

# Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

To affirm and promote  
the inherent worth  
and dignity  
of every person

FEBRUARY 1, 2008

## Interim Minister's Column

By the Reverend Don Vaughn-Foerster



Since I may not be among you many more months, let me say a few words about what I think is a Unitarian Universalist minister's function. Compared to ministers in other religious settings, Unitarian Universalist ministers serve a peculiar function. The clergy of other religions and denominations seem to have a more clearly-defined role in the worship (a word with which some UU ministers have a bit of trouble.) Islamic imams lead in prayer and deliver sermons exhorting the worship of Allah, the study of the Koran, and adherence to the tenets and teachings of Mohammed. Jewish rabbis conduct prayers, supervise the reading of the Torah, and give sermons designed to strengthen the congregants in their Judaism. Christian clergy (Catholic and Protestant alike) lead prayers and the worship of God; they preach sermons to proclaim the good news that through Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and we are inheritors of eternal life. At the risk of oversimplification of their preaching: imams exhort, rabbis educate, and Christian clergy proclaim.

What, then, do Unitarian Universalist ministers do and how does it make them different from worship leaders and preachers of other faiths? Think about the nature of the usual UU congregation. Ordinarily, it is made up of people who come not to worship "The Truth" that has been stated for all eternity, but to pursue the truth (small "t"), as each individual understands it—or can come to understand it. This fundamental characteristic of our free religion means that a minister who tries to lead a service of celebration or worship based on his or her private understanding of The Truth in absolute terms violates (from the "git-go," as they say) the basic reason other people are present. And any UU minister who proclaims a Gospel as if it were the inviolate word of Allah or Yahweh or God, by that act offends the integrity of those persons who have come with a mind for open inquiry and a heart for their singular experience of celebration or worship.

So, if a UU minister can't do as other religious professionals do, what can that minister do? The UU minister can do something immensely more meaningful and profound than those who rely on outside "Truth" to establish inward convictions. For, as I have come to understand it, the UU minister's function as the leader of the church service is to create a context in which those gathered can celebrate or worship according to their own convictions. Nor, as a preacher, is the UU minister's function to proclaim the immutable revelation, as other traditions would have it. Rather, the function is both to challenge and to facilitate inquiry into the realities of

See Page 9, Interim Minister

## Program Highlights

### Labyrinth Walk

Sun, Feb 3, 6:30–8:30 pm  
Remington Chapel

### Good Companions

11:45 am–12:45 pm: BYO Lunch  
12:45–1:45 pm: Speaker  
Tues, Feb 12–Supv. **Gerry Hyland**,  
Tues, Feb 26–**Bea Holmes** and  
**Would Be Poets**  
Hollin Hall

### MVUC/FHP Playground

**Construction Task Force Meeting**  
Thurs, Feb 28, 7:30 pm  
Fireplace Room

### Annual Lasagna Dinner and Variety Show

Sat, Mar 1, 5:30-6:30 pm–Dinner  
6:00–9:00 pm–Variety Show  
Meeting House

**Inside:  
Page 6  
Going Green  
at MVUC**



**MOUNT VERNON  
UNITARIAN CHURCH**

**INTERIM MINISTER**

The Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster

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**Mark Your Calendar!**

**Labyrinth Walk**

**Sunday, February 3, 6:30–8:30 pm**

**Remington Chapel**

Come when you wish; leave when you wish! Contact Kathi McNeil (703-780-5939 or [krmcneil2105@aol.com](mailto:krmcneil2105@aol.com)) for details.

**MVUC Co-Sponsored Town Hall Meeting  
Coal Plants and Virginia's Clean Energy Future"**

**Tuesday, February 5, 7:00–9:00 pm**

**Lyles Crouch Elementary School**

(See Page 6 for details.)

**Good Companions**

**11:45 am–12:45 pm: BYO Lunch**

**12:45–1:45 pm: Speaker**

**Hollin Hall**

Tuesday, February 12—Supervisor Gerry Hyland: *Revitalization of Southeastern Fairfax County*. Gerry has been the Supervisor of the Mount Vernon District for many years. He will speak on the hottest issues facing our area and will answer questions as time allows.

Tuesday, February 26—Bea Holmes: *The Would Be Poets*, including, Barbara Katz, Al Searle, June Stumpe and Tom Tarca, who will recite a few of their all-time best poems; also, a poem by Harriett Marx will be recited.

**Little Persons Night Out at the Beach**

**Saturday, February 23, 5:30 pm**

**Meeting House**

(See Page 4 for details)

**MVUC/FHP Playground**

**Construction Task Force Meeting**

**Thursday, February 28, 7:30 pm**

**Fireplace Room**

(See Page 4 for details)

**Annual Lasagna Dinner and Variety Show**

**Saturday, March 1, 5:30-6:30 pm—Dinner**

**6:00–9:00 pm—Variety Show**

**Meeting House**

(See Page 4 for details)

## Religious Education

By **Meagan Henry**, Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Dear Friends,

Last year's Green Hill Project was a great success and this spring we will implement phase II. With the inspiration and guidance of several dedicated volunteers, we are in the process of creating this environmental curriculum for Kindergarten–5th grades. The activities will be offered during both services, after the For All Ages. We will divide the elementary grades into two groups for each class; K–2nd grades and 3rd–5th grades.

The Green Hill Project gets the kids outside doing some hands-on activities to learn about our immediate environment and how to care for it—from gardening, to wildlife, to the water cycle, as well as the environment of our larger world and things we can do in order to be responsible stewards of the earth.

The children will learn to:

- o dig a garden plot, plant, care for, and harvest vegetables;
- o compost in order to reduce plant and food matter waste;
- o identify animal habitats and walk the grounds and explore the wildlife;
- o build, install, and maintain bluebird observation boxes; and,
- o understand the water cycle and watershed, the importance of preserving fresh water, the impact of water run-off on our neighbors further down the Hill.

The Green Hill Project covers eight weeks from March 30 through May 18, including our annual creek clean-up on Earth Day on April 27. Please contact me if you would like to get involved with this fantastic program. We had our first planning session on January 31, and there are still plenty of opportunities to get involved.

I am pleased to report that our Adult Religious Education (ARE) classes are off to a great start this semester. The ARE committee is looking ahead to our program for next Autumn, and we would very much like to hear from you. Please come to our next meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 26, 7:30 pm in the Blue Room on the second floor of Hollin Hall to share your input and ideas for classes!—**Meagan Henry**, Director of Religious Education

### **February Children and Youth RE Class Schedule:**

**Preschool–Chalice Children** (Meets after For All Ages of 9:30 service in the Carriage House, Joseph Priestley room.)

- 2/3 Wondering About the Moon
- 2/10 Valentine's Day
- 2/17 Rainbows
- 2/24 Dreams
- 3/2 Imagination

**K–1st Grade** (Meets after For All Ages of both services in the Carriage House, Thoreau Room.)

**2nd–3rd Grades** (Meets after For All Ages of both services in the Carriage House, Children's Chapel.)

**4th–5th Grades** (Meets after For All Ages of both services in the Hollin Hall, Morning Room.)

- *Our Jewish and Christian Heritage* -

- 2/3 The Story of the Good Shepherd
- 2/10 The Power of Forgiveness: The Story of Joseph I
- 2/17 Children's Chapel
- 2/24 The Power of Forgiveness: The Story of Joseph II
- 3/2 The Story of Queen Esther

**Jr. High (6th–8th Grades)–Compass Points** (Meets only during 11:15 service in Hollin Hall, Fireplace Room)

- 2/3 From Calvinism to Channing
- 2/10 Just Whose Religion Is It?
- 2/17 Honoring Our Martyrs
- 2/24 Attend Youth Service
- 3/2 Hey! Who's in Charge Here?

**High School Topic-Based Discussion Class** (Meets 10:00–11:00 am, YRUU Room)

- 2/10 Gun Control, Part II

**YRUU (Young Religious UUs) (9th–11th Grades)** (Meets during 11:15 service in the Carriage House, YRUU room.)

- 2/3–2/17 Youth Service Planning
- 2/23 Service Rehearsal, 5:00–8:00 pm
- 2/24 Youth Service!

**Coming of Age Class for 8th–9th Grades** (Meets Sundays, 4:00–6:00 pm, Hollin Hall, 1st floor)

**High School Our Whole Lives Class** ((Meets Sundays, 4:00–6:00 pm, Carriage House, 2nd floor)

*Please check the RE page of the MVUC website for updates!* ([www.mvuc.org](http://www.mvuc.org))

### **Melodie's Musings**

#### **Calling All Musicians**

MVUC is blessed with many talented musicians of all ages! But if this is a typical UU congregation, there are more hidden talents just waiting to burst forth! Now that I'm beginning to get "settled in" here, I'd like to begin developing a more complete list of individuals (or groups) who have musical talents. Do you play kazoo or whistle? Sing opera, scat, or just for fun? Do you play bass guitar or drums? How about trumpet or sax or piccolo or bassoon? Or piano or organ? If you possess any gifts such as these (and are willing to share them), I want to know! Please contact me at: [music@mvuc.org](mailto:music@mvuc.org), or at the church at 703-765-5950, ext. 107.

Blessings,

Melodie Feather, Director of Music

### **RE Announcements**

#### **Little Persons Night Out at the Beach, Saturday, February 23, 5:30 pm Meeting House**

Join us for an evening of food, fun and games. We will do the hula, play limbo and dance to Surfin' USA. Children under 10 are welcome. Bring enthusiasm and a dish to share! To volunteer or attend, please contact **Seileen Murphy** at 703-283-5130 or [smurphy@sentinelconsulting.net](mailto:smurphy@sentinelconsulting.net), or sign up in the Commons.

#### **Annual Lasagna Dinner and Variety Show—March 1**

The Annual Lasagna Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 1, at 5:30–6:30 pm in the Meeting House prior to the Variety Show. Dinner includes meat or vegetarian lasagna, garlic bread, salad and beverages. Tickets, which include the Variety Show, are \$8 per person, or a maximum of \$25 for immediate family members. Contact **Betsy Yarrison** ([betsy.yarrison@verizon.net](mailto:betsy.yarrison@verizon.net)) with questions about the dinner. Look for the ticket table in the Commons to reserve tickets in advance or purchase on the night of the event.

The Variety Show follows at 7:00 pm–9:00 pm. Get out your tutu, dust off that kazoo, and practice your juggling! It's a great way to break into the big time or discover that you shouldn't quit your day job! Adults and children, young and old, ALL are welcome to perform. Contact **Linda Jemison** (the emcee) by email at [linda@nx-01.org](mailto:linda@nx-01.org) or 703-765-0379. A sign-up sheet for the Variety Show will be in the Commons each Sunday in February. (Proceeds from this event will benefit the Coming of Age Class Trip to Boston.)

#### **MVUC/FHP Playground Construction Meeting, Thursday, February 28, 7:30 pm., Fireplace Room**

Please join us in this exciting project to revitalize our playground and create a new, earth- and child-friendly play space in and around the current MVUC playground and Carriage House. This meeting will kick off the spring tasks and help you figure out how you want to be involved in this exciting project. Elements include a story-telling area, bird blind, small stage, raised garden beds, glider, cob houses, Plexiglas easel, woven willow house, tunnel, small streambed, large sandbox, and more. You will also have the opportunity to donate an individual element, if you wish to participate in that way.

Questions? Contact **Gail McNulty**, [gail.mcnulty@gmail.com](mailto:gail.mcnulty@gmail.com); **Meagan Henry**, [dre@mvuc.org](mailto:dre@mvuc.org); **Kristen Reidy**, [stillnessmovement@hotmail.com](mailto:stillnessmovement@hotmail.com); or **Wendy Burns**, [wdburns@erols.com](mailto:wdburns@erols.com).

#### **News from the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC)**

We've been busy as bees reading ministerial packets, interviewing candidates, calling references and attending meetings on a daily basis! It will all be worth it in the end when we have confidently chosen our pre-candidates. These candidates will each be invited individually to Alexandria for a weekend of personal interviews with the MSC committee. We have arranged neutral pulpits—that is, we have arranged for each of the pre-candidates to give a Sunday sermon at a church in our area. Once all of the pre-candidate weekends are finished (there are generally three of them), the MSC will then be tasked with deciding which of these candidates best matches with MVUC. Please feel free to share with us any questions that you feel are important to ask candidates. We are humbly your MSC—**Kathi McNeil, Jane Nelson, Marty Bredeck, Pam Tinker, Omran Hasan, Sandy Peterson, and Vince Patton.**

#### **The Easy Way to Pay Your Pledge to MVUC**

You can make regular payments to MVUC without having to write checks or remember when they're due. Just fill out a simple form authorizing the money to be debited each month from your checking or savings account. To automate your contributions, contact **Ron Brandt**, Administrator, [admin@mvuc.org](mailto:admin@mvuc.org) or **Al Erickson**, Treasurer, [aerickson@cox.net](mailto:aerickson@cox.net).

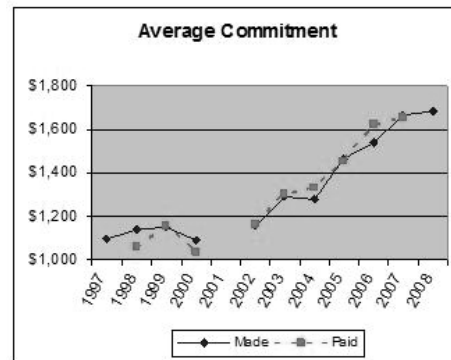
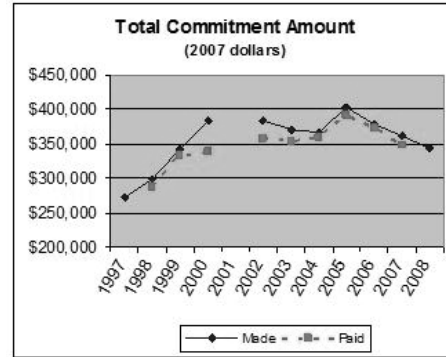
# Budget Facts

As we prepare for the upcoming stewardship commitment campaign and for decisions regarding major items of expense, we need to be mindful of our current financial condition.

First, the good news. We own a very valuable campus on our cherished hill and we are debt-free. We have over \$400,000 in our Building Fund, a little less than \$800,000 in our Endowment Fund, and a balance of about \$40,000 in our operating account. Our net worth is considerable.

The not-so-good news is that our operating revenues are declining in real terms and do not quite match our level of spending. In this year's church budget, expenses are expected to exceed income by about \$11,000. This is in spite of the fact that our church administrator position, which cost about \$62,000 last year, was vacated at the beginning of this year and its duties assumed by church member volunteers.

The condition of our operating funds has been shaped in large part by changes in revenue from stewardship commitments. The following four graphs depict the history of these commitments since 1997 (except for church year 2001, for which data appear to be incomplete).

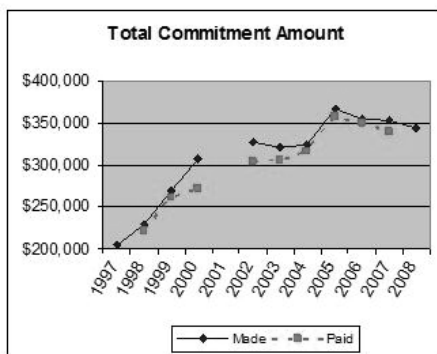
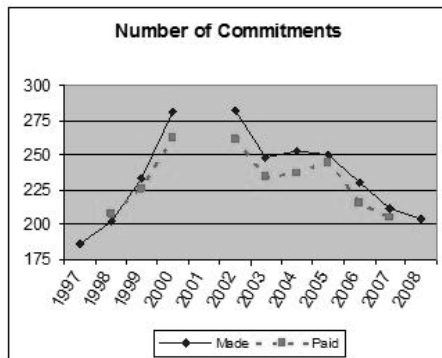


These graphs show that our average stewardship commitment has grown steadily, to about \$1,700 this year, but the number of member households making commitments has declined from a high of over 275 in 2000-2002 to a little over 200 this year.

Our total annual commitment amount has declined to about \$343,000 this year from a high of about \$360,000 in 2005. Adjusted for inflation, the 2005 high-water mark was worth about \$400,000 in current dollars. Thus, in four years, the buying power of our stewardship commitments has shrunk by about 14%.

Thanks to our accrued assets, our current budget deficit is not a serious problem. Our continued financial viability is not in doubt. However, to become an excellent liberal church, we need to increase our revenue.

With renewed commitment, we will build our Hill of Dreams. For more information, please contact **Al Robbert** at [aarobbert@comcast.net](mailto:aarobbert@comcast.net) or 703-299-9892.



**January Omission:** A belated Holiday Shop "thank you" to **Golden Slawson**, who again sold a record number of quilt-affle tickets. Golden has been a champion seller of quilt-affle tickets for many years. We love and appreciate you Golden.—**Mary Barnett**

### **Green Sanctuary Task Force Update**

Things are moving quickly and much environmental progress is being made at MVUC:

- Plans are underway within the church to begin quickly implementing some of the recommendations provided by Greater Washington Interfaith Power & Light during their recent energy audit at the church.
- We are in the final stages of preparing and submitting our Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation to the UUA. As a congregation, MVUC has worked hard on environmental projects for many years, and it is exciting to see the church's many results and our pending certification!
- While it will be wonderful to achieve "Green Sanctuary" status, this is not an end in itself. Instead, it is one step along the way in MVUC's continuing efforts to minimize our carbon footprint and do our part to tackle the Climate Change emergency. As a congregation, we are looking at our intentions for continuing to live out our Green Sanctuary commitments.

### **MVUC Co-Sponsors Town Hall Meeting "A Tale of Two Coal Plants and Virginia's Clean Energy Future"**

**When:** Tuesday, February 5, 7:00–9:00 pm (Reception from 6:00–7:00 pm)

**Where:** Lyles Crouch Elementary School, 530 South Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria, Virginia

**Cost:** Free!

Join **Congressman Jim Moran** and others to discuss the dirty legacy of Virginia coal and the actions that we can

take to help move Virginia towards a clean energy future. For decades, Alexandrians have been fighting the Mirant coal-fired power plant. We know the effect that coal can have on our air, our health, our water, and our climate—we have experienced it all first hand. But in spite of increasing opposition to coal all over the country and in spite of increasing awareness of how coal impacts global warming, another coal-fired power plant is ready to be built right here in Virginia.

We must stop the proposed plant in Southwest Virginia; we cannot allow another community to inherit the same problems that we currently face here in Alexandria.

Come learn more about the Mirant fight, the proposed coal-fired power plant in Southwest VA, and how Virginia can become a renewable energy leader and a model for how to fight global warming on the state level.

Speakers include Alexandria **Vice-Mayor Del Pepper** (MVUC member); **Congressman Jim Moran**, 8th District of Virginia; Mirant & Environmental Advocate **Ana Prados**; Sierra Club Mt. Vernon Group Air Quality Issues Chair, Mirant Mountain-Top Removal Coal Mining Activists and a Virginia Legislator to discuss the Virginia Clean Energy Future Act of 2008.

Event Sponsors: CCAN, Sierra Club, NOTICE, Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, GWIPL, VIPL, Green Sanctuary Task Force of Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, PDA, and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Environmental Impact Club

To volunteer your help, call **Suzanne Cleary** at 703-768-4967.

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### **The Power of the Quarter**

The efforts of two MVUC members, **Lynne Kennedy** and **Joan Darrah**, have resulted in a contribution of \$2,000 to United Community Ministries (UCM) for 2007. The money was collected from candy vending machines that dispense a "handful of candy" for 25 cents. Joan and Lynne became involved in this project back in 2005 when some candy machines were donated to UCM. At that time, UCM asked Lynne and Joan if they would be willing to help deploy and maintain these machines. Since then, Lynne and Joan have spent several hours each month filling, cleaning and repairing the machines, ordering new candy, and collecting and depositing the money. These candy machines are located at various establishments, mainly along Route One, including the South County Government Center, the Back Porch and the Mount Vernon Governmental Center.

If you happen to see one of these UCM candy machines in your travels, please put in a quarter and know that your money is going to a very worthwhile cause.

Caring Community

**In Memoriam**

**Florence Searle, 1916-2007**

Florence Searle, a charter member of MVUC, died unexpectedly and peacefully November 20, 2007, while riding home from a doctor's appointment in Washington, DC with her husband, Allan Searle.

Florence, referred to by her friends as Flo, was a familiar face at MVUC. She served on numerous committees and participated in multiple functions. She assisted in the newsletter distribution and participated in the Women's Group. For many years, Flo was a member of the Every Thursday's "kitchen crew" that made chutney and calico bean soup for the Holiday Shop. Years ago, when MVUC asked its members to provide housing for out-of-state young people arriving to participate in the Civil Rights and Anti-Viet Nam War demonstration, Flo responded to the church's call during that tense time in our history with warmth and hospitality.

The Searles were original Hollin Hills settlers, living in the same house since 1950, where they raised their son Jeffrey. Flo served as a greeter for the Hollin Hills Civic Association.

Born in 1916, Florence, the youngest of eleven children, was raised on the family farm in Irwin, Pennsylvania. She attended Norwin High School and worked in East Pittsburgh after graduation. She married Allan in 1939, moving to Washington, DC, where she worked for the War Department during World War II.

Florence liked to travel; she and her family spent many summers in East Dennis and Brewster on Cape Cod. She also enjoyed traveling in the Southwestern United States, Europe and Mexico, where she especially relished visiting archaeological sites.

Flo is survived by her husband Allan; her son Jeffrey; two granddaughters, Jennifer and Marisa, and their mother Susan; one great-grandson Eric, and by her daughter-in-law Amy Weiss. She has one surviving brother, Arthur D. Daily, who lives in Hunker, Pennsylvania.

**A memorial service for Flo will be held at MVUC on Sunday, February 17, 3:00-4:00 pm, followed by a reception from 4:00-5:00 pm.**

*(Information Sources: Allan Searle, Jo Jackley, and The Hollin Hills Bulletin)*

**Post-Holidays Thoughts**

The holiday season can be a coin with two faces. One face smiles with joy and anticipation; another frowns with the perils of overdoing. This season was no different: As some of us celebrated the season, others were in some form of pain. Numerous house fires impacted our larger community and offered us an opportunity to show again, that when we say "we care," we actually mean it.

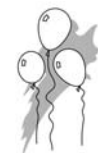
One MVUC family had such opportunity, in the face of the deadly fire on Popkins Lane that destroyed a house and killed two teenagers. The **Jernigan family**, who lives next door, saw the tragedy unfold and jumped to help. Their two sons, **Will** and **Elliott**, who grew up in MVUC, spent their winter breaks from college and high school establishing a fund to benefit the **Whitsett family** in its hour of need. They walked door-to-door in the neighborhood to seek clothes donations and to announce the religious service that was held for the two girls with whom they grew up.

There is no greater tragedy than losing one's child, and the community support went to out to the Whitsett family, prompted in large measure by Will's and Elliott's efforts. If you wish to support the fund that Will set up, please contact the Jernigans. Our thanks go to the entire family for showing us how UUs care. *(—Reported by Georgia Pourchot)*

Contact information for the Caring Associate for the week and Caring Associate Coordinator (CAC) can be found each week in the Order of Service and in the Member Services area of the church website. As always, the MVUC staff and volunteers are willing to assist you during normal business hours. Please direct any questions or concerns to **Betsy Stephens** ([betsys2@verizon.net](mailto:betsys2@verizon.net)) or **Meg Clontz** ([megclontz@cox.net](mailto:megclontz@cox.net)).



**RE Youth  
February  
Birthdays!**



- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Rachel Morgan     | 14 Grace Alexander |
| 8 Audrey Anderson   | 17 Hanna Jeng      |
| 8 Raven Des Jardins | 17 Jaelin Picado   |
| 9 Hunter Mulvaney   | 18 Dolan Napier    |
| 10 Carson Cameron   | 18 Zach Francis    |
| 12 Danny Cavanna    | 19 Kathy Butler    |
| 13 Joshua Turner    | 22 Audrey Snedecor |
| 14 Calvin Hentges   | 25 Allan Anderson  |



## OUR LARGER WORLD NEWS

Social Justice Programs at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

*Love is the teaching of this church, and service is its prayer.*

### Social Justice Speakers Series Welcomes Ambassador Nabil Fahmy of the Arab Republic of Egypt

On January 13, 2008, MVUC welcomed **Ambassador Fahmy**, who spoke about the prospects for peace in the Middle East, and the role of Egypt and the United States in regional and global stability.



Ambassador Nabil Fahmy

Ambassador Fahmy underscored the cultural differences between his country and the U.S. that can be best captured by the following statement: “The U.S. reacts fast to events and challenges; it is always in a hurry somewhere. Egyptian society is much slower to respond to challenges and needs time to adjust its strategies and policy positions.” Egyptian society is several thousand years old and has a rich culture and an established mode of doing things; change comes slowly, across generations—not across a few years. Nevertheless the Egyptian-American relationship is solidly founded on mutual interest in peace and security, particularly in the Middle East.

The main points were:

- Peace in the Middle East between Israelis and Palestinians is still possible, but it will take a lot of negotiation in good faith. Territory, refugees, Jerusalem and security are the top four issues that need to be negotiated.
- The Clinton administration prioritized the process of bringing the two sides to the negotiating table; the Bush administration came out in favor of a Palestinian state. Even if the process launched by the Bush administration comes at the end of the second term, there is still time to bring a settlement about, if the U.S. leverages its power effectively.
- Ambassador Fahmy believes that the territory will need to be returned, except what is agreed to exchange, and refugees accommodated in a Palestinian state; that Jerusalem should be an open city, with a Jewish Jerusalem, a Palestinian Jerusalem; and holy sites governed by international guarantees sacred to both faiths, under an international protectorate.



Gregg Early, Series Director

- The situation in Iraq remains volatile, even in the aftermath of the military surge. Politically, there has been no reconciliation among various factions based on their Iraqi identity. Bad blood remains among Sunni, Shia and Kurds. The security on the ground inside Iraq needs also to be balanced with the security of its neighbors. An international conference on security and proliferation is highly needed, with all the parties present at the table.

- On the issue of terrorism, 9/11, and negotiation with groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, the Ambassador reminded the audience that whether people like it or not, both groups were elected by their respective publics, in free elections. Their presence in the Palestinian and Lebanese governments is therefore legitimate, and the international community needs to learn to deal with them and work to convince them to pursue the correct policies.

- Egypt will remain a pivotal country in its region, just as the U.S. will remain a global power. The Ambassador called for renewed efforts to deal with challenges in the Middle East on a negotiation and cooperation basis, and called on the U.S. to “not go it alone” in trying to resolve all the security challenges facing us.



MVUC audience listening to Ambassador Fahmy

Photos: Tisara Photography

### Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Events in Social Justice Speakers Series:

February 24, 2008, 1:00–3:00 pm: **Ambassador Imad Moustapha**, Embassy of Syria to the U.S.

March 9, 2008, 12:30–2:30 pm: **Representative Jim Moran (D-VA)**

# Board Chips

## by Jim Potter, Chair, Board of Trustees

Over the next three months, your Board of Trustees will make several difficult decisions that will impact the pace and extent to which MVUC becomes an excellent liberal church. The Board is in the process of clarifying MVUC's major priorities and how we will budget to address them. You will be involved in making these decisions; in fact, the Board recognizes that the Congregation ultimately will "own" these decisions.

The Board's Strategic Planning Committee, led by **Reid Adler**, is helping the Board identify its priorities and think through their interrelationships. While the objectives listed below are tentative and may change, they represent your Chair's current thinking:

1. Provide consistently excellent Sunday services
  - a. Minister
  - b. DRE
  - c. DOM
2. Build and maintain core programs that benefit the congregation
  - a. Training, consultants, travel, and materials
  - b. Seed grants to support the creative efforts of key committees
3. Maintain infrastructure
  - a. Staff to provide necessary support services
  - b. Buildings and grounds
  - c. Website
  - d. Property Major Maintenance (a reserve fund that addresses major maintenance)
  - e. Membership in Unitarian Universalist Association and Joseph Priestley District
4. Start Phase I construction soon and complete by 2012
5. Other
  - a. Become an excellent liberal church
  - b. Grow the congregation
  - c. Passionately lead the community in becoming a positive force for good
  - d. Be certified as a "Green Sanctuary"
  - e. Grow the endowment

Your Board wants MVUC to grow. To do so, we must have consistently excellent Sunday services and consciously attract new members. We know we have a church life that is beneficial, richly rewarding and worth sharing, but we must let our neighbors know about us and what we offer. The "Shoe Leather Project" led by **John Henrehan** was a great example of what we need to continue.

As **Al Robbert** observes in an accompanying article, the number of pledge units has steadily declined since 2002. We must reverse this trend. In the meantime, we have hard choices to make in the current and next year's budget because we simply cannot afford to fund each of the above objectives to the extent required.

All of these objectives are important, and priorities in all five categories will be supported to some extent in the 2008-2009 budget. However, the Board probably will not wait to start construction until all "Category 1, 2, and 3" priorities are completely covered.

The success of the Stewardship Campaign will determine to what extent the Board can support its top priorities in the 2008-2009 budget. We will have several "town meetings" with the Congregation in April to explain the Board's proposed budgetary commitments and listen to your input. The Board will describe its final decisions to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting, including when we expect construction of the improved Commons and Chapel to begin.

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*Continued from Page 9, Interim Minister's Column*

life by his or her listeners. Whatever answers a UU minister would offer must actually be received by the hearers not as answers, but as stimulants to raise their own questions. The service of worship or celebration (I prefer the latter word) must inspire those gathered to be more authentically who they are. And the sermon or the address (again, I prefer the latter word) must prompt them to pursue the issues of life themselves and not be a sop to their dependence on someone else's ideas or emotions. For both of these things to happen, the service and the religious address have to flow from who the minister authentically is. The function of the UU

minister is to present his or her own authentic ideas and beliefs, not that others be required to believe them, but that others shall be prompted to pursue life on their own authentic terms.

Given the way most people view religion, this is a most peculiar function for a religious leader to fulfill. But it is distinctively ours as Unitarian Universalists. To approach the matter didactically or doctrinally would betray the freedom and personal integrity on which our approach to religion is based.

**Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster**

*Sermons for Your Re-Hearing*

Each Sunday's service is recorded and available on CD. If you would like a copy, please speak with **Raleigh Romine** or **Joanne Ell**.

**A Month of Sundays**

*Services at 9:30 am and 11:15 am  
in the Remington Chapel*

February 3

Partner Church Service  
*A Global Family*  
**Rev. Khlur Mukkim**  
Khasi Hills, India

February 10

*Friends in a Transitory World*  
**Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster**

February 17

*Any Human to Another*  
**Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster**

February 24

*Youth: The Experience*  
*Are You Experienced?\_*  
MVUC Young Religious Unitarian  
Universalists (YRUU) Service

March 2

*The Magic Rabbit*  
**Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster**

**Mt. Vernon  
Unitarian Church**  
1909 Windmill Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22307

Non-Profit Organization  
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**Large-Type Version Of  
Windmill Available**

A large-type version of the Windmill is available for those who are visually impaired. Copies may be picked up on the credenza between the two front doors in the Commons.

**Reminder to All MVUC E-Mail Users**

To receive all weekly bulletins and special notices, please promptly notify **Esther Dickinson** ([esthergertrude@verizon.net](mailto:esthergertrude@verizon.net)) whenever your e-mail address changes. Thank you!