

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
DAVIE, FLORIDA

APRIL 2012

CHOICES, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES

By Marjorie Loring, Board President



"If you want something you have never had, then, do something you have never done."

– Dina Reed

Growth only happens outside of our comfort zones. If we want to grow – personally, spiritually, or as a community – we need to step out and be willing to try different things. But, in order to try different things, we must first identify those comfort zones that immobilize us and then dare ourselves to step into a place beyond them. How easy is that? Well, about as easy as jumping from a plane without a parachute with the intent of hitching a ride with your jumping partner. It is the proverbial leap of faith.

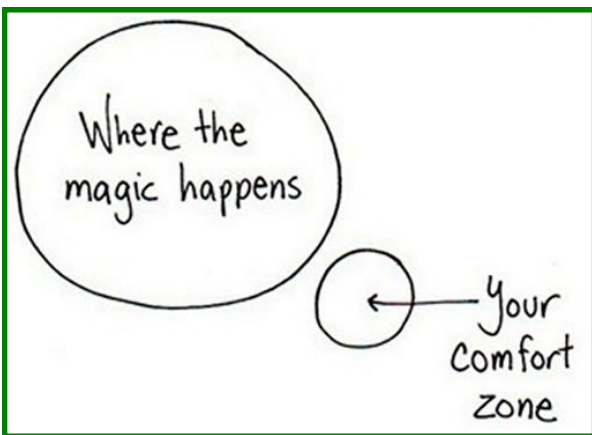
When looking at our five-year vision, and what we want our congregation to be, we need to be open to some change. And to do that, we must look at who we are, what we do, and how we look and decide how to get from here to there – and then decide on what we need to do differently that will nourish the changes needed to achieve our vision.

In fact, if you look closely at the details of our vision, you might see a picture. That picture is there to inspire us, to edge us closer toward the vision of having and sharing a wonderful religious space. Close your eyes and imagine the future River of Grass. Look at the picture you see and ask yourself: What is it exactly that makes it so appealing? So appealing that you can almost feel it and hear it? What is it about that future image that comes alive for you? Where does the excitement come from?

For me, the excitement comes from the belief that something that looks that good is possible. I find that I am willing to try it. I believe that we can do it; and I trust that we might actually like it!

But, now, take a step back. What is it that drove us to this new vision in the first place? Was it a desire to move out of a routine and try something different, to reach more people, to explore the next steps in our congregational evolution? How exciting it is to have this opportunity to learn and to grow: to broaden our horizons, develop new ways of worship, and expand the ways we experience life, love, and each other. Which brings me back to our five-year vision ...

During Envisioning Day, together we developed a snapshot of what we want River of Grass to look like in five years. This is what is in the picture:



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- ◆ We want diversity because we believe that being inclusive aligns with the basic tenets of our faith tradition. What this means is that, now that we have our own space, opening our doors will also require making room for the many forms of diversity that enter through them – and for making room to be changed by them.
- ◆ We want more youth and youth programs because we believe that children and youth are the future of our denomination. They are the future congregants and leaders. They will fill the board and committee positions of the future River of Grass,

(Continued on page 2)

CHOICES, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES

(Continued from page 1)

adding joy to our lives along the way as we watch them grow and thrive among us.

- ◆ We want more Adult Faith Development programs because we believe that faith development is not just for our children, but is a lifespan journey that should expand our minds, deepen our faith, and connect us to our inner selves, to one another, and to the world.
- ◆ We want professional spiritual leadership because we believe that we will benefit from the guidance and nurture of a called minister, someone who will continue to challenge us, guide us, comfort us, and keep us connected to the larger UU Fellowship and our interfaith partnerships.

In order to build new relationships with new people, we need to grow outside of our personal comfort zones. In order to build community, we need to grow outside of our spiritual comfort zones and move in new directions. When change happens, let us embrace it with open hearts and open minds. Let yourself be nourished by the transformation that is happening all around us. Let's try not to get stuck in the discomfort of something new. If we do not challenge ourselves, we will not change. If we do not change, we will not grow – whether on a personal level, a spiritual level, or a community level.

“If you want something you have never had, then do something you have never done.”

The River of Grass of tomorrow will not be the River of Grass of today. Our vision clearly points to that. We created this vision together. Let us embrace its unfolding together, and welcome the changes that will help us achieve it.

May it be so.

OUR PRINCIPLES

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

OUR SUNDAY LOCATION

11850 W. State Road 84, Suite 1, Davie, FL 33325

EVERY SUNDAY

Worship Service: 10:30 to 11:30am. **Hospitality Hour:** 11:30am to 12:30pm.

Faith Development Classes: 10:45 to 11:45am

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

There is plenty of parking outside the sanctuary, but please leave the closer parking spaces for our guests and physically challenged worshippers.

All meetings are held at 11850 W State Road 84, Suite 1 in Davie unless otherwise noted.

SERVICES

- Apr 1 April Fool's Day with the River of Grass Teens
- Apr 8 “Fierce Grace” with Deb Giblin-Davis
- Apr 15 Service and Social Justice with Guest speaker Maxine Neil
- Apr 22 Earth Day with Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Apr 29 “The Flowers in Our Garden” (Flower Communion) with Kathy Jens-Rochow

River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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 Service & Social Justice Alan Meerow & Judi Oltmans
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 Worship Kathy Jens-Rochow

FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

By Diane Lade and Karen Gonzalez, Faith Development co-chairs

Spring is here. And coming with it are many opportunities for and by River of Grass of students to celebrate and reflect.

Easter and Passover, which fall within a day of each other this year, are not “religious holidays” for Unitarian Universalists. But they are occasions we mark with our youth and our congregation, discussing what they mean to us as UUs as well as their larger spiritual significance: a time when we look at what it means to have hope, to move toward changes in our lives and our communities, to celebrate nature renewing itself. In that spirit, Faith Development is hosting a Spring Celebration on Sunday, April 8, during and after service. Join us for an egg hunt, hat parade for all ages and Passover games. Parents of faith development students are asked to each bring up to a dozen plastic eggs filled with candy or treats that morning. No nuts, please. Volunteers are needed to help with this event. If interested: contact FaithDevelopment@riverofgrass.org. Or look for the sign-up sheet in the hospitality area after service on Sundays.



In other Faith Development news:

- ♦ Enjoy spending time with young people? Believe in helping our children explore UU values? We will need volunteers with all sorts of skills to help us in the 2012-13 congregational year. Maybe there are gifts you can bring that we have not even thought about. If you are interested, contact us at FaithDevelopment@riverofgrass.org.
- ♦ Make sure you're in the sanctuary on Sunday, April 1. Our River of Grass teens are presenting the service. It's April Fool's Day and anything might – and probably will – happen.
- ♦ The teens will be hosting a “Con,” or statewide gathering for UU youth, at our facility on April 27-29. Cons are great fun and this will be the first time in many years that our congregation has had this honor, as we did not have our own space for so long. If you are a new member with a teenager who has not been attending service: this is a good chance for building new friendships. Please get in touch with us at the Faith Development e-mail listed above.

RIVER OF GRASS HAS NEW CHILDCARE PROVIDER

By Diane Lade, Faith Development Co-Chair

Please welcome **Tatiana Acero** (ah-SAIR-oh), our new childcare provider and hospitality assistant, who joined us about a month ago. Tatiana will be more than able to keep up with the little ones in our nursery. She loves keeping fit, and among her favorite hobbies are yoga, spinning and Zumba workouts. She also is involved with Reiki healing.

Born in New York City, Tatiana was raised in South Florida, coming here when she was seven years old. Her parents, originally from Colombia, still live locally.

Tatiana, who has a psychology degree, now works in inside sales for a company that recycles used motor oil. She also has been involved with youth ministry at the Unity Church of Hollywood, where she still is a member, and taught 6- to 10-year-olds there.

Her favorite part about that experience? “Letting children know, at an early age, they are connected to God but in a less conventional sense than how I was raised,” Tatiana said.



ETHICS CLASS OFFERED AT RIVER OF GRASS

By Maddi Gutfreind

Adult Faith Development will be returning to River of Grass this spring! The course is hot off the presses from the Unitarian Universalists Association's Tapestry of Faith program and is entitled, “*What We Choose: Ethics For Unitarian Universalists.*”

As UU's we believe the measure of our religion is how we live our day to day lives. We believe that our choices and our actions matter. But how do we discern the moral course of action in a particular circumstance? To what sources of authority do we turn to for help – personal experience, community wisdom, religious texts, words and deeds of prophetic men and women, Reason, Science, God? This program will explore the ethical frameworks that help us make our choices.

Beginning in the middle of April, we hope to offer six to seven classes on either Sunday afternoons after service or on Wednesday evenings after rush hour. We will try to avoid scheduling conflicts whenever possible. The classes are 90 minutes in duration and will be co-facilitated by **Maddi Gutfreind** and **Elyse Brunt**. Please check the hospitality area after service on Sunday to sign up and indicate your preferences. If you have a question for either of the facilitators, please contact them at AdultFD@riverofgrass.org.

BOARD MATTERS

By Susan Juncosa, Secretary

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single Board in possession of a good Agenda must be in want of a Meeting. Such was indeed the case on the evening of March 14, when the River of Grass Board of Trustees gathered to take up the affairs of the congregation. All this happened, more or less.

The Annual Giving Campaign has begun. Members of the Annual Giving Campaign, joined by **Allen Giese** and **Steve Tepper**, attended the meeting to give a special presentation to Board members and partners. This was followed by a general discussion about the goals and the mechanics of the campaign.

The Treasurer reported on the addition of new line items in the financial statements to reflect unusual events, such as the recent communications workshop. Other items of note: we are looking into the cost of obtaining a newer copier, the congregation received a sales tax refund from FPL, and our office administrator Sophia has become a Florida notary public!

The Hub Task Force is hoping to put itself out of business by the end of the (fiscal) year by purchasing some final items for the kitchen: some cabinets and the long-awaited industrial sink.

The Concert committee has already scheduled four events for next year, including our old friends Emma's Revolution.

The Facilities team has been dealing with air conditioner woes and really truly is almost finished with sound frames. (See article on page 10.)

The Membership Committee wins the prize for busiest this month. Although the February "Pathway to Membership" class had to be postponed, the first "Run River Run" class was held on March 18. Part Two of the class (which covers Unitarian Universalism) is scheduled for April 15. Discussions are being held to re-start Circle Dinners and Second Sunday Lunches! And get your smiles ready for the second photo directory. Picture will be taken in the summer.

The Service and Social Justice Committee was very pleased to report a successful Volunteer Day at LifeNet4Families on March 10. The committee will be coordinating the service on Justice Sunday, April 15, with a special guest in the pulpit, Maxine Neil from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee headquarters.

The Worship Committee will hold a service leader/lay leader training in April for those who just may be ready to share their deep thoughts with us, but haven't yet taken the training. There is still one opening for a service leader on June 24, and summer slots will be announced shortly.

Ken Bresnahan and **Tom Robinson** recently returned from the week-long Southern UU Leadership Institute (SUULI) and couldn't wait to share their experiences. If you think five straight days of lectures, case studies, group activities and spiritual practices does not sound like fun, you are WRONG! Not only are Ken and Tom refreshed and invigorated, they returned with materials to share. Please ask them about this transforming experience.

The Board is turning its attention to the serious business of planning its Auction event – namely, "River of Gas", the mur-r-r-r-r-der mystery/dinner to be presented on June 2 at 6:30 p.m. Good seats are still available!



A SPECIAL RESOLUTION FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The spiritual force that fills our River of Grass home each Sunday is created anew, every week, by the combined energies of those present in response to the personal and communal impact of the speaker, the message, and the music.

We recognize, as spiritual leaders, the importance of this congregation's free expression of spirituality.

Therefore, we feel that all members and guests should be free to clap or not clap, and to raise their arms or say hallelujah as they are moved.

This Board supports not only freedom of the pulpit but freedom of the pews, and affirms our third principle that calls us not to restrict, but to accept one another and encourage spiritual growth – in all of its manifestations – in our congregations.

We also affirm that our service leaders shall have the freedom to set the tone for their services and may request a certain ambiance when it is in keeping with the service being presented.

As a Board, we believe that from this resolution, there will emerge in a balance of energy that will meet the needs of all.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS AND NOTES

By Riley Cothran, Nominating Chair

After several meetings, careful consideration, and thoughtful discussion, the nominating committee proudly presented its slate of nominees to our Board of Trustees, who approved the slate for the coming congregational year 2012-2013. The nominees are as follows: **Secretary – Zena Tucker, Treasurer – Maddi Gutfreind. Trustees – Deb Giblin-Davis and Tom Robinson**, who both are agreeing to serve another term on the board. All positions are for a two year term.

The River of Grass By-Laws provides two other ways members of the congregation may participate in this nominating process. A member may nominate another member or even themselves simply by getting two members in good standing in the congregation to sign a petition stating that they are nominating that member for a particular office or trustee position. This petition must be given to any officer or member of the Board at least twenty days prior to May 20th – the date of our Annual Meeting this year. April 30th is the cut-off date for nominations by petition. Any nominee that meets these criteria will be placed on the final slate of nominees and voted on at the annual meeting.

The other way you may nominate a member for an open Board position is from the floor on the day of the Annual Meeting. Just remember that you must get the nominee's permission and willingness to serve in this position prior to his/her name being accepted as an official nominee.

Your Nominating Committee consisted of the following members: **Riley Cothran** (Chairman), **Gayle Giese**, **Linda Meerow**, **Patty Miller**, **John Perez**, and **Audrey Stang**.

EASTER AT RIVER OF GRASS

By Deb Giblin-Davis

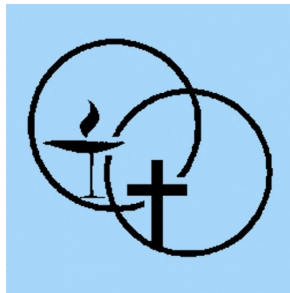
“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

– Albert Schweitzer

As I prepared the service for Easter last year, I read a lot of Unitarian Universalist Easter sermons to get ideas. Most had a theme of “overcoming” – how in the darkest of places in life there was a blessing, a flicker of hope and light – the Easter story!

A while back I watched a video on Netflix by Ram Dass – *Fierce Grace* – he talked about having a debilitating stroke and the blessings on the other side of that experience. It got me thinking. I know there are many stories in our congregation, stories of people who have suffered very hard things and have come out on the other side – have maybe even seen a blessing and lived to tell the tale!

Please join us this Easter and be blessed by beautiful music as four dear members of our congregation share their own personal “Easter Story.”



'TIS THE SEASON, ACT II

By Roy Schwartz, Annual Giving Chair

We are now winding up our annual giving drive. In March, we heard moving testimonials by **Brit** and **Maureen Lundell**, **Scott May** and **Carolyn SantAngelo**, and **Karen** and **Gary Gonzalez**. The value of River of Grass to their personal and family lives was beautifully expressed in their personal testimonies, and the message was received graciously by our members during the service each Sunday.



As of the writing of this article, 33 of the 73 pledge cards that were either hand delivered or mailed to our members have been returned with their pledge. The return so far has been encouraging, with many members noting an increase in their giving and expressing their support to add a level of professional ministry and support staff to

the River of Grass 2012-2013 operations budget.

Our goal was to have all of the pledge cards returned by April 1st and for the first time we have placed a poster in the hospitality area to recognize the families and members who have returned their card. We recognize that our congregational family includes members who are unable to make a financial commitment at this time. Those members are invited to contact **Marjie Loring**, president and member of the pastoral care team, and request a waiver. She may be reached at president@riverofgrass.org. At that point, the pledge card can be turned in and the member recognized for its return, just like everyone else. As a reminder; all information submitted on the pledge card is confidential.

It's been our practice to have members of the Annual Giving Team contact the stragglers who have not returned their card by the given date. Please help us reduce the number of calls we will be making by returning your pledge card by mail or to the designated space in the hospitality area ASAP.

Thank you for your generosity and your promptness. Please remember the Board of Trustees cannot move to completing the annual budget work or begin the process of engaging with available professional ministry until we determine what funding will be available.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Leana Bresnahan, Membership Chair

In the Spring 2012 issue of *UU World*, the Reverend Peter Morales, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), wrote an essay entitled “Hand in Hand: Religious Hospitality.” In his timely essay, Rev. Morales wrote of the common occurrence that many newcomers to UU congregations across the country experience when they walk in for the first time, or even, the second, third or fourth times, if they are even hardy enough to return. The experience of far too many is that they are ignored by congregational members, standing alone during hospitality hour, and sometimes, only able to strike up a conversation with fellow visitors.

Rev. Morales recounted the courses of action his parish took when it realized that this was a problem in the congregation where he served at the time. They set about to change, taking some very simple, intentional steps, steps that turned out to be so effective that very soon, their membership soared from 400 members to more than 750.

Rev. Morales continued: “Perhaps more important was that when we opened ourselves and made paying attention to the newcomer a spiritual practice, we transformed ourselves. The very practice of reaching out made us more open, more sensitive. Spiritual practices do that. They change us.

“Hundreds of thousands of people will visit our congregations this year. They are looking for a religious home, for spiritual sustenance. They want to be accepted, to be engaged, to be loved. Smile. Say good morning. Start a conversation. You are about to meet some wonderful people.”

We at River of Grass are fortunate that we **truly** are a welcoming congregation, in the broadest sense of the word. It is in our DNA. Our visitors, who are spilling through our doors in our beautiful, still new home, routinely tell us that they feel a positive energy when they step inside our doors, and that they find us to be an open and friendly congregation.

So far so good. But I think we can go further, and to become the congregation we wish to be, we **need** to go further. Let us challenge ourselves to take our spiritual hospitality to the next level. Let us each make a commitment to go beyond being friendly during hospitality hour, as positive as that is. Let us each search for ways that we can be more inclusive in all of our activities at River of Grass. Let us reach out to invite our visitors to upcoming congregational activities. Let us make room for our visitors in the activities that we ourselves organize. Let us always be aware of individuals who appear to be alone, in pain, or in need, then approach them, and offer to be a loving presence. Let us always be open to be in relationship with all who seek spiritual growth and who find Unitarian Universalism to be their path.

In the wake of Trayvon Martin’s tragic death, let us always be spiritually present to ALL who enter our doors, whether they appear to be similar to any one of us or not, looking always behind and beyond any apparent difference to see the spirit, the soul, the inherent worth and dignity, the longing and need in each of us to be loved and accepted.

The Membership Committee will offer the ‘Introduction to Unitarian Universalism’ Class on Sunday, April 15th, from noon to 2:00pm. The class will take participants on a two thousand year trek tracing Unitarian and Universalism all the way from the first century to modern day, learning along the way about our spiritual foremothers and forefathers, pioneers who fought and sometimes gave their lives for religious liberty. We’ll also talk about the theological strands which make up the rich tapestry of Unitarian Universalism, along with the sources and principles of our faith. The sign-up for the class will be available during hospitality hour, or e-mail Membership@riverofgrass.org.

The next New Member Sunday will be held on April 29th. Please contact us if you are interested in becoming a member. We welcome you!

On March 25, River of Grass held its annual Stone Soup Lunch as part of the Empty Bowls/Stone Soup project to fight hunger. Pictured below are some of the beautiful bowls and other works of art created as part of this project. All proceeds from the project were donated to Broward County’s LifeNet4Families.



ABOUT THAT BRIGHT LIGHT YOU MAY HAVE SEEN IN MID-FEBRUARY...

By Allen Giese

The dUUdes had a wonderful campout over Presidents' Day weekend at Highlands Hammock State Park near Sebring. One camper went so far as to describe the weekend as "life changing!"

The weather was near perfect and the camaraderie couldn't have been better. The dUUdes arrived Saturday afternoon, set up camp and quickly went about the serious business of doing nothing until dinner time. And then the food started to be brought out... and out... and out! As the late afternoon light started to fade, the younger dUUdes set about with the important task of nearly burning down the campground with a roaring campsite bonfire. Unconfirmed reports from the space station passing overhead stated "an unusual and large light disturbance coming from central Florida," but we don't know anything about that. The campfire went on late into the night as dUUdes stayed up talking, making deep philosophical statements and getting to know each other better.



This dUUde had too many s'mores

The dUUdes survived the first night tucked away snugly in their tents as ferocious wild beasts roamed the campground feasting on the bits of leftover food purposefully left out as bait. The dUUdes awoke to a crisp Sunday morning and focused immediately on gorging themselves with unheard of amounts of bacon, cereal and blueberry pancakes before hiking the Hammock trails of the park. The rest of the day was spent playing on the playground, preparing for the evening bonfire (hey... it takes a LOT of wood to make a fire that big!), biking, eating, napping and just hanging out doing more of nothing. dUUdes are good at that.

Sunday night's campfire rivaled Saturdays as further unconfirmed reports from the nearby Gulf of Mexico reported a few ships were led off course by "a large bright light source in central Florida." We don't know anything about that either. Everybody's favorite campfire dessert, "s'mores," appeared and hundreds of marshmallows met their flaming, gooey demise between two graham crackers and melted chocolate.

Monday morning the dUUdes awoke refreshed and well rested with all tents standing (we heard of another group camping not too far away where this wasn't the case). Another huge breakfast and dUUdes started packing up. A group photo, another short hike on the trails and a drive back to Ft. Lauderdale completed an awesome weekend!

Next dUUdes event: Saturday May 5th, Shark Valley Bicycle Ride under the Full Moon. Don't miss it! For more info about the dUUdes email: dUUdes@riverofgrass.org

FULL MOON DAUGHTERS AND DUUDES

By Diane Lade, FMD Facilitator

Did you go to summer camp when you were a kid? Did the boys raid the girls' cabins or campsites, or vice versa?

Well, River of Grass adults and youngsters reactivated a modern day equivalent of that tradition when the Full Moon Daughters, the outdoor spirituality group for women and girls, and the dUUdes, the equivalent for guys and boys, simultaneously had their out-of-town camping trips on Presidents' Day weekend in February.

First, the Daughters texted the dUUdes a photo of their extravagant appetizer spread at sunset in Fort De Soto Park near St. Petersburg, where they were camping on a key featuring a natural barrier dune beach. The dUUdes, at Highland Hammock State Park in south central Florida, fired back the next morning with a texted picture of their breakfast blueberry pancakes.

The battle went on. The dUUdes got haircuts (yes haircuts) from camper and hairstyle pro Steve Scanlon, and went on a hike. The Daughters had a choice of biking and kayaking or a trip to a nearby museum.

Bottom line? Both groups had a great time bonding with their own – but also look forward to time together. On Saturday, May 5, dUUdes and Daughters jointly will host a moonlight bike ride in Shark Valley, in the northern end of Everglades National Park. Mark your calendars! You will see the river of grass like you never have seen it before, with flocks of tropical birds nesting in the trees and marshes glistening under the moon's beam. Watch the weekly electronic update for sign up information.

Full Moon Daughters and the dUUdes are dedicated to building intergenerational bonds among same gender participants through a shared love of nature and the outdoors. Our activities include out-of-town camping trips and local one-day excursions. All River of Grass members, friends and relatives are welcome. For more information: FullMoonDaughters@riverofgrass.org or dUUdes@riverofgrass.org.

See you on the water, along the trail or under the stars.



AND SERVICE IS OUR LAW

By Alan Meerow and Judi Oltnans,
Service and Social Justice Commit-
tee (SSJC) co-chairs

Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the River of Grass Volunteer Day at LifeNet4Families on Saturday, March 10! There were twelve people participating including Christy, Cedar, Tai, Sydney, Julian, Travis, Zena, Rick, Judi, Gerard, Valerie and Victor. Three people worked in the kitchen serving food and the rest worked out in the pantry stocking shelves and filling boxes to be passed out to needy families. Check out the photo, it was truly a multi-generational event!

Our next River of Grass volunteer day at LifeNet4Families is on May 12th and the sign up is in the back of the sanctuary at the SSJC corner. LifeNet4Families is still in dire need of canned food donations especially peanut butter and canned meats. You can drop off your donations in the basket at the SSJC corner.

May 12th is going to be a busy day for River of Grass volunteers! Besides being our morning to volunteer in the LifeNet4Families pantry, it is also the Letter Carriers Food Drive Day! This is the 20th anniversary of the “Stamp Out Hunger” annual food drive run by the National Association of Letter Carriers. We will once again be supporting the event by working at the Inverrary Post Office. We’ll need lots of volunteers for this event and there are volunteer opportunities for every level: There will be three shifts in the afternoon and the sign-up sheet will be available at the SSJC corner in the beginning of April.

Justice Sunday is coming up on April 15th. We will have a special guest in the pulpit, Maxine Neil, from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee headquarters. The SSJC will be coordinating the service.

The Service and Social Justice Committee met on Thursday, February 16th in the River of Grass multipurpose room. We had a special guest, Jeanette Smith of Interfaith Worker Justice, arranged by Maddi Gutfreind, who talked to us about the New Sanctuary movement and how we can be involved in helping immigrant families impacted by deportation and other hardships, our justice theme for the second half of the congregational year. A new subcommittee was formed to look into the New Sanctuary Movement which includes Maddi Gutfreind, Diane Diaz and Steve Jens-Rochow. Their goal is to develop an action plan. If you are interested in attending the next SSJC meeting please email SSJC@riverofgrass.org. We welcome new members!

Remember to support our River of Grass team in the MS Bike Ride which will be coming up on April 21st! (See article beginning below.)

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

By Allen Giese

On just about any given Saturday or Sunday of late, as the first rays of sunlight from the east break the barrier from night to day, the River of Grass Cycling Team can be found grueling through training rides on the roads of western Broward County. With



(Continued on page 9)

The Cycling Team: From left to right, Linda Meerow, Allen Giese, Sean Giblin, Mary Diaz, and Laura Tepper. Not pictured: Bill Rish.

BIG NIGHT PLANNED AT RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

By the Music Team

On Friday, April 20th, the River of Grass Café and Concert Series will present **Paul Zisholtz** and our own River of Grass talented guitar duo **Aaron Stang** and **Gary Gonzalez**.

Singer/songwriter Dr. Bob writes of Paul: "If you'd ever been to the Gaslight Café located in the basement of 116 MacDougal Street in NYC's Greenwich Village during the 1960's, then you probably heard some pretty famous people play there like Wavy Gravy, Phil Ochs and Robert Zimmerman. You may have also had the pleasure of hearing another great: Paul Zisholtz, a.k.a. B.B. Sweetwood. Today, Paul lives in SE Florida where he's still making music which includes his latest CD titled *BB Then And Now*. Listening to Paul is like hearing Randy Newman and Leon Redbone sing a mellow version of Mississippi Delta blues. With precision chord stammering and wonderfully punctuated finger picking, Paul serenades and swings throughout this ten-track collection." You will not only enjoy Paul's music, but also his storytelling and his humor. You can hear Paul's music [here](#).



You know that Aaron and Gary play their own beautiful, intricate arrangements of Beatles tunes such as *Eleanor Rigby*, and that Aaron plays a gorgeous solo on *The Water Is Wide*, but did you know that Aaron won a Grammy for his participation with other world-class guitarists on the *Pink Guitar* CD, comprised of solo guitar arrangements of Henry Mancini tunes

(Aaron plays his arrangement of *Charade* on the CD)? Did you know that Gary is a great songwriter whose folk group **Relative Viewpoint** opened for such greats as Richie Havens? Gary is also a featured singer/songwriter at SUUSI (Southeastern Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute) each summer, where audiences take great delight in his originals, his guitar chops, and James Taylor-like vocals. To listen to *Eleanor Rigby*, click [here](#). For *The Water is Wide*, click [here](#).



Tickets: \$ 15.00 Advance Purchase (\$20 at the door).

Doors open at 7:30pm. Music starts at 8:00pm.

Save \$\$ and pay in advance at the River of Grass [website](#).

Come hungry!

Our creative River of Grass chefs are preparing something *yummy*!

Check out
our River of Grass Café
[Facebook](#) fan page

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE FINAL ACT OF THE FISCAL YEAR

May 18 **Hunter Altschul and Joel Zoss**

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

(Continued from page 8)

typical training rides of 40 to 60 miles each, the members of the team are hardening their bodies to endure the 150-mile MS Bike Challenge through southern Dade county and Key Largo later this month.

Why? Because we all know someone very special to us who has been stricken with Multiple Sclerosis and we want to make a difference. Many in this congregation know of **Sean Giblin** and his fight with MS. Every hour of every day, a bright, active, wonderful person like Sean is diagnosed with MS – it is the biggestcrippler of young adults in this country. There is no cure... yet. But your support for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society funds studies which hope to reveal the cause and course of the disease as well as much needed education, programs and services to everyone who is affected by MS, including the diagnosed, their friends and families, and the healthcare professionals that work with them.

The River of Grass Bicycle Team rides for Sean and the thousands of people diagnosed with MS who can't. If you are an experienced rider and would like to ride with the team during the challenge, please contact **Allen Giese** (duudes@river-ofgrass.org). If you would like to donate and support us in our efforts please visit <http://bikefls.nationalmssociety.org/>, click on "Donate" and search for "River of Grass" under teams.



SOUND PANELS: WHAT LIES BENEATH

By Susan Juncosa

Last fall, the Facility Management Committee, the Hub Task Force and the Concert Committee teamed up to create a solution to the problem of the reverberant echoes in the Sanctuary. For some, the sound was so painful they could not bear to attend service or stay for hospitality. The challenge was to come up with a champagne acoustical treatment on a Diet Coke budget.

The solution was to build “picture frames” out of lumber, stuff them with acoustical tile, cover them with burlap and hang them on the wall. That doesn’t sound too hard, does it? Oh, did I forget to mention that the frames were up to 7 feet long and some had to be hung more than 12 feet off of the floor? These pictures give some idea of the process.



At left, we see Steve Jens-Rochow and Riley Cothran stretching burlap over a frame that they have just put together.



Next, the frame is fitted with a special type of fiberglass designed to absorb sound. You might notice that the fiberglass does not completely fill the frame – there is a bit of an air-space between the fiberglass and the wall which helps absorb the echoes.



The most hazardous part of the enterprise is getting the frames up on the wall. At left, Riley shows no fear of heights and carefully places the hangers before the frame is lifted up.



And to the right, you see a section of a completed wall.

APRIL 2012



Sun.	1st		April Fool's Day / Teen service
	10:30-11:30am		Sunday Service
	10:45-11:45am		Sunday Classes
	11:30am-12:30pm		Hospitality Hour
	11:30am-1:30pm		Membership Committee
Tue.	3rd	4:00-7:00pm	River of GREENS
Thu.	5th	6:30-8:00pm	Yoga Class (Facility Rental)
Sat.	7th		Marjorie Stoneman Douglas' Birthday
	9:00am-12:00pm		Congregational Workday
Sun.	8th	10:30-11:30am	Sunday Service and Easter Bonnet Parade
	10:45-11:45am		Sunday Classes
	11:30am-12:30pm		Hospitality Hour
Mon.	9th	7:00-9:00pm	Finance Committee
Tue.	10th	6:30-9:30pm	Passover Seder
Wed.	11th	7:00-10:00pm	Board Meeting
Thu.	12th	6:30-8:00pm	Yoga Class (Facility Rental)
	7:00-9:00pm		Men's Group
Sat.	14th	10:00am-12:00pm	Wildpine Covenant Group
	6:00-10:00pm		ContraDance (Facility Rental)
Sun.	15th		Newsletter Deadline
	10:30-11:30am		Sunday Service
	10:45-11:45am		Sunday Classes
	11:30am-12:30pm		Hospitality Hour
	11:45am-12:15pm		Board Report Back
	12:00-2:00pm		Introduction to Unitarian Universalism (Membership class)
	12:30-3:00pm		Swamp Rose Covenant Group
	3:00-8:00pm		Wine, Chocolate and Cheese Tasting (Auction event)
Tue.	17th	4:00-7:00pm	River of GREENS
Wed.	18th	7:15-9:00pm	bUUKies Book Group

Thu.	19th	6:30-8:00pm	Yoga Class (Facility Rental)
Fri.	20th	8:00-11:00pm	Paul Zisholtz and Aaron Stang & Gary Gonzalez in Concert
Sat.	21st	2:00-4:00pm	Service Leader Training
Sun.	22nd		Earth Day
		10:30-11:30am	Sunday Service
		10:45-11:45am	Sunday Classes
		11:30am-12:30pm	Hospitality Hour
Mon.	23rd	7:30-9:00pm	Women's Group
Thu.	26th	6:30-8:00pm	Yoga Class (Facility Rental)
		7:00-9:00pm	Men's Group
Fri.	27th		Youth CON (Conference)
		7:00-9:00am	Spiritual Arts Group
Sat.	28th		Youth CON (Conference)
Sun.	29th		Youth CON (Conference)
			Flower Communion
			New Member Sunday
		10:30-11:30am	Sunday Service
		10:45-11:45am	Sunday Classes
		11:30am-12:30pm	Hospitality Hour
		1:00-4:00pm	Ladies Tea (Auction event)

MAY HIGHLIGHTS

Sat.	5th		dUUdes and Full Moon Daughters Shark Valley biking trip
Sat.	12th		Volunteer Day at LifeNet4Families Postal Food Drive
Fri.	18th		Hunter Altshul and Joel Zoss in concert
Sat.	19th		Greek OPA Party (Auction event)
Sun.	20th		Congregational Meeting