

Red River Ramblings

Volume 6, Issue 7

August, 2009

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
...a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas.

A Month of Sundays

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August 2

Elbert Hill

Wisdom: The Quest

We humans search for meaning in our lives, for what we like to think of as wisdom. Elbert shares some of the highlights of his own journey, and asks the question, "Which is more important, the wisdom that we acquire or the quest for it?" Dr. Elbert R. Hill is Professor Emeritus of English at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, having retired in 2006 after 40 years there. His teaching specialties were children's literature, Native American literature, and philosophy.

August 9

Megan Dalby-Jones

From Liberty to Liberation: Liberal Religion and the Making of America

Megan Dalby-Jones is a candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry. She and her partner Kristi came to Texas in 2006 so that Megan could serve as the ministerial intern at First Unitarian Church of Dallas. Currently, the family focus is on Kristi's career and their one year old son, Parker. While Megan is on leave from seminary, she is enjoying her secular job as a bookseller and

her new role as a modern day circuit rider.

August 16

Daniel Polk

To Build a Church: A Vision of Growth Through the Lenses of History.

Stories from First Unitarian of Dallas, with some of the highs and lows, and a bit of UU history, and a look at how they can guide and inspire us today. Daniel has been a member of First UU Dallas for 21 years. He is currently chairing the worship committee, and is president of the local L/G UU group. Daniel is an elementary teacher for Dallas schools.

August 23

Dianna Neimann-Harris

A Rose By Any Other Name...

With appreciation of the wide variety of beliefs in Unitarian Universalism and the traditions some hold as sacred and others carry as baggage, this morning's service will focus on the language(s) of our spirituality. Dianna will explore how words or phrases sacred and meaningful to one, may trigger negative reactions from another. The sermon will embrace word studies and the history behind some traditional and nontraditional

expressions of spirituality. The intention of the address and deep desire of the speaker is this not be a "final word" on spiritual language, but rather an invitation for continued conversation on how to be radically inclusive. Dianna Niemann-Harris is an ordained United Church of Christ minister and is Associate Chaplain at Texoma Medical Center. She is also manager of Texoma's Family Services for the Alzheimer's Association. She serves Cooke, Fannin and Grayson Counties and provides educational programming in Paris, TX, for the Alzheimer's Association.

August 30, 5th Sunday Forum

Marion Hill

The Writer's Craft

Marion will discuss her newest mystery, and share her research for *Deadly Design*, including historical information about Thomas Jefferson, an appealing figure many UU's like to claim as one of us. Marion will also explain her craft, and talk about the writing process from inception to publication.

Marion is a former newspaper reporter, legal secretary, and college instructor of English and journalism. She writes 2 mystery series.



Adult Forum
Worship & Children's RE

10:00am
11:15am

Calendar of Events

August, 2009

- 1 - It Takes A Village, Kayaking demonstration, 8 am at the dam on Lake Texoma
- 2 - Elbert Hill speaking
- 7 - Being Peace meditation, 11am
NAACP Dinner, 7 pm
UU JAM, 7 pm
Red River Earth Spirit, 7:30 pm
- 9 - Megan Dalby-Jones speaking
- 11 - Green Team, 7:30 pm
- 14—Being Peace meditation, 11 am
- 15—All Church Workshop, 9:30 am - 5 pm
PFFFT BBQ and swim party, 5 pm
- 16 - Daniel Polk speaking
Agape, 12:45 pm
Freethinkers, 12:45 pm
- 18—Board of Trustees meeting, 6pm
- 21—Being Peace meditation
- 23—Dianna Neimann-Harris speaking
Marion Hill Book Signing following the morning service
- 28 - Being Peace meditation
- 30 - 5th Sunday Forum; New to UU class
All church luncheon following the forum

All Church Feast



Movable Feast chalice circle will host a feast in Fellowship Hall on August 30th after church. All food and clean-up will be the Feasters' gift to the congregation, to welcome everyone back after summer trips.

New To UU

The second part of New to UU, "What Is Unitarian Universalism?", is planned for Sunday, August 30th, following the all church feast.

Please contact Amy Hoffman-Shehan at membership@rruu.org for more information.



August Birthdays

- 2 - Johnnie McAdoo
- 9 - Helen Schulze
- 12 - Nathaniel Price
- 14 - Jack Blue
- 16 - Jean Roelke
- 18 - Penny Armstrong-Bertrand
- 20 - Alana & Dianna Butler
- 22 - Nell Evans
- 23 - Jim Murphy
- 27 - Darrin Wade
- 29 - Carolyn Fridley
- 30 - Jackie Gauthier
- 31 - Douglas Morgan Strong



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

All September newsletter submissions are due to newsletter@rruu.org by September 23rd, at 5:00 p.m.

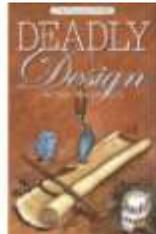
Be watching for our
First Annual Participation Fair
coming September 13th!

We hope to have all of the
Standing Committees and Chalice Circles
represented!





Book Signing With Author Marion Hill



RRUU is proud of our own author, Marion Hill. Many of us have enjoyed her previous novels including, *Almost Murder... With Pets* (2002), *Bookmarked for Murder* (2002), *Death Books a Return* (2008), and *Deadly Will: A Deadly Past Mystery* (2006). Marion is happy to announce the Sept 2009 publication of a second book in the *Deadly Past Mystery* series, *Deadly Design*.

RRUU is hosting a book signing reception on Sunday, August 30th, following the morning service. Marion will have copies available for purchase and will gladly include her autograph.

NAACP DINNER

The NAACP is hosting a dinner August 7 at 7:00 pm. The tickets are \$30 per person, tables are \$240 for a table of eight. They are taking reservations for individuals and tables. If you would like to attend and sit at an RRUU table, contact Amy Hoffman-Shehan at membership@rruu.org.

We need to move quickly on this, so make your reservation early!

By-Laws Committee Members Needed

The Board of Trustees created a Bylaws Committee with the mission to make our bylaws a better fit for our growing congregation. Chaired by Jim Murphy, the committee is looking for nominations from the congregation to serve on this committee. To be considered you must be a voting member and willing to attend about two meetings a month. If interested, please submit your name or a nominee to Jim Murphy at board@rruu.org. The committee of five will be filled from the list of nominees and will start meeting in August.

Christmas In July



Here we are in the middle of a scorching hot Texas summer, and we find ourselves in need of a few necessities, as well as a wish list, but no Santa Claus. If you would like to provide RRUU with a special gift, *Christmas In July* is a perfect opportunity!

Here's what to do: Take a tag from the tree in the sanctuary, make a purchase or donate funds to cover the item/s, return the tag with the item/cash/check to the tree.

Don't wait until December to enjoy the gift of giving.



The deadline for this project is the end of August..

Please help make all of our wishes come true

Race for Grace in Hotter 'n Hell 100

The following is an e-mail message from Jeannine Hatt and Chuck Phelps



Hello all!

We are again cycling in the Race for Grace in the Hotter 'n Hell 100 to raise money for Haiti's Grace Children's Hospital and International Child Care's other health programs for children and families in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. We have worked with and supported the Haitian and Dominican healthcare professionals in ICC's projects and have seen the dedication and skill they have in caring for the neediest children in our hemisphere. But they need our help! So this will be our third year to ride in this challenging event. We would really appreciate your support. Please make a donation by visiting our Firstgiving page: <http://www.firstgiving.com/jeannineandchuck> You can donate online with a credit card. All donations are secure and sent directly to International Child Care USA Inc by Firstgiving, who will email you a printable record of your donation.

Jeannine and Chuck

It's very easy to support Jeannine and Chuck online. Visit: <http://www.firstgiving.com/jeannineandchuck> to make a donation.

It takes a matter of minutes, is totally secure and you can even leave a message with your donation.

Children's Religious Education



Kids RE will restart August 23 as kids prepare to return to school. New director, Helen Schulze, announces the class will be using the curriculum *Learning and Living the UU Principles*, with a huge emphasis on having FUN! Anyone interested in helping should contact Helen at the church on Sunday morning.

Adult Forum

THE FOUR AGREEMENTS

This class will be led by John Ockels

August 2nd:

Don't Make Assumptions

August 9th:

Always Do Your Best



DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

Kris Riek will lead this forum

August 16th:

LIVING BY HEART

Leader TBA

August 23-November 8



Green Team Tip of the Month August, 2009

Invest in a battery charger and choose rechargeable alkaline manganese batteries.

Board Bits

What your board did at their last meeting

(July 21, 2009)



- * Minutes were approved for the last three meetings.
- * A bulletin board will be created in the sanctuary where minutes and board reports will be posted.
- * Treasurers Report was accepted.
- * Still have many leadership positions open and all on the board are going to be looking for people who would volunteer to fill those positions.
- * A policy for certification of petitions was written by Amy and after a few changes / additions was unanimously accepted.
- * CORE (Citizens Organized for Resources in the Environment) needs a place to show films / host gatherings in Grayson County. We passed a motion to explore possible unified efforts with CORE. Could be good publicity for us and another way to participate in the community.
- * Requests have been made for a new logo & newsletter name.
- * Resuming 2nd Sunday offerings of all non-designated cash going to a charity / social action. August will go to Friends feeding Friends in Durant; also plan to help with school supplies.
- * Sunday, August 23, there will be a book signing after Worship. Marion Hill will be signing copies of her soon to be released mystery.
- * Different members of the board volunteered to do announcements on Sundays from August 2009 through February 2010.
- * New By-laws & Policies Revision Committee is being led by Jim Murphy.

- * Board Email policy is in the works – first draft was presented – needs to be more concise. Going to start a web page on RRUU.org for members and friends to post links to share with others. It will be time stamped and needs a brief description so others know if they want to check it out. Want to avoid sending too many group emails.
- * Worked out more details for Aug 15th workshop with Daniel Polk.
- * Worked on letter of apology to congregation – will be sent by mail.
- * Discussion on Banner for building – more on this coming soon.
- * L.D. will be the Acting Chair for a Ways & Means committee which will replace the Stewardship Committee. We brainstormed some possible ways of raising funds like garden sale, rummage sale, service auction and lots more.
- * RRUU may be asked by the building owner to help pay the utilities. The board came up with a couple of suggestions to cut costs: Amy will ask other Green Team members to approve spending part of the GT budget to purchase programmable thermostats for sanctuary and fellowship hall; L.D. suggested retro-fitting the fluorescent lights to save energy.

The next board meeting is August 18 starting at 6:00 p.m. Board meetings are open to all, if you wish to be on the agenda please contact a board member. Deadline for the agenda is August 14. Those wishing a few minutes during the **“open mic” will want to be ready to speak near the end of the meeting.**

Message from Marla

Marla Loturco, President, RRUU



When our outgoing minister lead her last worship service on June 7th the board (all three of us left at the time) learned that if someone **didn't do something fast, we had just finished the last worship service ever.** No plans had been made for any upcoming Sunday morning celebrations. None! We were dead in the water. I want to start by saying kudos to our interim worship team who starting from scratch provided worship continuity every Sunday for the last six weeks.

Like a phoenix rising, our interim worship committee managed to pull six creative worship celebrations out of thin air. I think they did a wonderful job with few resources and no warning. Thanks to all who have worked to make this possible. We officially kicked off the beginning of the new worship year last Sunday, July 26th with the Reverend Dr. **Christine Tata's wonderful service and the fall and winter worship schedule is well in place.**

We're starting a new chapter in the life of our congregation and your Board has discovered that much of the management of the church was done informally without documenting decisions or actions. So we are sorting, organizing, questioning and learning what we can from the scant information we can locate. The results are showing as we create an open, transparent and ever expanding style of leadership and involvement.

I heard a wonderful metaphor about a cruise ship where happy people lounge on the upper deck sipping mint juleps marveling at how smooth the sailing, how lovely the views, and how all their needs were magically met. Meanwhile below deck a few dedicated ship lovers grab the oars and struggle to keep the boat moving forward. Over the last many years, we, the congregation, have been happily sitting on the upper deck rather oblivious to how complex it is to keep our boat afloat, happily letting

somebody else row the boat.

These are exciting times and we will grow in spirit and service through the giving of our time, talents and treasure. Gone are the days when *somebody else* will handle everything and we ask you to take a turn in the belly of the boat by finding one or two ways you can become more involved, to seize the moment and, to play out the metaphor, take an oar and start rowing. We have several empty places at the Team Leader table: buildings & grounds .. Communications .. social actions .. hospitality .. historian. If the notion of Team leadership is daunting, how about being a Greeter on Sunday; bringing flowers; or joining a committee. The goal is for each of us to participate in at least two activities – one that feeds our souls and deepens our spiritual lives, and one in which we give back in service to our church or community.

In that spirit, everyone is invited to join a UU Consultant, Daniel Polk, who will lead two intriguing and educational workshops on Saturday, Aug 15th. The morning session focuses on how a small congregation sets goals and runs things (i.e. church governance). The afternoon session shall lead us in covenant work and conflict management – strengthening the ways we can be together as a faith community. You will find specifics about the day elsewhere in the newsletter. You can attend either morning or afternoon, or both and the best part – it is free!

Ways and Means Committee Needs You

L. D. Clark is chairing the new Ways and Means committee, formerly the Finance committee. Those interested in working with



L. D. to provide for the financial health of our community, please contact him by e-mail at board@rruu.org.

Meet our new members for June & July 2009

Allen Shaw of Denison, TX
Andi Sturm of Sadler, TX
Rebecca Ratliff of Denison, TX
Kate Cherry of Bells, TX



Sue Wells of Whitesboro, TX
Victor Ratliff of Denison, TX
Jason Harbour of Denison, TX
Chris Gillentine of Bells, TX

WELCOME

A Day of Learning and Healing Workshop, August 15, 2009

Please join the board of RRUU Saturday, August 15, for a day of learning and healing. Daniel Polk, the current President of NTAUUS (North Texas Association of Unitarian Universalist Societies) and a twenty-one year member at First Unitarian Church of Dallas, will be presenting the workshop. Daniel has experience chairing the workshop committee, leading the local L/G UU group, along with teaching elementary education in Dallas schools. He attended leadership school in 1992. When he joined First U in 1988, they were in a board/committee structure, and soon shifted to a board/council form before then progressing to policy governance. Be prepared for lots of stories and a few bad jokes.

Everyone is welcome to attend the entire workshop from 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The morning will be devoted to Governance Models and Goal-setting. Lunch will be pot luck from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. The afternoon session will be on affirming our covenant and how we work together. This will include conflict resolution and techniques for being in right relationship. RSVP to any board member.



Social Action Needs A Team Leader



Second Sunday Offering for Social Action: As some of you know and others will find out now - RRUU normally uses the Second Sunday collection of all non-designated cash as a contribution to a charity or social action in our local area. Due to the changes this did not occur in June or July. We are resuming the practice with August and these funds will go to Bryan County's "Families Feeding Families" program. Families Feeding Families is a local organization that provides food and assistance to families in need. Since Bryan County will be starting back to school in mid-august, our donations will be used to help provide basic school supplies for a number of children.

We will also sponsor a local school district for return-to-school supplies. Contact will be made with 211 (Social Service Hot Line) to determine the school district most in need. On August 30 and September 6 we will be collecting the supplies. Meanwhile the school supplies may be left in the back of the sanctuary any Sunday in August.

This year's contribution schedule is still developing. Please forward ideas to any member of the board.

RRUU Chalice Circles: Which Small Group Is Right For You?

Chalice Circles are small groups of people who meet regularly for the purpose of getting to know one another while learning, discussing, and acting on topics of common interest. All members and friends are welcome! If you are interested in attending a particular circle, contact Circle Coordinator, Jan Fletcher, at chalicecircles@rruu.org.



AGAPE, a UU Christian Circle, meets the third Sunday of each month at the church at 12:45 pm. Next meeting is Aug 16. Facilitator is Drew Wade. **ALL LIBERAL CHRISTIANS AND UUs WHO WANT WORSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN FOCUS ARE WELCOME!**



MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle, meets on moveable dates at moveable locations. Next meeting will be announced. Facilitators are Elbert & Marion Hill. **ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME!**



BEING PEACE, a Mindful Meditation Circle, meets every Friday at 11 am at the home of Sue Wells in Whitesboro. Facilitator is Sue Wells. **NEW AND EXPERIENCED MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.**



PFFFT, an Outdoor Activities Circle, meets each month on a Saturday. Next meeting is Aug 15 about 5 pm at the home of Dianna Niemann-Harris & Kris Riek in Denison for a pot-luck barbecue and swim party. Sign-up sheet available at church. Facilitator is Suzanne Durland. **ANYONE WHO LOVES THE OUTDOORS IS WELCOME!**



FREETHINKERS, a Humanist Circle, meets the third Sunday of each month in Fellowship Hall at 12:45 pm. Next meeting is Aug 16 discussing chaos theory, "sacred geometry," fractals, and the emerging complexities discovered in nature that show newly discovered mechanisms and laws among other topics. Facilitator is Jim Gauthier. **All FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME!**



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, a Nature-Based Spirituality Circle, meets seasonally at the Church. Next meeting is Aug 7 at 7:30 to celebrate the Pagan harvest festival of Lammas. Facilitator is Penny Bertrand. **NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**



GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle, meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan in Sherman. Next meeting is Aug 11 to further discuss plans for Arts Fest on Sept 18 and Earth Day April, 2010. Facilitator is Amy Hoffman-Shehan. **ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH ARE WELCOME!**



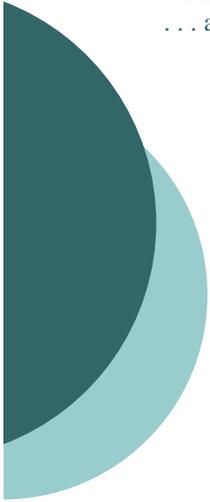
UUJAM, a Music-Making Chalice, meets the first Friday of each month at 7 pm at the home of Jan Fletcher in Sherman. Next meeting is Aug 7. Bring your instruments and songs to share. Facilitator is Jan Fletcher. **ALL MUSIC MAKERS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!**



IT TAKES A VILLAGE, a Circle of Parents Supporting Parents, meets on various dates at locations pertaining to the activity. Next meeting is Aug 1 at 8 am at the Texoma Dam for a kayaking demonstration and environmental clean up. Facilitator is Gerry Shehan. **ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ARE WELCOME!**



Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
... a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas



WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.RRUU.ORG

Church Leadership

Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco,
President (2010)

Don Durland,
Vice-president (2010)

Dianna Niemann-Harris,
Treasurer (2010)

Amy Hoffman-Shehan,
Trustee-at-Large (2010)

Jim Murphy,
Trustee-at-Large (2010)

L. D. Clark,
Trustee-at-Large (2011)

Cynthia Evetts,
Secretary (2011)

Committee on Ministry

Darrah Dunn, Elbert Hill

Team Leaders

Worship: Darrah Dunn

Chalice Circles: Jan Fletcher

Adult Forum: Open

Children's Religious Education: Helen Schulze

Youth Advisor: Open

Membership: Carla Murphy

Social Action: Open

Building and Grounds: Doyle Adams

Communications: Open

Caring: Kris Riek

Ways & Means: L.D. Clark

Hospitality: Open

Historian: Open

Newsletter: Cynthia Evetts & Shann Schubert

Website: Open