

Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

JANUARY 1, 2009

Taking Note . . .

by The Reverend Kate R. Walker



All too often I find myself in front of the fridge looking for something to eat and not finding anything that meets my desire. I'll move over to the cupboard, and then back to the fridge, finding all sorts of options, but nothing is really inspiring me. Finally, I'll reach out and take a loaf of bread and make a piece of toast, or eat some crackers. But, I'm not really satisfied.

I've been hearing this experience from several church members, only they're talking about spiritual hunger. They've expressed a desire for more depth and meaning in their lives. Sunday services help, but what I hear is a yearning for depth in relationship that doesn't come from sitting and hearing words or even singing a hymn. What I'm hearing is a call for depth in relationship with other people and with the universe or, for some, God. It's a hope for interaction or engagement that stimulates passion.

It's clear that folks are not clear about what they're yearning for. After all, spirituality, religion, and their elements deal with mostly abstract qualities of life. It can be a challenge to yearn for something when unable to identify it, and then end up in front of the fridge not knowing what is wanted. I think lots of folks come to church on Sunday mornings yearning for something, but not knowing what they want. Hopefully, they don't leave with a piece of toast or a handful of crackers.

I'm also aware that lots of members are experiencing emotional burn-out. There is a lot going on in the global world, and a lot in our personal lives. Between the economy, changing political winds, and fears about the environment, it may seem hard

to process it all. Add in our personal lives: issues with children, aging parents, our health, our life partners, and even our car, and it can be hard on our emotional coping mechanisms to keep up. Our church community should be a place to help us cope, rather than adding to the burden.

Being the minister here, it seems appropriate that I step up to bat and offer some ways to help. In January I'm starting a twice-a-month Vespers Service on the first and third Wednesdays, 7:00-7:30 p.m. (see separate article, page 9). In January, I'm also beginning the process of creating a Small Group Ministry Program. I'll have two planning meetings (see separate article) in January.

Both of these are designed to encourage more depth and meaning in people's lives and, hopefully, provide healing in an often-disconnected world. But, and this is a big but, the key to inviting more depth and meaning, or even bringing healing, is that we have to participate. This is not a passive experience; that's why Sunday morning worship services don't always do the trick in fulfilling our spiritual desires. The food will not leap out of the fridge; we have to reach in and select something, chew it and digest it. There are no IV tubes in the religious experience.

In a world often full of way too much "doing," perhaps finding a space where "being" is encouraged can help bring us into closer relationship with ourselves and our lives.

I hope you find something nourishing for your spirit, even if you can't articulate what it is you want.

Cheers,
~Kate Walker

**MOUNT VERNON
UNITARIAN CHURCH**

MINISTER
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

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**Program Highlights
Mark Your Calendar!**

Ventures in Community (VIC)
Hosted by MVUC
January 7, 11:30 am (See page 8)

Good Companions
11:45am–12:45 pm–BYO Lunch
12:45–1:45 pm–Speaker
Hollin Hall

Tuesday, January 13, 2009—John Holmes: *The Life and Times of His Communist Uncle Who Returned to Russia*. John will discuss his research in Russia and the Ukraine of his great uncle, Noah London. Not only did John do his research there, but he learned the languages required to do so. This is the story in the late 1920s of an American communist who re-emigrated, gave it his all, and whose ideals were shattered. (John is the son of Bea and Jay Holmes, long-time members of MVUC.)

Tuesday, January 27, 2009—Georgeta Pourchot: *A View from Behind the Iron Curtain*. The Cold War is over, but for many people, its memories remain. They are memories of everyday life and the struggle for freedom. Georgeta Pourchot has been in the US for 18 years, coming from Romania at the end of the Cold War. She speaks to us about what it meant to be born, raised, and educated behind the Iron Curtain, about her identity struggles and her current work.

Vespers Services
Wednesday, January 7, 7:00-7:30 pm
Wednesday, January 21, 7:00-7:30 pm (See page 9)

VIC Choir Festival
Sunday, January 18, 7:00 pm (See page 5)

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church Inaugural Ball
Tuesday, January 20, 7:00-9:30 pm
Remington Chapel (See page 5)

Worship Associate Training
Saturday, January 31, 9:00 am-2:00 pm (See page 6)

Facilitation Training for Small Group Ministry
Saturday, January 17, 9:30-11:30 am
Tuesday, January 27, 7:30-9:30 pm (See page 4)

Religious Education (RE)

By Meagan Henry, Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Being a UU Parent
Thursdays, January 8, 15 & 29
and February 12 & 19, 7:30–9:00 pm
Hollin Hall, Fireplace Room
Facilitated by Meagan Henry

What do UUs believe about God? What about heaven and hell? Do UUs believe in the Bible?— Have you been asked any of these questions by your children? Or, maybe you've asked yourself these same questions. If so, this may be the class/discussion group for you! You are not alone; many parents are looking for ways to better understand and interpret UU values at home, school and work. Join with Meagan and other UU parents to discuss what it means to be a UU parent.

Costumes, Dress-Up Clothes, and Christmas Creches Needed

Among the many casualties of the Carriage House basement flood over the summer were all of our Holiday Pageant costumes and creches. The creches are used in our Children's RE classes when we have lessons on Christianity and during Christmas time, naturally. Dress-up clothes and costumes come in handy all times of the year, but especially when we have our annual holiday pageant. Donations may be left in the Blue Room of Hollin Hall, and please send Meagan Henry a note at dre@mvuc.org when you drop off items.

RE Teacher Training
January 17, 9:30am–12:00pm
Hollin Hall, Fireplace Room

Our mid-winter teacher training will focus on safety in the classroom and on the Hill. Please join with Meagan Henry and your fellow Religious Education teachers to discuss this important topic!

YRUU Retreat
Friday–Sunday, January 9–11

Our High School Youth Group, the Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), is gathering for a weekend retreat at Wolf Run to plan a worship service. All Youth planning to attend must be registered in our RE program and must turn in the required registration forms for the retreat. If you have any questions, please contact Meagan Henry at dre@mvuc.org or 703-765-5950, x 105.

Adult Religious Education
Classes for the Winter Semester

Choices for Sustainable Living
Sundays, January 11–February 22,
7:30 pm, Hollin Hall

Start the New Year off right by learning how you can reduce your environmental footprint at home and in your community! Consider joining a discussion group called *Choices for Sustainable Living*, which will be co-sponsored by MVUC and Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church. Course materials developed by the Northwest Earth Institute (www.NWEI.org) will be used. Topics to be covered include:

1. Call to Sustainability: The goal of a sustainable society is popular, but difficult to define. How does the way our society functions affect the earth, and how can we be "a blessing to the planet"?
2. Ecological Principles: Some argue that the earth is the best teacher of sustainable practices. How can nature's organizing principles be applied in design, production of goods, and everyday living?
3. Sustainable Food: According to one author, our food travels an average of 1300 miles before reaching our plates. How can we lessen our impact on the earth through conscious choices about the way we eat?
4. Sustainable Buying: Daily messages tell us to buy, buy, and buy. How can we escape from these cultural pressures, and instead purchase only what we truly need, from the most sustainable sources available?
5. Sustainable Communities: Change does not come without people coming together and taking action. In what ways can your community work towards sustainability? How can you make your community a sustainable one?
6. Sustainable Business and Economy: Is a growing economy equivalent to a healthy economy? What are other ways of measuring success, and how can we encourage businesses to adopt sustainable practices and perspectives?

See Page 4, ARE Winter Classes

Activities On and Off the Hill

From Page 3, ARE Winter Classes

7. Visions of Sustainability: Choices we make today are shaping the world of tomorrow. What are the possible outcomes, and how can we create the most sustainable society for our children and ourselves?

For more info on the Northwest Earth Institute, go to: www.nwei.org. Please sign up by e-mail to dre@mvuc.org or call **Wendy Burns** (703-780-3204) or **Kathy McNeil** (703-768-2850) with questions. Please bring \$25 to the first class for supplies.

Great Decisions

For almost 40 years, MVUC has sponsored adult education classes in the Great Decisions program of the Foreign Policy Association (FPA). These classes provide citizens with background information on major international issues affecting the United States and its relationships with the world.

The FPA annually selects topics for study, chooses authors for articles on each topic, publishes them in briefing books and produces programs on them that are broadcast on public television. Video recordings of the programs are available to the study groups.

The MVUC class meets weekly, purchases the briefing books, shows DVDs of the TV programs, and discusses the issues. The 2009 topics are: the U. S. and rising powers; Afghanistan and Pakistan; energy and the global economy; the Arctic age; Egypt and the 21st century; global food supply; Cuba after Castro; and universal human rights.

Classes will begin in **February 2009**. An organizational meeting is planned for January 25. The cost of taking part—for briefing books and the DVDs—will be about \$25 per person, or less if class members wish to share briefing books. Please contact **Joe Kitrosser**, 703-768-8508 or joekit@verizon.net, **Jay Holmes**, 703-768-0170 or jay.holmes@cox.net, or **Leila Goodman**, 703-567-7664 or evnsong@comcast.net if you have questions or would like to participate. The books and DVDs will be ordered by mid-December. ~**Jay Holmes**

Check for updates on our Adult Classes page on the Religious Education section of the MVUC website: www.mvuc.org.

Small Group Ministry— Creating Intimacy and Ultimacy

In the past few months, many people have asked me about Small Group Ministry or Covenant Groups, as they are also known. It is time to start the planning process for creating Small Group Ministry here at MVUC. My goal is to launch the program next fall.

Small Group Ministry is an adult program that helps deepen relationships among members. With a trained facilitator, members gather for conversation in groups of no more than twelve people. The groups meet anywhere from two to four times per month for two hours. They are open and always welcome new members, and therefore, must divide themselves when they get too big. They are structured, yet flexible, for life's inevitable, unexpected events, and they are grounded in Unitarian Universalism.

The purpose is to offer a path to better realize our mission as a congregation and a religious community. Because we believe in a vibrant and vital community, Small Group Ministry supports four primary areas of our congregation:

**Worship: Worship is central to the life of the congregation. Small Group Ministry is intended to augment and strengthen our shared worship experience.*

**Community: Small groups meet the need for connection and intimacy that is both a deep hunger in our society, and essential to the ongoing life of a religious community.*

**Learning: People come to the church seeking spiritual growth, seeking to know themselves better, to grow into their understanding of the world, and to ponder the age-old questions of faith: how to live, what to believe, how to act, and what meanings we can decipher from the mystery of life.*

**Service: A life of faith is a life of service. As human beings, we seek to be of use, and a healthy congregation needs to provide avenues through which we may serve.*

If you're interested in being a trained facilitator and helping promote this new program, I offer two opportunities to meet with me and learn more about it. You can attend either day; they'll be the same: **Saturday, January 17, 9:30-11:30 am**, or **Tuesday, January 27, 7:30- 9:30 pm**. Please contact me at minister@mvuc.org, or 703-765-5950, ext. 104, and let me know which one you can attend.

~**Kate Walker**

Activities On and Off the Hill

Come to Our Own MVUC Inaugural Ball! Tuesday, January 20, 7:00-9:30 pm Remington Chapel

Our country is celebrating an historic event on January 20 with the swearing in of President Obama. Come and celebrate that night here at MVUC at our own Inaugural Ball.

This intergenerational event with your close friends will feature a catered dinner, with music by Tom Griffin and fellow artists. Dust off your dress-up wear and bring your dancing shoes. Child care available for children under five years of age.

Tickets are \$75 per person (includes a bit of income for the church), and \$250 for a family of four or more. Make your reservation by January 12 with **Esther Dickenson**, esthergertrude@verizon.net, or 703-360-9375. Please indicate if you need childcare. Checks can be written to MVUC, and mailed to MVUC, attn: Esther, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria, VA 22307.

Exciting and Powerful Opportunity Don't Miss Out!

Help Represent Our Religious Community by Joining Our MVUC Choir for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Ventures In Community Choir Festival on January 18, 7:00 pm

Everyone—4th Graders on up, experienced and would-be singers alike—is invited to rehearse between services, January 4, 11, and 18, and at our regular rehearsal time, 7:30 pm, on January 7 and 14. Attend as many rehearsals as you can! Practice will heighten your experience of singing with a really huge, over 400-voice choir! We're singing the **Rev. Jason Shelton's** *Standing on the Side of Love* as a choir, then we'll merge to sing **Patti Drennan's** *Get All Excited to See the King*, and the **Steffe-Wilhousky** arrangement of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Contact **Mark Zimmerman**, Interim Music Director, at music@mvuc.org, or **Joe Kitrosser** at joekit@verizon.net.

Holiday Shop Thanks

Holiday Shop 2008 was a great success. In spite of a national economy in recession, profits from Holiday Shop sales nearly matched those of last year, which were close to an all-time high. All the crafters were satisfied with the day's earnings and were highly complimentary of our hospitality. It was a beautiful, festive day.

More than 100 MVUC members and friends participated in the activities involved in putting on this major church fundraiser. If I tried to name everyone who helped, I would surely fail. You know who you are, however, and *I THANK YOU SO MUCH*. Here is a list of some of those activities: planning this year's Holiday Shop, which required many hours of meetings and discussions; making flyers and distributing them; writing and distributing the newspaper publicity; recruiting volunteers; making and installing our beautiful large wreath; setting up and then taking down the Holiday Shop spaces in Hollin Hall and the Meeting House; organizing and managing Sunday sales; cleaning up on both Saturday and Sunday; making, repairing, and putting up signs; controlling the parking; managing the inventory of jewelry and the unique, slightly-used, but attractive and decorative household items; assisting the vendors and crafters get settled; troubleshooting wherever and whenever it was needed; helping with the vendor check-out, shopping, and cashiering; designing and sewing the beautiful quilt, making and selling quilt raffle tickets, and hanging up the quilt in the Meeting House; making the gingerbread house and selling gingerbread raffle tickets; answering the many telephone inquiries; shopping for lunch ingredients, making soup and sandwiches, and organizing and serving lunch; making cheese pies; baking, pricing, selling, greeting, organizing, and participating in the sale of hotdogs and coffee; putting up the tent; and finally, organizing and contributing food and drink for the Sunset ceremony. Whew! Congratulations on a job well done!

Mary Barnett, Coordinator, Holiday Shop

Guidelines for Published News Items and Announcements

As you know, MVUC recently increased its channels of communication. We now publish a weekly e-newsletter and a Sunday Weekly Bulletin (included in the Order of Service); both of which supplement the existing website and the monthly newsletter, *Windmill*.

Here are guidelines for how to announce events, publicize church activities, or provide other information to members of our congregation.

Monthly Newsletter, *Windmill*: E-mail material by approximately the fifteenth of each month to newsletters@mvuc.org. Since the *Windmill* is mailed on the first of the following month, it cannot cover events occurring in the last two weeks that were announced after the 15th; hence, such notices must be included in the weekly e-newsletter.

Website: E-mail material to newsletters@mvuc.org at any time. This is the same address used for the *Windmill*, so both editors can review and publish the material accordingly. Since you can send items for the website any time, please feel free to *write for our site!*

Weekly E-Newsletter, *This Week at MVUC*: E-mail announcements by noon Wednesday to announcements@mvuc.org. *This Week at MVUC* is e-mailed on Fridays and covers events occurring in the following nine days (Friday through the second Saturday).

Weekly Bulletin: E-mail announcements by noon Wednesday to announcements@mvuc.org. The Bulletin (distributed on Sunday mornings along with the Order of Service) has a variety of items, including both current and future events, whereas the e-newsletter is limited mostly to major events occurring in the next nine days.

If you currently do not receive the weekly e-newsletter and want to, give your email address to **Anne Bredeck**, info@mvuc.org. Also, if you would like to receive the *Windmill* electronically, read the notice on page 10 for instructions, as well as the advantages!

On occasion you may need to contact the editors of these publications directly. **Marlene Churchill** edits the *Windmill*, **Leah Choudhury**, in cooperation with **Ron Brandt**, prepares the Sunday Weekly Bulletin and e-newsletter. As webmaster, **Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson** is responsible for technical aspects of the website, and as current administrator, **Ron Brandt** oversees content.

Unitarian Universalism on a Billboard?

Yes, that's a possibility right here in the DC metro area. The Unitarian Universalist Association is planning another regional marketing campaign—this time in the Washington/Baltimore area. The goal is for next fall using multiple media outlets such as radio, TV, outdoor/transit, direct mail, print or some guerrilla/grassroots ideas. The MVUC Board has signed on as a supporter for this campaign, so keep an eye out for further information on how you can help get the word out about our faith.

~Kate Walker

Worship Associate Training by the Rev. Kate R. Walker January 31, 9:00 am-2:00 pm

Are you interested in helping with worship services—perhaps just to do a reading and welcome people? Or, maybe you'd like to design a whole service around an invited guest speaker? Or, perhaps you have aspirations of designing the service and delivering the sermon as well? You're invited to come to a training class on January 31 and learn any, or all, of these opportunities.

The training is in three stages:

Level one, introductory level, 9:00–10:00 am, is for getting comfortable behind the pulpit and public speaking.

Level two, intermediate level, 10:00–11:00 am, is for those wanting to take it further and learn about liturgy, pacing, timing, and creating a space for worship.

Level 3, advanced level, 11:00 am–2:00 pm, (includes lunch), is for those wanting to incorporate a full sermon into a worship service. Come for all three sessions, or come for just the level you want. None of these will likely get you ordained, but you might find yourself dreaming about seminary.

Questions? Contact **Kate** at minister@mvuc.org or 703-765-5950. ext. 104. Ready to come? RSVP to **Peg Bartel** at Margaretbartel@yahoo.com.

Easy Ways to Pay Your Pledge

There are now several new ways to conveniently fulfill your financial commitment to the church. Rather than writing checks yourself, you can authorize an amount to be taken each month from your bank account, or you can make contributions by credit card. Forms are usually available on the credenza in the Commons, but if you don't find them there, ask the church office. We'll gladly mail them to you.

In Memoriam

Jeffrey Searle 1947-2008

Jeff Searle, only son of MVUC charter members **Allan** and **Florence Searle**, died while in hospice care near his home in Tallahassee, Florida, on August 1 after a decade-long battle with leukemia,

As a youth, Jeff showed an interest in music, studying piano and later percussion. He was an outstanding musician at Groveton High School and was named to the All State Band each year of his attendance. He also played drums with the Sandcrabs, a local rock band. During high school in 1964, Jeff joined MVUC and was a member of the Liberal Religious Youth (LRY).

Jeff graduated from Groveton in 1965, then attended Antioch College, where he met his first wife, Susan. They subsequently moved to San Francisco. While there, Jeff apprenticed with the Longshoremen's Union as a carpenter, achieving the rank of Journeyman. They later returned to the DC area. Their marriage ended in divorce, but it produced two wonderful daughters.

As part of the work/study program at Antioch, Jeff had worked as a record clerk at Discount Records and Books in DC under the store manager, John Olsson. When Olsson opened his own store, Jeff was among his original employees, and as Olsson's expanded, Jeff eventually rose to the position of General Manager. While working at Olsson's, Jeff met and married co-employee Amy Weiss.

In addition to attending Antioch, Jeff also attended the University of Maryland and Ball State University, taking courses of special interest. In his twenties, Jeff embraced the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, which began a life-long practice of transcendental meditation. He had a vast store of knowledge about American popular music, folk and jazz, as well as the full gamut of classical music.

His father, Allan, accompanied by Susan and Jenny, was able to visit Jeff and Amy in Florida a few weeks before Jeff died. A memorial gathering of family and friends was held on September 27 at his father's home in Hollin Hills.

Jeff is survived by his wife, Amy, Tallahassee, Florida; his father, **Allan D. Searle** of Alexandria, Virginia; his daughters, **Marisa LaNoue** of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and **Jenny Searle-Trainer** of Tijeria, New Mexico; and a grandson, **Eric Trainer**.

~Allan D. Searle, Amy Karin Weiss, Susan Gervasi, John Olsson, and Tony Jordan

Activities On and Off the Hill

Annual Intergenerational Climate Change Event and Potluck Spring 2008 (Date to be announced) Chapel and Commons

MVUC is pledged to living its commitment to be a Green Sanctuary church. This intergenerational event combines fun with food and singing, is family-friendly, and raises awareness of the need to reduce our carbon footprint on the world, in our church, and in our everyday lives. Find out all the news about what MVUC has been doing lately to support the environment, including:

- Learning the results of the study on MVUC's wind-mill conducted by VA Tech's Engineering students.
- Finding out about how the combination of Peak Oil, Climate Change and personal empowerment led to the creation of *Transition Towns*.
- Linking with the UUA study issue on ethical eating by holding a "Menu for the Future" Discovery Circle.
- Next steps in MVUC's *Green Year*.

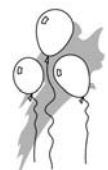
For more information, contact **Suzanne Cleary**, scleary3@cox.net or **Dick Schaffer**, bikeschaf@aol.com.

Caring Associates

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) or **Meg Clontz** (megclontz@cox.net).



RE Youth January Birthdays!



- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Nathan Kuhns | 13 Julian Worth |
| 3 Kenna Murphy | 13 Henry Keeler |
| 6 Ryan Power | 16 Shannon Brown |
| 7 Raina Pilkenton | 22 Benjamin Powilatis |
| 10 Ariel Villa | 28 Jacqueline Lee |
| 12 Sarah Whiteside | 30 Douglas Jemison |
| 13 Stuart Lee | 31 Georgeanna Hoey |



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.

You Are Invited to the Monthly Meeting of Ventures in Community (VIC)

Hosted by MVUC

January 7, 11:30 am

All are welcome!

Our church has been a member of VIC for several years. VIC is an interfaith community of churches on the Route 1 corridor that work together to organize for community action. VIC has been instrumental in advocating for affordable housing in our neighborhood, lobbied on behalf of INOVA Hospital at a time when it was under discussion for termination, and has most recently undertaken VIC-HOP, the hypothermia project to shelter and feed the homeless of Route 1 during the winter months. Come and join this gathering of church lay leaders and ministers. You will hear about initiatives that make our community a justice-seeking, safer place, and meet people who make things happen. Rev. Kate Walker will welcome participants with a brief introduction to our faith, and lunch will be included. Questions? Contact **Georgeta Pourchot**, gpourchot@yahoo.com.

The Story of John Doe

‘Twas the night before Thanksgiving, and all through the town, people were baking, shopping, or sitting down. One of them never got back up. He was a homeless man who fell asleep behind a Safe-way on the Route 1 corridor. That night was very cold, and he died of hypothermia.

You might wonder why details are included about this particular person? During MVUC’s 2007-2008 VIC-HOP service, several of us became acquainted with this homeless man; let’s call him **John Doe**. He participated in VIC-HOP, and occasionally went to the Kennedy shelter for the homeless. John Doe had a degree in biology, and used to have a home on Mason Hill Drive, a family, a car, and a job. He also used to come to MVUC. John Doe’s life went down the drain when he killed someone in a car accident. Between police charges, family turmoil, legal fees, and associated events, he lost his job, then his house, and finally his family. The unexpectedly-fast turn of events plunged him into deep depression,

and at the time MVUCers were meeting him at the homeless shelter last year, he was drinking himself into the ground—perhaps to forget what he used to be, so that he could cope with whom he had become.

This story of John Doe is not unique. Most of the homeless we see in the streets used to have lives and dreams. We can only surmise that some people are unable to get back up on their feet once they slip in life.

We could not do anything for John Doe last year because he was in complete denial about his drinking problem. The County of Fairfax health officials tried to talk him into entering a detox program, but he refused.

What we can do at this late time is to remember him in this post mortem salute to a man who slipped once, fatally. In this season of giving and forgiving, let’s remind ourselves of those around us who are less fortunate—those who make mistakes that become irreparable stages of their lives. You never know when a good word, a handshake, a smile, or a bowl of soup will make someone’s day better. Let’s spend a moment of remembrance, in memory of the seen and unseen John Does around us.

~Georgeta Pourchot



The Board of Directors of the UU-United Nations Office invites all UUs to a reception and special presentation by Ambassador E. Michael Southwick on “*The Daunting Challenge of Human Rights Today*,” in the new Fellowship Hall, River Road UU Congregation, 6301 River Road, Bethesda MD 20817, Saturday, February 7, 2009, at 7:00 pm.

Take the River Road exit south from Rt. 495 (Beltway) and turn left on Whittier Blvd. Light refreshments will be provided. Come and hear how the UU-UNO is effectively representing you and our UU values at the UN. This location is accessible. Parking is available on site and on adjacent streets. More information about the UU-UNO may be found on its website at www.uu-uno.org. ~Dan Cohen, MVUC UNO Rep.

Activities On and Off the Hill

Holiday Shop Profits and

Susan B. Anthony (SBA) Money Requests

Holiday Shop 2008 raised over \$11,000 (late sales and bills are still coming in). This money is used for items not funded by the operating budget. Written requests for funds should include item description, cost, use, storage, purchase sources, and any other pertinent information. Place requests in the Every Thursday/Women's Group/SBA mail box by January 21. The **Susan B. Anthony** Committee will meet to review the requests and submit recommendations on the disbursement of money to the Board of Trustees for its approval at the February meeting. All the money does not need to be spent at this time. For more information, contact **Joan Wamsley**, SBA treasurer, at 703-751-6086.

Lunch-with-a-Book Club

On January 11 after the second service, the Lunch-with-a-Book Club will be discussing **Edward Abbey's** *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which is about a "group who is ready to fight the power structure, and take on the strip miners, clean-cutters, and the highway, dam and bridge builders—all who are threatening the natural habitat. The *Monkey Wrench Gang* is on the move and peaceful coexistence be damned."

The Club meets at the Village Wharf Restaurant, and all are welcome. For more information, contact **Louise Werner-Rhoades** at louron13@cox.net or 703-619-1369.

Adult Activities and Major Event Brochure for Winter/Spring 2009

The MVUC brochure of adult activities and major events, winter/spring 2009 edition, will be posted on the website (www.mvuc.org) as follows.

Adult activities will be listed under *Adult Activities* (on the horizontal navigation bar at the top of the page), with their subcategories (*Welcome to Our Community*, *Leadership*, *Support Groups* etc.).

Upcoming events can be accessed from the home page, *More about Events*. A limited number of hard copies will be available in the Commons in early January, but they will *not* be mailed. Questions? Contact **Georgeta Pourchot** or **Ron Brandt**.

New Policy on Membership

Almost a year ago, the Membership Development Committee accepted from our Board of Trustees the task of tidying up the MVUC membership rolls. The immediate motivation was administrative. As a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we pay annual dues to the UUA for each member. Each February, we officially inform the UUA of our member count, and upon that number our dues are calculated. We also pay dues to UU-related social action organizations that support our core missions. As a UUA member church, we want to contribute our fair share. As a wholly self-financing congregational polity, we do not want to pay for those who for any number of reasons are no longer members. The amounts we are referring to are substantial. Even a ten percent over-count represents several thousand dollars not available for other church needs.

The problem was that we have had no process for periodically taking a look at our membership to make sure that our records accurately reflected the current membership at MVUC. Now we do. The new Policy on Membership calls for the Membership Development Committee to review our membership annually in order to identify those who seem to have been inactive during the previous year, then to contact those individuals to review and confirm their status with them.

In this last element of our new policy, we realize a benefit that is decidedly non-administrative. It gets us in touch with people whom we haven't seen for a while. Some may have moved away, some may have issues with us, some may have been facing a temporary extra demand on their attention but are looking forward to fully rejoining the MVUC community. In any case, we reconnect.

The new Policy on Membership is posted on our website at <http://mvuc.org/pages/new-membership-policy.html>. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at linkcobb@verizon.net, or 703-836-0153.

Lincoln Cobb

Chair, Membership Development Committee

Vespers Services

You're invited to participate in evening services (Vespers), on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, from 7:00-7:30 pm. Led by the **Rev. Kate R. Walker**, we'll engage in a reflective service of poetry, prayer, music, and silence. These are designed to help ground us in our life quest or just our daily tasks. (Appropriate for ages five years and up.)

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*

January 4

Journey or Destination?

Rev. Kate R. Walker

January 11

A Stone of Hope

**Betsy Yarrison, Ron Brandt,
and Others**

January 18

One Night in the Kitchen

Rev. Kate R. Walker

January 25

The Non-Anxious Life

Rev. Kate R. Walker

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

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

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