

# Communications

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Rockport

*"Since 1821, an open and welcoming religious community acting in conscience and compassion."  
"A Welcoming Congregation"*

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## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds."

—George Eliot



### REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTER'S STUDY

Rev. Katherine Reis One of my pastimes is walking the beach. Partly to occupy my mind, I keep my eyes on the sand, looking for "beach glass," those opaque bits of sand-ground glass. I collect them -- and thanks to whoever anonymously left a small hoard of these little jewels in my office! They may be only the remnants of beer bottles and mayonnaise jars, but they have a value for me, something to do with their unknown origins and ocean journeys.

I thought about my small beachcombing habit the other night, watching the movie *Cast Away* for about the fourth time. You probably know the story: Chuck, an ordinary guy (Tom Hanks -- the classic ordinary guy) literally gets stranded on a desert island for years, survives, and comes home to rebuild his life. The vehicle for his rescue is a sailboat that he builds with the "sail" being half of a port-a-potty that washed ashore on his island. The sad hitch is that after he's rescued by a passing ship and he's on his way home, he learns that the love of his life, the woman whose image kept him alive all those lonely years, gave up hope and had to let him go -- she has married someone else. They have a child and a life together, and our hero has to let her go. He has to drive off into the night alone.

I know a couple of people who find *Cast Away* depressing, practically unwatchable because Chuck is so devastatingly alone -- they think this is the end of

the movie. For me, the scene after this tragic parting is what the story is about, and it's anything but depressing.

In this climactic scene, Chuck is telling an old friend how bad he feels. He compares it to a time on the island when he was so depressed, feeling that his fate was so out of his control, that he took steps to kill himself. But he couldn't find a guaranteed way to end his life, a way that didn't take a chance on simply maiming him. So he just lingered on, mentally and spiritually more dead than alive.

Then, one day his "sail" washed ashore and gave him the germ of a plan for his escape. His hope was reborn. Now, remembering that rebirth and confronting his present hopelessness, Chuck says,

"I keep breathing because tomorrow the sun will rise and who knows what the tide will bring."

As it turns out, the final scenes bring a strong hint that Chuck does find love again, so there's a happy ending after all.

And what of our lives? Hollywood happy endings are a little scarcer in life than they are on the screen. The difficulties of our lives, our tragedies, problems, and inconveniences (wisely seen in their true proportions) don't tend to get resolved so neatly. Sometimes we have to work hard to find an affirmation of life in the presence of death, and sometimes joy seems out of our reach. However we find resolution and relief, one thing is certain: We have to be looking. Our eyes have to be open.

Tomorrow the sun will rise and who knows what the tide will bring. We can all be beachcombers on the shores, our eyes open for surprising gifts of life.

Blessings, *Kathy*



## INVITATION TO WORSHIP



Let us gather together in peace and goodwill.  
Let us gather together knowing our own needs and frailties.  
Let us gather together in a communal search for meaning.  
Let us gather, knowing we are in the presence of the divine.

**August 1**

***“Issie-isms,” Gems of my 1st Teacher, Isabel Hickey***

At age 14, Amy Shapiro-Kaznocha met and began studying with spiritual teacher, astrologer, healer and author, Isabel Hickey. Today Amy will share some of the wonderful gems that have guided her life, which she learned from “Issie.”

**August 8**

***The Seventh Commandment: The Marriage Bond***

“You shall not commit adultery” seems clear enough. But the ancient Hebrews had a very restricted understanding of the concept, limited to a man having sexual intercourse with a woman who was either married or betrothed; the marital status of the man was irrelevant. A married man was not guilty of “adultery” for having sex with an unattached woman. We’ll explore patriarchy and various concepts of marriage.

**August 15**

***Life and Afterlife: Heaven Help Us***

Our beliefs about what happens after we die may offer us comfort and hope or manipulate us into being “good.” No matter what those after-life beliefs are, they shape the institutions and visions of our present-life.

**August 22**

***Listening Below the Noise***

Author Anne LeClaire has practiced two days of silence every month for seventeen years. She writes that, through this practice, she has discovered her “own secret garden—a cloistered, sacred private place where true personal growth is possible.”

**August 29**

***What It Takes to Have a Successful Partnership***

When you enter into a partnership with another Unitarian church you are connecting two very different faith communities and two different cultures while creating lasting friendships. What is involved in a successful partnership? What would we need to do to form a successful partnership? Michael Fosburg and Linda Lu Burciaga of the First Religious Society of Newburyport have had many years of involvement with the Partner Church program and will explore these questions with us.

*Please be part of our religious community gathered for worship at 10:30 a.m.*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Workshop to develop Spirit Play props -- Wednesday, August 18

Please come to our second workshop to help create the new learning materials for Spirit Play, one part of our exciting new religious education program. The first workshop was held on July 21st. The next workshop is scheduled for Wednesday August 18th from 10am to 2pm. Everyone is welcome to join us. Come for an hour or two (or stay as long as you want). Bring your lunch and your scissors. Lemonade and tea will be provided. This is a great way for you to learn more about Spirit Play and what the RE program will look like in September.

### Community Service Experience

On one Saturday, every three months, the UUSR does community service at the Open Door. The Open Door provides meals for individuals and families in the Gloucester/Rockport community. We provide the makings of a nutritious dinner and we cook, serve and help to clean up too. This is a great opportunity for the children of UUSR to be involved in local community service and put into practice the principles they are learning about in their RE classes. It is also a lot of fun and is a great family activity. Children (age 8 years and up) can help serve or set up. All children can help shop for the food and help to make desserts. Please consider volunteering at the Open Door.

Roberta Stewart

## CONVERSATIONS IN SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

What does "spirituality" mean for us as individuals? What are the practices that will enhance our sense of living our lives more deeply in every dimension? How do we connect with the holy, the divine, or the sense that we are part of something greater than ourselves? With "Conversations in Spiritual Deepening" we explore the promising paths for spiritual development and discernment. The possibilities are wide open and depend entirely on your needs and interests.

If you have a sense that there's a nameless "something" missing from your inner life, I hope you'll take part in the conversation.

Blessings, Kathy

*Join us for a Conversation on Spiritual  
Deepening on Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>  
at 7:00 PM*

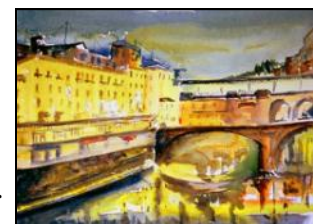
*A light supper will be served.*

## "TRAVELS IN TUSCANY" ART EXHIBIT

Rockport Artist, Phyllis Kaplan, will present a show of her watercolors of Tuscany at the Unitarian Universalist church at 4 Cleaves Street, Rockport, from August 3rd through September 6th.

The Opening Reception will be on Saturday, August 7th, from 3 - 5 PM. The public is invited.

Regular viewing hours at the church are from 9:30 AM to 1 PM daily and usually on Saturdays from 10 AM to 1 PM.



**FROM THE PRESIDENT***Joe Rukeyser*

A few weeks ago an audiologist came to the house to give me a free hearing test. I knew from experience with “free” in-home services that he would be determined to sell me a hearing aid or two before he was done. For quite a long time I have had significant hearing loss and, while I have adamantly resisted giving in to prodding of family and friends, at some level I think I hoped that he might succeed.

Because of my hearing loss, and having been a teacher and group facilitator for years, verbal communication has long been a challenge for me. Communicating has required extra attention and work. But then, communication, and I mean real communication, the kind where the “sender” and the “receiver” are truly engaged and both desire to make a meaningful connection, takes work for most of us.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees, a relatively new member of the group said that, as a member of the congregation, if she had not been at the meeting she would have had no idea about what was “really” going on with important issues facing the church. Issues like the status of budget, or planning for the upcoming canvass, policies on church space rental, anticipation of revisions to the bylaws, and committee activities, among others. She said she thought she was a pretty well tuned in member of the congregation and was surprised to feel so clueless about the status of these issues and the discussions that inform the many decisions that help to make the church run smoothly--or not.

There are a few ways we all try to communicate effectively with one another in the congregation. There are the announcements before each service, the monthly newsletter, all-church emails, annual meetings, circles suppers, the UUSR website, etc. So, for an in-touch member of the congregation to feel “out of the loop” was a real red flag that, no matter what we may think, we have not been doing

a good job of communicating. And that means that not only are the lay leaders not reaching the membership, the membership is not keeping the leadership well-informed.

George Bernard Shaw is reported to have said that the real problem with communication is the illusion that it has occurred. I think we may be caught in the midst of that illusion. We are all stewards of the congregation and each of us has a role to play in making sure that we continue to grow and to learn what it is we need and to do what we do best to meet those needs.

The new dean of the Harvard Business School, Nitin Nohria, tells us that “communication is the real work of leadership” and I would suggest that that applies to stewardship as well. We must find new or different ways to improve our communication. Maybe we should consider regular “town hall” type meetings—no agenda, no quorum, no Robert’s Rules, no votes—just checking in with one another. Maybe we should try an all-church blog or an e-group. Maybe we need to try something entirely different.

After trying on a pair of hearing aids I was amazed at what I could hear and what I had been missing for so long, assuming that what I could hear was pretty close to what others were hearing and, more importantly, it was all that I needed to hear. What I learned quickly was that I must have often missed the opportunity to really connect with people and them with me.

I think we could all benefit from a little more opportunity to connect with one another and to communicate more effectively, directly, and clearly. I don’t know yet how we can do that. What do you think?

Joe Rukeyser

## NEWUU CLASSES



Dear Newcomers, New Members, and Seasoned Members,

You are warmly invited to join Rev. Kathy Reis and members of the congregation for two evenings of illuminating conversation about Unitarian Universalism and the Unitarian Universalist Society of Rockport.

If you are a new member, or if you are new to our Sunday morning services and are considering joining our church, this is your chance to explore questions that have been puzzling you.

And if you have been a member for a while, you probably have questions and comments to share about our history and religious philosophy.

This is your chance to clear up the mysteries! Please join us for one or both evenings, Thursday, September 23 and Wednesday, September 29, at 7:00 PM.

An enjoyable time is guaranteed! Please call Jennifer at 978-546-2989 to let us know you'll be attending.

### **Thursday, September 23: *Spirit of Life, come unto me***

A guided tour through our Sunday morning worship service –

- ◆ What does it all mean?
- ◆ What is our Unitarian Universalist religious philosophy?
- ◆ How do we bring “inclusiveness” to life?
- ◆ Where do you fit in?

### **Wednesday, September 29: *Roots hold me close; wings set me free***

An introduction to Unitarian Universalist history & the Seven Principles –

- ◆ Unitarian Universalism history: Why the long name?
- ◆ Who are the important people in our history?
- ◆ Where do the 7 Principles come from? What do they mean?
- ◆ Where does UUSR fit in with the UU movement?

## **Farewell Party for Bob & Dawn Stewart Sunday, August 8th**

Please join us for a farewell party for long time members Bob & Dawn Stewart immediately following the service on Sunday, August 8th. We wish them well in their new condo right in the heart of Salem.

## THIS MONTH'S FAMOUS UU— BROCK CHISHOLM DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



*Brock Chisholm  
(1896-1971)*

**TWO BILLION  
CALL HIM DOCTOR**  
Abridged from Maclean's  
Magazine,  
May 1, 1950

Dr. Brock Chisholm once shocked a nation by saying there was no Santa Claus; now he needles a whole world into checking disease at its source.

Last fall the Canadian-born director-general of the World Health Organization (a United Nations agency) declared that seven ounces of high-powered germs would, if properly distributed, kill everyone on earth. The subsequent shockwave of headlines and military denials swept three times around the earth, yet Chisholm had simply used the alleged horrors of biological warfare to point up his long-held contention that if people don't grow up in time to avoid another war there maybe no people left.

He was the first psychiatrist ever to head the medical services of any army.

He was the only serious contender for the world's top health job when WHO was organized, and he was elected 16-2 by the participating nations.

Supported by 62 of the United Nations, Chisholm's WHO, in less than four years of activity: Killed a cholera epidemic in Egypt, almost wiped out malaria in Greece and Sardinia, in large sections of which the disease once struck 80% of the people annually. Ringed the world with a daily, short-wave epidemic-warning service, so ships at sea and port quarantine officials may know instantly when smallpox, cholera and plague break out anywhere on earth. Dispatched TB X-ray crews to China; air-

shipped iron lungs to India; trained natives in Ethiopia; sent American doctors to study VD control methods in Europe. Launched two long-term projects to standardize names, descriptions and strengths of all drugs throughout the world.

The WHO constitution has been hailed as revolutionary because it defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity;" because it declares such a state of health to be one of the fundamental rights of every human being; and because it recognizes the "the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security."

Says Chisholm, the only real enemy man has left on earth is man himself.

"We have swallowed all manner of poisonous certainties," Brock Chisholm has written, "fed us by our parents, our Sunday-and day-school teachers, our politicians, our priests, our newspapers and others with a vested interest in controlling us. "instead of bringing our children up according to our own preconceived rules of 'good' and 'bad' (despite which we have stumbled into two world wars in one generation) we must teach them to question everything, he says.

Give your children unquestioning love until they are four years old, Chisholm advises, tell them the simple truth about everything, encourage them to think things out for themselves, and you will set them upon the path of maturity. And not until we have enough mature persons to represent us in the United Nations—and enough more at home to back them up—can we hope to avoid self-annihilation.