



Grist from the Mill . . .

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Issue 6

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek

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We are a Welcoming Congregation serving the Hockessin/Pike Creek/Kennett Square region, meeting every Sunday morning. Childcare is available; religious education is held September to June. All are welcome at our services and invited to stay for refreshments and conversation following the service. Should weather conditions be in question on Sunday mornings, call the UUSMC telephone 369-2712 or check our website (www.uusmc.org). Note that if most area institutions are closing, we will also.

Standing on the Side of Love **The 2010-2011 UUSMC Annual Budget Campaign** **Jamie Kegerise**

Please don't forget to complete your Financial Commitment form February 21 through April 18. These will be given out during the Sunday Order of Service and will also be on the table in the lobby. We ask every member to complete a form so the church can plan its programs and schedule for the coming fiscal year. This year it is especially important for us to improve our financial situation to meet the challenges of hiring an interim minister. Pledge Sunday is February 21.

Did you know?

- Our children's Religious Exploration program is growing with many new young faces and parents who want to see their children benefit from a liberal religious grounding. We make a difference when we help our children on their spiritual journey.
- UU Mill Creek does much more than most of us realize. Aside from the weekly Sunday services and RE, we have many smaller groups that meet for discussion, worship, music, chalice circles, committee work and special interest. Groups from our local community use our building, and families gather in the church for weddings, dedications, memorial services and coming of age celebrations.
- ***Standing on the Side of Love*** is a theme borrowed from the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) of which we are a member church. UUSMC does stand on the side of love in so many ways. As a "Welcoming Congregation" we open our doors and our hearts to any and all no matter their background or sexual orientation.

Liberal religion needs to play a larger role in our community and world. The "Religious Right" is a very potent social and political force, and sometimes seems to be the only viewpoint of faith heard in our national dialog. You can help change that. UUSMC is part of the larger liberal religious movement, and we must have the same level of participation and financial generosity from our members as our friends on the "Religious Right" seem to muster so easily.

Please make a difference to your church and to your world during the upcoming pledge campaign. Be a good steward of liberal religion. Please contact Jamie Kegerise with questions.

2010 Fellowship Dinner
Saturday, February 20, 6:00 PM

Please join us for UUSMC's annual Fellowship Dinner. This is one of our best-attended social events, so it will be a great chance to catch up with your church friends or make some new ones.

There will be plenty of food, drink, music and laughter, so please bring your family and your friends. The church provides the main meat dish, and we ask each family to bring a side or dessert. Childcare will be provided.

Calling all folk singers! Our entertainment theme for the evening will be folk music and will include sing-alongs of some of your favorite music of social activism. Please contact our musical director, Kristin Tosh-Morelli, if you have suggestions or would like to help out with the music.

Please contact Randy Ploener or Jamie Kegerise with questions regarding the dinner.

Mark your calendars for the 2010 Services Auction
"UUSMC's Spring Fling - An AnnUUal Affair!"

Kim Anderson

Don't let our church decompose or go dormant—put your “petal” to the metal and help us grow our spiritual garden! We need a bumper crop this year!

Saturday, March 13, 2010
Cocktails Served and Silent Auction open at 6:00 PM
Dinner served at 6:30 PM
Live Auction 7:00 - 9:00 PM

The seeds to feed our garden will consist of a 50/50 raffle, a children's raffle, a silent auction, bountiful baskets, and many goods and services up for bid in a fun live auction. We have the pleasure again this year of welcoming professional auctioneer John McGrellis to run the live auction.

We'll turn our sanctuary into a recession-tolerant greenhouse garden full of edible delights, so wear any floral clothing you have, and please bring a potluck dish to share! Only you can be the gro-lights!

Childcare provided; please sign up in advance. We still need auction services and items. Fertilize early with your offering...contact Kim Anderson at 302-893-1011 or kimnjb@comcast.net by February 28.

For parents attending the Services Auction: We would like to ask you to bring to Kim Anderson a small \$5-7 gift that will be used in the children's raffle auction. We could use about ten items total. If you already have something new at home, feel free to "regift" it! Thank you for your help

Attic Treasures Sale Saturday, April 17

Judi Krause, Fundraising Committee Chair

Our annual Attic Treasures Sale, always a great success, will be held on Saturday, April 17. We have people who look for our sale every year and each year new people tell us what a great sale it is and they will be sure to return the following year. It is also a good fundraiser.

To continue having a great sale, we need you to clean out your attic, basement, closets, cupboards, bookcases, garage and garden shed. Check your kids' rooms for treasures as well. Please bring your items to the church the week of April 12: from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

We will need volunteers to help set up each night the week of April 12. We will be working from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM each night prior to the sale.

Volunteers to help work the floor as Sales Assistants and as cashiers will be needed on April 17th. We will need help for various shifts – 7:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

After the sale, we will need volunteers, cars, and trucks to help clean up and get our sanctuary ready for the service on Sunday. Clean up will begin promptly at 1:05 P.M. The more people we have to help, the quicker we can finish.

All items must be clean and undamaged—free of dust, dirt, crumbs.

Items we can use include: clean, stain-free, gently-worn children's clothing; toys; clean household items; books; puzzles; records; CDs and DVDS; artwork; usable furniture; garden pots and tools; jewelry; holiday items; handbags; tools; whatever! Please be sure all items are clean and have all parts. (We will also need boxes and bags the day of the sale for shoppers to carry away their great finds.)

Use your imagination and if in doubt, please call me at 610-274-8827 or send an email to 2dogfarm@comcast.net.

We cannot accept any of the following items: computers; soiled clothing and other articles; exercise equipment; adult clothing; broken items or items that do not work.

Board Votes to Hire Interim Minister

The board is excited to report that we have voted to hire an interim minister. To help guide us on our journey, we will be following proven procedures and guidelines established by the UUA. Beginning the first Sunday in February, there will be a designated bulletin board in the lobby to keep members posted about the selection process and progress.

On February 21st, the church will hold a town meeting following Sunday Services to present information and answer questions. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. If you have any questions, check with a member of the UUSMC board.

UUSMC February 2010 Sunday Services
10:30 AM

February 7

Echoes Across the Ages

Rev. Keith Goheen

Engaging history is essential work for healing communities, but how can the consultation of ancient texts strengthen our capacity to bring healing in these times of uncertainty and transition? This morning, we will explore the relationship between Scripture and spiritual integrity. *Rev. Goheen will also lead a Bible Study on Sundays in February.*

February 14

Story of the Heart

Rev. Nancy Dean

Celebrating love is the best kind of celebration, for nothing is so vital to our human experience than that mysterious, hard-to-define emotion that makes life worth living. Please join us after the service for our monthly Second-Sunday potluck lunch.

February 21

Random Acts of Kindness

Rev. Nancy Dean

How some tiny act can make a big difference, which is why we support and promote RAKs. A service when you can share a special RAK you experienced.

February 28

A Thread Woven Fine: UU History

Rev. Nancy Dean

A thread of Unitarianism runs from the 1st Century of the Common Era down to our modern UUism.

Sunday Flowers: Flowers make a lovely addition to our services. You may donate a flower arrangement to honor a special person, an occasion, or just because. The donating member may bring the arrangement home after the service. Simply sign up in the lobby or contact Debby Damiani, our office administrator. Write your check for \$30, \$40, or \$50 to UUSMC and write flowers and the date of the chosen service on the memo line. Place your payment in the box outside of the office or in the collection plate. Flower orders will be placed on Monday so payment must be received by the Monday prior to the Sunday requested. Alternatively, you may bring in an arrangement from another source or one you've made yourself. If you'd like to bring in your own arrangement, please provide the office with advance notice so dedication information can be printed in the order of service (administrator@uusmc.org). Thank you to the following people who donated flowers in January: Pam Brancati; Jane Frelick; David Smith; Donna Salek & Tina Guerrette.

WANTED: ALL USED INK CARTRIDGES! The recycling program through Staples continues to be profitable for the church. We bring twenty ink cartridges per month (any style or type) to Staples for recycling and receive \$60 in rewards, which are used toward the purchase of most of our office and building supplies. Please continue to drop off any used cartridges – look for the drop box in the foyer. *Thank you for your continued support of this worthwhile program!*

UU History—Environmental Concerns for UUs

From www.religioustolerance.org/tomek12.htm

Over the past forty years, the UUA has issued a number of resolutions and other comments concerning the environment. Some were:

- Awareness precedes attitude change, which precedes behavior change.
- Humanity is not the center of creation because there is no center.
- Extinction is the price we are likely to pay if we continue to devastate the earth.
- There is growing awareness that environmental degradation presents moral issues requiring religious responses.
- No longer can a few dedicated volunteers speak for all of us.

"In spite of the American transcendentalist tradition (notably Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir) we, the UUA, are not in the forefront of the current ecospirituality movement. We have much to learn from the National Council of Churches (which has an Eco-Justice Working Group), the American Jewish Congress, the Episcopal Environmental Network, the evangelical environmental network, and from the Thai Buddhists (whose monks ordain trees to protect them from the chainsaw)."

Delaware Launches 2-1-1 Phone Service Statewide: The phone number **2-1-1** is now available to refer Delawareans to appropriate health and human service providers who can assist with a wide range of non-emergency issues. The **2-1-1** service links callers to service providers who can assist with such issues as rent assistance, food banks, affordable housing, health resources, mental-health resources, child care, after-school programs, care for senior citizens, financial assistance, legal assistance, job-training programs, and much more. **2-1-1** is available 8:00am - 8:00pm, Monday - Friday. Keep in mind, 2-1-1 is not a substitute for 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.

Upcoming Adult RE

February 7-14-21-28 (after services): -Bible Series The Parabolic Mirror with Rev. Keith Goheen, Bible Study. These four sessions will probe the Wisdom literature of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Bring your Bible and your life's story, enter into sacred history, and discover the secrets of the ages.

February 21 and February 28, Sundays: *Finding Spirituality through Poetry and Art*, led by **Dan and Carol Welch**. Please join Dan and Carol again this year as they help us explore poetry and art. Both poetry and the visual arts have the capacity to make us see the world in new and unusual ways, which can often assist us in seeking spiritual truths that we might otherwise miss.

February 5: Friday Film Series, Buena Vista Social Club (1998). An award-winning documentary featuring the music of the Cuban ensemble Buena Vista Social Club.

Hello All :)

I've decided this Grist article is going to be about hope. I hope everyone is settling nicely into the new year. I imagine everyone is as busy as ever but hopefully we've all gotten at least a little bit of downtime after the holidays and are feeling a tad refreshed. It is with this hope that I am putting out a call for volunteers. The nice thing about this request is that it really requires very little time commitment and only requires a little hope that you can help be a part of keeping our church community welcoming and nurturing to our RE children and visitors. The Religious Exploration Committee is essential to keeping this welcoming and nurturing spirit alive so with that in mind, I would like to invite all who are interested to join the RE committee. Again, this isn't something that requires a huge time commitment...just a bit of hope. If you have any questions, please contact me at dreusmc@gmail.com.

Another way to help keep our program welcoming and nurturing is by volunteering to assist in the childcare room. I truly hope that members will consider volunteering a small amount of time to childcare. Most Sundays our hired childcare providers are enough, but in the event that they cannot come in or we have a high number of visitors, volunteers are needed. There is a sign-up sheet in the lobby and if we could just get one volunteer each week, it would be a huge help. In all likelihood, for most Sundays the volunteer would only be 'just in case' and would be able to attend service. We would just like to have people that are willing to be signed up and available should the need arise. This is not a long-term commitment...just one or two Sundays a year.

Last, but not least, I hope everyone remembered to put Friday Fun Night (February 5, starting at 6 PM) on their calendar. This is a potluck event and this month is a Mexican food theme, so dig out your favorite Mexican, Tex-Mex or Southwestern recipe to share. After dinner there will be a family-friendly movie for all to enjoy. I hope to see you there!

Usually I end this with a 'Cheers', but this month...

*Hopefully,
Stefanie Anderson*

Props to Our Youth

Congratulations to Sabin Lowe, Josh Mortenson, and Louis Mortenson, who were all award winners for Lego League on Saturday, January 9.

Become a Chalice Lighter: January 31 or February 7

Frank MacArtor

I believe that our UU faith can make a difference in the world, so I want to help new young congregations get started and grow. You can help too. Please make an investment in the future of UUism in the Jos. Priestley District by pledging to give \$10 or \$20 on request three times a year. Chalice Lighter funds are used to help form new congregations, assist them acquire land or buildings or hire professional staff. On Sundays, January 31 and Sunday, February 7 I will be available at a table in the foyer to sign you up as a Chalice Lighter. Look for me.

Facing Challenging Times

A survey a few months ago of 1000 churches found that even though generous offerings were reported, over half of the pastors surveyed said the current economy is negatively impacting their churches. Only seven percent reported being "very negatively" impacted.

You don't need a survey to know that virtually everyone who is not wealthy has been feeling the crunch over the past year in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Certainly congregations like ours feel the pinch when members lose jobs or find their nest eggs have been seriously eroded in the stock market plunge. Most of us, happily, will get on solid ground, but often not the same ground on which we stood before.

So we know that here at Mill Creek we are facing challenging times. For the first time in our twenty-one-year history we are having to make serious cuts in places we never had to before. There are a number of reasons. One is that due to moves, and other situations beyond our control, we lost four quite sizeable pledges, then the economic downturn hit, so it is not anything anyone did or could change. We are simply wading in the same stream of challenge as the rest of our country.

Challenges, though, are not all bad; we can use them to examine what is most important to us, and they help us to see our situations in a new light. And, we get much more creative in meeting such challenges. We know intellectually that we grow from being challenged, though rarely would we ask for the experience. Just as we do in our individual lives, we as members of this congregation must take a hard look at what we have here that matters most to us from our experience of this community of faith, what we have to both lose and gain, and how we might re-evaluate our present circumstances to deal most effectively with this current situation.

We are blessed in this congregation with very sound, thoughtful financial guides, and leadership, all of whom will help guide us through these challenging times. I feel confident that we will come out of them a stronger congregation, and additionally feel that special bond of a group who work together to deal with the problems in which we are all vested.

UU congregations are more like families than institutions, and we know all families will experience highs and lows, good times and hard times. We will manage, and in our managing care all the more for this community in which we have invested so much of not just our money, but more of our hearts and minds.

If you have thoughts or ideas about ways we might face our current challenges, then please contact me, or any of our Board and Finance Committee leaders. Your ideas will be welcomed.

*Peace and love,
Nancy*

A Note From The Editor The *Grist* is distributed electronically each month to every UUSMC member with an email address on file. Print copies are additionally available in the church foyer. Please remember to keep your contact information current, and update the office on changes in email, phone, or mailing address. If your contact information is up to date and you still are not receiving the *Grist* via email, please check your Spam folder.

Phase-Two Expansion

The board voted at its December 15 meeting to proceed with securing the phase-two sewer and grounds permit as was voted in the annual meeting. Funds for the permit preparation work were set aside from the endowment fund in May.

This action will secure our ability to begin phase two sometime in the next three years, but it will also allow us to lock in the required sewer capacity for an additional fee at the end of that time should the capital campaign not yet be begun.

We found this a difficult decision to make, given the current economic climate, but three factors influenced us toward the positive vote. First, we know that the area sewer capacity for expansion is strictly limited, and if we exceeded it, further expansion would have to wait for the county to undertake additional sewer development in this area. Second, we learned of the provision for holding the capacity beyond the three-year limit by purchasing a county permit later, if needed.

Finally, we're aware that the decision to expand a church facility almost always requires a leap of faith. We see this decision as a testament to our faith in our community and our continued expansion.

Thank you, thank you.

I want to express my thanks to the remarkable people who are ready and willing to help out, over and over again. My apologies to those I've missed—please let me know.

- Randy Ploener and the Social Events committee have done it again with our great annual chili cook off. Randy appeared on the 11th in his chili cook off regalia of sombrero and serape to announce the details, and a gorgeous poster, made by Laura Deschere, appeared in the foyer for this Jan. 24 event. I hope you didn't miss it.
- Stefanie Anderson and the RE group are doing great things, and you can see some of them on the RE bulletin board in the hall. The kids raised \$531 to buy a heifer in December – what a fine way for kids to feel good about Christmas! And there's now (Jan. 14) a neat new picture layout of "If I Had A Hammer."
- Charlie Brooks and Fran Loeffelholz are the new co-chairs of the Property Management committee, and both the property and management techniques are getting spruced up.
- Sarah Rose and Karen Sani are doing a great job with hospitality, and an unending supply of goodies is making the after-service social time really tasty.
- Have you noticed that the choir is sounding wonderful lately? Kris Tosh-Morelli is providing great choir direction, and is inspiring increased participation by the kids, both individually and in the children's choir.
- A special thanks to our wonderful minister, Rev. Nancy Dean, whose leadership and devotion (not to mention her continuous supply of interesting sermons) have been an inspiration. I know her decision to retire at the end of the 2009-10 church year is the right one, but it won't be easy to part with her.

--Jay

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Kathie Stamm, Chair

Souper Bowl Sunday Mmm, delicious! Stop by the library after the service on February 7 to buy bread and homemade soup at our annual Souper Bowl Sunday event. Proceeds benefit the Delaware Food Bank.

A Center for Relational Living A Center for Relational Living, Inc. (ACRL) is looking for mentors from UUSMC. As you may remember from the times that John Shuford and Paula Maiorano have visited us, ACRL is a charitable organization promoting relational living as an asset for healthy living in our homes, communities, and on our planet. They connect mainstream mentors with marginalized individuals, strengthening both and supporting a more holistic worldview in each. In Delaware, their work is in the field of prison reentry. We hope to recruit at least one man and one woman from our congregation. ACRL will provide free training and a support group meets at Delaware Technical & Community College once per month for those who are volunteering. The commitment is for at least six months at a rate of one hour of contact per week. Please let Kathie Stamm know if you are interested.

Share Our Warmth In December we collected six baby blankets, three pairs of socks, 18 hats, 47 scarves, and 42 pairs of gloves to donate to the needy. These were gratefully received by the YMCA Home Life Management Program, La Comunidad Hispana, and the Maternal Fetal Medicine Program. Thank you!

Heifer International Our total member giving to Heifer International (HI) during the December alternative gift drive was \$1,180, which equates to one heifer, three goats, two shares of a sheep, two hives of bees, three trios of rabbits and five flocks of chicks. This annual fund drive continues to help HI end hunger and poverty both near and far. For more information visit www.heifer.org.

Share Our Plate Share Our Plate is our ongoing program that takes half of the undesignated money (that is, money not marked as a pledge or for some other particular purpose) in the collection plate and donates it to a local charity. In 2009 we collected a total of \$1,960.53 through the Share Our Plate program: In January and February we donated \$431.21 to Adult Literacy Program; in March and April we donated \$438.77 to The Evergreen Center; in May and June we donated \$334.50 to Limen House; in July and August we donated \$201.04 to Tri-State Bird Rescue; in September and October we donated \$285.29 to Delaware Women Prisoner Reentry Program; and in November and December we donated \$279.72 to The Evergreen Center. The charity for January and February 2010 is Limen House, which provides drug and alcohol rehabilitation services.

The Social Action Committee The Social Action Committee (SAC) is hard at work coordinating the various ways in which UUSMC responds to the needs of the world around us. Each project is coordinated by a committed individual (i.e. Souper Bowl Sunday, coordinated by Theresa Medoff), or a group, such as our High School RE group who have been volunteering at the Sunday Breakfast Mission. Committee meetings are open to all and time can be allocated on our agenda by contacting Kathie Stamm at jstamm09@comcast.net or by cell phone at 302-547-3006. We meet on the third Sunday of the month after services, in the library. Our next meeting is on February 21.

To remain grounded and vary our work across different aspects of Social Action, we will try to categorize our projects in one or more of the five following ways: **service**: to meet the needs of people in distress, such as collecting money or donating food; **education**: to teach people about the importance of a social issue through workshops or meetings; **witness**: to make public the convictions of an individual or organization by letters to the editor, joining marches, etc.; **advocacy**: to work through the legislative process to impact on public policy; **community organizing**: to participate in the process by which decisions are made in places of power, based on the notion that individuals have little power to change their situations without the strength of groups who know how to organize and influence power.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Vicky Tosh-Morelli, Chair

A special welcome to our newest members, Terri and Don Pippins of Newark, DE.

Anyone interested joining our UUSMC need only contact Rev. Nancy Dean at any time to set up an appointment. There will be a chance to speak with Rev. Dean and/or Vicky Tosh-Morelli of the Membership Committee on some Sundays after services.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Kristen Tosh-Morelli, Music Director

Do you like the music you've been hearing lately? Do you want to ensure it continues, or improve it or change it? Do you want to have a voice? Then please join the Music Committee! This laidback, fun committee is looking for more members who care about music at UUSMC. Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 16 at 7 PM in the library. Bring a pencil and your thoughts. We try to meet each month on the third Tuesday. For more information, please contact Kristen at music@uusmc.org.

Please join us for the following upcoming musical events:

- Temple Beth El's Klezmer band returns by popular demand! They will provide the music for the service on Stewardship Sunday, February 21. Arrive early to get a good seat. Bring your clapping hands and dancin' feet!
- February 28 we welcome Nothing But Treble a capella women's group. If you liked the show "The Sing Off," you'll love Nothing But Treble!
- March 7 and 14 the UUSMC and UUFN choirs will join forces and perform at each church's service. The combined choir will perform at UUFN on March 7, and at UUSMC on March 14.
- March 28 is Big Music Sunday, and we are in search of musical acts to perform. All ages, genres, styles, sizes of groups, and ability levels. If you've got a song in your heart, come share it at Big Music Sunday! Sign up by sending an email to music@uusmc.org. If you don't have email, please write the name of your song and the performers involved and give it to Kristen Tosh-Morelli anytime. You can leave the note in the "music director" folder outside of the office as well.

CARING COMMUNITY

Felicia Shaw, Chair

- ☼ Kim & J.B. Anderson have booked a trip to Asia to take their children back to their birthplace.
- ☼ Pam Allenstein just returned from a month in Australia and New Zealand (Richard's home) with her family.
- ☼ Matt Nolan's brother is about to undergo prostate cancer surgery and Matt's mother is under treatment for breast cancer.
- ☼ Mark Berry's cousin is in Haiti with FEMA.
- ☼ Happy 66th Anniversary in January to Jane and Dr. Bob Frelick, and congratulations on their twin 90th birthdays in February.
- ☼ Peter Avakian had serious eye surgery January 19, but appears to have come through it successfully.
- ☼ Phyllis Peacock is dealing with the effects of eight years cancer treatments, and can use all our thoughts and prayers.

If you have health problems or concerns or know of someone who does, we'd like to help. Please let Felicia Shaw know. You can reach her at (302) 994-2768, or send an email to felicshaw@comcast.net.

UUSMC BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS **Cyndy Falcoff & Amy White, Coordinators**

The **Evening Book Group** will hold their next meeting in late March, date and book selection to be determined. If you are interested in joining this group or have any questions, please contact Amy White at (302) 652-1952 or amywwhite@comcast.net.

The **Sunday After-Services Book Group** will meet April 11 to discuss Elizabeth Strout's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Olive Kitteridge*. Beautifully written, thirteen rich and thoroughly engaging narratives are connected by the presence of Olive Kitteridge, a complex and unusual woman. While the stories take place in and around the small town of Crosby, Maine, they provide us with profound insights into the human condition, its conflicts, tragedies and joys, and the endurance life requires. This memorable book will give us much to discuss. For further information contact Cyndy Falcoff at cjofal@comcast.net.

Calendar

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Looking Ahead—April 2010

Saturday, April 17 Attic Treasures Sale

Contact the Joseph Priestley District Website for information on UU activities in the region:
<http://www.jpduua.org/pages/archive-jpd-packet.php>

The Grist is published eleven times a year by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek and is distributed free of charge to members and friends of the congregation. If you would like to contribute to publication and postage costs, please send your tax-deductible donation to UUSMC, 579 Polly Drummond Hill Road, Newark, DE 19711. Editor, Heather Doty. Send editorial materials via email to grist@uusmc.org.