

The Unitarian
Congregation of Taos
March 2018
Bulletin Board



- Sun., March 4 *Conflicts of Conscience*,
Rev. Munro Sickafoose
- Sun., March 11 *Sharing Circle: Transformation*
- Wed., March 14 Women's Group, 6 p.m.
- Sun., March 18 *Hatching Miracles*,
Rev. Gary Kowalski
- Wed., March 21 Men's Group, 4:30 p.m.
- Sun., March 25 *Sharing Circle: Living in the Question*

Services & Circles begin at 11 a.m. at the Masonic Lodge, 124 Camino de Santiago, at the intersection with Gusdorf Road.

Rising Tides

Rev. Munro Sickafoose

You probably didn't notice, but on January 4th of this year, the Unitarian Universalist Association issued a press release. The subject? The closing of UUA headquarters at 24 Farnsworth Street due to flooding. The "Bomb Cyclone" flooded Boston's coastal neighborhoods, and UUA headquarters is right smack dab in the middle of one — the Seaport District. The press release downplayed the flooding, saying only that the lower garage level had water in it, and that Farnsworth Street was flooded.

Not only was this event utterly predictable, I can safely predict that not only will it become a regular event in the years to come, it will only get worse as sea levels continue to rise. The disturbing part is not that UUA headquarters flooded. The disturbing part is that our leadership ignored the science and invested in a building that will not only be subject to more flooding in the decades to come, but will continue to decrease in value with every passing year.

Even in 2013 when the decision to move was made, the science was clear: sea levels were going to rise, and the only question was how fast and how much. In 2017, we have a better idea: a lot, and very soon. Granted, climate science is still evolving, and in 2013 the predictions weren't quite as extreme as now, but anyone paying attention knew that buying a building on the Boston waterfront — or any waterfront — could not be considered a safe long-term investment. The UUA occupied 25 Beacon Street for not quite 90 years. My guess is that the UUA will have to abandon 24 Farnsworth in less than 30 years.

Our leadership does not take climate change seriously, and ignores the science and the consequences of its actions. Every year, we hold a General Assembly (GA), to which thousands of people travel by plane, dumping thousands of tons of CO₂ and other dangerous emissions into the atmosphere. And at last

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Get to Know Your New Board Members

Virginia Saporta was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, but lived most of her life in the USA. Her first language is Spanish. She retired three years ago after a 31-year career as a high school Spanish teacher and school counselor.

Despite living in many places, she considers Nebraska home. After graduating from high school in Omaha, she received two degrees — a B.A. in Spanish and History/Secondary Education and an M.A. in Counseling Psychology — from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In 2004, she married Dr. Bill Waters, an anthropologist. Because of his work in Haiti for more than 30 years, she has come to know and love Haiti and its people ("shithole that it is, according to DT," she notes). "We travel to Haiti as often as we can; her people and culture are very important to us."

Virginia has a daughter, Emily, who lives in Lincoln with her three children: Brenden 16, Anthony 7, and Betty 3. "They are the most important part of our lives," she says. Her son Andy died in 2013, when he was 28 years old.

Bill and Virginia moved to Taos from Lincoln in November 2016. Their three dogs and an orange tabby cat are important members of their family.

"My spiritual journey is of primary importance to me," Virginia says. "Buddhism, as a way of seeing life and the world, has become important in helping to guide me on that journey."

As a UU for many years, she was active in the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, serving on several committees and engaging in almost all of the activities of the church. "Our minister, Charles Stephen, became a significant family friend and spiritual guide," she says.

For about 10 years, during the '90s, Virginia

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Rising Tides

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year's GA, the voices trying to get climate change on the agenda were shut down. There are many other problematic aspects to our approach to climate change, too many to list here, but as a faith, we are failing to address this increasing existential threat in an effective way.

If we're really serious about climate change, things need to change, and action needs to be taken. I have a couple of modest suggestions. First, we need to sell 24 Farnsworth Street while it still has value. Then move UUA headquarters to less expensive real estate in the middle of the country — to a location more easily accessed by our congregations, our ministerial candidates, and more reflective of our national diversity. With the remaining proceeds, start a fund to help relocate the low income residents of Boston and surrounding areas who will be affected by sea level rise. Second, hold GA every three years. (Five?) In between GA's, hold regional assembly's — offset from GA. If need be, create smaller regions that are easier to travel in, and more in tune with local concerns. We must decentralize and localize our governance if we are to weather the coming environmental changes.

There will be resistance to these ideas. Tradition will be cited. Those who invoke a central authority residing in Boston will be afraid of losing power. But the status quo of liberal climate denialism has been allowed to linger on too long in Boston, to the detriment of our faith and the fate of the world. We can no longer ignore the reality of climate disruption, no longer pretend that business-as-usual will get the job done.

Sunday, March 4th — Conflicts of Conscience Rev. Munro Sickafoose

What does it mean to have a conscience? What happens when the dictates of our conscience conflict with the dictates of another's? Is democracy up to the task of reconciling our differences?

Board Members

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lived in Atlanta and belonged to the UU congregation there. But because it was so far from home and so large, she didn't get that involved. Still, she says, "I very much enjoyed the Sunday services and the wonderful sermons of the minister, Edward Frost."

"I am curious and am interested in almost everything. I LOVE to read and do a lot of it — fiction and nonfiction, all genres. I am very interested in the life of the mind and in culture, in the broadest sense. I like to hike, cook, garden, knit, and do beadwork. I am so grateful for the welcoming embrace of the members the UU Congregation of Taos."

Ray Taylor moved to Taos in 2017. He is the Circulation Director for The Taos News, and that's the job that brought him to here. Ray was born in Virginia and lived there until 1994, when he and his family moved to Sarasota, Florida, where they worked and lived for 18 years. Ray has worked in newspaper circulation for most of his adult life.

He is Troop Camp, First Aid, and CPR trained, and holds this function in his daughter's Girl Scout troop in Taos. He bowls on a league with his co-workers from The Taos News at the new bowling ally, Gutters.

Ray has been married for 38 years (in April) to Elaine Taylor. They have three children; the youngest is a fourth grader at Ranchos Elementary School. Ray's older children have grown up and flown out of the nest.

Ray loves to cook and spend time with his family. He coordinated and cooked for both the UCOT Fall Harvest Feast and the Feb. 4 lunch following the annual meeting. His wife, Elaine, and their daughter, Madison, were a big help in putting it together. Ray said, "Even if I weren't on the board, I'd do this anyway, because I love y'all!" And that feeling is mutual!

Welcome, Ray & Virginia!

Call on Our Ministers in Times of Need

The Shared Ministry development team learned through survey responses that many of you were not aware that our ministers' contracts include providing pastoral care. Pastoral care is offered to those in need of emotional and spiritual support.

If you are going through a crisis (or even a hard time), feel free to reach out to our ministers — they're here to help.

The Rev. Gary Kowalski

gary.kowalski@gmail.com, (505) 257-5014

The Rev. Munro Sickafoose

munrosickafoose@gmail.com, (970) 946-2814

Taos County Imagination Library

TCIL, Taos County Imagination Library, is an affiliate of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. We mail free high quality, age appropriate books to children from birth to five. TCIL currently serves more than 550 children and is growing. Every book is personalized with the child's name and is mailed directly to the child's home each month. This effort creates a gift experience that makes books exciting and shows the child someone is thinking of them.

The Book Selection Committee, all early childhood literacy experts, reviews and chooses titles for the year. Books are chosen that meet the needs of children as they grow from birth to five. All the books have themes of inspiration and imagination. They focus on the love of reading and learning; regard for diversity of people, roles, culture, and environment; self-esteem and confidence promotion, and appreciation of art and aesthetics.

The first book a child receives is "The Little Engine that Could." The month a child turns five they receive "Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!" Many of the books are available in braille and audio formats so young blind and visually impaired children also can benefit from the program. Some books are bilingual.

Studies suggest this program is associated with higher measures of early language and math development. In Grant County research has shown a significant increase in third grade reading scores. We anticipate similar change here once TCIL has been in operation for three more years

The program costs \$25.10 per child annually. Funding through a state literacy grant reimburses 50% of the cost of the books and mailing. Affiliates and their local champions must secure the remainder.

We appreciate the past donations by the Unitarian Congregation of Taos and hope you will continue to support this worthy program. Our goal for 2018 is to reach 600 children while "graduating" about 80 five-year-olds.

Caryle Zorumski, UCOT Member, Coordinator, Taos County Imagination Library (751-0449)

Mindful Consumption Group

The Mindful Consumption Group will meet after the UU service on Sunday, February 18, at 12:30 p.m. at Hunan's, just around the corner from Bent Lodge on Paseo. Our purchasing, consumption, and disposal choices have economic, social, financial, and environmental consequences that affect not only humans but the larger web of life.

There are no "right" or "wrong" choices that we must all agree on, but rather the idea is to make choices that work for each of us after thinking mindfully about such actions. At this meeting, we'll decide future topics for discussion — from our food, product, and clothing choices to disposal of unwanted items. Chris Westover will initiate a discussion of consumption in general, and her experiment of not buying anything for a year, inspired by Ann Patchett's recent editorial in the New York Times, "My Year of No Shopping." To read the inspiring article, Google patchett, times, shopping.

Our Community Outreach: CAV

Mimi Owensby

I think everyone knows that Community Against Violence (CAV) is a shelter for women who have suffered from domestic violence and/or sexual assault. But did you know that men and children can find a safe haven there too? CAV has an on-site emergency shelter for adults and children. They provide a 24-hour crisis hotline and also offer legal and medical advocacy services.

With the assumption that each client is an expert regarding her or his own situation and needs, CAV employs a client-centered, client-directed approach to intervention, which can enable a client to make positive and appropriate choices toward her or his own future well-being.

Volunteer opportunities are many — more than volunteering at the Thrift Store. Volunteers can help in the front office by serving as a front-desk receptionist. And they are present on an as-needed basis to staff tables at various events throughout the year, including health fairs, arts and crafts fairs, and fundraising booths at local businesses. Also, Spanish-speaking translators are needed at events and to assist with presentations. Finally, volunteers are needed for landscaping and, on occasion, to help with various maintenance projects. Maybe you could be a volunteer at CAV. Think about it.

Sunday, March 18 11:00 am
“Hatching Miracles” – Rev. Gary Kowalski

Maybe Einstein didn't really say it, but there is some truth to the observation that there are two ways to live your life: as though everything is a miracle or as though nothing is. This month, on the verge of the vernal equinox, our co-minister Rev. Gary Kowalski explores some of springtime's everyday marvels. A few could be living in your own backyard.



UU Women's Group

On March 14 at 6 p.m., the UU Women will watch Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth, “The Hero's Journey,” which is Episode 1 in the famed 25-plus-year-old series of interviews by Bill Moyers with Joseph Campbell. Joseph Campbell, the acclaimed author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), has been described as “a beaming flashlight into the darkness.” He was interested in myths as a kind of compass for self-actualization.

Campbell followed three themes in myths:

- 1) Realize your shadow.
- 2) Find your personal myth.
- 3) Don't try to live your life too soon.

In his study of the hero myth, Campbell posits the existence of a “monomyth”: a universal pattern that is the essence of, and common to, heroic tales in every culture. We will meet at our new location: the Bridge Club room by Enterprise. Come join us, and offer your thoughts after we watch the film.

There are heroes among us!

Questions? Contact: Marsha Fawns, Chris Westover, Barbara Martinez, or Carol Doughty.

Notes from the President

Barbara Scott's summary of the Annual Meeting was emailed on February 7.

Music Committee News

Singing practice with Martha at 10:30 a.m.
on the 1st & 3rd Sundays.
All are welcome, attend when you can.

Unitarian Prayer

On Tuesday, February 6th, our own Mary Gray was invited to represent us by giving the opening prayer at the County Commissioners' Chambers! Her remarks and the prayer she spoke are below.

Good Morning,

I am a member of the Taos Unitarian Universalist congregation. We appreciate the invitation to be with you today, because like you, our actions emphasize service to our community. We act on these seven principles:

First Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

Second Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

Third Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

Fourth Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

Fifth Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large

Sixth Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all

Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Because we live our commitments in the community, I am honored to come before the commissioners of this county who are charged with providing just, compassionate and intelligent leadership for our residents.

May you pause to connect to your spiritual home as you begin this work today. In quiet reflection, may you find the courage, the conscience, and the clarity of mind to provide leadership which implements the best of our human visions for community. In peace and honor, I salute you for your willingness to serve.

Amen