

The Flaming Chalice

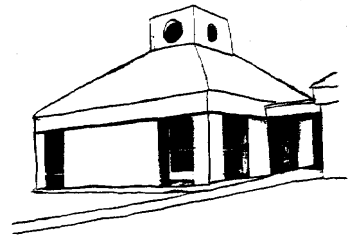
Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta

Located at: 1951 East Park Avenue
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What's going on... **March 2013**

Sun	March 3	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "A Beautiful Reality," Rev. Fred Howard Meet & Greet Coffee after the service Power of Myth Class after Meet and Greet
F	March 8	6:30 PM	Book Discussion and Potluck at the church
Sun	March 10	10:45 AM	Daylight Savings Time Begins – spring forward! Religious Education for children Service – "Christian Eye for the Queer Guy/Gal," Dr. Michael Stoltzfus Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
M	March 11	11:00AM	Break Bread delivery
W	March 13	6 PM	Board Meeting in the RE wing at the church
F	March 15	6:15 PM	Pizza and a Movie at the church <i>Deadline for April newsletter</i>
Sun	March 17	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "Mevlana Jeleleddin Rumi, Sufism, and Whirling Dervishes," Dr. M. Elizabeth Derrick <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> Meet & Greet Coffee after the service
F	March 22	6:30 PM	Firepit and Games Night at the church
Sun	March 24	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "Ethical Eating and the Rights of Food Workers," Doug Tanner Meet & Greet Coffee after the service <i>Palm Sunday</i>
	March 25		<i>Passover Begins</i>
Sun	March 31	10:45 AM	Religious Education for children Service - "The Heart of the Easter Story," Rev. Fred Howard <i>Bring a flower today for a Flower Communion during the service</i> Meet & Greet Coffee after the service Power of Myth Class after Meet and Greet <i>Easter</i>

March ... Winters over! Spring officially arrives on March 20th! Flowers! Birds! Bees!

Sunday Services

Sunday, March 3 – Rev. Fred Howard, “A Beautiful Reality”

Another of Peck’s disciplines for a healthy and fulfilled life is dedication to reality. “Mental health,” Peck says, “is the ongoing process of dedication to reality at all costs.” While the truth of this axiom would seem on the face of it to be inherently obvious and rather simple to live up to, in practice it requires tremendous courage, stamina, and discipline. This morning I will elaborate on this topic using examples from our own religious heritage and our life in community here in Valdosta, as well as a poignant illustration from the movie “A Beautiful Mind.” Rev. Howard is doing a series of sermons on Scott Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled*.

Sunday, March 10 – Dr. Michael Stoltzfus, “Christian Eye for the Queer Guy/Gal”

We will investigate the contemporary Christian discourse surrounding gay and lesbian sexuality in light of the central teachings of Jesus and Paul. We may discover that neither Jesus nor Paul offered unchanging moral absolutes grounded in law or command. Rather, the Biblical teachings of Jesus and Paul point to a Christian morality rooted in open-ended exploration and ongoing transformation and that love, grace, and hospitality apply without distinction between gay or straight sexual expression.

Daylight Savings Time Begins!!! Set your clock ahead one hour before you go to bed Saturday night and be on time for the service today!

Sunday, March 17 – Dr. M. Elizabeth Derrick, “Mevlana Jaleddin Rumi, Sufism, and Whirling Dervishes”

During a recent trip to Turkey, Betty Derrick visited Konya, the adoptive home of Rumi, the Sufic mystic and poet who founded the Whirling Dervish sect. While there she visited a dervish lodge as well as the Mevlana Museum where Rumi is buried, and attended a sema, the ceremony of the whirling dervish dance. Sufism is a mystical-ascetic approach to Islam which seeks to find divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. Since everything in the universe is spinning, dervishes seek true love of the divine by spinning themselves. Today Betty will share some of this moving, mystic experience with us along with several of her pictures from this part of Turkey. Dr. Derrick is a Professor Emeritus from the VSU Chemistry Department and longtime member of our congregation.

Share the Plate Sunday Offering: Donations to the offering plate not designated for pledges will be donated to the Lowndes Associated Ministries to the People (LAMP). LAMP operates a food bank and long-term shelter for families in need. Our church has supported LAMP for many years.

Sunday, March 24 – Doug Tanner, “Ethical Eating and the Rights of Food Workers”

Justice Sunday 2013 focuses on upholding the inherent worth and dignity of every person through our power as consumers, specifically by protecting the rights of workers in the food system. Workers have the right to work in a safe environment, receive fair wages, and organize with dignity. Join us to find out how together with the Unitarian Universalist Service

Commission (UUSC), you can act on a deep commitment to ethical eating and change the national conversation about how to create a truly sustainable food system. Doug Tanner is Vice President of our congregation and is responsible for planning our Sunday services.

Sunday, March 31 - Rev. Fred Howard, “The Heart of the Easter Story”

Easter is singularly problematic for most Unitarian Universalists. Yet, at its heart, the narrative of Jesus’ death and the discovery of the empty tomb by some of his more courageous followers should be a story that is uniquely qualified to transmit the very essence of our faith. How can this be? This morning I will examine the Easter story from an intriguing perspective created by the poetry of the liberation theologian Dorothee Soelle.

This will also be our annual Flower Communion service. Please bring a flower or two with you this morning so that you and your family can take part in this very beautiful and special ritual of spring.

Easter Egg Hunt

(our annual visit from the Eostre hare)

Egg Hunt for kids (mainly) and adults after Meet & Greet today! Contributions of treats or plastic eggs to help Eostre Hare are welcome. Please keep in mind treats should be wrapped, if candy, and small enough to fit inside a plastic egg. Also, keep the weather in mind...Eostre Hare hides the eggs before the service. If it’s going to be very warm, chocolate will melt! See Sue Bailey if you have questions about this event.

“The Power of Myth” Class

After the service until 1PM

Fred Howard is facilitating this class on “The Power of Myth” using video from the popular PBS series of conversations between the mythologist Joseph Campbell and journalist Bill Moyers. The class meets after Meet and Greet on the Sundays Rev. Howard is in charge of the Sunday service.

Religious Education

For Children: The RE program for children under 15 years of age meets at 10:45 AM concurrent with the Sunday morning service. Older young people will remain with the adult service. Two adults are needed each Sunday to help with RE. Sign up on the weekly e-mail volunteer list or let Sue Bailey know if you can help on a given Sunday.

INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

If you are interested in becoming a member of our fellowship, we encourage you to talk with our minister, Rev. Fred Howard or our President, Carol Stiles, or Membership Director, Kimberly Tanner. We welcome your questions, and we extend an open invitation to all who want to join our liberal community of faith.



MINISTERIAL MUUSINGS

March 2013

“Violence in any form is a tragic expression of our unmet needs.” These simple words, penned by Marshall Rosenberg, the founder of The Center for Nonviolent Communication, speak volumes to today’s world where the headlines are saturated with stories of random and inexplicable violence.

Most all of us tend to think of committing violence as the farthest thing from our minds as we go about our daily lives. We may even take some satisfaction in being Unitarian Universalists, dedicated to the Seven Principles, which ostensibly tend to affirm and promote a more peaceful and nonviolent world. We may even feel a little self righteous about it. I know I have. Being “violent,” in any way would seem to be the last thing any of us would be about.

But taken to another level, violence is about more than physical acts against another human being. There is also psychological violence, often manifested in the ways we communicate with one another. These dysfunctional patterns of communication are woven into our habitual ways of listening and speaking, and manifest in countless ways that few of us are even conscious of. Nonviolent Communication (NVC,) or the term I would prefer is Compassionate Communication, as taught by trained facilitators of NVC, teaches us how to become more conscious of the many ways our culture perpetuates ways of thinking and speaking that are ineffectual at best, and often border on being coercive, manipulative, and detrimental to the well being of others.

In the NVC workshop that took place at our church in January led by Rev. LoraKim Joyner, I received a rude awakening to some of the dysfunctional patterns in my own ways of thinking and speaking (this coming from someone who has already received extensive training in pastoral counseling and other means of communicating compassionately.) I daresay, based on some of my conversations with fellow participants, that the experience was a wakeup call for us all. Even though we may be engaging with others with the best of intentions and a value system completely informed by UU principles, the overlay of us being raised in a world and a culture that simply doesn’t teach us how to communicate empathically and effectively will always override our intentions and the values we think we are promoting.

I urge our congregation to get involved in the NVC process. Begin to use it in our church community, with a longer term goal of taking it into the larger community of Valdosta and even beyond. A way for us to begin this is to send a few people for the more intensive training being offered by Rev. Joyner and Carrie Stewart at the UUA Southern Region Leadership Training April 5-7 in Clayton GA. If this is of interest to you, please let me know or our president, Carol Stiles. You can also learn more online at <http://www.uusouthland.org/springtraining2013.html>
Grace and Peace, Fred



Fred Howard is our part time minister. You may contact Rev. Howard by email (preferable) at fredhoward3622@gmail.com. He is available for consultations on Monday and Wednesday afternoons on most weeks from 2-5PM by appointment. Fred welcomes any questions you may have about membership in our congregation. He is also available for weddings and rites of passage ceremonies by prearrangement.

Sangha Tuesdays

5:30-7:00 PM at the church

The KTD Buddhist reading and meditation group meets on Tuesday evenings at the church. Everyone interested in Buddhist practice and meditation is welcome. Tea, 5:30-6: Buddhist shamata meditation, 6-6:30; Discussion of reading, 6:30-7. Participants should supply their own pillow for sitting, although using a chair for those unable to sit on the floor is allowed. The group shares books and the liturgy.



VALDOSTA SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP

This support group hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Valdosta is facilitated by Tamara Hardesty. The group meets at the church on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8 P.M. Contact via e-mail at sosvaldosta@yahoo.com or connect online at **VALDOSTA SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP** or ‘Like’ us on **facebook** for online support, daily affirmations, links to resources, and information on upcoming meetings.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Keep in your thoughts

- ❖ Our members and friends with health concerns....

You might like to know

- ❖ Sue Bailey’s son (Emma’s brother) Logan and his wife Ashley, who were stationed at Ft. Hood in Texas, have transferred to Ft. Stewart, Hinesville, GA. Sue and Emma haven’t seen them for 2 years and are delighted to have them closer to Valdosta..

Communicating at UU Valdosta

Newsletter Editor: Betty Derrick

Website Manager: Carol Stiles

e-Mail List: Contact Carol Stiles

Facebook: Kimberly Tanner

Local Publicity: Dee Tait

March 15: Deadline for the April newsletter.

If you prefer reading this newsletter on the website, e-mail the editor to remove your name from the mailing label list.

Thank You! Thank You!

For layleading services: Valerie Webster, Amy Wells, Dee Tait, Betty Derrick, Doug Tanner

For speaking at Sunday services: Holly Prall

For Sunday service music: Amy Wells, Bill Webster, Doug Tanner

For Stories for All Ages: Sue Bailey, Fred Howard

For helping with Children's RE: Sue Bailey, Meredith Covert, Raynaé Jones, Emma Bailey, Amy Wells and Teagan Dunn

For serving as Meet and Greet Hosts: Kimberly and Doug Tanner, Rosie Asbury, Dee Tait

For greeting visitors: Kimberly Tanner, Betty Derrick, Dee Tait

For delivering Break Bread meals: Frank and Rosie Asbury,

For cleaning the church: Frank Asbury, Dee Tait

For sweeping the sidewalk: Doug Tanner

For helping with and attending the 4th Annual Rainbow Mixer in February: Raynaé Jones for putting the gift baskets together; Emma and her friend for helping Sue Bailey decorate; the many folks who provided snacks and beverages; Sue Bailey for coordinating everything.

Let's Have Some Fun!!

BOOK DISCUSSION AND POTLUCK

Friday, March 8 - 6:30 PM - At the church

The book is "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" by Michelle Alexander. This book is the 2012-13 UUA Common Read. The author "asserts that crime-fighting policies and systems in the US such as the "war on drugs" and the incarceration system disproportionately and intentionally affect Americans of color. She describes multifaceted, lifelong discrimination and disenfranchisement that affect people who are branded felons." Whether you agree with the authors conclusions or not, this book is worth reading and discussing in a group such as ours to be sure we fully understand the history of slavery, emancipation, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights protest era, and the emphasis on law and order currently, especially as it affects people of color.

Bring a dish to share. Coffee and tea will be provided. You are welcome to bring other beverages. We socialize over our potluck meal for the first hour and then promptly begin our book discussion drawing to a close with the selection of our next book by about an hour later. We have been selecting books that deal with difference. Contact: Betty Derrick.

PIZZA AND A MOVIE

Friday, March 15 6: 15 PM at the church

A donation for pizza and refreshments is \$5.00 The movie this month is "How to Survive a Plague," directed by David France.

This movie continues to garner international acclaim following such recognition as the best documentary of 2012 by the Gotham Independent Film Awards and the Boston Society of Film Critics. The documentary wing of the Academy of Motion Pictures Art and Sciences nominated it for an Oscar. After moving to New York City in 1981 to

begin a career as a freelance writer, France found himself in the midst of the rising HIV/AIDS plague. Soon he began building a national reputation for persuasively writing about the unknown disease. The film resulted from his writings and devotion to collecting and reviewing thousands of hours of video tapes shot in 1980s and 1990s by activists demanding United States governmental health authorities, religious leaders, politicians, research institutes, pharmaceutical companies, and others take action to respond to the human dimension of the plague. In the documentary, France calls attention to people he interviewed and with whom he collaborated who alerted the U.S. and world to the AIDS threat, including Larry Kramer, the playwright and co-founder of the Gay Men's Health Crisis; David Barr, a founding member of the Treatment Action Group and the Act Up/New York Treatment and Data Committee; Anthony Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; and Garance Franke-Ruta, who helped found Countdown 18 Months, a group that pressured pharmaceutical companies to speed up the process of developing AIDS drugs. AIDS became a personal issue for France when it killed Doug Gould, his life partner of five years. France expresses his fatalistic view regarding his unexpected survival of the plague when he says: "I assumed I was positive, too; and I never did contract HIV...By some miracle." The film received particular attention in the Valdosta UU Church when Kat Nickola, France's sister and former member of this church, called attention to it. Kat now lives in Korea with her husband Bryan, a U.S. Air Force major who deployed there in 2012 together with their daughter Zoe and son Avi.

Kimberly Tanner has been in touch with Kat about her advice on age appropriateness for viewing this unrated film. Kat says that she would watch it with a teen who has had some discussion at home to understand the topics - AIDS, gay rights, healthcare. She says she'd rate it a high PG13 (or PG15) for content - AIDS topics, death, dying patients, sexual health, heated discussions, and protests. Some of the archival footage has bad language as well. Kat shared the following website for additional information: <http://surviveaplague.com/meet-up>

Contact Fred Howard or David L. Rodgers if you have films to suggest for future gatherings.

Fire Pit and Games Night

Friday, March 22 6:30PM - until at the church

We'll start out around the fire pit to enjoy good company and conversation and roast hot dogs and marshmallows. Please bring something to cook over the fire and beverages of your choice. Then we'll retire inside for games. Often we play Mexican Train (dominoes), but we enjoy learning new games. If you have a game that is not limited to small numbers of players, please bring it along! Contact: Susan Bailey.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

CAROL STILES

Greetings! By the time you read this column, you may have already visited with one of our board members to offer your talents for one of the many tasks that make our congregation, well, a congregation! Every Sunday, we gather together for a weekly service, message, and fellowship afterwards. There are many things that go into a Sunday service – and many things that happen in between Sundays. We hope you will become part of the team that builds the beloved community every week. If you haven't signed up yet, see me or any member of our board.

We also look ahead, not week to week, but in the months and the year ahead! We are currently looking at programming for next year, and we hope you – yes, YOU! – will become involved in our programming. There's opportunity, for example to participate in Compassionate Communication training on the first weekend of April in north Georgia, part of the UUA Southland Regional spring training. Again, contact me or Rev. Howard for more details, and see the board notes for more details!

In community, Carol

Social Action Activities

UUSC Justice Sunday

Each spring, along with other UU congregations, we celebrate Justice Sunday. This year's service on March 24 will celebrate the culmination of UU efforts to raise awareness and action for the rights of workers in the food system. Working with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), UUs across the country have committed to ethical eating and to promoting the human rights of workers in the food system. Justice Sunday calls us to reflect, understand, and act— today and every day. UUSC is a membership organization that is independent of and receives no funding from government or the UUA. It depends on the active participation and financial support of its members and supporters to carry out its vital work. Justice Sunday is a good time to affirm your commitment to human rights: begin or renew your UUSC membership during Justice Sunday! For more information see www.uusc.org. Betty Derrick is our congregational UUSC representative if you have questions.

Break Bread Together

Our date for meal deliveries with the Break Bread Together program is the 2nd Monday (and 5th when there is one) of each month. If you would like to help deliver meals beginning about 11:00 AM, please contact Frank or Rosie Asbury.

UU Valdosta Caring Committee Contact Dee Tait if you or someone you know needs the services of this committee.

Rainbow Mixer: The Rainbow Mixer was a success with 40 - 50 adults and children in attendance to stand on the side of love for Valentine's Day and every day. This is the 4th year that UU Church of Valdosta has hosted the event. We had two tables full of treats and refreshments including a beautiful fruit rainbow made by Kimberly Tanner. There was music,

dancing, and lots of wonderful fellowship. Door prizes were awarded throughout the evening – rainbow flags, South Georgia Pride t-shirts, and lots more. A high point of the evening was when awards were given to the gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples who have been together the longest and to the newest couple. There was even an impromptu dance contest. Another high point was the surprise visit of Sue Bailey's son and daughter-in-law, Logan and Ashley Bailey. It was truly a wonderful evening and a very special way to celebrate Valentine's Day.

Notes from Kids' RE - Sue Bailey

In Kids' RE this month, we are continuing to explore our UU principles through stories, games, activities, and art. Recently we celebrated Valentine's Day by making cards for parents and rainbow and heart mobiles as part of the decorations for the Rainbow Mixer. In another lesson, we talked about rain, read the story of Noah and the Ark, and made rain sticks – cardboard tubes decorated with construction paper and filled with dried lentils. For Chinese New Year, we read about the holiday and made ribbon twirlers and a dancing dragon. As we explore the diversity of our world through stories and art, we always welcome helpers and visitors to Kids' RE. Please see Sue Bailey if you would like to volunteer.

At the Church-in-the-Woods

New Hope Christian Community Church- Sunday evenings: Choir practice at 4:30 PM. Service at 6:00 PM.
<http://www.wix.com/nhccc1/nhccc>

Taoist Tai Chi – Monday and Thursday: Beginners Class 5:30-6:30 PM; Continuing Class 6:30-8 PM. Contact Dennis Bogyo or Luana Goodwin.

PFLAG Meeting – 4th Tuesday each month, 7:00PM
Contact: Doug Tanner The web page for PFLAG Valdosta:
<http://community.pflag.org/Valdosta>

South Georgia Pride – 3rd Tuesday each month, 7:30PM
The March 19 meeting will feature guest speaker Jessica Young from Langdale Valloton law firm. She will be discussing the importance of Wills and Health directives for LGBT. Contact Raynaé Jones

Yoga Basics – Wednesday, 6:00 - 7:30 PM. Continues through March (except for March 13). Contact: Jane Zahner, certified yoga teacher (RYT200). Donations (\$5-10 per session recommended) will be accepted to pay for facility usage; any extra will go to the UU Share-the-Plate collection for the month. Gentle instruction and guided practice in common yoga postures, breathing, and relaxation techniques support increased flexibility, strength, and stress reduction. Bring a yoga mat (or beach towel) and an active body; leave with a quieter mind.

UU Church of Valdosta Board of Directors Meeting News February 2013

(Note that some matters appear in articles and announcements elsewhere in this newsletter and are not repeated here. The full minutes are posted on the RE wing bulletin board after approval by the board.) UU board meeting highlights

The UU board discussed:

- Increased requests to use the church for meetings and other events.
- Movie night in March – invitations will be extended to PFLAG and South Georgia Pride.
- Developing descriptions of various volunteer activities to encourage participation.
- UUA Southland Region training, April 5-7 More info: <http://www.uusouthland.org/springtraining2013.html>
- Next meeting, Wednesday, March 13, 6:00 p.m.

Treasurer's Report – Rosie Asbury January 31, 2013

Receipts	January	July -present
Plate	\$283.76	\$ 1094.48
Pledge	2440.00	11060.00
Rent	290.00	1530.00
Share the Plate	315.12	1099.40
Transfer from Gen Fund		
	5000.00	<u>5000.00</u>
Total Receipts	\$8328.88	\$19783.88
Disbursements		
Speakers' Fees	200.00	1200.00
Minister Exp.	700.00	4258.16
Maintenance	0.00	4201.16
Pest Control	35.00	245.00
Supplies	0.00	265.96
Utilities	269.90	2005.52
RE Program	0.00	10.59
Advertising	0.00	700.00
UUA Dues	852.00	1276.00
Donat. (Haven)	315.12	1199.40
Other	<u>0.00</u>	<u>154.17</u>
Total Disburse.	\$1520.02	\$ 15515.96
Net Receipt	\$ 6808.86	\$ 4267.92

levels, starting as a youth and continuing as an adult in her congregation(s), her district, and in denominational posts, including the UUA Board of Trustees for nine years, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and as a member of the Black Concerns Working Group. It was a considerable honor to work with her for seven of her UUA Board years. She is the consummate lay-leader of our faith, totally versed in governing by policy, which she sees as advantageous in its clarity of roles and usefulness in establishing effective accountability structures.

In her life-long role as UU, in leadership roles, and as a member of a marginalized group she has maintained her relationships with youth and young adult with an enviable linkage track record. For thirty years she has worked to help shift our UU culture(s) to be more inclusive and diverse; she has a unique perspective and insight into who we are and where we need to be, which gives her needed confidence to move among, and with UUs.

She firmly believes it is more important to do the right things rather than say the right things. One of her finest qualities is her reflective nature. When serving with her on the Board I witnessed time after time Tamara listening to a discussion and after many had spoken weigh in with an in-depth analysis of the situation or decision to be made, and only then offer her perspective and why it was so. Tamara will serve us with ultimate **clarity**, an abundance of **creativity**, and a thorough **commitment** to our faith. She represents all we stand for as UUs to take us through the next six years as our lay-leader. I ask you to check out her web-site tamarapaynealex.com, read her blog, find her on Facebook, and read her articles/sermons. And then I urge you to vote in June for **Tamara Payne-Alex** as our next Moderator.

Hope to see many of you at our April District Annual meeting in Ft. Myers. Always a great time to be together, learn together, and share our friendships. As always I can be contacted at jlund@uua.org.



UUA TRUSTEE TIDBITS

Joan Lund
jlund@uua.org

March 2012

General Assembly, 2013 will be held in Louisville, KY, and it is an important one, because eleven members of the UUA Board of Trustees, the UUA Financial Advisor, and a **new Moderator** will be elected. The eleven Trustee slate will include four currently serving Trustees who have been selected to continue by the Board. The Nominating Committee selected seven Trustees including two who are currently serving, which means there will be a continuation of six current Board members and seven new ones.

While both candidates are qualified to serve as Moderator I am supporting **Tamara Payne-Alex**, from San Jose, Ca. Tamara is a life-long UU, member of First Unitarian Church, San Jose, CA, and served nine years on the UUA Board of Trustees. She has served our Association at many

UU Activities and Announcements

March 1-2 -Annual Racial Justice Conference, UU
Congregation of Columbia, SC

April 6-7- Southern Regional Leadership Training, Clayton,
GA

April 12 -14- Florida District Annual Assembly UU Church of
Fort Myers, FL,

April 19-21- SWUUC Spring Conference, Journey to Justice,
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio, Texas

April 26-Southeast District Annual Meeting, UU Church of
Charlotte, Charlotte NC

June 19-23-UUA General Assembly, Louisville,



Consumers' Power to Transform the Restaurant Industry

By Ariel Jacobson
(Originally published in the Winter/Spring 2013 issue of Rights Now)

Restaurants are a part of daily life for many Americans: more than half go out to eat at least once a week; most people know someone who has worked in a restaurant; and many have worked in one themselves. But a great number don't realize the injustices that restaurant workers endure day in and day out. UUSC and the Restaurant Opportunities

Centers United (ROC-United) are committed to shedding light on unfair working conditions and transforming the industry. The plan to achieve that includes empowering customers to choose compassionate consumption and change the national conversation about workers' rights.

As the restaurant industry grows — more than 10 million workers and record sales of \$632 billion in 2012 — people's attention to how food choices affect health, the environment, and local economies has grown (think ethical eating, organic and local food, and more). Yet how workers are treated, in restaurants and throughout the food supply chain, has largely been omitted from this increased consciousness. A true concept of sustainability must also encompass the human rights of all the people who work to bring us our food.

Challenges in the restaurant industry

ROC-United, a UUSC partner that has more than 10,000 members in 19 cities, has been striving to redefine the industry for years. They've successfully organized and trained thousands of restaurant workers, opened two worker-owned cooperative restaurants, and engaged about 100 restaurant employers in choosing the "high road" to profitability with fair labor practices. Significant systemic problems remain, however.

ROC-United has documented extensive poverty, wage theft, health and safety hazards, discrimination, sexual harassment, and lack of basic benefits in the industry. They found that more than 87 percent of restaurant workers lack paid sick days and two-thirds of all restaurant workers reported cooking and serving food while sick. The federal minimum wage for tipped workers remains at \$2.13 per hour, the same it was 20 years ago. And although the law requires employers to make up the difference between that and the regular minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour if tips fail to cover the gap, the reality is that employers seldom do.

Taking consumers behind the kitchen door

What will it take to change these conditions? After repeated unsuccessful attempts to pass fair minimum-wage legislation, it has become clear that it will take a groundswell of public support to advance rights for restaurant workers. Most critical

to this effort is the active participation of the only group more powerful than the immensely well-resourced and politically connected National Restaurant Association lobby group — consumers.

Just as diners changed the restaurant industry by asking for organic and locally sourced options, they can shift restaurant practices from the bottom up by requesting respect for workers' rights. To motivate consumers, Saru Jayaraman, ROC-United's codirector and cofounder, has written *Behind the Kitchen Door: What Every Diner Should Know About the People Who Feed Us*, which is being released on February 13 to highlight the tipped minimum wage of \$2.13 (2/13/13). This book provides an inside look into the personal histories and experiences of restaurant workers. It is the key to reaching a broad audience and a unique opportunity for Unitarian Universalists and other UUSC and ROC-United supporters to bring a discussion of restaurant working conditions into the national conversation.

If you help take the lead in buying the book and sharing the book's message, *Behind the Kitchen Door* has a chance to make it onto the New York Times bestseller list — garnering further national attention for restaurant workers and their call for better conditions. Workers, employers, and consumers will together forge a new path forward to sustainability. Remember, "the customer is always right" — and it's time to tell the restaurant industry what customers think is right for workers.

Published on Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (<http://www.uusc.org>) website.
Wednesday, January 23, 2013
Ariel Jacobson is a senior associate in UUSC's Economic Justice Program.

Take Action for Restaurant Workers

1. Watch Behind the Kitchen Door video trailers.
2. Change the conversation by making *Behind the Kitchen Door* a bestseller — buy the book.
3. Be part of a UUSC Get-Together with author Saru Jayaraman on February 24 — check out the archive.
4. Download a diners' action kit.
5. Apply for a microgrant to spread the word.

(See uusc.org for links to these actions and for more information.)

A classic!

Some UUs were out walking one day and came to a fork in the road. One sign read "This Way to Heaven." The other sign read "This Way to a Discussion About Heaven." ...

All the UUs went to the discussion!