



Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship
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Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

July 3

Janet Horton

“Is Religion the Opiate of the People?”

This phrase from Karl Marx is often quoted. But what was Marx really trying to convey? We will look at the content of this quote as well as the context - is Marx sympathetic towards religion or critical or both? (Janet is revisiting this topic as many members missed out due to long weekend etc).

July 10

Ginna Hastings

“Universalism 101”

This is a information sharing and reflection talk about Universalism as it is and has been, and what it offers to Unitarianism and anybody. It is based on a short book by Richard Trudeau.

July 17

Colin Whatmough

“Water”

The substance of life, but in declining supply! How do we respond?

July 24

Rev. Dr. Ian Ellis-Jones

“The Little Prince and the Seven Principles”.

Ian has previously spoken to our fellowship on his favourite spiritual book “The Little Prince”, and will this time explore how the book expounds and affirms each of the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism.

July 31

Janine Matthews

“Spirituality of the Future”

We have a habit of looking at the future from inside the past. This future is based on today's scientific 'rational' scheme of life. But there are many scientists who have proposed concepts which go beyond our normal rational thinking processes.

7 August

Ross McLuckie

TBA

14 August

Jan Tendys

“Following”

21 August

Candace Parks

“Less and less”

28 August

Laurence Gormley

“The Truth about Lies”

New Kiva Loans

Jan Tendys

Our new loans in Burundi (Africa) and Bali (Indonesia) are group loans. This means that a group of people borrow the money collectively and then each borrows from the group.

In the Burundi group, one such borrower is Pascaline who is described as follows:

She is a 34-year-old shopkeeper who lives at the chief place in the province of Kayanza, situated to the north of Burundi. She has sold not only food products, such as corn flour, but also clothes and other articles for 6 years and at the same time, works as a cultivator. She is married to Ernest Nduwayo, himself a clothing shopkeeper, and they have 6 children, aged respectively 14 years old, 12 years old, 10 years old, 7 years old, 1 year old, and 6 months old, who are being educated. She studied until her 6th year of primary school. She is asking Kiva for a loan to augment her capital and increase the size of her business in order to make large profits. She hopes her business will grow considerably in order to allow her to ensure that her family's basic needs are met.

http://www.kiva.org/lend/301731?_te=ty

N. Ketut is a member of the Bali group, As head of the group, she obtained a loan of 1,500,000 Indonesian rupiah, used to maintain two pigs that will be prepared to be sows. Ni Ketut finds it helpful to supplement family income with this work. She hopes for the future this cooperative will run smoothly. Furthermore, with the present value of pork starting to improve, these loans will be very useful.

http://www.kiva.org/lend/302535?_te=ty

Further inquiries can be made to Jan at jtendys@bigpond.com

Our PM's Non-Religious Stance

Radio 774 ABC, Melbourne, 29 June 2010

Jon Faine: Do you believe in God?

Julia Gillard: No, I don't, Jon. I'm not a religious person. I was brought up in the Baptist

Church, as is now very well known, I think. We're Welsh migrants, we're Baptists, I grew up going to Mitcham Baptist church. ... But during my adult life I've, you know, found a different path. I'm of course a great respecter of religious beliefs, but they're not my beliefs, Jon.

(Clearly she has not heard of the Unitarian religion which welcomes Humanism as well as theism, deism, mysticism and other theological positions. We are united in our admiration for freedom, reason, tolerance and justice). **Jan Tendys**

The alternative to the Ten Commandments

cited by Richard Dawkins in "The God Delusion":



1. Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you
2. In all things, strive to cause no harm
3. Treat your fellow human beings, your fellow living things, and the world in general with love, honesty, faithfulness and respect.
4. Do not overlook evil or shrink from administering justice, but always be ready to forgive wrongdoing freely admitted and honestly regretted.
5. Live life with a sense of joy and wonder
6. Always seek to be learning something new
7. Test all things; always check your ideas against the facts, and be ready to discard even a cherished belief if it does not conform to them.
8. Never seek to censor or cut yourself off from dissent; always respect the right of others to disagree with you.
9. Form independent opinions on the basis of your own reason and experience; do not allow yourself to be led blindly by others.
10. Question everything

Dawkins, Richard (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Dawkins) *The God Delusion*. (2006). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. pp. 406.

Contributed by Martin Horlacher.

Godlike Princess Curbs Childhood Cheating

From "New Scientist" online

Religions can discourage believers from erring for fear that God is watching. Now it seems that children also avoid cheating if told they're being watched – not by God, but by Princess Alice, an invisible person conjured up by researchers.

Sixty-seven young children from Belfast, UK, volunteered to take part in a hit-the-target game designed by Jared Piazza at the University of Kent in Canterbury, UK, and colleagues. But the rules of the game were so tough that success necessitated cheating.

While secretly being videoed, each child played the game either with an adult present, with no one present, or with no one except "Princess Alice" present.

Chair check

Beforehand, they were all asked if they believed Princess Alice really existed. Of the 11 children who did, only 1 cheated in her "presence". Five of the seven disbelievers cheated, but not before they'd manually checked the Princess didn't exist by running their hand over the chair to feel if she was there.

"This is an interesting example of an audience effect and the drive to preserve our reputation," says Chris Frith of University College London, who was not involved in the study. "It's certainly consistent with the idea that belief in an invisible watcher will increase social-norm conformity."

Next, the researchers hope to delve deeper by finding out why children behaved well when being watched by Alice: whether it was from fear she would punish them directly, or that she would tell the experimenter.

Journal reference: Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, DOI: 10.1016/j.jecp.2011.02.003

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"Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone."

"One good turn gets most of the blankets"

**Contributed by Margaret Armstrong**

## Alternative Scouting (US)



Photo Robin Bossert

Navigators USA welcomes gay, atheist, and agnostic scouts.

By Donald E. Skinner  
March 2011

For four years Robin Bossert led a Boy Scout troop in New York City sponsored by the Unitarian Church of All Souls. But over time a moral dilemma developed. The Boy Scouts of America had always had a requirement that boys believe in a supreme being. Then in 2000 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the BSA, as a private organization, could set its own membership standards, including barring boys and leaders who were openly gay.

In 2002 All Souls terminated its relationship with the BSA. That's when Bossert, who deeply loved everything about Scouting except its discriminatory policies, began creating an alternative scouting group that he came to call Navigators USA. Over the next few years Navigators slowly evolved as Bossert led his group of boys, still sponsored by All Souls, into that new model. First came a logo, then a shirt, and lots of hours of "imagining."

Last fall a 188-page Navigators guidebook was completed and Bossert took the new group public, opening it up to others who wanted what the Boy Scouts is not - a group open to everyone, including gays and atheists. And girls. Navigators is coed.

Navigators is still a small operation. Those who have found the group have done so by happy accident, coming upon its website, or by seeing its listing on the Boy Scouts of America Wikipedia entry as an alternative scouting group.

Currently there are seven Navigators USA chapters - one at All Souls, three others in New York City through a partnership Bossert has with a local service group

(including some youth in a homeless shelter), and one each in Binghamton, N.Y., Durham, N.C., and Belmont, Mass. There are also chapters being formed in at least a half dozen more places around the country, he said.

Interest in Navigators started to pick up this past fall, Bossert noted. He thinks part of that interest was generated by news stories about deaths from gay bullying. But a bigger factor was the completion of the Navigators guidebook.

"The book did the trick," he said. "The book gives people enough information to start a chapter. Before that people were finding us on the Internet, but without a book to guide them there wasn't much they could do."

Sidra Taylor is co-leader of the Navigators group in Binghamton, which meets at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton, where she is a member. "We were looking for a scouting type of group," Taylor said. "We didn't want to go with the Boy Scouts because we're not very comfortable with some of their policies. We did some searching online and came across the Navigators. It has everything we wanted. We're really excited about it. It's inclusive, it's for boys and girls, and it provides ways for us to get kids outside in nature." Taylor co-leads a homeschooling group and that was part of the appeal of Navigators. "Our 15 boys and girls have become a very close group, and we didn't like the idea of splitting them up."

Her chapter has been meeting since September. "We're so glad Robin has done this," she said. "And we're happy to be pioneers."

Navigators will be familiar to those who have been in Scouting. Page 3 of the Navigators USA Guidebook lays out the Navigators "Moral Compass." It reads: "As a navigator I promise to do my best to help create a world free of prejudice and ignorance, to treat people of every race, creed, lifestyle and ability with dignity and respect, to strengthen my body and improve my mind to reach my full potential, to protect our planet and preserve our freedom."

There is a chapter with subtitles on essential outdoor topics, "Building, Lighting and Extinguishing a Fire," "First Aid Kits" and "How to Avoid Getting Lost." There are other

sections on camping in extreme weather, choosing outdoor gear, tying knots, camp cooking, and using a compass and topological map. Navigators also has badges and other awards.

Unitarian Universalist congregations have been among the most vocal opponents of the BSA's discriminatory policies against gays and atheists over the years. The Unitarian Universalist Association parted ways with the BSA after the BSA withdrew approval in May 1999 for a religious emblem the UUA awarded to scouts who had earned it through a program of study in their congregations.

Indeed, Bossert said most of the interest thus far in Navigators has come from UU parents. He said Navigators is nondenominational, however. "It's open to any group that does not discriminate."

There was a time when many UU congregations sponsored BSA troops. Most have since dropped that affiliation. None have yet signed up to sponsor Navigator groups, except for All Souls.

"We're too new for that," said Bossert. "The only people that know about us are those who come across us on the Internet." He said that for the moment, he's focusing on getting parents, rather than congregations, to sponsor chapters.

Sponsors will be invited to help develop the program, he said. "We tell whoever wants to start a chapter that Navigators is not a fully robust program yet like the Boy Scouts, but if they'll partner with us they can help us design badges and uniforms and do the other work that needs to be done."

Bossert, who owns and operates a video production company in New York City, is the sole staff member of Navigators. He said he is paid a "tiny stipend." He estimates he has put in at least 20 hours a week since 2003 on Navigator activities.

All Souls has been supporting Navigators since 2003 with grants of \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year, he said, not only helping the local chapters, but also the national organization. He said he hopes to attract broader support, including raising \$200,000 to provide training, support for the chapters, a more robust website, and more curricula. Navigators is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Starting a chapter requires five children or youth and two adult co-leaders, he said.

The start-up fee of \$150 is being waived for the time being and the national group pays for liability insurance for new chapters. "A chapter will have to pay for the uniforms - which is just a t-shirt at the moment - and books." Navigator products, including the guidebook, are available on the organization's website.

For now there is one level of Navigators for youth ages 7 to 18. Soon there will be a Navigators Junior group for the lower end of that age range, with its own handbook and programs.

Bossert said he's not trying to compete with the Boy Scouts. "We're an alternative. There should be more than one scouting choice. Navigators is focused on diversity and inclusiveness, the weakest part of the BSA. Navigators is very similar to the Boy Scouts in terms of outdoor activity and nature, but we emphasize inclusivity, the interconnection and interdependence of all people, the preservation of our planet, and an individual's right to believe or not believe in God."

He said he knows that some UU parents and boys at many congregations continue to participate in Boy Scouts. "I respect that." Others have joined Camp Fire USA, also a coed group. Bossert said Camp Fire isn't well known on the East Coast.

Bossert plans to be at General Assembly next June 22-26 in Charlotte, N. C., to further promote Navigators. He added, "The past few months have been very exciting for me. It feels like Navigators is starting to take hold."

No one is happier to see Navigators come along than James Hencke at First Church in Belmont (Mass.), Unitarian Universalist. A former Scoutmaster and an Eagle Scout, he said members of his family have been in Scouting since 1958. "We bleed khaki," he said, "so the discriminatory policies from the hard right turn of the BSA have cut me to the quick."

Hencke recently completed the paperwork to create a Navigators program at First Church. He is also mindful that many UU families continue to be involved in Boy Scouting. "We are being very careful in this nascent stage to stay in touch with our BSA families in our congregation. We emphasize that we are not in competition. This is a min-

istry to those who would otherwise miss out."

The First Parish Board agreed in February to become a Navigators sponsor, said Hencke, pending final clarifications of some insurance details. It will become only the second UU congregation to sponsor a Navigators unit, the other being All Souls in New York City.

Michelle Kucerak and D.J. James started a Navigators group in Durham, N.C., last fall. It holds one meeting a month, at the Eno River UU Fellowship, and does monthly outings that have included overnight camping, a scavenger hunt, and a tour of a veterinary clinic. "We love it," said Kucerak. "The kids like the fact it is very outdoors adventure oriented and has badges. As a parent I like the fact it has enough flexibility we can make this our own. Everyone who has come has been attracted by the fact that this is an open alternative to scouting. And it also helps that it's coed. I hope this grows."

The Navigators received a high-level endorsement Feb. 15 from New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. In a speech accepting the Forrest Church Award for Humanitarian Service from the Heart and Soul Charitable Fund, which was founded by All Souls, Bloomberg lauded groups supported by the fund, including Navigators.

Bloomberg said, "by belonging to the Navigators, boys and girls get the guidance and adult-supervised adventure that only scouting can offer- in an atmosphere free of any stigma about sexual orientation. And as a proud Eagle Scout who has publicly told the Boy Scouts to change their wrong-headed anti-gay policy, I say 'Amen' to that!"

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## Wind Turbine Minarets.

A small Muslim community in northern Germany is pioneering renewable energy sources by planning to build a mosque with wind turbines in its minarets.

The €2.5m (£2.2m) project would see the mosque in Norderstedt, near Hamburg, become one of the first to turn the minaret, the place from which the muezzin called the faithful to prayer, into a wind-fuelled power source. Read more:

[http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/13/eco-friendly-mosque-planned-germany?CMP=twf\\_fd](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/13/eco-friendly-mosque-planned-germany?CMP=twf_fd)

## What if these companies merged....

Fairchild Electronics and Honeywell Computer  
-- Fairwell Honeychild

Polygraph Records, Warner Brothers, Keebler  
-- Poly-Warner-Cracker

W.R. Grace buys Fuller Brush and Mary Kay,  
merges with Hale Business Systems  
-- Hale Mary Fuller Grace

Yahoo and Netscape -- Net'n'Yahoo (but  
they'd have to relocate to Tel Aviv)

3M & Goodyear -- mmmGood

John Deere & Abitibi-Price -- Deere Abi

Honeywell and Imasco and Home Oil --  
Honey, I'm Home

Denison Mines and Alliance and Metal Mining  
-- Mine, All Mine

3M and JC Penney and Canadian Opera  
Company -- 3 Penney Opera

Grey Poupon + Dockers Pants -- Poupon  
Pants

Knott's Berry Farm + National Organization of  
Women -- Knott NOW

Crabtree and Evelyn and Apple Computer --  
Crab Apple

Swissair and Cheeseborough-Ponds -- Swiss-  
cheese

Zipco Manufacturing and Audi and Dofasco  
and Dakota Mining -- Zip Audi Do Da

**Contributed by Candace Parks**

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Piglet's Song

Let's find a Way today,
that can take us to tomorrow.
We'll follow that Way,
A Way like flowing water.

Let's leave behind,
the things that do not matter.
And we'll turn our lives,
to a more important chapter.

Let's take the time and try to find,
what real life has to offer.
And maybe then we'll find again,
what we had long forgotten.
Like a friend, true 'til the end,
it will help us onward.

The sun is high, the road is wide,
and it starts where we are standing.
No one knows how far it goes,
for the road is never-ending.

It goes away,
beyond what we have thought of.
It flows away,
Away like flowing water.

Benjamin Hoff

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### **Becoming**

Nowhere is it the same place as yesterday.  
None of us is the same person as yesterday.

We finally die from the exhaustion of  
becoming.

This downward cellular jubilation is shared  
by the wind, bugs, birds, bears and rivers,  
and perhaps the black holes in galactic  
space

where our souls will all be gathered in an  
invisible  
thimble of antimatter. But we're getting ahead  
of ourselves.

Yes, trees wear out as the wattles under my  
chin

grow, the wrinkled hands that tried to  
strangle

a wife beater in New York City in 1957.  
We whirl with the earth, catching our breath  
as someone else, our soft brains ill-trained  
except to watch ourselves disappear into the  
distance.

Still, we love to make music of this puzzle.

**Jim Harrison**

## Two Bears

Once  
After a hard day's forage  
Two bears sat together in silence  
On a beautiful vista  
Watching the sun go down  
And feeling deeply grateful  
For life.

Though, after a while  
A thought-provoking conversation began  
Which turned to the topic of  
Fame.

The one bear said,  
"Did you hear about Rustam?  
He has become famous  
And travels from city to city  
In a golden cage;

He performs to hundreds of people  
Who laugh and applaud  
His carnival  
Stunts."

The other bear thought for  
A few seconds

Then started  
Weeping.

(The Gift - versions of Hafiz  
by Daniel Ladinsky)

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I Want a Lot

You see, I want a lot.
Perhaps I want everything:
the darkness that comes with every infinite
fall
and the shivering blaze of every step up.

So many live on and want nothing
and are raised to the rank of prince
by the slippery ease of their light judgments.

But what you love to see are faces
that so work and feel thirst....

You have not grown old, and it is not too late
to dive into your increasing depths
where life calmly gives out its own secret.

Rainer Maria Rilke

(Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke,
trans. by Robert Bly)

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## The Surfer

He thrust his joy against the weight of the  
sea;  
climbed through, slid under those long banks  
of foam--  
(hawthorn hedges in spring, thorns in the  
face stinging).  
How his brown strength drove through the  
hollow and coil  
of green-through weirs of water!  
Muscle of arm thrust down long muscle of  
water;  
and swimming so, went out of sight  
where mortal, masterful, frail, the gulls went  
wheeling  
in air as he in water, with delight.

Turn home, the sun goes down; swimmer,  
turn home.  
Last leaf of gold vanishes from the sea-  
curve.  
Take the big roller's shoulder, speed and  
swerve;  
come to the long beach home like a gull  
diving.

For on the sand the grey-wolf sea lies,  
snarling,  
cold twilight wind splits the waves' hair and  
shows  
the bones they worry in their wolf-teeth. O,  
wind blows  
and sea crouches on sand, fawning and  
mouthing;  
drops there and snatches again, drops and  
again snatches  
its broken toys, its whitened pebbles and  
shells.

**Judith Wright**



### **Eroded Hills**

These hills my father's father stripped;  
And beggars to the winter wind,  
They crouch like shoulders, naked and whipped -  
Humble, abandoned, out of mind.  
Of their scant creeks I drank once  
And ate sour cherries from old trees  
Found in their gullies fruiting by chance.  
Neither fruit nor water gave my mind ease.  
I dream of hills bandaged in snow,  
Their eyelids clenched to keep out fear.  
When the last leaf and bird go  
Let my thoughts stand like trees here.

**Judith Wright**

Judith Wright "was born into a pioneering bush family and managed to become the conscience of Australia on the vexed issues of Aboriginal rights and the environment before they became fashionable". (The Guardian, June 2000, obituary). She died at age 85.

**Contributed by Margaret Armstrong.**

*If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for publication.*

**Please note that Esprit is assembled usually in the last week of the month so longer items should be handed in or sent by the second last Sunday of the month. Items for the Schedule of Services (talk titles etc) should be in by the Friday of the last week. Variations to this timetable may be necessitated by circumstances.**

Preferred method is as an MS-WORD or email to jtendys@bigpond.com  
Hardcopy (or electronic media) submissions can be hand-delivered to Jan or posted to:  
Spirit of Life  
PO Box 1356  
LANE COVE NSW 1595

Please note:  
If space is limited, submissions may be subject to editing.

### **Do you have a topic of a spiritual nature that you would like to share with the congregation?**

As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit"  
and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish.

**Just let Candace know what you would like to speak about and when you are available and we will fit you into the schedule.**

Also, please feel free to give us your feedback on any of the services. This is the best way to ensure the services address the needs of the congregation.

**Would you care to join us? Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter** If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring 9428-2244, consult our website [www.sydneyunitarians.com](http://www.sydneyunitarians.com) or speak to one of our members before or after the Sunday service. Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee.