

# THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

121 North Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 502, Amherst Massachusetts 01004

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**May 2023**

**Join our Reproductive  
Justice Action on  
Saturday, May 13  
(Page 4)**

**Meet our newest members!  
(Pages 5-6)**

**UUs in "Considering Matthew  
Shepard" May 21  
(Page 8)**

## Important Information

### **STREET ADDRESS:**

121 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002

### **MAILING ADDRESS:**

P.O. Box 502, Amherst, MA 01004-0502

*The following staff can be reached by email or by calling the office and leaving a message: 413-253-2848*

**MINISTER: The Reverend Rachael Hayes**

[revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org)

**CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:**

Lea Douville [office@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:office@uusocietyamherst.org)

**Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**

**DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**

Andrew Coate [dre@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:dre@uusocietyamherst.org)

**Office Hours: Wednesday 9:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.,**

**Sunday 10:00 - Noon, evenings as requested**

**YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR:**

Collee Williams [youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org)

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:**

Brenda Miller [music@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:music@uusocietyamherst.org)

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

[board@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:board@uusocietyamherst.org)

[link to board minutes](#)

**Co-Presidents:**

John Gerber and Anne Moore

**Clerk:**

Louise Grosslein

**Treasurer:**

Eric Murphy

**Members At Large:**

Carolyn Cave

Sue Kelly

Deeya Pavelle

## NEWSLETTER

Copy Editor:

Janis Gray

Calendar Creator:

John Foster

Deadline for submissions: 20th of each month.

Email them to Janis Gray (contact Lea in the office if you need her email address).

Please understand we cannot cut and paste PDF files into the newsletter, so submissions should either be Word documents, rich text files or written in the body of the email. Submissions may be edited to save space or to maintain a consistent style.

Thank you!

Printed on recycled paper



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## Schedule of Services

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We encourage you to join us in person for our hybrid services, understanding that we still wear high-quality masks when we are indoors together. To attend online, Click <https://bit.ly/3eGKxFj> Meeting ID: 998 3789 9241 PW: 432607 Or call in +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID: 998 3789 9241

**Sunday, May 7, 10:30 A.M. – *Beltane***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes, Andrew Coate, DRE, and Sarah Rosehill**

Let's celebrate Beltane and the fullness of spring with a Maypole!

**Sunday, May 14, 10:30 A.M. – *Close as the Skin***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

On Mother's Day, we revisit the story of Ruth and Naomi.

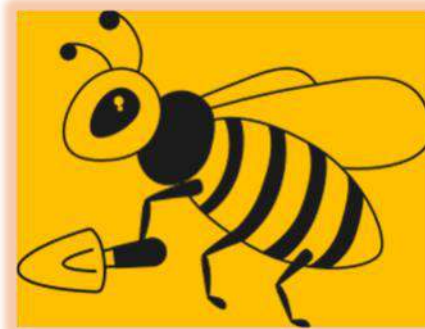
**Sunday, May 21, 10:30 A.M. – *Correspondence with our Better Angels***

**Alyson Bull**

This service is inspired by the poetry of Rev. Sean Parker Dennison.

**Sunday, May 28, 10:30 A.M. – *The People in the Place***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**



### Check out the UUSA YouTube Channel!

Original content from our Sunday services are now uploaded to our website, [uusocietyamherst.org](https://www.uusocietyamherst.org), with optional closed captioning! To view them, click [here](#) — and don't forget to SUBSCRIBE!

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## Dedicated Offerings

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From September to June, our Society donates each month to a dedicated offering recipient and splits 50/50 every Sunday's offering plate with the recipient organization. Since fall, our members have generously contributed the following: \$1,025 to Letcher County in Eastern KY; \$875 to the Hospice of the Fisher Home; \$2,100 to Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts; \$950 for Local Energy Advocates; \$1000 to Ohketeau Cultural Center; and \$1,375 for Rise Above. We will report in a future newsletter what we collected in April for The Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership.

The Dedicated Offering recipient for May - June will be the [Wildflower Alliance](#). Established in 2005 under a different name, the Wildflower Alliance supports healing and empowerment for people who have been incapacitated by psychiatric diagnosis, trauma, extreme states, problems with substances and other life interrupting challenges. At the heart of their work is their important peer to peer support — ordinary people who've experienced similar problems communicating with one another. The Alliance presently has locations in Springfield, Greenfield, Holyoke and Northampton, at which different services are offered depending on the location. These include peer-run respite services, drop-in centers for peer support, snacks and coffee, quiet rooms, art and music supplies and computer and fax machines.

Please give generously to help the Wildflower Alliance support challenged people in their daily lives. Thank you.

Mary Beth Seminario

Dedicated Offering Committee member

### *More about the Dedicated Offering Committee*

The Dedicated Offering Committee (DOC) selects non-profit organizations that our Society will support with donations from our Sunday collections September - June. We split our collections 50/50 with them. In turn,

our UU Society is enriched by learning about organizations we did not know about that are helping enrich our world.

The DOC meets in August and as needed throughout the year to select the recipients for the coming year. A different organization is chosen for every month. The DOC solicits members for names of specific organizations and asks they complete a specific DO form, which is available in the office or on-line at <https://forms.gle/hypyMGzMJHgeAVf26>. A representative from a chosen organization is asked to speak about it on the First Sunday of its month.

We welcome new members. If you are interested in learning more about or joining the DOC, please contact any of the people listed below.

Members: **Anne Perkins, Linda Honan, Carolyn Holstein, Mary Beth Seminario, Pat Brinkman, and Linda Callahan.**

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## Co-President's Report

The UUA General Assembly is scheduled to be held in June, both online and in person in Pittsburgh, PA. This year, there will be an initial vote on proposed changes to the Purposes section of Article II of the UUA Bylaws. The Unitarian Universalist Association, like many progressive faith communities, continues to struggle with deeply rooted cultural norms relating to white supremacy culture. In referring to their ongoing efforts to dismantle racism and other oppressions, the UUA claims to have “...had many starts and stops in this work.”

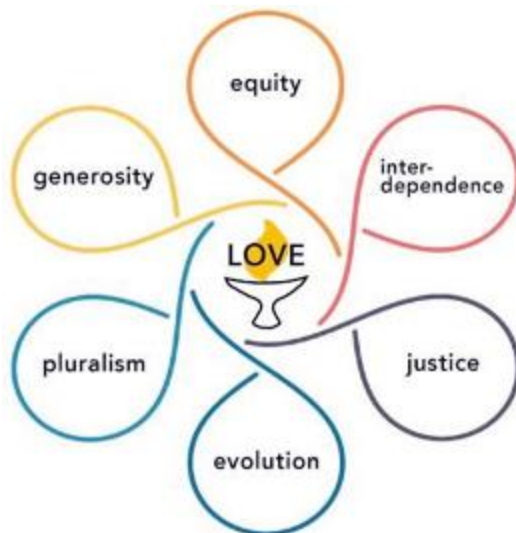
In a [document describing the proposed changes to Article II](#) of the UUA bylaws, they acknowledge that some of their efforts have garnered “great pushback from the dominant culture.” This pushback is evident in the well-organized criticism of the proposed changes to Article II. It might be useful for us to understand both the proposal and the pushback, as there seems to be “a bit of a kerfuffle” emerging within the UUA.

As background, the Article II Study Commission was charged by the UUA Board to review the principles and purposes statement in Article II, to root its work in Love, and:

- Create a living document that “challenges Unitarian Universalists to place the liberation... of all, at the center of our lives,”
- Center “our commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism, and
- Create a document that “guides us in the transformation of ourselves, our communities and our faith.”

After two years, the Article II Study Commission has published its [preliminary recommendations](#) for review by UU congregations. The current draft would replace the written list of 7 UUA principles with a more integrated visual image of UU values and associated descriptions which incorporate the 8<sup>th</sup> principle and puts love at the center of the presentation.

The revised bylaw states, “Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love. Inseparable from one another, these shared values are:



Paraphrasing Dr. Cornel West's quote “justice is what love looks like in public,” perhaps its useful to think of

this image as suggesting that equity, interdependence, justice, evolution, pluralism and generosity **is what love looks like in action**. In any case, this proposed revision represents a significant change in language from our beloved 7 UUA principles which were approved in 1985. It might be worthwhile for each of us to try to understand the proposal.

Toward that end, our congregation is committed to helping us review the proposed changes, which our delegates to the UUA General Assembly will have the opportunity to vote on in June. If you are interested in serving as a voting delegate, please contact **Reverend Rachael**.

In community,

John Gerber, co-president

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## Reproductive Justice Action Group

The UUSA Reproductive Justice Action Group (also known as RJAG) is happy to report that we raised more than \$11,000 for the Brigid Alliance at our March 26 fundraising event! Thank you to the many UU folks who volunteered and UUs who showed up for the event and contributed to the Brigid Alliance.

### WHAT'S NEXT:

RJAG has made connections with a number of local networks working on Reproductive Justice, and we are getting ready to participate in an action in Greenfield, Mass on Saturday, May 13. People will gather at the Greenfield Commons at 10:00 am, and then march to the fake pregnancy center, "Alternatives Pregnancy Center" at 466 Main Street. This event is sponsored by FCCPR, River Valley DSA Reproductive Justice Working Group, Generation Ratify Amherst, Indivisible Northampton-Swing Left WM and the Feminist Action Team of Indivisible Mass Coalition.

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## Religious Education Ministry



**Youth Group:** After a busy March, our Youth Group members from Amherst and Northampton were on break for April due to Easter Sunday and the Spring Break in Massachusetts schools. We reconvened on April 23 to debrief the Youth Group service. Our next meeting will be Sunday, May 7 from 2:00-4:00 P.M. to continue to plan for the upcoming camping trip May 19-21 at Rowe Camp in Hawley (see below!), and will play some games. If you would like to be added to the Youth Group listserv to receive more information on the upcoming camping trip weekend, contact **Collee Williams** at [youthfulusnf@gmail.com](mailto:youthfulusnf@gmail.com)

**Calling UUSA Adults:** Youth Group camping chaperones needed! We need four chaperones to team up with youth advisors and the youth director to cover late night shifts. The shifts are Friday night and Saturday night, 12 midnight-3:00 A.M., 3:00-6:00 A.M, around the campfire. It is a beautiful spot, you are welcome to camp and eat with us, we can provide a chaperone tent. Please contact **Emma Livingston** if you are able to help us out. We appreciate your support of our Youth Program.

**Young Adult Group:** The Young Adult Group helped to cook a ham roast with mac'n'cheese for the Easter Sunday meal with the Interfaith Shelter. Next month we will be having our second-to-last meeting of the year, date and time TBD. Collee has sent out a poll to find the best meeting time to the Young Adult Group listserv. If you would like to be added to the listserv, you can contact Collee at [youthfulusnf@gmail.com](mailto:youthfulusnf@gmail.com).



*A Time for All Ages with DRE Andrew Coate,  
Easter Sunday*



## *New Member Recognition Ceremony April 30, 2023*

**Rene Andersen**  
**Emma Livingston**  
Ollie MacFadden  
**Jennifer Albury**  
**Kay Flatten**  
**Gwen Oulman-Brennan**  
**Melanie Holmberg**

signed April 10, 2022  
signed April 10, 2022  
signed October 30, 2022  
signed February 13, 2023  
signed February 13, 2023  
signed February 13, 2023  
signed April 9, 2023

*[bolded names have bios included here]*

Rene Andersen writes: *"I'm one of those folks whose life changed in a positive way during quarantine. I was "caught" March 2020 on the SC coast gazing at the horizon and listening to the ebb and flow of the waves. Rather than come north where the numbers were higher than in the Carolinas, my friend and I moved to the Blue Ridge mountains until we returned to the ocean in the fall. For that time I was enveloped in quiet and calm. The stillness gave me an opportunity to reflect on what was important to me as the age lines on my face deepened and my body was slowing down.*

*About this time, Anne Perkins encouraged me to attend a UUSA zoom service to hear Naomi Yanis speak. Her powerful message on social justice resonated for me and I attended the following week and the following. Eventually I summoned up the courage to stay for the small group discussion at the close of the service.*

*I'd been seeking a welcoming community of like-minded people with a philosophical bent who were actively involved in peace and justice work. I found my tribe at UUSA. On April 10 I celebrated my birthday by attending my first in person service with Anne P who had invited me to listen to Naomi and become familiar with the UUSA congregation. That day had been designated as a "book signing" Sunday, becoming a member of the community.*

*Long having identified as not belonging to anything or anywhere, on that Sunday I let go of that narrative and joined this beloved community of seekers and activists, ordinary people all. I gave myself the "gift of belonging" as my friend Naomi said when I signed the book. Thank you all for being welcoming, kind & curious."*



Emma Livingston writes: *"I grew up in the RE programs at the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, MN and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign, IL. UUSA became my spiritual home online in 2020-21, and the decision to become a member felt like a natural progression as I started to get more involved. UU communities throughout my life have been how I stay grounded and practice living into my values. This year at UUSA I have been an adviser for the UUSA/USNF youth group and have enjoyed Small Groups and helping with tech for services. Like many in the Valley, I came to the area for school and put down roots, and I now live in Northampton with my roommate and our cat. My spare time is often spent dancing, knitting, reading, star-gazing, or organizing and advocating for the asexual and aromantic communities."*

Jen Albury writes: *"My name is Jen, I'm originally from New Jersey but when relocating after living and growing a family for 10 years in Guadalajara Mexico, we chose Amherst as our new home because my grandparents and mom are from the community! We have two daughters, Julieta and Liliana who are excited to play and learn here. I am the multilingual education director for Holyoke Public Schools, and my husband is chef and owner of Mexcalito. We are so excited to learn in our new community with you as this is a new path for us. And we are especially grateful for how accepting and supportive this beautiful this community has already been!"*



Kay Flatten writes: *"I came to Massachusetts from Wales in January. My wife and I chose Amherst for a variety of reasons. We are working at living lighter on this Earth. This includes no car and living close to what we need to meet our needs. Thus my bicycle (Alice) who brings me to UUSA most Sundays. I love sport (Pickleball & golf) and nature (hiking & camping). Come join me June 13-15th at nearby Tully Lake Campground."*

Gwen Oulman-Brennan writes: *"Thank you for welcoming me and my son, Ziah (6). We first visited a few times before 2020. We were grateful to be included in the Zoom RE gatherings early in the pandemic. When Jacy and Rebecca began hosting in-person outdoor Sunday school at the Wildwood playground and a parent group, Ziah and I really began to feel connected to the community. Now that we are meeting in the sanctuary in person, I am happy to begin to connect with all ages of the larger community. I am an artist, trained as a painter and metal smith. In the last few years, I have been designing and laser-cutting wooden educational materials for children and have a small business."*



Melanie Holmberg writes *"When I left my Boston area homes, in June 2022, I started my search for a new residence somewhere in New England, where my son, Tim Zoidis, now intends to continue to reside. I was looking for an area that had natural beauty, arts & cultural offerings and, most important to me, where I could find people who share and try to live values that are similar to mine. My values have been strongly influenced by my experiences as a lifelong UU. After I moved to Leeds in November I began searching websites for UU congregations that are within an hour of my new home. UUSA spoke to me for all the justice work, personal growth and connection opportunities and, governance as a sociocracy. After attending my first wonderful service by Reverend Rachel and, with my friend Larry Schwartz, being so warmly welcomed by all we met, I came away with the delicious feeling of being home. How could I not join?"*

***A heartfelt welcome to all of our new members***

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## Finance Committee

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The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, May 8, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.

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## Social Events

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**The Women's Circle** is a supportive and social group of UUSA women and open to all. We meet at noon on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, sometimes in person, sometimes on Zoom. If you are not already on the email notification list, please contact **Lea** in the office to request the link — or to ask her to let **Sophie Rogers** know you want to be added to that list!

**The Men's Breakfast** With Kelly's Restaurant temporarily closed as it transitions to a new owner, our no-agenda Men's Group that meets each Wednesday at 7:00 A.M. is gathering instead at The Stables, 326 Russell St. (Route 9) in Hadley. Contact **Pete Rogers** if you have questions.

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## Here's looking at yoUU!

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UUSA's Communication Team invites you to *share brief tidings* with our congregation about births in your family, graduations, weddings, changes in jobs, or other significant events in your life. If you have something you'd like to see in a future newsletter, send a note to our editor, **Janis Gray** — with the knowledge that your info will be accessible to the public. since the newsletter is posted on our website. (Reach out to **Lea** in the office if you do not have Janis's contact information.)

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## Our Caring Ministries

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Our Minister **Rachael**, members of the **Caring Circle**, and **Pastoral Care Team** are here for you in Beloved Community.

We are here when you would welcome a phone or in-person visit, a ride, some nourishing soup or a casserole, a listening heart, perhaps a caring fellow parishioner who may ask, "How goes it with your soul?" These are just a few ways we share our lives and our faith with each other in beloved community.

Our **Caring Circle** coordinator is **Catharine Porter**. Please contact her or your own Caring Circle Person for simple needs. Other Caring Circle members are **Jeanne Ballantine, Linda Callahan, Carolyn Cave, Lauren Croce, Kate Dahlstedt, Sophie Hermann, Gabriela Horvay, Mary Latham, Karen Mack, Lynn Sussman, and Gordon Wyse**.

Our **Pastoral Care Team** Coordinators are **Fran Plumer and Rob Fuderich**. Please contact anyone on the team for more complex or personal needs. Other members are **Charlie Atwood, Rev. Rachael Hayes, Carol Johnson, Pete Rogers, and Rev. Elizabeth Alcaide**.

Spring is here! Bidding you peace and love as we journey toward wholeness.

Why, it was wonderful! Why, all at once  
there were leaves,  
Leaves at the end of a dry stick, small, alive  
Leaves out of wood, it was wonderful,  
You can't imagine. They came by the wood path  
And the earth loosened, the earth relaxed,  
There were flowers  
Out of the earth! Think of it! And oak trees  
Oozing new green at the tips of them and flowers  
Squeezed out of clay, soft flowers, limp  
Stalks flowering. Well, it was like a dream,  
It happened so quickly, all of a sudden  
It happened –

from "The Sowing of the Dead Corn"  
Archibald MacLeish (1892-1982)

Image by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

## In Our Larger Community

**Ron and Louise Grosslein** are singing with Da Camera Singers this spring and will be performing an oratorio, *Considering Matthew Shepard*, on Sunday, May 21 at Greenfield High School, 4:00 P.M. Writes Louise:

“It is an amazing piece of music, remembering Matthew Shepard, who was a gay student murdered in Wyoming in 1998. Local author and poet Leslea Newman had been hired to speak at the University of Wyoming for an LGBTQ event. She arrived on the day Matt died, spoke anyway, and subsequently wrote a book of poetry about Matt. Craig Hella Johnson later set her poetry to music, added some other poems, too, and wrote the Oratorio we’re going to be singing.

Parts of it are light-hearted, other parts are difficult, and parts are joyful, believe it or not. There is a variety of musical styles, which Craig Hella Johnson chose on purpose with the idea that no matter who was in the audience, each person would find some part of the piece where they loved the musical style. And that they would know, if the style of a particular movement wasn’t their favorite, that someone else was probably thoroughly enjoying it.

In addition to the wonderful Da Camera choir and beautiful solos by several of our members, we will have some hired soloists and a small orchestra, in addition to our amazing accompanist. **Jon Solins (Polly Peterson's** husband) is singing a solo. **Louise** has a three-measure solo with a few other people that you’ll miss if you blink. (She will NOT be blinking! She will be paying close attention!) There are also narrators who you will recognize: Stan Rosenberg, Leslea Newman, Mark Auerbach, Metta Dael, Jill Kaufman and Bill Newman.

I know we all have lots of things on our calendars already. If you have time on May 21, I hope you will join us. It's an amazing, hard, wonderful thing to be singing this music and clearly really important to honor Matthew Shepard and witness for rights of all minority groups, especially these days. And, truly, the music is moving and beautiful.”

Da Camera Singers Present the Western Mass Premiere of

# Considering Matthew Shepard

by Craig Hella Johnson

Introduction by Lesléa Newman

Guest Narrators: Mark Auerbach, Metta Dael, Jill Kaufman, Bill Newman, and Stan Rosenberg

**May 21, 2023 at 4:00pm**

**Greenfield High School**  
**21 Barr Ave, Greenfield, MA**

**Open to all, Free**

Generously supported by  Mass Cultural Council

This work celebrates Matt's life, explores the events of his murder in 1998, and asks us to consider how we can rid the world of homophobia and hate crimes. Donations collected at the door will be shared with the Matthew Shepard Foundation

(\*Please note this work contains mature content and includes a homophobic slur)



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## Here We Have Gathered

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*Here we have gathered, gathered side by side, circle of kinship, come and step inside!*  
(Hymn #360, Singing the Living Tradition)

A look back at UUSA based on May newsletters from 25 and 15 years ago.

### May 1998

**Our Unsung Heroes: The UU Choir** — the singers who have devoted week after week, month after month, year after year to our choir. These people bring their voices, their music, commitment, humor, and precious time to be an integral part of our Sunday Services.

As tho' that isn't enough! Our choir continuously commits to extra rehearsals which bring special; events most recently the *Tales of Hoffmann* project, "Merry Month of May," Schubert Mass, Vivaldi Magnificat, and, *not* reluctantly, *The Reluctant Dragon* with UUs from Northampton.

This group of people who come together to sing for us are talented, committed, faithful, and hugely appreciated by their friend **Fran**.

Remember to thank them from time to time during coffee hour — they give *lots*.

**Marilyn Falkowski, Diane Westfall, Carol Rothery, Helene Lambert, Cynthia Brown, Jan Stevens, Kathy McCue, Louise Grosslein, Ann Kirchoff, Barbara Henderson, Howard Reep, Chad Johnson, George Sulzner, Tom Pelletier, Kurtiss Gordon, Paul Barber, John Foster, John Lasalle, Bill Ashley, Carolyn Holstein, Anne Louise White, Cara Henderson, Laurel Glocheski, Emily Rosenberg, Martha Kishinevski, Janis Gray, Pam Chestek, T. R. Rosenberg, Bryan Bruce, Kenton Tharp, Jim Hayes, and Bill Allan.**

To both full-time members and part-timers — a huge thank you.

Fran Plumer

### May 2008

**This month's Social Justice Spotlight** comes to us from **Molly Cooksy**. Molly is a junior at Amherst Regional High School and a youth member at UUSA. She and her family have attended the UUSA since she was 6.

The most frequently asked question for a high school student in Amherst is, "What are you going to college for?" Over the last few years, my answer has strayed all over the map: actress, writer, nurse, psychologist, artist, and even a mechanic — things I wasn't really cut out for. That is, until I came upon social justice. Last year I became a member of the Youth Action Coalition based in Amherst because a friend asked me to try it out. I was part of Video Vanguard (VV) and Get Up Get Down (GUGD), both creating social awareness through different visual arts. The community I found was absolutely astonishing and I learned varieties of skills and styles of expression, including the political and social justice mural Get Up Get Down created on the side of Food for Thought Books last spring.

After that, one thing after another opened up for me. I was selected as a trainee for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which works to break down barriers and support communication between people of all different backgrounds — especially in schools. I participated in fundraisers for nonprofit organizations supporting different kinds of oppressed people. I worked with the Help Increase the Peace Project to start breaching their links of violence in our society and worked with other networks to start bringing awareness to Amherst. It was obvious by the end of the year that I had found my answer to Amherst's most frequently asked question.

This year has brought even more amazing things, and I've learned more than I ever have before. I am still a part of Get Up Get Down and I still work with the Anti-Defamation League in the Amherst schools as well as at Not Bread Alone. In addition, I am a student in the Minority Student Achievement Network working with other youth my age to destroy the Achievement gap between students of color and white students, and I am a member of the Woman's Rights Club at ARHS which is performing *The Vagina Monologues* this year.

There are thousands of people who don't see the injustice pressed upon just as many *other* people every day in this society, but without social justice movements, that number would double. Change doesn't come easy, but that's the most gratifying part of what I do: watching people change.