

CUUCSA ON-LINE NEWSLETTER/ VOL. 36, December 2006
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#1

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Nov. 26: "A Skeptic's Guide to Meditation:" Rev. Phil Schulman
- Nov. 26: Men's Group, 6:30 pm
- Nov. 27 Women's group, 7:00 pm
- Dec. 03: "The Rabbi's Gift, Pt II" - Peter Van Dusen
- Dec. 03: Brown-bag Socrates Cafe, 12:15 pm
- Dec. 09: Tree Decorating Party
- Dec. 10: A Skeptic's Guide to Prayer: Rev. Phil Schulman
- Dec. 10: Men's Group
- Dec. 11: Women's Group
- Dec. 17: "The Presence of Christmas Past" (sharing service): Steven Botts, coordinator
- Dec. 17: Remarkable films "Singing in the Rain"
- Dec. 24: Birthing the Christ in All: Phil Schulman
- Dec. 31: "Joys and Concerns, Reflections and Resolutions" (sharing service): Henry Halff, coordinator
- Jan. 07: "Significant Musical Moments" (sharing service): Steven Botts, coordinator

#2

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deck the Sanctuary Halls
Patty Gullick

Children, parents and friends,

Come help us make decorations for our tree. There will be a Holiday Tree Decorating Party on Saturday, December 9th at 6:30 pm.

Bring enthusiasm, ideas, and if you have any scraps, markers, stuff for making decorations.

Pizza provided.

UU Housing Assistance Corporation
June Kachtik

GREAT CELEBRATION AND ANOTHER ON ITS WAY!

UU Housing Assistance Corporation celebrated the completion of 3 single family homes in the Alta Vista Neighborhood on November 3, 2006, with Congressman Charles Gonzalez as our featured speaker. The weather was beautiful and the 68 guests were suitably impressed with UU HAC's work in the community.

Our next event for our friends and supporters will be at the lovely home restored by Mr. and Mrs. Bob Comeaux. It is located in the Alta Vista neighborhood at the corner of Breeden and 702 W. French Place. It will be decorated for Christmas, including the red walls in the living room. This will be a benefit, with a silent auction, refreshments, special thanks to our special friends, and an opportunity to again view the video that you, as members of CUUC, helped to finance.

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

702 French Place

You'll love the home - come see one of the gems of an older neighborhood.

Wonen's Group
Jean Halff

Woman's Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 7 p.m. at the church. We will not meet the 4th Monday of December which is the 25th.

Worship Committee:
Peter Van Dusen

1. The Sunday service for 12/31 (New Year's Eve day) will be a special event on the worship calendar. There will be no sermon or guest speaker presentation. Instead, the service will be a time for us to share our joys and concerns in depth and in detail with one another. A member of the worship committee will facilitate the sharing and discussion. The title for the service: "Joys and Concerns, Regrets and Resolutions." Please bring your thoughts, your feelings, and yourself. We hope this will be a worshipful way to begin the new year!

2. The first or third Sunday in January (to be announced as soon as we confirm our speaker for the alternate Sunday) will be a special musical sharing service. We invite you to consider bringing a 3-4 minute song or piece of music, and a 3-4 minute story explaining its special significance for you. It should be music that represents for you, or recalls for you, a particularly poignant or spiritually significant moment--or turning point--in your life. We hope to include sharing from 4-5 members. If you think you would like to participate in this service, please speak with a member of the worship committee.

#3

UPCOMING SERVICES

November 26
Skeptics Guide to Meditation
Rev. Phil Schulman

Negative experiences and concepts associated with meditation may lead us to an attitude of contempt prior to investigation. Many UUs and other religious liberals meditate. If you consider meditation to be superstitious or delusional activities, you may be in for a pleasant surprise

December 3
The Rabbi's Gift, Pt II
Peter Van Dusen

This is a continuation of a theme presented in an earlier service. In Pt. II, Peter will explore the role of the religious community.

December 10
Rev. Phil Schulman

A Skeptics Guide to Prayer

Do you think prayer means petitioning a superhuman male deity (Father God) for favors? Expand your consciousness. Come hear how skeptics, liberals, agnostics, humanists possibly even atheists can discover the power of prayer.

December 17
The Presence of Christmas Past
Steven Botts, Coordinator- A Sharing service

A panel of CUUC members will talk about memorable Christmas experiences.

December 24
Birthing the Christ in All

UU readings speak of "seeing the divine in every person" That sounds beautiful but is it really possible? How could we do it?

December 31
Joys and Concerns; Reflections and Resolutions
Henry Halff

This year's New Year's Eve service will set free all of the joys and concerns that have remained trapped within our hearts during the past year. Bring to church those reflections that nourished or troubled your spirit during the past year and your hopes and intentions for the year ahead. The service will provide you with the opportunity to share these reflections and resolutions with the congregation as we indulge ourselves in one long round-robin of joys and concerns.

January 7
Significant Musical Moments
Steven Botts, Coordinator - A sharing service

This will be a special musical sharing service. We invite you to consider bringing a 3-4 minute song or piece of music, and a 3-4 minute story explaining its special significance for you. It should be music that represents for you, or recalls for you, a particularly poignant or spiritually significant moment--or turning point--in your life. We hope to include sharing from 4-5 members. If you think you would like to participate in this service, please speak with a member of the worship committee.

#4

ARTICLES AND REPORTS

From Our Pastor
Phil Schulman

Playing Into the Beloved Community

Last summer some of leadership engaged in extensive discussions about our church community. We asked what qualities we wanted to enhance in our community. We acknowledged and pledged to continue efforts to beautify our physical environment. We also decided that we needed to shift focus from work to fun; enjoyment and appreciation of each other as we continued the activities that comprise our religious community.

This type of change may be subtle, but it's very important. I've seen some really sweet qualities being played out. If you have noticed any positive changes, or want to appreciate any efforts, please tell members of the Committee On Ministry. (COM: Joan Bradshaw, Steve Botts, and Jean Half). Of course, if you have concerns with the congregation tell them that too.)

One recent church activity that was truly playful was November's Way of Council session. Council is all about being together in a way that values "listening and speaking from the heart" I expected something warm and fuzzy, and knew I could receive that. What surprised me was that it was a blast of fun.

Facilitator, Suzanne Wright Crain chose an unusual format for November's council. After a meditation time, we shared dreams and wove dream images together. An inquiry questions arose: "How do we allow the dream world to inform our waking selves?" In a spontaneous closing blessing one participant said, "May we dream our lives into a greater awakening." I had the thought that many people would have judged this Council as "weird, silly or pointless." I found it beautiful and profound, and best of all truly delightful. I forgot how much I enjoyed the power of non-linear play and creativity.

Another activity, not quite as playful but every bit as potent, has been my study and practice of Marshall Rosenberg's work on "Nonviolent Communication" (NVC) Like Council, NVC Classes have felt good and have enabled me to open to life more fully. However, the gifts of NVC have come through willingness to connect with people and share their pain. Sometimes the pained person we need to connect to is oneself.

I am pleased to offer NVC with CUUC by facilitating a study-practice group. The purpose of NVC is to build relationships that nurture trust and empathy. Anyone who is interested in learning how to connect with what is alive in self and others is invited to participate. A

couple of members have purchased books and CDs. Anybody else want to play into this community?

RE Review

Glenna Jones-Kachtik, DRE

The RE Committee planned the Annual Dia de los Muertos service (10/29) & also the Guest At Your Table service for 11/19. The rest of November and some of December will be spent discussing some of the UUSC programs and uses for Guest At Your Table money. One Sunday will be spent on "The Grinch".

We will also be making cards for shut-ins again this year. Let us know if you know of someone who needs to be remembered!!! We studied about the real 1st Thanksgiving this year. The RE Classes had fun making decorations for the Thanksgiving Dinner to be held on 11/23

Thanksgiving is a time when Family matters and it leads into the Season of Sharing and Giving. This is always the season that I love - watching the children prepare for Christmas. I think that we 'Adults' loose something; some magic as we grow older. We often get so caught up in "busy stuff" and "what we need to do"; that we forget that this time of year is for family and for sharing. That it is a special time. That it is a time of miracles, of wishing and hoping - of being nice and sharing our bounty with those who may not have what we do.

I remember when I was a child being firmly convinced that some Christmas morning I would awake to a white wonderland - with deep snow all over my lawn. That I would run out and build "Frosty" & experience flying across the lawn on a sled . The fact that I lived in South Texas and that it did not snow; (in fact had never snowed but 1 or 2 times and never at Christmas) - nor the fact that no one had a sled and that it was pretty flat where I lived so flying on a sled was not aerodynamically possible never mattered!) It was Christmas.

Miracles happened at Christmas, didn't they? Even though it never snowed; I never got to build Frosty, and I probably would have broken my neck on the sled - I still like the lights, the decorations, the music, the candles and the rituals of Christmas. I love hearing the Carols, listening to all those hokey 'Holiday' stories like: Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, The Charlie Brown Christmas, A Christmas Story (and his Red Rider BB gun), A Christmas Carol & the Grinch (I never felt that Christmas could come if I had not seen every TV Special that came on) - they remind me of the things that matter most.. Children making lists; Children looking in shop windows; Good smells coming from the kitchens (my Mom always made several kinds of cookies at Christmas - the only time she really baked) and travels across many miles to be with those that matter in our lives.

It is a time when everyone is nice to everyone - a time when Family matters. It is a time when there truly is goodwill to all on Earth. Peace seems possible.

I hope that our children have a wonderful 2006 Holiday Season and that the parents are not too frazzled and the congregation of CUUC remembers their childhood memories. More than that; take time to share your childhood stories with the children in your lives. At the Tellabration, the MC made much of telling stories to those that matter to us; but I know what he means. We need to tell our stories to the young - NOW. I have my memories of Thanksgivings and Christmases past; however, my mother and both grandmothers and grandfathers are gone now. They never shared their stories - so I have no connection to their Christmas Pasts. I did get my Dad to tell me about his memories and it was a wonderful look into his life - since he is going to be 92 soon - I am glad that I did not miss that opportunity. Here is to a wonderful holiday season full of Stories - family and friends.

CUUC Selected For Major Medical Studies
Henry Halff

Our church has been selected for two cutting-edge studies addressing serious health and nutrition issues.

The first study is designed to once and for all to quash the insidious notion that chocolate has tangible health benefits. The Coalition for a Chocolate-Free America (CCFA), which includes such organizations as the American Fruit Pie Association, the Society for the Advancement of Gummi Bears, and the Carrot Cake Foundation, is concerned about a distressing imbalance in research and reporting on the issue of chocolate and health.

The CCFA points out that, within the last decade alone, 571 published studies have presented the health benefits of chocolate whereas only 3 have delved into its health risks and dangers. To help eliminate this pernicious bias, the CCFA has enlisted CUUC's help. The study's design calls for CUUC members to purchase and consume large quantities of chocolate from the Equal Exchange Interfaith Program. (Equal Exchange is a worker-owned cooperative dedicated to Fair Trade. It is sponsored by several religious organizations, including the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.) CCFA researchers will then examine all participants for symptoms of the dread disorder chocophilia, the easiest symptom to observe being the propensity to purchase and consume even more chocolate.

The second study is sponsored by the non-profit Society for the Advancement of Caffeine in American Life (SACAL). SACAL seeks to add to the already impressive body of evidence indicating that many, perhaps most people enjoy, desire, and (dare we say)

need coffee. To put all doubt to rest on this issue, CUUC members will be offered the opportunity to actually buy coffee (again provided by Fair Exchange) for use in their own homes.

SACAL plans an intense marketing campaign in conjunction with the study. Although details of this campaign have yet to be worked out, the organization has adopted the catchy slogan, "Buy da coffee and no one gets hoit." According to an anonymous source, the competition for a spokesperson has been narrowed to Hulk Hogan and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Please help promote world health by setting aside part of your holiday savings for these ground-breaking studies. Details, including instructions on how you can participate, will be forthcoming soon through CUUC's electronic mailing list and at future services.

#5
AFFINITY GROUPS

Socrates Cafe
Marilyn DeKing

The Brown Bag Socrates Cafe will meet at 12:15 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month at Community Unitarian Universalist Church. The next meeting will be September 3, 2006. It will be moderated by Marilyn DeKing. Bring your lunch and join us for a satisfying philosophical session.

At the beginning of each session, participants submit and vote on the question to be discussed. Resolution is not the goal of the discussion. We usually end with more questions than we began with.

Everyone is welcome to participate in Socrates Cafe or to visit and see what it is about.

Women's Support Group
Jean Halff

The Women's Support Group is open to CUUC women and friends of the church. We meet every 2 weeks, on a Monday night at the church, starting at 7 p.m. and usually finishing before 9 p.m.

Each woman usually talks for about 10 minutes about anything she wishes. However, you don't have to talk if you would rather not. What is divulged is kept confidential unless otherwise stated. It is a great way to get to know the women in the church on a

more personal level in a safe environment. We invite you to come and join us and let us get to know you. 10/23, 11 /6, and 11/20 are meeting times for the current period.

Men's Group
Steven Botts

The CUUC men's group meets every second and fourth Sunday from 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. All CUUC men or visitors are welcome to join us. November dates are 11/12 and 11/26.

Group leadership rotates from meeting to meeting. The leader for each meeting is also the host, and he is responsible for furnishing snacks and drinks.

We usually start off meetings with a clearing, in which each member is allowed to talk about recent events in his life, if he wishes to, for as long as he sees fit. Next, the facilitator introduces the topic for the evening. This may involve a short reading - a poem, an article or other text. The subject could be just about anything that the facilitator would like the group to address: What's going on at CUUC, religion, economics science, health, family, friendship, etc.

Around 8:30, we wind things up by deciding who is going to facilitate the next meeting, declare this one finished, clean up, and leave.

Remarkable Film Group
Clem Chow

The Remarkable Film Group consists of members and friends of CUUC who gather each month to view one feature film and discuss it afterward. Everyone is welcome to attend. The films are usually shown at church at 6 PM on the third Sunday of each month. Films are shown in a series. The attendees select the theme and content of each series normally compose of four films of a common theme, directed by the same person or featuring a specific actor or actress. Current leaders of the group are Clem and Joyce Chow. Any questions about this group may be directed to Clem or Joyce.

#6
DIRECTORY

Officers

President - Mary Grace Ketner, 210-278-0612, mgteller@yahoo.com

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Email Addresses

Messages to the Board of Trustees may be sent to cuuc-board@yahoogroups.com.

Calendar additions and changes should be submitted to Diane Wilson, calendar@cuuca.org.

Suggestions for and comments on the worship program may be sent to cuuc-worship@yahoogroups.com.

Requests for special assistance and pastoral care may be sent to cuuc-cares@yahoogroups.com.

Requests for use of the church facility and reports of maintenance problems may be sent to cuuc-ops@yahoogroups.com.

Changes of address, other membership information, and newsletter subscription or unsubscription requests may be sent to cuuc-members@yahoogroups.com.

Material for and questions about the newsletter may be sent to the editor, Steve Botts, stbotts@texas.net.

CUUC Announce is an electronic mailing list for announcements, information, and questions about church programs and activities. All friends and members of the church are urged to join this list by sending an email to cuuc-annnounce-subscribe@yahoo-groups.com

CUUC Justice is an electronic mailing list devoted to church and denominational programs in the areas of social action, social justice, and social responsibility. Those interested in these programs can join the list by sending an email to cuuc-justice-subscribe@yahoo-groups.com.

CUUC Discuss is a mailing list for exchange of information on any matter of interest to church members and friends. You can join the list by sending an email to cuuc-discuss-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

CUUC Men is the secret mailing list of the CUUC Men's Group. Men who join the list will get in on discussions of Men's Group Activities and the occasional tasteless joke. To subscribe, send an email to cuuc-men-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.