

----- AUUF Services · 10 a.m. -----

April 6

Wise Planning, Wise Planting
Rev. Diana Jordan Allende
2008-09 Canvass Kick-Off

What does the future hold for AUUF? Even without a crystal ball, we know that what we do today sows the seeds of tomorrow. Investing in leadership, both professional and lay, volunteer and paid, is one way we signal our intent to be relevant, viable and here for the long term. A new book on the Fellowship Movement of 1948-1967 will help ground us in our beginnings. A successful canvass will help move us toward our future.

April 13

Making Alabama Truly, Deeply, Widely "the Beautiful"
Rev. Diana Jordan Allende
Potluck & Giving Away the Plate: Alabama Arise

For those with "enough," Alabama is already "the Beautiful." But scenic and pastoral views along interstate or rural highways obscure attitudes and social policies that make our state less lovely for those with too little. What would make Alabama truly, deeply, widely beautiful for all? How well do we understand the issues? What do we know about the place where we live?

April 20

A Deeper Kind of Normal
Rev. Diana Jordan Allende

When sorrow breaks us and we put the pieces back together, it is said that we return to "a deeper kind of normal." Could it be that the need to do things differently—from peacemaking to sustainability—could return us, as a society, to a deeper kind of normal? In honor of the upcoming Earth Day, we'll explore what that might mean.

April 27

Annual Men's Service
AUUF Men

If your curiosity is killing you about what the men will come up with this year, it's killing us too! We haven't a klew.

*The 2008-09
Canvass is Coming!*

Please watch for canvass materials in the mail and see page three of this newsletter for more information.



**April
2008**

**
Conversation Café April 6, 2:00-3:30
Is Religion Necessary?

Theology Café April 20, 2:00-3:30
Losing Our Religion
**
<i>All are welcome</i>

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	Weekly Events	Diana 1:30-6:30 Yoga @ 5		Diana 1:30-6:30 Choir @ 6:30		Meditation @ 10
		1 Com. Lunch @ 12	2	3	4 Sundilla @7:30 Macho Men @7	5
6 Conv'n Café @ 2 NVC 4-6 pm	7 Diana away at SEEUMA 4/7 - 10	8	9	10 Diana returns from SEEUMA	11	12
13 Potluck Board Meeting Quilters 4 - 6 pm	14	15	16 NVC 5:30-7:30 pm	17	18 Feminista @ 6:30	19
20 News Deadline Theology Café @2 NVC 4-6 pm Humanists @ 6	21	22	23 NVC 5:30-7:30 pm	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 Env't'l Film @7			*(Please see inside pages for more details about events.)*



Diana's Column

Office Hours—

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30-6:30 p.m.

Time off: Mondays

Diana's office is in the lower level of the Busch Center, most easily reached by walking down the sidewalk and entering through the back door.

Do stop by!

I should **not** have made that donation to the Arbor Day Foundation. In return, they sent me ten small trees. Babies, really. With planting instructions. Colored-coded so that I would know which was which. So the first thing I did after receiving my trees was to lose the instructions—not intentionally and not before reading that I should plant my young trees in a protected place for the first couple of years, as though being responsible for planting ten tiny trees *anywhere* was not already burden enough. Protected from what, I wondered? Frost, drought, predatory insects and diseases? I suppose all of the above, but this complicated things.

I peeked inside the long, narrow plastic bag in which they had arrived. They seemed to be doing just fine for little sticks with roots. They were in a second see-through plastic bag, surrounded by a special potting medium for shipping. I put them (in their long narrow bag) out on the porch, partly so I wouldn't have to look at them and partly because cooler temperatures were recommended until planting.

For a while, having them on the porch helped—out of sight, out of mind. I only noticed them in passing, but after a few days, I decided to see how they were doing and was shocked to find that several had sprouted tiny leaves. So much for benign neglect! Now what? I still didn't know what kind of protected place they needed, or, for that matter, what kind I could offer, and couldn't imagine where I might eventually plant ten additional trees on my residential lot. But I couldn't bring myself to put the little leafy things back in the long, narrow bag. So there they were, out on the porch, in plain view.

Visiting my mother, I whined about what to do with these trees. "You could put them in pots for now," she said. What hadn't I thought of that? "And you could use these large plastic coffee containers I've been saving." Oh, all right! She had me. I took the coffee containers, mostly to get them out of her house. She saves everything. (*And she reads this column—hi, Mom!*) So for about a week, the coffee containers were *out* of her house, but *in* my car, because I still had not come to terms with having these trees on my hands. Oh, *why* did I send in that donation? Why hadn't I told them just to keep the trees, that I didn't mind sending money, but I didn't want to get my hands dirty? Literally.

I finally moved the coffee containers to the garage so that I had room in my car for a passenger. The garage? You're right, of course. What good could they do in the garage? Pangs of conscience gripped me. How hard could it be to plant ten little trees? I had the pots. I had the potting soil. What I didn't have (I thought) was time to plant them. I decided I would plant the two with the most leaves (and then maybe quit). And since the pots were big, I decided I'd plant 2 to a pot.

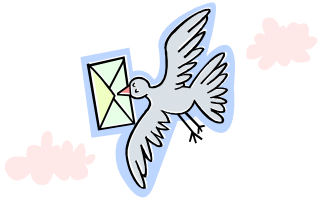
Reaching down into the bag of potting soil with my hands and scooping up dirt, I thought one last time, "I should **not** have made that donation!" But since we're coming up on our Every Member Canvass, I realized that begrudging one's giving is hardly the proper spirit. In fact, as I worked on planting my little trees, I could see other parallels between my 'predicament' and our annual canvass.

Each year, the AUUF Board of Trustees, committee chairs, and the Finance Committee put together a preliminary budget that aims to meet our obligations and stretch us a little further. In recent years we have increased our giving through social action and by "Giving the Plate." Last year we embarked on a campaign to search for and hire a part-time DRE, which we hope to have on board by summer. Most people who pledged support for the DRE last year agreed to continue their support through the 2008-09 fiscal year. This year we've added money for leadership development to enable, among other things, Martha to attend the conference of the UU Musicians' Network. Our dues to the UUA and the Mid-South District have increased slightly, and the Committee on Ministry recommended that my compensation be increased to meet UUA guidelines. All together, we're looking at an increase of under \$5000 over what has been pledged already in support of the DRE.

As I worked on potting my little trees and periodically lamenting my donation, I wondered if any of you ask yourselves why you give to the AUUF...why you continue to give...why you increase your giving. Although we may have different reasons for valuing the Fellowship and the relationships we share, I imagine we give much for the same reason I gave to the Arbor Day Foundation. The world needs trees, and trees don't plant themselves. The world also needs Unitarian Universalist congregations...and Unitarian Universalist values. And these also don't plant themselves.

Many a UU congregation arrives on the scene like my little bag of trees. Only ten or so folks, of assorted varieties. They survive in a special potting medium for a while, but eventually, they have to come out of the long, narrow bag that got them to a certain point but can't support their long-term growth. They need soil and water and light. And people to do the work, people who are committed to the well-being of the group. They may even need protection from time to time—from frost, from drought—because the goal is a strong and healthy tree—or Fellowship—with sturdy roots and sheltering limbs and healthy new growth. You get the picture. As the AUUF welcomes new members, hires a DRE, establishes a presence on campus and moves toward its 50th birthday (2011), we want our tree to stay healthy. To grow and to thrive. For us and for those yet to come. For now and for the future. For the greater good we can do together. And if we all help, it will.

Love, Diana



In the Loop



The theme for this year's Canvass is "Investing in Leadership" and of course there will be much discussion of the financial support the AUUF needs to invest in and support our professional leadership—the minister and the DRE. But as President, attending Board and Council meetings, and just hanging around the sanctuary, I'm aware of another form of investment in leadership, and that's our responsibility to invest in the support and development of our many Committee Chairs and members. After many years of serving on a variety of committees, I know these positions can be very satisfying and rewarding, but too often we assume they are easy jobs. Heck, we're just volunteers! But they aren't always easy and they can at times be fairly demanding of our time and energy.

This year, many of our long-time Committee Chairs have said they need a chance to recharge, to step down, and just be a part of the congregation, so the Nominating Committee, chaired by Garth Stauffer, has its work cut out for it. They need to find folks with energy and new ideas to step up and join our leadership. If you are interested in a particular committee, or if you are asked to serve, please know that they will do their very best to explain the work as completely as possible. I promise that we will do all that we can to support you and help you learn the ins and outs of Fellowship leadership and accomplish your goals and tasks for your committee. So, please think about accepting a Committee Chair position or serving on a committee. It will require your time and energy, but it will deepen your experience of Fellowship life and provide the opportunity to work with some of the most creative and dedicated folks I've ever had the good fortune to know.

Yours,
Sharon Roberts
President, AUUF Board of Trustees



UU Connections Cindy Reinke



UU Women

International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8th, offered us an opportunity to reflect on the role Unitarian and Universalist women have played in times of war and peace over many generations. Read the story at <http://www.uua.org/news/newsubmissions/101133.shtml>. There are several related stories: More about Julia Ward Howe and Emily Greene Balch; UU Military Ministries; and "This Woman's Army" by Marie deYoung.

Spiritual Life

Did you know there is an area on the UUA web site devoted to personal spiritual life? It contains subsections entitled: Minister's Study, Global Chalice Reading, Today's Reading, Today's Sermon, Worship Service Podcasts, and WorshipWeb. Check it out at www.uua.org!

2008-09 Every Member Canvass *"Investing In Leadership"*

April is our Every Member **Canvass Month!** You will soon be receiving canvass materials through the mail as well as a call from your canvasser. Please plan on meeting with your canvasser for a pleasant visit and making your pledge. Members and pledging friends fill out their own pledge cards and share comments with the canvasser regarding their AUUF experience.

We are actively in search for a part-time DRE and hope to fill the position by summer. Those who participated in last year's canvass will recall that financial support for this position was pledged separately—contingent upon hiring a DRE. When you receive your pledge cards for the upcoming 2008-09 fiscal year, you will be reminded of what you have already pledged in support of the DRE. Thank you for your continuing support and your consideration of all the canvass goals.

Religious Education News

4-6 RE Class

Our class has spent several lessons exploring the issues of who we are, facing our fears, and acknowledging our inner wisdom. The kids made some great "WHO I AM" collages and learned the value of affirmations in strengthening confidence in their abilities.



As the New Year began, we wrote down ten wishes for ourselves and put them in a jar to save and open in 2009. Also, we started thinking about the importance of helping others, the ability we all have to help in some way, the value of listening, and the healing power of touch. Our community service projects have included helping with the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, working at the Habitat for Humanity Community Garden, and volunteering at the Humane Society (where we all fell in love with various cats and dogs.)

Currently we are discussing human rights. We have talked about the Holocaust and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights protections. We are becoming aware of the forms of injustice—stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice. We will finish the year with a unit on Caring for the Earth. We have plans to help clean up Felton Little Park and to work at the Community Market.

--Terry Rodriguez and Tom Hodges

High School RE

The high school RE class is having a great year. We enjoyed organizing the script for the Hunger Banquet, being the MCs and serving the high income table. We are discussing and doing projects on many different Social Action themes. The students are leading discussion and activities. Beyond our work on poverty and hunger, we are discussing racism, environmental issues and GLBTQ issues.

--Claire, Robert, and Sally

Youth Advisor Training Summary

AUUF hosted the youth advisor training on March 1. Connie Goodbread, MSD's lifespan consultant, led the training (as well as the service and other activities) that weekend. Approximately 20 youth and adults attended the training, including Robert, Claire, and Jacob from Auburn. The training was helpful in discussing working with youth and having effective youth groups. People from around the district attended: from Nashville, Mississippi, Birmingham, Atlanta, and Athens. Many of the attendees were very impressed with the AUUF; they appreciated the historic building, the colorful RE building, and the wonderful hospitality. Thanks to Amy and Darrell for providing wonderful food for the meeting.



--Claire

Upcoming Youth Events

A few of us will head to a Leadership Development CON at UUCA (Atlanta) at the end of March. Trainers from the UUA will lead the conference and teach us about effective leadership. Those who attend will receive credit towards a Chrysalis Certification—a UUA program for recognition of training.

The weekend of April 18-20 there will be a Junior High CON in Huntsville, Alabama. Elaine and Jacob will help lead the conference, and we hope to have several Junior High schoolers (6th-8th grade) attend the CON. The conference name is Millenium FalCON, a Star Wars theme. Please let Claire know (claire.crutchley@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending.

Senior High (including rising 9th graders) are invited to attend the Mid-South District meeting May 2-4. The meeting is in Valparasio, Florida, and we will have a mini-CON arranged around the business meeting on Saturday.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Environmental Film Series—

Manufactured Landscapes

Wednesday, April 30, 2008, 7:00 PM

LAST SHOW OF THE SPRING! DON'T MISS IT!!

This documentary film follows the artist Edward Burtynsky through China where so many of our daily-use items come from. Using diplomatic channels, Burtynsky has gained rare access to newly established zones of Chinese industrialization. The movie shows us how the environment has been changed in the process.



His photographs allow us glimpses of the massive social and economic transformations currently happening in China.

Director Jennifer Baichwal introduces photographs focusing on China, and then presents Burtynsky in the process of creating them. His camera penetrates into entire villages dedicated to recycling of electronic waste, plastics, and metals, where sorting is done by hand. All his industries of choice are located in the vast manufacturing heart of China. His photography mediates between the life we lead and the place we create that allows us to live this life. The film won several awards. It was produced in 2007 and runs for 90 min. Each minute is worth it!!



The AUUF *Quilt Show* is Back!

Reception April 13, 4-6 pm

Art and community outreach! An AUUF tradition! Beautiful quilts adorning our walls, stitched together by life-long quilters! But it needs your help. If you can organize food for the reception, pick up and return quilts, help hang them, or write biographies of the quilters for the catalog, please let us know. This is a tradition we want to continue, but it needs the support of us all. Please step up, especially if you are new to AUUF. It's a great way to get involved. Thanks in advance for your help. Please contact bryansk@auburn.edu, boomer1220@gmail.com, or dallende@uuma.org.

--Shannon Bryant-Hankes



2008 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY -- May 2-4

UU Fellowship of the Emerald Coast, Florida

Sunshine! Beach! Fun! Fellowship! Friends! All of this and much more is happening at this year's Mid-South Annual Assembly.

Things begin Friday night with the Service of the Lively Tradition at 7:30 pm, preceded by the Lively Choir rehearsal at 5:30 and a light supper at 6:00 pm.

This year's theme – "Living Unitarian Universalism," – will be explored throughout the weekend through inspiring stories about what it means to be a practicing Unitarian Universalist and workshops in breakout sessions on Saturday.

UUFEC is celebrating its 50th birthday and invites Mid-South folks to celebrate this milestone with them! Come be part of this historic anniversary!

Plan to stay overnight and attend *Coffeehouse LIVE!* at 7:30 pm. and the Sunday service the next morning at 10:00am. Slip away to the beach for some time to walk barefoot in the sand and to breathe in the fresh, salty air. Registration will be available in early April at www.msduua.org. Contact MSD Trustee June Bryant for more info. (junebryant@cox.net)

Come be energized and inspired by stories about living our faith! Renew your commitment to the principles and practices of Unitarian Universalism! Learn about projects and practices to adapt for your congregation!

Be there on the Emerald Coast May 2 -4, 2008!

-- June Bryant -- TEACH Trustee, MSD Board

Sundilla Concert

April 4, 7:30

The Laws

More information available at www.sundilla.org

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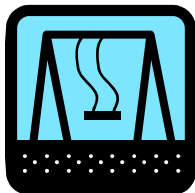
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Reminder: The deadline for newsletter items is the 20th of the month.



Schedules

Playground Volunteers

**

April playground volunteers are needed!

Please contact Ben Rudgers on a Sunday or email him at:
teamsteam@bellsouth.net.

Storytellers

**

April 6	Betty, Diana, Tom
April 13	Jennifer Brooks
April 20	Tom Hodges
April 27	Men's Service

Grand, Glorious, Gladsome, Gleaming Greeters

**

April 6	Shannon Bryant-Hankes & Friend
April 13	Terry Rodriguez, Ken Walters
April 20	Lindsay Amsberry, Julie Meadows
April 27	Jennifer Brooks, John Ellisor

Are you an ape or an angel? These are angels:

**

April 6	Connie & Ralph Ressler—with help from someone in doing coffee...
April 13	The archangel Walkers
April 20	Kirk Iverson, Yucheng Feng
April 27	Dott Dailey (& Helper needed)

This Lucifer needs replacing. Someone step up! –Chip B.