

The COMMON

Harvesting the wind

Slaking the desert's thirst



Every day, 1,400 children under the age of five die from water-based diseases. Some 770 million people do not have access to water that is safe to drink. On a planet distinctive for

its abundance of water, Earth is water-scarce.

What to do? Why this intriguing picture and the depressing news, and what are they doing in The Common? Please turn to page 5.

calendar

Pulpit

May 4

Dr. Roger Bowen

May 11

Rev. Charles Stephens

May 18

Rev. Margaret Beckman

May 25

Rev. Charles Stephens

Events

May 4

Congregational meeting

May 18

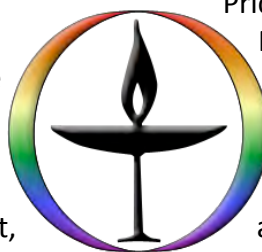
Pot Luck Luncheon

FROM THE BOARD

On May 4, an important congregational meeting will follow the Sunday service. Three issues will be decided. First will be an up or down vote on the slate of seven congregation members selected to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee: Brooke Tenney, Emma Sweet, Elaine Gerard-Climo, Peter Fairbank, Anne

DELACROIX DAVIS III, PRESIDENT

Price, Deborah Neve, and Anne Parsons. They represent well the congregation's ages, experiences, and viewpoints, and I am confident they will do exemplary work in selecting the best person available as our clerical leader for the future. *Continues on p 2*



BOARD, FROM P 1

We have entrusted them with a major undertaking and we are thankful they each have agreed to accept the task.



Del Davis, President

Next will be a vote to amend article VIII of the UUCC bylaws to require *90 percent*, in lieu of the current 80 percent, of those present and voting to call a settled minister. This change is strongly recommended by our Ministerial Settlement Representative and is in accordance with UUA guidelines.

Finally, a vote will be taken on what to do with the “Have We Not All One Father” ribband. The Board recommended earlier that the banner be displayed in the Parish House, with appropriate signage. A decision on the issue was deferred during an earlier congregational meeting pending preparation and review of the wording to accompany the ribband. At its April meeting the board recommended the following language be placed near the banner in a large, easy-to-read font:

*Have we not all one father?
hath not one God created us? why do we
deal treacherously every man against his
brother, by profaning the covenant of our
fathers? Malachi 2:10 (King James Version).*

The opening words, “**Have we not all one father?**” reflect the Universalist

belief in the commonality of humankind, and were the inspiration for the wooden “ribband” placed above the pulpit of the Unitarian Meeting House, circa 1840, where it hung for over a century and a half. Sensitivity to cultural changes, and the recognition that the creator could be male, female, or genderless prompted the Unitarian Universalist Congregation to remove the ribband in 2005. We recognize the historical significance of the ribband by placing it here in the Parish House as an important reminder of our past and the continuing evolution of our faith.

On other matters, we have had further communication with the student group at the Maine Maritime Academy about our campus ministry effort. Originally we had agreed to try to meet once in April before the end of the academic year. Upon reflection, however, we both think that with so many students busy preparing for finals, getting ready for the MMA summer cruise or finding summer jobs, that it makes more sense to wait until September.



I am pleased to announce that our lay delegates to the UUA General Assembly in Providence, Rhode Island in June will be Kent Price and Ruby Nash. Kent brings great experience from the many UU activities in which he has been active for years and Ruby brings youth, energy and a desire to experience and learn about all things related to Unitarian Universalism. Kent, Ruby and the Rev. Charles Stephens.

continues on p 4

CHARLES' COGITATION



Members and Friends of UUCC ought to know that there are a number of organizations and even more people who are grateful that the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Castine exists and is so generous.

As your minister, I regularly see thank-you cards and letters from such organizations as the Tree of Life Food Pantry and Bucksport Community Concerns Food Pantry. I also talk with people who call our congregation asking for help, from the Castine Special Assistance Fuel Fund or from the Minister's Discretionary Fund. People who call usually start out apologetically because they need assistance. They are heartened to hear that these funds are for people like them.

There have been a number of special Sunday offerings taken for unexpected and often tragic needs. And there also are the Social Justice "Deborah Pulliam Awards" given this past year to such organizations as Sustainable Harvest International, At Home Down East, The Otter House, the Ellsworth Free Medical Clinic, The Philippines Women's Dormitory and the Free The Kids Orphanage in Haiti. Just think about how much positive impact these awards have meant to those institutions and the people they have helped. And the Social Justice Committee has plans to expand the scope and the impact of the "Deborah Pulliam Awards" this year.

The reason UUCC is doing so much justice work is because we affirm and promote the Unitarian Universalist principles:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Being able to help people in the name of UUCC is a one of the most gratifying roles I have as your minister. We cannot all give in the same way nor are we all inclined to help in identical ways. But we are all called to live by our principles and that is one reason we are known as a faith community of deeds rather than creeds.

With Love and Warmth,
Charles

May 4: Dr. Roger Bowen, former President, SUNY New Paltz

May 11: Charles: "The Gift of Nurturing," sermon on Mother's Day. I find myself reflecting on my parents and their lives more now than when I was younger. We as both children and adults find nurturing in a variety of places and ways. Some people seem natural at nurturing others. Not all nurturing people become mothers or fathers. But we all rejoice in the gifts of nurturing we have known.

May 18: Rev. Margaret Beckman, minister at UU Pittsfield

Charles Stephens begins a week of vacation

May 25: Charles: "Hospitality and Mental Illness"

I dedicate at least one Sunday a year to Mental Illness/Mental Health because it matters how we individually, as a congregation and as a society respond to people who suffer from mental illness. Rosalynn Carter observed, "People with mental problems are our neighbors. They are members of our congregations, members of our families; they are everywhere in this country."

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Kay Hansen, Religious Educator

Board, continued from p 2

As I write, there is still snow on the ground, but the crocuses have burst forth in protest and we look forward to a season of new beginnings and growth, lots of green, and the colors of May flowers!

This year we have explored the religious beliefs and rituals and the culture of the people of Islam and several earth-centered traditions, including American Natives: the Hopi, Wampanoag and the Passamaquoddy. In addition, we have explored native religions of Africa, finding traditions and rituals similar to that of American Natives. The plan this year was to also explore Hinduism and Buddhism, but we have run out of time with only a month left in the program year. We look forward to having them as part of the 2014-15 religious education program.



May will be a busy month in which we will wrap up our exploration of religions for this year by finishing any projects and activities, and reviewing and summarizing what we have learned. We will also be working on projects for Mother's Day and graduation, and we will prepare for our traditional Unitarian Universalist celebration of Flower Communion on Sunday, June 1.

"For now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in the land."

Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, Verses 11-12



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
PARTNER CHURCH COUNCIL

In addition, Kent will receive a Stewardship Award from the UU Partner Church Council during a special luncheon at GA. Our congregation will be well represented by Kent, Ruby, and the Rev. Charles Stephens.

At the April 17 Board meeting we had further discussion of adding a level to the Parish House. A preliminary estimate from Steve Shea totaling more than \$1 million is now in hand. Before proceeding any further, the Board felt it prudent to explore the possibility and cost of adding a second story on top of the Parish House in lieu of digging a second level below. While this may delay any decision, it was felt more information was needed at this time. The next step will be to develop preliminary architectural designs to present to a working group of the Castine Historical Preservation Commission.

I end with great news. Two new people have signed the book! No, make that Persons, as in Pam and Phil. (pronounced "Piersons") They have been members of UU churches in Maryland and Maine and are deeply committed to UU principles. And as an added bonus, both Pam and Phil will be adding their voices to the choir. Please extend them a hearty welcome.





In *Dear Emily*, by E.H. Gerard, fourth-grader Billy sneaks letters to Emily Dickinson from his classmates into a secret time machine. The “Silver Cloud with the emerald eye” floats into the poet’s home filled with letters and chocolate chip cookies from the students. Happy to communicate, Dickinson writes back to each child, answering questions on poetry and life in the 19th century, and she even sends her famous black cake.

E.H. Gerard is the *nom de plume* of none other than our own Elaine Gerard-Climo. She discovered Emily Dickinson while studying for her B.A. at Goddard College and admired her originality, her independent nature, and the “voice” in her letters. To know her target audience, Elaine interacted with fourth through sixth grade teachers and students. Teachers have expressed great enthusiasm for *Dear Emily* and the way it is written in the form of letters between the students and Dickinson.

Parents and teachers will find *Dear Emily* a simple and engaging way to introduce children to the famous poet. “I love the power of letters as a meeting of minds and experiences,” says Scott Springer, a teacher at The Bay School in Blue Hill.

Elaine has been an editor for a hospital newsletter and a freelance journalist for newspapers in Maine and Massachusetts. She works as a certified legal nurse consultant at a Bangor law firm.

Books are available from www.ehgerard.com, Maine Authors Publishing, and Amazon.



As you may have noted in Del Davis’ column, Pamela and Philip Person have signed our membership book. As friends both within UUism and without, it’s a personal as well as a congregational pleasure to give them “the right hand of fellowship.”

Phil years ago left a day job in the Washington DC area and never looked back. In Maine he long played viola in the pit orchestra for the Gilbert & Sullivan shows at the Grand and now plays cello in a string trio. And he’s a top-notch painter, too. Both Persons have joined our choir!

Pam, co-founder of the Coalition for Sensible Energy and of Maine Global Climate Change, is a member of the League of Women Voters of the U. S. and is Program Chair of the Hancock County Democratic Committee. She has made herself a go-to person on energy issues. The Persons live on the Back Ridge Road in Orland. Ed.

HARVESTING THE WIND



Earth Day was April 22, but, in a sense, every day is Earth Day. Let us revisit not only last month but also the very first Earth Day, in 1970. One of the pressing issues of the day was human population growth. Remember the Zero Population Growth movement and the buzz generated by *The Population Bomb*?

Are you aware that world population, at more than 7 billion, has nearly doubled in the 44 years since that first Earth Day? Our appetite for energy, land, and meat, has swelled, too, and yet runaway population growth and overconsumption have faded from our minds and our media.

And how about potable water? With climate change, desertification, and population growth, demand for water may soon exceed supply, if that line has not already been passed. Indeed, many observers foresee military conflicts over water to be more serious than those over oil.

As all else depends on water, let us focus on that critical resource in perhaps its most threatened place--Ethiopia, in Africa's north-eastern desert. With few exceptions, water must be fetched from miles away by women and children, by hand. What to do? Drilling 1,500 feet into rocky soil is expensive, and operation and maintenance of a well require dependable electricity.

If modern technology is not the answer, designer Arturo Vittori just may have a low-tech solution in the striking water towers pictured on page 1. Each 30-foot natural-material and plastic tower can literally harvest the wind of some 25 gallons of water per day, from atmospheric water vapor. The natural and man-made fibers act as a scaffold for condensation--as the droplets of dew form, they follow the mesh into a basin on the ground.

Even with several towers, production of 25 gallons of fresh water per tower is meager. But compared to zero? At an installed cost of about \$550, it's transformative!

The towers in our page 1 photo are computer-generated. Vittori hopes to have the first two water-harvesting towers erected in Ethiopia next year.



Albert Einstein wrote: "A human being is a part of a whole, called by us "universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest... a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."

ETHICS & EVIL

This is the first in an occasional series of excerpts from an important book on ethics and ecological economics--RESISTING Structural Evil, by Seattle University professor Cynthia Moe-Lobeda. Ed.

Moe-Lobeda describes a “moral problem: that affluence and poverty are linked. This book would not be necessary if the abject poverty of many were not connected to our overconsumption and to the public and corporate policies and practices that enable it. If that link did not exist, then charitable relief and assistance would be adequate responses to extreme poverty. The point is crucial. If, for example, factors leading to poverty in the Global South were internal to those nations or regions, then our moral obligation would be far different than it is, given our structured implication in others’ poverty and Earth’s distress.



“We would be called to generosity--to invest in health and education, infrastructure, technology, agricultural productivity, food and water supplies, and micro-business. The moral question would be relatively simple. ‘How and how much ought we, who have more than enough, share our resources with people who live in abject poverty and hunger?’

“However, this question is an utterly inadequate and deceptive moral lens if we play a causal role in others’ impoverishment or benefit from it.”

In many cases, she concludes, we do play a significant role, one that often brings material wealth to some in the United States.



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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 Anne Romans, Clerk
 Nancy Guy
 Tom Mason
 Leslie Fairbank
 Deborah Neve, Alternate

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

THE COMMON

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