



# UUMAN TIMES

Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North

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## IN THE INTERIM: Transcendental Journey



ting in which Transcendentalism might actually work. I was wrapping up my session on Emerson and Thoreau, one of a four-part series on Transcendentalism for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Clemson University.

They already knew what I do for a living, I mused back. I see the imprint of Transcendentalist thinking on Unitarian Universalism and how our congregations operate as faith communities. The Transcendentalist movement of the 1830s and 40s was heavy on Unitarian ministers and disgruntled former Unitarian ministers like Ralph Waldo Emerson. While our congregations face many of the same day to day realities that other organized religions do, in addressing them we start out from a slightly different perspective, one where there is no dogmatic seam between the divine and the secular. As UU musician Peter Mayer sings, ♪everything is holy now.♪

Transcendentalism grew up in a post-Civil War capitalistic culture to which it was vigorously opposed. "Gilded Age" extravagance had led to a displaced class of low-wage factory workers, many of them immigrants. The Transcendentalists' impulse was deeply democratic. Those who kept faith with organized religion were mainly Unitarian. Those who viewed organized religion as an impediment were what sociologists sometimes refer to as SBNR (Spiritual But Not Religious). There were two ways to be a Transcendentalist. Either you were an uncompromising individualist (Ralph Waldo Emerson), or you saw the unity of humankind as key to social betterment for all (Margaret Fuller). Both parties revered the natural world. (Henry David Thoreau was an icon in his own time.) Is any of this starting to sound familiar?

First published in 1873, Louisa May Alcott's "Transcendental Wild Oats" is a rather hilarious fictionalized tale of her father Bronson Alcott's failed utopian venture, the Fruitlands community. Louisa was almost eleven years old when the Alcott family moved to Fruitlands in 1843. Thirty years later, she

### Transcendental Wild Oats

*Truth lies at the bottom of a well, Sister Hope, said Brother Timon. That's the reason we seldom get at it, I suppose, replied Mrs. Hope.*

- Louisa May Alcott

I've tried, the woman in the front row mused. I can't imagine an institutional setting

made gentle fun of her father and his partner in lunacy, Charles Lane (Brother Timon). Neither Lane nor Bronson Alcott possessed the agricultural skills needed to make a spiritual Eden of a remote, dilapidated farm and orchard northwest of Concord, Massachusetts. Mrs. Alcott shouldered nearly all the house and farm work, most of the time with remarkably understanding good humor.

As "Transcendental Wild Oats" closes, Abel Lamb (Bronson Alcott) realizes the dream of Fruitlands has failed. He takes to his bed in despair, deciding to Leave all to God, and die by inches. When her tears fall to no effect, the ever-pragmatic Hope Lamb (Mrs. Alcott) resigns herself to a pending funeral. But the strong angels who sustain and teach perplexed and troubled souls came and went...working miracles within... Too feeble to rise...and in the darkness and solitude of that memorable night [Abel] ate and drank what was to him the bread and wine of a new communion, a new dedication of heart and life to the duties that were left him when the dreams fled.

None of that happened. Fruitlands did fail, but Bronson Alcott did not shelve his dreams. He went on to semi-success as a schoolmaster and poet, both in the Transcendentalist mode. Her mother's daughter, the also-pragmatic Louisa May, probably fabricated Abel's deathbed scene in a nod to popular taste for Victorian melodrama. Bronson Alcott's idealism was too sturdy to succumb to a single failure. More likely he supposed the world simply wasn't ready for Utopia yet. Surely the day would come.

When I read "Transcendental Wild Oats" I'd just spent a couple of weeks amid the florid prose of that era. I knew Bronson Alcott hadn't despaired himself to death, but I hadn't picked up on his daughter's Victorian flourish. Instead I glimpsed Transcendentalism's legacy to Unitarian Universalism, embodied in Abel Lamb's restoration to hope through the transformative power of love for his family, and for the world of ideas and ideals that nourished Bronson Alcott throughout his vivid post-Fruitlands life.

May it be so for us all.

- Rev. Cynthia Prescott

# Membership Corner

## Sonova Balli & Tiffany Gordon



Both of us are teachers and we're engaged to be married. We're very excited about becoming members of UUMAN. We came from different backgrounds but both came together in search of a congregation that was accepting of us as part of the LGBTQ community. When we found UUMAN, it was wonderful to receive a warm welcome and be accepted. Knowing that we will have a community that will support us and our future family is amazing and we can't wait to get to know everyone.

## Brian and Robbie Kohn

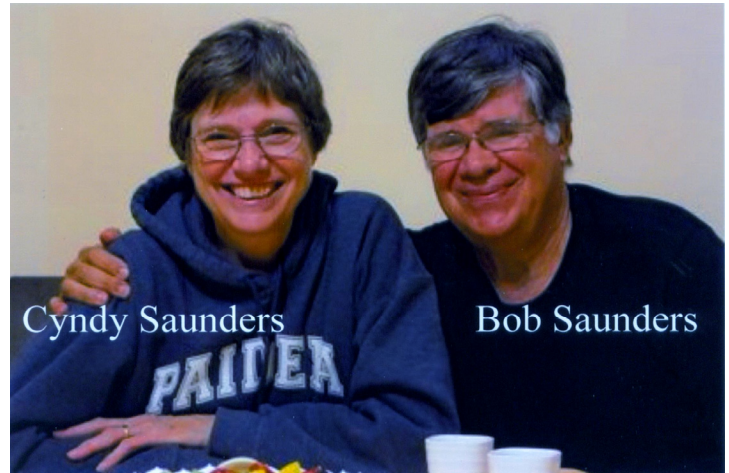


Brian joins UUMAN after six years with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading (Massachusetts) where he served as summer worship coordinator and small group ministry coordinator. In addition, Brian was an avid participant in UU theology and UU history adult learning opportunities, and enjoyed being the assistant scone baker at the annual church fair. Born in Brooklyn into a Jewish family, his religious perspective is now best typified by the Peter Mayer lyric, "Everything is holy now." By day, Brian is system architect of a compliance management software system. He lives in the Crabapple area with his wife Robbie and their super-sweet cats, Maia and Theia.

Robbie considers herself a lifelong UU although she has only been a member of a UU church for the last six years. She recently moved to Roswell from Massachusetts where she served her local UU church in a variety of roles including membership team and chair of the fellowship team (similar to UUMAN's Hospitality Committee). Robbie

works full time as a business analyst for a software development company, and she's enjoying being back in the South after a 30-year absence. She lives with her husband, Brian, and two cats in Roswell.

## Bob & Cyndy Saunders



We're Ohioans by birth, but we spent our adult lives in Connecticut. Bob began his career working for Travelers Insurance. But he found his passion and professional satisfaction when he returned to school at age 50 to get an MA in Special Education, and began teaching high school students who were unable to function in public school alternate programs. I taught 8th grade language arts and literature, the perfect subject for exploring all the difficult and confusing issues that challenge adolescents. In 2004, I was given the chance to teach in Jiangmen, China for a month, and China has become a fascinating new chapter in our lives.

We retired to Atlanta in 2010 to be close to our daughter and her family, including two fascinating grandchildren who keep us happy and busy. Our son has lived in Shanghai for eight years, satisfying his passion for music by playing in a band there.

Georgia has given us many things, but most unexpected and most enjoyed are the hiking trails in the Georgia mountains and the calm they provide. At UUMAN we've found a community of people who are always interesting and always growing, and we look forward to being a part of that.

# Gifts That Keep on Giving

Can't think of what to buy for a special event? Don't stress, just write a check to UUMAN! The Life Events Gifting Committee will send the person being honored a note to let them know of your thoughtfulness and you will receive an acknowledgement of your contribution.

Life Events Gifting is the perfect way to let friends and family know you are thinking of them as they experience joys or sorrows. For more information please contact Jan Wilson at

[janbillwilson@msn.com](mailto:janbillwilson@msn.com)



# FROM THE GARDEN: SPRING IS HERE!

A Special Appeal to All UUMANites:

Please see the information elsewhere in this newsletter regarding the special "Spruce up UUMAN" day on Saturday, April 18. We can use everyone's help!

— Claire Sullivan [cbsullivan@bellsouth.net](mailto:cbsullivan@bellsouth.net)

P. S. to the Gardeners: We will also be having our usual work days on Monday April 13 and Monday April 27 this month.



Forsythia



Yellow Daffodil Bud



White Daffodils with Yellow Trumpets



Yellow Daffodil Unfurled



A Stand of Yellow Daffodils



Narcissus



A Stand of White Daffodils

# Spruce up UUMAN Grounds and Garden Day



## Life Celebrations

We want to commemorate the happy occasions in the lives of our UUMAN members and other friends of UUMAN. We are looking for Naming Ceremonies, Graduations, Marriages, Anniversaries, Retirements, and Birthdays.

Please submit the information about your special day, in the month prior to the event, to Claire Sullivan at [cbsullivan@bellsouth.net](mailto:cbsullivan@bellsouth.net)

We will be having a special “spruce up UUMAN” work day on Saturday, April 18, with setup starting at 9:00 a.m. We are renting a wood chipper, which will be delivered around 10:00 a.m., to clean up the grounds at UUMAN, particularly the area to the south of Discovery Hall and the playground area and to use those chips in the garden. Our rain date is Saturday, May 2.

The Men’s Group, the Grounds Crew, and the Gardening Group are working in concert to get this job done. Our hope, though, is that we can receive the help of as many members of UUMAN as possible to move the debris to the chipper and then, using tarps, move the chips to the areas needed to cover all the front gardens. The more people we have, the quicker the job will be done! We don’t expect to work beyond 3:00 p.m.

If you do decide to help, we suggest that you wear long sleeves and long pants, sturdy shoes, and work gloves, in order to protect yourself from unfriendly plants and insects. If you have extra tarps, hand saws, or chain saws, please bring those with you. If you are susceptible to bug bites and sunburn, please bring your own insect repellent and sunscreen.

We will provide lunch and drinks, to keep everyone energized and hydrated. We realize that many of you can’t spend all day at this, but even an hour or so would be a terrific help! We’ll all be able to take pride in the beauty of our grounds!

Please let me know if you can help. Thanks!

Claire Sullivan  
UUMAN Gardening Group  
[cbsullivan@bellsouth.net](mailto:cbsullivan@bellsouth.net)

Date	Celebration
4/5	Chris Algren is celebrating a birthday
	Jason Hagood is celebrating a birthday
4/7	Violet F. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
4/9	Marianne Walker, Ilona’s mother, is celebrating her birthday
4/13	Liz and Diego Garcia are celebrating their 11th wedding anniversary
4/16	Suzanne and Marlon Banerian are celebrating their 49th wedding anniversary
	Dan Ben-David is celebrating a birthday
4/17	Sophie D. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
4/18	Marlon Banerian is celebrating a birthday
4/20	Joel S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
4/24	Sue Yochum is celebrating a birthday
4/25	With hope and joy, Dan Ben-David and Carole Herman will get married here at UUMAN!
4/27	Dirk and Anne Bender adopted Danielle 14 years ago!
	John Algren is celebrating a birthday



## A Month of Sundays

Date	Topic	Speaker
4/5/15	<p><b>Seeking Easter in a Good Friday World</b></p> <p>Unitarian Universalists tend to be so ambivalent about Easter that our celebrations focus mainly on the triumph of spring over winter. There's nothing wrong with that, but this morning let's add a dimension.</p>	Rev. Cynthia Prescott
4/12/15	<p><b>A UU's Personal Coming of Age: #Selma50</b></p> <p>As a sheltered, suburban daughter of the South, I was never taught, growing up, this Southern history. Come with me as we ride to Selma with activists who were leaders in 1965 and before. Experience being in the minority as you spend three days on the bus, one of the few Euro Americans, as Mark Morrison-Reed (The Selma Awakening) identifies me, and wanting to fully share this experience across color lines. Acquire a growing sense of the nature of risk: putting your job, your home, and your life on the line for the right to vote in the 1960's, and consider the scars that remain among both races today. Reflecting on this trip with the SCLC W.O.M.E.N's group and the family of Rev. James Reeb last month, I find more questions than answers—and that's OK. Where is the place for our UU pride over our involvement and sacrifices fifty years ago, and where does that direct us now?</p>	Lay Speaker Paula Watson
4/19/15	<p><b>Faith in Action Sunday: For the Earth Forever Turning</b></p> <p>A multi-generational recognition of Earth Day (April 22).</p>	Rev. Cynthia Prescott
4/26/15	<p><b>Secular, Sacred</b></p> <p>A concept worth keeping. First dictionary definition of secular is simply, "Worldly rather than spiritual". Even UU spirituality takes a worldly approach to ideas and practices commonly called "religious" elsewhere. Bob Mihalik, winner of the minister's 2015 Heart's Desire Auction sermon requested this</p>	Rev. Cynthia Prescott

## April Events

Date	Event
<p><b>Humanism</b></p> <p>2nd Sunday of each month, after the service, in the sanctuary.</p>	<p><b>21st Century Humanism</b> focuses on the philosophy of mankind as the center of all things, informs members of Humanism's nature and history, and emphasizes free and frank discussion of the effect on humanity of past and present events, safe from the influence of contravening public opinion. For more information, contact John Peltier at <a href="mailto:peltier.john@gmail.com">peltier.john@gmail.com</a></p>
<p>Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 in Discovery Hall</p>	<p><b>Circle of Women</b> We aim to develop a warm nurturing circle of trust where we can share ourselves and our lives.</p> <p>Contact Kate Hudson <a href="mailto:hudsonkd@bellsouth.net">hudsonkd@bellsouth.net</a> or Linda Etheridge <a href="mailto:l etheridge1@gmail.com">l etheridge1@gmail.com</a></p>
<p>Wednesdays from 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>UUMAN's Painting Group</b> Come paint with us in a relaxed atmosphere with a glass of wine. All are welcome. There is a fee but half is donated to UUMAN.</p>
<p>Weekly on Wednesdays at 12:15</p>	<p><b>Daytimers</b> The Daytimers group discusses contemporary, thought-provoking topics such as current political issues or social trends that may affect everyone at some level. All are invited to attend. For information, contact Dan Ben-David at <a href="mailto:dan@uuman.org">dan@uuman.org</a></p>
<p>Fourth Saturday of the month at 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>The Common Grounds Coffee House</b> <i>Connecting people who love to play music with those who love to listen!</i></p> <p>Doors open at 7 pm (except April this year it is the 3rd Saturday). Live music and delicious refreshments, \$5 suggested donation, held in the Sanctuary.</p>
<p>Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary</p>	<p><b>Centering at UUMAN</b> Silent meditation Saturday mornings at UUMAN. Please come at 9:10 for some basic instruction if it is your first time. The meditation itself begins promptly 9:30. Please be in your seats on time. Those who wish to may stay after for 30 to 45 minutes of discussion about our experiences.</p> <p>For more information, contact Carolyn Bommarito <a href="mailto:campoften@aol.com">campoften@aol.com</a></p>

**ABOUT THE UUMANTimes:** The UUMANTimes is the newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North (UUMAN), located at 11420 Crabapple Road, Roswell, GA 30075. We go live with each issue by the first Sunday of the month; deadline for submissions is typically close of business on the 20th of the month preceding the issue date, although we have been known to accept submissions within a reasonable time before publishing. Please email your news articles and artwork to Becky at [newsletter@uuman.org](mailto:newsletter@uuman.org)

**For more information about events, see the UUMAN Events Calendar at [www.uuman.org](http://www.uuman.org).**