

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



Spotlight On... Leslie Ashton

Maybe you've seen the woman who's usually in the gallery selling gift cards for a local grocery store. Her name is Leslie Ashton. If you don't know her you should introduce yourself and thank her for all that she does for our church. Before taking on the task of selling those cards—and raising money for the church—Leslie had served on various committees and also on the board, including stints as Treasurer.

She has served on the Finance Committee for many years and has done an enormous amount of work for the church, including several years of putting together the budgets. For the last year she has been chair of the Finance Committee but she's stepping down this month in order to take care of other things. She will remain on the Finance Committee.

We owe a lot of thanks to Leslie for all she's done over the years. Her tireless energy has been of inestimable value

Margaret Borden

Margaret says she will always remember her first visit to this Church. It was October 31, 1993, and Dr. Fred Wooden had a skeleton on the stage!

She was looking for a church that supported her values, had a good Religious Education program for her son, James, and was a place where she could feel at home. She found us! This church was a very important support for her when she was going through cancer treatments in 1998.

Margaret has volunteered as a mediator at both the church and the Dispute and Resolution center. She has served on the nominating committee, the Committee on Ministries and taught Sunday School. She is a Listening Minister. Most of all, you can find her faithfully every Sunday at the bookstore.

She is currently serving on a reconciliation team whose goal is to bring in an outside consultant to help the congregation during this transition. She feels that many people will need the grief and healing sessions sponsored by the Listening Ministry and she hopes to assist with this. We are very fortunate to have Margaret in our church.

Readers' Theater will read a One Act Play by Poullette MacDougal!

February 9 is the next time we meet to read one-acts, in room 13 at 7:30. Our program will include Poullette MacDougal's comedy *Bloomingdale's Elephants*. The pleasure of reading plays aloud is contagious – over twenty folks attended our last gathering! As always, newcomers are welcome.



Goodbye and Thanks... for more excitement than I could have possibly imagined!

The nature of a ministerial intern is that you only plan to serve at a church for 10 months. So from the beginning, you know that you will be leaving relatively soon. We may not like this, but that is part of the expectation as we begin, therefore it seems

acceptable at some level. Alas, life's unpredictability even thwarts that bittersweet undertaking. I leave my internship after four months as a result of the congregation's vote to dismiss Davidson. An intern needs a supervisor. Therefore, I need to move elsewhere. My internship at First Church is the collateral damage from the congregational vote. I am very saddened to leave prematurely, partly since I will not be able to engage in the exciting projects we had planned together, but predominately to leave the valued relationships many of us had developed. Leaving places while hard is not the most difficult part, leaving people is. I will miss you.

I want to thank everyone at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin for the wonderful and yes, very exciting, opportunity I had to serve you these four months and also for the warm, gracious welcome my family and I received here. The experience was certainly a rich and valued experience for me. More rich than I could have possibly imagined. I learned much about myself, ministry and the wonderful complexity of the human condition. Thank you. Also I want to thank all the support I have had from this religious community during my internship and my transfer to Live Oak even through all the difficulties I have felt very cared for and supported.

I leave First Church a very different place from what I found on arrival just five months ago. There has certainly been much pain and upheaval. Having been through much of that with you makes it especially difficult to leave when I see so much need for ministry. There is much work to be done to rebuild a vibrant and healthy religious community but I know the many committed, talented, and hardworking people involved here therefore the possibilities of a successful outcome are good. I wish you all strength, courage, and patience in your journey ahead. I look forward to hearing of your progress in building the Liberal religious community that will benefit Austin and our movement. I look forward to when our futures cross paths in the small but what I believe to be the important world of Unitarian Universalism. In gratitude and love,

Brian Ferguson

Stewardship News!

One of our goals from the last two Stewardship Campaigns is that we should engage in a year-round conversation about money, since this is a necessary side to running a church. Right now we are looking for new committee members to help us with fresh ideas for next year's pledge drive. The Stewardship Committee currently consists of our Executive Director, Sean Hale, Mary Jane Ford, Joseph Hunt, Kae McLaughlin, and Michael Trice. We are already meeting on a monthly basis to plan next fall's pledge campaign. For information about our next meeting, which you are welcome to attend, please call Sean at 452-6168 or email to sean@austinuu.org. With proper planning our 2010 campaign should be a great success.

"Stewardship" has been defined as "an individual's responsibility to manage his life and property with proper regard to the rights of others." In reference to the church, "Stewardship" means commitment. When people are committed to their congregation, they will support it financially, as well as with their time and talents. They will give as generously as possible.

A pledge is a promise. In our fall pledge drive, we ask people to contribute to the church's goal to finance a specific budget. The church bookkeeper sends periodic statements to remind people of their pledges, and to show how far along they are toward their personal annual goal. Your generosity is much appreciated, and your pledge payments are tax deductible. Please examine your statements closely throughout the year for consistency with your own records.

Pledges finance 75% of our 2009 budget. It is important that every member make a pledge to support the church to keep us going during difficult times. If you have not yet pledged for 2009, you may still do so. Pledge cards are available in the church office, and pledges may be called in to the church bookkeeper, Jim Scott, during business hours. You can also pledge by email to mjaneford@grandecom.net. In addition, if you have not completed paying your pledge for 2008, you may still send in the remainder. Be sure to write "2008 pledge" on your check, so it will be credited to last year's pledge. And please keep up your regular payments for 2009 to finance the ongoing

Gratitude



I feel immense gratitude for the support I've received both personally and professionally here at FUUCA. Though we've passed through one of the greatest challenges that a church can face, and though the waters remain rough, our boat has not capsized. Despite the storm and the toll it took on everyone, so many of you have stepped forward and given generously of your time and talent to help us make the best of a difficult situation.

On the personal front, my family and I have received a very warm welcome over the last five months, including the generous reception of our new baby who arrived in November. Most of all, I've found a good deal of understanding and sympathy regarding the demands of being a new parent and how this impacts my ability to always give 100% at the office.

Professionally, the last two months could have been a disaster had it not been for generous volunteers. When any organization loses half of its full-time staff in just a month, that's difficult even under the best of circumstances. A new baby, the holidays, and challenging circumstances created a perfect storm that could have seen this ship crash against the rocks.

Instead, countless volunteers have stepped forward left and right to lend a hand with our daily operations and in other important ways. Although we haven't consistently provided the level of timely service or attention to detail that we aspire to, we're not aware of any major fires raging unattended. Our volunteers deserve the lion's share of the credit for this. From covering reception and dispatch to taking on special projects, they've helped us stay afloat with just a skeleton crew. (By the time you read this, our new full-time administrative assistant, Gail Bell, will have finished her first week on the job.)

To put this all another way, "In prosperity, our friends know us; in adversity, we know our friends" (John Churton Collins). Thank you all for being our friends.

*Sean Hale
First UU Executive Director*

We Do Care: Caring Congregation Task Force

How important is pastoral care to this church community? Pretty darned important, as it turns out. At a planning meeting in mid-January, 26 people came to talk about ways to improve the organization of member pastoral care. We found out there are many efforts already underway (Listening Ministries, Helping Hands, Joys-Concerns email, North Central Caregivers, etc. etc.) and lots of ideas on how to coordinate them better. A better committee structure will give more of us in the church the chance to offer our help, and give more of us the confidence that we CAN ask for help. A Caring Congregation Task Force is at work during the next couple of months to decide the structure:

Klondike Steadman, Lara Douglass, Lynda West, Genie Martin, Marilyn Wilson, Mary Ann Stafford, Bobbie Mattord, Charles Galloway, Karen Saadeh, Pat Walters, Elizabeth Gray (facilitator). In your future: a chance to live our value as a caring community.



UU Sing-a-long

The Sing-a-long is happening this month on Saturday, February 28, from 7:30 to 10:30 at the Friend's Meeting House on 3701 E. MLK Blvd. Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing with the group. For more information contact Larry Vaughn 469-0029 or email lavest@sbcglobal.net. To be added to the email list, contact Mary Jane Ford at mjaneford@grandecom.net. The fourth Saturday is the regular default date. We use Rise up Singing as our standard songbook and copies of this are available. Solos, original songs, and your personal favorites are welcomed.



President's Corner

The January 20 monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees had a packed agenda, went late into the night, and was very productive. Visitors from the congregation came and reported on some of the positive activities going on at the church that are moving us forward, such as the well attended Listening Ministries sessions. It sounds like the tone of conversations throughout the church are becoming increasingly forward-looking and solution-oriented, even at gatherings of those who remain distressed about the congregation's vote to dismiss the minister.

The board addressed and voted on several action items important to transition, including authorizing the Reconciliation Team to retain an expert to come help the entire church move through the current emotional conflict toward reconciliation. We also voted to go into search for an interim minister and to begin the process of organizing a search committee of congregants to work with the UUA Transitions Office in identifying qualified candidates. According to the UUA, an interim minister may not stay for more than two years (we anticipate an initial one-year commitment), may not become a candidate for the congregation's "called" or "settled" minister, and should have the skills and commitment to handle not only the normal tasks of worship, pastoral care, and church leadership, but also to help the congregation with transition, healing, visioning, and preparing for a settled minister. Additionally, the board voted to reinstate the Worship Services Committee, with Michael LeBurkien as its interim chair, to continue to ensure meaningful and quality Sunday services throughout the transitional period and beyond.

Other business items included acting on the Executive Director's recommendations to clarify staff vacation policy and to increase security with a new policy on the issuance and responsibility for building keys. We voted on appointing Eugene Balaguer as the interim chair for the Finance Committee and recognized Leslie Ashton's service as she steps down from that position. We also reviewed the church's website content and made decisions to preserving access to past sermons and archived documents.

All the Board Members expressed their individual commitments to talk to anyone with questions about process, procedure, church business, or ideas for the future. Also, we would love for you to attend a board meeting to learn more about how church business is handled; please feel free to visit at 6:30 on the third Tuesday of each month in the Gallery.

*Sheila Gladstone
First UU Board of Trustees President*

Listening Ministry Service for Small Groups

Members of our congregation may be experiencing a gamut of emotions since the dismissal of Davidson. We invite anyone who wants to explore feelings about Davidson's dismissal to meet with listening ministers in small groups.

RSVP needed:

We want to accommodate as many of you as possible, and want to keep each group to a manageable size. To that end, groups are being scheduled for both daytime and evening, weekdays and weekends. It's our goal for everyone to have adequate time to speak and to hear others, so we need to keep each group small. We will not be able to accommodate walk-ins. Therefore it's very important that you sign up for the group you want to attend so we can keep track of the numbers.



How to RSVP:

Sign up by phone or in person. By phone, call Zosia Hunt at 349-0825. If you have to leave a message instead of talking to her directly, please leave your contact info so she can call you back to confirm, or to offer another meeting time. Please do not call the church office, as they will not have the latest scheduling information. In person, you can sign up on the sheets that will be available on Sundays at the Listening Ministry table in the

Serving Suppers to the Homeless at ARCH.

Many thanks to our FUUCA volunteers for December 22 and January 4: **Eric Hartman, Nancy Owens, Kim Cook, Rebecca Pitts, J.H. Webber, Elaine Carpenter, and John and Betty Wood.** If one of your New Year's resolutions was to become more involved with social action projects at First UU, come and try it out. First UU members, in groups of 4, serve dinner at ARCH (Austin Resource Center for the Homeless, 500 E. 7th Street) on the first Sunday and fourth Monday of every month. Volunteers arrive at ARCH at 5:30 pm and are typically finished by 8:00 pm. Volunteers are needed for most dates. Please contact any of the leaders to volunteer: Mary Ann Copp (mac624@tstar.net, 830-693-5920), Karen Franks (kfranks46@yahoo.com, 512-670-2221) or Christy Seals (seals@grandecom.net, 512-217-9056). Thanks!

Sharing Suppers

Sharing Suppers has a new coordinator!!! Welcome and thanks to Linda Buehlmann, who has been active with Sharing Suppers for several years. She is ready to go and will begin with this month's suppers on February 21.

Thanks to our outgoing coordinator, Grace Amborski. We appreciate all she brought to Sharing Suppers and hope to see her at many suppers to come.

Please mark February 21 on your calendar and come meet new people and reconnect with old friends. The deadline for signing up is the Sunday before the suppers, February 15. Just call or email Linda Buehlmann at 323-5334 or

Lindabuehlmann@sbcglobal.net, or sign up on the sheet posted outside Room 8. If you'd like to be put on an email list for Sharing Suppers, just send an email to sharingsuppers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Split-the-Plate Sundays

On February 1: American Near Eastern Refugee Aid. ANERA is a leading nonsectarian, nonpolitical organization providing humanitarian support to the Middle East since 1968. Initially providing aid to Palestinians immediately following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, ANERA now addresses the long-term economic and social needs of Palestinians, Lebanese, and Jordanians and also provides emergency relief. The focus is on helping local institutions become more self-sufficient and effective in serving the health and relief, education, and economic-development needs of their communities.

On February 15: Capital Area Food Bank of Texas. CAFB serves 21 counties in Central Texas. Annually, CAFB distributes more than 18 million pounds of food, largely through 370 partner agencies. Nearly 98 percent of all resources are returned to the community. Texas has the highest percentage of households with food insecurity in the nation. More than 35,000 people depend on CAFB's services each week—one-third of them children.

Seniors' Luncheon

Tuesday, February 10th

Howson Hall at Noon



Soup, Salad & Dessert \$5

RSVP to Alice Cashman
837-0988

Program:

Preview of Paradox Players'
Social Security, opening Feb 13.

Directed by Charles R. Hill. This scene stars PP veterans Bobby Erb and Lisa Foster. This hilarious tango of sex, love and lies threatens a couple's socially secure life when Mother enters their life and apartment.

People's Community Clinic Social Action Project

FUUCA's Social Action Committee has partnered with People's Community Clinic for the last three years to help provide medical care to our Central Texas neighbors who are underinsured or uninsured. Currently we have multiple teams who prepare patient education materials and send out immunization reminders. Over 75 church members and friends have been involved in one or more activities in the last three years.

We are hoping to take on several new activities, with individual volunteers helping in various departments at PCC. Additionally, we hope to develop teams to provide programming for children during evening parent classes, and provide Story time to children in the waiting room. Each of these volunteers would need current immunizations. If you are interested in helping with any of these activities, please contact Sheri Overton at sherioverton@hotmail.com or 512-847-2685.

From the Yew Grove:

It's always a new year somewhere, isn't it? The Year of the Ox began a few days ago, a sparkling ball dropped in New York last month, and Yew Grove Pagan Interfaith began its new year in Howson Hall last Halloween. All that being said, there's been a lot of change in Yew Grove, it feels like we're beginning a brand new turn around the wheel.

Last month, after a very musical winter Solstice celebration, we said goodbye to our coordinator of four years, Stephanie Canada. That's 28 in Pagan years! She's taken on a new position as First UU's church librarian, so you can congratulate her in the library. With Stephanie stepping down, and the challenges of economy and day-to-day life bringing everybody's energy down a notch, our schedule will be a bit more calm over the next several months--we'll still have our monthly full moon observations and celebrate the Summer Solstice in style. Bill Gill will facilitate our rituals, Heather Palmer will once again keep us organized and in communion with the church office, and Jacob Williamson will take on the role of "web shaman."

Keep an eye on our calendar on our web page, www.YewGrove.org. We've got a number of events coming up--Spiral Scouts has a packed schedule of hikes and field trips. Join us for the Moon of the Wolf on Sunday, February 8, and join us for a Do it Yourself Ritual workshop on February 28 to discuss personal rituals and bring some creative UU energy to the Summer Solstice observation. We look forward to having you in our circle.



There are a number of words in the English language that can mean almost anything. Love, for instance; or God; or the word "great." I've been wondering for years just what it means for something to be great in both a relativistic and an absolute sense. When it comes to people, Shakespeare said in *Twelfth Night*, "Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." Still, this bit of poetry does not tell us either what it means (or takes) to be great or whether one can be great but nonetheless not enjoy greatness. I hope to get a little closer to some answers to these and other questions on Sunday.

- Feb 8 Sun: Yew Grove Full Moon Circle, 6:00, outside/Rm 13
- Feb 14 Sat: Spiral Scouts Circle, 1:00, Rm 13
- Feb 21 Sat: Spiral Scouts Field Trip, 1:00 offsite
- Feb 28 Sat: Yew Grove DIY Ritual Workshop, 10:30, Rm 13

February Frolics on New Stage

Paradox Players

Have you noticed the newly refurbished stage in Howson Hall? Our spring play, *Social Security*, will be the first to frolic across the new surface, opening Feb 13. This romantic comedy directed by Charles Hill features several actors known well to our audiences – Chris Jimmerson, Lisa Foster, Bobby Erb, Cynthia Schiebel, Keith Hale and Bill Phillips. A hilarious tango of sex, lies and love swirls the characters around the stage as they question whether their socially secure life may soon be over when Mother moves in.



Opening weekend will be back-to-back parties:
Special galas on both Feb 13, Opening and Feb 14, Valentine's Day.
 Tickets can be reserved online at paradoxplayers.org,
 by phone at 744-1495, or in the Gallery on Sundays.



A standing ovation to Bob and Susan Bethke, Bob Porter and Barbara Weeks for the construction and painting of the new stage surface. The outside dimensions are the same, but the surface is 2 inches higher and somewhat soundproofed. We hope this improvement will enhance the experience of other groups and renters who share this asset in Howson Hall.

Another stage in Austin recently hosted a short comedy written by our own Poullette MacDougal. *Bloomington's Elephants* played at Frontera Fest's Short Fringe in late January, a performance attended by many discriminating theatergoers in Austin.

Sunday Worship

The times for the Sunday morning Worship Services are 9:45 and 11:30 a.m.

February 1: How is wisdom different than intelligence? Eric Hepburn. What role should wisdom play in governing the application and use of our intellect? This sermon will take a look at means-ends rationality as an example of applied intelligence and ask questions about how a wisdom concept like karma can be understood as a way of framing, focusing, and managing means-ends thinking to avoid the trap of unintended consequences.

February 8: Forgiveness Happens. Jimmy Stanley, member of First UU. I grew up in Big Sandy, I graduated from the University of Houston, served in the Peace Corps, served in the pharmaceutical business, attended The Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest and earned a Master of Divinity degree. I was a chaplain intern at Austin State Hospital. During seminary, I did pastoral care field work at the Travis County Jails. I joined First UU Church December 25, 2005.

February 15: Tom Spencer will be delivering the sermon this Sunday. He is the Chief Executive Officer of Austin Interreligious Ministry (AIM). The mission of AIM is to unite faith and cultural communities to foster respect, partnership, and transformation in service of the common good. Topic will be given in the Weekly Announcements when it is available.

February 22: What Does It Mean To Be Great? Jim Checkley a member of First UU since 1977 and has been delivering sermons since 1987. There are a number of words in the English language that can mean almost anything. Love, for instance; or God; or the word "great." I've been wondering for years just what it means for something to be great in both a relativistic and an absolute sense. When it comes to people, Shakespeare said in Twelfth Night, "Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." Still, this bit of poetry does not tell us either what it means (or takes) to be great or whether one can be great but nonetheless not enjoy greatness. I hope to get a little closer to some answers to these and other questions on Sunday.

Public Affairs Forum

The Forum begins at 11:30 a.m. in Howson Hall every Sunday unless otherwise noted.

February 1: The Debate Over the Science Curriculum in Texas Public Schools

Ryan Valentine, Deputy Director of the Texas Freedom Network (TFN) will cover topics that will include issues related to religious freedom and church-state separation at the Texas Legislature. Ryan will also discuss the role of the controversial Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) pertaining to the high-profile debate over the state's science curriculum which the board will decide this spring.

February 8: No Forum

(Religious Education Classes and Valentine's Party for all between classes.)

February 15: John Kelso's Favorite Stories.

Austin American Statesman Humor Columnist, John Kelso, has entertained us with his column for many years, as well as authoring books including "Texas Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities, and Other Offbeat Stuff." John will discuss his favorite stories past, present, and future as well as take audience questions.

February 22: The Story of Robert King.

Speaker: Robert King, Former Black Panther, Member of the "Angola 3", author of "From the Bottom of the Heap" Robert King, former member of the only prison-recognized chapter of the Black Panther Party and part of a trio of American political prisoners collectively known as "The Angola 3" will speak. Robert is also the author of the book "From the Bottom of the Heap." Robert will discuss his life story and how he spent 31 years in prison, including 29 years in solitary confinement, for a crime he didn't commit. The state grudgingly acknowledged his innocence and set him free

Surprise Pals Program Begins February 15th

Welcome to the annual First UU of Austin Surprise Pals Program. This is a fun way for adults and kids in our congregation to get to know each other and make a new friend at church. We have been growing this program for the last five years and the kids and adults LOVE IT! It's similar to a pen pal correspondence but the identity of your pal is kept a secret.

This is how it works. You simply fill out the Surprise Pals application form to be a Pal (on the next page). Each child applicant is matched with an adult applicant. Not all adult Pals will be matched with a child because we typically have more adult applicants than children. You correspond with your Pal for six weeks through our own Surprise Pal Mailbox System, located in Howson Hall. Small gifts are allowed, but only under \$1 (stickers, candy, etc). Finally, Pals meet each other at the Surprise Pals Reveal Party on March 29th where the kids will finally learn the true identity of their adult Pals.

Children from Kindergarten-5th grade are invited to participate. Parent/guardians must sign the application on behalf of their child and will be informed of the identity of their child's surprise Pal in advance. The program officially begins on February 15th, so expect to start corresponding that Sunday. ALL pals must make a firm commitment to correspond weekly with their Pal for the six weeks of the program— everyone loves to get mail!!

Use the application on the right and email it to cyndi@austinuu.org. Or, pick one up in the Gallery from Jan. 25th to Feb. 8th. For more information contact Cyndi Stein, at cyndi@austinuu.org or call 560-2839.

Denominational UUpdates

International Convocation of U*U Women (First Ever!) in Houston, Texas. Dates: Thursday, February 26th, to Sunday, March 1st. For registration and program information, go to <http://portal.icuuw.com/>. The event is also listed, but with the wrong dates, on the district web site. This should be an exciting event, with participants from all over the world; if you miss this chance, your granddaughter may some day ask you why!

“Leading Congregations Into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future,” a UUA event in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Dates: Friday, April 3, to Sunday, April 5. Information at <http://www.uua.org/events/multiracialmulticultural/index.shtml>. Like the ICUUW meeting, it is an event for the entire denomination that just happens to be within driving distance (sort of).

SWUUC Spring Conference, hosted by the First Unitarian Church (“Church of the River”), Memphis, Tennessee. Dates: Friday, April 24 to Sunday, April 26. Look for further information on our district website: <http://www.swuuc.org/>. So far, details have not emerged, but based on the high standards set by the host church for last year's spring conference, we may anticipate a real winner!

Austin Hunger Walk March 7-8

Support the Austin Hunger Walk with your donations and your participation. This year's annual interfaith Hunger Walk will take place on Saturday morning, March 7, and Sunday afternoon, March 8. The Hunger Walk is the largest interfaith activity held in Austin each year, jointly sponsored by Austin Area Interreligious Ministries and Church World Service/ CROP (Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty). Proceeds of the walk help fight hunger locally, nationally, and worldwide. See Eric Hartman at the Social Action table on Sundays in the Gallery or e-mail Eric at hartoftex@aol.com to sign up to participate, get directions, or to pledge your support.

Church Mice...



These folks pitched in during the past weeks in the church, especially the office and we are very appreciative of their help. Barb Denny, George Denny, Greg Thompson, Veryan Thompson, Zoshia Hunt, Joseph Hunt, Mary Jane Ford, Rose Anne Reeser, Carol Ginn, Carol Ellison, Karen Sadegh, Ann Edwards, Paula Wiesner, Paul Ferguson, and Jim Burson. Some folks answered the phones, some organized and sorted out, some put up shelves, and cleared shelves and filed and unfiled. Thank you all. The Staff

P S. If any one else wants to volunteer in the church during the week. Call Linda 452 6168 ext. 10 Her promise is to find you something to do that you will enjoy. (emails:

taylorlinda@mac.com, linda@austinuu.org

Surprise Pals Application!

I am ___ an adult pal

My Occupation _____

I am ___ a child pal - Grade ____ Age ____

My Name _____

I attend the ___ 9:45 ___ 11:30 service

Parent/Guardian's Name (if child application)

Email _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____
(if you are absent we will put your message in the mail)

City _____ Zip _____

The following info will be used to match pairs, and also to aid the adults in customizing letters.

My Hobbies or Interests _____

Favorite Game or Sport _____ Pets _____

Favorite TV, Books, Music or Movies: _____

Allergies or dietary limits (to guide pals in treat-giving) _____

I promise to write weekly!! (pal signature) _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____

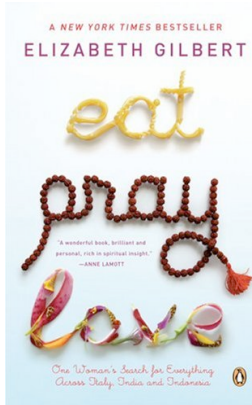
Please turn this form in by February 8th at church or adults can email information to:

Cyndi Stein, Children's Programming Assistant, E-mail: cyndi@austinuu.org

Phone: 560-2839.

NOTE: Adults are required to complete a background check in order to participate in the program. Forms will be available in the Gallery or the RE Department.

Religious Education



What?

Read In !!

Join us to discuss Elizabeth Gilbert's "Eat, Pray, Love" a **spiritual crisis** and emotional journey for the American citizen as she travels globally in search of answers to life's biggest questions. The group discussion will be held on February 22, 2009, Sunday, 2-4pm in Howson

New UU Class

New UU is a one-day session for new members and for those who want to learn more about UU. Questions, explanations, and discussion of beliefs, history, Seven Principles, and ritual practices will be covered. Individual credos



Thore Parker

are constructed to illuminate the current thinking and evolution of beliefs. Functional areas such as affiliations, local governance, congregational committees, and participation in activities, all resulting in more informed members and visitor will be addressed,



Richard

This class will be held on Saturday, February 28, from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. in Room 17. Luther Elmore, Treasurer & history professor and Lara Douglass, Director of Religious Education will conduct the class. There is no fee and brunch will be served. Email Peg Frey at peg@austinuu.org to register. CHILD CARE will be available for those who request it no later than Wednesday, February 25th.

What is the longest-running civic education program in the US devoted to foreign affairs? Great Decisions.

Great Decisions is the name shared by a national civic education program and publication of the Foreign Policy Association. Published annually, the **Great Decisions** briefing book highlights eight of the most thought-provoking foreign policy challenges facing Americans today. Great Decisions provides background information, current data, and policy options for each issue and serves as the focal text for discussion groups. Classes will be held on 8 consecutive Sundays, beginning February 8 in Room 17 from 4:00-5:30pm. Judy Sadegh will lead.

To register, contact Peg Frey, peg@austin.uu.org. Classes are FREE, however the briefing book is \$20.00 and purchase is required. Topics this year are: *U.S. and Rising powers, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Energy & the Global Economy, The Arctic, Egypt in the 21st Century, Global Food Supply, Cuba after Castro, and Universal Human Rights.*

Adult Religious Education Committee

meets once a quarter under the leadership of Chair Susan Bethke. Dates for 2009 will include April 9, July 9 and October 8. Adults are welcome to attend and/or join the committee. Mark your calendar.

Spiritual Movie Night Returns...

Our Premier will be held on Friday night, March 20 at 7 p.m. in Howson Hall. The details of Spiritual Movie Night for those of you who have never participated are quite simple. The suggested donation is \$5 per person, \$8 per couple, and \$5 per child. Childcare will be available by reservation ONLY! Contact childcare@austinuu.org.

Are you ready for a movie that will remind you of a more kind and thoughtful era; when "follow your dreams" simply meant listening to your heart? If so, you will love **SWING**, a feature film that will get your heart pumping and your toes tapping. **SWING** stars Jacqueline Bisset, Jonathan Winters, Tom Skerritt and Nell Carter in a film about keeping dreams alive. The film's captivating Muse, played by the beautiful Ms. Bisset, teaches a young man to Swing dance by following her instructions, meanwhile following his heart.



Children's Religious Education

Children's Programming Committee (CPC) Needs You!

Have you ever wondered who comes up with ideas like Secret Pals or the Dia de los Meuertos party? Ever wondered who plans and assists with the Christmas Pageant or the Passover Seder? Who works behind the scenes to keep our children's programming alive and vibrant? It is the CPC – Children's Programming Committee! If you enjoy planning events, working with kids, are creative or just young at heart, we need you! The CPC is looking for new members; individuals that are available one Sunday a month for meetings and are willing to help organize and add their spirit to fun family events throughout the year. For volunteering or more info contact Lara Douglass, of lara@austinuu.org or 452-6168.

New Committee Forming - Youth Programming Committee (YPC)

Our Middle school and High school population is growing and we need a committee all our own. Similar to the Children's Programming Committee, the Youth Programming Committee will help plan and assist RE with projects and events for our youth. The YPC needs creative and committed adults the help the youth plan events and trips, fundraise, and teach leadership skills while cultivating life long UU values in our youth. If you are interested in helping with the coming of age process, the bridging to adulthood, district youth events, maybe even trips to Boston or General Assembly we need you! For info please contact Amber Andrews, amber@austinuu.org or 750-9689.



Come One and All (young, old, and in between) Valentine's Day Party Feb 8th

Please join the Religious Education Department in a party celebration of Valentine's Day between services on Sunday, February 8th in Howson Hall. We will have all the supplies you need to make Valentines for your friends and family. Please bring a dessert to share for the party. All types of cookies, cakes and treats are welcome and very much appreciated by all. Crafty, artsy folks are needed to volunteer to help the congregation and the kids make their valentines. Contact: **Cyndi Stein**, Children's Programming Assistant at cyndi@austinuu.org or call 560-2839.

FEBRUARY 2009 for Adults

1st, Sunday, Super Bowl XLIII
8th, Sunday, Great Decisions
14th, Saturday, Valentine's Day
22nd, Sunday, Read In Again
24th, Tuesday, Mardi Gras
28th, Saturday, New UU Class

February 2009 for Children

Children's Programming Committee Meeting - January 25th
Valentine's Day Party - February 8th
Surprise Pals Program - Open Enrollment
Surprise Pals Program - Starts on February 15th
Surprise Pals Reveal Party - March 29th

**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Austin**
4700 Grover Avenue
Austin, TX 78756
One Church. Many Beliefs.

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Sean Hale

Director of Religious Education:
Lara Douglass

Director of Music: Brent Baldwin

President, Board of Trustees:
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Next Newsletter Deadline

January 15th

Please submit information to

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