19 for an extraordinary workshop.

The workshop leader, Dr. Donna Beegle, was born into a family of generational poverty. At 25, she was supporting two children, single, no high school diploma, homeless, and hungry. A mentoring program encouraged her to get a GED. She now has her EDD.

I can attest to the power of her workshop. Donna's story of breaking out of poverty, coupled with her own research, needs to be shared. The stresses of poverty can lead to some of the most toxic experiences I can imagine for young children. I am more convinced than ever before that the cultural changes needed must include passionate and engaged communities.

Because church networks can play a huge role in reaching out to families dealing with poverty, I hope we can have a strong UUCC showing at the October 19 workshop: Blue Hill Consolidated School, 60 High Street; registration begins at 8 am

If you already have registered to attend, thank you. If not, I urge you to do so since space is filling up. Simply go to - <http://healthypeninsula.org/>.



From the Board, cont. from pg 1

Building on the work of the retreat, the Transition Team will meet with Charles and me early in October to explore the next steps we want to take regarding the ministerial transition.

I am pleased to report that at its September meeting the Board unanimously agreed with the recommendation of the Nominating Committee that Leslie Fairbank serve as the Alternate Member of the Governing Board. With this action the Board is once again functioning with a full complement of members.

In preparation for the annual meeting to be held in November, our new Treasurer, Diana Bernard, is gathering information and budget requests. Committee chairs will be asked specifically for their input. If other members of the congregation are interested in projects that could have a budgetary impact, they are encouraged to contact Diana with explanations and proposals. Members and friends should know that the Board has agreed to a recommendation from the Social Justice Committee to change the Pulliam Awards to grants and to increase the amount budgeted from one-tenth of one percent to one-quarter of one percent of the endowment. Thus, the draft budget to be voted on by the congregation will include \$15,000 for this purpose.

September saw many different activities in the life of the congregation. In addition to Sunday services we had the second well-attended Trio Cleonice concert, the Partner Church Committee's Lasagna Dinner, the Interim Ministry Retreat, two showings of the excellent documentary "A Place at the Table," and the Deborah Pulliam Tribute. Had the weather cooperated we could have added the CROP walk. Let's build on the energy demonstrated at these events as we move into autumn!

Del Davis, President

ETHICAL EATING: FOOD FOR THOUGHT

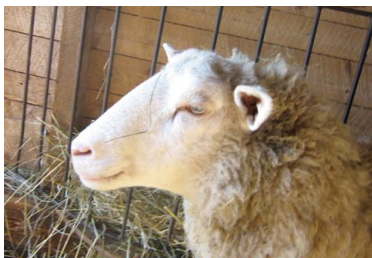
This begins a 5-part series compiled and written by the Rev. Gary Kowalski, long-time minister at the UU Church in Burlington VT, now in interim ministry. He is a past president of the UU Animal Ministry.

Rev. Kowalski provided references for each of the assertions below, but I have omitted them for reasons of space and readability. I will be happy to supply one or all on request.

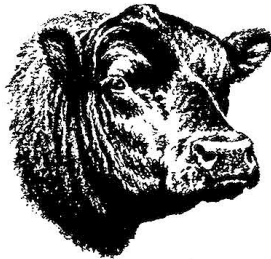
Ed.

CLIMATE CHANGE

With rising temperatures, rising sea levels, melting ice caps and glaciers, and shifting ocean currents and weather patterns, climate change is the most serious challenge facing the human race. The livestock sector is a major player, responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions measured in CO2 equivalent. This is a higher share than transport.



The life cycle and supply chain of domesticated animals raised for food have been vastly underestimated as a source of greenhouse gases and in fact account for at least half of all human-caused GHGs.



A kilogram of beef is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions and other pollution than driving for 3 hours while leaving all the lights on back home.

The added greenhouse gas emissions associated with the difference between a red-meat diet and a plant-based one is comparable to the difference between a Toyota Camry and a SUV--2.52 tons CO2 per person per year.

Dietary shift can be a more effective means of lowering an average household's food-related climate footprint than "buying local." Shifting less than one day per week's worth of calories from red meat and dairy products to chicken, fish, eggs, or a vegetable-based diet achieves more greenhouse gas reduction than buying all locally-sourced food.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Del Davis, President
Gil Tenney, Vice President
Diana Bernard, Treasurer
Anne Romans, Clerk
WG Sayre
Nancy Guy
Tom Mason
Leslie Fairbank, Alternate

The Governing Board meets in the Parish House at 8:30 am on the second Thursday of each month. Observers always welcome.

THE COMMON

The Common is published monthly and distributed in both electronic and photocopy forms. All members and friends are invited to submit items for consideration. Send submissions or comments to editor Kent Price at kapricorn75@gmail.com. Deadline is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

CONTACT US

The Rev. Charles J. Stephens
minister@uucastine.org
326-9083 (Meeting House)
609-947-5564 (home)

Del Davis, President
chadbourne.davis@roadrunner.com
326-0828

Kay Hansen, Rel. Education
hansen85@myfairpoint.net
667-9421

Becky St. John, Office Administrator
office@uucastine.org