

WVUU Times

May 2019

West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church



WEST VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Gavel Talk

Diane D'Agostino, President
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I couldn't have agreed more with Kentucky principal Gerry Brooks about the college admissions scandal in a *CNN* on-line article posted April 11, 2019:

"Everybody's just so surprised about this. You know who's not surprised? Every educator in the world. Do you know why? Because this kind of thing happens every day in school."

To me, the only surprising aspect of the scandal was the issue had caught the attention of law enforcement and the system was going to actually prosecute parents.

No doubt parents should have choices as to where they send their children to school. But finding a safer school environment or enrolling a child in a school which can match a student's educational needs better was not the intent of the

parents involved in the college admissions scandal. Instead, these parents wanted their children to have an advantage without the necessary or accurate credentials, forcing out deserving students. *Money and Markets* cites the \$25 million parents spent to gain an advantage could have helped 3,000 students receive free admission for a year at a community college.

Instead, money was paid to William Singer, the mastermind of the scandal, and Mark Riddell, the test whiz who completed the tests. The scandal was able to occur because the system has loopholes in it to help those who have special test-taking needs (*New York Times*, 4/12/19).

(continued on page 3)

Sunday Services

Sunday Services begin at 10:30 a.m.
followed by a light lunch and fellowship.
Child care is available for children ages 3 and up.

May Theme: ***Mystery***

May 5: **Somos America**

Sharon Kopina

Asylum seekers vetted by Homeland Security need food and clothing while they travel to family members. Hear about the border situation and this immigration process.

May 12: **Magnum Mysterium**

Cathy Corbin-Manino

"Love is an essence that defies analysis as does life itself ... It is that which IS and cannot be explained." Ernest Holmes

May 19: **Service Is Our Prayer**

David and Sharon Moore

The Moores will describe their recent experience in Cuba which they think qualifies as service as prayer.

May 26: **Mysterioso Pizzicato**

Cathy Corbin-Manino

"I do believe in an everyday sort of magic -- the inexplicable connectedness we sometimes experience with places, people, works of art, and the like; the eerie appropriateness of moments of synchronicity; the whispered voice, the hidden presence when we think we're alone." Charles de Lint

Who We Are



West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association. We are a welcoming congregation whose mission is provide a safe place for celebrating diversity, drawing inspiration for living better lives, fostering social and environmental justice, and compassionately supporting each other in our spiritual searches.

We are a theologically diverse community who encourages you to seek your own spiritual path. We provide a caring environment for each adult and child to learn more about yourself and your place in the interdependent web of existence. Sunday services celebrate our community, challenge us intellectually, and engage us spiritually.



Gavel Talk

(continued from page 1)

Parents were encouraged to tell their home schools the standardized tests had to be taken at another location due to a family event. Also, taking advantage of special education criterion was a way for parents to have their students receive extra test-taking time.

Where this sense of entitlement comes from in our society is a topic for another day. My concern is what does an instance like this do to our youth? Eileen Kennedy-Moore, psychologist and author, says parents are defining success to their children in very narrow ways when they allow cheating and lying as part of the equation. In addition, they have publicly shown their children they don't have much faith in them.



Author and technical investor James Altucher has a more sobering perspective. He maintains when dishonest

and unqualified people get into schools undeservedly and marry people just like them, mediocrity gets passed on to the next generation. There's little drive to do better.

A professor of psychology at Marywood University, David Palmiter, believes entitlement doesn't allow individuals to gain wisdom about the world and may lead to depression, eating disorders and substance abuse. He has several tips to help parents. My favorites: have children make their beds every day, let them be bored, and keep them humble.

Our children deserve to have the resiliency and old-fashioned grit needed to face their problems, weigh possible options, then take a course of action leading to solutions. Let's give them opportunities to do so.

Take care -- Diane



Hospitality Thanks & Appeal

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

Thanks so much to all you behind the scenes volunteers who ensure we have coffee, food, and clean dishes each week!

Diana Barker is our stocker. We send her a note that we're running low on something like dish soap, and she picks some up at the store and brings it to the kitchen.

Elaine King launders the weekly napkins.

And behind the counter are folks who serve our food and beverage then clean up afterwards. Thanks to our weekly kitchen hosts: Roz Cook, David Moore, Sharon Moore, Morgan Oviatt, Kay Vogt, Doug Pope, and Dorothy Ward.

Thinking of signing up to bring food to Hospitality Hour this summer? Good idea! We need people willing to bring a light repast to enjoy after Sunday Service.

This summer, in keeping with the higher temps and concomitant lower appetites, expect a less robust offering. The food providers will be encouraged to bring food that is simpler for themselves to prepare and the servers to serve, as well as making clean up easier and faster for the hosts so they can get out of the kitchen faster. The fewer the dishes the sooner the hosts can get out into the Arizona summer fun, too.

In summer, we also serve fewer people, so we're thinking food for 25-30 will be plenty.

We're following the KISS method for hot weather food: Keep It Simple Summer. If you are signed up (or would be willing to sign up) for food offerings this summer, consider bringing items like one of the following:

- Caprese salad (stacked tomato, Mozzarella, basil)
- celery stuffed with peanut butter (tuna salad, egg salad, etc.)

- chicken (egg, tuna, etc.) salad on tomato slices
- cold fruit or vegetable soup
- cold quinoa, lentil, farro, chickpea, or pasta salad
- corn/tomato salad (etc.)
- deli meats and cheese (no bread necessary)
- flatbread or small tortilla with salad topping
- frozen egg rolls or spring rolls with sauce
- frozen taquitos and salsa
- fruit and cheese plate
- hummus with veggies
- lettuce leaves to make tuna (or chicken, egg, etc.) salad "sandwiches"
- meatballs with marinara dipping sauce
- nachos (chips with hot cheese sauce)
- panzanella salad
- pizza slices
- potato salad
- quesadillas
- short kababs with meat, cheese, fruit
- tortilla roll-ups sliced in pieces

Oh, and so many more foods that you have served! KISS!

WVUUC Spring Congregational Meeting

Sunday, May 9, 2019

Agenda

Welcome: Determination of quorum (11 needed)

Call to order

Chalice lighting

Approval of December's minutes

Board Report

Treasurer's Report

Bylaw changes:

Term Limits of Board Members

Requirements for Membership

Election of members to Board of Trustees:

President: Emily Whitmore

Vice President/President Elect: vacant

Trustee at Large: Emilie Sulkes

Election of members to Chairs of Committees: No proxy voting allowed

Committee on Ministry	Vacant, not needed presently
Endowment	Vacant, 3 years
Facilities	Noel Johnson, 1st of new 2 year term
Hospitality	Sharon Moore, 1 year
Long Range Planning	Noel Johnson, 1st of new 2 year term
Membership	Terry Mead, 2nd of 2 year term
Newsletter	David Moore, 1 year
Religious Education	Mandy Oviatt, 2nd of 2 year term
Social Action	Vacant, 2 year term
Stewardship	Vacant, 2 year term
Worship Services	Diane D'Agostino, 2nd of 2 year term
Leadership Development	Vacant, 2 year term
Caring Committee	Diane D'Agostino, 2nd of 2 year term

Adjournment:

Fall meeting: December 2019

WVUUC Proposed Bylaw Changes

As a UU Congregation, we support the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) financially through contributions to the Annual Program Fund (APF). This is a tangible expression of our covenant as a member congregation.

This fiscal year the APF is linked to certified expenditures (rather than membership); the UUA has decided this is more responsive to what is happening within congregations and thus links more directly to the congregation's ability to pay.

All Member Congregations of the UUA are required to report their Operating Expenses during the annual Membership Certification. Operating Expenses are based on Prior Year Total Expenses, minus Denominational Contributions, minus Capital Expenses. There are certain adjustments to that formula depending upon cost of living in the district and other factors.

In keeping with these changes, the WVUUC Board is recommending the following bylaw change to be voted on at the Congregational Meeting on May 19, 2019: (Additions are in red; deletions are crossed out)

PART II. MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Article 1. MEMBERSHIP

Section D. Minimum contribution

For the purposes of reporting and record-keeping, members who do not make a monetary contribution ~~at least equal to the suggested fair share of both the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Pacific~~

~~Southwest District~~ **equal to \$10/month or \$120 per year** in one program year and have not attended services nor participated in church activities for at least six months, may be placed in an inactive status by the Board. The Secretary, at the Board's direction, shall send a letter of notification to the member at least two weeks prior to the Board changing the member's status to inactive. An inactive member will be returned to active status at the member's written request.

Additionally, because we are a small congregation, the Board is recommending the following bylaw change regarding serving on the WVUUC Board:

PART III. LEADERSHIP AUTHORITIES AND DUTIES

Article 1. OFFICERS, TRUSTEES-AT-LARGE, VACANCIES, TERMS

Section C. Terms

Each Board member will serve a two-year term. Terms will be staggered so that three trustees will be elected each year. Board members will serve no more than two consecutive terms. After serving two terms, Board members shall be ineligible for election or appointment to the Board for two years. After serving either a full or partial term, a Board member is eligible to serve only one additional full term. **If the pool of candidates is not enough to fill Board positions, term limitations may be waived in order to maintain a fully staffed Board of Trustees.** Newly elected members of the Board shall take office on the first day of ~~June~~ **July** of each fiscal year.

Getting to Know Doug Pope

Sandra Mahoney

s_1mahoney@cox.net

Doug Pope grew up in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio and attended church, Sunday school, and catechism at a Lutheran Church. His father was a plumber, and his mother worked for Goodyear Blimps. He had an adopted brother the same age whose father passed away when both he and Doug were eight.

After high school, Doug started at Ohio State in 1963 with a major in electrical engineering. After getting expelled from there, he attended Franklin University in Columbus for two years. After two more years at Akron University he earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering degree. Soon after graduation he went to work for Western Union as an electrical engineer.

In 1967 Doug moved to Phoenix, working for Western Union first as an engineer who installed Telex interchanges. The Telex network was a public network which used teleprinters to send text-based messages between business all over the world in the period following World War II. In 1969, to avoid serving in Vietnam, he found a

draft deferred job in New York City maintaining the transcontinental telegraph system.



He lived in New Jersey, then later moved to Long Island where he was director of engineering for Vector Associates, a company which made telecommunications equipment for Western Union. He then worked for Brookhaven National Laboratory and married a woman with twin sons. After fifteen years, they divorced, and Doug moved back to Phoenix in 1995 after retirement.

His mother made him promise to do something constructive, so Doug decided to attend church. He came to WVUUC when our congregation met at a YWCA and then at Spirit of

Hope United Methodist Church. He met Dorothy Ward at West Valley, and they have been together since January 1997.

Doug views Unitarian Universalism as a place for mutual fellowship where everyone is welcome and there are no strings attached. For him, the UU Church is a "sanctuary for agnostics." Doug is a member because Dorothy urged him to join and to support the church both financially and by contributing time. He printed the Order of Service for several years and helped rewire some of the modular buildings. He and Dorothy also help with hospitality one Sunday a month.

Electric cars and 4K Ultra High Definition TVs are his hobbies; he and Dorothy have owned several. He sees WVUUC as an excellent support system for his personal AA work and is proud of his seven and half years of sobriety.

UU Principled Minutes

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

Living our seven principles day to day is a challenge as life interferes with our best laid plans. This is a challenge for all faith traditions: how do you keep the spiritual spark going throughout the week, after the glow of the Sunday Service has faded? These principled minutes items are one way to daily reflect on what our church calls us to do.

Principle 1: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

The glue that holds all of our relationships together is the mutual recognition of the desire to be seen, heard, listened to, and treated fairly; to be recognized, understood, and to feel safe in the world. When our identity is accepted and we feel included, we are granted a sense of freedom and independence and a life filled with hope and possibility. And when are given an apology when someone does us harm, we recognize that even when we fall short of being our best selves, there is always a way to reconnect. "I'm sorry" are two of the most powerful words anyone can utter.

Principle 2: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations

Put aside your viewpoint, and try to see things from the other person's point of view. When you do this, you'll realize that other people most likely aren't being evil,

unkind, stubborn, or unreasonable – they're probably just reacting to the situation with the knowledge they have. Once you see why others believe what they believe, acknowledge it. Remember that acknowledgment does not always equal agreement.

Principle 3: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

For Christians, spiritual growth includes increasing your knowledge and understanding of God's word, decreasing your frequency and severity of sin, increasing your practice of Christ-like qualities, and increasing your faith and trust in God. Perhaps the best summary of spiritual growth is becoming more like Jesus.

UUs shouldn't necessarily reject what Christians are about and asking of their faithful. Jesus (the idea or the real man, depending upon your perspective) was a Jew who practiced a kinder, gentler religion. His example of meditation, questioning, and seeking is one we all can support. His examples of how to treat others and accept responsibility are also ones to emulate. We don't have to believe in the divinity of the man or spirit to follow the teachings. Such a path will lead to spiritual growth as a UU.

Principle 4: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

Viktor Frankl, Holocaust survivor and author, is often held up as an example of how we can control our destiny.

(continued on page 9)

Principled Minutes

(continued from page 8)

We identify a purpose in life and then immersively imagine the outcome. Commitment to something that is out there is an essential component toward the free and responsible search for truth and meaning. See where you want to go, then find the path that will get you there.

Principle 5: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large

Liu Xiaobo, human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate who called for political reforms in Communist China, said:

“Hatred is corrosive of a person’s wisdom and conscience: the mentality of enmity can poison a nation’s spirit, instigate brutal life and death struggles, destroy a society’s tolerance and humanity, and block a nation’s progress to freedom and democracy.”

Principle 6: The goal of world community with peace, justice, and liberty for all

The World Café Online Community (www.worldcafecommunity.org) is a place to join with others to discuss issues and

actions for our Principle 6. Their website says: “The World Cafe is a natural & effective way to host meaningful conversations that awaken collective wisdom & engage collaborative action.” Also, they say: “There are a lot of us contributing to positive social change right now - standing in different doorways, but all working from a "central garden" that connects us.” Maybe this is a place for you to connect with others as you explore Principle 6.

Principle 7: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

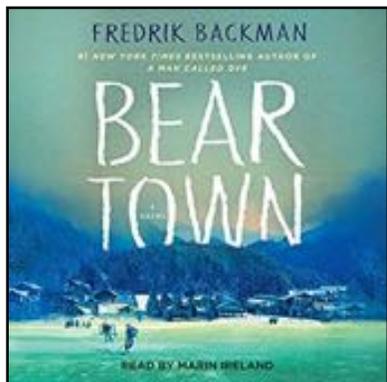
Last week David and I watched *Our Planet*, the recent Netflix series about Earth and its fragility as well as resilience. The film makes very clear how interconnected all species are to all things on Earth and how the delicate balance of interdependence has been threatened by political decisions—across the globe—on conservation and use of natural resources. The figures on species extinction, or near extinction, are chilling. The film is hopeful, too, that with specific interventions we can reverse some of the damage and keep Earth healthy in the long-term. Watch it for astounding photography and amazing information.



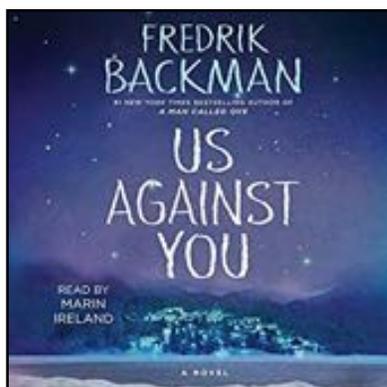
STANDING ON THE SIDE OF

LOVE

Backman, F. (2017). *Beartown*. Newark, NJ: Audible Audiobooks.



Backman, F. (2018). *Us against you*. Newark, NJ: Audible Audiobooks.



Reviewed by Barry Linden

Those of you who know me know that I am a big hockey fan. This is only one reason why I like the two books reviewed here, *Beartown* and *Us Against You* by Fredrik Backman. (Backman also wrote *A Man Called Ove*, which you might be familiar with.)

Beartown is the first book, and you should start with it as this story continues into its sequel, *Us Against You*. These are the best books I have read in several years. Actually, I listened to them, and the narrator on Audible is excellent, reading with drama and emphasis.

Beartown is set in a small town “in the forest” presumably in Sweden, but it could be any small town in any country. The town is obsessed with their hockey teams, much like many small towns are obsessed with their sports teams. Think *Friday Night Lights*. Almost everyone in town is tied to the hockey team in some way.

In addition to the living characters in the book, two other characters are *Beartown*, itself, and hockey. The nature of the town, and probably of many small towns, is a major reason for the plot development. The sport, in this case hockey, also drives the plot.

The plot in *Beartown* surrounds the hockey team, made up of teens and young adults who have finally had a

winning season and will be going to the national championship. The future of the town seems to ride on their shoulders.

They have an exceptional star who is the best anyone has seen. But all the hockey players are well-known in the town and considered stars. They can do anything they want and get away with it. The town reveres them.

Yet no one is perfect, and no one is all bad. This is what you learn in a small town. The “pack,” a group of thugs who intimidate and fight opposing fans, also helps the town in many ways. They support the team, perhaps more than anyone else, and nothing means more to them than the town hockey team. The star of the team is hard-working and well-liked but will do something that tears the town apart.

The town hero, who played in the National Hockey League in Canada, is the manager of the team and a good person.

(continued on page 11)

Media Review

(continued from page 10)

But his own weaknesses lead to trouble in the town. His family is endangered. While his family is important to him, it is not as important as the hockey club. It can't be since hockey is his life.

In these two novels we get to know each character very well. We see their incredible strengths and their terrible darkness. This is true with the non-living characters as well. We explore the nature of communities, the nature of friendship, and the meanings and consequences of actions.

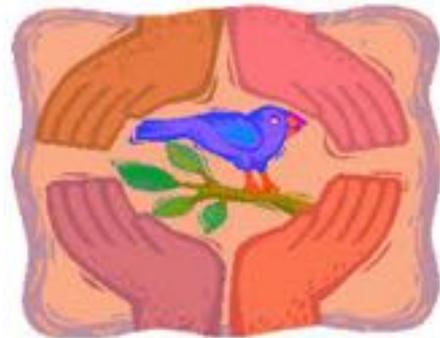
The novels are ultimately about the hero's journey and trial and redemption in each character - even the non-living ones. The plot is forceful, the characterizations dead-on, and the morality nuanced and vital.

While I don't usually like character-driven books, the plot in these was enough to keep me interested. These are the kinds of books that will keep you thinking about them long after you have put them down.



The National Organization for Women (NOW) Sun City/West Valley Chapter will meet Wednesday, May 1, 1:00 pm at the UU Church of Surprise, 17540 N. Avenue of the Arts, Surprise, AZ. The speaker will be Rebecca Rodriguez who will speak on hospice family care. Everyone welcome. For more information, call 623-972-6273 or visit our website: aznow-scvv.org

March Financial Highlights



Total Operating Income - \$4,669
 Pledge Income - \$2,824
 Fundraising - \$840
 Sunday Plate - \$705
 Sound System - \$300
 Total Operating Expense - \$2,911
 Worship Services - \$500
 Facilities Maintenance - \$294
 UUA/PSWD Fair Share - \$330
 Payroll - \$546
 Net Operating Income - \$1,758

Web Presence



Go to this online calendar for WVUU events:

westvalleyuu.org/events/calendar/



Keep up with WVUU church and member news, post comments, and share articles and photos with friends at these websites:

Facebook Group
facebook.com/groups/wvuuc

Facebook Fan Page
facebook.com/WestValleyUnitarianUniversalistChurch

Pin and browse UU-related visuals at this site:

pinterest.com/pin/242772236133017855/

UU Principles and Sources



Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven principles:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all; and
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalist principles are drawn from six sources:

1. Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
2. Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
3. Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
4. Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
5. Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit; and
6. Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.