



# Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 6

JULY 2009

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church

...a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas

## A Month of Sundays

Inside this issue:

Calendar	2
"Thank You" Pot Luck	2
Social Action	3
President's Notes	3
Board Bits	4
Treasurer's Report	4
Stewardship	5
Membership Notes	5
Caring Circle News	5
July Birthdays	5
Chalice Circles	6
UUA President's Address	7
Board Covenant	7
Green Team Tips	7
Church Leadership	8



### WORSHIP:

#### July 5

##### Congregation

##### "Day of Sharing"

Today we ask each member and friend who so desires to bring their favorite poem, song, or short story. Sharing will be interspersed with our normal order of worship. Let's give thanks for our freedom.

#### July 12

John Ockels & L.D. Clark

"Humanism and Spirituality: Oxymoron or Tautology?"

What is humanism, and how does it inform our life together? What do we mean by spirituality? Are humanists cut off from deep understanding and experiences of spirituality, or are these two concepts actually siblings? Join us in an exploration of this relationship in words and music.

#### July 19

To Be Announced

#### July 26

To Be Announced

### ADULT FORUM:

#### July 5

Richard Newlin

"The Path to Wisdom"

#### July 12 Begins at 9:30 am

Ken Fletcher, Richard Newlin & Amy Hoffman-Shenan

"Our Most Excellent Unitarian Universalist Adventure"

New to UU Class to orient visitors and new members to the history of Unitarian universalism and what it means to be UU; the seven principles; what members can expect to get out of being part of a liberal religious community and how they can become involved. Facilitators will be Ken Fletcheer and Richard Newlin. The membership committee will provide coffee and refreshments. No advanced registration is needed. Child Care will be provided.

#### July 19 - Aug 9

John Ockels

*"The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom (A Toltec Wisdom Book)"*

Don Miguel Ruiz suggests in his best selling book that everything we do can be reduced to four truths:

*Be Impeccable With your Word  
Don't Take Anything Personally  
Don't Make Assumptions  
Always Do Your Best*

This class is open to everyone but you need the book - title above - and read Chapter One before the first class. Book is available on line from Amazon.com and at some local libraries.

#### Aug 15

Kris Riek

"Through the Rabbit Hole"

#### Aug 23 - Nov 8

*"Living by Heart: A Guide to Devotional Practice"*

Practical ways to nurture your inner self, claim the wisdom of the ages in the midst of your busy life and live with depth, meaning & purpose.

Adult Forum

10:00am

Worship & Children's RE 11:15am

# July 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 UU Jam at Hot Summer Nights 7:30 pm	3	4 Moveable Feast 6:00 pm at Amy's
5	6	7	8	9 UU Jam at Hot Summer Nights 7:30 pm	10	11
12	13	14 Green Team 7:30 pm at Amy's	15	16 UU Jam at Hot Summer Nights 7:30 pm	17	18 Outdoor Group 8am Baker Park  Moveable Feast 6:30pm Devolli's
19 Agape 12:45 pm in Sanctuary  Free Thinkers 12:45 Fellowship Hall	20	21 Board Meeting 6:00 pm in Fellowship Hall	22	23 UU Jam at Hot Summer Nights 7:30 pm	24	25 "Thank You" Pot Luck at Burnes Run East on Lake Texoma - 4pm-??
26	27	28	29	30 UU Jam at Hot Summer Nights 7:30 pm	31	

## Thank You Pot Luck Picnic



The idea surely isn't novel. Did you know that our Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more impoverished than these who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving. And so are we, right here in River City! It's our first-ever Red River UU Church Thank You Pot Luck Picnic.

We all can think of people who labor in the vineyards of our church and we probably have all privately thought what a wonderful effort others do but perhaps haven't told them. Now is our opportunity to do just that.

Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> starting at 4:00pm - dinner at 6:00pm. Everyone is invited to break bread together in what is planned to be a fun church-wide picnic. Drew Wade will be the chef for board provided hotdogs, hamburgers and condiments. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table settings. Pavilion is reserved from 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM for RRUU - come early, bring your family, fish & swim.

WHEN: July 25, 2009

WHERE: Burnes Run East park on Lake Texoma      Group Shelter S1-E

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 75 in Denison, TX: Take exit 72 (Highway 91); travel north on 91 across Denison Dam 5 miles, take first exit left after the dam. 525 East Burns Run Road, Cartwright, OK 74731.

## Social Action—"June 14, 2009"

Fifteen members and friends of RRUU attended a Social Action meeting held during the regular time slot for Adult Religious Education.

Participants first talked about how they see social action in relation to the Unitarian Universalist Church and what it means to us. Items covered were the desire to be an example to the community, become more visible, take stances on issues, and make a difference in which we are by identifying community needs. A commitment to continue with our funding of the Bonny Shah orphanage was brought up several times. A few people brought up specific areas in which they would like to work: transition of foster children into independence, children of offenders, habitat for humanity, a youth art center, and defending the interests of the powerless. Specific issues addressed were class, race, and gender identity. There was talk about working with other organizations and avoiding an inward focus.

The history of how social action has been approached at RRUU was discussed, along with the benefits and detriments of holding regularly scheduled meetings. It was agreed that social action was more visible and connected in the church when meeting on a regular basis. The new facilitator will decide how to proceed, and participants were invited to indicate an interest in how often they would be interested in meeting.

Next, the conversation turned to how we would like social action to proceed in the future. It was agreed that there needs to be an internal poll in the congregation to find out what issues members are concerned about and would be willing to work on. Methods of having face to face conversations and written surveys for the purpose of documentation of issues and talents within our congregation were talked about. It was among the participants that the RRUU social action program needs be more issue oriented and more visible both within the congregation and in the community.

Submitted by

Amy Hoffman-Shehan

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## President's Notes

What a couple of months!! I want to thank all of you for your wonderful support since I have accepted the position of President of RRUU and the Board of Trustees. I did a lot of soul searching and consideration prior to accepting, worried I wouldn't have sufficient experience within a congregation to do justice to the job. I didn't have to make a campaign speech, but if I had – a major goal is to make the board more transparent and open to the congregation. One of the steps in that process is to publish a condensed outline of what took place at the last board meeting – Board Bits – in each newsletter. We also have a planned time for congregational concerns in each board meeting as well as the ability of congregants to request being placed on the next board agenda. If any of you have concerns/ideas you wish to share with the entire board, please make use of one of these methods.

There have been several changes in church leadership during the past month. Elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter you will find an updated list of who is doing what around the church. I want to take this time to thank each and every one of you for your past leadership service you have provided the congregation. Without your participation and love Red River Church would still be a dream waiting to happen. The board will be hosting a 'Thank You PotLuck Picnic' on July 25, 2009 at the shelter at Burnes Run East on Lake Texoma and hope that all past leaders will attend. See details about this picnic elsewhere in this newsletter.

In the last few months many changes have taken place within our community. The underlying causes of the conflict and strife may never be completely understood. What is clear now is that there were no structures in place to assist in communicating and clarifying issues in an open and loving manner. Conflict and change are normal and can be healthy and transformational, but need guidance and a trusting environment. Our new church year started July 1<sup>st</sup>. I invite all of us to go forward with a spirit of open communication and active listening. Toxic gossip, toxic emails, 'us against them', and secrecy go against our spoken covenant: *Love is the Spirit of This Church*. There is an excitement and a renewed sense of purpose in the air. I look forward to being a part of this, the next chapter in the life of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church and I hope you do as well.

Respectfully submitted by your president,

Marla Loturco

## Board Bits - *what your board did at their last meeting (June 28, 2009)*

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- We were all present except for Mary Larkin-Baker (family emergency). The meeting started at 6 and we went home at 9:10.
- Decided to have one of us act as Process Observer and another as timer for all board meetings to assure that we stay on purpose and don't get bogged down
- Handled some routine stuff like Bank signature cards, distributed church keys, and elected Cynthia Evetts as Secretary (Amy Hoffmann-Shehan as backup)
- Officially appointed Helen Schulze as our Director of Religious Education; Jan Fletcher as the Chalice Circle Coordinator; Jim Murphy & Dianna Niemann-Harris as our Representatives to North TX Association of UU Societies (NTAUUS)
- Arranged Worship Services for the first two weeks in July while the new worship chair is on a well-deserved vacation
- Approved tuition for two church members (Kris Reik & Amy Hoffman-Shehan) to attend the UU Leadership School if there are cancellations.
- Finalized a Letter of apology
- Approved a "Thank You Potluck Picnic – July 25, 2009 – for all members & friends to honor previous church leaders
- Introduced a new process for the Board that involves devoting 15 minutes of each meeting as an "open mic" for members/friends to come and speak to the board. Members/friends can also request to be on the agenda ahead of the meeting. Two members came and spoke at the meeting.
- Decided to wait until the July board meeting to delve into by-law revisions as it deserves a more in-depth conversation

The next board meeting is July 21 starting at 6:00 pm. Board meetings are open to all, if you wish to be on the agenda please contact a board member. Deadline for the agenda is July 17. Those wishing a few minutes during the 'open mic' will want to be ready to speak shortly after 6:15 pm.

## May 2009 Treasurer's Report

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RRUU is continues to steward contributions and manage finances well. Following is a May financial synopsis with data from reports completed by Dianna Butler prior to her resignation as Treasurer. For May, we had total revenues of \$4,160.67 ,and our expenses were \$7,774.90, resulting in a net loss of \$3,614.23. For the fiscal year-to-date, we had total revenue of \$54,330.17 and our expenses were \$58,282.92, resulting is a year-to-date net loss of \$3,952.75.

It is significant to note that while May showed a \$3,614.23 net loss, paper supplies for the church were restocked and honoraria with mileage was high as we had four paid speakers in May. We also had pay for newsletter editor, RE director and minister which are expenses we will not have after June, 2009.

As of May 31, 2009, RRUU has a total of \$53,940.50 in the bank in checking accounts, savings accounts, and CD's. Those funds are dedicated as follows:

6-Month Emergency Reserve	30,392.50
New Home Fund - Restricted Assets	5,695.00
DBLE Scholarships - Restricted Assets	1,000.00
Endowment Fund	4,911.18
Uncommitted Funds	15,894.57

If you have questions I might respond to as your treasurer, please send email to [rruutreasurer@hotmail.com](mailto:rruutreasurer@hotmail.com) or call (903)464-0786, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted by Dianna Niemann-Harris, RRUU Treasurer

## This is a Time of New Beginnings...

### Stewardship...

It's a new day at Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, and **YOU** are invited to join in wholly, radically and joyously! In worship, new and long absent faces appear in the pulpit, doing the welcome and announcements, as worship associates, doing the "Time for All Ages" and lighting the Chalice. At Board meetings five of seven members are new to the Board and all three officers are recently appointed. New Chalice Circles have developed, one embracing Fun, Faith, Fellowship Indoors and Out and another is in the works embracing Reading and Sharing. There is much goodness and positive change to celebrate in our faith family.

Celebrating all the new beginnings also means owning the reality much has changed at RRUU. Some beloved, faithful, diligent faces are absent from our midst. We grieve those who have chosen to leave the church. With hopeful hearts, we breathe a prayer of Godspeed to each and all in the search for spiritual community.

In the midst of change and new beginnings, often how a person feels about committing financial support changes as well. Recognizing this, the Board asked me to prepare this newsletter piece offering each of us to consider again our pledges to RRUU for the 2009-2010 fiscal year which began July first.

Some may have withheld pledging waiting to determine if decisions made at annual meeting would allow continued involvement. Others may have been in a personal financial abyss at pledge time but now have more stable income to steward. Still others may find the changes more than they can embrace. Whatever the circumstance, discussion among the Board members acknowledges there is a need to "reopen" financial committing for this fiscal year and encourage each member or friend of the church to consider what they desire to commit to the ongoing life and new beginning that is Red River Unitarian Universalist Church.

Your newly chosen Board of Trustees would like to hear from you in this. There are pledge sheets located on the table to your right as you enter the sanctuary (that would be on your immediate left as you exit). I can also email a sheet to you if you prefer, just send a request to [rruutreasurer@hotmail.com](mailto:rruutreasurer@hotmail.com) and I will send one. Please consider reaffirming or increasing your pledge if you are so moved. Please consider making a pledge if you were unable to do so when we had the initial call for annual pledges a few months ago.

If you have made a pledge that you will be unable to honor for any reason, it would be helpful to know that as well.

Over the next month or two the Board will be reviewing the annual budget and proposing appropriate changes. As your treasurer, I would very much like to provide the Board with a realistic estimate of what amounts will be available as we move together into whatever godbywhatevertime has in store for RRUU. You can make the difference in how accurate our budget is by sharing your intentions.

Thanks in advance for your response to this appeal and for trusting me to be the best possible church treasurer I am able to be.

Namaste,

Dianna Niemann-Harris

### Membership Notes:

In June, your new **Membership Team** got busy! We now have new pamphlets, more name tags, a new place to keep name tags, and a "New UU" Attitude! Plans are in motion for "New UU" classes, Christmas in July, New RRUU Member packets, and a Participation Fair this fall that will spotlight all of the committees and Chalice Circles, making it easy to get involved. Watch for upcoming attractions! We thank for your support!

Carla Murphy

### Caring Circle News:

Someone once observed, "In helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us." There are times when we need help and the Caring Circle of our church is ready to provide friendly visits; hospital calls; emergency transportation; or meals in times when urgent, temporary assistance is needed. Kris Riek is the team's contact person for July.

### July Birthdays:

01	Elissa Baird
12	Davis Gregory-Allen
13	Linn Cates
13	Mary Edwards
15	Melba Avila
18	Ben Schulze
19	Kendall Caves
21	Tingey Tracz
23	Kyla Larkin
25	Christine Infante
26	Jim Gauthier
30	Don Lanier

## 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! You do not have to be a member of RRUU or even attend Sunday services in order to participate in a Chalice Circle. If you are interested in attending a particular circle, contact Circle Coordinator, Jan Fletcher [chalicecircles@rruu.org](mailto:chalicecircles@rruu.org).

A Book Discussion Chalice Circle is gathering steam. If you love to read and enjoy sharing your reaction of the work, contact Suzanne Durland. She is facilitating this new church activity and has all of the details.



**AGAPE**, A UU Christian Circle. Facilitator: Drew Wade. Meets on the third Sunday of each month @ the church after church @ 12:45 p.m. Next meeting: June 21. ALL LIBERAL CHRISTIANS AND UUs WHO WANT WORSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN FOCUS ARE WELCOME!



**FREETHINKERS**, A Humanist Chalice Circle. Facilitator: Jim Gauthier, Will meet on Sunday, July 19 in the Fellowship Hall at 12:45 pm  
ALL FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME!



**THE GREEN TEAM**, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month @ 7:30 p.m. at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan in Sherman. Next meeting: July 14. Begin plans for the next Earth Day Festival, bringing in core leaders from other organizations to begin the planning process.

ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH ARE WELCOME!



**IT TAKES A VILLAGE**, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Facilitator: Gerry Shehan. Meet on various dates, depending on the activity. Next meeting: TBA

ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ARE WELCOME AT "VILLAGE" ACTIVITIES



**MOVEABLE FEAST**, A Cooking and Eating Circle. Facilitators: Elbert & Marion Hill. Meets at moveable times and moveable places! Next Open Meeting: Saturday, July 18. 6:30 PM @ Devolli's in Denison.

ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME!



**OUTDOORS GROUP**, Facilitator: Suzanne Durland

Next Meeting: Saturday, July 18 @ 8a.m. @ Baker Park in Sherman bring your breakfast.

ANYONE WHO LOVES THE OUTDOORS IS WELCOME!



**RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT**, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitator: Penny Bertrand. Meets at various places on various dates. Next meeting: TBA.

NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



**UUJAM**, A Music-Making Circle. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher. Meeting every Thursday in July at Hot Summer Nights in Sherman @ 7:30 pm.

ALL MUSIC MAKERS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!



## UUA President's Address

June 28, 2009

Friends,

*As you know, I have just been elected President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. I have trouble expressing how profoundly I am touched by the confidence people have placed in me. I can only say, in the Spanish phrase, mil gracias, "a thousand thanks."*

*I am humbled and grateful. The challenges before us are great. We continue to live in a world where fear and hatred cause suffering and violence. Greed and acquisitiveness threaten life on our planet. We are surrounded by millions of people seeking a spiritual home that is free and open. We face historic cultural and ethnic change in America.*

*We must learn to express our love and values in new cultural contexts. We will build on the great achievement of President Bill Sinkford in social witness. Ours will be a presidency passionately engaged in the great moral issues of our time: economic justice, peace, and human rights. I would like to thank and praise the Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman, the other candidate for president, for her deep insights and inspiring contributions to our faith. Her concerns for spiritual depth, covenantal relationships and stewardship are values I share.*

*To Laurel's supporters, I offer my warmest welcome. There are no divisions in our movement, only complementarities. Your call for spiritual depth has always been a call that leads us to work together to make a better world. Together, we are answering the same call heard by Servetus, Ballou, Channing, Parker and Susan B.*



*Anthony—a call to leave behind what is outmoded and to let compassion guide us as we shape a future together.*

*The challenges we face are great. However, together we have the passion, the spirit, the determination and love to face the tests of our times. Together, together, we can grow our faith and help heal the world. We can be, we must be, the religion for our time. Together we are beginning an exciting new chapter in Unitarian Universalism. We are on a journey of faith together.*

*-- Peter Morales  
President, Unitarian Universalist Association*

## Board Covenant

Adopted June 24, 2009 by unanimous agreement

1. When I commit to things I will follow through to the best of my ability, including asking for help.
2. I will attend all board functions. If not possible I will make arrangements for my absent prior to the start of the board function.
3. I will honor and support decisions of the board
4. I will love our church and be positive and passionate about Unitarian Universalism
5. I will call forth, recognize and appreciate the gifts of others.
6. I will do my best to bring attention to voices not heard
7. I will keep a sense of humor
8. I will be an active and respectful listener and will be open to all ideas
9. I will be mindful of others need to process
10. I will stick to the agenda
11. I will be on time for the meetings and assist in starting and ending on time.



**Green Team Tip of the Month – July 2009**

**Read labels and check packaging. Make sure your purchases are the best choice for you and the safe choice for the environment.**

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A home for religious liberals in  
Southern Oklahoma and North  
Texas

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
[WWW.RRUU.ORG](http://WWW.RRUU.ORG)

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## Church Leadership

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### 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	Finance: Judy Donahue
Chalice Circles: Jan Fletcher	Hospitality: Open
Adult Forum: Open	Historian: Open
Children's Religious Education: Helen Schulze	Newsletter: Mary Larkin-Baker
Youth Advisor: Open	Website: Jerry Barrax
Membership: Carla Murphy	
Social Action: Open	
Building & Grounds: Open	
Communications: Open	
Caring: Kris Riek	