

The COMMON

We Shall Overcome...



PHOTO SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

August 28, 1963: the March on Washington for Jobs & Freedom. *I have a dream*, a palpable turning point in the struggle for civil rights, for human rights. One did not have to be a historian to realize that something momentous was happening. Do you

remember where you were on that day, 50 years ago? I do.

Fortuitously, we did have a historian on the scene. Lynn Parsons was there and on pages 5 and 6 he shares his impressions. Still so far to go... editor

Calendar

Pulpit

September 1
Rev. Charles J. Stephens

September 8
Rev. Albert Boyce

September 15
Rev. Charles J. Stephens

September 22
Rev. Charles J. Stephens

September 29
Rev. Charles J. Stephens

Events

Trio Cleonice, Sept. 3

Filipino Supper, Sept. 6

Board meeting, Sept.12

Celebrating Deborah
Sept 20

FROM THE BOARD DELACROIX DAVIS III, PRESIDENT

By the time this newsletter is available, we hope the scaffolding around the Meeting House will be gone and the current work on the church finished. Unfortunately, both the cost and time estimates have been greatly exceeded. Fortunately, though, serious structural problems have been identified and



addressed. With normal maintenance, the repaired belfry should be in good shape for another 100+ years. According to the crew of Preservation Timber and Framing, without the recent work the belfry probably *continues on p. 2*

ORGAN ORIGIN

Gena Churchill



A reed organ of the time

In 1848 18-year old Noah Brooks steamed from Boston to Castine for summer vacation. Lucky for us snoopers from the future, he kept a diary, now housed in the Castine Historical Society.

It seems that Noah's social circle included listening to a Miss Maria Hooke play the organ at the Meeting House. The connection is not clear, as all references in the diary to a girl-friend are to a set of initials that are not MH.

The Historical Society referred me to the Wilson Museum, which just so happens to have a working reed organ in the basement--the first type of organ I ever played. Guess who would pay attention from his portrait on the wall should the organ be played once again? None other than Noah Brooks himself, as an older man, complete with mutton-chop whiskers.

All I did was to pursue a question: what is the earliest reference to an organ in the Meeting House? 1848 is sure, but the true date almost certainly is earlier. And who became Mrs. Brooks?

from the Board, from p. 1

...probably would not have lasted five more years without serious damage—or possibly even collapse.

Once again we are indebted to Deborah Pulliam for her generous spirit and dedication to Castine. Those who knew her best say that she would want to do what is needed to keep the Meeting House in good shape—and the congregation vibrant.

It is with regret that I inform you that Frederick Kaiser has resigned from the Governing Board and no longer serves as Treasurer. I am pleased to say, though, that Diana Bernard, who had been our alternate Board member, is now a full member of the Board and has agreed to serve as Treasurer.

During his sermon on August 11th, Charles Stephens spoke about the importance of the history of the church, both individually and collectively. Members and friends of the congregation were encouraged to recall important events in their lives relating to the church and record them on the long sheets of paper set up in the Parish House during coffee hour. The historical time line sheets will be set up during future coffee hours so there will be ample time for everyone to make a contribution. The time line will then help us understand better where we have been and where we want to go as a congregation. It may also help us to see that there is not one correct interpretation and that an event some people regarded as a minus was viewed as a plus by others.

We continue to struggle in getting people to serve as ushers each Sunday. If you have not done so yet, please consider signing up on the sheet on the bulletin board next to the copier. And if you have already ushered this year, please sign up and do it again! It doesn't take much time or effort and is a very necessary part of our services. Think of it as part of the way you perform your ministry for the church, a small contribution to help make the operation of the church run smoothly.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Kay Hansen
Religious Educator

Our “Sacred Places” project, begun in July, continued through August, with much consideration and cooperation among the children. Some finishing touches may be added in September. Regardless, the goal has been to involve our children in a cooperative effort--keeping in mind the teachings of Jesus--and to introduce them to the variety of world religions we will be exploring during 2014.

For two years, we have focused on Jewish and Christian teachings, using the Bible to introduce the children to stories that are part of American culture. This year we will expand our view to include Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and earth-centered traditions.

I will be using a variety of resources, including a curriculum that introduces world religions through stories and allows children to explore the differences and similarities in their own lives. Our books will illustrate concepts such as the value of wisdom and loyalty in Hinduism, the importance of family in Islam, and the practice of compassion for all living beings in Buddhism.

In our UU faith, we identify “wisdom from the world’s religions” as a source of our living tradition. In sharing stories from different faiths, we help our children begin a journey of understanding, tolerance, and celebration for the diversity of human expressions of faith.

We will begin our study on September 8 with the religion of Muslims: Islam. In November we will move into earth-centered religions and, after the first of the year, we will take up Buddhism and Hinduism.

For September and October, we would appreciate your sharing any Arab decor you may have, including pictures.

Coming Events

Trio Cleonice returns for two concerts-- Thursday, August 29 and Tuesday, September 3. These young musicians are fantastic! Mozart, Wernick, & Shostakovich on August 29 and all Beethoven on September 3. Do yourself a favor and catch at least one of these concerts. \$10 donation.



On Friday, September 6, your Partner Church Committee hopes to see you at the latest in its series of fundraising suppers to benefit the children of our Partner Church in Aquino, the Philippines. It’s Lasagna this time, at a special reduced rate--\$12 for adults, \$7 for children 5 to 15, no charge for kids under 5, and a maximum of \$40 for a family, regardless of ages and numbers. Do well by doing good. Come sup with us! September 6, 5 pm in the Parish House. Reserve now, as seating will be limited. Call Elaine Gerard-Climo at 326-0992 or Becky St. John at the Parish House office, 326-9083.



On Friday, September 20, from 5 pm to 7 pm, you are invited to help Celebrate the Life & Legacy of Deborah Pulliam. Hosted by the Castine Historical Society, Witherle Memorial Library, the Maine Community Foundation, and this congregation, the event will be held in our Meeting House. Please RSVP by September 16 to Amy Morley at 877-700-6800 (toll free) or at events@mainecf.org.

CHARLES' COGITATIONS



As I write this, I am participating in a training program that is exploring the many facets of Interim Ministry. There are thirty of us Unitarian Universalist ministers here in Minneapolis--a fascinating group of colleagues from around the country, focused on serving congregations during the transition time between settled ministries. We are deep into learning all we can about the specialty of Interim, also called Transitional, Ministry. Having been a parish minister for many years, this training is providing me a fascinating way to look at ministry through the lenses of transition.

One of the comments that I find enlightening is from one of our readings, "Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change," by William Bridges. He writes that "... psychological transition depends on letting go of the old reality and the old identity you had before the change took place. Organizations overlook that letting-go process completely, however, and do nothing about the feelings of loss that it generates. And in overlooking those effects, they nearly guarantee that the transition will be mismanaged and that, as a result, the change will go badly. Unmanaged transition makes change unmanageable."

What he says seems obvious, but there have been times when in my desire to move forward that I have forgotten to stop and reflect before I started on a new path or direction. This is especially the case when we seem to be starting something we are familiar

with. Years ago I learned Tai Chi from a really good teacher. Then I moved to another area and had to find a new teacher. It didn't seem like a big deal to me that my new teacher happened to teach a different style of Tai Chi. I soon learned that before I could learn this new way of doing Tai Chi I had to leave behind and actually unlearn the way I had been doing it and it took both time and hard work. The moral of the story: before UUCC can move forward with a new settled minister, there will be things that you will need to let go of, which includes many different emotions. Again, this seems obvious and simple, but one thing I have learned about life is that what seems simple may not always be easy.

...how we deal with endings influences our beginnings.

The first part of any change is the ending of something else. Part of an ending is that we have feelings with which we may not always be comfortable. Something I believe is that how we deal with endings influences our beginnings. One of the major tasks during my time with you the next two years is to help you explore and navigate the practical stages of the changes taking place at UUCC. Even as every congregation follows a different path during change, every person within a congregation can feel differently during the transition time. In fact, we Unitarian Universalists take pride in the fact that we as individuals tend to do things differently. That is why I will be trying to talk with our Members and friends to discover your experiences, your thoughts, and your feelings about the past, present and future of your congregation. I will be contacting you to do this, but I welcome your calls if there are specific times this fall that will work best for you.

Warmly,
Charles

MEMORIES OF WASHINGTON

AUGUST 28, 1963

Lynn Parsons

At the time, I was a twenty-six-year-old graduate student in History at the Johns Hopkins University in nearby Baltimore. Some fellow students and I had driven over to Washington early in the day, not knowing fully what to expect, but nonetheless eager to be there.

We arrived to find thousands of D.C. policemen deployed to deal with any contingency. There were more than a few who feared that the March would get out of hand, that white supremacists would tangle with black militants, that Washington's shops and restaurants would be trashed, and the March would backfire. President John F. Kennedy was one of them. Earlier in the year he had tried unsuccessfully to talk Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the other leaders out of the March. Now, he was watching carefully from the White House.

The March's leadership was not unaware of the possibility of violence. The program we were handed – I still have a copy – listed the speakers and participants, but it also contained a plea to make the March “a disciplined and purposeful demonstration.” We were urged, regardless of race or ideology “to resist provocations to disorder and to violence.” We were warned that “evil persons are determined to smear this March and to discredit the cause of equality by deliberate efforts to stir disorder.” None of this was to occur.

Washington can be brutally hot in late August, but that day it was mild and pleasant, or so I recall. We gathered at the Washington Monument and marched down Constitution Avenue, around the reflecting pool, to where a quarter of a million of us gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial.



As I look at the program today, a single folded sheet of paper only faintly yellowed with age, I am struck still by the galaxy of progressive leaders, young and old, who were assembled there. There was the seventy-four-year-old A. Philip Randolph, formerly president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, whose barrel-organ voice needed no amplification. There was the twenty-three-year-old John Lewis, Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, now a Congressman from Georgia and almost as old today as Randolph was then.

Women were there, starting with the great Marian Anderson, who led us in singing the national anthem from the very spot where, a quarter of a century earlier she had also sung when the Daughters of the American Revolution had denied her the use of Constitution Hall. The gospel-singer Mahalia Jackson was there too, as well as Myrlie Evers, whose husband Medgar had been shot down two months before. Dr. King was only one of several speakers that included not only John Lewis, but Walter Reuther, President of the United Auto Workers, Whitney Young, Jr., of the National Urban League, and Catholic, Protestant and Jewish leaders. Dr. King was listed as the last speaker on the program.

continues on page 5

MARCH MEMORIES, FROM PAGE 4

Curiously, what lingers most in my mind was not the famous “I have a dream” peroration, which now has become almost a cliché, but rather King’s lesser-known but more radical and provocative opening words. We had come to the nation’s capital, he said, to cash a symbolic check, made out by the Founders of the Republic.

it was obvious that America had defaulted on the obligation to its black citizens.

It was a promise that all citizens would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” But it was obvious that America had defaulted on the obligation to its black citizens. Instead of honoring the obligation, the check had come back marked “insufficient funds.”



In his book, *Lend Me Your Ears*, a compendium of great historic speeches, the late William Safire noted how King had borrowed from Shakespeare, the Old Testament and earlier speeches by Robert Ingersoll and Franklin Roosevelt. In Safire’s opinion – and he was no flaming liberal – King had “ennobled” the Civil Rights movement. Putting him at the very end of the list of speakers was a stroke of genius.

The concluding cadence of his delivery, his rhythmic recitation of both biblical and patriotic themes known to every American, will last in my memory forever, as well as the event itself.

Now, half a century later, only two of the speakers of that day are still with us – John Lewis and Myrlie Evers. Horrible things lay ahead for Dr. King, President Kennedy, four little girls in Birmingham killed in their church only a few weeks later, and all the other martyrs to the cause of racial justice, including Unitarian Universalists Viola Liuzzo and Rev. James Reeb. King’s dream has yet to be fulfilled; funds still are insufficient. Even today, people still can scream racial epithets at their own president and deface the statues of black sports heroes.

Yet the very fact of an African-American president speaking at the Lincoln Memorial on the 50th anniversary of an event that took place when he was barely two years old should remind us of something Dr. King said on an earlier occasion: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Letter from a Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

I think I should give the reason for my being in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the argument of “outsiders coming in.”

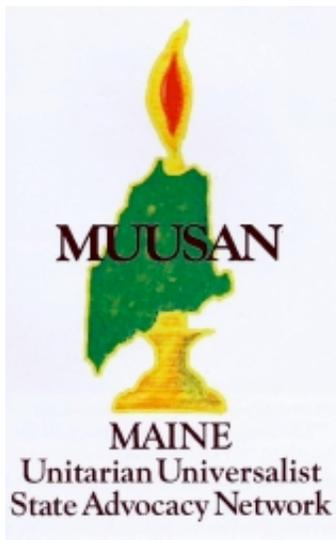
I am in Birmingham because injustice is here ...I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial “outside agitator” idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider ...

MUUSAN

State Advocacy Networks at General Assembly

Trudy Ferland,
Co-Chair, MUUSAN
First Universalist, Pittsfield

Maine was represented among the 15 states with advocacy networks at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Louisville, in June. Leaders from established networks generously spent time mentoring people from newer organizations.



As its co-chair, I was honored to represent the recently organized Maine UU State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) at eight of the nine informal coaching sessions offered. Topics included Getting Started, Engaging Local Congregations, Collaborating, Grant Writing, Social Networking, Talking with Legislators, and Strategies for Field Development.

Each session offered strategies and practical advice, as well as discussion on the inspiration and philosophy behind our reason to organize and act.

The one message every lesson included was that State Advocacy Networks (SANs) are all about relationship building.

A few gems:

- Collaborate with other groups only on specific issues so we don't become an "arm" of another organization.
- Empower congregations to be courageous voices for justice. Spend time developing both relationships and infrastructure.
- Emphasize the importance of training and communication.
- Cultivate justice, deepen faith, and grow leaders.
- Stand at the intersection of political urgency and congregations. Our job is to thoughtfully connect with UU theology while providing education, action, and reflection.

Charlotte Lehmann and I joined other groups on stage Saturday morning for the premiere of a video about UU State Networks, *What's Your State of Justice?* Watch it here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_mEpK5lNyo. [Charles Stephens calls this video "powerful." ed.]

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Del Davis, President
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Diana Bernard, Treasurer
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Nancy Guy
Tom Mason

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

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