

Prior to posting on the web, this newsletter was re-edited according to the UUA guidelines at: <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/leaderslibrary/55398.shtml>.

KALEIDOSCOPE

"WE SEEK SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN A WELCOMING AND CARING COMMUNITY"

December 6–19, 2008

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

Editor: Jared Dawson

Building Project Update

in
the
words
of...

“
The miracle of Exodus is not whether or not the Red Sea parted. That is nothing more than a poetic conceit. The miracle of Exodus is that a group of people finally realized for themselves, for us, and for all time that you cannot stay in Egypt. Any personal commitment that is not toward growing and changing, any religious commitment that is not toward goals beyond one's own personal welfare, is a commitment toward slavery in Egypt.”

JOHN HAYS NICHOLS

(FROM WELCOME: A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRIMER)

Hooray! We're in the "homestretch" with our building project.

Parish Hall is essentially complete. The new stage curtain is in place. The new door hardware is working great. The Library is back in business. The new Reception Office is open and welcoming visitors. The bathrooms are marvelous. The finishes are very classy. And, the new A/V system will "knock your socks off". Only very minor details remain unfinished.

In the Sanctuary, the chancel pews have been removed and the chancel tile floor will soon be refurbished. The new exterior doorway to the Terrace should be installed by the time you read this.

We can now walk onto the new Terrace and look over the work being done in the Jefferson Courtyard. After considerable excavation and infrastructure work, the pieces are falling together quickly. All concrete sidewalks, stairs and retaining walls have been poured and will

soon be plastered. The central court around the new magnolia tree has been covered with bricks. And an extensive array of exterior lighting is near completion.

The new storage area below the Terrace is almost ready to be put into use. All we need is installation of ceiling lights and locks on the door. The elevator/lift, which can take you from the Terrace and Sanctuary down to the Jefferson Courtyard, has not been installed yet. Once it is installed everyone will be able to easily traverse our campus.

We still have some major concrete work going on in the area below the Terrace and next to the Starr King playground. This is where the Amphitheater and Labyrinth are being built. It is the last stage of our construction project and will create a very exotic and useful new area for the whole congregation. More on this work in a couple of weeks.

KEN RALPH, FACILITIES MANAGER

Sunday Morning Services

9:30 & 11:30 AM

December 7
On Pearl Harbor Day:
The Essential Causes of War

Rev. Dr. Lex Crane

December 14
Napoleon in Iraq

Rev. Aaron McEmrys

Why is it that humanity has shown such remarkable creativity in developing weapons and making war, and, at the same time, has proved so inept at creating lasting peace? We have tried arms control repeatedly, and twice in the 20th century have organized a union of the world's nations. To no avail: war persists all over the world.

It has often been said that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Reading a book not too long ago I was struck by the eerie similarities between George W. Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq and Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1809. The rhetoric, the false assumptions and the overweening ego are frighteningly similar. In this service we will use two men and two wars separated by almost two hundred years to explore the ways we get caught in history's endless loops—and how we can finally break free and begin to set a new course.

The Chancel Choir will Sing!

UU Service Committee Holiday Cards

Why not send “Season’s Greetings” that also support human rights and advance social justice?

UUSC cards are a beautiful, colorful way to celebrate the holidays while supporting UUSC’s focus areas:

- Defending civil liberties and access to democratic processes;
- Advancing economic issues;
- Promoting environmental justice;
- Protecting rights in humanitarian crisis.



One selection costs \$15.00 for a pack of ten cards that are 5" by 7", with the message *Wishing you a world of peace this holiday season*. Another package holds four designs of smaller cards and is \$15 for a pack of 16. We also sell note cards that are useful throughout the year at 4 cards for \$10.00.

Heap these greetings around the world and touch your friends with Joy and Hope.

Cards will be available at the Social Action Table this Sunday.

Freedom and Peace



Hope and Joy

Justice and Harmony

Advertisement

- Travel and stay in homes of people who share your ideals
- Learn about hosting people in your home to earn extra money

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) offers a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and are happy to open their home to like-minded people. Travel to different cities and stay in reasonably priced accommodations or become a host and enjoy meeting new friends.



www.UUreHome.com
43 Vermont Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-281-3253

For more information, visit
www.UUreHome.com
or write to
info@uurehome.com

A Close Look at the Human Condition

Our Minister Emeritus Lex Crane published a book last year titled *Love, Sex, and the Human Condition*. It will be available for sale during our Community Hour on Sunday December 7, and he will sign it if you like. The book’s editor described it as “...a penetrating account of the current human condition, and what it takes to be fully alive and engaged in a time like ours. The writing style is witty, warm and personal, the thinking fresh and profound.... Crane is a teacher of essential wisdom.” Browse through a copy, and see if it looks interesting to you.

Sketches . . . by Aaron

Dear Friends,

I am reminded of an ancient curse: “May you live in interesting times.”

Well these certainly ARE interesting times, but I’m not sure that I consider the above to be a curse. Living in interesting times is definitely less predictable and less secure in some ways—but also packs so much more potential for fullness and possibility.

It’s easy to say things like this. “Look at the bright side of things, the glass is half-full, every cloud has a silver lining.”

And all of this may be true. But it gets old sometimes, doesn’t it? Sometimes I don’t want to try and look at the bright side anymore and I don’t care about silver linings—I just want the clouds to GO AWAY for a while!

I think now may be one of those times for many in our congregation.

We have been through so much change in the last few weeks, months—even years. We have a new minister, new music staff, and a massive fundraising and building project that will almost certainly be wonderful someday, but it nonetheless remains in ongoing transition right now.

And in other news, while many of us are happy to have a new President, we have also seen Proposition 8 strip away the rights of same-sex couples. We are in the worst financial downturn since the Great Depression, and if that isn’t bad enough—how about throwing a big scary wildfire into the mix—the third in fifteen months!

I know we are all strong, brave and capable—but come on—enough is enough already!

So in case you are like almost everyone else I know, and have trouble letting yourself go—let me give you some permission (with the vast power and authority granted to me): permission to feel anxious, angry, afraid, confused, pessimistic, sad, hopeless, grim and bitingly sarcastic. I give you permission to ignore the silver linings of life and revel in gloom if you want to!

I give you permission to feel all of these things, and more. Whatever so-called “negative” emotions want to rise up in your bones—you’ve got permission to feel them, to name them and to own them without guilt or shame.

But let’s call them what they are. I have observed a rising tide in our community lately, a complicated tumble of anxiety and hope; energy and exhaustion; grief and elation. And I have observed this tumble of complicated feelings being expressed in some understandable ways—emails that can get a bit too edgy, reacting to small problems as if they are big problems, sometimes taking things personally when they aren’t meant that way, and trying to

assert control, to hold onto things too tightly in an out-of-control time. I have noticed in myself a noticeable drop in my usual supply of patience and a noticeable increase in my supply of irritability (which I hope has not troubled any of you too much!). Maybe you can relate. I don’t like to see this in myself, but I know it is to be expected, all things considered.

In times like ours, it is 100% natural for us to start to wear down under the weight of all we are carrying and the distance we have travelled. So let’s hit the pause button and observe ourselves as if from a theatre balcony. What are we carrying? How are we with the people we care about? What will happen if we just stop and take a deep breath? Once we name things, they are almost always easier to work with. So know that none of what I am saying is directed at anyone in particular, and that if you do feel a pang at any of these words, you might want to stop and reflect.

In most other columns you will probably hear me reminding you to stand in the sun—but not this time. This time I call you to stand wherever you darn well want to—in sun or in shadow. Resist the urge to pretend everything is okay if it isn’t, and if it is good—try not to feel guilty about it.

If our Unitarian Society is anything, it is a place where we can be real with one another, can truly be our authentic selves. It is also a place that can safely hold some of the feelings that we can’t really bring to other places in our lives. Whoever we are, wherever we are—there is space in our community for whatever we bring.

Soon enough we can return to gazing at the stars in wonder, but for now—let’s just enjoy the gloom.

REV. AARON McEMRYS

Grand Opening of Theatre and Monthly Potluck Dec. 20

Come early and bring food to share as we combine the monthly all-congregation potluck series and theatre night with Chuck Wolfe. We’ll eat about 5:45 to clean up so the movie can start about 7:00! (And yes, one can come only to the movie at 7:00.)

Those who can, please come by 5:00 to help set-up. For more information contact Bruce Hanna.

Melitta's Musings

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children...to leave the world a better place...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

I have been moved by the incredible generosity of people who offered to help those in need after the Tea Fire. My family and I were in the evacuation warning zone and chose to evacuate when we saw embers flying around in the heated winds. As we were leaving late at night, our cars stuffed with our children, cat, dog, rat, important papers, my ministerial robe and other odd treasures, we received calls from folks offering their assistance. My son's 3rd grade teacher called out of the blue. Distant friends and congregants called too. This was true for the rest of Santa Barbarians who had to evacuate. The bright side of such tragedy is experiencing the strong net of community we have beneath us here in Santa Barbara and here at the Unitarian Society in particular. Usually, we are completely unaware of this network of good and large-heartedness. But it is there.

I have also been moved by those who have lost so very much. Their understandable grief has been mixed with a light-heartedness and laughter made possible by their inner knowing that life, and not material things, is what matters most. That said, the journey of recovery and rebuilding is a long and difficult one to walk, as grief is an unpredictable creature. It is the resiliency I see in their eyes that amazes me.

A couple of weeks ago, I learned about a youngster from our congregation who was counting up his loot on the floor at home. Piggy bank empty and to the side, he carefully sorted his coins and cash. Upon tallying up his savings, he announced, quite unsolicited, that he had too much. His 60-odd dollars of birthday money and quarters happily found on the street seemed too great of a sum just for him. After a bit of deliberation, he decided that some of this money ought to be given to others in need. In telling me about his story, his mother went on to say she felt that such generosity was something he learned here, from our program and congregation.

May we, in all that we do together, be ever able to share of ourselves with those in need, to reach out beyond our comfort zone to make a difference, to accept help when we need it, to find the levity in life and define our success in terms of our love felt and expressed.

So May It Be,

REV. MELITTA L. HASLUND

Lifespan Religious Education News

Happy birthday USSB! It's our 131st birthday the week of December 7!

Youth Choir

Children of the ages 5–12 are invited to join the Youth Choir. Come; enjoy snacks and a few surprises at 10:45 AM on Sunday mornings in Jefferson Hall. RE Teachers will invite our children to follow them to Jefferson Hall immediately after classes are over on Sunday mornings for rehearsal. Presently, the Youth Choir is preparing for our Christmas Eve services! For more information, please contact our Youth Choir Director, Vaiva Janusoniene.

High School: YRUU Group

We had an adventurous overnight event in Blake Lounge in November with many high school youth in attendance. We are currently considering ways we can work to make a difference, together, in a greater way than we could alone.

Coming of Age

Our COA program will "staff" the favorite Holiday Craft Party tables: Candy Houses! They enjoyed a memorable day at Ledbetter Beach creating art with their mentors on their Goldsworthy Day. They'll be attending the Unitarian Universalist camp at deBenneville Pines Jr. High Camp on December 5–7.

RE Children

On November 30, our children donated their gently used toys, had them sold to a consignment store, and will soon purchase new toys with the proceeds for children in need. They also created their own "Googley-Eyed Gratitude Monsters" with recycled materials. We thank Chrissie Cable and Charla Bregante for their leadership.

Reminder, Fabulous Classical Indian Music on December 7

Come to our Sanctuary on Sunday at 3:00 PM and hear sarod and tabla masters Vikash Maharaj and his son Prabhash from Varanasi, India. They are 14th and 15th generation musicians of an illustrious musical family and we are assured of a memorable experience.

Donations of \$15 general and \$10 for Society members are requested for this concert. Tickets will be available at the door. For further information, call John Warnock.

Holiday Family Fun Calendar

Friday, December 5

The Elf

Movie Night and Chili Dinner, 6–9 PM, Parish Hall

Intergenerational showing of *The Elf* on our new screen in Parish Hall! Complete with the Edmundson Family's famous chili dinner, the elf's favorite foods, a "snow ball fight" and the appearance of "Buddy the Elf" and maybe even "The Big Guy". This is a Services Auction event. Contact Carol at assistant@ussb.org or 965-4583 x224 by December 1 to purchase your space. \$10/individual or \$30/family.

Sunday, December 7

Brunch Break and UUltimate Frisbee

Enjoy a Brunch Break during our Community Hour and come to Alameda Park for a fun-filled game! This is a multigenerational activity where everyone gets to play and no one gets hurt. Bring water, running shoes and sunblock. A cheering crowd is always appreciated too!

Friday, December 12

Family Fun Night! 6–8 PM

Come, enjoy a delicious potluck meal, help decorate our holiday tree, and sing songs led by our Youth Choir Director, Viava Janusoniene! We begin with a Gratitude Circle at 6 PM and wind up our evening fun at 8 PM in the dark around the lit tree in Parish Hall. Bring a dish to share and your own silver and flatware. Invite a new RE Family to join the fun!

Sunday, December 14

Annual Holiday Craft Party!!! 9:30–11:30 AM

Everyone is invited to join in our traditional Holiday Craft Party! Children and youth will begin in the Parish Hall at 9:30 AM. Adults will join us during the Community Hour at 10:30. We will have our old favorites and a few new crafts too!

Sunday, December 21, 9:30 AM

Children's Worship Celebrating the Solstice

Children will begin in the Sanctuary at 9:30 AM and gather in Jefferson Hall to celebrate the Winter Solstice.

RE Family Caroling, 6:30–8:30 PM

Later that evening, we will hold our 2nd Annual RE Family Caroling at Sarah House and another nursing home. Bring a plate of cookies to share at our second destination.

Wednesday, December 24, 5 & 7 PM

Christmas Eve

Celebrate Christmas Eve with our congregation. Both the Adult and Youth Choirs will sing at the first 5 PM service, and the Adult Choir will sing at the 7 PM service. We will conclude with candle lighting and song.

Healthy Holiday Habits

It is easy to get overwhelmed and feel lost during the rush of the winter holidays. Here are a few ideas that can help keep what is most important in focus:

Family Mealtime Grace

Have a family meal time grace. Make up your own prayer or draw from a book of world prayers. Take turns to talk about your "greats and groans" of the day.

Keep a family 'Gratitude and Hope' Journal

For what are you each grateful? What gives you a sense of hope in tough times? Record these and periodically read them aloud for all to hear and reflect upon.

Slow Down

Select just a few holiday events and gracefully decline the rest. I recently performed a memorial service for a grandmother best known for getting on the floor to play. Simple time spent together is what is often most memorable and meaningful for children. Find places where time can expand: take a walk on the beach, go for a bike ride or hike, gaze up at the stars on a blanket before bed, walk around a neighborhood at night to see the lights.

Generosity in Giving

Consider donating a share of what you might normally spend on gifts and tell your family about how it benefited others in their honor.

Storytelling

Share stories of favorite holiday memories with a cup of hot cider or cocoa by candlelight.

Lend a Hand

Plant a tree. Clean up a part of the beach. Help out a neighbor with a chore. Select a wish card from our Giving Tree in Parish Hall after December 12. Someone from Domestic Violence Solutions will be ever so grateful.

I'd love to hear about your family traditions—and what helps you keep the spirit of this season alive in your lives.

REV. MELITTA L. HASLUND

Late Breaking News: Music Club Concert Dec. 10

On Wednesday the 10th at 11 AM there will be a free concert featuring the world premiere of an organ and piano work by Emma Lou Diemer, who will play the organ. There will also be several other works employing viola, violin, and flute. Come hear the organ in our renovated Sanctuary emerge from under wraps and ring out again!

Calendar

Saturday, December 6, 2008

- All Day COA at deBenneville, Off Campus
- 9:30 AM Breast Cancer Resource Center, Parish Hall (to 3 PM)
- 4:00 PM International Families Holiday Party, Jefferson Hall

Sunday, December 7

- All Day COA at deBenneville, Off Campus (to 3 PM)
- 9:00 AM USSB Childcare, Starr King
- 9:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 9:30 AM Children's RE Classes, Classrooms
- 10:30 AM Brunch Break, Parish Hall
- 11:00 AM Youth Choir, Jefferson Hall
- 11:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 11:30 AM UUltimate Frisbee, Off Campus
- 3:00 PM Masters of North Indian Classical Music, Sanctuary

Monday, December 8

- 6:00 AM Early Morning Exercise, With Linda, Parish Hall
- 5:30 PM Lark Yoga Class, Jefferson Hall
- 6:00 PM Women's Writing Circle, LaPaz Lounge
- 7:00 PM USSB Men's Council, Blake Lounge

Tuesday, December 9

- 7:00 AM Toastmasters Club #5, Parish Hall
- 5:30 PM USSB Program Council, Blake Lounge

Wednesday, December 10

- 6:00 AM Early Morning Exercise, With Linda, Parish Hall
- 11:00 AM Santa Barbara Music Club Concert, Sanctuary
- 4:00 PM USSB Finance Committee, Blake Lounge
- 5:00 PM USSB Membership Committee, LaPaz Lounge
- 5:30 PM Lark Yoga Classes, Jefferson Hall
- 6:30 PM Path to Membership, Blake Lounge
- 7:00 PM Book Discussion Group, Classroom 1

Thursday, December 11

- 7:00 PM Articulating Your Faith, LaPaz Lounge
- 7:00 PM USSB Choir, Sanctuary

Friday, December 12

- 6:00 AM Early Morning Exercise, With Linda, Parish Hall
- 8:00 AM USSB Coffee Boys, Off Campus
- 5:00 PM Family Fun Night, Jefferson Hall
- 7:30 PM DanceAway, Parish Hall

Saturday, December 13, 2008

- 7:00 AM Early Morning Exercise, With Linda, Parish Hall
- 10:00 AM USSB Choir, Sanctuary

Sunday, December 14

- 9:00 AM USSB Childcare, Starr King
- 9:30 AM Holiday Craft Party, Parish Hall
- 9:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 10:40 AM UU Inquiry Sunday, Sanctuary
- 11:00 AM Youth Choir, Jefferson Hall
- 11:30 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 7:00 PM USSB Women's Group, LaPaz Lounge
- 7:00 PM S.B. Master Chorale Holiday Concert, Sanctuary

Monday, December 15

- 6:00 AM Early Morning Exercise, With Linda, Parish Hall
- 5:30 PM Lark Yoga Class, Jefferson Hall
- 6:00 PM Women's Writing Circle, LaPaz Lounge

Tuesday, December 16

- 7:00 AM Toastmasters Club #5, Parish Hall
- 5:30 PM USSB Board of Trustees, Parish Hall

Wednesday, December 17

- 6:00 AM Early Morning Exercise, With Linda, Parish Hall
- 5:30 PM Lark Yoga Class, Jefferson Hall
- 5:30 PM Committee on Shared Ministry, Blake Lounge
- 6:00 PM USSB Vespers Potluck, La Paz Lounge
- 7:00 PM USSB Vespers, La Paz Lounge
- 7:00 PM Book Discussion Group, Classroom 1

Thursday, December 18

- 7:00 PM USSB Choir, Sanctuary

Friday, December 19

- 6:00 AM Early Morning Exercise, With Linda, Parish Hall
- 8:00 AM USSB Coffee Boys, Off Campus
- 6:00 PM DanceAway Committee, Jefferson Hall
- 7:30 PM DanceAway, Parish Hall

Looking Ahead

December 21 Winter Solstice Services

December 24 Christmas Eve services at 5:00 and 7:00 PM

The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

1535 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Office: (805) 965-4583
Fax: (805) 965-6273
e-mail: ussb@ussb.org
Internet: www.ussb.org



Aaron McEmrys, Parish Minister
John Alexie Crane, Minister Emeritus
Melitta L. Haslund, Consulting Minister for Religious Education
Nancy Edmundson, Director of Administration

Sunday Worship Services: 9:30 & 11:30 AM; Children's Program: 9:30 AM
Nursery & Children's Care: Sunday, 9:00 AM-12:45 PM, Starr King
Office Hours: Mon-Fri: 9 AM-4 PM; SUN: 10:00 AM-NOON

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

December 3 for material covering
December 20, 2008-January 2, 2009

E-mail: Kaleidoscope@ussb.org

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
SANTA BARBARA, CA
Permit 99