

Red River Ramblings



July 2014
Volume 12
Issue 1

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Sunday, July 6, 2014 – 11:15 am

Re-imagining a Religion with Compassion and Forgiveness

Randy Roberts Potts, *speaking* (video)



Author Randy Roberts Potts likes to say he grew up 50 feet and a million miles away from firebrand televangelist Oral Roberts.

Now openly gay and a pariah to his family, the 37-year-old is on a mission of his own: to undo his grandfather's legacy by preaching in churches and touring the Bible belt. When his grandfather died, Randy attended the funeral but wasn't asked to sit with "family". Randy and his husband make their home in Dallas.

Sunday, July 13, 2014 – 11:15 am

Relations

D. Scott Cooper, *speaking*



"Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." How do the three concepts in our Second Principle relate to one another and to the other Principles? How do they connect, overlap, and inform one another, and how might that relate to our lives?

Sunday, July 20, 2014 – 11:15 am

The Gradual Dawn of Light

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

Doug Strong originally was scheduled to speak on Father's day. A family emergency took him to Wisconsin the week before. He returns this month and while Father's Day is long gone, the sermon isn't. Of his remarks Doug wrote: *Herodotus, credited with being the father of his*

tory, wrote his immortal work because he wanted to "preserve past events from oblivion and to perpetuate the just renowned that belonged to men of departed generations". I wish to speak about one such father - our father, if you will and explain why I think it is important to do so. Whom, you may ask? Come and find out.

Sunday, July 27, 2014 – 11:15 am

Grayson County Shelter: Hope Lives Here

Ashley Earls, *speaking*



In 1985, The Grayson County Ministerial Alliance recognized the need in the community for a homeless shelter. The Alliance then committed itself to help relieve the human pain, family displacement and tragic consequences of the homeless in our area. As a result the Board of Directors was formed, and the Grayson County Shelter opened their doors in 1987 to assist families and individuals in need of housing, food and clothing. Dr. Brandt donated the building in memory of his wife (Helen Brandt) to serve the homeless people in the community. The Shelter's Mission Statement is straight forward: The Grayson County Shelter provides multiple survival services to homeless persons, and others in need, with the explicit goal of self-reliance.

Ashley Earls is the director of the Grayson County Shelter will offer an update on the shelter, and its outreach with the homeless on our community. She will also look at the challenges faced in completing the shelter's mission, as well as, its successes in leading the Texoma Homeless Coalition's efforts to end homelessness in our community.

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

We are a sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity and spiritual growth..

Elbert's Epistle



This will be my last letter as president of RRUU. It has been a privilege to serve in this capacity, and I appreciate all the cooperation I've received from fellow board members, team chairs, and others in RRUU.

I welcome Dan Althoff as incoming president. I know he will do an excellent job, especially since he did so when he was president before. I hope church members and friends will give him the same support they gave me during the past two years.

One of the biggest regrets I have is that the church did not grow during my tenure. It seems that each time we had a few new people join, others left, mostly because they moved out of the area. I am looking forward to help from Visitors Sundays in the area of growing the church.

I am writing this from Providence RI, where Marion and I are attending the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. There are over 4,500 registered attendees this year, and it's great to see that many UUs in one place at the same time. We have seen many old friends (mostly from north Texas) and made some new ones. We will give a more complete report after we get back (perhaps in Adult Forum if that works with Joyce's plans?).

We have other traveling planned after we leave Providence, so we'll be seeing you in church near the end of July.

Elbert

Dan's Dispatch

Dear Friends,

In my very first newsletter offering, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for electing me to be president. I am sincerely grateful. It is also very humbling because it is a sign of a very great confidence placed in me personally. It is an awesome responsibility! Although there is no formal oath of office for this role, it is my intention to "faithfully execute" all the duties of this position and to be an ambassador of



good will for liberal religion in north Texas and southern Oklahoma. I can only hope to continue the fine example of our previous presidents, Elbert Hill and Marla Loturco, in publicizing and promoting the work of this small but mighty congregation, not only in the local communities anchored by Sherman, Denison, and Durant—but also among our sister fellowships, congregations, and churches in our area "cluster," North Texas Unitarian Universalist Congregations, better known among us as NTUUC.

In the last five years or so, we have together weathered some massive challenges but we are still here! But more than simply hanging on, we recognized and seized an opportune moment to establish a beautiful permanent home, not a rented space subject to a landlord's religious sensibilities. We have seen opportunity for ministry in the neighborhood surrounding our new sacred space and we have acted upon it. We have invited the community to meet us by making personal invitations to visit. We have made a commitment to the Grayson County Shelter, our neighbors at the corner. We have an ongoing ministry to the care of the planet in our annual Earth Day celebrations, which was honored this year by the Interfaith Power & Light Cool Congregations Community Inspiration Award! That is amazing! Small but mighty, indeed!

In the next few months ahead, I will be looking forward to getting up to speed on how I can best serve our congregation. Although I first served as president some ten years ago, much has changed since then. I hope to gain new knowledge (and hopefully some wisdom, too) from the workshop and training opportunities provided through NTUUC and the Southern Region of the UUA as well as ongoing consultations with our Board and our members. Our relationship with those organizations is important because it is so very mutual: our dues help to support them, and they in turn help us with their expertise and grants. Of course, we also sponsor events to share expertise with our sister congregations as well, such as the Wide Awake Worship workshop next month led by our great friend, the Rev. Dr. Christine Tata. We ourselves—individuals and churches and organizations—form an interdependent web which holds us tightly and rightly in mutual assistance and cooperation.

With your help and suggestions—and loving corrections as needed!—I believe that this small but mighty congregation will continue to have the outsized influence it has already had—and then some!

Faithfully,

Dan

Board Bits ~ from the June Board of Trustees meeting

At the June 12 board meeting, we discussed the block party which the church held on June 8 and concluded that, for a first such effort, it went very well. A major goal was to get people from the neighborhood there, to get acquainted and find ways the church can become more a part of the neighborhood. Flyers were distributed to area residents beforehand (thanks, Bennie!), and we had balloons, streamers and signs outside to call attention to the event.

Unfortunately, threatening weather meant we had to move the actual event inside; it might have added to the "festive" air if we could have done it all outside. But four adults and one child from the neighborhood came, and church members reported having good visits with them. Thanks to everyone who provided food, music, labor, planning, and ideas. A good time was had by all!

We decided its well worth the effort to repeat the block-party idea at some point. Next time, we'll do the flyer in Spanish as well as English, since many of our neighbors speak only Spanish. In conversation with the neighborhood visitors, we also learned of other possible ways we might assist neighbors, like providing a

central point where area residents can pay their bills. Gil is checking into the possibilities of providing this service.

Gil reported that the church Facebook page is attracting 40-50 visitors each week. Only a few people are currently posting to the page, and it would be good to have others do so. In fact, anyone who likes spending time on Facebook is encouraged to go to the church page, post comments or info on events, "like" the page, and generally help RRUU have a more effective social-media presence.

Tommi and Marion plan to institute a special Visitors Sunday each month, beginning in August. Look for more details on this later, and be thinking of people you'll invite to "sample" what RRUU offers. (You needn't wait until the Visitors Sundays begin, of course, but hopefully those Sundays will be a regular reminder to share the good news about RRUU with people who might be interested in our church.)

The board discussed fund-raising ideas suggested in the May Congregational Meeting and are pursuing these.

Elbert (outgoing RRUU congregational president)

WIDE AWAKE! WORSHIP!



Thanks to a grant from NTUUC – we're hosting a one-day Wide Awake Worship workshop on Saturday, August 9th. The Rev. Dr. Christine Tata will be the facilitator and since nearly everyone in the congregation has heard her speak at RRUU, you know how good the workshop will be! The best part – besides Christina leading it – the workshop is free! Lunch and printed materials included!

Save the Date! Register by emailing your name to:
WideAwakeWorship[+suffix]

Please go away!

Don't forget to bring home a small amount of water from your travels – whether you've been to Denton or to Damascus! Our annual Water Communion service will be in September. A small amount is all you need.



Our Little Free Library ~ Take a book | Leave a book

Our Little Free Library is up and running! It has been a labor of love for Gil Alexander who created the little library to look like a house. His ranch hand did the construction and Joyce Peak lettered the signs.

Several folks donated books and it was open for business the day of our Block Party on June 8th.

Little Free Libraries are not so well known in Texoma land, in fact the number of Little Free Libraries in our area is exactly none, according to a search on the Little Free Library web site! Our Little Free Library is the only one in Durant, in Denison and in Sherman! There is one at Community UU Church in Plano, which was the genesis for our project.

Thanks Gil.

Several neighborhood children have visited the library and there is a need for more Children's books – especially Spanish language books.

The library is self run. If you want to take a book or leave a book all you need to do is to visit the library.

Pictured are incoming president Dan Althoff and outgoing president Elbert Hill.

Happy Reading Everyone!



Treasurer's Report ~ For May 2014

In the month of May, we had income of \$3,412 from general operations. After operations expense of \$2,565 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$846.

In May, we spent \$814 on renovations to install attic insulation and vents. In addition, we had other grant expense of \$523 for worship and religious education.

For the year to date period of July 2013 through May 2014, we had net income of \$14,211 from operations, net expense from renovations of \$9,155, net grant expense of \$6,694 and principal payments of \$3,967. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$5,606. Operations expense was lower than budget for the year to date period, but that was offset by higher renovation expense.

As of the end of May 2014, we had cash of \$45,682 and debt of \$35,370. The cash amount includes \$989 reserved for renovations and \$3,548 reserved for grants.

In May we donated \$89 from the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

I've enjoyed my time as treasurer. Thanks for all the support. Robert Shelton will be taking over in July.

Carole Harner, Treasurer

The 2014-2015 Budget ~ Where your pledge is going!

| Income | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Pledges | 25,080.00 |
| Weekly Offering | 3,000.00 |
| Special Collections - Share the Plate | 1,000.00 |
| Fund Raisers | 1,900.00 |
| Total Income excluding grants | 30,980.00 |

| Expense | |
|--|-----------|
| Administration - Postage | 50.00 |
| Administration - Postal Box | 80.00 |
| Administration - Supplies | 80.00 |
| Administration - Banking Fees | 30.00 |
| Childcare = RE Assistant | 1,400.00 |
| Committees, Hospitality, Historian, Stewardship, etc. | 0.00 |
| Communications - E-news | 130.00 |
| Communications - Newsletter, Telephone, Website | 0.00 |
| Community - Special Collections - Share the Plate | 1,000.00 |
| Community - Social Action | 64.00 |
| Facilities - Building Loan Interest | 1,353.36 |
| Facilities - Building Maintenance | 800.00 |
| Facilities - Grounds Maintenance | 1,200.00 |
| Facilities - Supplies | 0.00 |
| Facilities - Insurance | 2,570.00 |
| Facilities - Utilities | 4,988.00 |
| GIFT/Fair Share Program - UUA | 2,262.00 |
| Religious Education - Director Comp | 1,666.93 |
| Religious Education - Adult - Expenses | 0.00 |
| Religious Education - Children - Expenses | 300.00 |
| Worship - Bulletins | 1,300.00 |
| Worship - Honoraria | 6,000.00 |
| Worship - Mileage | 1,000.00 |
| Worship - Supplies | 577.07 |
| Subtotal Expense | 26,851.36 |
| Building Loan - Principal payments | 4,128.64 |
| Total Change in Cash excluding Grants | 0.00 |
| Net Renovations | 0.00 |

Expense from Grants:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Leadership Development - DBLE | 906.00 |
| Religious Education - Director Comp | 1,239.62 |
| Worship - Guest Musicians | 1,200.00 |
| Net Grants | 3,345.62 |
| Total Change in Cash including Renovations and Grants | (3,345.62) |

New Rules for Church Email ~ to thwart spam

Over the last year, many of the RRUU email addresses have been phished – resulting in some people getting upwards of 100 emails every couple of days. The Communications Team is revamping the whole system. No longer will email addresses, in their entirety, be printed in the newsletter, flyers, our web page, facebook page, or e-news. Rather you will see only the prefix (in bold) to an email. To make it a church email address you will need to add the suffix: **@rruu.org**. The hope is that this will help to keep our email addressed from being hacked. Here's the list we'll use from now on.

| Email Prefix | Plus our suffix [@rruu.org] will send an email to the following individuals |
|-------------------------|--|
| adultforum | Joyce Peak |
| aesthetics | Bruce Cameron, Carolyn Cameron, Joyce Peak, Maura Shehan, Kat Walston |
| announce | Marla Loturco, Doug Strong |
| avteam | The Alexanders, Marla Loturco, Carole Harner, Jim Murphy, Doug Strong, |
| awards | The Alexanders, Bruce Cameron, Carolyn Cameron, Carole Harner, Marla Loturco, , Doug Strong |
| bookclub | Carole Harner |
| bookmarks | Carolyn Cameron, Marla Loturco |
| building | The Alexanders |
| buildingteam | Bruce Cameron, The Alexanders, Jim Murphy, Peter Schulze |
| calendar | Doug Strong |
| caring | The Alexanders |
| CoM | Carole Harner, Peter Schulze, Gerry Shehan [Committee on Ministry] |
| communications | Doug Strong |
| directory | Doug Strong |
| dre | Joyce Peak |
| endowment | The Alexanders, The Hills, Robert Shelton, Doug Strong, |
| feast | The Hills |
| finance | Dan Althoff, Robert Shelton, Helen Schulze |
| goodtimesteam | The Alexanders, Carolyn Cameron, Carole Harner, The Hills, Faye Shadrick |
| greenteam | Amy Hoffman-Shehan |
| historian | Marla Loturco |
| hospitality | goodtimesteam |
| info | Doug Strong |
| meditation | Paula Blackshear |
| membership | The Hills |
| membershipteam | The Hills , Marla Loturco, Faye Shadrick, Amy Hoffman-Shehan, |
| news | Marla Loturco, Doug Strong |
| nominations | L.D. Clark, Marla Loturco, Helen Schulze |
| ntuuc-rep | Marla Loturco |
| pastpres | The Hills |
| planning | The Alexanders, The Hills, Amy Hoffman-Shehan, |
| pledge | Carolyn Cameron, The Hills , Robert Shelton |
| president | Dan Althoff |
| rruuboard | The Alexanders , Dan Althoff, Paula Blackshear, The Hills, Doug Strong, |
| scp | Dan Althoff (Safe Congregation Panel) |
| secretary | Doug Strong |
| socact | The Alexanders |
| teamleaders | The Alexanders , Dan Althoff, Paula Blackshear, Carolyn Cameron, Carole Harner, The Hills, Marla Loturco, Joyce Peak, Peter Schulze, Gerry Shehan, Amy Hoffman-Shehan, Doug Strong |
| treasurer | Robert Shelton |
| trustee1 | Paula Blackshear |
| vicepresident | The Alexanders |
| waysmeans | The Hills, Marla Loturco, Robert Shelton |
| worship | Marla Loturco, Doug Strong |
| worshipassociate | Dan Althoff, Bruce Cameron, Carole Harner, Jana Norris, Faye Shadrick, |
| worshipteam | Dan Althoff, Marla Loturco, Faye Shadrick, Doug Strong |

Moveable Feast ~ A July Swim Party!

Lanan and Robert Shelton are hosting a pool party, on Saturday, July 26th starting at 5:00 PM for early swimming followed by Summer Salads and Dessert and coffee at 6:00 PM. Swimming can continue as long as one wishes.

Children are welcome but parents must be responsible for them. Bring your own towels if you plan to swim. There is a 4 ft. section for children and the deep end is 10 ft. They will have indoor and outdoor seating and In case of rain we will come indoors.

RSVP by email (no later than July 19th) to [feast\[+suffix\]](mailto:feast[+suffix]) to let them know you're coming.

Out To Lunch ~ Sunday, July 13th

Our July Out To Lunch is returning to La Placita El Salvadorian restaurant. They serve wonderful, authentic meals which are very inexpensive yet delicious. The place, a recycled filling station, is at 1015 W. Houston St in Sherman.

The purpose of Out To Lunch is just that! Going out to lunch as a congregation – everyone is encouraged to come. There is no agenda, no minutes, no assignments – just good fellowship. We each pay our own way.

It is about a 13 minute drive from church. Folks gather around 12:35.

See you there!



S.W.U.U.I. ~ Summer Camp for Liberals!



SWUUSI (Southwestern UU Summer Institute) is happening at Western Hills Resort (between Tulsa and Tahlequah, OK), with Rev. Meg Barnhouse as the theme speaker.

SWUUSI is an annual, multigenerational summer camp with many and varied activities.

All two bedroom cabins are now taken! One-bedroom cabins are going fast, and space is still available in the Bunk House and the Lodge. Register ASAP to ensure you get your preferred housing choice! ALL options are great for families, groups, or singles! Check out the flyers on their web site for complete information and

registration on line here:

www.uuasouthernregion.org/2014swuusi.html.

SWUUSI is very excited to give back to the local community in a meaningful way this year. We will be partnering with the Cherokee Nation Early Start Program and UU Church of Tahlequah to provide school supplies to the low income children of the region. The children need coloring books, reading books, crayons for young children, hand sanitizers and for the youngest ones, socks, panties and briefs, bibs and baby wipes. If you would like to support this effort, there will be a donation box in the entry to the Chapel in July and we will take the donations to SWUUSI.

Leadership

Board of Trustees

Dan Althoff, *president*
 Gil Alexander, *vice president*
 Robert Shelton, *Treasurer*
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*
 Paula Blackshear, *Trustee*
 Elbert Hill, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,
 Peter Schulze

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Joyce*
 Aesthetics Team:
Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*
 Communications: *Doug*
 Chalice coordinator: *Open*
 DRE: *Joyce*
 Finance: *Dan*
 Good Times: *Carole, Marilyn & Marion*
 Long Range Planning:
Amy, Gil, Marilyn
 Membership: *Marion*
 Nominations: *Helen, L.D., Marla*
 NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
 Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
 Social Action: *Gil*
 Ways & Means: *Open*
 Worship:
Dan, Doug, Faye, Marla

Contact Us

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 Web: www.ruuu.org
 E-News: **announce**[+suffix]
 Facebook:
 RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

PROVIDENCE

RHODE ISLAND

JUNE 25-29, 2014

With the colorful congregational banner parade led by Officer Tony Lepore, the famous dancing traffic cop of Providence, R.I., the 53rd General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association kicked off Wednesday night to a joyous crowd of several thousand at the Rhode Island Convention Center. With a musical tribute by Emma's Revolution to beloved UU, human rights activist, and folk singer Pete Seeger, featuring some of his best-loved songs including "If I Had a Hammer," representatives from 659 congregations at this year's GA joyously danced, marched, and waved their banners, as a white-gloved Lepore, an anti-bullying activist and the first-ever GA Grand Marshal, blew his whistle and hit the floor for break-dance moves.

More than 4,600 people are registered to attend this year's GA, which features the theme, "Love Reaches Out." UUA Moderator Jim Key welcomed the crowd to embrace the theme, which will be reflected throughout the four-day conference. In Wednesday night's celebration, Love Reaches Out was highlighted through a number of musical celebrations, with people of many cultures sharing the word love in a number of languages, and with a creative use of light, including having the audience hold their lighted cell phones or lanterns up in the air as dramatic music filled the air.

UUA President Peter Morales and Key offered inspirational words to the crowd. "We are assembled as one body to grow our religion across the borders of our imagination and reach out in love," said Key, who encouraged delegates and observers to share their GA experiences through Twitter and other social media.

This year marks Key's first as Moderator, and, after welcoming newcomers, he gave a special shout out to a couple attending their 30th GA, who were seated at the rear of the convention center. "Thirty GA's—and that's the best seat you could get?" Key joked, to widespread laughter.

In response to feedback from delegates at previous GAs, this year's will have 11 fewer hours of plenary sessions than last year, Key noted, to cheers from the audience. "That allows us to offer 48 more workshops than last year," he said, for a total of 156 workshops to "inspire and challenge you." He added, "You'll have a great four days."

Along with Morales and Key, Vice Moderator Donna Harrison formally welcomed the UUA's newest congregation, Original Blessing, a 40-member community in Brooklyn, N.Y., whose mission is "to transform the lives of 400,000 people in North Brooklyn and Western Queens." Original Blessing, led by the Rev. Ian White Maher, is the first new congregation in nearly 20 years in the Metro New York District, said Mia Morse, district president, who called Maher "a true visionary" in creating an appealing model for attracting new members. Its addition brings to 1,048 the number of congregations in the UUA, said Harrison.

The ceremony concluded with the audience on its feet, clapping and dancing to songs both new and familiar.

Chalice Circles & Interest Groups ~ Join In!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle usually meets on Thursday evenings @ 7:30 PM. Next meeting TBA at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's house. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle will be meeting on July 26. Details on page 7

OMMMM... Meditation Group, meets the last Sunday of each month @12:35 in the Chapel. They are currently on hiatus for the summer. Open to all who wish to learn more about meditation and to participate in meditating. Facilitator: Paula Blackshear.

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, is an informal book discussion group meeting in the Barton Parlor on the second Thursday of the month. They are currently on hiatus for the summer. Join in the conversation. Facilitator Carole Harner.

OUT TO LUNCH, One Sunday a month after things we go out for a Dutch-treat lunch. There is no agenda, no reports, no minutes - just everyone heading out and breaking bread together. This month OTL will meet on July 13. See details on page 7. Email **announce** [+suffix] if you have a restaurant suggestion.

GA remembers

Pete Seeger

