

THE UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF TAOS

Bulletin Board: September 2017

1st Sun,	Sept. 3	<i>The Power and Poetry of Place</i> , Rev. Munro Sickafoose
2nd Sun,	Sept. 10	Circle topic: <i>Companionship</i>
Wed,	Sept. 13	7 p.m. – Women’s Group (<i>Carol Doughty, lccdoughty@gmail.com</i>)
3rd Sun,	Sept. 17	<i>Walden Revisited</i> , Rev. Gary Kowalski
Wed,	Sept. 20	4:30 - 6:00 p.m. – Men’s Group (<i>Bob, rsilver65@gmail.com</i>)
4th Sun,	Sept. 24	Circle topic: <i>Crossroads & Choosing</i>

**Services & Sharing Circles begin 11:00 a.m. at the Masonic Lodge,
124 Camino de Santiago, at intersection with Gusdorf Rd.**



Putting Out the Fire

After my sermon on July 2nd, a number of you asked about actions you can take to help “put out the fire” of global warming—both as individuals and as a UU congregation.



Consumption choices do matter. They just happen to matter a lot more if you’re in the one percent, and especially the top 0.01 percent. It’s important that, at the very least, we take the most effective of those actions: eat less meat, avoid air travel, have fewer children, stop using AC, and drive less (or not at all – a near impossibility here in the western USA.)

As citizens of one of the richest nations on Earth, we take more than our fair share of the world’s precious resources. On average, an inhabitant of North America consumes around 90 kilograms (kg) of resources each day. In Europe, consumption is around 45 kg per day, while in Africa people consume only around 10 kg per day.

It seems like it would be easy to reduce our consumption level to that of Europe. But like so many of our current problems, the underlying problem is a structural one, and simply reducing our personal consumption isn’t enough. A big chunk of that 90kg we consume is used in transportation, housing, heating and cooling, huge retail stores, next day delivery—the very systems that feed us, clothe us, and provide us with all the

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Increasing Our Means to Fulfill Our Commitments

On Sunday, August 13, the subject of our sharing circle was “Being Vulnerable.” Twenty or so people came to share their feelings with others in the congregation. Many of us were feeling especially vulnerable following the violent clash in Charlottesville just the day before. But I think most of us left feeling spiritually fortified by the experience of listening to each others’ stories and sharing our own.

Our sharing circles exemplify more than one of our Unitarian Universalist principles, but on August 13, it spoke with new meaning to “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.” In addition to our regulars, we welcomed one newcomer and four out-of-town visitors. One visitor, Linnie McAdams, comes every year when she visits Taos for a month in the summer from Denton, Texas. Two other visitors, Claudia and Jim, plan to return for more services and circles as they visit here for the month, so maybe you’ll meet them in a week or two. In these times, it seems, no one wants to be away from their UU congregation for long, and they seek out ours when they’re on the road.



Other values we practice regularly—both in circles and services—are “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and “acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.”

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The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism truly align with our own, as we discovered in the vision, mission and covenant process we underwent last year. It helped us all to see clearly the values that matter most to us. The board and many of our members have worked hard to bring those values into practice, including widening our interfaith/intercultural connections, adding small-group activities, and enlarging our music program.

We’ve also tried over the last year or two to reduce demands on our volunteers by hiring people to produce the newsletters and orders of service, as well as to open and close the lodge on service Sundays. We have two superb ministers, who not only speak on Sundays but write for our newsletter every month and for *The Taos News* when they have a broader message to share.

Increasing our visibility and strengthening our spiritual mission in a time of socio-political fragmentation in our country has also increased the amounts we need to budget

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Increasing Our Means, cont'd from page 1

every year. At our most recent board meeting, on July 29, Treasurer Bette Myerson brought to our attention that without drawing down our reserves, we are on track to fall \$9,000 short of what we need to cover the expenses that support our congregation and its mission and vision. We are willing to do that this year, but it's not sustainable over the long term.

Look for a letter in your mailbox within the next few weeks. The board will detail the reasons our costs have risen and also suggest ways we might bring the budget back into balance. In the meantime, think about this: A pledge is the amount we promise to pay, but that amount can always be increased—either regularly or on certain months when our own budgets allow or when we feel especially generous. Please consider increasing yours. Think of the words we speak at our chalice lighting and extinguishing, and recognize that your pledge is a concrete commitment toward supporting those values.

The board wants you to know exactly where we are financially, and why we have arrived here. We are also very open to hearing your suggestions. In the meantime, you can review our Vision, Mission, and Covenant statements on our website at utaos.org/about-us/principles to see how far we've come toward achieving them.

Thank you,
Barbara Scott



**HAPPY SEPTEMBER
BIRTHDAY
WISHES TO...**

7 Linda Aubrecht

If your name is not on the birthday list yet, please contact our Admin, Welcome Lindsey: welcomelindsey@gmail.com.

Putting Out the Fire, cont'd from page 1

gizmos and gadgets of modern life. It's an incredibly wasteful way of doing things.

So it should come as no surprise that the best way we can fight global warming—and a host of other environmental and social problems—is to get involved in changing those systems!

This starts with being active in local government – at the city, county, and state level – so we can influence federal government from the grassroots. Tax and regulatory policies need changing so that emitting carbon dioxide (and other pollutants and toxins) isn't rewarded. We need to pour enormous amounts of money and effort into building out a new energy infrastructure of cheap solar, cheap wind, and cheap battery storage. Such an infrastructure could potentially eliminate 90% of our fossil fuel use, while giving a massive boost to the world's economy. And that's only one possibility for a sustainable future for all. There are many others.

But we need to act, and act now. We need to show up in the halls of power, pick up the phone, raise a ruckus, support or elect people who see the danger and take it seriously. People who are interested in systemic change. THAT is how we put out the fire!

Blessings,
Rev. Munro

Music Committee News

Singing practice with Martha 10:30 am on the 1st and 3rd Sundays each month. Please join when you can.

There will be **no guest musician** in September as we prepare for the All Music 5th Sunday in October.



Sunday, September 3 11:00 am

The Power and Poetry of Place
Rev. Munro Sickafoose

What does it mean to be committed to a place? How do we engage with the land and its inhabitants—human, non-human, and perhaps more than human? To commit and engage is to connect with the particular power of that place and its poetry.

Sunday, September 17 11:00 am

Walden Revisited
Rev. Gary Kowalski

This year marks the bicentennial birthday of poet, philosopher, naturalist, tax resister and environmental mystic Henry David Thoreau. Was he a sage of simple living? A crank? This morning Gary Kowalski ponders the lasting significance of this lapsed Unitarian's life and work with a selection of readings from *Walden*; or, *Life in the Woods*.

Women's Group

Meets 2nd Wed. of every month at 7 pm in different homes.

Book being read: *Field Notes on the Compassionate Life*, by Marc Barasch.

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