

FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

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NEIGHBOURS & FELLOW CREATURES

The First Religious Society in Carlisle

Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Volume XXXII No. 20

July 17, 2008



WE ARE LOCATED IN CARLISLE CENTER OPPOSITE THE COMMON, JUST OFF ROUTE 225 AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE ONLY ROTARY IN TOWN. A CLASSIC NEW ENGLAND MEETING HOUSE WITH THE TOWN CLOCK IN THE STEEPLE. COME AS YOU ARE. "LOVE IS THE DOCTRINE OF THIS CHURCH, THE QUEST FOR TRUTH IS OUR SACRAMENT AND SERVICE IS OUR PRAYER."

Newsletter for July 17, 2008

Church Service and Sunday School: Sunday at 9:30 a.m. through the summer.
Church Office: 978-369-5180; Fax no. 978-369-1891, www.uucarlisle.org, frs@uucarlisle.org
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Office Administrator: Kathy Varney, 978-369-5180
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Minister of Music: Marguerite Shaw, 978-501-4220; frsmusic@comcast.net

Minister Emeritus: Dr. Eugene R. Widrick
Parish Committee Co-Chair: Suzanne Whitney Smith, 978-369-0922; Suzanne_w-s@comcast.net
Parish Committee Co-Chair: Lisa Sama, 978-692-6592, LMSama@comcast.net
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Membership Contact: Sue Kirk, 978-371-0176
Coffee Committee: Gio DiNicola, Anne Ketchen, Richard Ketchen, Tom Rourk, Suzanne Whitney Smith
Union Hall Coffee House: Dian Cuccinello 978-287-5745, dianfrancesca@comcast.net

In The Interim

How The FRS Got It's Groove Back!

My year with you was dominated by one issue: "welcoming congregation". The phrase itself caused anxiety; people turned away; a toxic topic to be avoided if possible. The fact that you had already voted to become a "welcoming congregation" was hardly acknowledged!

Even after an all-church meeting to discuss the issue at which all opinions were fully explored distress and confusion remained. It was a marked contrast to other churches I have served where "welcoming congregation" was not an issue at all. What was going on ?

While trying to answer that question I remembered a story.

Once upon a time a community was gripped by a "killer fever". People acted toward each other in strange and unfamiliar fashion, old friends became enemies, harsh judgments were exchanged, and fear gripped the people. It was reported that a "killer fever" was abroad. Where would it strike next!

Then one bright citizen said, "There's no such thing as a 'killer fever'. Fevers don't kill. Fevers are produced by something else! It's not the 'fever' but whatever produced the 'fever' that is the 'killer'."

I suggest to you that in our FRS case the "killer fever" was "welcoming congregation". It disrupted the community, turned old friends against each other, spread anxiety far and wide. We've spent a lot of time discussing and examining it, but like the townspeople in that other community, we did not name its cause.

What caused the up-roar about "welcoming congregation"? Not some inherent homophobia residing in Carlisle! Carlisle is no different than other UU communities that voted for "welcoming congregation" with little or no internal friction. The charge of "homophobia" doesn't explain how "killer fever/welcoming congregation" got such a grip on FRS?

My own explanation is that FRS had quietly and progressively become vulnerable to such viruses by avoiding rather than dealing with the normal stresses and strains that UU congregations regularly struggle. They develop ways and means of handling conflict creatively.

IN THE INTERIM *(continued)*

I suggest that what caused the “killer virus/welcoming congregation” issue to explode in your midst was A FAILURE OF CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELVES.

It didn't “fail” all at once. It just kind of faded away from lack of use.

The long, successful (and relatively stress free) ministry of the beloved Woody had ended. Diane Miller had provided expert leadership in the Interim. An excellent and respected ministerial search committee had selected a highly recommended candidate who was enthusiastically welcomed. FRS would confidently continue to sail on untroubled waters.

But something went wrong. The anticipated “happy and productive union” did not occur. It happens. It's no one's “fault”. Yet, for a congregation that was not used to such strains and tensions the “bonds of fellowship” were seriously stressed and weakened. Self-confidence dwindled. The issue of FRS becoming a “welcoming congregation” was introduced. “Welcoming congregation” became “killer fever”.

Over the past months of dealing with this issue I've witnessed your confidence returning. Now mention of “welcoming congregation” is greeted with enthusiasm, acceptance or indifference. Amen.

Two events mark that success: the “calling” of Diane Miller (who made it very clear where she stood on the issue) and the joy of the 250th Anniversary Celebrations. When she arrives next month Diane will marvel at the beauty of the Infinity Memorial Garden and be delighted (as we all have been) by “250 Years in 34 Minutes” (the

collection of one minute essays on the church's history shared at services over the past twelve months).

On the morning of the Anniversary Service, as I watched the crowd of parishioners follow our bagpiper around the church building in joyous enthusiasm for all things FRS I knew that this congregation had “gotten it's groove back”!

Yea and Amen.

Victor

JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP PARTY AND T-SHIRTS

In August we plan to have a Junior Youth Group swim and games event at Jackie's. We will welcome the new 6th graders at this party. Also the youth-designed T-shirts have arrived so we can distribute and sign them in August.

Watch for the date and details to be announced.

MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION THANK YOU!

We had a glorious day for the town Memorial Day Celebration! Many families joined us for the lunch and everything went smoothly. Hope more of you will join us next year. Many thanks to our hard working staff of FRS women and men. Also thanks to the young people who love to help and do a great job. We enjoy opening our church Union Hall tour Carlisle community for our traditional ham and bean meal!

Janice Kissinger

UU Penpals for UU Prisoners

Looking for a social justice project that UUs can do alone or in groups, in their own homes, whenever it's convenient? Over 350 prisoners have joined the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) seeking liberal spiritual support by mail. About half of them are writing to a (non-incarcerated) UU penpal through CLF's “Letter Writing Ministry”, but dozens more CLF prisoner-members are still on the waitlist.

All letters to/from prisoners are sent through the mail (so UUs without web/email can participate), and all letters from prisoners are forwarded through CLF's prison ministry (prisoners are told only their penpal's first name). The CLF's prison ministry staff makes the penpal ‘matches’ and remains available to all penpals for advice/support. Individual UUs are welcome to apply, or a group of UUs from the same congregation can apply and ask to be ‘matched’ all at the same time (if they want to form an ongoing study/support group).

Please visit CLF's website www.clfuu.org/prisonministry to review the Guidelines for the Letter Writing Ministry and request an info-application packet, or write to the CLF Prison Ministry, 25 Beacon St, Boston, MA 02108 (PrisMin@clfu.org).

Next Newsletter Deadline is August 11. If you would like to be added to or removed from the newsletter mailing list please call or email the church office.

STAFF AND OFFICE SCHEDULE

Church Office Hours: During the summer months the church office is open Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Email and phone messages are checked regularly. Email: frs@uucarlisle.org or phone: 978-369-5180.

Minister: You can reach Victor Carpenter by email at victorcarpenter@dedhamuu.org or by phone at 781-648-3861.

Director of Religious Education: Molly Sorrows, DRE and Youth Advisor, can be reached by email (frs_re@comcast.net) or phone (church, 978-369-5180; home, 978-371-2217).

Minister of Music: Marguerite Shaw can be reached by email (frsmusic@comcast.net) or phone (978-501-4220).

For a complete calendar of meetings and activities here at The First Religious Society please go to the church calendar on the website: <http://www.uucarlisle.org/calendar.html>

All are welcome to attend Parish Committee meetings, except in cases of executive sessions. FRS Committee meetings are open to any interested party. To address a committee on a specific issue please contact the committee chair.

JULY UPDATE ON THE INFINITY MEMORIAL GARDEN



The irrigation is now rigged so that turning on the red faucet to the left of the sandy area behind the big pine tree will make all the emitters spritz water. This is more convenient than hauling watering cans. Many thanks to Barbara Ritz, Tom Rourk, and Nina Benkley for agreeing to weed a garden area.

We are looking for mulch for the garden beds. Pine mulch is best, but we would be willing to use chipped brush if that is all we can get.

Only a few garden areas still need stewards. Do you have an hour or two here and there this summer and fall to do some weeding? Areas still needing maintenance volunteers are:

Overlook Garden: This is the garden between the two entrances; the descending path and the granite steps. The tree is a Redbud and was planted in memory of Scott Munroe. As technically this garden is not part of the Infinity Memorial Garden, some plants in this garden originated from other parts of the world, although the Coreopsis and Gaillardia are US native plants.

Prairie Plateau: The impressively tall stone wall on the West side existed prior to the IMG construction, but Bob Wallhagen built the retaining wall shelf to keep it stable. It is planted with perennials that can handle poor soil and little moisture. The biggest plant is the variegated Yucca. Achillea, a variety of sedum, and Oenothera (Evening Primrose) are planted in this garden. It would be a shame to hide the stone wall, so it is hoped the plants will not be too tall. This garden gets full sun all morning and into the afternoon.

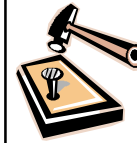
Wagon Wheel Wildflower Garden: The iron band for a wagon wheel planted with Mayapples came from the site. Obviously people had used this area as a trash dump for many years! The Mayapples were donated and planted by Bonnie Miskolczy. The second wagon wheel came from Marge Stickler. When the site work is finished, it would be good to find another wagon wheel to plant with wildflowers. The second entrance/exit to this garden is still rough and needs to be smoothed and mulched. This garden does not need irrigation as it is naturally shady and moist.

The First Religious Society in Carlisle is an inclusive community bound together in the Unitarian Universalist tradition of friendship, free inquiry and service to humanity.

We recognize our commonality as spiritual seekers, and welcome and celebrate the participation of all people, without regard to age, race, religious heritage, political opinion, gender identity, sexual or affectional orientation, socio-economic status, disability or ethnicity.

We are committed to continual learning and growth toward affirmation of the enriching diversity of humankind, and to working to create a more just, sustainable and loving world.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SUMMER PROJECTS



The painting crew has been busy sanding, scrubbing and painting in Union Hall and on the outside of the church building. Thanks to all the many volunteers who have showed up to help!!

The Buildings and Grounds Committee is getting a new updated sign painted for the front of the church and re-furbishing the front entrance, inside and out. We are also studying the major project of re-doing the Red Balloon ceiling, all the renovations that will be required to get the ceiling fixed and possible restructuring of that space.

We are looking for people to help us with designing the "memorial" part of the Infinity Memorial Garden. We need help with policy, contributions, bricks vs. plaques, etc. If you could give us some help please let Kathy in the church office know. She can be reached by phone at 978-369-5180 or by email at frs@uucarlisle.org.

FITZPATRICK UPDATE

Tom Fitzpatrick came home last Thursday after months of hospitalization and rehab following a stroke. Michael Ansara has sent us the following update and request for community help.

"For the next months, Tom cannot be left alone. He needs someone to be available to assist him 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They do have some coverage from their Mass Health plan for a home aid for limited hours. That will be a big help but the rest of the time this job falls on Gail and to a lesser extent on Charles and Grace. Hopefully in the months to come Tom will continue to make progress and not need the support and care that he does right now. But for the next months we know he will need that care. So here are the ways that we can help – starting with the hardest job first:

1. Be a home helper for Tom – this means getting some training with Gail on how to assist him if he needs to get out of the wheelchair or back in the wheelchair – literally as in he needs to get on the toilet or get on or from his bed to the wheelchair. It is less a matter of strength and more a matter of technique. Gail knows now some upcoming times when she will be out painting at events (see the dates directly below) but also we need several people just to spell Gail so she can go to the grocery store, the dump, see a friend for an hour for a cup of coffee outside the house. Here are the dates that Gail has painting events scheduled:

- July 12 from roughly 6:00 p.m. to midnight. Grace is going to be the primary person home and in charge but it might be nice to have someone with her for part of that time.
- August 8th, again 6 to midnight
- August 16th the same

2. Reading to Tom – still hard for him to read for long periods of time and it would be good if there were a couple of people who wanted to set up a schedule where once a week they would come over and read to him or just chat.

3. Assisting Gail by doing errands--picking up groceries or making the dump run or driving Charlie to work, etc. Probably the best way to do this is to have one or two people who would be on call when she needs this.

4. Teaching Charlie to drive – he has his learner's permit and will take drivers ed at the high school this fall – but Gail would appreciate someone who would schedule some times to take Charles out in a car and get him used to driving and teach him the basics.

5. Occasional meals are a great gift and lots of support."

Michael ends his report by saying " I hope we will find a way to continue the level of community support that we have been able to mount so far. This is what living in a community should be all about. Many thanks. " If you are willing to do any of these please call the church office 968- 369-5180/frs@uucarlisle.org.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

On Saturday, June 21 FRS resumed its Saturday work parties at a Habitat building site. Working were Sarah and Blair Robinson (Tena Herlihy's daughters), Eric Munroe, and George Bishop. Also working that day were Steven and Alex Teixeira, the twin sons of Alison Saylor's sister Gillian.

The building site was the "greenhouse" Habitat is building at 18 Williams Avenue in the Nabnasett section of Westford. The house lot is one of a large number of small lots, which originally may have been cottage lots on Nabnasett Lake. It is only about a hundred yards from a beach on the lake. The future owner is a single mom with three children and they love the location.

A "green house" is one which minimizes energy use thru the smart design and the extensive use of insulation, cutting of air leakage, routing of heating, cooling and ventilation ducts, and the design of the intake and exhaust from the heating system. For example, the foundation walls are insulated inside and out to avoid heat leakage to the ground/ground water.

Construction is well along. Habitat arranged for three contractors and volunteers to frame the house so their work crews could learn "green construction". The house is nearly completely closed in (exterior and interior walls framed, sheathing and most clapboards on, windows in, roof on).

This brings us to our contribution. Eric and George worked on siding a dormer on the south side of the roof. Eric and another volunteer were on the ladders, George was on the ground cutting the siding to fit. Each piece had to be measured and cut to match the sloping roof and for the last few pieces the slope of the dormer roof. In addition by mid morning the roof heated in the sun so it became too hot to touch. As Jim Comeau, the site supervisor said, "dormers are not volunteer friendly".

Sarah and Blair worked in the basement on the insulation for the inside of the basement walls. The insulation was large foam panels. These had to be cut to fit around windows, doors, stairs, and pipes. Steven and Alex installed metal plates to reinforce the joints and the framing of the stairs between the first and second floors.

Another contribution by FRS was the lunch for the work crew. Nadine Bishop planned, shopped and packed all the fixings for sandwiches, including condiments, beverages, chips and apples and cookies for dessert. The lunch was served by the future owner and her sisters (they also held the ladder for the dormer project).

In addition to the Westford house, Habitat has another project on North Road in Bedford that is starting up. With all of this local Habitat activity, we are planning on restarting our regular once a month Saturday work parties. We are looking for volunteers for Saturday, August 23. We also need people to sign up for either making a lunch, or buying and delivering a lunch for all the site workers at Westford on that date. Please contact Ernie Huber at 978-369-6678 or George Bishop at 978-369-5080.

SUMMER SERVICES

Sunday Mornings at 9:30

July 20: Meet Roger Goulet at the church at 9:30 a.m. and carpool to Concord to the 10 a.m. First Parish service at Kerem Shalom (services will be held there while First Parish is undergoing construction). Angela Herrera, First Parish's student intern for the upcoming year, will preach.

July 27: Topic: What book has inspired you religiously, spiritually, or amazed you with its impact or simply its beauty? Tell us about it and read a short excerpt if you want. Questions? Contact Ernie or Ellen at e2huber@verizon.net, or call 978-369-6678.

August 3: Topic: Rowe Camp and Conference Center member Mary Zoll and leader Rodney Mashia will describe the experiences they enjoy by attending this camp, and Rodney will teach and sing some of the songs he teaches at Rowe. Rodney has been a visitor at FRS several times during the past few years and his music is special.

August 10: Topic: Poetry. Read a poem that is special to you and tell why.

August 17: Topic: Tom Rourk will lead. "Culture Shock"

August 24: Topic: Environmental Concerns led by the FRS Environmental Action Committee.

Please watch your Thursday e-mail announcements for more information or any changes. We hope you'll support the efforts of your fellow members and friends who have committed their time to lead these summer services. Please come to as many as possible and bring your neighbors!

OUR PEOPLE

Dot Clark is now getting rehab at the Life Care Center on Foster Street in Littleton. She is doing well but is anxious to get home. She would love to have visitors. Bobby Morrill is managing the farm. He would enjoy visitors, too. He misses Dot.

On July 14 **Donna Cantrill** was still at Emerson Hospital but feeling MUCH better. By the time the newsletter reaches you she hopes to be home.

Congratulations to our own **Susan Emmons**, Carlisle's 2008 Honored Citizen!

Longtime FRSer **Marcella Shepherd** and her husband Shep are moving to a Northborough condo near their son Russell in early August. On Sunday, July 27, at 2 p.m. their neighbor of 43 years, Tom Rourk, is holding a neighborhood block party in their honor. Tom would also like to invite Marcella's FRS friends. Tom will provide grilled hot dogs and hamburgers and would appreciate donations of salads, desserts, etc. Please RSVP to Tom at 978 369-5366 (leave a message). He'd like some idea of how many to prepare for. We will all miss Marcella, but especially the choir and most especially her alto buddies.