

Sunday Program and Service Leader Schedule

4 January

10:40—Program: **John Studstill**, “Our Fellowship”

Service Leader—**Pat Hart** Opener—**Janet & Norm Horofker** Closer—**Chris Nix**

Greeters—**Tanya Davis & Mark Berger**

11 January

9:15—Adult Religious Education: Building Your Own Theology

10:40—Program: **Bill Edwards**, “Worship as a Placebo”

Service Leader—**Paul Lee** Opener—**Chris Nix** Closer—**Paul Lee**

Greeters—**Mona Crawford & Don Nahley**

18 January

9:15—Adult Religious Education: Building Your Own Theology

10:40—Program: **Ken Crook**, “Remembrance”

Service Leader—**Barry White** Opener—**Paul Lee** Closer—**Barry White**

Greeters—**Marge Hall & Huguette May**

25 January

9:15—Adult Religious Education: Building Your Own Theology

10:40—Program: **Barry Whittemore**, “A Traveler’s Field Guide to Unitarians and Universalists”

Service Leader—**Norm Horofker** Opener—**Barry White** Closer—**Rick Spradlin**

Greeters—**Shirley Gray & Barry White**

Pledging for 2009

The script that service leaders use for Sunday services includes the following statement: “Our offering reminds us that we are a free church, supported by you. Our giving is a voluntary act of commitment to this place and to liberal religion.” In the coming weeks you will be asked to make a commitment to this place in the form of a pledge of monetary support for the coming year. Even though we use the term a “free church”, we all know that funds are needed to pay for program support, utilities, supplies, maintenance, and the list goes on. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Columbus is a special place. There is nothing else like it in the Columbus area. Your support in the form of a monetary pledge will help the Fellowship to grow and to better meet the needs of the Columbus area. The finance committee is thanking you in advance for your generous support.

January Birthdays

1 January	Brenda Stevens
8 January	Tanya Davis
14 January	P. D. Lal
16 January	Pat Hart



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Sanjay Lal By Bill Edwards

Sanjay Lal has accepted a position to teach philosophy at Minnesota State College at Moorhead beginning in January. This is a long sought and important development in Sanjay's academic career. We celebrate his many achievements even as we feel a loss of having him so far away. Sanjay and Bhawna will depart for Minnesota after Christmas.

Sanjay Lal first visited our fellowship in April 1991. At the time, we were meeting in the lobby of Dr. Ben Pike's office at St. Francis Medical Park. In January 1992 Sanjay enrolled in a public speaking class I was teaching at Columbus State (then called Columbus College). In one of his speeches he expressed some very clear and thoughtful liberal religious views. Later, while we talked about his speech, I invited him to visit the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. He started attending, and later his father, P.D., became active with us. His mother, Nikki, and his sister, Prita, when she was in high school, have been part of our community.

Soon after he became a member, he asked me to be the faculty sponsor for the Unitarian Universalists Student Union. Several student members attended our Fellowship for a while and a few joined. For about three years he organized debates, speeches, and forums. He persuaded speakers with national reputations to speak at Columbus State.

Columbus College did not, and still doesn't, offer a major program of study in philosophy. That was clearly what Sanjay wished to study. He majored in communication. His minor was philosophy. He was encouraged by a long time philosophy professor, Dr. John Thomas. After serving as a youth director for UU students at the University of Georgia, Sanjay moved to Atlanta where he earned a M.A. in Philosophy, and then on to Knoxville where he earned his Ph.D. At University of Tennessee, he wrote an outstanding dissertation using the life and philosophy of Gandhi.

Sanjay and I have had many discussions over the years. The only time I will claim that I ever pressured him to do something was when he told me about his proposed dissertation topic. I insisted that he should not write a dissertation on Gandhi without spending some time in India, talking with Indians who were studying Gandhi. In 2004 he spent several months in India traveling to significant sites and studying. His family in India also introduced him to a young lady named Bhawna Sinha. Sanjay emailed me shortly after meeting her. It was very clear that he was smitten with her. Our anxiety was, of course about how she felt about him. There were hopeful signs. And then, there was the question of how the families evaluated the prospects. A correspondence began between Sanjay and Bhawna. In 2006, Sanjay returned to India to marry Bhawna in a beautiful ceremony in Punta, a city on the Ganges which was important in the lives of both the Buddha and Gandhi.

Even while Sanjay lived in Athens, Atlanta, and Knoxville, he remained a part of the Columbus Fellowship. After receiving his Ph.D. he returned to Columbus and once again became a leader in our fellowship. He is currently our Vice President of Programs. As he searched for a tenure-track position, Sanjay held adjunct positions at Clayton State University, Columbus State University, and Chattahoochee State College, usually teaching five to six classes and traveling hundreds of miles per week. No one should doubt Sanjay's capacity to work hard.

Sanjay Lal and his family will continue to be important to the Unitarian Universalists Fellowship of Columbus.

Joys and Concerns

The **youth** are selling wrist bands for five dollars each. The proceeds from the sale will go toward the purchasing of shoes, socks, and gloves for Afghanistan children. Contact one of the youth or **Rick Spradlin** to purchase a wrist band.

Mary Schley is recovering from surgery, remember her in your thoughts and prayers throughout the week.

Laura Oswald continues to have health issues and can no longer attend church services. Remember her and her family during your devotional and meditation time.

Norm Horofker and the Social Action Committee purchased clothing and toys for a single parent family. The Social Action Committee delivered the gifts during the Christmas holidays. The circumstances of the family were made known to the Social Action Committee by the Open Door Community Center. The fellowship has partnered with the Open Door Community Center to provide help and assistance where needed. This initiative is funded by the Fellowship by the Generous Congregation Fund. The Social Action Committee would like to thank the Fellowship for their generous giving.

Ernestine Mathis has continuing health challenges. The Fellowship is requested to remember her throughout the week as you engage in uplifting various members of the Fellowship in your thoughts and prayers.

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Barry White is facilitating an **adult religious education program** beginning on **11 January starting at 9:15 am**. Barry will be conducting seminars on “Building Your Own Theology.” Barry has ordered six of the guidebooks, “Building Your Own Theology”, that will be used as textbooks for this ten weeks of workshops. It is not necessary for you to purchase the text in order to participate. The author of the book states that “We seem to be predominantly a movement of ‘come-outers,’ people who have left some other faith and are now ‘come-inners,’ people who have chosen to cast their lot with Unitarian Universalism.” The author states that this workshop series enables people to build a “new theology on the residue of the old.” This Adult Religious Education event is of interest to everyone, those just recently finding UU and those whose discovery happened years ago. The workshop promises to be stimulating and thought provoking.

Dinner Meeting at the Fellowship Saturday January 24

Please mark your calendars to attend a dinner meeting at the Fellowship on Saturday evening January 24. This dinner meeting will provide a relaxed and sociable environment while providing direction for the Board of the Fellowship for our medium to long term future. At two earlier dinners last year we discussed a number of opportunities and settled on projects related to welcoming visitors and to planning for improving our buildings and worship space. We have made good progress on both objectives and we will be reporting this at the meeting. Everyone who attended the earlier meetings gave positive feedback and recommended that we continue the process... so here is your chance to be a part of our becoming...

We will have a special guest for the dinner: Rev. Barry Whittemore. Barry is the interim minister for the UU Church in Birmingham AL and he has a special interest in working with small growing congregations. He is our speaker for the Sunday morning service on January 25, and he volunteered to come early and join us for dinner on January 24.

Watch for further details on meeting time and dinner format. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact any member of the Long Range Planning Committee.

We consider these dinner meetings to be meetings of “The Whole Long Range Planning Committee.” We need input from all of our members and friends as we strive to realize our full potential as Unitarian Universalists in Columbus. We definitely hope to see you there.

Your Long Range Planning Committee: Julie Bouchard, Katy Clyde, Ed Wilson, Rick Spradlin, Norm Horofker

Summary of Last Board Meeting by John Studstill

(Copies of complete minutes of board meetings are provided by Pat Hart--see table)

1. The 2008 UUFC Board met for the final time on December 15. It welcomed the new board of 2009 that will take office in January. The new board is composed of several new officers and a few returning ones. We have three new trustees. John Studstill, as immediate past president, is an ex-officio member of the board.

New Board: President - John Nix`

VP for Program - Bill Edwards

VP for Religious Ed - Rick Spradlin (returning)

Secretary - Mona Crawford

Treasurer - Julie Bouchard (returning)

Trustees: Tanya Davis, Paul Lee, Sidney Wilson

Non-Voting Members of board, our two adjunct ministers: Ed Wilson & Ernestine Mathis

Let me take a line here to thank all members of the 2008 Board for their diligent efforts. Much thanks also goes to all volunteers and adjunct ministers without whom we could not function as a Fellowship! I thank especially Paul Lee for editing the Newsletter each month and Brenda Stevens, whose administrative assistance is beyond calculation.

2. A note of appreciation and *au revoir* (til we meet again), was expressed to Sanjay Lal for his work this year as VP for Program. We wish him and Bhawna well in their new home in Minnesota.

3. The major item of business was the Process of Recertification of our congregation to the UUA (national organization).

Since this involves a major payment of dues to support the activities of the UU Association based on the actual number of active members of our Fellowship, we must each year verify the number of members who are deceased, who may have left town, or otherwise been lost to us. We must also add new members before calculating the total dues owed. This recertification will be completed by February 2009.

4. The finance committee reported on their work to establish a budget for 2009. This will be completed in time for the board meeting in January. The committee will shortly communicate plans to solicit renewal of pledges from all members.

5. The processes for continuing our discussions of development and expansion were brought up. We hope that future growth will allow for hiring a full-time minister and the acquisition or building of a new and enlarged Fellowship Hall/Church, but this is certainly contingent on enlarging our membership. The population growth in the Columbus area should challenge us to achieve, and make possible, these growth goals.

Letter to the Columbus Fellowship by Sanjay Lal

It was April 1991. I first arrived to the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Columbus as a Shaw High School senior exploring various religious paths. I made it a point to find out exactly where the St. Frances medical park was the night before (as the meetings in those days were in Dr. Ben Pike's office). Little did I know at the time that after more than doubling my age, I would continue to feel a deep connection with the spiritual home and identity I was introduced to on that Spring day in 91. I have been nurtured in innumerable ways through the years by this Fellowship.

While I've gone away from Columbus for employment and graduate school over the last dozen plus years, I've never stopped feeling connected with my first spiritual home here. Indeed, I've always found my way back. One by one, my entire family (most recently my wife, Bhawna) has developed a connection to this place that cannot be severed by mere physical distance. The kind of friendships that we have found here are amongst the rarest and most valuable people can have—between spiritual supporters.

After completing high school, I spent my undergraduate years at CSU as a member of this Fellowship. It was the encouragement and support that I received here during those years that motivated me to start a UU group on campus. I was able, as a result of that experience, to work as a paid UU campus organizer at the University of Georgia during my first year after receiving the BA degree. I was able to grow as a result of the campus activism that this Fellowship sparked and nurtured in me in ways that go far beyond typical classroom experiences. During my graduate school days at Georgia State and the University of Tennessee, coming back to this Fellowship always renewed my spirits and enabled me to find the strength to reach the degree finish lines. Thanks for your receptiveness in hearing my thesis ideas and for allowing me to develop those ideas as a part of our Sunday programs.

When Bhawna first arrived to this country, I will never forget the warmth and acceptance with which you welcomed her to this family. The wedding reception planned and put on by members of this Fellowship will always remain as one of our most memorable nights. Connecting with our group has made her acclimation in American society all the more easier and successful. Thank you for being there for both of us.

Looking back over the years, my personal milestones celebrated at 1442 Double Churches Road have included my 20th birthday, my graduation from CSU, my marriage to Bhawna, and most recently, Bhawna and I reaching this next stage of our lives. I know that we will celebrate and Fellowship again and often. It is thoughts of this place that will keep us going in the cold, far away place we are headed to. Please keep the coffee hot for our return visits and continue to take good care of our mom and dad!

Love Sanjay and Bhawna

UU History Minute

Dr. A. Powell Davies was a greater minister, speaker, and leader of Unitarianism. He helped to spur growth in the denomination in the 1950's. He began his career as a Unitarian minister on 1933 in Summit, New Jersey. He was previously a Methodist minister. Before the union of Unitarianism and Universalism, he helped to shape the Unitarian faith as we know it today.: "... it simply is not true that one can believe anything and be a Unitarian. This is not what creedlessness means. One cannot be racist and a Unitarian; be a Nazi and a Unitarian; be a polygamist and a Unitarian; a bigot and a Unitarian. In our zeal for growth, we must not sacrifice the character of our movement as a rational, idealistic, ethical religion. Everybody is not, and cannot be a Unitarian regardless of their unethical behavior or prejudicial beliefs."

Dr. Davies was the minister of All Souls Church in Washington, D. C. from 1944 until his death in 1957. During his tenure at All Souls Church he was engaged in social and political activism. He preached against bigotry of all kinds, he headed campaigns in post-war Washington to feed the starving Europeans and to deal with Washington slums.

He was eulogized in the Washington Post as "...militantly in the forefront at every assault upon intolerance and racial discrimination and injustice...."

Performers in “A Christmas Carol”



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