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Welcome Grace!

Grace Garner, a member of UU Church of the Desert, accepted an invitation to join the UULM-CA Board. Entering her third year at Pitzer College (one of the Claremont Colleges), she brings a passion for youth and young adult leadership, politics & religion to her board work. Welcome, Grace!

Young UU Leaders Join Clergy at Capitol

Drawn from San Diego to Davis, young UU leaders traveled to Sacramento on April 17th to join UU clergy and lay leaders in lifting up a religious voice on behalf of full civil marriage equality. The following day, after joining clergy of other faiths for a press conference and an opportunity to educate legislators about the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Act (AB19), UUs gathered back at the hostel for closing worship. "I learned more in one day about the way our government works than I have learned in a lifetime of classes. Today was amazing!" commented Parker Bugush, age 17. UULM is thrilled to be working with the next generation of faith-based advocates!

Special thanks to the event organizers: Kate Throop, Tera Little, the Rev. Darcey Laine, Suzanne Bernardi, Riley McLaughlin, and Greg McGonigle; and to the Rev. John Millspaugh who spoke for the UUs at the interfaith press conference.

See page (8-9) for a Marriage Equality update, including photos from our successful Valentine's Campaign.



It's time to insure all of California's children

by Yvonne Schumacher Strejcek

We love our kids. Virtually everyone would say they agree with that simple statement. In a world divided into red and blue, Democrat and Republican, left and right, conservative and progressive, on at least one thing we solidly agree: We love our kids.

Loving our state's kids means, in part, giving them the attention and care they need. One way to do that is to be certain all kids are covered by health

care insurance. Californians for Healthy Kids is a broad-based coalition working on the 100 Percent Campaign, which will assure that all kids in California are covered by health insurance.

Each and every one. No exceptions.

This goal is definitely within our reach. Nine out of 10 kids are already covered. This means that of California's 10 million kids, only about 1 million

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From the Director

We covenant to affirm and promote... the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large (5th UU Principle)

When I served a parish, I thought that "taking a position" was usually more bother than it was worth - seemed like a lot of word-smithing and not much action. UUs may covenant to promote the use of democratic process, but it is hard to get the spirit moving when you haven't had lunch, it is Sunday after church, the kids are restless, and you are mired down in Roberts Rules of Order.



personal ideas, you can still love each other! "We need not think alike to love alike." (Parker) I can assure you that not all Catholics or evangelicals agree with every social teaching of their church.

Can taking a position build community and deepen our faith?

Before one congregation took a position on the war in Iraq, the Board asked members of its Justice Council

Now that I am working at the state level, I have a different vantage point from which to see our many social justice ministries. When trying to have an influence statewide, it is definitely important to put your ideas in writing. Legislators do look at the list of endorsers and opponents when considering legislation. Congregations of other faiths appear more frequently on such lists than UUs. Why are we, who are so active locally, reluctant to "take a position" and be visible at the state level?

I am guessing it has something to do with the following:

- 1) we don't realize that "taking a position" is important.
- 2) we are afraid that taking a position on a piece of legislation will somehow violate the separation of church and state
- 3) we don't want members who may disagree with the majority sentiment to feel excluded or uncomfortable
- 4) we haven't learned how to take positions in a manner that builds community and deepens our faith

Is it important? Definitely! Many legislators have deep values, and are touched by testimony from faith communities whose motives are uncluttered by financial interest in particular legislation. A side benefit is the added visibility of Unitarian Universalism.

Does taking a position on an issue threaten the separation of church and state? No! The separation of church and state prohibits government from establishing or favoring a certain religion. Congregations can and should express their opinion on moral issues that have a legislative expression. To dole out charity, without advocating for justice, is to betray the most vulnerable with a kiss.

What if someone feels left out? We succumb to an idolatry of community, lifting one value above all others, if we avoid taking a position for fear of excluding someone. We do not expect unanimity in other areas of church life, be it voting on the color of the sanctuary or whether to go to two services. If your congregation takes a position on a social issue that is not in keeping with your

to reach out to those they guessed were likely to be in the minority opinion. They called particular individuals, listened deeply, and by the time of the congregational meeting, had incorporated some of the minority viewpoint into their proposal. After congregational discussion and debate, the vote leaned heavily in the direction of opposing the war, but was not unanimous. At a subsequent worship service, a man in the minority opinion spoke, saying that while he disagreed with the position they had taken, he knew that he was heard and respected. He loved his congregation, and unequivocally supported the congregation's right to take a public stand on a profound and complex moral issue of our time.

Community is built and faith deepens when we risk relevance, know our history, demonstrate mutual respect, listen, use an inclusive process, invoke a loving spirit, learn from our mistakes, and keep on worshipping together.

Some things to keep in mind:

Educate and listen before voting. When appropriate, take a position on an issue, not a piece of legislation. Sometimes it takes years to pass a change in public policy. Give authority for the minister and/or social justice committee to use your congregational statement as the basis to indicate congregational support or opposition to specific legislation as it arises. Walk your talk; commit to putting your words into action. Don't take a position on too many issues or you will become a mile wide and an inch deep.

Risk an open mind and heart. Congregations can become safe vessels for honest inquiry where we wrestle with complex social issues in light of our faith, and touch values deeper than party politics.

And don't forget to sing! We have the capacity to become healthy springboards for spiritually engaged activism.

- Rev. Lindi Ramsden

MCCARTHY'S GHOST

Rev. Alicia McNary Forsey, Ph.D.

In 1945, Truman issued an order to search out any "infiltration of disloyal persons" in the U.S. government.¹ The witch-hunt of Joseph McCarthy and the House on Un-American Activities Committee reached into every corner of our society, silencing a public who had come to live in fear, lest they lose their livelihood, reputation, or freedom. Just as in the 16th Century Inquisition, books were banned and burned, including *The Selected Works of Thomas Jefferson*.²

Professors, writers, artists, aerospace workers, film producers—nobody was safe if they dared to voice views not in keeping with the party line. "The walls have ears" was a reminder to exercise caution when speaking one's true conscience. How many people lost their jobs because employers did not want to risk having a "pinko" on the payroll? How many went to prison, falsely accused? How many lived with deep depression, unable to support their families? How many committed suicide, having done no wrong?

A "loyalty oath" was required of teachers, government workers, engineers designing new technology, and more. Unitarian and Universalist congregations were put in the position of signing the "loyalty oath", or taking the risk of being shut down.

I was a member of Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) at the time of McCarthy's interrogation. I had done my time crawling under my desk at school, practicing for the day I needed to protect myself from the enemy of our country. I joined other young Unitarians, presenting the film "Operation Abolition" to other churches, and idealistically hoping that audiences would see the light. On one of our visits I lost a bit of my innocence. Following our presentation, a woman came up and spit on me. I was shocked by this response, just as I am now when I am searched when I set off the alarm as I attempt to board a plane. Okay, I forgot to take off the bracelet that I wear when I travel—one that belonged to my Unitarian mother who worked to stop Senator Joseph McCarthy from his abusive activities.

Remembering my upbringing, I must ask myself why I remain silent in the face of today's growing threats. I have gradually turned inward to my own work with a quiet conviction that I cannot make a difference — feeling overwhelmed and sensing it easier to stay quiet than to go out on a limb alone and end up in jail, out of a



1902 - 1981
Stephen H. Fritchman

job, or with a ruined reputation, unable to pursue subjects that spark my intellectual passions. I see the ghost of McCarthy more clearly with each passing day.

How did our Unitarian and Universalist congregations meet the challenge of McCarthy? Fear of loss could not trump the value of integrity among many of the liberals, including the voices of ministers in our Unitarian and Universalist congregations. Ministers like Stephen Fritchman [First Unitarian, LA] "embodied the concern for social change that has been an important current of twentieth-century liberal religion."³ Fritchman refused to give up his right to speak his own conscience. In addition to bold preaching, congregations also entered into strategic

collaboration. In the heat of the McCarthy debate, several of the ministers from California congregations with endowment funds got together and decided which ones would sign the Loyalty Oath and which would refuse. The resources of congregations who signed the oath could carry those congregations who risked everything.⁴

Such collaboration in the face of danger reminds me of our distant cousins the Anabaptists, radical reformers outlawed by both Catholics and Protestants during the 16th century. Forced into hiding in the forests, a "reader" went from community to community to read and discuss scripture, helping illiterate Anabaptists to learn the Bible by heart, passing on news and needs of each group, sharing items of use, and forming a thread of communication that kept each group apprised of the others. Some scholars say that this is one of the first examples of Congregational Polity. ***Each group independent, yet working in collaboration with other groups.***

The Anabaptists were martyred more than any other group of radicals, but they had the courage to live by what they valued. The gospels were their authority; the teachings of Jesus their model for right living. Our theology has changed since the time of the Anabaptists, but if we get things right, we will follow their example of independence and collaboration.

It is not often that a new organization comes along that has both the potential to raise issues and then to address them in a manner that reduces the sense of hopelessness of any one individual. I was surprised to feel a ray of hope when I was invited to attend

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UULM-CA's Water Democracy Team Begins

Following the Board of Trustees selection of "Water Rights" as an "Incubator Issue" for UULM-CA, UU experts who share more than a century-and-half of experience in various aspects of California water policy, management and law, joined clergy and other interested parties in Sacramento on March 12th to kick off UULM-CA's Water Democracy work.

Cognizant of Mark Twain's maxim, that "whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting", they have begun addressing California's complex water issues by developing a set of Guiding Principles consistent with UU values, investigating opportunities for collaboration with interfaith and secular groups working in this arena, becoming more familiar with legislative initiatives, and working to select some points of education and

action where UULM-CA can make a difference. UULM is pleased that the UUSC has also chosen "Water Rights" as its focus for environmental justice work.



While UULM-CA's Water Democracy Team's work is currently bubbling below the surface, we look forward to it "springing forth" this coming fall. If you are interested in becoming involved with this effort, please contact the UULM-CA office.

Thanks to team members, Karen Paull, Dr. John Tucker, Bob Niblack, Mary Nelson, Rev. Craig Scott, Nicole Paris-Smith, Rev. Beth Johnson, Fred Seamon, Kris Ockershauser, Lorrie Gervin, Carol Thornton, Pete Chadwick, and Julie Cidell for jumping in the deep end.

VICTORY FOR SMALL TOWN'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST MULTINATIONAL WATER PRIVATIZATION

by Ben Bush

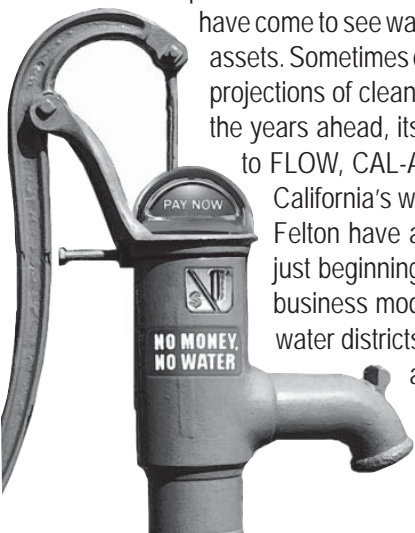
Within months after Felton turned over control of its town's water system to a for-profit company California-American Water, CAL-AM was in turn swallowed up by RWE, a German multinational and the third largest private water supplier in the world. The new management has attempted to double rates since the time of the purchase and one local elementary school's bill jumped from \$200 to \$2,000 per month. Residents of this small town outside Santa Cruz responded to the financial shock of privatization by creating FLOW Felton Friends of Locally Owned Water, a grassroots effort to buy back the town's water supply.

Under current conditions, Felton can use the right of eminent domain to take back their water system whether or not the company wants to sell. This is the same law that allows towns to purchase property for roads or other civic projects. However, Fresno's State Assemblyman Juan Arambula introduced AB 1397, which would have prevented applying eminent domain to buy back private water utilities, destroying Felton's chances of making their utilities public again. This bill would have made it impossible for the citizens of Felton to buy back their water supply.

Water privatization in Felton and in neighboring towns has met with substantial opposition from a broad array of sources from Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, a watchdog group which opposes privatization; to a golf course concerned about their skyrocketing bills; to a local military base concerned that increased costs could lead to base closure. Amid the public outcry, Assemblyman Arambula withdrew the bill.

While the withdrawal of Arambula's bill is a victory for FLOW, they still face an upstream struggle; they will need a 2/3 majority in the fall election to approve the bond for the buy back. If you would like to become more involved visit feltonflow.org or contact feltonflow@aol.com

The problem is that CAL-AM doesn't want to sell. Corporations have come to see water resources as increasingly valuable assets. Sometimes quaintly referred to as "Blue Gold," with projections of clean water becoming ever more scarce in the years ahead, its value is sure to increase. According to FLOW, CAL-AM is working aggressively to buy up California's water supply. Events similar to those in Felton have already occurred in Stockton and are just beginning in nearby Valley Springs. CAL-AM's business model proposes buying up locally owned water districts, consolidating them to reduce costs, and then applying for rate increases to boost profits.



It's time . . . (cont. from p.1)

still need coverage. And of that remaining million or so, nearly half may be covered by programs that already exist. They just need the relevant follow-up to make sure they get in the door. Right now they are blocked primarily by application procedures and eligibility restrictions that are too stringent.

In mid-April, due in large measure to the organizing of PICO California (see www.picocalifornia.org), 4200 people from diverse faith communities from around the state held a Town Hall meeting with political leaders in Sacramento to secure health care coverage for all of California's children.

Insured kids are healthier. Healthy kids do better in school. Working parents and care-giving extended families can be more productive if their kids are healthy. Moreover, if families and children have access to preventative care and treatment, rather than waiting for illness to strike and grow severe, to the point of becoming an emergency, the total cost of medical care is reduced.

Legislation has now passed in the California Senate (SB437) and Assembly (AB772) - both known as "the California healthy kids legislation." These companion bills provide for a strong

partnership of families, business and government to assure that all kids who are currently uninsured, up to the age of 21, have access to health care coverage. The proposed legislation will also make it easier for families to enroll their kids and keep them covered. It will also build on what's already working, including the success of local initiatives for children's health.

Ten California counties are already using a model similar to what is proposed in this legislation, another 17 are in the planning stages. It's good business. It's good public policy. It's a matter of ethics, justice and compassion, of our deepest values and our faith in the future. It's a matter of answering human needs. It's life affirming, maybe even life saving, and it's in our hands. It's a matter of soul and calling.

Let's do what we can and must for the children of California we all profess to love.

Yvonne Schumacher Strojcek is a member of the Board of Trustees for the UULM-CA. A longer version of this op-ed was published in her hometown paper The Union, serving Northern Nevada County.

Next Step for UULM-CA – Regional Organizing

A Los Angeles native who has been organizing on behalf of marriage equality, when asked to compare mobilizing support in Massachusetts to organizing in California, once remarked "You could tuck Massachusetts under the arm of Los Angeles and hardly know its there!" No disrespect to Massachusetts, which, while small, has had a formidable impact on the UUA and the US. However, the 2000 Census does show Los Angeles County has one and a half times as many people as the entire state of Massachusetts.

In order to reach a state as BIG as California, the UU Legislative Ministry began by utilizing the internet – you can join UULM, fill out our issue survey, make donations, find educational information, send an action alert, and even do statewide committee work online. If you do not get information from UULM via email and would like to, please sign up on our website in the Join UULM section! www.uulmca.org

While the internet has many virtues – fast and inexpensive - nothing beats building real relationships person-to-person. In order to more effectively bring our UU values to the public square, and build the capacity of the UU Legislative Ministry, UULM is starting a campaign to organize regional UULM networks. Bi-annual regional gatherings will include worship, training, legislative updates, planning for coordinated education and action, and, of course, food!

Our efforts to organize in regions will begin in the following seven areas. Other regions will be added throughout the year. If you'd like to help, feel free to contact the UULM Board member who is helping to get the regional ball rolling. If you want to get started in a region not on the initial start-up list, please contact the UULM office at admin@uulmca.org

SF North Bay - Leland Bond-Upson

lbu@linex.com

SF East Bay - Lee Helena Lawrence & Lisa Sargent

leehelenalawrence@yahoo.com

lisa_sargent@hotmail.com

Sierra Foothills - Yvonne Schumacher Strojcek

yesyvonne@gmail.com

Santa Monica and South Bay - Rev. Silvio Nardoni

silvionardoni@sbcglobal.net

LA and San Gabriel Valley - Jo'Ann De Quattro

jdequattro@uunehborhood.org

Ventura County - Tom Stapleford

stapletc@adelphia.net

Our new board member, Grace Garner, will be working to organize interested **PSWD Youth and Young Adults**.

grace.garner@gmail.com

From Both Sides Now

by Claire Wagner, First Unitarian Church of San José

A Personal Perspective on the Healthcare Maze

I'm constantly amazed at how often the subject of healthcare comes up in discussions with my family and friends. I don't mean health, but the healthcare system. As you can guess, the news is often downright discouraging.

The biggest issue within my inner circle is maintaining benefits. My mother worked for a large corporation for 15 years before she retired. For 13 of those years, the job was not a good fit, but it was the only place she could work part-time and receive health benefits.

Soon after a relative was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, her company went from "dot-com" to "dot-bomb". She lost her income, benefits, and savings. Due to her illness, she could no longer work full-time. She found part-time work with an accounting firm, but without health coverage. Luckily, a friend who was a cancer survivor himself, offered to hire her and enroll her in his small tech company's plan and let the accounting firm contract for her services. She still pays \$335 a month for medication.

My husband has been laid off six times in Silicon Valley's volatile economy. Our first thought was always, "How are we going to keep our health insurance?" After the last layoff, my husband decided to start a consulting business. For continuity, we wanted to stay in our HMO, but three of us were not accepted - and we are basically healthy! Time to get creative. A business partner enrolled my husband in his health insurance plan as a commissioned salesperson. We pay the full cost of the HMO plus fairly high co-pays. At least we are insured.

Now let's take a look at the other side: the health care providers.

I worked for a year and a half in a small, family-owned chiropractic office. I was the office manager in charge of billings. At least 75% of my time was spent handling insurance issues. Ultimately, it wore me out.

My least favorite task was explaining patients' health insurance plans to them. I have to admit that I often didn't fully understand the terms of my own plans, so I tried to be sympathetic to the many who didn't understand theirs. The most difficult points to get across were the underlying

principles of private health insurance: it's insurance, not a guarantee. It's a for-profit business, not a public service. It's a benefit, not a right. Most importantly, it's a contract between an employer and a health insurance company, not a contract between an individual and his or her doctor.

Most health care providers manage the relationship with the insurance company as a courtesy to the patient. Given the incredible difficulties of dealing with multiple insurance companies, why would physicians do this? Insurance companies have become the gateway to patient access. In the past, people chose physicians who were known in their communities. Now, most seek referrals by entering a zip code on their insurance company website and picking a name. This is where the real economic advantage of the health insurance companies comes from: controlling access to patients. It's a brilliant strategy that pays billions in profits every year.

Some providers streamline by eliminating insurance and offering patients special deals for payment in cash. For physicians with a loyal clientele or an in-demand specialty, this can benefit both patient and provider. Smaller providers, however, can't afford to bypass health insurance, especially those serving middle or low-income communities.

Government plans are frequently not worth joining for the provider. We generally lost money on Medicare and Medical. The systems are difficult to navigate, the benefits very limited, and payments were frequently denied. Sometimes it was easier and cheaper to just take a patient's \$7.87 Medical co-pay (for a \$60 service) and not bother to bill the system. Our Medicare patients always ran out of benefits well before the end of the year. We absorbed the cost and treated them for the co-pay to allow for continuity and good health. Most doctors won't do this. Many have dropped Medical and Medicare altogether.

Even when providers participate in a health insurance network, the number of payment variables is staggering. The same service is not always paid at the same rate for the same patient. Different insurance companies require very different payment procedures. I spent a lot of time trying to understand why bills were not paid or were underpaid.

After significant decreases in reimbursements and increases in paperwork, one physician sold his practice of 20 years. The new doctors who bought the practice faced delays in becoming certified by all of the health insurance companies. So as not to lose clients, they gave treatments for free or for modest co-pays until all of their certifications were complete. Nearly a year later, their practice is still not very profitable.

Both patients and physicians are hurt by this incredibly complex and seemingly unfair health care "system." I've seen both sides, and we all need reform.

California Health Insurance Reliability Act Moves Forward!



What follows in the quality of our helping when we begin to know ourselves beyond separateness? ... We are not so much helping out, then, because it is "me" needing to tend to "you".

We're helping out because it is "us". The more we understand and dwell in that truth, the more we serve simply in the way of things. If any of "Us" needs help. If one of "Our" arms gets caught in a door, naturally we use the other of "Our" arms to set it free. Helping happens not because it's been weighed and considered; it happens because the barriers to its lawful and automatic expression have fallen away.

- Ram Dass and Paul Gorman, *How Can I Help?*

Over 6 million Californians are estimated to be without health insurance. Unions and employers struggle with spiraling health costs. Health care emergencies put many families into bankruptcy.

Senator Sheila Kuehl is spearheading an effort to put all Californians in one insurance pool to share the risk and save billions in administrative costs. The state's enormous purchasing power can also result in deep discounts for prescription drugs. Senator Kuehl's bill, (SB840) the California Health Insurance Reliability Act, allows Californians to choose their own physician, a privilege that is currently not available to most.

Bolstered by the Lewin Group's independent analysis that demonstrated substantial financial savings, SB840 passed

the Senate, and is now in the Assembly. It is likely to take a mobilization, on the order of the civil rights movement, to pass comprehensive health care reform. UULM is happy to be a part of this growing coalition.

Farm worker and civil rights leader Dolores Huerta recently expressed her support. "Most people would not be willing to have public schools, firefighters, paramedics and roads available only for those who can afford them. Why do we tolerate a health care system that guarantees inequity? The United States is the only developed nation in the world that does not offer some form of universal health care coverage.... We in California led the way on immigrant, women's and other civil rights. By passing SB840, California can be a model for the nation that health care for all is possible, affordable and equitable."

If you are interested in establishing a health care reform task group in your congregation, please be in touch with our office.



MATCH YOUR MONEY

Support UULM-CA's Fund Drive

The Neighborhood UU Church in Pasadena is offering its third matching grant to help the UU Legislative Ministry in its start-up years. After we raise another \$65,000 in pledges or donations for our 05-06 fiscal year, Neighborhood Church will contribute \$15,000. Thanks Neighborhood!

The best way to support UULM-CA is to become a Monthly Sustainer, signing up online www.uulmca.org or in the enclosed donor envelope to give a monthly gift via check, credit card, or through automatic deduction from your checking account. Monthly donors help UULM-CA to operate more efficiently, and

build a more secure and predictable financial foundation.

In our fall newsletter we will be publishing the names of donors who sign up to become Monthly Sustainers, as well as all those who contribute \$500 or more. We hope to add your name to the list before September 20th!

Special thanks to the Pacific Central District (UUA), Pacific Southwest District (UUA), UUA Freedom to Marry Fund, UUSC, William and Alice Hinckley Fund, and the Society for Community Ministry for their continued support!

Standing on the Side of Love

We asked you to help UULM deliver 1138 valentines to the Governor expressing UU support for civil marriage equality – one valentine for each of the federal rights and responsibilities of civil marriage that do not come with domestic partnerships. Be careful what you ask for! (Note to self: when you have organized a statewide UU action, get more volunteers to help open the mail!) When we arrived on the morning of February 15th, to mounds of overnight express boxes, we were beside ourselves with delight. 3800 Valentines – more than three times what we had expected. You outdid yourselves with creative slogans and heartfelt notes.

For the first time since the McCarthy era, 64 California UU congregations mobilized on a statewide basis: coordinating worship, education, press coverage and action. Your efforts caught the attention of the Governor's office, and gained press coverage for UUs in several media markets. THANKS!! This was an example of what we can do when we work together. We also learned much that UULM can apply to other statewide UU justice actions. Special thanks to the Rev. Ned Wight of Summit UU Church for coming up with the idea, to Sonya Sulkalski of Starr King School for the Ministry and the Rev. J. D. Benson, who made a million phone calls, and to the thousands of CA UUs who put their amazing creativity to work. More photos and the wonderful hymn "Standing on the Side of Love" can be found on our website www.uulmca.org



February 15, 2005 the Rev. Sofia Craethnenn, Molly McKay, the Rev. Lindi Ramsden, Steve Hansen, Stephanie Funke Cray, Grayson Cary (3 months), Elliot (4 yrs), Wes (7 yrs), Mary Helen Doherty, Christopher Craethnenn, and the Rev. Matthew Cray take 3800 valentines to the Governor's office, expressing UU support for civil marriage equality. Rev. Cray and his family traveled throughout the far northern counties in CA to support Equality CA's "Get Engaged Tour". A long way, from the congregations he serves in Riverside and Anaheim!



Anti-Gay Protest Fails in Tracy UUs Help by Presence and Prayer

On Saturday, June 11, the day before the UU Fellowship of Stanislaus County (Modesto) unanimously passed its historic Resolution In Support of Equal Marriage Rights, the nearby town of Tracy peacefully faced down 13 members of an anti-gay church group from Kansas who had come to protest during the high school's graduation. According to Jim Herron Zamora of the San Francisco Chronicle, the Rev. Fred Phelps and his tribe of 13 traveled 1,800 miles from Topeka because they "were upset that students at a different high school in Tracy gained administrative support for resurrecting their chapter of the Gay-Straight Alliance."

Across the street from Phelps' intentionally graphic anti-gay banners, "250 counter demonstrators, 30 police officers and numerous residents showed up to protest their annoyance to see such divisive protests in this normally quiet town," wrote Zamora. The Rev. Sofia Craethnenn of Stockton, who helped to organize UU support for the high school, thanked valley UUs for their presence, and those farther a field for their prayers.

Aynslie Frederickson, a UU from Modesto, commented, "What I found heartening—and surprising—was the incredible amount of positive support for the GSA. I would guess that at least 75% of the vehicles, a constant stream on a busy street, honked to show their support for the students. This valley many had believed to be very conservative may not be as "red" as we thought."

Best news of all: the protests appeared to have little noticeable effect on the celebratory graduation ceremony.

Marriage Equality Bill 'Loses Forward'

On June 2nd, the "Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act" (AB19) fell just short of passage in the State Assembly. 37 voted in favor; one supporter was absent, another ill, and a third signaled a willingness to vote for it once the 41st (and winning) vote is lined up. This is an extremely hopeful accomplishment! Never before has civil marriage equality come this close to passing in a state legislature without being mandated by the courts. Let us show appreciation to legislators who understand that a popular vote is never the first step on the path to ending entrenched discrimination. Assuring equal protection under the law for all Californians requires leadership from all branches of government, not just the courts. We were VERY CLOSE. While AB19 lost this first round, we definitely "lost forward". More and more civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund gave their endorsement. We fully expect similar legislation to be reintroduced in the near future. To see how your Assemblymember voted go to www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html



UU young leaders and clergy join interfaith colleagues at the Capitol for a press conference on behalf of civil marriage equality.

Coalition Opposes Initiative to Dismantle Domestic Partnerships & Deny Equal Marriage Rights

A proposed constitutional amendment, that would deny equal marriage rights and eliminate all legal protections for same gender couples and their families, is currently being circulated by those who oppose the existence of GLBT families. This ballot initiative would strip the rights and responsibilities now granted under existing domestic partnerships in California for both same gender couples and elderly straight couples who are registered domestic partners. It also contains language that threatens the status of single individuals as suitable parents. The backers of this initiative seek to place it on the June 2006 ballot. At a press conference called by the "Equality for All Coalition," the Rev. Cecil Williams, Pastor of Glide Memorial Church, said "We are not going to take this sitting down. This type of initiative and this type of discrimination should not exist in the 21st century." Labor, faith, and civil rights organizations are coming together to oppose this initiative by doing voter education, and identification. UUs can take action by working with UULM and the Equality for All Coalition to build a progressive majority to defeat this extreme anti-family initiative. Please call or email the UULM office to inquire how your congregation can help.

Planned Giving Program Adopted by UU Legislative Ministry

During the May 2005 Board meeting of the UULM-CA, a Planned Giving Program was adopted. Trustees understand that planned gifts are the key to assuring that UULM-CA will be here to serve future generations, bringing UU values of equity, compassion, and justice to the public square.

The joys of making a planned gift are many.

- * You will find ways to earn good income on your investments
- * You may find ways to save tax dollars, become more intentional about the use of your resources, and you will receive heartfelt thanks for your generosity while you are around to receive it!

Here are a few of the ways you can make a planned gift

- * Bequests by will, outright gift, or in trust
- * Pooled Income Fund
- * Charitable Annuity Trusts
- * Charitable Remainder Trusts
- * Life Estates

For more detailed information about the program, please contact the UULM-CA Executive Director, the Rev. Lindi Ramsden at 916- 441-0018 or lramdsen@uulmca.org

If you have already remembered the UU Legislative Ministry in your will or estate plans, please do let us know.

McCarthy's Ghost . . .

(cont. from p. 3)



A lifelong UU, the Rev. Forsey holds a Ph.D. in Religious Studies with an emphasis on Unitarian History. She teaches courses in Unitarian Universalist History, Humanism, the Radical Reformation and related subjects.

a gathering of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, California. Surprised and hopeful — not a bad combination.

We need each other. Together we can keep our civil rights from being eroded, and health care from becoming a luxury. We can protect our wise elders and our innocent children. We can refuse to run our affairs according to the bottom line of the dollar. We can steward the resources of this earth.

If we try to be as quiet as possible, flying under the radar, we are practicing nothing more than a stopgap measure, which will offer us no peace. Our foremothers and fathers worked together to challenge the loyalty oath, finally winning in the Supreme Court. We have our equivalents of McCarthy to battle. Like our 16th Century forebears, we will create a coalition, linking our congregations in a common cause. The UU Legislative Ministry is a force and a voice to make that possible.

¹ Zinn, Howard, *The Twentieth Century: A People's History*, Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., New York, 1980, p. 164

² *Ibid.*, p. 167

³ Robinson, David, *The Unitarians and the Universalists*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Ct, 1985, p.261.

⁴ From a personal conversation with Rev. Dr. Arnold Crompton, 1991.

“Liberal Voices in a Conservative Landscape” UULM-CA Leadership Training Workshops

UULM-CA offers trainings to foster effective and collaborative social justice leadership in and among our congregations. See reflections below from some of this past year's participants. Two UULM-CA workshops are scheduled for this fall and early winter:

•November 12th in San Diego County

•January 7th 2006 in the Central Valley (back by popular demand!)

If you would like the UULM to organize a Saturday training in your region, please contact our office.

Reflections:

On Jan 8, 2005, about 70 UUs gathered at our Modesto congregation for a workshop titled “Liberal Voices in a Conservative Landscape.” The workshop was especially designed for congregations in the conservative areas of the Central Valley and the Foothills of the Sierras. These UUs face special challenges because the local cultures are often resistant to liberal or progressive positions on both religion and political issues.

The Rev Doug Kraft (UU Society of Sacramento) launched the day with an overview of George Lakoff's idea that we view our country as an expanded version of a family. The trouble, Lakoff says, is that liberals and conservatives have different models of how families work, and those also get applied to the country. We need to be sure that we frame our issues in ways that clearly reveal our values and use them consistently enough that they become recognized among the options regarded as “common sense.”

In the weeks that followed the workshop, its material was the subject of quite a lot of conversation in the Modesto congregation. Out of that interest, a follow-up group has formed, using the name ‘Liberal Voices.’ The talk is always lively, but the task of framing issues in ways clearly related to our values is difficult. Along the way, we find ourselves dealing with our assumptions, with old hurts and feelings of rejection, with anger and outrage, and with our own inability to see the limitations of our paradigms.

The work of framing is complex, difficult and crucially important. We are committed to the idea that we need to be able to talk about issues with each other and with those opposed or uncommitted. We want to be clear about the spiritual values that ground our positions on those issues. We know that effective framing, used well and often, is the key to our recognition as part of the “values” conversation. We're looking forward to extending our understanding and our efforts at next year's workshop. We want to be clear, strong liberal voices in our conservative landscape.

- Rev. Grace Simmons,
UU Fellowship of Stanislaus County

The UULM conference I attended in Santa Barbara last January with two members of my congregation set an activist light under us in specific ways. We started a weekly study group on health care, hosted the president of Health Care for All in California at our congregation who explained the importance of the Kuehl bill to us. We took steps to improve our own health as well as to advocate for others. We participated in the valentines for the Governor campaign and wrote letters to support gay marriage. Many of us are going to join Health Care for All. We have discussed many issues with our children and adults, including recent Supreme Court cases. We also began some of the strategies Lindi taught us for bringing our congregation together.”

- Ricky Perkins, President
Antelope Valley UU Fellowship

The Book Corner

Jim Wallis God's Politics:

Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It

Harper San Francisco \$24.95 384 pages

By Ben Bush

Jim Wallis is a progressive evangelical minister who has worked on behalf of the poor from the micro to the macro, from soup kitchens to third world debt, opposing U.S wars in Vietnam and Iraq, and working against apartheid with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He aspires to carry on the admirable tradition of progressive religious political movements: abolition, women's suffrage, Gandhi and Dr. King.

After lecturing to an audience of Harvard-area liberal intelligentsia about his desire to see religion play a greater role in political life, the first question from the audience was "But Jim, what about the inquisition?" Wallis responded, "Unless you want me to raise the specter of the communist butcher Pol Pot and his brutal Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia every time you talk about the need for a comprehensive national health plan, why don't we move onto a better discussion."

Wallis argues that "Protests are good, alternatives are better." Pacifists have a responsibility to take seriously the problems which war ostensibly deals with. -- What to do about problems like terrorism or an oppressive government such as Saddam Hussein's? Wallis demonstrates that there are real alternatives, which are not in fact, far-fetched, but instead quite practical. The choice between going to war and doing nothing is a false dichotomy. In the broad range of issues he covers in the book, he always presents alternative policy.

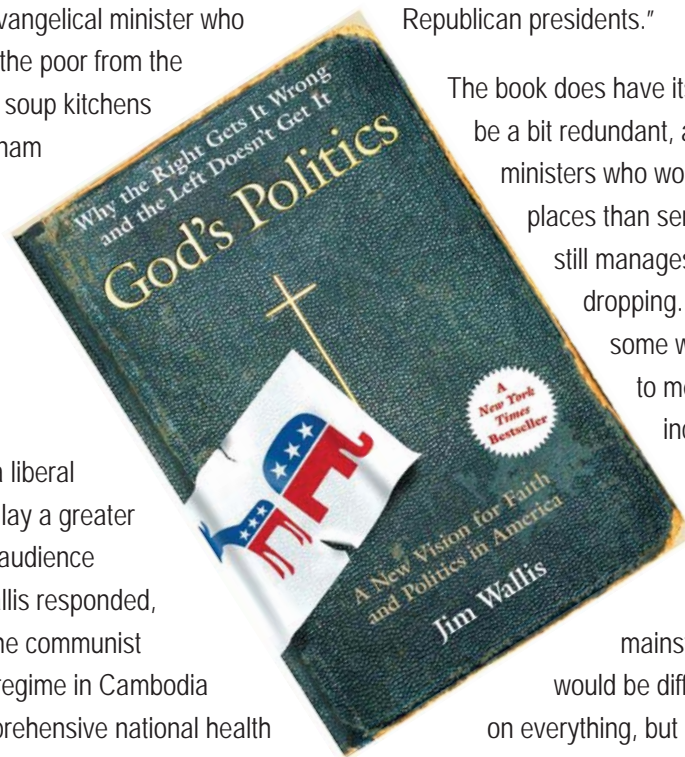
Wallis makes frequent reference to the Catholic church's concept of a "consistent ethic of life" which opposes war, the death penalty and abortion in a single breath. To his credit, Wallis doesn't advocate restrictions on abortion, pointing out that a recent drop in abortion rates is "due more to economic progress for poor women during the Clinton administration than to any initiatives by religious right supported

Republican presidents."

The book does have its shortcomings. It can be a bit redundant, and after dismissing ministers who would rather be seen in high places than serving the poor, Wallis still manages a fair amount of name-dropping. His central thesis is in some ways unsettling. It seems to me quite likely that an increased role of religion in politics would likely lead to the marginalization of anyone who doesn't partake of mainstream Christianity. It would be difficult to agree with Wallis on everything, but he asks questions worth asking, and even when I disagreed, the process was worthwhile.

Wallis sees Bush as promoting a militaristic Christian theology capable of doing a good deal of harm not only to U.S. policy but also to religious faith itself. "The best response to bad theology is not secularism, but good theology." If progressive candidates don't bring their religious beliefs into public discussion, the Right will continue to have the privilege of defining abortion and gay marriage as moral issues, but not poverty and war. Wallis and his organization are doing exciting work in broad coalitions, and propose ideas that deserve attention.

Editor's Note: Jim Wallis writes regularly on-line at www.sojo.org



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- Rodrigo Garcia, Graphic Designer

OFFICE

926 J Street, Suite #708,
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 441-0018
Contributions are tax-deductible



UULM
926 J Street, Suite 708
Sacramento, CA 95814

UULM is moving!

The building that houses the UULM office, has been sold, and all the tenants are being evicted. We will miss being across from Cesar Chavez Park (and the amazingly low rent), but we have found a nice office at a light rail stop, close to less expensive parking, and above a park where they ice skate in the winter. Plus, we are still in the same building with the Friends Committee on Legislation. Our phone will remain the same.

After August 1, 2005
our address is

UULM-CA
717 K St. # 514
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 441-0018
admin@uulmca.org

Visit us on-line at www.uulmca.org

HOST A PARTY TO BENEFIT UULM!

Thanks to Lee Helena Lawrence, Beverly Smrha, Leland and Deborah-Bond Upson, the Rev. Alicia McNary Forsey, Dorothy and Russ Balisok, and the Rev. Silvio Nardoni for hosting and/or helping to organize a house party fundraiser on behalf of UULM this past winter and spring. Fall house parties are scheduled for:

Saturday, September 3rd, 4PM End of Summer Bar-b-cue at the home of Tom & the Rev. Betty Stapleford in Thousand Oaks; featuring the music of NatureGirl, Ventura's Alternative-Original-KitchenJam-Band.

Saturday, November 19th House Party at the home of Jerry & May Lawrence in Grass Valley – more details to follow

THANKS to all the generous donors who are helping to building the UU Legislative Ministry, CA



Magoo and Rachel from NatureGirl

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