



**Spirit of Life** Unitarian Fellowship  
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 Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre  
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 Editor: Jan Tendys

Volume 5, Issue 3

March 2009

**Schedule of Services**

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

**AGM March 15. Time to renew membership.**

**All memberships \$10**

*GEOFF MATTHEWS will be speaking on "HOW IS YOUR SOUL?"*

**NOTE MARCH 22 ANTHONY RAYMOND will be speaking on "RELIGION OR SPIRITUALITY?"**

March 29	Rev. Steve Wilson	All Heretics' Day <b>Superstar Servetes: Someone Ought to Make a Movie</b> In the heart of the Reformation, with everything on the line, The Goliath of Geneva- Calvin, took on our little David like underdog Michael Servetes. If you know UU history you know this plot line, is a good one. Come here a movie preview, a real thrill ride with an action hero as exciting as Matt Damon.
April 5	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>The New Cosmology-Ritualized (An Intergenerational Service):</b> The New Cosmology -Ritualized is an intergenerational service dedicated to bringing us not only intellectually, but -with some luck- ritualistically in touch with the universe we are coming to know. Come step inside for some fresh spiritual and cosmological perspectives about whom and where we are in the world.
April 12	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>Steve W. Oscar Night: Jesus Lifetime Achievement Award:</b> This sermon was born as a response, maybe even a rebuttal to the hoopla over Mel Gibson's film "The Passion." Tired of the seemingly near exclusive popular understanding of Jesus as ransomed son, Jesus here is credited for his character and heroism. In the context of a speech at the Oscar's, this sermon is for me a long overdue eulogy to my first and favorite mentor
April 19	Rev. Steve	<b>Learning The New Maths: An Earth Day Train Ride</b>

*Opinions expressed in "Esprit" are not necessarily those of the Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship.*

	Wilson	*And Animal Blessing Bring your Pets It's earth day and its not exactly working. We obviously need more metaphors to push us to change. This earth day we explore old maths problems, and take a train ride that might help us see our unique ecological situation with the poignancy it deserves
April 26	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>Standing Guard: Anzac Day</b> Working off the image of the Soldiers who guard the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, this sermon plumbs the challenge Anzac Day always brings to a person of peace. How do we honour those who fight for us, and not turn a blind eye to the horror of war? Really, how do you do that.
May 3	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>The Pursuit of Happiness:</b> Freud says we all want to be one thing, and that thing is happy. With a wealth of psychological studies at our disposal we travel the world like detectives on a crime show hunting for happy. Like every good reporter we will ask the where's, what's, and why's it takes to find happiness.
May 10	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>Mothers' Day Bargains and Boundary Disputes</b> This sermon pushes past the Hallmark sweetness of the holiday to look at all that mothering really requires. In this service the natural tensions between being a parent and person are acknowledged. In this service the goalposts for what it is to be a good parent are set high but realistic. Today we are going to work that perfect parenting does not become an enemy of good parenting.
May 17	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>Free seminar at the Group Home</b> is a reflection on my twenty years of working in the homes of people who live with a mental illness and/or a developmental disability. In it I profile some old friends and share the lessons learned.
May 24	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>Shams and Rumi- Friends in Love:</b> Rumi Persia's most famous poet did not become the Rumi we know until he took a chance on an unlikely friend. Come greet the esteemed Rumi and the homeless and questionable Shams. Their friendship is a soap-opera of intrigue that costs both a lot, and oddly enough saves them both.
May 31	Rev. Steve Wilson	<b>Transcendentalism 101- An Idiot's Guide to Emerson</b> The Transcendentalism of Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Henry Hedge, Thoreau, etc is the philosophical movement most associated with New England and Unitarians. If I were King their story would be on the standardized testing. Come bring your #2 pencil for this catechism lesson on New-England Unitarianism.

## COMMITTEE NEWS

Our big news is our new website: [www.Sydneyunitarians.com](http://www.Sydneyunitarians.com)

Your Committee has been very occupied with outreach for some time now. I said last month that advertising, letter boxing, a new website etc don't come cheap. Actually, Janet did obtain a special price for our website. However, we have been spending money lavishly and using up a lot of the fat in our savings. Perhaps we should set up a special outreach fund!

We have seen more visitors, which is always gratifying, but it is hard to "sell" a subtle religion like Unitarianism. Steve and I sat at a stall at Kirribilli Markets with very few enquiries. The best publicity is word of mouth and three of our recent visitors came from membership contacts. Thank you.

Thanks to Rev. Steve Wilson for the stimulating, thoughtful and funny addresses he provides for us. Unfortunately he is making an unexpected lightning visit home to the States during March, but we will continue to benefit from his presence in Australia for a few months yet. I only hope he actually finds time to write the book he is working on in this vacation!

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### TO BLOG OR NOT TO BLOG?

#### *Definition from Wikipedia (online free encyclopedia)*

A blog (a contraction of the term weblog) is a website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art (artlog), photographs (photoblog), sketches (sketchblog), videos (vlog), music (MP3 blog), audio (podcasting), which are part of a wider network of social media. Micro-blogging is another type of blogging, one which consists of blogs with very short posts. As of December 2007, blog search engine Technorati was tracking more than 112 million blogs.[1] With the advent of video blogging, the word blog has taken on an even looser meaning — that of any bit of media wherein the subject expresses his opinion or simply talks about something.

Our new website comes with a blog (noun) and an invitation to blog (verb). If you choose to blog, you will be a blogger and then be part of the blogosphere (The collective community of all blogs)

### International Women's Day - 8 March

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. In some countries like China, Russia, Vietnam and Bulgaria, IWD is a national holiday. The first IWD was held in 1911.

"Love is the way messengers from the mystery tell us things." ~ Rumi ~

## **The Oceanic Feeling**

The "Oceanic feeling" is the name Freud's friend Romain Rolland gave to what he regarded as the true source of religious conviction. Freud states:  
"It is a feeling which he would like to call a sensation of 'eternity,' a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded-as it were, 'oceanic.' This feeling, he adds, is a purely subjective fact, not an article of faith; it brings with it no assurance of personal immortality, but it is the source of the religious energy which is seized upon by the various Churches and religious systems. . . One may, he thinks rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion."

Civilisation and its Discontents

### **THE WAY WINGS SHOULD**

What will  
our children do in the morning?  
Will they wake with their hearts wanting to play,  
the way wings  
should?  
Will they have dreamed the needed flights and gathered  
the strength from the planets that all men and women need to balance  
the wonderful charms of  
the earth  
so that her power and beauty does not make us forget our own?  
I know all about the ways of the heart - how it wants to be alive.  
Love so needs to love  
that it will endure almost anything, even abuse,  
just to flicker for a moment. But the sky's mouth is kind,  
its song will never hurt you, for I  
sing those words.  
What will our children do in the morning  
if they do not see us  
fly?

~ Rumi ~

*(Love Poems From God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West  
by Daniel Ladinsky)*

### **THAT LIVES IN US**

If you put your hands on this oar with me,  
they will never harm another, and they will come to find  
they hold everything you want.  
If you put your hands on this oar with me, they would no longer  
lift anything to your  
mouth that might wound your precious land –  
that sacred earth that is your body.

If you put your soul against this oar with me,  
the power that made the universe will enter your sinew  
from a source not outside your limbs, but from a holy realm  
that lives in us.

Exuberant is existence, time a husk.  
When the moment cracks open, ecstasy leaps out and devours space;  
love goes mad with the blessings, like my words give.  
Why lay yourself on the torturer's rack of the past and the future?  
The mind that tries to shape tomorrow beyond its capacities  
will find no rest.  
Be kind to yourself, dear – to our innocent follies.  
Forget any sounds or touch you knew that did not help you dance.  
You will come to see that all evolves us.

~ Rumi ~

*(Love Poems From God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West  
by Daniel Ladinsky)*

### **BEGIN**

This is now. Now is,  
all there is. Don't wait for Then;  
strike the spark, light the fire.  
Sit at the Beloved's table,  
feast with gusto, drink your fill  
then dance  
the way branches  
of jasmine and cypress  
dance in a spring wind.  
The green earth  
is your cloth;  
tailor your robe  
with dignity and grace.

~ Rumi ~

(adapted by Jose Orez from a version by Coleman Barks in *The Soul of Rumi*)

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### ***Speaking truth to Power, resisting Big Pharma.\****

BOSTON - In a first-year pharmacology class at Harvard Medical School, Matt Zerden grew wary as the professor promoted the benefits of cholesterol drugs and seemed to belittle a student who asked about side effects.

Mr Zerden later discovered something by searching online that he began sharing with his classmates. The professor was not only a full-time member of the Harvard Medical faculty, but a paid consultant to 10 drug companies, including five makers of cholesterol treatments.

"I felt really violated," Mr. Zerden, now a fourth-year student, recently recalled. "Here we have 160 open minds trying to learn the basics in a protected space, and the information he was giving wasn't as pure as I think it should be."

Mr. Zerden's minor stir four years ago has lately grown into a full-blown movement by more than 200 Harvard Medical School students and sympathetic faculty, intent on exposing and curtailing the industry influence in their classrooms and laboratories, as well as in Harvard's 17 affiliated teaching hospitals and institutes.

They say they are concerned that the same money that helped build the school's world-class status may in fact be hurting its reputation and affecting its teaching.

The students argue, for example, that Harvard should be embarrassed by the F grade it recently received from the American Medical Student Association, a national group that rates how well medical schools monitor and control drug industry money.

Harvard Medical School's peers received much higher grades, ranging from the A for the University of Pennsylvania, to B's received by Stanford, Columbia and New York University, to the C for Yale.

Harvard has fallen behind, some faculty and administrators say, because its teaching hospitals are not owned by the university, complicating reform; because the dean is fairly new and his predecessor was such an industry booster that he served on a pharmaceutical company board; and because a crackdown, simply put, could cost it money or faculty.

Further, the potential embarrassments - a Senate investigation of several medical professors, the F grade, a new state law effective July 1 requiring Massachusetts doctors to disclose corporate gifts over \$50 - are only now adding to pressure for change.

The dean, Dr. Jeffrey S. Flier, who says he wants Harvard to catch up with the best practices at other leading medical schools, recently announced a 19-member committee to re-examine his school's conflict-of-interest policies. The group, which includes three students, is to meet in private on Thursday.

Advising the group will be Dr. David Korn, a former dean of the Stanford Medical School who started work at Harvard about four months ago as vice provost for research. Last year he helped the Association of American Medical Colleges draft a model conflict-of-interest policy for medical schools.

The Harvard students have already secured a requirement that all professors and lecturers disclose their industry ties in class - a blanket policy that has been adopted by no other leading medical school. (One Harvard professor's disclosure in class listed 47 company affiliations.)

"Harvard needs to live up to its name," said Kirsten Austad, 24, a first-year Harvard Medical student who is one of the movement's leaders. "We are really being indoctrinated into a field of medicine that is becoming more and more commercialized."

David Tian, 24, a first-year Harvard Medical student, said: "Before coming here, I had no idea how much influence companies had on medical education. And it's something that's purposely meant to be under the table, providing information under the guise of education when that information is also presented for marketing purposes."

The students say they worry that pharmaceutical industry scandals in recent years - including some criminal convictions, billions of dollars in fines, proof of bias in research and publishing and false marketing claims - have cast a bad light on the medical profession. And they criticize Harvard as being less vigilant than other leading medical schools in monitoring potential financial conflicts by faculty members.

Dr. Flier says that the Harvard Medical faculty may lead the nation in receiving money from industry, as well as government and charities, and he does not want to tighten the spigot. "One entirely appropriate source, if done properly, is industrial funds," Dr. Flier said in an interview.

And school officials see corporate support for their faculty as all the more crucial, as the university endowment has lost 22 percent of its value since last July and the recession has caused philanthropic contributors to retrench. The school said it was unable to provide annual measures of the money flow to its faculty, beyond the \$8.6 million that pharmaceutical companies contributed last year for basic science research and the \$3 million for continuing education classes on campus. Most of the money goes to professors at the Harvard-affiliated teaching hospitals, and the dean's office does not keep track of the total.

But no one disputes that many individual Harvard Medical faculty members receive tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars a year through industry consulting and speaking fees. Under the school's disclosure rules, about 1,600 of 8,900 professors and lecturers have reported to the dean that they or a family member had a financial interest in a business related to their teaching, research or clinical care. The reports show 149 with financial ties to Pfizer and 130 with Merck.

The above is part of an article appearing in The New York Times, by Duff Wilson, March 3, 2009.

The article went on to detail the large sums involved in the penetration of Harvard medical school by pharmaceutical companies and the number of the faculty earning big money from relationships with those companies. What is the situation with Australian medical schools we wonder? \*Ed: My title

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There was a young lady from Australia  
Who went to a dance in a dahlia  
As the petals unfurled  
She revealed to the world  
That the dahlia as a dress was a failure.

Anon.

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### **Two Little Boys**

After a hardy rainstorm filled all the potholes in the streets and alleys, a young mother watched her two little boys playing in the puddles through her kitchen window. The older of the two, a five year old lad, grabbed his sibling by the back of his head and shoved his face into the water hole. As the boy recovered and stood laughing and dripping, the mother ran to the yard in a panic. 'Why on earth did you do that to your little brother?!' she asked as she shook the older boy in anger.

'We were just playing 'church' Mummy,' he said.

'I was just baptizing him.....in the name of the Father, the Son and in...the hole-he-goes. '

**Contributed by Candace Parks.**

## **GROUCHY**

A 5th grader asked her mother the age-old question,  
'How did I get here?'  
Her mother told her, 'God sent you.'  
'Did God send you, too?' asked the child  
'Yes, Dear,' the mother replied.  
'What about Grandma and Grandpa?' the child persisted.  
'He sent them also,' the mother said.  
'Did he send their parents, too?' asked the child.  
'Yes, Dear, He did,' said the mother patiently.  
'So you're telling me that there has been NO sex in this family for 200 years?  
No wonder everyone's so damn grouchy around here.'

### **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.**

***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.***

#### **Notice**

**DEADLINE** for copy for the next issue of Esprit is  
FIRST SUNDAY IN APRIL

Please be sure Jan has your WRITTEN items by this date.  
Preferred method is as an MS-WORD or email to [jtendys@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jtendys@optusnet.com.au)  
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.