



**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
of Grand Traverse**

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(During office hours, call 947-3117 first,
then FAX.)

Office Hours:
9 am – 3 pm
Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

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Rev. Chip Roush, 947-3117
revuucgt@charterinternet.com

Minister of Music*

Rev. Kevin Tarsa, 922-8146
musicuucgt@charterinternet.com

**Interim Director of Religious
Education***

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dreuucgt@charterinternet.com

Office Administrator*

Connie Hoffman

*Ex officio members of the Board

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Sunday, February 4 — Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM

"Move Me Brightly: the Inspirational Message of the Grateful Dead"

Rev. Chip, Vocal Ensemble

The last of a three-part series. Intergenerational. How the Grateful Dead lived its social conscience and still had fun. With a modified liturgy, for maximum gladness. Please wear your brightest colors!

Sunday, February 11 — Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM

"A Long Summer to Ripen"

Rev. Chip

Challenging the myths, and celebrating the potentials, of romantic love.

Sunday, February 18 — Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM

"Concentric Circles"

Jeff Hawkins, Karen McCarthy, Joan Sheard

This morning, we'll explore the spiritual meaning of belonging to a larger whole. Our congregation exists within a set of concentric circles ... we sit within the Heartland District, which sits within the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. What are the implications, responsibilities, and benefits of a relationship with a larger whole?

Sunday, February 25 — Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM

"Spiritual Practices of the New England Transcendentalists"

Cal Boulter, Maura Brennan, Sally Mitchell, and friends

Our Transcendentalist predecessors believed in lifelong spiritual growth. We will present spiritual practices that they advocated.

Sunday, March 4 — Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM

"Just Us"

Rev. Chip

Justice and judgment; restoration and retribution; sin and salvation: how can we respond when our communal bonds are damaged?

Sunday, March 11 — Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM

"How Big Is Your Relationship?"

Michael Jarvis

Understanding, empathy, cooperation, and peace on all levels, from the inter-personal to the international, require not just that we be in relationship with the "other" but that we also know we are in relationship. In this service, presented by UUCGT member Michael Jarvis, who has a Master's degree in Psychology, will examine relationship through brain research, mirror neurons, social theory, and the Buddhist teaching of Inter-being

Sunday, March 18 — Services at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM

"Socinian Eucharist"

Rev. Chip

Exploring the humanist communion celebrated by our spiritual ancestors, the unitarian Christians of Rakow, Poland, 400+ years ago. A Socinian Eucharist service will follow the main service, for those who wish to participate.

Principles

Our Congregation is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association. As such we covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person
Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

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

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

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

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

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part

The living tradition we share draws from many sources:

Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;

Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;

Wisdom from the world's religions which inspire us in our ethical and spiritual life;

Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;

Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;

Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant

the BEACON

BEACON Deadlines: Last Sunday of each month, following the last service.

Jim Cook, Editor, 941-4648

Beacon@uucgt.org

Mary Kiner, Assoc. Editor, 935-3050

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Folding, labeling & mailing

by Peg Kauffman and volunteers

From Our Senior Minister

26 January 2007

Answers

In our "Roots" class, we explored our personal understandings of common theological questions. In the interest of fairness, I thought I should share my answers to the questions, too: 1. Human beings are... manifestations of Spirit, co-creating our reality as we evolve with our universe. 2. God is... a metaphor for our evolving consciousness, of which all things are part. 3. Conflict and war are... inevitable, and they are opportunities to better understand each other. 4. When people die they... return to the source; and they live on in peoples' memories. 5. Love is... a word almost as misunderstood as "god"—unsentimental love is the foundation of the universe. 6. Jesus is...

dead/misunderstood; he was a mystic teacher, who lived about as close to a selfless life as we've recorded. 7. Prayer is... a communion with Spirit, which probably doesn't change the world, but certainly changes me as I do it.

Please note that these are not the "correct" answers, they are only the answers that make the most sense to me, at this time and place in my life. If you'd like to discuss these questions, or any others, please contact me for an appointment—or come to the next "Roots" session!

With Spirit,

—the Rev. Chip Roush

BENZIE SATELLITE NEWS

At this time of the year, we meet on the first and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at the Scenic View Resort (1400 Highway US 31 between Honor and Beulah). Please park and enter in the back by the swimming pool. Potluck Begins at 6:30 PM and then....our service.

We won't be having our traditional services during the first 3 months of the New Year. Instead we are sharing an eight-session series of gatherings, which began at our regular meeting time and place, January 3. We will share our thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs with each other. The guidebook for these gatherings called *Evensong* was developed by a UU minister. Each gathering will

center around a discussion topic as the central event (listed below). The discussion is embedded in a sequence of: Opening Words, Singing, Readings from the Common Bowl, Sitting in Stillness, Communing, Singing, and Closing Words. Listening is the core of *Evensong*. It focuses on paying attention to people, "hearing"

them in a deep sense of their humanness. If you have questions, please email mascholl@charter.net, rfscholl@charter.net; 231-325-0085 Sincerely,

—Mary and Bob Scholl

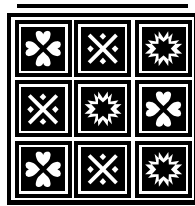
Gathering:
1. *Beginning Together-Jan 3*
2. *Religious and Spiritual Experiences-Jan 17*

(Continued on page 4)

ADULT PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Sharing Activities with the Kids

Have you a hobby to share? Are you ardent about your avocation? Please consider guest appearing one Sunday in RE to teach our 4th-6th grade children about your favorite pastime. Is there really anything better than sharing your interests with inquisitive young people? Is there any better way for our children to learn, than by first-hand interaction with someone eager to share what they know? To arrange your time to share, contact Gretchen Kronk, Interim DRE, at 947-3117 (office), 935-1798 (home) or dreucgt@charterinternet.com.



Quilting

UU quilters will meet the second and fourth Wednesdays – February 14 and 28 – from 1 until 4 in our social hall. Materials and instruction are provided. All proceeds from quilts benefit UU programs. Beginners are welcome!

A new project—Judy Halsted has provided knitting or crocheting instructions for making a shawl or lap

blanket for a project she learned about from the book, "Knitting into the Mystery." This project includes knitting blessings or good thoughts into a shawl to pass on to someone with concerns or needs. The knitters might break off into another group, or add another time, such as an evening meeting to the needlework program.

For more info call Bonnie Mathias or Kathy Prentice for quilting, Judy Halsted for knitting/crocheting.

Dining Out

The UU Dining Out group will meet for dinner Wednesday February 21 at 6 PM (5:30 social time) at Minerva's Restaurant in the Park Place Hotel. The usual Wednesday Night Supper will not be held on that date since the social hall will be unavailable (installation of new

(Continued on page 4)

MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT

Christie McGue (our President-Elect) has been working diligently on the installation service and reception for Reverend Chip. As she writes.... "This is a REALLY big deal!" The Board wants you to "come along with us" as we plan... hence Christie's work is highlighted in this message rather than a general letter from me.

Please thank her regularly and often!

—Joan Sheard

SAVE THE DATE!!

On Earth Day, April 22, 2007, we will install Rev. James "Chip" Roush as our senior minister at UUCGT! We formally called Rev. Roush by congregational vote in April of last year; the installation results naturally from that call. It highlights and reaffirms the bond between minister and congregation. This is a really big deal for Chip as a person and for us as a congregation. It gives us the opportunity to highlight our congregation and minister to the wider communities of both Traverse City and the denomination. Other ministers will attend and take part, as well as lay and clerical representatives from the wider community.

The usual practice is to have the installation some months after the minister's arrival. In choosing a date we wanted to give many of those who go away for part of the winter an opportunity to be here. We also figured that we'd have a better chance of good traveling weather for Chip and Becky's family, friends and UU clerics from afar.

I'm know that many of you will want to be involved in the preparation for and implementation of the installation. There is plenty of need: people to work preparing for the service; gathering lists and sending out invitations; planning and preparing for the reception after the service; providing places for out of town guests; and a million little things I haven't thought of. Please call me at (231) 941-1923 or email at christiemcguen@yahoo.com with your interest and ideas.

The installation will take place at 5:30 in the evening and will be followed by a joyous reception. Please highlight the date on your calendars and plan to attend this important event for our Congregation.

—Christie McGue

ALL ABOUT US

On Friday, January 26th, Barbara Brokaw asked for hospice care. She is 7th on the list for Hospice House so they brought some equipment to her home as she bravely continues to fight her cancer. Her sons, Chris and Kevin, and friends, UU's as well as others, help Barbara in her home. She tires easily so she has requested notes and cards at this time. They may be sent to 13901 S. Morgan Hill Rd. Traverse City, MI 49684.

Please call Pastoral Care (947-9124) to find how you may be of help.

We Hold In Our Hearts and are mindful of:

- ♥ Shirlee Davidson
- ♥ Denyse Everett
- ♥ Beecy Fraser
- ♥ Mercedes Kimling
- ♥ Gretchen Kronk
- ♥ Joan Laird
- ♥ Richard Myer
- ♥ Elizabeth Norris
- ♥ Anne Olney

—Arline Howe, Pastoral Care

Welcome, New Member!

We are delighted to welcome new member Paula Hartmann, a long-time UU in Ann Arbor and Myrtle Beach. Please look for her during coffee hour and make her welcome.

To become a member, please make an appointment for a meeting with the Rev. Chip Roush.

—Judy Halsted

"Joys & Concerns" Format

Please print the name and reason on the provided cards BEFORE each service, so they can be read during the service. There is also a box to check on the card if the joy/concern is private—to share the information with the Pastoral Care Team, but not declare it publicly to the congregation.

—Rev. Chip

Recommended Reading

John Schneider has written a very informative article entitled "On Becoming a Patient Advocate: Basic Training." Due to limitations of space, we are unable to print it in the *Beacon*, but we are going to try to include it as an attachment to the *Beacon* on the UUCGT website (www.uucgt.org), and copies will also be available in the office. It is an excellent first-hand account of John's experience in preparing himself for a planned surgical procedure.

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

...From our Friends

Some exciting events planned for our friends at Heartland District! The 2007 HD District Spring Conference and Annual Meeting is March 30-31, in Grand Rapids! How fortunate to have the conference and meeting so close to us. Wonderful workshops addressing Lifespan RE, UU Principles, Social Action, Governance, Leadership Development, and lots more. The keynote address titled: "Connecting the Dots: Interconnections in our UU World," will be offered by Gini Courter, UU Moderator. Wouldn't it be wonderful to send a delegation for training, inspiration, and re-energizing? Would you consider sponsoring a delegate? Cost for the meeting is \$125 per adult, once again thanks to HD subsidies in keeping costs low. Please contact Rev. Chip Roush or any Board member if you would be kind and generous enough to offer a sponsorship, and/or if you would like to go yourself! Further details can be found at www.heartlanduu.org. How terrific for our friends to offer such wonderful resources at such a low cost. Could we ever thank them enough?

—Jeffery Hawkins /
Trustee for Denominational Affairs

MINDING THE STORE

Your Help Needed!

Prior to and after the new office carpet is laid, volunteers are needed to remove light weight furniture and equipment from the church offices.

Painters are also needed to paint the offices. Volunteers are needed on Friday, February 23 to move furniture and equipment to the Social Hall. On Saturday, February 24, your help is required to prep the office walls for painting. Sunday afternoon, February 25 we will need your help to paint. Bring brushes, rollers, paint trays. Wednesday, February 28, your help is needed to move light furniture and equipment back into the offices. It will take a "village" to accomplish the needed tasks to get this job done in an orderly manner.

If you can give of your time and talents for any of these important tasks, please call Penny Ort at 932-8766 or email her at ortjp@aol.com (mailto:ortjp@aol.com) or let Connie know in the office.

Desperately Seeking Coffee Makers

I need folks to sign up to make coffee before first service. I especially need someone for February 18. I will be out of town. If no one volunteers, there may be no coffee.

—Mary Kiner

Covenant Groups

Unfortunately, I was a little too enthusiastic about our covenant

group timeline. While covenant group facilitators will still meet together for training, the actual groups will not begin until next fall. I apologize for the mix-up. The additional time will ensure that the experience is worth the wait!

—Rev. Chip

Hymnbook housekeeping

There is an urgent need for a volunteer or two to check the hymnbooks in the sanctuary every Friday or Saturday to ensure that the books are distributed as evenly as possible among the seats for Sunday morning. If you can help, please call MaryAnn Force at 941-5024 or leave your name in the office (947-3117). Thank you!

—MaryAnn Force

B & B Fundraiser

Raise money for our congregation and meet other UUs. List your home in our Bed & Breakfast Directory and rent a room out for a visiting UU. Questions should be directed to Ron Chao by phone at (231) 935-0265 or email at ciaogillian@hotmail.com.

—Ron Chao

UUMeN

While in Phoenix, Arizona, with the UUMeN Steering Council, I helped plan UUMeN events for 2007, and helped energize the creation of a men's group at the Valley UU Church in Chandler (a Phoenix suburb). Our UUCGT congregation is one of a hundred or so with UU men's groups. Because men are

socialized to be "tough," so it can be difficult for them to reach out to other men. A men's group changed my life; I would like all men to have such an opportunity. There's always room for more—if you're interested in forming another group here at UUCGT, please contact Rev. Chip.

Call to Visual Artists

How about using Unitarian Universalism as subject matter? Works are useful for settings and for the West Wall devoted to UUism. It is a good way to use ones skills and a good way to learn about UU or liberal religion, in general. Our library is full of books to suggest topics. And the internet has many, many UU related sites. The topics could convey general ideas, as Paul Ward did with his "stained glass" window showing the seven principles. Or illustrate historical events, or depict images from ones readings of Thoreau, Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman et al. Or relate to the big topics—search for truth and such. Or sermon titles up coming may suggest images. Maybe we could have an exhibit with a call for entries, e.g., The Transcendental Landscape. Or self-portraits to illustrate our connections with Renaissance Humanism. Any ideas?

—Sally Mitchell,
231 929 2798.

Our Sound System ...

...urgently needs additional volunteer operators for both services. Please speak with Paul Kauffman, Jim Cook or

HG Smith to learn about the rewards of helping those who are unable to read lips! Thank you.

—Paul, Jim and the rest
of the Sound System "team"

UU Trivia

The first person to email Rev. Chip (jchpr@yahoo.com) with the answer to this trivia question will win a gift certificate to Horizon Books, and will have his or her name published in our next *Beacon*.

He was almost beheaded in France, and almost buried in Germany, but he practiced medicine in Pennsylvania, and preached that all were welcomed into Heaven upon their death. One of our two dozen UU camps and conference centers is named for him.

Congratulations to Karen McCarthy, for her right answer last month: Mary Wollstonecraft was the Unitarian who wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792 (her daughter, Mary W. Shelley, wrote *Frankenstein*).

Board Minutes

Available

Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees are available in a binder in the reference section of the library. Individual copies of the minutes may be made in the office at a cost of 10 cents per page. Any suggestions about other steps the Board could take to assure good communication with the congregation are always welcome.

—Jim Cook, Secretary

(Continued from page 2)

3. *The Divine: What Do I Really Want-Jan. 31—at the home of Don and Sue Pyne—extra meeting*
4. *The Human: What limits do I Encounter?-Feb. 7*
5. *The messiah, the Christ, the Buddha, the Divine made Manifest: What Is Possible?*

What Keeps Me Going?-Feb. 21

6. *The Community: What is Possible Together?-March 7*
7. *Endings: How do I Live with Loss and Death-March 21*
8. *Ministry: What is my Ministry? What Am I Called to Do in the World? not decided*

(Continued from page 2)

carpet). Please contact John or Pinkie Hoffman or Sally Mitchell for reservations for Minerva's.

—John Hoffman

Men's Group

The Men's Group will meet for dinner and conversation on Monday February 12, 6:00 PM at the South City Limits restaurant. Discussion topic is still open but is always interesting. Join us!

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our January RE Teachers: I wish to thank Katy Bean-Larson, Joyce Braeuninger, Nadine Elmgren, Scott Huggins, Betsie Kortokrax, Emma McCarthy-Stone, Bill Perkins and Becky Roush for generously volunteering their time and energy to make Religious Education happen for our children during the month of January. Please express your gratitude when you see them.

Share Your Hobby. Do you bake bread, carve ice, knit yarn, make music, polish rocks, quilt fabric, snow shoe, or work wood? Do you collect books, bugs, farm implements, abandoned snake skins, stamps, Petoskey stones or, perhaps, zebra mussels? Do you practice

a martial art, a musical instrument or yoga? We are looking for people who are willing to share their hobbies with the bright, inquisitive, enthusiastic children who comprise our 4th-6th Grade RE class. This would be a one-time-only guest appearance, scheduled at your convenience, any Sunday between now and Memorial Day. Contact your Interim DRE right away to schedule the Sunday of your choice!

2007 RE Curricula. For the next four months, our children will explore the following themes during Religious Education classes.

Preschoolers will continue with the "Growing Times" lessons which explore the natural world and the little ones' important role in it.

Our children in grades 1 through 3 will continue with the "Stories About God" curriculum, in which they explore the idea of God through a wide variety of sacred and secular stories, develop language to talk about God, and create

their own ideas and express their feelings about God.

In grades 4 through 6, the children will embark upon the study of ethics through the "What Do You Stand For?" curriculum. The lessons will encourage self-knowledge and self-awareness, nurture self-acceptance and self-esteem, and support self-actualization as means of building character and defining a code of ethics.

The "In Our Hands" curriculum will guide our Middle School adolescents in their exploration of Utopian Society, examination of Prejudice and "-Isms" and Hunger and Poverty, and understanding of the fundamental importance of Peace and Social Justice within Unitarian Universalism.

Our Youth Group plans to make a field trip to Chicago this Spring will be supported by fun gatherings and fundraisers. Stay tuned!

—Gretchen Kronk
Interim DRE

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ACTION

On Sunday February 4 there will be a meeting of the Social Justice Action Committee. Please come with ideas and energy. We need help with our actions and would be grateful for your input and willingness. We will meet in the Sanctuary after services, about 1 PM. If you cannot attend and are interested, please let me know (Emmy Lou).

[Pain in the Land of Love, a Talk about Peace in the Middle East](http://www.compassionatelistening.org/), Friday February 9 at UUCGT at 7 PM is a talk and slide show about my November trip to **Israel and Palestine**. I went with a group called Compassionate Listening (<<http://www.compassionatelistening.org/>>), where we visit and learn

of the issues and problems through individual stories and situations. I have been given the mission to share what I heard and learned. Please come and hear about the situation from a different perspective and join the discussion. There will be mid eastern snacks following the talk. Donations are welcomed to help with several of the peace projects that we visited, Al-Arroub Refugee Camp and Hope Flowers Secondary School.

Friday, February 23, at 7 PM at the UU Congregation, we will show 2 to 3 short videos about our human impact on our planet. *The Ecological Footprint*: Dr. Mathis Wackernagel, co-creator of the Ecological Footprint, introduces this resource accounting tool that measures human demand on the Earth. *Vanishing Ice*: "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink..."

Vanishing Ice is a documentary that explores the function and beauty of our glaciers, framed by a local filmmaker in her own environment, following the story through the regional, national, and international picture of supplies, politics and future—of our most precious resource—water. *Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life Of Garbage* is a film that explores the history and politics of garbage, a substance both hidden and omnipresent. The film uncovers the links between modern industrial production, consumer culture, and our disposable lifestyle.

[Safe Harbor](#) is expecting our help the week of March 3 to 10. We will need people to prepare a dish for supper or breakfast, either deliver it, or stay, help serve, clean up, talk with the guests, etc. We also could use more help with the

overnight stays. Anyone able to help during that week please let Mary Kiner or me know. Thank you!

On March 10, Saturday, at 7 PM, at the UU, Diet Eman, a Dutch immigrant, a *righteous Gentile*, will talk about how she worked underground to save victims, Jews and others, from the Holocaust. She will also show the video, *Resistance*. Introductory remarks will be by Rabbi Al Lewis. Her book, "*Things We Couldn't Say*" is written in collaboration with James Schaap. Please mark you calendars and plan to attend. This event is co-hosted by Beth El Congregation, and they will provide refreshments afterwards.

Thank you for your support and interest. I look forward to seeing you at these events, if you can.

—Emmy Lou 943-7999

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6726 Center Road
Traverse City MI 49686-1802



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the BEACON

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February 2007

the BEACON

Calendar

All events take place at the Congregation building unless otherwise noted

February

- 1 Thurs Vocal Ensemble, Kevin Tarsa, 7-9:00 p.m.
- 4 Sun **"Move Me Brightly: The Inspirational Message of the Grateful Dead," (3rd of 3) Rev. Chip, services at 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.**
- 4 Sun SJA, Emmy Lou Cholak, 1:00 – 2:30 PM
- 5 Mon SOS meeting, Jeff (946-8680), Minister's Office, 7-8:30 PM
- 7 Wed RE Committee, Gretchen Kronk, 4-5:00 p.m.
- 7 Wed Supper at Six (potluck) (social time, 5:30), Program at Seven: Bill Thomas, Editor, *The Record-Eagle*.
- 7 Wed Roots, Rev. Chip Roush, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- 8 Thurs Vocal Ensemble, Kevin Tarsa, 7-9:00 p.m.
- 9 Fri Social Action Video & Discussion, Emmy Lou Cholak, 7-9:00 PM
- 11 Sun **"A Long Summer to Ripen," Rev. Chip, services at 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.**
- 12 Mon Finance Committee, Holly Knibbs, 5:30-7:30 PM
- 12 Mon Men's Group, South City Limits, 6-8:00 PM
- 12 Mon SOS meeting, Jeff (946-8680), Minister's Office, 7-8:30 PM
- 13 Tues Board, Joan Sheard, 7-8:00 p.m.
- 14 Wed UU Piecemakers/Quilting, Bonnie Mathias, Kathy Prentice, 1 – 4 PM
- 14 Wed Supper at Six (RSVP for dinner to Ann Dressel 922-0483) (social time, 5:30), Program at Seven: Manor House, English class system, video.
- 15 Thurs Vocal Ensemble, Kevin Tarsa, 7-9:00 p.m.
- 18 Sun **"Concentric Circles," Jeff Hawkins, Karen McCarthy, Joan Sheard, services at 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.**
- 19 Mon SOS meeting, Jeff (946-8680), Minister's Office, 7-8:30 PM
- 21 Wed (NO Supper at Six) — Dining Out, Minerva's Park Place (carpet installation at UUCGT)
- 22 Thurs Vocal Ensemble, Kevin Tarsa, 7-9:00 p.m.

- 23 Fri Social Justice Action Video & Discussion, Emmy Lou Cholak, 7-9:00 PM
- 25 Sun **"Spiritual Practices of the New England Transcendentalists," Cal Boulter, Maura Brennan, Sally Mitchell, and friends, services at 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.**
- 26 Mon SOS meeting, Jeff (946-8680), Minister's Office, 7-8:30 PM
- 27 Tues Nominating Committee (Cal Boulter), 7-8:30 p.m.
- 27 Tues Sunday Services Committee (K. McCarthy), 7-9 PM
- 28 Wed UU Quilters, Bonnie Mathias, Kathy Prentice, 1-4 PM
- 28 Wed Supper at Six (RSVP for dinner to Ann Dressel 922-0483) (social time, 5:30), Program at Seven: Manor House, English class system, video.
- 28 Wed Roots, Rev. Chip Roush, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- March
- 1 Thurs Vocal Ensemble, Kevin Tarsa, 7-9:00 p.m.
- 4 Sun **"Just Us," Rev. Chip, services at 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.**
- 5 Mon SOS meeting, Jeff (946-8680), Minister's Office, 7-8:30 PM
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- 7 Wed Supper at Six (potluck) (social time, 5:30)
- 8 Thurs Vocal Ensemble, Kevin Tarsa, 7-9:00 p.m.
- 10 Sat Social Justice Action Video & Discussion, "Resistance" with guest speaker Diet Eman, Emmy Lou Cholak, 5 – 10 PM
- 11 Sun **"How Big Is Your Relationship?" Michael Jarvis, services at 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.**
- 12 Mon Finance Committee, Holly Knibbs, 5:30-7:30 PM
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On Becoming a Patient Advocate: Basic Training

By John Schneider

January 2007

My wife Sharon doesn't think I am taking my upcoming surgery seriously enough. That came after I made a comment questioning how mobile I might be in the week or so after this prostate procedure was to be done. Sharon, being a nurse and having been a surgical one many years ago, knows all the complications that can take place. She then filled me in on what it would be like to have a catheter in for several days. She discussed the level of pain I might experience. Sobered, I am glad she did it. Still, I need to focus on doing the best I can afterwards. Instead of focusing on when I can get back on the treadmill, I know that first means taking into account the pain and the catheter.

I want to share this journey through surgery as a way to let other members of the UU congregation know about patient advocacy and how needed it is these days. Since I am the one pushing this program, I hope to demonstrate how this applies to me, and perhaps learn something in the process that can only be done by "being there". This is my basic training!

I am having prostate reduction surgery. It is not a cancer procedure, which most people fearfully assume when I first tell them. My PSA is fine (4.4. and steady), but my "peeing isn't. As Sharon likes to say, I'll probably gain back three hours of my day by having this procedure. She may not be too far off!

It is hard to accept the necessity of such a procedure. I have worked hard to limit the effects of aging with exercise and diet. I moved Up North eleven years ago, taking an early retirement from the medical schools at MSU to eliminate some of the major stressors—where I live and the nature of my work—and enjoy the fruits of a partial retirement. I am doing what I really like to do; a part time practice of psychotherapy, writing books and stories, some consulting around the world, while

mainly enjoying the beauty of the area and spending as much time as I can with Sharon, children and grandchildren.

But aging takes its inevitable course. I may just be making the march of time's downward slope a little more gradual. That doesn't mean there won't be bumps like this one. This kind of "ream job" surgery has been a possibility for several years. The inconvenience, discomfort and occasional embarrassment of it just got too much to delay much longer.

Once I decided, I have begun to prepare. One way was to let the Pastoral Care team know. Easy for me, since I am a member! They have responded, as I knew they would and do for others in the congregation when they know they are needed. Arline, Bonnie and Chip have called, emailed and asked: What can we do for you? The offers of visits, meals and advocacy all make me feel loved and cared for. It is good to know Sharon will have back-up, that she will be able to do her own work as well as be there when I need her.

The list of health care system concerns that have recently come out in Newsweek, Parade and the AARP newsletter also suggested how to maximize positive outcomes. I can make practical use of them right now. I have increased my exercise level, sometimes two workouts a day. In a month's time, my resting pulse rate, already pretty good, has dropped from 55bpm to 45, amazing my family doc Roger Gerstle. I have lost 15 pounds of weight by getting back on the South Beach diet. I am getting a good night's rest. I am listening to soothing music rather than the irritating and frightening news (well, at least some of the time). My patients know and I have made arrangements for those who need special care. Sharon and I talk about logistics.

There are things I can monitor already. At the urologist's office, the urine sample for whoever was before me was still in the little door between

the bathroom and the lab. I alerted the tech on the other side that the first one coming through wouldn't be mine. I watched just to be sure. Roger had a cold. Before I could say something, which I knew I would have, he told me he had just washed his hands before doing his exam. I am getting great care, I know, but it sure is in my best interest to be alert as well.

I am also preparing for my recuperation process. I expect I will be a bit foggy from the anesthesia and possibly the pain meds afterwards. I lower my expectations of all the work I will get done. Not wanting to rely on TV, I am lining up movies to watch. I am getting my favorite CDs together and in easy reach of my bed and the sofa. I will bring over my wonderful neuroacoustic mat, which sends vibrations through my body when I lie on it, along with the various pieces of music and vibratory sound that can even target the affected organ, my bladder.

Friends know about the procedure and what to expect might happen. I ask them to call, but not to be surprised if I have marbles in my mouth or sound "off the wall." I expect I may not want to talk some of the time, and they are all OK with that.

Oh, yeah. There is some risk in this procedure. Infections, impotence, the fact that it may not work. Two to four percent they say. Used to be a lot higher. I have to sit for a bit with the possibility that I might be one of the 2-4%. Can I live with it? I know I will find a way and have the support to do it.

But then I acknowledge it's not likely. I look for and hear positive stories from several who have had the procedure done. I think ahead to the three hours of additional time each day that Sharon says I will have. This will improve my life. I can see myself less reliant on finding the nearest restroom, or sitting on the aisle at movies.