the chalice

July 2005

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Summer Church »»

Cardigan Lodge Retreat and "Report from Lesbia" See Inserts

newsletter@uusharon.org **Deadline: July 15, 5pm**Submit via Email or on Disk



Does our church "close" for the summer? NO! The Board and committees, especially Bean Supper and Silent Auction, are at work, as are the Minister and Staff. And the building is used by outside groups for income-producing rentals.

And Houston, (Sharon, Canton, Foxboro, Mansfield, Norwood, Stoughton, Walpole, etc.) ... We have Worship! This summer, as in past years, Rev. Deborah Cayer will lead simple evening vespers services at 7:30pm on June 22, 29 and July 6, at which Glenn Rivard, Jennifer Spencer and Steve Tapper will provide live music. Karl Arruda will lead a poetry service on Sunday, July 10 (10:15am); we're looking for live music and invite you to bring a favorite poem to share. If there's interest, we'll have services beginning again in mid-August; stay tuned for more information.

AND there's Fellowship! Join us on Friday, July 15 at 7:30pm to watch the video "What the (Bleep) Do We Know?" This is a movie for adults that deals with new discoveries in science and their implications for spirituality; we'll also have some separate activities and videos available for children. If you're interested in this Fellowship event please call the church office or send an email to admin@uusharon.org so we know how many cool, creamy delicious snacks to have on hand.

On August 19 - 21 Glenn Rivard has organized another fun church retreat to the American Mountain Club's Mt. Cardigan facilities in NH. You can stay in the lodge or at a campsite, and join fellow church members to hike, swim, or just relax near the pond. See our website for more information, contact Glenn at GlennRivard@hotmail.com or call him at 781-989-2010. (Note: if you're planning to do this, best to make reservations ASAP.) All are welcome!

There's always lawn mowing (call Jack Armstrong before he calls you), Memorial Garden weeding and watering (help is always appreciated, call Suzie Gray) and projects in the building (July 16 the Membership Committee will do some "fresh eyes" tidying and tossing; B&G also will undoubtedly have something going on).







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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FRIDAY JULY 15 5PM FIRM

Submit EMail by 5pm to

newsletter@uusharon.org
MS Word attachments
preferred
Or
drop off in the RED
Newsletter Mailbox in the

Church Office

(preferably on disk)

We Need Not Think Alike to Love Alike

At every meeting I've been to since June 10, people have asked me what I thought about the Annual Meeting. "It was good!" I say, "One of the best I've ever been to, because people really spoke up about what they

thought and everyone seemed to listen to each other." Many years we've flown through the agenda with little controversy,

From the Minister

unanimous "yeas" being the norm. Not so this year. The question from the Board proposing a bylaw change to require the UUA and BCD dues as a condition for membership was what stirred peoples' minds and hearts.

One of the basic dynamics in any non-profit organization (and perhaps it's true in for-profits as well) is that the folks who are on the Board often really worry and sweat and research and analyze and discuss and hammer out solutions to problems that the rest of the membership may know about, but about which they don't have the same fullness of understanding. So when the Board comes forward with the good news about its great, Eureka! solution, the rest of the members say, "WHAT?! And you think we should what?!" And sometimes when there's a really big disconnect there's a scene like in the movies where the villagers get really mad and come running at leaders with pitchforks. I thought it was a great meeting because there was no running with pitchforks - passionate discussion, yes, but no pitchforks.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, and now, a week later, I'm remembering that all the research shows that when changes are proposed lots of opportunity to talk before making a decision is extremely helpful. Although discussion takes time, and that's often in short supply, and it can be hard to listen to what others think and feel, it's time well spent for groups that want to vigorously focus on their main mission and goals. It's also a spiritual practice to keep your mind and heart open when listening to people who think something so different from yourself. This doesn't mean hiding what you think, or "going along to get along." It just means that while there's a conflict you keep your mind and heart open to the other person. I keep learning by doing, and I'm going to file this lesson where I hope it can be easily accessed in the future: if there's a proposal for any kind of sensitive change, create many opportunities to talk about it before it comes to a vote.

By and large this is a healthy congregation that lets leaders do their jobs, thanks them for working on everyone's behalf, and takes their recommendations, sometimes with very helpful suggested adjustments. Every so often it's wonderful to see members exert their power and pull on the emergency brake and say, "Whoa! What made you think that was a good idea?!" What would be equally wonderful in the future, when given the opportunity, would be to see members show that same kind of passionate interest in the conversation and discovery part of the process.

In Faith,

the chalice

Presidential Ponderings

"May the long-time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the clear light within you guide you on your way." These are the words to a farewell the choir is preparing as I write this. I gratefully extend them to Aidan Cunningham, Peter Wilson and Suzanne Howard, all of whom are leaving the Board of Trustees. I have enjoyed working with you and I will miss you . . . "see you in church."

Welcome to Bill Fox and Rory McGregor, new BOT members, elected at the annual meeting. I look forward to a congenial and productive year with you and returning Board members.

Speaking of the annual meeting, the fellowship of the premeeting potluck, the ready quorum, the thoughtfulness and selfdisclosure of many questions and comments, people's willingness to be flexible . . . all of these contributed to a positive experience. If you weren't there, here are the "returns:" The slate proposed by the Nominating Committee was elected. The bylaw amendment proposed by the BOT was rejected . . . so thoughtfully that some Board members left the meeting having had their minds changed through the debate.

The next day, six UCS members made the trek to Arlington St.

Church for a service before the Pride march. Afterwards, we walked with hundreds of other UUs-gay, straight, bisexual, transgender AND straight—to our place in the parade lineup. Then we waited for 45 minutes in broiling sun for part of the parade to go by so we could fall in! We carried our banner and I felt enormously proud of UUs for our commitment to equal rights.

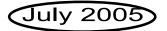
There were strange sights. Like the cross-dresser man in a thong red string bikini and six-inch platform shoes with the highest heels I ever saw! However did he stand up, let alone walk! The experience, at least for me, was a surge of joy at the commitment and fellowship demonstrated throughout the day. I saw one protester, a young woman who did not meet my eyes, who carried a poster, "no gays wanted", in rather more pejorative terms.

It was a wonderful day. Even Shreve, Crump and Lowe got into the spirit. They had a sign in their window reading: "It's been a year. What are you waiting for?"

It's been a year. Since I began my term as your president, that is. It's been a full and satisfying one. I look forward to summer events, and to ingathering in September, full of beans.

Wherever your summer may take you, "May the long-time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the clear light within you guide you on your way."

Valerie White



Summer Office Hours, Staff and Minister's Schedules

This summer Janet Mayo (our Administrative Assistant) will respond to email and voice messages from home and will come into the office briefly once during the week. If you have questions or need anything from Janet call the office 781/784-3652 or send a message to Admin@uusharon.org

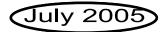
Louise Marcoux, DRE, will work various hours in June, July and August. If you want to reach Louise call her at 781/784-3652 mailbox 3 or send a message to DRE@uusharon.org

Rev. Cayer will be working in early summer through July 15, will take a month off, and then will be back at work during the week beginning August 15.

When working, Deborah will be in and out of the church office planning, visiting and attending meetings, and will also work part time from her home study. You can contact Deb at church, 781/784-9460, at home, or send a message to

Revcayer@uusharon.org. When she's on vacation, a local minister will cover pastoral emergencies.

Contact Valerie White who will help you find pastoral assistance.





Celebration

As I crawl through the wreckage formerly known as the DRE's desk, I have to smile. We have a lot to celebrate in religious education.

From the Director of comprehensive human Religious Education gram, was a great suc-

- Our Whole Lives, the cess due to consistent

participation by our 7th and 8th graders and the caring leadership of Dan Huse and Christine Cavallaro (along with Robert and Susan Johnson of the Canton church).

- The Senior Youth Group took off this year. Long-term members brought friends, new 9th graders joined, and suddenly there were 20 members! The group grew because it was dynamic, interesting, and open to growing. Many thanks to all the group members (old and new) and to advisors Chris Cayer, Jenny Debell, and Fred Bramhall. Special thanks to Chris Cayer for his many years as youth group advisor. Chris will be leaving his role with our youth group but expanding his involvement in youth leadership development with the UUA. Thank you, Chris, for your dedication and deep caring!
- The transition to a new DRE went smoothly thanks to our very supportive minister, an outgoing DRE who did her best to train and inform me, a congregation that clearly wanted me to succeed, and an RE committee that worked hard to support continuity and ensure a quality program.
- Our Sunday morning program hummed along, thanks to twenty people who were willing to share themselves with and be present to young Unitarian Universalists. Our teachers - newcomers and experienced alike - made this year special.

This summer, I'll focus on plans for new curricula, groupings, programs, and challenges. But first, I promise to clean my desk.

Congratulations to you all!

Louise

Words of Thanks

The R.E. Committee would like to thank Beth Hoke and Chris Cayer for their many years of service to the religious education program. That the R.E. program is as strong and vibrant today is due in large part to their tireless efforts.

Beth has been the co-chair of the RE Committee for the past five years. Through her dedication and leadership, the RE program has become one of the major strengths of our church community.

Chris has been an adult facilitator of the Senior Youth Group since arriving at our church. His expertise, spirit and enthusiasm in working with older youth is appreciated by all who have worked with him or been a part of the Senior Youth Group.

Thanks, Beth and Chris!

The R.E. Committee and DRE Louise Marcoux

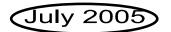
Goals of the RE Program



The Religious Education Program is founded on the basic belief that providing our children with a means to develop a religious and spiritual identity is of primary im-

portance to fostering individuals who are: tolerant, respectful and self-aware; competent and clear about their own identities; well-equipped to be responsible and active citizens in our larger culture; and well-informed to make their own religious choices.

RE registration will resume in September.



Among UUs

We offer the condolences of the congregation to David and Mary Nelson. David's sister, Cindy, died in mid-June after a long battle against cancer.

Congratulations and best wishes to our high school graduates, Dyan Hager, Sam Huse, Alison McDougal, and Ryan Fitzgerald!

Huge thanks to John Schumacher for his tremendous work in creating both choral and duet musical scores for the song, "Everything Possible" for our Rainbow Sunday celebration.

And thank you to everyone who made Rainbow Sunday a wonderful experience yet again, beginning with the Welcoming Congregation Committee: Mia Joiner-Moore, Janet Limke, Gare Reid and Jon Slavin. They had terrific support from Alison Reid and our DRE, Louise Marcoux - thank you! Thanks also to Steve Tapper for the music and equipment to play it, Jennifer Spencer and the Choir for special music during the morning's service and Melissa Leonard for her honest, hilarious "Report from Lesbia" (you'll find Melissa's remarks on an insert). And a very special thank you to our congregation's friend, Ilan Fisher, who took gorgeous photos of our human rainbow and has given them to us to use in our own future materials.

On Sunday, May 15 the Membership Committee led us in welcoming the nine newest members of the congregation: Dia Cheney, Paul Smith, Ben D'Avanzo, Mia Joiner-Moore, Liz Moore, Sylvia Mignon, Bill Peyton, "Schnig" Schleinig and Evelynne Swaggerty. Welcome All!

We offer the sincere thanks of the congregation to outgoing members of the Board, Aidan Cunningham, Peter Wilson and Vice President, Suzanne Howard. And say a hearty "welcome back" to David Nelson who begins his second term, and new members Bill Fox and Rory McGregor! Thank you, everyone, for

all the work you do on behalf of the congregation! A special thank you goes to our Nominating Committee, Lisa Yeransian and Blair Weidig for their thoughtful, thorough work in recruiting new leaders—you guys rock!

On Sunday, June 12, the Religious Education Committee thanked and honored Beth Hoke for five excellent years as RE Co-Chair. Thank you, Beth, from the congregation as well!

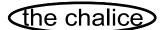
And thanks to the indefatigable Rory McGregor who is stepping down as chair of Buildings and Grounds to serve on the Board. Rory was Chair of B&G during major projects these past couple years, including painting the building and upgrading its heating and energy systems. Though Rory is a stalwart who can always be counted on to respond to current disasters whenever needed, perhaps his true genius lies not in doing everything himself. Rory has a gift for making both work parties and meetings into real experiences of community. Thank you Rory!

Organ Repair

The UU Church of Weymouth is looking for an organ repairperson to finish a restoration project on its 1903 pipe organ that is more than 2/3 complete, and also to do routine repairs and annual maintenance. Any referrals will be much appreciated. Write to info@nmuc.org.







Calendar

Events take place at church unless **otherwise noted**. Event times are "pm" unless **otherwise noted**.

M	June 27	Sobriety Meeting 7:30		
	(1)	W	June 29	Vespers 7:30
	H.	W	July 6	Vespers 7:30
		Su	July 10	RE Committee 9am Poetry Service 10:15am
		M	July 11	Sobriety Meeting 7:30
W	July 13	Board of T	rustees 7:15	
Th	July 14	Men's Gro	up 8	
F	July 15	"What the		Te Know?" 7:30 te grown-ups watch the movie) 7:30
M	July 18	Women's	Group 7:30	
W	July 20	Membersh	ip Committee	7:30
M	July 25	Sobriety M	leeting 7:30	
Th	July 28	Men's Gro	up 8	

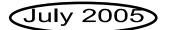
Remember - End-of-Summer All-Church Retreat August 19 - 21, Cardigan Lodge (see separate insert page)

Remember - Bean Supper September 10 and Water Service/Ingathering September 11 (bring water from someplace you spent part of your summer)

News Around the UUA

Join Unitarian Universalist Association President Rev. William Sinkford on a cyber march against global warming, read about UU participation inn the recent Boston Gay Pride celebration, find out about General Assembly (GA) in Dallas (maybe you'll be inspired to attend GA 2006 in St. Louis). Info on these activities and many more is available at www.uua.org.

Did you miss the Ballou Channing District Annual Meeting? Read the Rev. Alice Blair Wesley's keynote address on the importance of covenants at http://bcdsite.home.comcast.net/readings/2005springKeynote.html.



"Streetscapes" is Coming

About five years ago, the church Board was contacted by the state via town planners, advising us that part of a major, state-wide

street enhancement project would be coming to Sharon and would create changes that would have a big impact on the front of our property.



At the time, the Board appointed Phil Barske to attend meetings and

bring back information. What we discovered was that the main change involving the church is that a state law went into effect after our driveway was designed; the law prohibits driveway exits within a certain number of feet of an intersection. What they proposed, to bring us into compliance, was to block off the arc of the driveway closest to Depot Street and instead widen the side that comes into the parking lot.

It also means that the peach trees in front of the building will be taken down. This is not a problem, because they are so old, stressed and diseased that Building &Grounds (B&G) had planned to take them down anyway; they've just been waiting for this project to make changes all at once.

Five years ago, the Board and Phil also created several informational meetings to explain proposed changes to church members and receive feedback and ideas from the congregation. Plans were displayed for several months on Sundays and notices were put in the newsletter and orders of service. Jack Armstrong has since replaced Phil as liaison between the Board of Trustees and town and state project planners.

At long last the project is underway in Sharon, although no one can tell us for certain when the work crews will arrive to begin making changes to our property; it may be this summer or it may be later.

The Board has been in conversation with B&G all along and is now also including the Accessibility Committee in discussions and decision making. The Board will be signing off on final work orders with the town and state by the end of June. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Jack Armstrong or Valerie White.

Early Summer Services

There will be vespers services at 7:30pm on Wednesdays June 22, June 29 and July 6.

Vespers in our congregation is a simple service with words, music, meditation, candles and joys and concerns. Come to the Meetinghouse to unwind in the cool of the day, see friends and fill up your soul; live music will be provided each week by Glenn Rivard, Steve Tapper or Jennifer Spencer.

Karl Arruda will lead a poetry service Bring a poem to share and stay for fellowship after the service. (At deadline, we're still searching for a musician for this service.)

There is no child care for summer services, but quiet activities for children will be available.

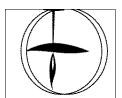


HOLD ACH

DEAN SUPPER SEPT. 10 WATER SERVICE SEPT. 11

FELLOWSHIP AND MORE - IT'S SUMMERTIME -

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OF SHARON
4 NORTH MAIN STREET
SHARON, MA 02067

SUMMER SERVICES - JOIN US!

Vespers

Wednesday evening services will be held June 22, June 29 and July 6 at 7:30pm.

July 10 10:15am

Please join us on the second Sunday in July and bring your favorite poem or short reading to share. Or, just come to listen. The service will be intergenerational

After the service, we will meet for coffee, tea, snacks and conversation. If you can, bring something sweet or savory to share. Karl Arruda, worship leader



July 2005)

MELISSA LEONARD, PH.D. ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF EQUAL MARRIAGE IN MASSACHUSETTS 6.5.2005



The Welcoming Committee asked me to speak for a few minutes on the anniversary of the institution of equal marriage in Massachusetts. They generously instituted no guidelines and so, left to my own devices, I have decided to begin with one of my favorite Irish jokes. It goes like this: A woman goes into a bar and has a seat. And old Pat, at the other end of the bar in his usual seat with the usual glint in his eye says to the bartender, "Michael, I'd like to buy the lass a drink." And Michael says, "A word of advice Pat, save your money, she's a lesbian." And Pat retorts, "Michael, I'm surprised at you. In this day and age to talk to me of discriminating. I want to buy the lass a drink, and By God I'll do it!" And Michael's surprise is exceeded only by the degree to which he is impressed and he says, "Pat I had you all wrong; I sincerely apologize." And so Michael gives the woman her drink, and she toasts Pat. A few minutes later, Pat comes down the bar, sidles up next to her and purrs in his brogue "So dear, how are things in Lesbia?"

I love this joke for a number of reasons. First of all, *The New York Times* said, a week or so ago, that the joke as a form is dead and I don't believe that that is true. But more to the point, not only is this is a rare example of a respectful gay joke, but it operates by teetering simultaneously on the edges of visibility and invisibility, and acceptance and discrimination. Michael's reaction is one of surprise at Pat's apparent acceptance of the lesbian in the bar. He expects Pat to be homophobic. Pat's response, on the other hand, points out that while it used to be acceptable to discriminate on the basis of many differences, in this case, country of origin (and from which we can extrapolate other differences like race), it no longer is. But in spite of seismic shifts and advances for lesbian and gay people in our society and indeed in the world, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is unfortunately, in many places and instances, alive and well. As a result of simultaneously attacks on and advances for our community, I find myself alternating, sometimes almost daily, between despair and hope. Here are some random examples of recent events which precipitate my ongoing psychic shift:

Despair—Virtually every state that had an anti-equal marriage, or even a civil union, amendment on its ballot in the last election believed the unbelievably malicious and mendacious propaganda put forth by the radical right wing and passed its amendment.

Hope—We live in the great Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where one of the wealths, or advantages, currently common to all residents is legal marriage and the over 1,000 rights which accompany it, and perhaps the states of New York and California are not far behind us.

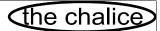
Despair—Fanatics and bigots will try to influence the Massachusetts State Legislature during the Constitutional Convention, ironically short-handed to the ConCon (it is so negative that it is going to be held at all that you have to say it twice!) to put equal marriage, a civil rights issue, on the ballot in Massachusetts in 2006.

Hope—After fifteen and a half years, two children, one dog and three real estate purchases together, my partner and I will tie the knot this August!

Despair—Microsoft, one of the richest companies in the world, gave in to homophobia and bigotry when it abandoned support of Washington state's partner benefit bill.



July 2005)



Hope—The CEO of Microsoft quickly came to his senses when he responded to the outcry against his company and changed its position back to one of support for the third year in a row.

Despair—The Secretary of Education, a single parent, pulled the plug on an episode of Little Buster the Bunny when he went to check out the lives of well-behaved, bike-riding, cheese-fetching children in Vermont who happened to have two mothers.

Hope—For Mother's Day, our three and a half year old brought home from her nursery, two stylish sunhats, made from industrial coffee filters, paint and green electrical tape.

Hope—At the radical rights so-called Justice Sunday, William Donoghue, Head of the Catholic League, began his talk by saying that it was going to be a day of tolerance and acceptance.

Despair—Seconds later, Donohue's speech completely degenerated into Injustice Sunday when he ranted and raved against the equal marriage movement in the most disgusting and violent invective.

Hope—In Israel, leaders of all the major religions in the Middle East came together for the first time. Christians, Muslims and Jews sat down together.

Despair—This unprecedented event occurred not for any discussion of peace in the Middle East, but to discuss their common hate for gay men and lesbians and to protest and try to prevent a Gay Pride parade this summer in Jerusalem.

Despair—At a Driving Range in another town the other night, I was consistently distracted, by a teenage girl who told her date, "You're so gay" every time he missed the ball.

Hope—I'm so gay and I was driving quite nicely, thank you.

Hope—Another teenage girl, a Junior at Sharon High, told me about the moment of silence at the High School for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered people who have experienced violence and discrimination and how a friend of hers was concerned she might be mocked for participating. When I asked if that happened, the student said, "No, Sharon is an ideal community, that would never happen here." That may be the kids, but,

Despair—At one of my team's softball games last year, three women who happened to be on my team commented incessantly on the appearance of a player on another team, a woman who, shall we say, eshewed our societally mandated conception of female beauty. These three women rapidly became obsessed with this woman's appearance, and the ringleader of the three finally told the others in a knowing and conspiratorial tone, "Well, I've seen them before, but I've never seen one who was that far gone."

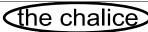
Hope—The ringleader is off the team due to knee surgery and I've recruited two other lesbians to be on the team, and we are going to have a very good time!

So to return to Old Pat's question, "How are things in Lesbia?" Things are complicated and there are moments of great stress, but also moments of great joy. And two of the joys for which I am grateful are our state's leading role in the fight for equal marriage in our nation and for our church, an oasis of good will, compassion, political action and, perhaps most importantly these days, calm. What a joy it is to be here celebrating this monumental anniversary with the rainbow flag proudly displayed on the front of our church. Would that the outer world functioned more like we do here.



July 2005

Unitarian Church of Sharon



End of Summer Church Retreat at Cardigan Lodge

An AMC Lodge in Alexandria, NH

for singles, families, extended families, friends

August 19th, 20th & 21st

Housing in Bunk Rooms, Platform Tents or Camping

What we'll do then: Hang out, visit waterfalls & swim, talk, read, blow bubbles, eat ice cream, play games, hike Mt. Cardigan. Meals are available in the Dining Hall (see fees below). Sunday morning there will be outdoor worship for all ages.

This is a great opportunity to get away and get to know other church members and friends in a relaxed setting.

What you need to do now: Call the AMC reservations office at 603-466-2727. Also, call the church office 781–784–3652 and have your name put on the Summer Retreat list. Cost per night (NOTE: We're being offered AMC member rates):

. 5	2	Adult	Child*
Full Se	rvice options (bed + meals)		
•	Shared room in Lodge	\$51	\$32
•	Private room in Lodge (double occupancy)	\$59	\$32
•	Private room in Lodge (single occupancy)	\$67	
Campi	ng/Platform Tents (no meals)		
•	Platform Tent (2 cots)	\$34	\$34
•	Individual Campsite (up to 2 tents)	\$17 per night	
Meals (fo	r Camping/Platform Tents users)		
Br	Breakfast or Trail Lunch		\$4.50
Di	nner	\$14.50	\$8
Ca	Camper's Special (all 3 meals)		\$15

*Child rate is for 15 years old or under

