



The South Church
Weathervane

From the Minister's Desk

September 2010

Rev. Jennifer Brooks

THE FULL AND UNDIVIDED CONFLICT OF OPINION

I have often pondered the meaning of Kenneth Patton's phrase, "the full and undivided conflict of opinion." The line is from his piece called "This House," which appears in the back of our hymnal. Today I see exactly what Patton meant: even though we may disagree, we can still be united in our common endeavor. Disagreement need not mean disrespect. It need not mean the loss of our unity, of our calling to UU principles.

What prompts these musings is a letter that has been quietly circulated to some of our members and friends. When I returned August 24 from a week away with my family, the primary drafter of the letter gave me a copy of it with a list of the 48 signatories. The letter asks the Board of Trustees to "initiate the process that would lead to new ministerial leadership." I distributed the letter at the Board meeting that evening and listened as it was discussed in executive session. The Board meeting has been continued to next week, when further discussion will occur; the Committee on Ministry meets September 8; our UUA District Executive Bill Zelazny will meet with the Board September 14; and I have been reflecting on this situation and my response.

*"This house is for the ingathering of nature and human nature. It is a house of friendships, a haven in trouble, an open room for the encouragement of our struggle. It is a house of freedom, guarding the dignity and worth of every person. It offers a platform for the free voice, for declaring, both in times of security and danger, the **full and undivided conflict of opinion**. ... This house is a cradle for our dreams, the workshop of our common endeavor." —Kenneth Patton*

I believe the letter is, in part, an indicator that our congregation has not had healthy systems, particularly around conflict. Issues that first arose years ago have been raised and repeated outside the channels that would have allowed for constructive consideration. Other issues, raised more recently, similarly have not been handled in a way that allows them to be addressed. Nonetheless I recognize that, under the circumstances, I may not be able to continue as minister.

My immediate concern is the impact of this letter on the congregation and its pledge campaign. Pledge chair David Oman agreed just a month ago to lead the 2011 campaign that launches on September 15. Despite the emergence of this conflict, David says he will continue as pledge chair. He and I ask everyone, both signatories and those to whom the request for a new minister comes as a complete surprise, to pledge and if possible to increase their pledges. I hope signatories who are not members will immediately join, and active members who have been happy with Sunday services and my ministry will remain engaged.

Our congregation has entered into an especially challenging time. I aspire to behave as I sincerely feel: with respect and appreciation toward everyone, whether they wish me to remain as minister or not. My work in these next days and weeks is to help our congregation manage this conflict in a constructive way. I believe it is possible to use this moment as a springboard to a stronger, larger, more energized congregation—one with its financial house in order. That is my goal. *This house is the workshop of our common endeavor.*

Board of Trustees Report

One of the results of the mid-year congregational meeting held in July is to start the pledge campaign sooner than in some years past. The 2011 Pledge Campaign Committee consists of co-chairs David Oman and Trish Jarrell, and Linda Sonnonstine Spery. Additional committee members are being sought. Please contact any of the committee members for more information. The 2011 Pledge Campaign will kick off with a luncheon following the September 19th service. All members are urged to attend what should be an exciting event. Look for additional information on the campaign that will be distributed soon.

In preparing the materials for the pledge campaign, important information will be gleaned from the Dialog Circles that were held earlier this summer. Under the coordination of Jack Weinhold, small groups are extracting what makes up our story at the church and in the community. It should help to bring focus to what is important to all of us and what our priorities will be as we move forward.

Welcome to our new sexton, Dennis Santangelo, who replaces outgoing sexton, Jim Sutherland. Sincere thanks and appreciation to Jim for his years of dedicated service.

Craig Spery – President, Board of Trustees



Life Education Program

The Sunday School Curriculum for the school year 2010/2011 will be "What is Religion, for Others and for Us"? It was developed at the Unitarian Church in Wayland, Massachusetts.

It has 4 goals:

1. Unitarian Universalism: Practicing the values in which we believe, experiencing the freedom of inquiry and the quest for understanding, coming to feel part of a loving and worshipping community.
2. Church/ fellowship/ society/ congregation: Exploring the physical body of the space where worship happens, the activities that take place there and the way these activities help meet the needs of the congregation.
3. Religion: Acquainting children with religious concepts and language, helping them develop an introductory understanding of such terms as God, Religion, prayer and to comparing the five major religions in the world.
4. Holidays: Exploring both secular and religious holidays to discover the special characteristics of each and to acquaint children with some specific holidays, practices and ideas of Christianity and Judaism.

We hope that this course will:

- Nurture the assimilation of our ways of being religious
- Foster a feeling of belonging to a caring religious community
- Answer some of the questions that they may already be asking
- Awaken their awareness of different ways of thinking
- Awaken their understanding of different ways of being religious.

Around age seven, children become fascinated by the different ideas to which they are exposed by their peers, relatives, TV and books. They are seriously engaged in trying to make sense of customs and their significance, both to others and to themselves. They will spend the rest of their lives refining their understanding of the concepts introduced here. Elementary ages are the ideal time to start the process.

Lizie and Sally – LE Directors



Music Notes

- **Sunday, September 5**, the a cappella group "Overboard", led by Caleb Whelden, will sing in church.
- **Sunday, September 12**, will be the first Children's Choir rehearsal, and the choir will be back again singing for services after their break.
- **Sunday, September 26**, will be a lay-led service by the choir, and the theme will center around music and also the history of the choir, featuring reminiscences by various people. Some of the stories are very funny. Don't miss it!
- **Sunday, October 3, at 4 PM**, I will play a fundraising concert for the church: "Ragtime Music for Organ". It will include several selections by Scott Joplin, as well as ragtime by many other composers. I love the names of these pieces. For example, "The Footwarmer", "Too Much Raspberry", "Wild Cherries", and "the Cubanola Glide". Donations will be accepted for the Unitarian Church Music Program.
- **Saturday, October 9**, is the annual Organ Crawl, and the organists will play short concerts one after another at the various churches. The audience strolls from one church to another in between. My concert is usually at 11:30. The exact schedule will be announced again closer to the date.

Susie Jarrell's grandson **Quinn Jarrell**, who is 15, helped out this summer with the Noonday Concerts. He made posters and signs, set up tables and chairs, collected money at the door, counted the people, put up posters around town, took flyers to guest houses, and also helped every week with the donations and signs for the Quarter Hour concerts. His help was much needed and much appreciated. And he did a great job.

This year I hope to do more folk music, more music with the children, and: organ music, piano music, guitars, music for women's voice, men's ensemble, children, teenagers, solos, duets and choir music, and in a variety of styles from classical to folk to jazz. If you have suggestions or requests, or if you know of musicians in the community who would like to play for us, let me know.

Marcia Hempel, Music Director



The 2011 Pledge Campaign

The 2011 pledge committee, consisting of David Oman, Trish Jarrell and Linda Sperry, has been working with the Board of Trustees and Rev. Brooks to outline the timeline for the pledge campaign. We are pleased to say the kick-off event will be a luncheon directly after the service on September 19th. Fear not, it will be properly catered and we are hoping for a great turn-out. There will be more details in a separate letter from Trish, Linda and me around the middle of September.

David Oman – Co-chairman



Building and Grounds Committee Report

At the August meeting the discussion of how to control the excessive humidity in the Activities Room and Hendrix Hall was renewed. An expert has been engaged to determine if further changes in the controls may suffice. If not, two dehumidifiers are to be installed, the cost to be covered by the SCPF as part of the new HVAC system paid for by it three years ago. The need for shampooing the rugs in these same spaces was noted and, indeed, David Hall and Craig Sperry did the job the next day. There are also several minor plumbing problems in the meeting house and the parsonage to be addressed. The insulation project for the floor of the back of the parsonage is still on for September. Jack thinks some (thin) young lads from the high school might be available to help and thereby satisfy their requirement for community service.

Dennis Santangelo is being hired as outside sexton. His supervision was discussed. This duty was assigned to the B&G Committee 18 months ago with the understanding that the chairman would probably do it. It was no problem when Jim Sutherland was the sexton but becomes important with the new employee.

The Building and Grounds Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month at 5:15 PM in the Activities Room. The committee oversees the upkeep of the historic meeting house, the parsonage, and the outside areas in conjunction with the two church sextons and the South Church Preservation Fund. New members are always being sought for this committee. For further information, contact Bob Lehmann or Les Ottinger. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 1.

Leslie W. Ottinger – Co-chairman



South Church Preservation Fund

The contract with EverGreene (EverGreene Architectural Arts, Inc.) for restoration of the paintings is now nearing execution. Our consultant, Brian Pfeiffer, is planning a September 8 meeting of representatives of EverGreene with the Board of Directors of the SCPF to review the details of their plans. This meeting is open to anyone interested in the plans. Work is to begin on October 18.

David Barham is working with the Paint and Decorations subcommittee and Brian Pfeiffer to develop estimates of the cost of other projects that may be undertaken as part of Phase III. These estimates will be used to serve as a foundation for the major gift fundraising now underway. Among several possible projects would be refinishing the mahogany structure that includes the pulpit, replacing the carpets, and refinishing the pews and reupholstering the cushions.

The next major decision is whether and how to begin to raise money for a permanent fund for the maintenance of the Meeting House. The original campaign anticipated a fund of \$1,000,000 for this purpose, but, of course, that was before the present grim atmosphere for such enterprises. Still, there is optimism from some of our members that it can be done.

Leslie W. Ottinger – President, Board of Directors

A Benediction - Science has freed us from the fears of superstition. No longer do we need to be afraid of being struck by lightning because of some sin we may have committed. Hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes and volcano eruptions are not acts of an angry god. But science has shown us we must live within the limits imposed by nature, and considering all the benefits we have received from our technology, that's not asking too much. Or is it?

From Bob Hall - Church service, August 22, 2010



Fourth Sunday Lay Led Service Update

Fourth Sunday Lay Led Service speakers have been confirmed through the end of the year. On September 26, music director Marcia Hempel and the choir will lead a creative service of music and choir memories. We are pleased to announce that our speaker for October will be the new Nantucket Public Schools superintendent, Dr. Michael Cozort, who is looking forward to joining us on October 24. In November on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, John Millspaugh, Co-Minister (serving with his minister

wife, Sarah) at Winchester Unitarian Society in the Boston area, will be our featured speaker. Closing out the year, our speaker on the Sunday after Christmas will be Reverend Ted Anderson.

Thus far, the 2010 Fourth Sunday series has featured Jack Weinhold ("Choosing Change"), Beverly Hall ("Portraits of People"), Carolyn Walsh ("Grass Roots United: Haiti Disaster Relief"), John Merson ("How Long is a War?") and Dr. Sarah Oktay ("Nature Bats Last) with participation by scientists, researchers and science educators in our congregation--Dr. Jim Sutherland, Val Hall and Bob Hall.

If you have a speaker or topic to suggest for 2011, please contact us at linda@sonnpr.com and sissy02564@yahoo.com. Our committee will begin meeting in early January to consider recommendations from the congregation for Fourth Sunday programs in the newyear.

Linda Sonnonstine Sperry and Sissy Girard - Fourth Sunday Co-Chairs



An open letter to the Board of Trustees

Subject: Fundraising to meet the budget
From: Pete Sawyer and Jack Reindel.

A suggested and needed order of business: To activate the plan set forth on page 34 of the current edition of our Congregational Handbook, dated October 2009, which states; "The Board of Trustees plans to create a Fundraising Committee to concentrate on fundraising events throughout the year, and to inform members about the opportunities for giving through estate planning". As of August 2010, this committee had not yet been formed.

You would want to charge this new committee with a mission to aggressively research the subject of church fundraising and to develop action plans that could be put into place quickly. Making note of all the fund raisers you are asked to support would be an obvious source of ideas. The UUA website is an impressive resource on the subject. Googling the subject finds reference to eight million sites!

For example, one proven method is to offer Bed and Breakfast services. This was being considered here at one time so some of the groundwork may already be laid. Tom Stites, former editor of UU World magazine, who was our guest speaker on Jazz Sunday, writes as follows: "Lots of UU churches in places that attract tourists run B&B services to raise money for the church. They tend to promote this service through UU World classified ads and through their own websites. It's a proven fundraising source. Evidence: In the last 4 issues of UU World we find ads for B&Bs that benefit 16 congregations in 11 states." Here, for example, is the website for Marthas Vineyard's B&Bs - <http://www.uusmv.info/info/bedandbreakfast.html>. We on Nantucket enjoy a powerful presence as a world class resort community. But there are many who can't pay the sky high rates the island asks who would come to the island, and perhaps to the South Church, if we provided places to stay at a reasonable rate.

If we can't raise significant funds with the lure of Nantucket and our reputation as a liberal and welcoming congregation, we're just not trying.

Let's start protecting our reserve funds by raising the money to meet our budget.

Thanks for your attention. We hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully yours,
Pete and Jack

Sunday Flowers

We are fortunate that there are often flowers left from Friday and Saturday events. Also flowers may be placed in memory of a family member or friend or to commemorate an event. If you would like assistance with providing such an arrangement, Tomomi Sato, 508-228-0326, is usually available. The cost of the flowers for one of her beautiful arrangements is \$50.



Memory, Alive and Well

Salt. Smell of salt – first time. Instant total immediate familiarity and recovery. Great Aunt Molly's little cottage set above the vine strung cliff-edge – 50 foot drop – bare feet feeling their way down steps and jiggily railing hanging on – River - tributary into Chesapeake Bay – Piers sticking out into scary depths with diving board as ultimate thrilling challenge all the way at tip - coarse sand and seaweed beach front – strewn with dead jelly fish; couldn't sting you anymore – like trophies – my sister and I learned to catch them on sticks – wading out like brave warriors into the briny broth of River wonderment. They told us to put sand over the sting on our legs or arms – Indians had done that and it worked. Gritty wonderful river wet sand. Salt water like magic holding us up while we tilted sunburned noses above the water and busily, purposefully dog paddled – praying that we successfully cleansed the water from all that transparent steaming meanness. Marvelously scary walks through water's edge curving in and out of overhung coves – slipping and sliding over slimy old fallen logs and branches (so many looked like snaky things). The goal at the end being oh so delicious oh so never to be repeated; utterly satisfying gorgeous frizzled crab cakes all toasty and hot squished between two pieces of white bread. Such adventure – such a prize.

If we were exhausted from the daring – due to the general store/gas station, we would decide to walk home with the dust and pebbles of the skinny road under our bare feet stepping along into the dappled shade and sunshine through the long green tunnel of cool to get back to the screened sleeping porch of the green and cream colored cottage to flop for awhile – oil ourselves up fresh before the siren call of the River drew us as if with a magnet down the grassy slope – down the tiny path partly made by

sister's and my feet to descend those rickety steps again and thrill ourselves silly jumping off the sides of the pier into the dark, dark embrace all over again.

Marta Allen

The Weathervane

The Weathervane has a long history of bringing news about and developments within the Second Congregational Society to its members and friends. It has been put out monthly on a regular basis for the last seven years by the present "editor". During that time, all material submitted has been included, and I think it has provided a generally fair and complete accounting of our affairs. With this September issue, I feel this is no longer true.

In the last two weeks, and during the absence of the minister, a letter directed toward forcing her resignation or dismissal was circulated to some but not all members of the Society. There is even a report that some members were specifically to be excluded from the process. The letter was then brought to the Board of Trustees in an executive meeting. Rules that govern executive meetings prohibit attendance by anyone not a member of the Board and make the proceedings confidential, so, of course, the outcome remains secret. And, woefully, this development comes as we contemplate both our failure to attempt to supplement our diminished 2010 income and the impending initiation of the 2011 Pledge Campaign.

It seems important to me to bring this information to the attention of our readers. I believe our newsletter should honestly and fully report what is occurring in the church and on its boards and committees.

Leslie W. Ottinger