



Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship
PO Box 1356, Lane Cove NSW 1595
Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre
16-18 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli
(near Milsons Point Station)
Tel: (02) 9428 2244

Website: www.sydneyunitarians.org
Editor: Jan Tendys

Volume 6, Issue 7

July, 2010

Schedule of Services

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

4th July, Janet Horton, **"Authoring your own Beliefs"**

11 July, Candace Parks **"Let's Dream Together."**

"Disappointment and frustration are unavoidable parts of life, but aiming low is what constitutes real failure. When we dream together our shared aspirations lift us up, giving flight to our common goals."

18 July, Lilium Ouyang **"Authentic Happiness". (Debut talk.)**

We human beings have been relentlessly pursuing happiness. Is it something illusionary, or is it possible to reach authentic happiness? If true happiness does exist, then what's the pathway? And, is it something we are born with, or something we can add more in our life? In this interactive session, everybody will have a chance to voice their opinion on this topic.

25 July, Colin Whatmough **An open discussion on Marcus Borg's thoughts on Liberal Christianity...**
..arising from Colin's talk on this topic on 21 March,2010. (Published in May 2010 Esprit).

1 Aug Geoff Matthews **"Horses' Birthday Today"**

8 August Ginna Hastings **"Kindness"**

15 August Ross McLuckie

22 August Jan Tendys **"World Stress—Another Mindfulness Session"**

29 August Janet Horton

CPRT ETHICS SEMINAR

on Saturday, August 28, 9am – 4pm

at the Beecroft Community Centre, Corner
Beecroft & Copeland Roads

ETHICS WITH or WITHOUT GOD,

Exploring a Progressive Religious Basis for
an Ethical World View.

SPEAKERS:

REV. DR. IAN MAVOR, O.A.M., F.A.C.E

Ian is a Fellow of the Australian college of Educators , and an ordained Uniting Church minister. He completed a doctorate in Education at Teachers' College, Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, specialising in curriculum theory applied to Religion and Education. For ten years he worked for Education Queensland as leader of a religious education curriculum project, followed by a term as Principle Education Officer (Health and Personal Development) with responsibility for aspects of the curriculum that relate to students as persons. For the last ten years Ian and his wife Deirdre have conducted a support meeting entitled "Explorations in Spirituality and Worship" for people having difficulty finding a faith community that fits their developing consciousness.

ALAN SAUNDERS

Alan is the ABC's announcer for the programme "Philosopher's Zone" and will be the first speaker.

MRS. JAN TENDYS, M.A., Dip. Ed

Jan is the mother of two children; she originally taught English and History at high school level before retraining as a remedial teacher specialising in reading teaching. Education, ethics, sociology and politics have been lifetime interests. Jan is now involved in pushing green issues through membership of the ALP and Human Rights through involvement with Amnesty International. Now re-

tired, she is currently editor of Esprit, the newsletter of the Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship.

MS TERESA RUSSELL

Teresa is publicity Officer with the St. James Ethics Centre.

REGISTRATIONS CLOSE ON AUGUST
21st

NON-MEMBER Adult (After1/8/10)... \$ 50.00

CPRT MEMBERS Adult (After1/8/10)
\$45.00<.00

NON-MEMBER PENSIONER and Student
(After1/8/10)... \$ 45.00

EARLY BIRD (paid before 1st August2010)
pay \$5.00 less than the above prices.

Becoming a member in conjunction with this seminar will entitled you to a further \$10.00 discount. Contact us for details. Registrations including Address, Email and Phone Number to: CPRT Freedom to Explore, 22 Badajoz Road , Ryde, NSW, 2112. For enquiries please contact Eric Stevenson on (02) 9888 5361 or Ken Fletcher on (02) 9876 4147 or email: cprtfreedomtoexplore@yahoo.com.au



Fiji Jewels Cruise

Helen & Colin

We left Sydney in early May bound for the Pacific Islands of Noumea, Fiji and Vanuatu; a beautiful sunset as we left Darling Harbour then the lights of the Harbour Bridge, Circular Quay and the Opera House with the ship's horn sounding was quite an exit!

We had two sea days which were cool and sunny with some white horses, going through water with depths of over one thousand metres beneath us. We were hearing of Jessica Watson arriving into Sydney and thinking of her, especially at night up on the deck looking into the darkness, and how daunting it would be in such a small boat on her own.

We went to Movies Under the Stars on the top deck sitting in deck chairs (with a rug) with popcorn, under a starry sky and liked it so much we went three times.

First stop was Noumea where we went to the beautiful Cultural Centre housed in a number of separate buildings built of wood in the style of Kanak Great Houses designed by Renzo Piano - the largest 28 metres tall.

At the next stop, Suva, the police band greeted the ship, playing and marching along the length of the wharf. We went on an excursion to a village in the hills above Suva which had very basic houses, some of which had been built by the Habitat for Humanity housing group. Most of the other houses had lots of corrugated iron with external food preparation areas and showers; the village was prone to flooding by the adjacent river in stormy weather. There was a very large, elevated, uncompleted building which was to be the village Methodist Church.

Our tour group watched a kava ceremony and singing and dancing by the community; we didn't partake of the kava!

Back in the busy city we walked around - it was a little daunting here as there seemed to be a number of different security groups, including various police, patrolling and all were carrying very large wooden batons to keep law and order. There were many and varied buses gathering to take workers home from the city near the wharf; it was good to get onto the peaceful, cool ship again.

At Port Denarau, near Nadi, we were tendered to the wharf; here we used the hop on - hop off bus to visit the various resorts on Denarau Island, a reclaimed mangrove area. They were all beautiful, with palm trees, colourful flowers and many pools though very similar in style; there was not much access to real beaches here.

We arrived at Port Vila, Vanuatu, in a pleasant, non-city setting - more tropical island surrounds than other ports. The newly built, basic concrete wharf had been funded by the Japanese government - according to the signage and it wasn't explained why this had happened; the local colourful market was adjacent to the wharf on both sides of the dusty road. This was very busy with much competition for cabs and small buses! The city was basic and dusty though the tropical flowers and trees were very colourful.

We didn't reach Dravini Island due to an overnight storm which whipped up the seas and made it too difficult to use tenders to reach the shore.

The last stop at Lifou, another tender port, was onto a white sandy beach; our shore excursion took us across the island to a village for a traditional cooking demonstration using hot coals in the ground. . We had to leave our beautiful palm frond and flower hats on the pier!

Lifou is part of Noumea with French language and cultural influences and education system. There were many quite big, Roman Catholic churches in the villages. These villages appeared more prosperous than those we had seen in Fiji and Vanuatu.

Back on the ship, we settled down for the two sea days en route for Sydney; the weather was cooler as we headed south and starting to feel winter like!

The ship entered Sydney Harbour early on a cool and dark morning; we disembarked very quickly and uneventfully at the conclusion of our Pacific Island holiday

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An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him, "How do you expect to get into Heaven?" The boy thought it over and said, "Well, I'll run in and out and in and out and keeping slamming the door until Saint Peter says 'for Heaven's sake, Dylan, come in or stay out!'"

**Contributed by Caz Donnelly**

## Beauty of Mathematics

A friend sent this to me on the web. She saw it as proof of God. It didn't prove or disprove a God to me, but rather pointed out a piece of specific mathematical symmetry I hadn't known before and found interesting. It's nice to know that in this changing world some things remain constant and fascinating. To me what's more interesting is in people's reaction to this symmetry. Does it bring out awe and wonder at something in our world that only the human mind can understand? Or does it reflect something beyond that? Does the very ability of humans to determine wonder and awe at quite different things cause them to determine that "there just must be a God because this is so amazing!" Or does it draw out a more scientific response such as "this is a fact that proves nothing more than a mathematical symmetry in base ten number system." Is the human response to something perceived proof of a God, or is belief in a God simply a choice? Unitarianism does not attempt to pose an answer to these questions, but it does honour the questioning as an individual's own personal search for meaning. What do you think? **Ginna**

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**Brilliant, isn't it?**

## Bunthun Chhun's Group



One of Spirit of Life's two Kiva Loan recipients, Bunthun Chhun's Group is in Preak Doung Village, Cambodia.

Details:

Repayment Term: 14 months ( start in July)

Activity: Agriculture

Loan Use: To repair her vehicle and to purchase more sugar cane

Mrs. Bunthun Chhun is 50 years old. She was selected as village bank president by a group of 15 members. The members of this group loan live in Kandal province. With the loans, they hope to increase income to improve their families' standard of living.

Mrs. Bunthun Chhun is a farmer who owns a plot of land to cultivate rice. She also sells sugar cane. With these 2 businesses, she earns a small income to support her family. Her husband, Mr. Meng Tuy, is a wedding chef.

Mrs. Bunthun Chhun is requesting a loan to repair her vehicle and to buy more sugar cane to increase her business activities. This couple has eleven children; two are seamstresses in the garment factory, three are labourers at a pig farm and five are attending in the local school while the youngest one is 3 years old.

AMK (Angkor Microfinance Kampuchea) is Kiva's partner in the field.

## Mach Nhen's Group



Location: Prey Toteung Village, Cambodia

Repayment Term: 14 months ( start in June )

Activity: Farm Supplies

Loan Use: To purchase a motor for a water pump.

The group consists of 14 members located in Kandal province. Mrs. Mach Nhen is 39 years old and she is the village bank president who has been selected by the members. The members will use the loans for different purposes.

Mrs. Mach Nhen and her husband, Mr. Run Khon, are farmers who own a 1-hectare field where they cultivate rice for a living. They face a problem because they do not have enough money to support the farm crops. Thus, Mrs. Mach Nhen is asking for a loan to purchase a motor for a water pump. This couple has four children; two are seamstresses in a garment factory while two others are students in the local school and also work on their parents' farm.

AMK (Angkor Microfinance Kampuchea) is Kiva's field partner. For more about financial details see:

<http://www.kiva.org/partners/109>

For more about how Kiva works see:

<http://www.kiva.org/>

**Contributed by John**

## Jane Goodall renews her faith

in nature and humanity during the "Gombe 50" anniversary. Dr. Jane Goodall is "the chimp lady" of Gombe, Tanzania. This is part of an interview with Mark Szotek, Special to the magazine Mongabay April 12, 2010

**Mongabay:** In your new book, Hope for Animals and Their World, you discuss multiple examples of species that have been saved 'at the 12th hour.' Are there species or areas that you feel are especially vulnerable, ones that may be 'falling through the cracks?'

**Dr. Goodall:** Well, the planet is facing what is being called the 'Sixth Great Extinction' (comparable to mass extinction events like the disappearance of the dinosaurs). In places like Africa, Madagascar and the Amazon, forests are disappearing at a shocking rate. For example, by the late 1980s around Gombe, there were no trees, and the local population of chimpanzees had grown isolated. The chimp communities north and south of the park used to spend a lot of time outside the park connecting with other forest territories and chimp groups, and now they can't without the trees. When chimps do venture outside the park, they come into contact with people, which has led to numerous problems.

We are now losing many of the amazing animal species that share our planet, and due to unsustainable economic practices, millions of people across the world are caught in a cycle of overpopulation, poverty and disease.

This trend is reversible. Dedicated people across the globe have successfully stepped up to save wildlife and wild places against seemingly 'impossible odds.' It's why I wrote my book Hope for Animals and Their World to let people know that there is hope for the world's animals and there's hope for us as well. These conservationists are my heroes.

**Mongabay:** Many 'hotspots' of global biodiversity are within the developing world. What's the best way to help developing countries save their wild areas (forests)?

**Dr. Goodall:** Developing countries need to adopt environmentally sustainable practices and there needs to be acceptance of these practices by local people at the local level.

I will tell you about the project we developed with the local communities around Gombe called TACARE (Take Care). In 'traditional' economic assistance programs, people are given cash subsidies, but there is little done to solve the roots of the problems.

***I think the reason our reforestation and education programs have worked so well is that we don't follow this practice. We've invested money into projects only after sitting down with the local leaders and village elders. Because the Tanzanian nationals who make up our team do the talking, it is understood that they represent local people not 'outsiders.' And the villagers embrace our projects because they choose the projects themselves. We have placed a real emphasis on micro-credit lending (loans of less than \$200) to further the commitment of local people, and all of our projects are developed to be environmentally sustainable—that's key.***

***Right now, across the globe, more people are living on the land than it can support. At Gombe, TACARE works to improve the local peoples' lives by developing sustainable farming practices, educational scholarships, HIV-AIDS information, family planning, health care, and especially projects designed to help women and children—because all around the world as women's education improves, family size goes down. Everyone's quality of life improves. And we have engaged local youth in our global environmental and humanitarian youth program, Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots, which is fostering a new spirit of environmentalism in the next generation.***

As a result, the villagers around Gombe now have a much greater understanding of the local environment and their impact on it, and have lessened practices like clear cutting and other processes that harm the forests. We've already seen trees coming back around many of the villages surrounding Gombe and hopefully the chimps will no longer be trapped within the tiny park.

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Readership Items

Last month I asked for written contributions to Esprit from our far-flung readership as well as from local membership. This month we feature letters (for which permission to share given) from two US visitors to Spirit of Life, Matt and Rich. JT

From Matt in China

Hey Jan:

I am getting the emails and really appreciate them.

Things are well here, family is doing well. My spouse Sherri enjoys living in China again and our youngest Elliot has recovered the Chinese he learned as a baby and grade schooler and graduates next year from the Dalian American School. Our older children, Matthew and Esther, are in school in London and Urbana Champaign, Illinois, and both are happy.

We are in the final phases of "start up" for this factory in northeast China ("Manchuria"), where I am the security manager with a staff of 79 employees and contractors. My Chinese has improved a lot with the need to speak and read the language every day as the majority of those working with me have little to no English.

One of the highlights in this job is doing the new employee orientation every week for the over 1,500 people we have hired in phases over the past two years. When doing this one hour presentation I make references to things that people don't often discuss openly, but find that 20-somethings here do indeed know more of their own recent history than they are given credit for - an encouraging sign.

Matt

From Rich in Vietnam and Thailand

It is difficult to capture the experiences of my first week in Thailand and Viet Nam in words. One element that stands out is the quality of presence the people bring to our greetings. Many nods, smiles, clasped hands in front of the heart and a gentle bow, and laughter, and another element is the traffic pattern in

Hanoi.

See my crossing the street video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYtBvAski0Y>

I ponder the process of how I experience the demonization of those my country has made their enemies in the past... both here and in my travels to China and Russia I feel such affection for the people, how much alike we seem, the emotions of happiness, appreciation, sorrow, affection, etc. all expressed by both this white elderly male and the many ages and both sexes that live in such different cultures. I think we share so much in spite of our differences.

Perhaps if an enemy were not viewed through the lens of "danger" they would no longer be an enemy. I am reminded of the quote from Thomas Merton. "Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in the eyes of the Divine. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. . . I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other."

There are a few moments in my life when I have felt so full of love and appreciation for all that is life. These moments are blissful. My challenge is that my own filters such as "want to be right", "want to be loved", "want to be noticed and appreciated" often lead to seeing others as a problem in my life rather than a blessing. Hope all is well with you. Rich.

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"Adversity is the trial of principle. Without it, a man hardly knows whether he is honest or not."- Henry Fielding

"If my brain surgeon stuffs up my lobotomy I'm gonna give him a piece of my mind."  
- Frank Woodley

# Notes from the Pews

Helen

Claire's news - good news in threes - she has a new full time job ( teaching English to women in Silverwater Gaol); has become engaged and is becoming an Australian citizen!

Lunch together last Sunday, at the pub, was well attended and very enjoyable.

The next lunch together will be Yulefest on 18 July.

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## Creative Puns

The roundest knight at King Arthur 's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.

She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.

**Contributed by Candace**

*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.