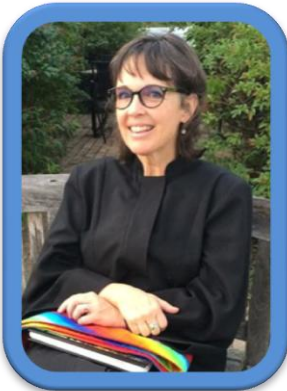




NEW OUTLOOK

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY
A spiritual home where religion and reason meet MARCH 2016

Kindred Spirit



On one rainy summer morning, a man in Andover, Ohio was fixing his breakfast. As he put a cup in the sink, he looked out the window onto the open storm water drain that ran alongside his house. What he saw was terrifying! A small 2 year-old girl was bobbing perilously in the fast-moving water.

Remembering that the ditch soon disappeared with a roar beneath the road, Ray Blankenship quickly ran out the door and jumped into the deep rushing water. He tried to get ahead of the child in order to catch her as she traveled with the current. She went under and so did he.

Tumbling head over heels, he rose to the surface just before the water plunged under the road. In one hand, he held onto the little girl's arm as the water tugged at the child. Ray's free hand located something protruding from the bank. He grabbed it and held on for dear life repeating to himself, "If I can just hang on until help comes, we'll be alright." He did better than hang on, however. By the time the fire-department rescue folks arrived, he had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock.

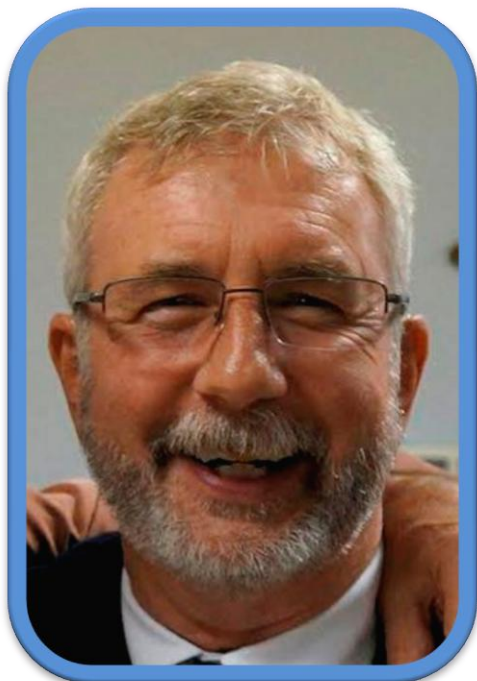
Ray Blankenship was later awarded the US Coast Guard's Silver Lifesaving Medal. The award was fitting. You see, Ray was at even greater risk than most people realized. The 36 year-old man didn't even know how to swim.

The story about the fellow from Ohio and the little girl is true. Now, there is one hero I've never met.

However, you and I encounter amazing people all the time. There are folks who have overcome terrible odds after confronting a life-threatening illness, some who have survived war-time terror, many who have grieved abysmal loss, various ones who have endured abuse of any number of forms and countless individuals who toil to make a difference in the life of someone on a daily basis. We meet champions every day.

And yet, they come through tough moments only to live humbly among us, never bragging or telling anyone about how remarkable they are for having such resiliency and enthusiasm for life in spite of it all. (Yes, some say they are joy-filled because of the hardship.) These are the great teachers of our time. Maybe YOU are one of the heroes of which I write?!!

For life's big achievements and small ones, I celebrate all who show bravery in the midst of life's many challenges. *May we treat one another as though each of us is a hero worthy of respect and admiration.*



Dear Ones

I have news to report regarding our efforts to acquire 21500 Gibraltar Drive in Port Charlotte. Last Thursday I received a unanimous recommendation from the Negotiating Team. Bob Taylor, MaryHolly Allison, Jack Osborne, and Don Liermann have worked for weeks developing a fair and affordable offer for the former Peace Lutheran Church. Their work is greatly appreciated.

By Friday afternoon, all nine members of UUFCC's Board of Trustees agreed to accept the Team's recommendations. So on Monday, February 29th, our realtors presented an offer of \$650,000 to the property's owners. Contingencies in the offer include a down payment of \$250,000 due at closing and payments of \$400,000 over 5 years at 5% interest.

If the offer is accepted, we will have 30 days to have the building thoroughly inspected and an additional 30 days to secure an affirming vote by our members. If the offer is rejected, we will need time to regroup and create our next steps toward the acquisition of needed space.

Quite frankly, I'm feeling impatient. I've dared to imagine us prospering in that big, old church. With each successive visit, the space appeared more manageable and the possibilities for living our mission and vision there increase. I am hopeful and excited.

However, the road to 21500 Gibraltar has been rough. Hang on, the ride might get bumpy or we may have to make a quick U turn. So, please pay close attention. Our Treasurer, Bob Taylor, and I will keep you up to date as the process continues.

Mean while back at 1534 Forrest Nelson Boulevard, the Fellowship is rocking. The combined operating and capital campaign concludes next Sunday, March 6th. So far, the giving trend is positive.

Next week the official announcement for our April 3rd annual meeting will be created. The agenda will include election of officers, two new trustees, members for the Nominating Committee, and delegates to General Assembly. We also need to decide if the "Black Lives Matter" banner will fly in our front yard.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude for your generosity and commitment to our precious community and the consistent support you have offered me as I've served as the Interim President of your Board of Trustees.

In faith,

Dennis Shaw

Many Paths...

Sundays

9:15 a.m. Conversation Among Friends
9:30 a.m. – Choir Practice
10:30 a.m. – Worship Service
 Coffee Hour following Worship
 Potluck Lunch on first Sunday

Saturday Services

Our Saturday evening services have a little different slant than our Sunday mornings. For example, we have meditation periods twice interspersed with readings and music on Saturday evenings.

Conversation Among Friends precedes the service at 3:15. On Sunday mornings, our service includes more traditional elements such as a sermon. Come on Saturday evening at 4:30 pm or Sunday morning at 10:30 am. Either way, we work hard to engage the listener and to provide a strong dose of hope when it seems absent.

Meditation and Buddhist Discussion Group

Thursday nights, 5 - 6:15 pm

Each evening, we begin with a discussion and end with a period of meditation. This session's book title is *Living Beautifully* by Pema Chodron. Books may be purchased from a member of our group. All are welcome to attend.

March Theme: Earth's Honor

Sat., March 5 – Readings from the native traditions of North America and **Sun., March 6**

“A Promise to the First People” – Rev. Amy Kindred

Beauty is before me, behind me

Above and below me – Navajo saying

We walk the sacred grounds of the First People. What are we willing to do to honor the earth, the people before us and those who will come after we are gone?

Sat. March 12

Faith, Hope and the Judicial System

This service led by worship associate Dennis Shaw will feature readings from Joyce Coleman's book, ***Doing the Right Thing***.

Sunday, March 13

Faith, Hope and the Judicial System

Joyce Coleman

Joyce Coleman spent thirty years as supervisor of probation in Massachusetts. Her experiences are remarkable! Join us for an insider's view of a rough judicial system.

Sat. March 19 and Sunday, March 20

“Preparing the Path” – Rev. Amy Kindred

In the Christian tradition, Palm Sunday recognizes the painful journey Jesus made to his ultimate demise. Followers placed palm leaves along his path. All of us have a journey to make. What is yours?

Sat. March 26 and Sun. March 27

“New Day, New Life” – Rev. Amy Kindred

We celebrate Easter and all the varied metaphors for transformation. The Unitarian Universalist tradition of Flower Communion will be also observed. Please bring a flower or two from your garden (or your favorite florist) to share during the service.

The UU Endowment of Charlotte County (UUECC)

Many requests for your money and many ways to give!



At the time of our Annual Giving Campaign (for the UUFCC Operating Budget) and the corresponding kick off of an exciting Capital Campaign (for Building Expansion) it may be confusing to many folks. When do I give to the Endowment? Where do I put my money? Yes, there may be ways to do it all, just not all at once.

Making an additional contribution to the Endowment fund helps both of the above two funds. The Endowment offers a annual contribution to the Operating Budget AND the Endowment Trustees have recommended to use at least a portion of the Endowment fund to invest in our future growth as we consider the Peace Lutheran Church as a possible new home. Thus, your gift to the Endowment lives on.

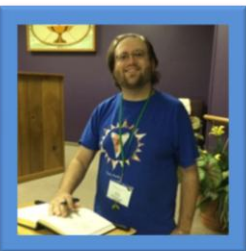
Here are three possible ideas for when to give to the Endowment:

1. You can make a donation in the memory of a loved one or dear friend who has passed away.
2. You can add the UU Endowment of Charlotte County (UUECC) as a bequest in your will.
3. You can honor someone who is still living as an expression of love and commitment to UU and the principles we value. Here's the latest example which we receive with great gratitude:

Carolyn Kvam - in honor of Robert Hansman's 89th birthday - \$1890.00

How do you make a donation? No amount is too small! You can just write a check to the UU Endowment, mark in the memo line who the gift is recognizing and place in the collection basket, OR send to the UUFCC office, OR give to an Endowment Trustee. We will be honored to accept your gifts.

Membership News Joani Mountain. Membership Coordinator



In a UUFCC strategic planning session in 2012, the goal of 135 members by 2017 was established. Three new members signed the book on Sunday, February 21, 2016, and brought us to that goal.

Let's give Bill Howat Jr. (top, left), Debbie Conrad (bottom, left) and John Lee (right) group credit for the Fellowship hitting the target early. Bill, a longtime UU, Debbie, a longtime UUFCC friend, and John, an actual native Floridian new to Unitarianism are good examples of our growing membership.



New goals will undoubtedly be set. But for the moment, Reverend Amy and every person who has been a welcoming face of UUFCC should relish this milestone.



Reflections

Six children in our Religious Education program added notes and pictures to many of the Valentine bookmarks distributed on Valentine's Day following the service.

The theme for March is "Earth's Honor."



Children will be decorating Easter eggs on Easter morning, prior to the egg hunt. Parents, you may want to send an old tee shirt for your child to wear, and bring a basket for each child for the egg hunt after the service. We could also use teenagers to help hide the eggs.

Lifespan Development - I could use your help

Religious Education needs your help with the Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday. We need

about 6 dozen eggs to hide. Steve Pollard is asking for at least two dozen eggs that are hard-boiled no sooner than the Friday before Easter for the children to decorate that morning. We also need volunteers to hide the eggs prior to the egg hunt, right after the service. Please let me know if you can help.

I am also looking for a substitute Child Care provider (or two) for times when Malik or Ashley are not available. UUA policy suggests two providers at all times. Again, let me know if you might be able to help occasionally.

The latest version of the Opportunities to Participate list is now available on our website. This list includes a brief explanation for most of the activities, as well as days and times and contacts.

I am looking for a few people who would like to assist me in planning inter-generational events for our congregation. We had a very successful Halloween party, and I am sure there are other things we could plan. Let me know if you'd like to help.

A recent craze is coloring for adults. Let me know if this is something you'd be interested in with a group at UUFCC.

Is there an activity or group you'd like to see at our Fellowship?
Talk to me!

Faithfully,
Marty Wilmer
Lifespan Development Coordinator



ANT Camp

- What?** Art, Nature, and Theater Day Camp
Who? Children ages 4 - 6 and 7-11
When? June 13 - 17, Monday through Friday, 9 am - 3 pm (9 am to noon for younger ones)
Cost? Half day - \$75 and \$125 Full day (Children will bring their lunches)

Activities include:

- * Drama games
- * Tie Dying
- * Movement using scarves with music
- * Nature rubbings
- * Creating lanterns
- * Building bird feeders and bird houses
- * Plant identification
- * Weaving
- * Water balloons
- * And more!!



Interested in signing your children or grandchildren up for summer camp?
 See or email Marty Wilmer at marty.wilmer@gmail.com or Rev. Amy Kindred at minister@uufcc.org.
 Registration forms are forthcoming. (Scholarships available.)

ARE YOU AN ADULT WHO WANTS TO GO TO SUMMER CAMP TOO?

Sign up to teach one of the 45 minute workshops or to assist with other activities such as lunch time coordination, set up, clean up or supervision of free-time play.

You may think we are providing camp for children but any adult who has worked a summer day camp can tell you, the adults are the ones who reap the giggles and rewards!

Let Marty Wilmer know if you are interested and available.

SECOND ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP CAMPING WEEKEND

You are invited to the second annual Fellowship Camping weekend!

WHEN: April 29, 30, May 1

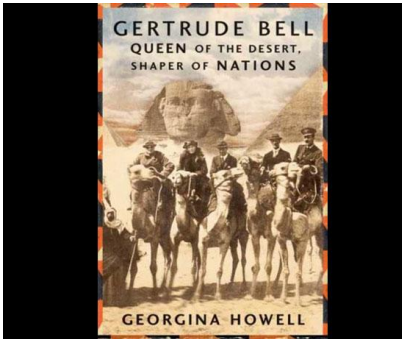
WHERE: Oscar Scherer State Park group campsite

WHO: All families and fellowship invited

Activities: Stay for the weekend or come out to play for the day! A potluck supper will be held on Friday night with a bonfire and is being coordinated by Regina Renner. We can attend the Drum Circle Saturday night at Nokomis Beach. We can take a bike ride Sunday on the Legacy trail which is connected to Oscar Scherer State Park. There are also some beautiful hiking and birding opportunities! We hope to see you there!

Our Book Club Revels in Diverse Types of Wonderful Books

We meet at 1:30pm on the last Monday of each month to discuss a book chosen by the group members. Please consider (re)reading the book for March, *The Pathfinder* by James Fenimore Cooper, and join us on 30th at the Fellowship to discuss 18th Century views of “savages,” women, war, manifest destiny, etc. plus Cooper’s ability to write an absorbing adventure story.



Then on April 27th we will discuss the book *Gertrude Bell: Queen of the Desert, Shaper of Nations* by Georgina Howell. Never heard of Gertrude Bell? I hadn’t either until recently, but evidently she was an amazing and highly influential woman. One of our members who read the book suggested that, male or female, you will almost certainly be humbled by her accomplishments. Sounds like a fascinating read.

For more information, please contact Mary Wolff at hmwolff9@hotmail.com or 941-629-0669.

Ubuntu Sacred Song Gathering

Sing uplifting songs from all around the world in glorious harmony. No experience is necessary; just a desire to sing. All are welcome. Come, sing, be joyful, and experience the sacred through song. There’s usually a lot of laughter, too. Suggested donation: \$5

We will be gathering on the first Saturday of each month through June at 2:30 at the Fellowship. The next gathering will be on March 5. Come, sing and enjoy!

If you want a taste of Ubuntu singing or want to take the experience home with you, Tom Tyre has CDs of his Ubuntu group in North Carolina available for sale for \$10. This is a fundraiser to help women coming out of the prison system.

Racial Justice

In the hope of finding common pathways to better lives, a Racial Justice Committee was formed. Racial tensions seem to be escalating. People divided against one another keeps our attention away from counteracting the real dangers that face us all.

Believing that there is only one kind of human and that skin color, gender, sex, nationality, etc. are insignificant differences between people, it is sad to see how these differences have somehow assumed irrational importance.

Those persons interested in finding paths towards peaceful activities please attend. Information: Myrna Charry, 941-764-5859.

Please be respectful.

We in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship community are united in our commitment to respect one another and to affirm the dignity and worth of all people. Therefore, please, please refrain from comments of a political nature that demean another in our congregation who may hold a different view from you.



Peace Initiative

Dr. Douglas Whittaker, recently retired Superintendent of Charlotte County Public Schools, will speak on Sunday, March 6, in the UUFCC sanctuary at approximately 12:15 pm, following the potluck lunch. His address will focus on educational challenges we, as a nation, are facing and why the solutions being forwarded by the policy makers are nothing more than faux reform. He will suggest actionable steps that we all can take to seriously reform American education so all of our children are career ready.

This is the third event in this year's Peace Initiative Speakers Series sponsored by the Social Justice Committee. In January, African American activist Valarie Young spoke on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Dr. Saeed Shahzad, neurologist and Muslim community leader, spoke on February 7. His address was very well attended.

All are welcome.

Florida Spring Gathering



Please plan to join us for the Florida Spring Gathering **March 12, 2016**, at the **Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater** for fun, networking, cooperative learning, and covenant!

Our morning Keynote on Covenant will be presented by Connie Goodbread, Congregational Life Staff, and Margie Manning, Elder. Lunch will be served before an afternoon of topical workshops. Our closing worship will send us on our way feeling connected and revitalized! We will offer a portion of the Unitarian Universalist film series "Long, Strange Trip" as an optional evening activity. Please feel free to stay over Saturday night and join us for worship on Sunday morning!

Workshops:

- Cluster Development with Natalie Briscoe
- Social Justice/Witness/Black Lives Matter with Rev. Carlton Elliott Smith
- Stewardship with Rev. Kenneth G. Hurto
- Intro: Leadership as Spiritual Practice with Maggie Lovins

Youth (age 12 and over) are welcome to join any workshop which interests them, as all are intentionally open to all ages, abilities, and learning styles in the spirit of whole family church.

Child-care is available on the registration form for those 12 and younger.

Registration

- Late registration (begins 22 February): \$75 for adults
- Firm registration deadline: 07 March

More info: <http://www.uuasouthernregion.org/floridaspring2016.htm>

Art on the Wall

A decade-old group of artist friends whose moniker is the "Unlawful Assembly" will be showing their art on our walls March 1 through 31.

Annie Fraser works in acrylic, watercolor and oil. She paints still life and landscape in realism and impressionist styles. Fraser will hang six pieces ranging through her wide repertoire of subject, medium and style. "I'm always learning," says Fraser, "and there's nothing I won't try." Fraser shows and sells regularly in Connecticut and works on commission.

Colleen O'Brien, who paints in *Naïve* or *Kindergarten* style in acrylics when she's not using Magic Markers, will show 12 primary color prints. "I am interested in color more than form," says O'Brien. "Although many of my pieces tell a story."



Fran Dickey is a natural at oils and will show five of her favorite desertscape/seascape works. Dickey says, "I like it when I'm painting. I think it's the losing yourself in the doing, whatever the outcome, that appeals."

Jackie Deschenes, watercolorist and constant potter, sells her pottery on a regular basis at area art shows and through the Jack Vartanian Studio in Punta Gorda. "If I could make art all the time, I'd be happy," Deschenes says of her art habit. Her platters, vases, bowls, cups, pitchers, garden art and olive trays slide out of the kiln in vibrant color. Each work of art expresses her core belief that one makes art for beauty's sake.

The *Unlawfuls* will show Monday, March 1 through Tuesday, March 31, 2016 with a wine and cheese opening on Friday, March 4, 4-6 p.m.

Attention artistic snowbirds! Please consider leaving a piece of your artwork for UUFCC's Summer Member & Friend Art Show. We will take loving care of it until your return. Please see Trudy Gerhardt for more information.

MYSTIC FAIRE

Saturday, March 19th @ 9:30 am until 3:30 pm

Come and share at the Mystic Faire! The Faire will be held on Saturday, March 19th from 9:30 am until 3:30 pm at the Fellowship. There will be intuitive readers, vendors with a variety of mystic wares for sale and informational speakers. Food and drink will be available for purchase.

Come early to register for readings. All readings are for entertainment purposes only. Tickets are sold at the door for \$2.00. There will also be a door prize drawing!

For more information, please contact Karen Yelk at [941.759.3525](tel:941.759.3525) or via email at kyelk@centurylink.net.

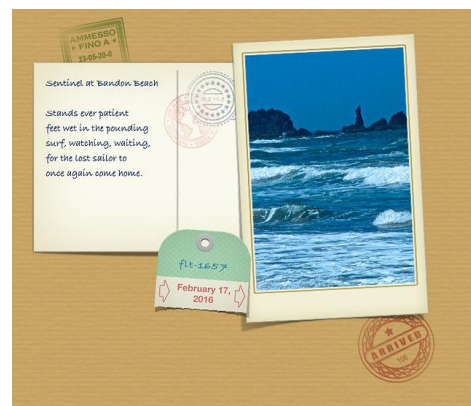
April is National Poetry Month

*This idea was shared by Lenora Rain-Lee Good, a former UUFCC member and friend from afar since her move to the **real** west coast.*

Wouldn't it be fun to celebrate with a postcard poetry exchange? Anyone can write a short poem that will fit on a postcard. The very size of a postcard is limiting, so you don't need to worry about form or length, just *think about or notice something*, and write it down. Short Haiku-style poems are perfect!

What you will need:

- 30 postcards, one for each day of the month. These can be store bought, or hand-made,
- 30 postcard stamps (if anyone signs up in a country other than the USA, and is on your list, you will need international stamps, which are somewhat more expensive),
- a sense of commitment to DO this,
- JOIN THE FUN -- sign up (<http://www.lenorarainleegood.com/#!/April-is-National-Poetry-Month/c1q8z/56c64ae40cf2de8a478fd71e>). I will need your name and correct snail mail address.



What you will get:

- a list of names and addresses by the end of March,
- 30 post cards from
- 30 new friends,
- 30 original poems.

Then, all you do is write, and mail, a postcard poem a day. Doesn't this sound like fun? Actually, it is. I've done this before, during the month of August, and thought this would be a fun way to celebrate National Poetry Month, and decided to start my own list.

You don't need to be a poet to do this; you only need to have an adventuresome spirit. You won't be graded, or critiqued; you WILL be appreciated. So, if you want 30 new friends, 30 postcards, 30 original poems, sign up NOW!



Picnic with a Purpose

Come to the "Picnic in the Park with Helen Wrobbel and Friends," March 21, 1:00 to 3:00, Gilchrist Park, Large Pavilion, Punta Gorda. Home cooked lunch and good conversation.

Support the new "Ladies Remembered" Mural. Seven Ladies, deceased and of diverse ethnic and economic background, will be memorialized on the walls of the building at US 41N between Olympia and Virginia Avenues. (Sponsored by the "Friends of Ladies Remembered" and the Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society.) Tickets are \$15.

LIMITED SEATING - CALL FOR TICKETS TODAY. L. Schaefer: 941-639-8217.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Wed. Mar. 2, 9, 16 (Mon. 21), 30 – Choir Practice 6:00 pm

Thurs. Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31– Meditation 5:15 pm

Sat. Mar. 5, 12, 19, 26 – Recorder Group 2 pm

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|---|--|
| Mar. 2 Gulf Coast Acoustic Guitar Society 7 pm | 13 Social Justice Committee 12 pm |
| 4 Artist Reception 4 pm (see p. 9) | 15 Board Meeting
Local UU Ministers Gathering 10:30 am
Sierra Club 7 pm |
| 5 Being a UU – What Do You Believe?
9 am
Ubuntu Singing 2:30 pm (see p. 7) | 16 Worship Committee 11:30 am |
| 6 Peace Initiative Speaker 12 pm
(see p. 8) | 17 Citizens Climate Lobby 6 pm |
| 7 Racial Justice Committee 6:30 pm
(see p. 7) | 18 Peer Writing 1:30 pm |
| 8 NAMI 6 pm | 19 Mystic Faire 9:30 am |
| 9 Caring and Hospitality 10 am

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 2 pm | 20 Mystic Experiences 12 pm |
| 10 Discussion on Class 4:30 pm | 22 Shared Stories: For All Who Have Lost
a Loved One 6:30 pm |
| 11 Karaoke Night 5:30 pm

Café Serendipity 7 pm | 23 Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 2 pm
Healing Oasis 6 pm |
| 12 Chalice Circles 2 pm
Patchouli Music Concert 7:30 pm | 26 Being a UU – What Do You Believe?
9 am
Chalice Circles 2pm |
| | 30 Book Group 1:30 pm |

CONTACT US - OFFICE HOURS Monday through Thursday 8 am – 2 pm

1532 Forrest Nelson Blvd, Port Charlotte, FL 33952 941.627.4303

www.uufcc.org, www.facebook.com/uufcc

Rev. Amy Kindred, minister@uufcc.org 941.916.0957

Minister's hours: Tues. morning and Thurs, afternoon. It's best to call for an appointment.

Chris McCoy, Office Administrator, office@uufcc.org

Dennis Shaw, Board President, President@uufcc.org

Joani Mountain, Membership Coordinator, joanimountain@gmail.com

Marty Wilmer, Lifespan Development Coordinator, marty.wilmer@gmail.com

Ginger Abraham, Newsletter Editor, newsletter@uufcc.org **Article Deadline:** 20th of the month

Myrna Charry, Communications Chair, mcharry@earthlink.net