UUCT Gardens Needs Gardeners
by Carrie Arbiter

Someone once wrote that a garden carries a message to all living things; and plants murmur clearly so that all may hear: “We shall come rejoicing.”

Continued care of our UUCT gardens reflects our interest, loving treatment, and protection of our surrounds. The Buildings and Grounds Committee on September 25 approved the formation of a sub-committee devoted to The Gardens. Would you like to participate in the work of preserving and enhancing our outdoor setting? If so, please join the committee. Happily, there is a Master Plan for guidance.

As a cooperative endeavor, we will prioritize needs, assess resources, and where required suggest aesthetically appropriate innovations. Can you make a commitment of two hours per week? We will address all aspects of gardening: pruning, digging, planting, moving things and plants about, fertilizing, etc.

In addition we seek two members interested in (and with some knowledge about) the mysteries of irrigation systems. A drip irrigation system must be maintained to support adequate water delivery to the plants. These two members will be consultants on an as-needed basis. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact me at Carolyn@arbiter-arizona.com.

Custodial responsibilities for clean-up days are an entirely separate issue and not the work of the Gardeners. As a committee, however, we may be asked to assist in organizing a work day which would be open to all members of the congregation.

The joy in gardening is that there are no absolutes; and every garden “holds within it the seeds of infinite newness.”
First Friday

First Friday Parents Night Out is scheduled for the first Friday evening of the month. The next one is scheduled for Friday, November 2, 2007. It is held in the Awareness room from 6pm until 10pm and provided for a nominal fee. If you would like to reserve a space for your child, you must RSVP to Kathleen Hogue, 312-0441, by Thursday, Nov 1.

Ceremony of Joining

Becoming a member is a personal decision. It means committing oneself to an institution that shares your beliefs and values. If you feel you are ready to make that commitment and you have attended one of our Newcomers Orientations, I invite you to participate in The Ceremony of Joining that takes place during our regular worship service on Sunday, November 4. If you plan on taking part in the ceremony, please email me a brief biography that can be read during the service. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at macbrude@cox.net or at 349-4521.

Yours in community spirit,
Mary

Town Hall Meeting, Nov. 4

The Town Hall meeting scheduled for Sunday, November 4 is on “Policy Governance.” Your leaders will attempt to answer your questions—especially why our version of policy governance places power in the hands of the many rather than the few. How do I start something? How do I reserve space? How do I get a problem solved? Who is in charge? How do I know the finances are being handled safely and right? Trivial questions? For UUs they are near the center of our community. Come join us for the discussion at 12:15 p.m in Holland Sanctuary on Sunday, Nov. 4. We hope to see the sanctuary packed.

Marion Leonard,
Board of Trustees Member

Cabaret 2007: "Jammin' 'round the Americas!"

Tickets for "Cabaret 2007: "Jammin' 'round the Americas!" are available every Sunday morning after service in Goddard Hall, and also weekdays in the church office. Buy now and save - for just $12 in advance or $15 at the door, you will get to hear three outstanding, professional music groups all in one night. See you there at 7PM on Saturday, Nov. 10th, for wine, cheese, great music, and great fun!
Music Notes

“Sing Ev’ry Morning and Noon and Night!” is the title of the anthem Family Singers will be sharing with the congregation on Sunday, November 18th. Recently one of our younger singers came up to me during coffee hour, gave me a hug, and told me that she sings this song in the morning when she wakes and at night when she goes to bed. It is a fitting anthem to sing at Thanksgiving time; truly the gift of singing is something for which to be thankful.

Now it is possible for you to purchase an anthem to be dedicated in honor or memory of someone. Our capable Office Manager has designed a form for this purpose which will be available in the vestibule of the church. Usually the cost of an anthem comes to about $75. You are invited to fill out the form and put it in my church office mailbox or you are also welcome to speak with me about this opportunity as well.

I have good news to report. In response to my request in a recent newsletter, Cynthia McDaniel has volunteered to take care of ordering and distributing the tee-shirts for Family Singers. Thank you, Cynthia.

Other good news – About $15 worth of sheet music was returned to me for our church files. If any of you still have some copies of the church’s music in your homes, please know that they would be gratefully received. Peace and harmony through music,

Agnes Paulsen,
Minister of Music

Upcoming Services

**Sunday, November 4**
*A Time for Rest, A Time for Delight: Finding and Keeping Sabbath*
For many people the idea of keeping the Sabbath is associated with boredom and dreariness. This need not be so! Intentionally creating time to rest and play is at the heart of a good Sabbath. Joy and vitality increase when we consciously and regularly set aside our work. You know what they say about all work and no play!
Leader: Rev. Diane Dowgiert

**Sunday, November 11**
*An Uneasy Silence: Unitarian Universalists and Military Service*
Veteran’s Day is a complicated holiday for Unitarian Universalists, a day when we are confronted with the complexities of war and peace, service and protest. How do we respect the inherent worth and dignity of those with whom we disagree? How do we honor the service of our military veterans even if we are opposed to the wars they are called to fight? What is a compassionate response to military families in our congregation and in the community at large? How do we make room in our hearts to hear the un-speakable truths our war veterans bear?

Leader: Rev. Diane Dowgiert

**Sunday, November 18**
*An Extended Family Worship Giving Thanks*
Leaders: Lisa McDaniel-Hutchings & Rev. Diane Dowgiert

**Sunday, November 25**
*Living Our Beliefs*
With all the emphasis on our principles and purposes, let’s take a few minutes to see what it means to live our faith every day. We often hear how Muslims and Christians and Buddhists and Orthodox Jews and others of strong faith incorporate their beliefs in everything they do. What would it mean if we did the same?
Leader: Ellen Germann-Melosh

Ellen Germann-Melosh preaches regularly in UU congregations and has just completed a book for leaders of small congregations called “Big Ideas for Small Congregations: A Friendly Guide for Leaders”. She served as District Executive for the Mountain Desert District and is now a church consultant living in Tucson.
The Liberal Religious Educators Association Fall Conference in San Antonio, TX (October 19-23) offered presentations that grounded us in the philosophy of our progressive forebears (Judith Sargeant Murray, William Ellery Channing, Angus McLean, Sophia Lyon Fahs) and opened us to the possibilities of the future, including the new Tapestry of Faith curriculum under construction at the UUA, which will be available online as each component is completed.

One of the most exciting presentations came from the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) where congregations are participating in a process to be certified (like Green Sanctuary or Welcoming Congregations) as Lifespan Learning Communities.

“A Lifespan Learning Community is a community which intentionally encourages and creates opportunity for spiritual growth and learning at all ages of our lives and all stages of our faith development.” (CUC)

This really fits at UUCT! This is exactly what we are trying to do with our Religious Education program for children and youth and our Adult Faith Development program. The congregation’s Lifespan Program Council coordinates all of the program areas of the church to provide for the needs of all ages, sometimes together and sometimes in age-appropriate groups, so that we have worship for ALL ages, community building opportunities for ALL ages, social justice for ALL ages, learning for ALL ages, and leadership development for ALL ages.

The Canadians have identified Twelve Keys to effectively developing Lifespan Learning Communities. These keys are interconnected, and success in each key makes the others effective. It is encouraging to see how our congregation has already made progress in several areas!

The Twelve Keys (from the Canadian Unitarian Council)

1. Articulate your vision of Lifespan Learning as it relates to the mission of your community.

2. Assess current reality—the opportunities for learning at every age of life and every stage of faith development that you have in place RIGHT NOW. [The Lifespan Program Council developed a comprehensive program grid last year as part of UUCT’s strategic plan.]

3. Create a long range plan to maintain current lifespan learning opportunities and create desired new opportunities.

4. Provide opportunities for people to learn and grow at all ages of their life. [Check current offerings in RE and AFD. Let the RE Council or the Adult Faith Development Team know if you’re pleased and if you notice something missing.]

5. Provide opportunities for people to learn and grow at all stages of their faith development.

6. Assist members through life-stage transitions with programs and ceremonies of transition. [UUCT offers child dedications, the Coming of Age Program, bridging ceremonies for youth to young adulthood, weddings, lifespan Lessons of Loss classes, memorial services.]

7. Provide opportunities for members of different generations to form relationships and learn from one another.

8. Support and inspire members to teach and lead others. [The Nominating Committee has taken on the role of a Leadership Development Team offering leadership training workshops.]

9. Nurture safe and respectful relationships among members and safeguard against abuse.

10. Allocate adequate resources including space and funds to create quality thriving ministries and programs. [Our church is staffed with a Director of Religious Education and an Adult Faith Development Director charged with providing leadership with our lay leaders for a congregational ministry of Lifespan Faith Development.]

11. Provide encouragement, opportunity, and financial support for lay and professional leaders to continue their own spiritual growth.

12. Regularly re-assess vision, goals and plans for lifespan learning.

Hearing this presentation helped me see the effective direction in which our programs can move and made me realize what important steps UUCT and its Lifespan Faith Development Program have taken in that direction!

“For Unitarian-Universalists, learning is the fundamental spiritual practice.” –Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker

“Learning is a centrifugal force in the life of a congregation.” –Rev. Larry Peers
Now that I’m well into my second year as your settled minister, I’m getting a more thorough sense of the rhythms and patterns unique to this congregation. This is an exciting time of year. Winter residents are beginning to make their annual migration to Tucson and the mild winter climate. I love greeting people at the door on Sunday morning as they bring news of their “other” Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Our congregations across the country are as varied as the blooms of the Sonoran Desert. Some are small and lay-led; others are large with a whole staff of professional ministers. Some operate on shoestring budgets; others raise over a million dollars annually for operating expenses. Some have a distinctive theological identity, such as Humanist or Christian or Pagan, others are eclectic in their theological approach. Some have histories going back hundreds of years; others have only just begun. Some meet in rented space like a school or synagogue; others have their own buildings. Some church buildings are old with historic architecture; others have more of a modern flair. Some congregations are overflowing with children and young families; others with empty-nesters and retirees. Some have an informal worship style with a central focus on open times of sharing; others are formally structured with emphasis on more traditional liturgical elements.

Yet, we are all Unitarian Universalists, committed to the common causes of our open-minded faith. The great variety of who we are as a religious people converges here during the winter months. Relationships between all of our congregations are made stronger by the connections made here. The cross-pollination of ideas and institutional practices brought from places far and near makes for a rich and interesting mix. Add in people who are discovering Unitarian Universalism for the first time, and you get the full picture of the vital, dynamic congregation we have here.

Now that I’m well into my second year here, I’m beginning to feel connected to your particular history as a congregation: to know your styles and preferences. I’m beginning to know you more fully as individuals and as a collective body of people. Every day I learn something new and every day I find even more to love.

It is with great hope that I look to the future of Unitarian Universalism, which has always been made great by people just like you.

Yours in the spirit,
Diane

Share the Plate returns Sunday, November 4

Share the Plate is a program that continues UUCT’s long history of involvement in the local community. It is a way that we share our abundance with local agencies that do good work in the community. Past recipients have been Habitat for Humanity, Borderlinks, and Wingspan. This month, the Southern Arizona Aids Foundation (SAAF) will be the recipient. SAAF is the only community-based organization in Southern Arizona providing case management and ancillary support services for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families, culturally appropriate prevention and education programs to reduce the rate of infection, and extensive trainings and opportunities for community members to fill critical support roles.

The way Share the Plate works is that the “loose” offering one Sunday a month is divided between UUCT and a community agency. It’s a win-win way of making a difference in our community.
Artist of the Month Gallery

Winter brings with it the need for warmth. Celebrate warmth in art created by our own UU Quilters at their opening reception on Sunday, Nov. 11, in the Sanctuary after the service. Reasonably priced, these quilts make fantastic gifts, just in time for the winter holidays.

Abby Root
for the Gallery Committee

Give Grocery Cards for the Holidays

Is it too early to think about the holidays? Maybe the kids who are newly out on their own somewhere, poor Aunt Nellie or 90-year old Uncle Tim still trying to entertain his lady friends, could use a helping hand getting the turkey or other victuals to make it a nicer Thanksgiving, Christmas or other holiday. You can help with a UUCT Grocery Card loaded at a Kroger store (Fry’s here) which can be used in most parts of the country or a Basha’s card to be used in Arizona at either Basha’s, A.J.’s or Food City. Anyway, think about it. UUCT will benefit as well and we all know, to help someone in need is not a bad thing!

Marj Smith
Card Coordinator

Holiday Pageant Needs YOU!

It is almost time for our annual Holiday Pageant. This year’s pageant will be “Would You Like to Hold the Baby” by Joyce Poley. The pageant needs volunteers like YOU to be a success. If you would like to volunteer for this fun event please contact Kathleen Hogue (312-0441) to leave a message or email her at Kathleen-hogue@qwestoffice.net. Someone will contact you with more details.

Kathleen Hogue
DRE Assistant

Book Club
by Cheryl Mennel

The Book Club meets each 3rd Tuesday of the month in Awareness at 7:00 p.m. For more information one may contact Cheryl Mennel at 760-4915 or CandJ_Mennel@msn.com.

Nov. 15 The Meaning of Everything: The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary by Simon Winchester. From the PCPL: Traces the history of the Oxford English Dictionary from its earliest inception through its long path to completion, describes the process of creating a dictionary, and includes anecdotes about its creators and their work. The PCPL has 9 copies with none on hold. Available in PB. Approx. 260 pages.

Dec 20 Montana 1948 by Larry Watson. From the PCPL: A series of events in a small western town changes the lives of David Hayden, his sheriff father, his mother, and their Sioux housekeeper, as they discover the truth about family loyalty. PCPL has 7 copies, none on hold with one lost and paid. Available in PB. Approx. 175 pages.
At the first Town Hall meeting of the year, UUCT President Carolyn Saunders reviewed the long-term goals and benchmarks making up our Strategic Plan. She reported on our current progress and lack of progress toward meeting these goals. Copies of the presentation are available in the church foyer or in the office.

We then broke into groups to provide feedback on our progress to our leadership, committees, and staff. Responses were varied as the blooms in our Sonoran Desert. As expected, there were positive and negative responses to all four questions. Most were positive but all were honest and grounded in reality.

The first question for feedback was, “What was the most Positive element in the Strategic Plan Review?” Replies focused on the fact that there is monitoring and tracking of the benchmarks of the Plan. People were encouraged by the new year-round Stewardship Campaign.

The second question asked, “Given our problems, where should our focus be?” Replies included better recruiting and retention of newcomers, importance of volunteers, more Adult Faith Development programs, more Town Halls with open discussion, and better marketing of UUism and UUCT.

Next participants were asked to discuss what else needs to be heard by our leaders. The replies ranged from concern about the Chalice as a potential fire hazard to suggestions about the Sunday service, and to advice that the church leadership pay attention to members’ likes and dislikes.

Finally, all were asked to comment on the feedback process used at this Town Hall. While not all had time to respond to this question, the response received was overwhelmingly positive. One person hoped significant leadership attention will be paid to this feedback.

These comments were shared at the Board of Trustees meeting on Oct 9th. Responses from our Minister and Trustees include: We will have Town Hall Meetings monthly and all will include feedback sessions. We will obtain “smiley” stickers for the badges of volunteers. (Watch for happy volunteers!) Several comments reflected things currently being done: There is a planned Board project to update our Strategic Plans for presentation at our Annual Meeting in May; The Worship Committee has held stage training for participants in services and the training will be on-going; Rev. Dowgiert has been meeting with other UU churches and other denominations. The Board of Trustees will strive to make these efforts more visible and effective.

Feedback from this and future Town Hall meetings will go to the appropriate agents of change. A report containing more detailed feedback from the meeting is on file with the Board of Trustee minutes for Oct. 9, 2007.

The next Town Hall meeting will be held on Nov. 4 at 12:15. The topic will be Policy Governance. The meeting will be followed by small group feedback sessions.

PSWD Fire Relief Fund Available

You may have heard the news that fires are sweeping across southern California, and they have impacted our fellow UUs. I have heard that 90% of our Chalice Congregation in Escondido has evacuated; with several homes burned. Members of our local UU congregations have opened their homes to the evacuees. We will not know for days the total impact; the fires across the state are all in areas where we have congregations. We have begun the PSWD Fire Relief Fund to help out the best that we can. Donations can be sent to the Pacific Southwest District, 2052 Norma Street, Oxnard, CA 93036.

Ken Brown
District Executive, PSWD
Go Green!

Do you remember to:

- Turn off lights when not in use?
- Turn off appliances (including computers, TVs, etc. when not in use?
- Close off rooms when not in use?
- If appliances are faulty, repair or replace?
- Wash and dry only full loads?
- Use cold water?
- Don’t over-dry?
- Hang outside if possible?
- Take short showers?
- Turn off water while brushing teeth or shaving?

Watch for more tips from the Green Social Justice Working Group in future newsletters.