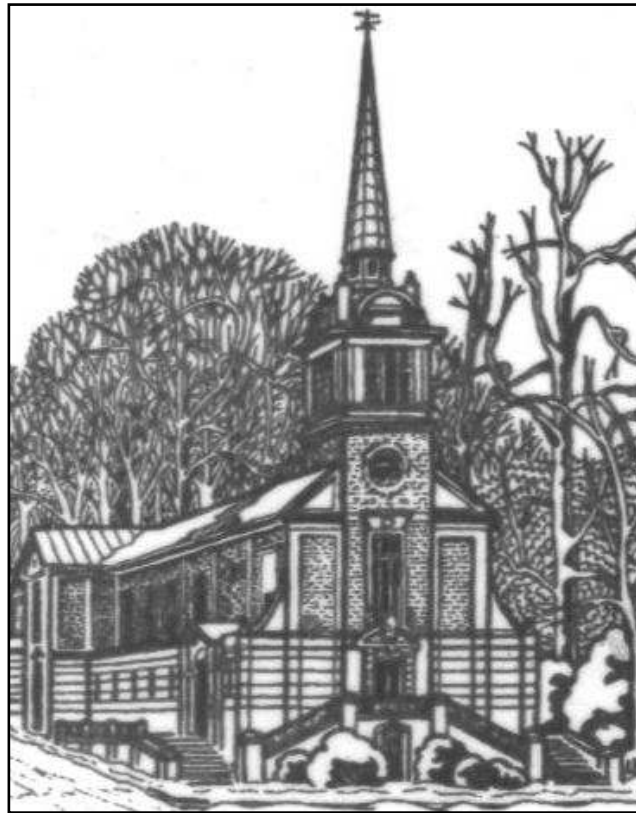




The CommUunicator
The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Germantown
July/August 2011, Volume 48, No.11



Dear Friends,

I hope this summer brings relaxation and rejuvenation.



As you may already know Jude Henzy, our Director of Lifespan Faith Development for six years, will not continue in her position. I want to again thank her for all the ways she helped our community with her skills and talents over the last years. From religious education for children and youth to pastoral care to worship leadership, Jude made many tremendous contributions to our community. We are grateful to her and wish her many blessings on the next stage of her journey.

This is one of my favorite parts of the church year, because I am about to be with thousands of Unitarian Universalists from around the world at our 2011 General Assembly. Approximately a dozen of us USG folks will be together in Charlotte, NC, for worship, sharing of best practices, and spiritual joy! Each year as the end of June grows near, I can't believe how blessed I am to get to attend this conference every year. In 2012 we will hold a very special public witness General Assembly in Phoenix, AZ. Please consider making the journey to Phoenix 2012.

In regards to the upcoming church year: this is the best year ever for you to consider joining a small group ministry, and to pay special attention to our monthly spiritual theme curriculum and spiritual practices. Starting in October we will be in a collaborative project with sister UU congregations in Philadelphia and the Church of the Larger Fellowship. Each month there will be video discussions, presentations and worship regarding the monthly theme on a national website. This is an innovative experiment in how we can meet our spiritual needs and aspirations. Here at USG we will have 12 small group ministries with 8-12 participants in each group. PLEASE consider joining a group this year!

Together I KNOW we will keep growing in spirit and bringing blessings to the world.

Love, **Kent**

July's Worship and Small Group Ministry theme is My Musica Sacrae (Sacred Music).



August's Worship and Small Group Ministry theme is Connectedness/Sharing.



A link to the Small Group Ministry materials for contemplation can be found on the usgu.org home page in the Theme of the Month box.

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Sunday services in July and August begin at 10:30 am
Childcare is available 8:45 am to 12 pm

July 3 Phoenix Here We Come, Reverend Kent Matthies

Thousands of Unitarian Universalists met last week in Charlotte, North Carolina for our 2011 General Assembly (GA). For GA in June 2012, we are going to Phoenix, Arizona, for an historically unique gathering focused on increasing all of our congregations capacity for working with community partners on witness and advocacy. We are picking Arizona for this effort because of unjust immigration laws. However we know there is more than enough injustice here at home in Pennsylvania. How does this connect with the 4th of July?

July 10 Embracing Darwin – A New Spiritual Perspective, Alan Windle

The Darwinian understanding of the natural world is often presented as fundamentally materialist and therefore incompatible with religious faith, contemplation, and prayer. But it need not be so. Framed by the writings of John Haught and Michael Dowd, I will examine how a full and clear acceptance of mainstream evolutionary thought can enhance rather than hinder spiritual life. Alan has been at USG since 2000. He started the Green Sanctuary Committee, has been a Board member, is involved in Small Group Ministry and teaches Sunday School in the K-1 classroom. He works for Honeywell as a software engineer and has practiced Buddhist meditation daily since 1994.

July 17 Grace, More Amazing Than You Think, Sam Gugino

The great theologian, Bono of the band U2, once said "I am a believer in grace over karma." Unlike karma, the universal balance of good and evil, grace is getting more than we deserve, leading us in a path of more hope, more trust, more love. And it is not there just for the special, the holy or the religious. It is there for all of us. Sam has been a member of USG since 2002. He has been a Lingelbach tutor and served two terms on the Nominating Committee, one as chair. He is most proud of his three-year stint as Membership Chair and three years on the Board of Trustees, the last two as president. He is currently serving as chair of the Stewardship Committee. Sam is a food and wine writer and the author of four cookbooks.

July 24 The New Cosmology: Poems, Peter Walsh

In the process of addressing questions concerning the origin and fate of the universe and our place in it, Peter has focused on the physics and mathematics of quantum mechanics (governing events at a subatomic level) and relativity theory (governing events on a cosmic level), and the attempts made, using string theory, to resolve inconsistencies between them. His failure to understand the mathematics has led him to explore poetry as a means of addressing some of these existential questions. He will read a series of poems and discuss some of the mysteries confronted by modern cosmologists and religious thinkers. Peter has been a member USG since 1973, when he and his family moved to Philadelphia from England. He works at Temple University School of Medicine as a physician and scientist. He has been writing poetry for more than thirty years and has shared it with members of USG in fourteen previous services.

July 31 It's Not Whether, It's How, Sarah Lenzi

In the season of backyard games of horseshoes and croquet, it's important to remember that it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game. This sermon will explore the difference between "games" and "competitions" and will discuss how we keep sight of our first principle even as we become impassioned participants in summer fun. Sarah is a born and raised UU. Having received her MDiv in 2007 she decided to pursue her education further and is working toward her dissertation in the department of religious studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Her work focuses on the development of the Stations of the Cross and its relationship to pilgrimage and liturgy. She hopes to finish next spring, at which point she will complete her ministry requirements and seek ordination.

August 7 What We Need Is Here, Berdine Whedon

"And we pray not for new earth or heaven but to be quiet in heart and in mind clear" are the words of Wendell Berry in his poem titled, "What We Need is Here" He also wrote "You are the known way leading always to the unknown. And you are the known place to which the unknown is always leading me back." We will use these two poems to explore our relationship to the known and the unknown as well as what we truly need. Berdine has just completed a term as president of USG's Board of Trustees.



Sunday Services (continued)

August 14 Look to the Horizon, Rebecca Froom

What does it mean to relax? Rebecca will reflect on a passage from the classical Buddhist text "The Way of the Bodhisattva" which invites us to consider the role relaxing plays within our commitments to work for justice and peace. Rebecca Froom grew up in Mt. Airy attending USG and Summit Presbyterian Church. She was involved in youth ministry, and campus ministry, and served for three years as a Director of Religious Education in Tucson, AZ. Rebecca is currently a student at Harvard Divinity School and the intern minister at Arlington Street Church, UU in Boston, MA. She has worked with the interfaith coalitions No More Deaths and the Boston New Sanctuary Movement and is interested in the interconnections between education, worship, and social justice. USG is Rebecca's "sponsoring congregation" in her path towards fellowshiped Unitarian Universalist ministry.

August 21 Homo Espiritu, Rev. Kent Matthies

We humans call ourselves *homo sapien*, which means wise or knowing man. This is good and important. However, there is so much we do not know. It is also true that focusing on our knowledge has not got us out of war, poverty and destroying the planet. Perhaps we should call ourselves *homo espiiritu*, which would refer to mind, intelligence, but also soul and spirit. This could help us prioritize our fullest selves. This could help us connect to our ancestors, and our future through the power of now.

**August 28 Relief for the Addicted Church
Rev. Kent Matthies**

Here we go with another church year. Let us not be weighed down with administrative obligations or guilty feelings of what we "should" be doing for our congregation. Let's continue to align our community so that we call all celebrate life with excitement, listen to our souls, and follow our bliss. If we do this I know with all certainty that we each with grow spiritually, we will become an electrically vibrant congregation and we will bring many blessings to the world.

Over 4000 enthusiastic UUs attended this year's General Assembly in Charlotte, NC from June 22 to 26 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the consolidation of the Universalist Church of America and the American Unitarian Association into the Unitarian Universalist Association. Attendance was above expectations, causing standing room only in many seminars and lectures.

The opening celebration was kicked off by the traditional parade of banners with Ben Smith carrying the USG standard, accompanied by brother Carlton and Rev. Kent Matthies. The Wednesday evening ceremony began a five-day reflection on the path our denomination has traveled since the Unitarians and Universalists first gathered together in Boston in 1960.

But while there was much reminiscing about past glories, there were also many events and programs that looked forward, particularly a stirring two-part lecture by Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich, senior minister at All Souls Unitarian in New York. Guengerich eloquently expounded on a quote from Harvard religion scholar Diana Eck, who said that Unitarian Universalism is "the church of the new millennium." For this to happen, indeed, if Unitarian Universalism is to survive, Guengerich said, we must focus on what brings us together as a religion rather than our need to be spiritually independent. (The UU population in the United States is about what it was 50 years ago, despite a 72 percent increase in the nation's population during that period.)

"Spirituality only nourishes the individual, but it has little effect on those around us," Guengerich said. And while UUs are "dismissive of God and skeptical of religion," 94 percent of Americans express a belief in God. Thus, we need to "redefine God and embrace religion in the new millennium," he said. "To save the world from cynical men who use religion to enslave people." (continued page 8)

News from General Assembly (continued)

Highlights of decisions made at the Plenary Sessions (where UUA business is conducted) included the following:

- ◆ Delegates to General Assembly no longer have to all be at GA in order to participate and vote in the UUA's annual gathering.
- ◆ Actions of Immediate Witness (public statements and calls to action passed at the General Assembly but not considered UUA policy) included:
 - A protest to Rep. Peter King's hearings on Muslim radicalization.
 - Support for Southern California supermarket workers' struggle for decent wages and benefits.
 - Opposition to the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Citizens United v. FEC*. The AIW also urged congregations to sign [The People's Rights Amendment](#) proposed at freespeechforpeople.org and individuals to encourage Congressional representatives to sponsor such a resolution in opposition to the Supreme Court decision.

A call to end U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan failed to gain the required approval of two-thirds of GA delegates.

Sam Gugino

From the Board President

Looking back with gratitude and appreciation as my term as President of the Board of Trustees comes to a close, I am reflecting on the many images of our community that are present in my mind's eye.

I see the faces of fellow Board members around the table in the Sullivan Chapel. People whose dedication, integrity, intelligence, and heart know no bounds: my outgoing cohort Susan Bockius and Rudy Sprinkle and current Board members, Mark Bernstein, Mary Lee Keane, Norman Matlock, Walt Ceglowski, Linda O'Gwynn and Marny Walsh. They have been wonderful to work with. Special thanks also to last year's Board members: Eli Scarce, Edna Jones and Alan Windle.

My images of Kent, our minister, are pleasing and enduring in face to face meetings but probably the most recurring image: his cell phone number showing up on my cell phone display. We certainly had hundreds of calls, collaborating on the work of the Board, responding to snow emergencies, thinking about the vision of our church and how to expand our impact in the world. Working with Kent has been wonderful. We became a team and tried together to do our best for the church, day in and day out.

Looking around our community, I view with pleasure the renovations of the Austin Lodge, the new DRE office, and the beginning reconstruction of the Sullivan Chapel, and recognize the extraordinary amount of hard work and vision that has brought us to this place of expansion and courage to grow. My deepest thanks go to Carolyn Cotton, Howard Silver, and the Master Plan Implementation Committee for moving us forward, pointing us toward the future in our physical space.

If I sit in the sanctuary, I see the Worship Associates guiding our Sunday morning services and am grateful for Linda Smith's Leadership. I see – and hear, of course, - the choir, of which I have been privileged to be a part. (I may be leaving the Board but I am *never* leaving the choir.) So many thanks are due to Mark Daugherty for his contributions to bringing in the holy. I also see Jude Henzy leading the Story for All Ages, and with all of you, I mourn her absence.

My mental pictures include Sam Gugino kick starting the stewardship campaign, Beth Lazer initiating the brand new Ministries and Program Council, seeing the beginning of a food bank thanks to Anais Salles, and witnessing the remarkable Debbie Kish Silver and her thoroughly wonderful management of the service auction, and also Dennis Strain shepherding the new Communications Committee as well as Earth Honoring Traditions.

You know I could go on and on; my gratitude knows no bounds. I have been so privileged to have been able to serve in this role. Please accept my deepest thanks and appreciation to each of you and for all that you do to make USG the beautiful and loving community that it is. With great respect and love,

Berdine Whedon

USG Retreat at Camp Innabah

Over 70 folks attended the All Church Retreat the weekend of June 4 and 5. Most stayed overnight but some came just for the day.

Rev. Kent began Saturday morning with an icebreaker "getting to know you" activity. Then the day was filled with nature walks, swimming, canoeing, a ping pong tournament and the slip 'n' slide which was an unexpected surprise. The kids loved sliding down the big hill and were quickly joined by adults as well.

Workshops included meditation and chanting, yoga, enjoying silence and a River of Life theme that involved imagining and drawing the twists and turns your life has taken. After dinner there was a talent/no talent show with dancing, singing, poetry reading, juggling and storytelling - some very talented and some very FUN. As it got dark, a campfire glowed with guitar and drums and singing and s'mores.

Mark Daugherty and a number of choir members joined the worship service on Sunday morning. The theme was PLAY and was interactive, joyful and nourishing. In the photo above the children create a human glowing chalice.

Most important--everyone agreed--it was a wonderful opportunity to spend time together.

Next year the Retreat will be held on June 2 and 3, so save the date. Remember Camp Innabah is less than an hour's drive from USG. Hope to see you there!!





Thank you for a successful June Workday!

Thirty-three people came! They did great work! We had a very productive work day, accomplishing all that was on the task list and then some. The Sullivan wing is now ready for renovation. It is empty of all but trash that will be in the construction dumpster, saved/salvaged oak from Jude's old office for possible use by the contractor, and a table for people to take things. The storage POD is loaded. RE materials have been sorted and stored and archive books and materials secured.

As "sweat equity" contribution to the Sullivan Wing project, the team completely removed the closet/shelves that used to be the entrance to Jude's old office. And they took down the folding partitions. Critical original hardware has been saved for the renovation.

In the grounds, a crew worked the berm, and also we had a crew clearing the leaves from the pachysandra between the sidewalk and the building - from back to front. We had some success clearing clogged down spouts, and made ready for replacing the outdoor hand rails for the emergency exit stairway from the kitchen.

A cordial, cooperative, supportive effort by all involved!! What a special group of people!

Your Building & Grounds team



Share the Plate for July 17: Ella's Retreat

Ella's Retreat is a non-profit organization that provides temporary lodging and logistical support to families who must travel to and remain in Philadelphia while their children receive proton therapy treatment for cancer at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). The goal is to reduce the mental, physical, and financial burdens that plague families who have children with cancer and to enhance their ability to focus on fighting the disease. USG members Joe and Audrey Walsh will tell us about Ella's Retreat which he and his family have established and named after their daughter.



Share the Plate for August 21: Inn Dwelling Program of St. Vincent's Church in Germantown

Inn Dwelling rehabilitates houses for low income residents in Germantown. In addition, the program provides after school tutoring and job placement for the families it serves. St. Vincent's has an outstanding decades-long history of providing supports to children, the unemployed and low-income families in central Germantown and is an important member along with USG in the Neighborhood Interfaith Movement. Gerry Whelan of USG has nominated this initiative for our support.





Rebuilding Together--The Homeowners Stories

Our USG-First UU team worked on four houses in the 3400 block of North Orianna Street. This block is in a Hispanic neighborhood of two story, two bedroom row houses. Jaime and Ana Vasquez needed a lot of work on their house, particularly, repairing their crumbling basement walls. What a dusty, messy job that was! It took all of all three Saturdays. We ended up applying over twenty bags of cement to the walls! We also repaired a dropped ceiling and replaced missing sheet rock in the dining room, and a bedroom door. Jaime and Ana have lived in their house for eight years. They both work as sextons for their church. They expressed their gratitude for our work and said they felt very respected by our workers.

Mary Daisy Roman lives in her house with two teenage girls and two twenty something boys. She has been in Philadelphia for 3 years. She is studying to be a mental health worker. She was happy we had fixed many things she could not have done herself. She was grateful for the kind, respectful people who had come to help. We replaced her back door and back steps and did a lot of work in her bathroom. In the basement, we fixed up the gerry built doors and walls for the teenagers who live there. (A visit to Mary Daisy after the work days were over found that she and her family had tackled some painting and fix up projects of their own.)

Candelario Pizarro has lived in his house for 30 years. He formerly worked as an engineer. He said it was a marvelous experience to have people helping him now as he has always helped people his entire life and it is good to see the cycle repeating itself. For instance, he went to Oklahoma City after the bombing as a volunteer worker. We replaced a basement window that had been boarded up long ago.

Miguel Gonzalez and Damin Martinez have lived in their house many years. Miguel celebrated his 90th birthday on our last work day. Damin has cancer and heart problems. Miguel had fixed up their house and cared for it beautifully for many years but he couldn't do it anymore. He thanked USG for all our help. We installed a new basement window and fixed a leaky shower faucet.



The Lost Art of Reading: Creating a Spiritual Practice

This summer, I would like to invite you to take a moment for yourself and consider reading as a spiritual practice. I know that many are chained to our desks, staring at computer screens all day long. Some even make a living reading and writing. I am no exception. The art of writing and journaling for pleasure is lost to me; more often than not; I write to eat.



But for me, reading calms the mind. Like meditation it slows my breathing, focuses my attention, and forces me to reach deep. In part it is because I have to make time to read, and in doing so, I take the first steps to take time for myself, and that creates a spiritual practice. I have a reading ritual, from the process of scouting the book either online, at the bookseller, or at the library, to brewing the perfect pot of tea, to positioning myself in my favorite chair, the process is often as engaging as the book itself. By creating a reading ritual, even if the book fails to capture me, I still have the experience of creating a moment for myself.

The books on my shelf have informed my soul as much as my mind, and make me smile. Books transport me, and when the author is engaging, I find myself inspired to seek answers to great questions. As an English teacher turned religious professional, this summer I endeavor for you to remember the joy and also the lesson found in reading.

The series of books below are, in my opinion, well written, engage the reader, and probe us through story to reflect on belief with out expressly being about "God."

Fiction:

Phillip Pullman's ***The Golden Compass***, takes the reader on a journey that is reminiscent of C.S. Lewis' Narnia Chronicles.

Ayn Rand's ***The Fountain Head***, invites the reader to reflect on individualism in the face of socialistic philosophy.

Edith Wharton's ***The Custom of the County***, endeavors the reader to ask the value we place on wealth.

Erick



How and When to Reach USG Staff

Office phone: 215-844-1157 FAX: 215-844-1159

USG website: www.usquu.org

Office Administrators: Gloria Smith & Lida Holota

admin@usquu.org

Office hours: Monday-Friday 9:30am - 3:30pm

Rev. Kent Matthies: kmatthies@usquu.org

Office hours: Tuesday 9:30 - 11:30am & 1:30 - 4:00pm

Wednesday 9:30 - 11:30am

Friday 9:30 - 11:30am & 1:30 - 4:00pm

Erick DuPree, Consulting Director of Religious Education:

Erick@usquu.org

Please submit CommUUnicator articles to
usg.editor@gmail.com by the 15th of the month.

Budget Drive Update

The Stewardship Committee is pleased to announce that as of May 22 the amount pledged for the 2011-12 Budget Drive was **\$323,803!** This is the largest amount ever raised in USG's history. And we expect that number to go up by \$3 thousand or more by the time all financial commitments are in.

If you have not sent in your financial commitment, please do so as soon as possible so that we may finally close the books on this campaign. You can mail the financial commitment form to USG, drop off at the church office or simply email Sam Gugino at sam@samcooks.com. If you have any questions about payment options, please contact pledge secretary Rudy Sprinkle at pledgesec@verizon.net

The Stewardship Committee is deeply grateful for generosity of the congregation and especially the 63 families who gave at the Suggest Share level. We are also appreciative of the work done by the 25 Visiting Stewards whose efforts were instrumental in achieving our goal.

The Stewardship Committee: Sam Gugino (chair), Bill Dowdall, Edna Jones, Trevor Lalish-Menagh, Tom Ott and Paul Teti

What's Happening in Sullivan Chapel?

The renovations of the Sullivan Wing are beginning. On Saturday, June 11 a large group of USG volunteers moved the furniture into a rented POD, began demolition work and sorted through years of accumulated RE detritus. The Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) has approved the final architectural plans. Howard Silver Contracting, Inc. will handle the construction work. The Sullivan Wing is closed until mid-September. A dumpster will join the rented POD in the courtyard. Limited parking will still be available in the courtyard. This is an exciting time in the life of our congregation. When church school resumes in the fall, we will have 3 new classrooms for our youngest children.





Community Food Bank & Equal Dollars Market

First and Third Thursday of each month from 4-7 pm

Our Community Food Bank and Equal Dollars Market launched on June 16th and is scheduled to happen twice a month.

For complete details on how the Food Bank will work, go to:

<http://www.wix.com/vtyaya/usg-communityfood>

Clip those manufacturer's coupons! Drop off \$25 worth of date ready coupons at the Green Sanctuary table on Sundays, or pop into our mailbox in the office. We'll keep track of who is donating coupons for the food bank coupon swap so you'll receive \$50 in Equal Dollars. These can be used at the food bank to stretch your food budget. Or you can bank or donate your Equal Dollars on behalf of our NPINH families. Coupons desired: health & beauty products, pet supplies, kids stuff, and wholesome food products.



USG Victory Gardeners! Your donations of fresh from the garden veggies will be welcome on any Thursday the food bank and market is open. More info on the way and we'd love to have a few volunteers! Contact: Anaiis Salles, greensanctuary@usquu.org, 267-325-6869

sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee

Calling all Cooks to make dinners for NPINH families during the week of July 10th through their stay at the Lutheran Seminary. USG has been asked by NPINH (Northwest Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network) to provide dinner cooks/hosts and overnight hosts. Translation: we need volunteers to cook a meal, serve it and spend the night. You can sign up to do one or all of these tasks on any night July 10 - 16. Sign up with your Small Group Ministry or Church Committee. For more information and to sign up, please contact Carolyn Scott at cwelchscott@gmail.com.





Meet Our New Members

Zachary Washington, a theological student, joined USG in May, 2011. Currently single, he now lives in Fishtown.

Zachary has a bachelor's degree in religion and has just finished a year of study at Lancaster Theological Seminary with coursework related to Gay Theology, Judaism, and Educational Ministries. Now he is studying online as well as on campus at a Chicago-based theological school, in such areas as African Americans and the UUs and Multi-faith Theologies. Regarding his occupation, "first and foremost," Zachary says, "I am an Activist for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender rights. Secondly, I work as a Residential Assistant/Counselor with Bethesda Project, an agency that helps homeless people in Philadelphia."

Zachary's interests include traveling, reading, writing (including blogs), court and crime-investigation programs on TV, and music. Playing in his ear might be Tina Turner, Dionne Warwick, Usher, or Dolly Parton, among others. Asked how he came to Unitarianism and USG, Zachary wrote, "I come from a diverse family and background religiously... Having traveled to various countries and been among people of various and sincere religious traditions, my personal belief system is composed of contributions from various world religions. I love the fact that we can find women and men from these and other traditions in a UU church.

"Of all the area UU churches, I felt that USG would be the best fit for me, especially with its community focus. I have visited many churches in my travels, but never did I feel so welcomed at a church upon first visiting, and like I belong. I am particularly excited to be attending the Unitarian Universalist 50th General Assembly in Charlotte next month...I will also be working at the assembly as a volunteer, thus obtaining free registration. Rev. Kent was kind enough to offer me a reference if I needed it. However, I was able to earn this position from the GA leadership on my own.

"An important belief in my life is that women and men must flesh out their lives by doing things that are meaningful. I have come to believe that success is measured mostly by the meaning in what we do."

Judy Morgan moved to the Philadelphia area only recently but is engineering a swift integration into her Germantown/Mt. Airy community, which has included her joining USG in May, 2011. Moving is not unfamiliar to Judy, as she was part of a military family; she has lived in Japan, Italy, and Germany, as well as New York, Georgia, Indiana, and Illinois, giving her “a sense of the wider world and a respect and appreciation for different cultures.”

With college degrees in psychology and sociology, Judy has worked at the Educational Testing Service (the folks behind the SATs) as a research assistant and co-author. She also worked for fourteen years for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in public education relating first to water resources and, later, radon. One program that she really enjoyed developing and implementing was the New Jersey Water Watch, in which 100 community groups ‘adopted’ local waterways and helped protect them. In 2004, Judy took an early retirement to help with the care of her elderly father in Texas. Her father passed on in 2010, and that led to Judy’s move to Philadelphia.

Dancing has been a long-time love of Judy’s. For years, she participated in international folk-dancing and even performed at the Philadelphia Folk Fair. Today she is more interested in ballroom, swing, and salsa. She also enjoys hiking, singing, drumming, movies, and cooking and is passionately interested in helping to build a sustainable, equitable global culture.

Divorced, and with no children of her own, Judy gets her love for children met by working as a volunteer at a local day care center. She has also participated in and enjoyed UU-created ‘extended family’ groups. As to single men of a certain age? She enjoys meeting them, too.

“Life is a school and love is the lesson” was a bumper sticker that her car once sported. A long-time UU, Judy writes, “I like the theology of Teilhard de Chardin, that the universe and humans are evolving toward a higher consciousness based on love, which gives me hope that our species will eventually learn to transcend or integrate in a benign way its warlike, brutal tendencies...I am committed to focusing on, and contributing to, the many positive things that are happening. I want to contribute with a spiritually-rooted sense of joy and gratitude that I can make some small difference.”



Unitarian Society of Germantown
6511 Lincoln Drive
Philadelphia PA 19119

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