

U-FIRST

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

66 Elm St. — P.O. Box 637, Gardner, Massachusetts 01440
(978) 632-0222 — www.uusg.net

April 2008

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Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday Services at 10:00 a.m.

April 6—These Are My People—Rev. John Pastor

We are all a part of the stories of local and global suffering, triumphs of the spirit, and challenges of the heart. In all the many ways that we are in relationship with each other we are together as a people. "These are my people" is a mantra of interconnectedness, understanding and compassion.

April 13—Guest Preacher—Rev. Susan Suchocki Brown

April 20—Environmental Justice—Sue Blain

The rich get rich and the poor get . . . droughts, floods, and hazardous waste dumps. What is environmental justice? How is it related to economic justice, racial justice, social justice? What can we do to make a difference?

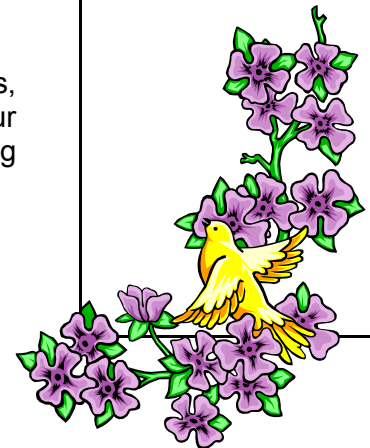
April 27—Canvass Sunday—Rev. John and Finance Committee

Our church is fully self-funding which means we turn to our members, investments and rental income for a substantial amount of our income. Our Canvass begins this Sunday and will determine the budget for the coming church year.

May 4—Universal Dances for Peace—Amina Silk and Arif Leininger

We're going to dance! Worship will be in the fellowship hall. Children are invited to participate.

*Everyone is invited to join us for coffee and conversation
in the fellowship hall downstairs following worship.*



Vision Board & Potluck Social

On April 19 Amina and Arif are planning to have a vision board afternoon followed by a potluck. Bring in your old magazines, scissors, glue sticks, poster board, markers, crayons, colored tissue paper, yarn, etc. Let your creative ideas flow. If you have extra bring it along. If you do not have this stuff come along anyway, there will be materials provided. No experience required!!

A vision board is a collage. A vision board is intended to be a powerful affirmation of what you would like to attract into your life. Whether in the realm of spirituality, health, family, work, life purpose or material things. The list is endless. Whatever you are inspired to create, whatever your imagination comes up with. It is your creation. Hang it where it can be seen as a reminder of your dreams and desires, it is likely that opportunities will arise to help you fulfill your goals.

It is fun to be working on our own vision together along with everyone else.

Here is the plan—
Saturday April 19

Vision Boarding
2-5pm

Potluck 5pm



Minister: Rev. John Pastor — Office Hours: Thurs. 1-5pm, Sat. 10-11am
For pastoral emergencies — 508-277-6113

Emeritus Minister: Rev. Neil Bakker

U-First Editor: Julie Pera — uusg.newsletter@gmail.com

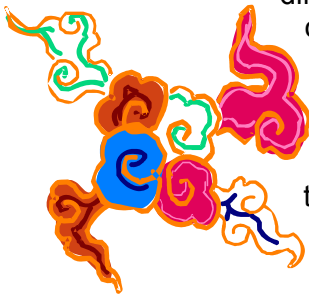
Church Office: Catherine Azora-Minda, Secretary — 978-632-0222

Pastoring.....

Imagination is a marvelous gift.

I've discovered that I am using a lot of imagination in my ministry with you. There is such joy to be found in the freedom of possibility in imagining; everything becomes possible in the imaginary world. What a lift to the spirit!

I also find that imagination is such a wonderfully positive expression of the divine within all of us. Without imagination it would be difficult to be reflective. Think of it, because of the gift of imagination, you can move into the possibilities for the future, have enough resources to build great things, or see beyond current limitations.



Without imagination human love would not be possible. Love is the ability to put yourself in another's shoes and to look at the world through their eyes. Imagination is the creative force that carries one spirit into the spirit of another to achieve a fuller understanding of who they really are.

The human spirit could never take flight into dreams, hopes, or aspirations if there were no wings of imagination in life. There could be no hope of anything beyond here and now.

Theologian Howard Thurman, writes, "The divine spirit in the human spirit is symbolized by imagination, without which there could be no sense of repentance and contrition, no tenderness, no sympathy, no love and no hope."

Just imagine.

With love,



A LITTLE CHURCH HUMOR...

A boy was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked.

"Why, God tells me."

"Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"

Welcome!!!



Please make an effort to formally welcome those friends among us who have chosen to become members of the Unitarian Universalist Society during the recent New Member Sundays:

Joined on March 9th:

- ◆ Bo Azora-Minda
- ◆ Theresa Dattolo
- ◆ Donald Dattolo
- ◆ Amina Silk
- ◆ Arif Leininger
- ◆ Jennifer Jones
- ◆ Christopher Jones
- ◆ Cheryl Menard
- ◆ Chip Steward

- ◆ Shauna Pratt
- ◆ Mike Vecchi
- ◆ Nina Vecchi
- ◆ John Stanley Zylinski
- ◆ Robert C.W. Hall, Jr.
- ◆ John G. Pastor, Jr.

Joined on March 16th:

- ◆ Leslie Fabian
- ◆ Denise Fournier



Help Needed

Lunenburg—Family with triplet girls still in need of help. Babies have been home now over 5 weeks and are doing well! Family also includes two-year boy. On-going help is always needed, when help is not available Mom gets exhausted very quickly. Good payment on a weekly basis.

Fitchburg—Elderly couple living near Park Hill Plaza need once or twice a week help. Mornings 8 or 9am to 10 or 11am on Tuesday, Wednesday and/or Thursday. Schedule is flexible, may be good "Mother's Hours". Couple is very able physically to do many things. Pay is \$10 an hour paid cash that day.

Positons available ASAP. Call Liz 978-297-3042 or liznett@comcast.net if you have questions or are interested.

UUSG April 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30 Worship, 10am	31 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm 	April 1 TOPS, 9am	2 MOMS Club, 9:30am Meditation Group, 6pm Finance Comm, 7:30pm	3 NO MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS	4 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	5 Peace Sanctuary & Minister's Office Hours, 10-11am AA, 12-1pm <i>CBD Spring Conference</i>
6 Worship, 10am Congregational Forum, following	7 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	8 TOPS, 9am	9 Meditation Group, 6pm	10 Minister's Office Hours, 1-5pm Dances of Universal Peace, 7pm	11 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	12 Publicity Comm, 10am Peace Sanctuary & Minister's Office Hours, 10-11am AA, 12-1pm
13 Worship, 10am Exec Comm., 11:45am <u>Newsletter Deadline</u>	14 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	15 TOPS, 9am	16 MOMS Club, 9:00am Meditation Group, 6pm	17 Minister's Office Hours, 1-5pm	18 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	19 Peace Sanctuary & Minister's Off. Hrs, 10-11 AA, 12-1pm Vision Boarding & Potluck, 2pm
20 Worship, 10am RE Comm., 11:30am	21 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	22 TOPS, 9am	23 Meditation Group, 6pm	24 Minister's Office Hours, 1-5pm Worship Committee, 7:30pm	25 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	26 Peace Sanctuary & Minister's Office Hours, 10-11am AA, 12-1pm
27 Worship, 10am	28 Yoga, 6:30-8:30pm	29 TOPS, 9am	30  Meditation Group, 6pm	May 1 Minister's Office Hours, 1-5pm	2 Al-Anon, 10:30am AA, 5-8pm	3 Peace Sanctuary & Minister's Office Hours, 10-11am AA, 12-1pm

Bold: UUSG events at UUSG

Plain Text: Rental Groups at UUSG

Italics: Community Events

Boldface Italics: District & UUA events

Just Between UUs

Submitted by Catherine Azora-Minda

Bob Gifford

Bob Gifford, our fearless Board president, can oftentimes be found with his shirtsleeves rolled up, elbow deep in soapy water, cleaning up after coffee hour. In a world of all possibilities, one of the people he would most like to meet is the late Harpo Marx. Bob read his autobiography and found him to be a very engaging and loving humanitarian. Bob's traveled to Bali, Indonesia, and when he leaves this mortal coil he would like his tombstone to read "Glad that's over!"

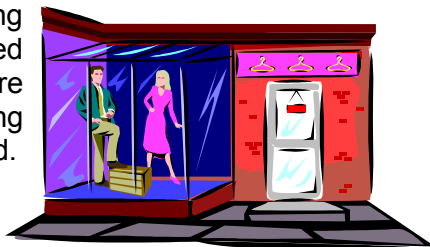
After living 28 years in Boston, Bob decided to search for a more affordable place to live and grow a business. That search led him to Gardner which at first glance struck him as being "right out of a movie set – main street pool hall – Blue Moon Diner." Indeed, a movie was actually



shot here in Gardner. He and his wife, Melody Fortier, looked forward to owning their own place and establishing their individual businesses, the Tangerine Boutique for Melody and Beacon Multimedia Services for Bob.

They had been here for two months and business at Melody's store was doing well; then 9-11 happened. No one came into the store for 30 days and the atmosphere in town was one of fearfulness. When people started coming around again, Bob found himself still feeling isolated from them as his thoughts about the war seemed to be different than theirs. He wasn't hearing any liberal voices. Also, since they lived in the same building downtown that housed their businesses, there was no sense of being part of a neighborhood.

Bob's next search was for community, other like-minded folks. He had a good feeling about the Unitarian church because of a positive interaction with the UU church in Rockland, Maine, where he was born and grew up. After his father's death, even though the family had no affiliation with the church, they reached out to him and his family and were very helpful during that difficult time. After checking



things out on the UUSG website, he decided to try attending a service here. Although he hadn't been to any church in a long time, it felt okay. He thinks that UUism is difficult to understand and UUSG felt like a safe place to learn about it. It felt safe enough that he kept coming back.

With two one-year terms on the Board behind him, Bob is now in the first year of an official three-year term. Currently President of the Board, he has been very active since the beginning. He coordinated the use of our building space for two years and created the current building policies. Bob also originated the idea of the congregational forum



as an informal way for all of us to talk about issues of concern regarding how things happen at UUSG. He believes it's "an easy way for ideas to come out – a great place to build community." Bob spent a lot of time working on our website as it's an important way to get us out into the community.



Bob loves the seasonal changes in Massachusetts, especially the spring and the foliage in the fall. He finds the five months of winter to be increasingly difficult and spends the spring in hand-me-down waders from the previous building owner, clearing out the drain in his backyard. When he was growing up, he wanted to be a musician or an actor and actually did work as a musician for about 12 years. He said that "it was a wonderful time and it was sad when it ended and it ended too soon."



The future of our church looks very hopeful to Bob. He says we "overcame the inertia of just being in the church" when we participated in Gardner Days. The events happening here now, such as the meditation group and the Dances of Universal Peace, are inviting to the greater community and we become associated with these events in a positive way. He's guaranteed to find a smile at the sight of someone being kind unexpectedly and is as likely to be modeling that behavior as witnessing it. We are privileged to have Bob as an active leader and member of this church.

Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

P.O. Box 637

Gardner, MA 01440

TO:

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, or if your address has changed, please send a note to the church, "Attention: U-First Editor."

April 08

Your Executive Committee

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding church policies or programs, please feel free to speak with any of the church trustees.

Trustees for Church Year 2007-08

Al Ericsson

David Fabian

Nancy Fiske

Melody Fortier

Bob Gifford (Chair)

Vicki Heidorn (Clerk)

Marion Lyon

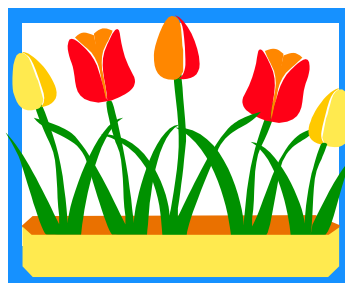
Save the Date!

April 5—Clara Barton District Spring Conference & Annual Meeting; Keynote Speaker: Jim Scott "Making Art of Our Vision." Childcare available if registration received by March 24. For more details and registration forms, visit www.cbd.uua.org

April 6—Congregational Forum following worship

April 10—Dances of Universal Peace, 7pm

April 19—Vision Boarding & Potluck, 2pm



Newsletter Contributions

The deadline for newsletter contributions is usually the second Sunday of the month. Send your contribution via e-mail to uusg.newsletter@gmail.com; or on diskette, typed or *neatly* handwritten in the newsletter "in-box" located on the bulletin board downstairs. No phone submissions, please. Contributions may be edited for length or content at the discretion of the editors.

The deadline for the May newsletter is April 13th.