

**THE ADIRONDACK  
COMMUNITARIAN**



A Monthly Newsletter of the Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community

**Volume 130**

**September 2013**

**September Schedule**

**September 1**

Adrien Vlach  
Generational Trends  
Social Justice Committee Meeting 11:15

**September 8**

Jason Brill  
Water Communion  
Please bring a small container of water or a nature-related memento from your summer.

**September 15**

Dan Berggren  
Topic TBA  
Social Justice Committee Meeting 11:15

**September 22**

Rev. David Weissbard  
Reclaiming Wholeness

**September 29**

Sigrin Newell  
Starr King

**“Reclaiming Wholeness”**

The central function of religion is to help us gain perspective on the meaning of our lives. Many religions turn to a sacred book for those insights. I recall a Unitarian pamphlet from the '40's which suggested that we have a "Loose-Leaf Bible," which is to say that ours is open -- not sealed -- it does not look only to the past for insight.

Throughout my ministry, I have been on the lookout for new ways of understanding our ways of being in the world. One of the contributors to my loose-leaf bible is Carol Lee Flinders whose book, *The Values of Belonging*, retitled the following year *Rebalancing the World*, provided me with one of those "Ah ha!" experiences.

Her work provides the basis of my September sermon: "Reclaiming Wholeness."

Dave Weissbard

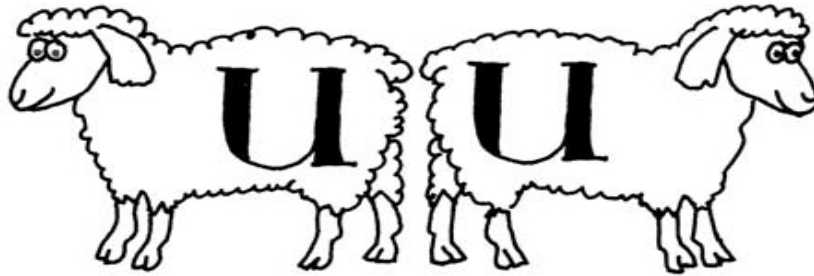
**From the Caring Committee**

Best wishes to everyone as we slide through these beautiful days into autumn. I don't know about you, but I'm making every effort to soak in the summer breezes, sit in the sunshine, listen to sounds of cicadas, float on the water and walk in the woods, see friends, volunteer and do what we all do to make the August days count. In other words, we're being Unitarians and expressing our love of nature and the outdoors.

If any of you would like to visit The Wild Center and watch the new "Flight of the Monarchs" I have several passes available. I am willing to drive and can take 3-4 people with me. Or if you would like to get together for lunch, I'll organize a very small group so we can enjoy great conversation.

Enjoy the end of summer, especially the Leos and Virgos who have turned a year older. It's a blow to our vanity! Richard and Joan Kelly have returned from their travels, Emily Warner's been picking buckets of blueberries, Leo Brill is leaving for Oregon so Gail and Jason will be empty nesters, the Farm to Fork Festival is coming up on August 29 – come see Gail, Jason and Susan and perhaps other Unitarians there. I can't wait for us all to be together again! With love from your AUUC Caring Committee. Susan Arnold 891-3744

## Double Ewe Knitters



If you took wool to knit something for charity, now is the time for you to complete your project. These knitted ware items will be collected on Sun Oct. 6 and Sunday Oct. 13. They will be distributed to elementary schools and Middle school in Saranac lake. before winter sets in. Thanks to all of you with "magic fingers". Joyce Henklein

### *From the Caring Committee*

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### **Social Justice Committee News**

The Social Justice Committee will be resuming 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday meetings starting September 1<sup>st</sup>. Anyone interested in making a difference in our community and the world is welcome to join. We're always looking for fresh faces and ideas! Forum ideas are welcome as well! If you have any ideas for a future panel discussion contact Steve DeHond at [sdehond@hotmail.com](mailto:sdehond@hotmail.com).

**"If you have knowledge, let others light their candle at it."  
–Margaret Fuller**

## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Last month, as I revisited my September sermon topic, I realized that generational attitudes, tendencies, and abilities provide a lens for *congregational affairs* that could be useful to us at the AUUC. In my circle sermon, last Sunday, I had hoped to introduce the broad concepts of generational theory, describing formative events, defining features, strengths & weaknesses, then launch a focused discussion. Specifically, I wanted to talk about how well the generalizations fit our UUs—we tend to be outliers in some things (politically, spiritually, etc.) and quite mainstream in others (racially, economically...)—and to discuss what we might take from generational theory and apply to our little, all-volunteer, religious community.

We got about half way there. The discussion about formative events was compelling, and hearing the personal stories of our congregational community members opened new windows into who we are. It was touching and illuminating. It was also *more* than enough for a single Sunday sermon. We barely touched on practical applications for more effective coordination of congregational affairs.

In lieu of a group exploration, or perhaps as a primer for discussions to come, let me toss out a few ideas that came to mind as Julia and I discussed the sermon a couple weeks ago.

**1. Growth oriented congregations should be mindful of the needs and modes of the congregants they wish to attract. That goes double for congregations, like ours, that want to grow without proselytizing.**

What is the growth demographic for religious bodies? Not children, not students, not retirees, it is families that are drawn (back) to religion. Childbirth, divorce, and relocation are probably the three life events most likely to reshape a person's religious life, and Generation X is currently in that phase of life.

According to the theory, Gen X'ers are informal, loners, realists, individualists, cynics, skeptics, independents, flexible, pragmatic, philanthropic, tech savvy, and largely agnostic. That describes a lot of Unitarians, which suggests a UU/GenX subcultural fit; it also suggests some ways we could be more accessible as a congregation.

Gen X experienced the birth of personal computing and the Internet at a formative time in their lives—they are tech savvy, and we should have a decent website!

Members of Generation X tend to be wary of institutions and disdainful of candy-coated messages. They are acutely aware of the fact that they are the first generation not to do as well, financially, as their parents and are dourly realistic about the trajectory of our culture and our environment. If we want to capture the attention of this generation and be spiritually relevant to them and their families,

we may want our content to balance rejoicing in the joy of life and celebrating beauty with constructive recognition of the struggles we all face and the injustices that must be overcome.

Regardless of generational cohort, if people largely embrace institutional religion in the life stage of parenting, divorce, and the redefined lifestyles accompanying those game changers, shouldn't our congregation be prepared to receive and nurture children, parents, and divorcees? This is another reminder of what we already see, that a nursery, compelling religious education, and opportunities for community building (via covenant groups, circle suppers, or other forms of small group ministry) is important to the future of our congregation.

**2. Any congregation, and especially a small, volunteer-led congregation like ours, should be mindful of the needs and modes of the congregants that keep the place running.**

In our case, the Baby Boomer generation constitutes the bulk of our membership and the deepest well from which we draw support. Currently, Boomers fall somewhere in the 49 to 67 year old range (roughly). They are likely to be recently retired or at the pinnacle of their professional careers, putting them in a strong place to contribute with time, talents, or financial resources.

Boomers, the theory says, are starkly different from the members of Generation X. They are, as a lot, driven, optimistic, socially competent and technologically challenged. They embrace the institutions and institutional solutions that X'ers largely reject. Inwardly focused and drawn to collaboration, spiritual awareness is especially important to the boomers and congregational community is a natural extension.

If we want to make the most of our greatest resource, our Boomers, we will need to remember that they accomplish things via face-to-face interactions, inclusive processes, and by purchasing things. Computer based communications are 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier choices for Baby Boomers, and even if they are completely proficient, technology may be less integrated into their daily lives. For the AUUC this suggests that of our cloud-based resources and e-communication just make it harder and slower for some of our doers to get things done.

As a generation, baby boomers also value praise and recognition far more than X'ers do. We'll need to get a little better at publicly recognizing their hard work, if we want to keep them involved.

Our little, religious community is moving in some good directions. The board has recently discussed some ways to make information more accessible. In response to a message from a members noting wide disparity in who can and cannot access our Google Docs, Ginger Slater successfully solicited a commitment from Judi's Computing for a tutorial in her specialized classroom for our congregation. Judi is waiving her fee for us. We just need to organize and schedule the training—you can bet that's

something we'll take her up on.

I am toying with ideas for broader information and resource delivery at Sunday services. Clipboards seem to come and go, almost randomly, and I seldom see printed copies of the Communitarian available for the taking. I want a calendar showing our events and services that people can peruse at their leisure and edit with a pencil. I don't think any of the onsite stuff should replace the existing digital resources. If we want to engage across generations, we have to follow an "also/and" approach, not "either/or".

Yours in service,

Adrien Vlach

### Some Things to Think About

Have you ever imagined a world with no hypothetical situations?

Why isn't phonetic spelled the way it sounds?

If you're in a vehicle going the speed of light, what happens when you turn on the headlights?

Why is it, whether you sit up or sit down, the result is the same?

If you keep trying to prove Murphy's Law, will something keep going wrong?

Why do we park on driveways and drive on parkways?

What do sheep count when they can't get to sleep?

When you choke a smurf, what color does it turn?

If corn oil comes from corn, where does baby oil come from?

If someone has a mid-life crises while playing hide & seek, does he automatically lose because he can't find himself?

I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.

Where do forest rangers go to "get away from it all"?

The two biggest problems in America are making ends meet and making meetings end.

## Contact Numbers

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**We the member congregations of the Unitarian  
Universalist Association, 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 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.*



**From the "Church of the open mind, loving heart, and helping hand" to**

**Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community  
89 Church Street  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983**