



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County

1532 Forest Nelson Boulevard, Port Charlotte, Florida 33952
941.627.4303 — www.uufcc.org — www.facebook.com/uufcc

COMMUNIQUE

Can you say kuh-myoo-nuh-kay?

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

promotes

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

as strong values & moral guides:

1st Principle

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

2nd Principle

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

3rd Principle

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

4th Principle

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

5th Principle

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

6th Principle

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

7th Principle

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

SUNDAY SERVICES

are at 10:30 a.m.
Services are hybrid:
in-person and
on YouTube.
www.youtube.com
UUFCC Port Charlotte

A Letter from the President

Dear Ones,

I am writing to you on Thanksgiving afternoon. The turkey is in the oven and the waiting sides are in the refrigerator. I'm sure my dear friend, Tim, and I will have a delicious feast!

There is so much to be thankful for!

Our Fellowship is experiencing the annual "return of the snow birds" and dear members that I have not seen for too many months are back.

The grounds that surround our property are looking so much better due to the hard work of **Laura Liermann, Tom Deuley and John Lee.** If my back continues to heal and the cooler weather persists, I plan to return to the **Grounds Crew** in January.

The **decorating group** is consistently amazing me with their monthly enhancements to the chancel area. I am really looking forward to viewing their December efforts.



During the November Board of Trustees meeting, I was once again impressed by the compatibility of our leadership. I wish to thank Vice President **Laura Liermann, Secretary Laura Anderson, Treasurer Dick Schwartz and Trustees John Lee, Robert Moran, Betty Barriga and Sharon Whitehill.** These special folks make such a difference in so many ways.

Remember, there will be several **openings on the Board** and it is not too early to consider who will fill these positions. I will complete my third two year terms as President and I have decided that for the welfare of UUFCC, I will not run for another term.

Where the mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

— *Laozi*

(Chinese honorific meaning 'The Old Master'; Romanized as Lao Tze) a Chinese philosopher, sage and author of *Tao Te Ching* (400 BC), the foundational text of Taoism along with Zhuangzi

Elections will be held at the end of March but it is not too early to start the search for my successor.

Finally, I hope that each of you has a **great holiday season** and takes advantage of the many Fellowship activities and festivities.

In gratitude and faith,
Dennis Shaw, President
UUFCC Board of Trustees

Merry Christmas

**SEASON'S GREETINGS:
FOOD AND HOLIDAYS**



Lyn and I don't have a fireplace. So we use a chiminea on Christmas Eve. Chimineas are used for heating and cooking in some villages in Latin America. Our Mexican chiminea is a freestanding fireplace, made of clay, with a holiday chimney decorated with lights.

How does Santa Claus squeeze himself down the small chimney on a chiminea? He has magical powers. Gifts arrive for Christmas morning, although, sometimes, the old guy gets confused about colors, sizes, and other matters. We have a solution for the problem.

Instead of hot chocolate, Lyn and I prepare a pot of hot coffee for Santa. Hot cocoa is nice, but if Santa needs a jolt of caffeine, he'll find some espresso at our house during the early morning hours.

Can you imagine the December holidays without chocolate and coffee?



**Rev.
Robert (Bob) Murphy
Unitarian Universalist
Community Minister
Retired**

The story is the same for Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the Night of the Winter Solstice. Vanilla, ginger, nutmeg, sugar and cinnamon, and other tropical and sub-tropical items are important for all of the December holidays. Some of these items are identified with places near the Gulf of Mexico. In November, Lyn and I went to Central America to learn about fair trade in the Americas.

Look for fair trade labels when you shop in local markets. Check the labels on spice and coffee containers, on chocolates, on bananas, and on other products. Fair trade organizations help farmers in developing countries to achieve equitable and sustainable trade relationships. Fair trade products sometimes cost a bit more than other products. Still, paying a few pennies more for fair trade products supports food justice. Congregations and families can be helpful.





A DYNAMITE STORY?

Nobel Prize Day is December 10

— *contributed by Herb Levin*



In 1888, Alfred Nobel, while very much alive, was said to have read his own obituary which was titled “The Merchant of Death is Dead.” It was accidental. Supposedly, a French newspaper was to report the death of Alfred’s brother Ludwig. The story goes that seeing news of his own death was so disconcerting that it got Alfred thinking about how he might be remembered when his time came.

Nobel was born in Sweden into a family of engineers. He was fluent in six languages: Swedish, French, Russian, English, German, and Italian. He wrote poetry in English. He also wrote a prose tragedy, *Nemesis*, about an Italian noblewoman that was printed

while he was dying, but immediately after his death, all but three copies were destroyed, as scandalous and blasphemous.

Alfred Nobel was Lutheran, then an agnostic, and later an atheist. Yet his generous donations to the Church of Sweden continued.

At 24, he filed his first patent. By his 1896 death, he’d amassed a fortune from his 350 inventions. The invention for which he is most famous? Dynamite.

News of his own death is said inspired Alfred to change his will. Merchant of Death wasn’t how he wanted to be remembered. So his 1895 will awards “those who, during the preceding year, have conferred the greatest benefit to

humankind.” His will left all his “remaining realizable assets” to be used to establish five prizes which became known as “Nobel Prizes.” His family disputed the will and the Swedes disputed dispersing a Swedish fortune to the rest of the world at a time when Swedes were impoverished. Five years later (1901), the first Nobel Prizes were awarded.

Prizes are awarded annually for Physics, Peace, Literature, Physiology or Medicine, and Economic Sciences. Each recipient (“laureate”) gets:

- A green gold medal plated with 24 karat gold;
- A diploma; and,
- Money (\$986,000 in 2023).

Alfred Bernhard Nobel, a Swedish chemist and founder of the Nobel Prize, was born on this day in 1833

Merchant of Death to Champion of Peace

Invented the dynamite, detonator and owned Bofors, a major manufacturer of cannon and armaments

90 armaments factories were established by him

“Good wishes alone will not ensure peace.”

— Alfred Nobel

Before his death he set aside **31,225,000 Swedish Kronor** to establish five Nobel Prizes.

350 patents are held by him

“I intend to leave after my death a large fund for the promotion of the peace idea, but I am skeptical as to its results.”

— Alfred Nobel

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Nobel

Unitarian Universalists include, but are not limited to, agnostic, atheist, Buddhist, Christian, earth-centered, Hindu, Humanist, Islam, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Taoism, believers in God, and more.

www.uua.org/beliefs/who-we-are

The UUFCC Book Group

will discuss

The Matzah Ball by Jean Meltzer

Wednesday, December 27th, at 1:30 pm at the Fellowship

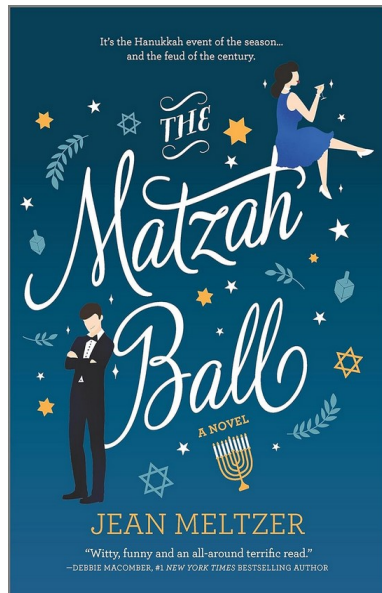
Amazon.com says:

“*The Matzah Ball* had me laughing out loud.”
— Debbie Macomber,
#1 *New York Times* bestselling author.

Oy! To the world!

Rachel Rubenstein-Goldblatt is a nice Jewish girl with a secret: she loves Christmas. For a decade she’s hidden her career as a Christmas romance novelist from her family. It’s made her a bestseller even as her chronic illness has always kept the kind of love she writes about out of reach.

But when her diversity-conscious publisher insists she write a Hanukkah romance, her well of inspiration suddenly runs dry. Hanukkah’s not magical, not merry, not Christmas. Desperate not to lose her contract, Rachel is determined



to find her muse at the Matzah Ball, a Jewish music celebration on the last night of Hanukkah, even if it means working with her summer camp archenemy, Jason Greenberg.

Though Rachel and Jacob haven’t seen each other since they were kids, the grudge still glows brighter than a menorah. But as they spend more time together, Rachel finds she’s drawn to Hanukkah — and Jacob —

in a way she never expected. Maybe this holiday of lights is the spark needed to set her heart ablaze.

“A luminous celebration of all types of love, threaded with the message that everyone is worthy of it.” — Rachel Lynn Solomon, author of *The Ex Talk*.



Mary Jane Williams
UUFCC Office Admin. and
UUFCC Book Group Chair

“These candles ... remind us we always have a choice ... Become someone who snuffs out another person’s candle, and ... makes the world a darker place. Or ... be the type ... who spreads light.”

— Jean Meltzer
The Matzah Ball

An Elevator Speech
Unitarian Universalists gather in community to support one another’s individual spiritual journeys, trusting that openness to one another’s experiences will enhance their own understanding of their own links with the divine, with history, and with one another.

—UU Rev. Jonalu Johnston,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
<http://archive.uuworld.org/2003/06/affirmations.html>

The UUFCC Book Group Schedule Fall 2023 thru Spring 2024

10-25-23	Circe	Madeline Miller	F
11-29-23	Under a White Sky – The Nature of the Future	Elizabeth Kolbert	NF
12-27-23	The Matzah Ball	Jean Meltzer	F
01-31-24	Book Woman of Troublesome Creek	Kim Michele	F
02-28-24	A Little Devil in America Notes in Praise of Black Performance	Hanif Abdurraqib	NF
03-27-24	The Road Back (sequel to All Quiet on the Western Front but no need to read first)	Erich Maria Remarque	F
04-24-24	The Great Alone	Kristin Hannah	F
05-29-24	The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks	Rebecca Skloot	NF

UU SOURCES OF OUR LIVING TRADITION

UU congregations “live out [their seven] Principles within a ‘living tradition’ of wisdom and spirituality, drawn from sources as diverse as science, poetry, scripture and personal experience. These are the six sources our congregations affirm and promote:

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

<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/sources>



Somehow you’ll escape All the waiting and staying. You’ll find the bright places where **BOOM Bands** are playing!

— *Dr. Seuss*

I’d been thinking about dynamite (p. 3) and was ready to switch gears and think about music.

Why not songs that have the word “boom” in their title or lyrics?

Google it. There are so many, and so many you know.

1. *Boom Boom*
by John Lee Hooker
(1961), also covered by the Yardbirds in 1964 and The Blues Brothers in 1980.
2. *Sophisticated Boom Boom*
by the Shangri-Las
3. *I Saw Her Standing There*
by the Beatles

*Well, my heart went boom
When I crossed that room*
4. *Chick-A-Boom*
by Daddy Dewdrop

*Bomp boom a loo
Bom a long bamboo
Chick-a-boom
Chick-a-boom-boom-boom*

5. *I want to Take You Higher*
by Sly and the Family Stone

*Boom laka-laka-laka
Boom laka-lak-goon-ka-boom*

And now for your listening pleasure, here’s Little Walter and his Jukes playing *Boom, Boom Out Goes the Lights*.

Listen. Watch. Enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XagQ3owbBEM&list=PLB251B3D669D1663E&index=7>



— A Herb Levin contribution

CHURCH: THE NEXT GENERATION by Ryan Smith

As grey hairs start to grow in, my credibility to talk about the needs of younger church-goers wanes. However, since I first attended a UU congregation in 1999, I often find myself a bit of an outlier in regards to age. I'm considered a Millennial on the cusp year with Gen X: my experiences align with both. Ideas?

INCLUSION: The number one thing to attract and retain younger people is to allow them full participation. UUism has great promise to be radically inclusive, yet leadership in UU congregations is almost ubiquitously retired people. As a musician, I am keenly aware of what area congregations have representing them in worship and music: it is ubiquitously older. On the surface, it seems unintentional, but I've personally been treated as invisible when visiting UU congregations and had my participation declined.

THIRD SPACES — Places where people interact that aren't home or work and don't have a significant pay barrier. Different generations have different third spaces: soda fountain, mall, coffee shop. For young people now, there are very few third spaces to be able to socialize and often those available are a significant drive away from one's neighborhood. Loneliness is an epidemic and the younger one is, the worse it is. Any gathering that UUFCC puts on to allow younger people to gather and socialize could be the one thing a person has to connect with others in their life.

TECHNOLOGY AND AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE: To some extent for my age group, but definitely for those younger, technology and the internet, is endemic, proliferating every aspect of our lives, and many of us are really weary of it. Zoom meetings and internet networking may seem novel and engaging for older generations, but younger people always had these things and can never seem to get away from them. For us, an authentic in-person experience is desperately lacking and thirsted for.



Beautiful but neglected Farley United Methodist Church in Berkey, Ohio, in the process of being torn down after attendance struggled and failed to get over three people

CHANGE: Every generation changes the way we do church, at least to some extent. Yet, many churches are very set in their ways, rigid, and inflexible. My philosophy of worship and music is to have a beautiful tapestry of different influences. The way it has always been gets only what it has already gotten. When addressing a congregation on this matter, I try to dispel clinging to old ways that don't work any more by painting a picture of the dinosaur church, like in *Jurassic Park*: applying DNA from a past to today just doesn't always work.

SAFETY: Growing up before I did or after differs vastly. Generations before were given lots of freedom to explore, scrape knees, and make mistakes. In the 80s, paranoia about children's safety began. No trick or treat without the watchful eye of an adult. X-ray candy for razor blades—none was ever found, ever. No accepting popcorn balls the sweet grandmother down the street spent all day making. Kids growing up after me are kept safe from mostly imagined threats by being safely locked down at home in front of an electronic device that quietly links them to every person in the world that would do harm to a child. It is hard to differentiate a penitentiary and a high school at first glance: both have multiple fence perimeters and armed guards. Feeling safe can be a lot harder for younger people.

IF YOU FORGET EVERYTHING ELSE: Remember to not apologize for being old. Growing old is not a flaw or an error to feel bad about. If you apologize for who you are, what is it about who I am that I should apologize for? If a younger person comes to UUFCC, give them the benefit of the doubt that they are okay being around older people.

May this be food for thought. As many churches close down, even UUs, there's a horrible missed opportunity for so many young needing and wanting spiritual and social connection and not finding any place that accepts them.

**UUFCC Art Committee
ART ON THE WALL**



On display at UUFCC Nov.10 thru Dec.1

This exhibit features some local landmarks that may be familiar to area residents.

PEACE RIVER PAINTERS

Plein air painters – they paint outside much like French Impressionists did!

Every Monday, September through June, 9am to noon, they go to a different location.



Penny MacKenzie with her "Summer Flowers"



"Manasota Key North" by Penny MacKenzie



"Lighthouse Boca Grande" by Lori Hasselfeldt



"A Moment for Thought" by Johan Bjunman

More ART SHOW, p.8

ART SHOW, from p.7



“Gone Fishing” by Johan Bjuman



“View from my Kayak”
by Simonne Smith



“Sea Turtle” by Simonne Smith



“Manasota Key Wave” by Penny MacKenzie

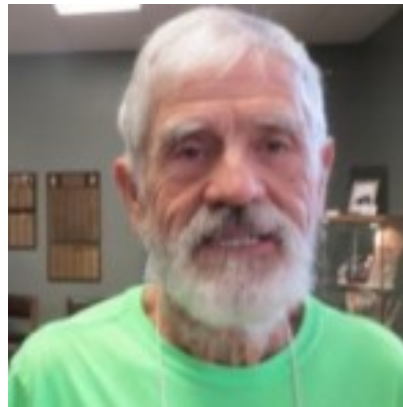
Q: What motivated you to start being a vegan? Was there a trigger, and if so, what?

A: A few years ago, it was determined that I needed to get checked out. A CAT scan was ordered and revealed that I had some coronary problems and needed a stent. I also had a slow heart rate, which I already knew about, so a pacemaker was put in at the same time as the stent.

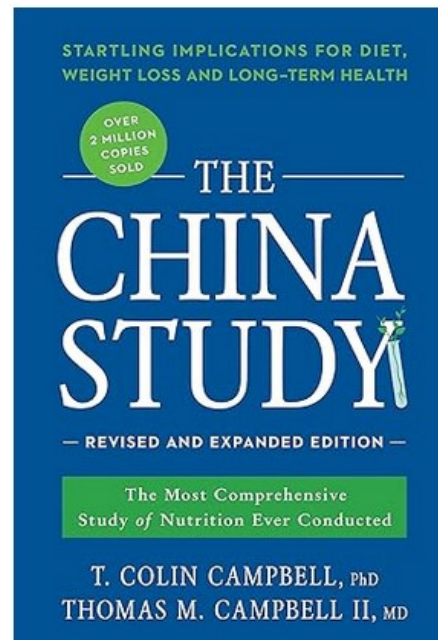
[A **coronary angiogram** is a special procedure that takes dynamic x-ray pictures of your heart. The purpose of this procedure is to see if your coronary arteries are narrowed or blocked and to look for abnormalities of your heart muscle or heart valves. Another term for coronary angiogram is **cardiac catheterization**.]

So now I needed a cardiologist. I'd already heard of Dr. Jaimela Dulaney. She was a vegan who was a patient concierge doctor: you pay a monthly fee whether you need to see her or not, but then she's always available whenever you need to see her. I'd heard she was an extreme athlete and a plant-based primary and cardiologist. I've been her patient now for about three years.

By the way, I prefer to say my diet is plant-based, not vegan. **PLANT-BASED** means I'm trying to eat as healthy as possible. I limit eating sugar, oils, cholesterol and processed foods. Vegan eaters eat broader sources versus just plants.



Mark Ellefson



Q: So how did you begin and know what and how to eat?

A. Dr. Dulaney has weekly nutrition classes. I also read a lot about diet. I can't remember if it was before or after this health problem, but I read a big book by a heart doctor who studied and researched how and why the Chinese have more fiber in their diet and are healthier than we are. His book promotes plant-based diets.

Books I've read, like Campbell's, talked about how this country stresses **PROTEIN** more than most other countries. We get enough protein with plant foods, not trying to get as much as we used before. Other countries eat more **FIBER**. Animal products don't have any fiber so we miss out in that area.

Q: How long have you eaten like this? Pros and cons? Seen a difference?

A: It's been three years. Eating this way is less convenient. And most everyone else eats animal products. As for feeling better, there's been no change: I felt good before my heart problem.

Once I got into the plant-based diet, reasons other than health really bothered me. First, **animal rights** and abuse that takes place even with milk. Animals are not treated well at all which is lorded over them. Lobbyists promote animal eating and have had a financial interest ever since animal eating and hunting began. Second, the **environment** is not sustainable if we keep eating animal products. It's the cause of global warming.

This all just confirms my plant-based diet is the right choice.

DECEMBER MONTH OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL RITES

DECEMBER FESTIVALS have been present from ancient, possible prehistoric times. Christmas, a primary religious celebration, stems from both Pagan and Roman culture.

SATURNALIA was an ancient Roman festival honoring Saturn, the God of Agriculture. It lasted from December 17th-23rd with a sacrifice to the God, private gift giving and a hedonistic festival which went on for days. Masters prepared the table for their servants and they were free and equal during the festival time.

WINTER SOLSTICE occurs during the maximum tilt of earth from the Sun. In the Northern Hemisphere it occurs around December 21st. South of the equator, it occurs in June. Rumor has it that the early Catholic church designated December 25th as the day to celebrate the birth of Jesus because many of the locals still recognized the Winter Solstice. Celebratory competition?

HANUKKAH, a Jewish Holiday, celebrates the re-dedication of the second Temple at the beginning of the Maccabee revolt in 2 BCE. The miracle which is recognized is that the available oil, a one-day supply, lasted for eight days. The candles of the Menorah signify the eight-day period. This holiday normally occurs in mid-December.

CHRISTMAS, December 25th, was first celebrated by the church of Rome in the 4th century during the reign of Constantine, the first Christian emperor. The feasting and gift giving from an earlier time are today incorporated by both the religious and the secular. The Festival of Lights, the fir tree and the mythical Santa Claus bringing gifts for all seems to be the focus today.

KWANZAA, December 26—January 1, is a Pan-African secular holiday emphasizing the importance of Black families and social values. It is centered on seven principles, with a candle in the Kinara lit each night. Gifts given within the family are handmade or personally performed.

ORIGINS of the December holidays vary depending upon one's religion or cultural history. I have rarely seen a Santa Claus or Christmas angel of color. To many, Christmas in particular has become a secular event. However, I can say as a Unitarian Universalist I am free to embrace whichever is important to me. And, I can say that I have participated in services for each of the above December recognition days.



Stephanie Garrett



Five Amazing Holidays

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion characterized by a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Unitarian Universalists assert no creed, but instead are unified by their shared search for spiritual growth, guided by a dynamic, living tradition.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UnitarianUniversalism

Happy Holidays

Four major United Nations legal instruments exist to define and guarantee protection of human rights:

1. 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);
2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966);
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976); and,
4. Optional Protocols to the last item.

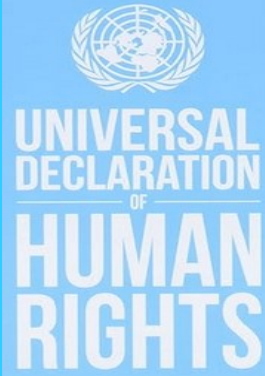
The Covenants are treaties binding on the national States which ratify them. The UDHR is a public moral statement of intentions, motives and views. Together: **International Bill of Human Rights.**

We hopefully believe that there are certain inborn rights that cannot be denied and are permanent, part of the inheritance of all human beings. We also have other rights that are defined and enacted by our governments, be they national, state or local. These latter rights are not unchangeable but may be altered, replaced or canceled as circumstances change. There are also international treaties agreed to by independent national States which define what is acceptable or unacceptable among the signing parties.

As noted, **Covenants are legal treaties.** **The UDHR is aspirational,** based on moral codes founded on philosophical and religious beliefs and practices. For example, one might cite the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

A most signal role was played by **Eleanor Roosevelt**, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's widow, in creation of UDHR. Nominated by a Chinese delegate, she was unanimously approved as chairman of the **UN Human Rights Commission (HRC)**. Mrs. Roosevelt was already a world figure recognized for her newspaper

December 10th
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
honors adoption of



“Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

— Preamble to 1948 UDHR



articles addressing poverty alleviation, access to education, conflict resolution, and civil rights. President Roosevelt, not long before his death, proposed adding a second bill of rights to the US Constitution to deal with unresolved needs.

HRC members represented countries with a broad variety of conflicting political, economic, cultural and religious views. Under her patient, tactful and deliberate leadership, Eleanor Roosevelt was instrumental in bringing about respectful discussions, compromises and carefully worded agreements.

The resulting UDHR is considered **one of the most important human rights documents ever published.** Constitutions of many countries include passages and even the entirety of the UDHR. Some include additional rights. UDHR continues to stimulate thought, creativity and hope.

When the UN Charter was signed in 1945, seven articles declared support for human rights and a Human Rights Commission was established. At the first session of the 1946 UN General Assembly, an HRC was designated and instructed to formulate an international bill of rights. Its work began in 1947. The first debate was whether the result should be a proclamation or a treaty. The decision was to declare general principles and to form covenants based on those principles that would be binding on the States that would ratify them. In 1948, the UDHR was adopted. In 1966, the UN General Assembly adopted the three Covenants unanimously.

— Ted Zawistowski, Interim Chair
Social Justice Committee

To see UDHR's 30 articles, click:
<https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/#64>

I opened my October talk, “We’re In This Together,” by saying Buddhism can’t be explained. Then, I went on to try to explain Buddhism. Similarly, explaining Buddhist holidays can be pretty tricky. In the West, the frame of reference for religious holidays is largely Christianity. Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire and doctrines and holidays were made homogenous. Ashoka the Great was an Emperor in India and did much to spread and unify Buddhism, but he was only active for 30 or so years. There is no central figure or hierarchy. The Dalai Lama is the leader only of Vajrayana Buddhists. After that, there was nothing to interfere with Buddhism developing in different ways in different places. The **THREE MAIN BRANCHES OF BUDDHISM** are THERAVADA in Southeast Asia; Mahayana in China, Japan, Vietnam, and Korea; and, VAJRAYANA in the Himalayas. Recently, the United Nations recognized VESAK (May) as a holiday but, at that time, it was only recognized in Theravada countries. Now, because of the UN, most Buddhist institutions recognize it to some extent.

BODHI DAY in December is mostly recognized in Mahayana regions of the Buddhist world. It is the day that Siddhartha Gautama is said to have attained enlightenment, or at least when it is observed, and is thought of as a **more advantageous time for awakening**.

As traditions vary greatly around the world (and for an article versus a dissertation), I will focus on one tradition I am most familiar with, **RINZAI ZEN**. In the Rinzai Zen training monasteries in Japan, there is a palpable sense of energy and anticipation as the darkness and freezing temperatures take hold. In Japan, Bodhi Day is called **ROHATSU**, which just refers to the 8th day of the 12th month. It used to be



BODHI DAY December 8th



Ryan Smith

observed at a different time, but moved to December when Japan changed to a Western style calendar. The week leading up to Rohatsu is called **SESSHIN** and, during that week, monks refrain from almost all their regular activities and dedicate all their time to sitting meditation, often referred to as **ZAZEN**, but better described as **SHIKANTAZA**, which means “just sitting” and seeking guidance from the abbot. You might think of it as the Olympics of Zen, but there is also a Japanese word that alludes to it as the time when a lot of monks give up. They are so single-mindedly focused on attaining **SATORI**, experiencing one’s true nature, that they don’t even lay down to sleep and eat only rice porridge and pickles, so the monk cooking doesn’t waste time that could be used towards attaining satori. Between the few different activities, monks run between buildings to waste no time. All this, most will tell you. What they won’t tell you is that all this effort is a bit of farce, an inside joke. Master Lin ji (“Rinzai” in Japanese) said (heavily paraphrased) that anyone who came to a monastery to find anything they didn’t

already have should be beat with a stick. Any aspirant seeking to enter a Zen monastery is told they have nothing to teach and that they must go away. Some have a hard time accepting awakening as simple as taking off a tight old shoe, so every ritual and procedure in a Rinzai Zen monastery is designed to confound the encumbrances one imposes on themselves. What I am saying is, **don’t feel like a slacker**, the Zen training monastery is definitely not for everyone. Indeed, Siddhartha did not practice Zen. Master Lin ji seemed to think that Zen was just for the most difficult cases. Any Zen master will tell you that the practice of Zen is like putting legs on a snake: not necessary, unless it is.

Cultures around the world set aside December as a special month. As days grow short and candles, lights, Christmas trees and more appear, may you be well, have an ease of heart, and find this time advantageous for awakening.



PARENTING with PRIDE

Join us for our upcoming webinar!

Learn How to Bust Book Bans

Book bans and attempted book bans are happening in schools and libraries across Florida right now. It's shocking AND we can stop it - but first we need to know how.

Florida Freedom to Read Project, a mom-led grassroots organization on the frontlines of fighting Florida's book bans, will be giving us the 411 on how to fight these censorship efforts.



Please Join Us On:

**December 12th, 2023
6:00pm - 7:00pm EST**

We will discuss:

- What are the different types of book bans taking place in Florida?
- Why are book bans happening and how can we stop them?
- What is the difference between a book challenge and a book ban?
- What strategies can be implemented to ensure students can access diverse and inclusive books?

[Click HERE to RSVP or Scan the QR Code](#)



HOSTED BY



Florida's Kaleidoscope
PTA
everychild.onevoice®



Questions? Email-
Jennifer@equalityflorida.org



5 December 2023

World Soil Day

Keep soil alive,
protect soil biodiversity



One of the biggest concerns for the environment is **SOIL DEGRADATION** — when soil health declines due to improper use or poor management.

During the Great Depression, dust storms were frequent and massive and **they were caused by soil erosion**. Farmers learned (the hard way) and began to practice better soil management.

Unfortunately, soil health concerns persist. Soil is eroding at a rapid rate worldwide.

Every 5 seconds, the equivalent of one soccer field of soil erodes. If soil erosion continues, the earth will no longer be fertile. Global food supplies and food safety will be threatened.

Replacing lost soil takes years, up to 1,000 years to produce just 2 to 3 cm of soil: that's about **the size of a grape**. It's believed that up to 90% of the world's land will be degraded by 2050.

World Soil Day (WSD) Background?

In 2002, the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) recommended an international day to celebrate soil. Under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) supported the establishment of WSD.

In 2013, the UN FAO formally endorsed WSD. In December 2013, UN General Assembly officially designated December 5th as World Soil Day, commemorating the late H.M. King Bhumibol

Adulyadej, King of Thailand, a leading proponent. December 5th is the King's birthday.

World Soil Day Observations

UN FAO encourages youth and adults worldwide to participate in annual challenges to care for the soil. One challenge: sign a pledge card, plant a seed, take a photo, and share it on social media.

The King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award (\$15,000, a gold medal and a trip to Thailand) sponsored by the Kingdom of Thailand for the best soil day activity or campaign.

The Glinka World Soil Prize (\$15,000 and a gold medal) in honor of Russian soil scientist Konstantin Glinka (1867-1927) sponsored by UN FAO Global Soil Partnership for dedication to solving world soil degradation.

LET'S STOP LOSING GROUND

1. Learn about soil health, importance, future impact.
2. Watch videos and documentaries about soil:
 - a) **Dirt! The Movie (2019)**
 - b) **Living Soil: A Documentary (2018)**
 - c) **Soil Erosion: A Historical Perspective (2016)**
 - d) **Symphony of the Soil (2013)**
3. Commit to caring for your community's soil:
 - a) Compost, plant cover crops, build terraces to prevent soil erosion, etc.
 - b) Share on social media with #WorldSoilDay.
 - c) **Help with our Fellowship garden!**

Can you dig it?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Year_of_Soil



TOUR

Ted Zawistowski, SJC Interim Chair
 Pictures provided by Debbie Conrad



The UUFCC Social Justice Committee sponsored a tour of the facilities of the Homeless Coalition on Monday, November 13th. Participants brought items to donate, such as clean clothing in good repair. Attendees got to see how the Homeless Coalition does its work to help people in our community.

Welcoming us to our tour was CEO Tina Figliuolo who led us through the facilities and described all the activities that take place there. Serving our community for 33 years, the Homeless Coalition works to alleviate and prevent hunger and homelessness. Meals are served every day, breakfast, lunch and dinner. In addition, food baskets are distributed weekly, including for pets. Emergency housing exists for up to 62 individuals, families, seniors and children. Twenty-two beds are reserved for veterans.



Taking part in the tour were (L to R) Carolyn Kellar, Ruth Volpe, Suzi Barbee, HC COO Philip Schofield, Alex Pritchard and Ted Zawistowski. We also delivered two large bags of men's clothing which is distributed to the needy or sold at the Fabulous Finds Re-sale Shop. At various times over the years, members of our UUFCC have served as volunteers at the Homeless Coalition, including in the kitchen seen in the background.

Fabulous Finds
 Re-Sale Shop
 and Unique
 Boutique

1931 Tamiami Trail, Unit 13
 Port Charlotte FL
 941-979-8230
 www.fabulousfinds.org

Proceeds support the Homeless Coalition.

Store Hours: 10 am–4 pm
 Donation Hours: 10 am–3 pm
 Free pickup available.

To volunteer, call 941-627-4313 X134

GO VEGAN



COMPASSION



NONVIOLENCE



FOR THE ANIMALS



FOR THE PLANET



FOR THE PEOPLE

BLACK BEAN SWEET POTATO BARLEY SOUP

I love to cook and my very favorite thing to make is soup.
Easy, versatile, nutritious, economical and low fat.

TIPS

- Canned beans are convenient but I prefer dried beans: cheaper, tastier and the cooking liquid makes a wonderfully rich, flavorful broth.
- In lieu of expensive commercial vegetable broth, it is remarkably easy to save all veggie scraps in a plastic bag in the freezer. Boiled in water, this makes wonderful broth that is not only free but minus all that sodium and other nasty stuff!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup black beans
- 1 cup pinto beans
- 4-8 c. Reserved liquid from cooking dried beans to add to soup and/or vegetable broth.
If using canned beans simply wait and add at the end.
- 2 T. olive oil
- 3-4 carrots (chopped)
- 3-4 celery stalks (chopped)
- 1 onion (finely chopped)
- 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 10 oz. can Rotel-type diced tomatoes and green chilis
- ½ cup barley
- ½ -1 t. cumin, thyme, garlic powder, onion powder, and salt
- 2-4 sweet potatoes (½" cubed)



Sandy Telander



INSTRUCTIONS

1. **PREPARE BEANS AHEAD:**
Follow directions on package (usually soak overnight, drain, cover with fresh water and simmer 2.5 hours). Quicker if using a pressure cooker.
2. **SAUTÉ** in large stock pot 8 minutes:
2 T. olive oil
3-4 carrots (chopped)
3-4 celery stalks (chopped)
1 onion (finely chopped)
3. **ADD TO SAUTÉED VEGGIES:**
28 oz. can diced tomatoes
10 oz. can diced tomatoes and green chilis (Rotel type)
4-8 C liquid as needed (reserved from cooking beans, vegetable broth, water or a combination of all three)
½ C. barley
Spices
4. **SIMMER 40 MINUTES** until barley is cooked.
5. **ADD SWEET POTATOES** and simmer 10 minutes or until sweet potatoes are tender.
6. **ADD BEANS** that have already been cooked and simply heat thru.

This makes a lot and freezes well.



IN MEMORIAM

**“To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.” – Thomas Campbell
Remembering Fellowship members and friends.**

**MARION
CAROL
MENNA**

**12/14/36
to
10/05/23**



Marion Menna was active in UUFCC Chalice Circle, discussion groups, the Book Group, the Art Committee and a writer's group. She grew up on Long Island beaches and was an accomplished artist, prolific writer, published poet, retired special educator, dog lover, and committed bird watcher. She's had poems published in the *West Hills Review*, *Long Island Quarterly*, *Xanadu*, *Stone Canoe II*, and many online journals. Her first published short story, "An Enormous Child," is online at <https://persimmontree.org/spring-2009/an-enormous-child/>.

**CAROL
VIRGINIA
STANGER**

**01/05/47
to
10/09/23**



Carol Stanger joined UUFCC as a friend just before COVID made UUFCC turn to Zoom. Not long thereafter, Carol learned her cancer was back. She had a master's degree from Western Michigan University in Learning Disabilities and served as a special education teacher in three states, including South Dakota's Cheyenne Sioux Reservation, and as an Adjunct Professor with Spring Arbor University. She enjoyed golf, reading, traveling, playing games, socializing, and advocating for equality and human rights.

Beloved Fellowship Members and Friends may be honored with:

- **An ENGRAVED PAVER for the UUFCC PEACE GARDEN.
See Order Form in the UUFCC Weekly Update.**
- **A contribution payable to the UUFCC ENDOWMENT FUND.
On check memo line, write 'In Memory of [Beloved's Name].'**



UUFCC ENDOWMENT FUND

In Memory

Of...



Contributing to the UUFCC ENDOWMENT FUND is a way to recognize Fellowship members and friends.

It allows the Endowment to grow and financially support UU programs demonstrative of our principles at the local, regional and national levels.

It is with deep gratitude that we thank you for your contributions.

UUE Board of Trustees

MaryHolly Allison
Ken Brennen
Stephanie Garrett
Mary Howard
Delmar Wooden

UUFCC ENDOWMENT FUND Disbursements

In 2023, UUFCC Endowment funds provided \$6,000.00 to UUFCC for Administrative Support of the Endowment.

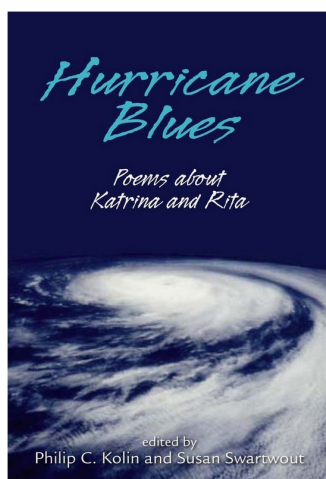
In addition, at the request of the Fellowship, UUFCC Endowment Funds provided funding to cover the piano player for the Celebration of Life for long-term member Marion Menna. A flowering bromeliad has been placed in the Fellowship garden in her memory.

UUFCC ENDOWMENT FUND Donations

In 2023, UUFCC Endowment Fund received the following donations.

In honor of
MARION MENNA

by
Maureen Peters
MaryLou Proudfoot Kennedy
Mary Jane Williams



Marion Menna's poem, "Blue Monday," references her inspiration, New Orleans legend Fats Domino (with song quotes). Here's an excerpt:

"Our tears fell like rain and the moon stood still. The four winds blew 'til blue Monday when Fats came walking, yes indeed, still walking, out of the dome."

Kolin, P., and Swartwout, S. (2006). *Hurricane Blues: Poems About Katrina and Rita*. Southeast Missouri State University Press, p.105.



<https://www.uufcc.org/uee-unitarian-universalist-endowment-of-charlotte-county/>

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County [Florida] — 941.627.4303 — www.uufcc.org — www.facebook.com/uufcc
Sunday Services are at 10:30 a.m. Services are hybrid: in-person and on YouTube — www.youtube.com UUFCC Port Charlotte

LOOK AT THIS



UUFCC GENEROSITY!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SECOND HELPING

Your SEPTEMBER 2023 Donations Totaled \$1,061.00 which was given to:



COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS A worker-based human rights organization https://ciw-online.org.org

Wow!

PEACE GARDEN ENGRAVED PAVERS

Honor beloved UUFCC members and friends AND help UUFCC.

\$75 buys one paver of which \$45 gets donated to UUFCC

Use ORDER FORM in WEEKLY UPDATE



ENDOWMENT

Honor beloved Fellowship members and friends AND help UUFCC.

Endowment funds assure UUFCC's financial future and further UU principles and practices.

Make contribution to: UUFCC Endowment Fund and on check memo line write "In Memory of [beloved's name]"

In Memory

Of...

UUSC CAPAS

Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum Seekers and UUFCC are assisting a Venezuelan family seeking asylum.

YOU CAN HELP!

- Donate clothing, diapers, food, filing fees, etc.
• Provide transportation to school, appointments, etc.
• Translate for the host family.
• Plan a recreational outing.
• DONATE MONEY!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



SECOND HELPING DONATIONS CORRECTION:

04/2023 issue should have said \$897.00 was received 01/2023 and given to C.A.R.E.

**SECOND SUNDAY
SECOND HELPING
DECEMBER RECIPIENT**



FAMILIES IN TRANSITION
Homeless Education Project
removing barriers that might
prevent students enrolling,
attending, succeeding in school

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT
*"Covenant" is Latin for "walking together."
This Covenant is a living, dynamic document
describing how we intend to live the Principles
we value in our religious community.*

We, the members of UUFCC,
covenant to support and cherish all
our members and friends and
encourage each other to honor these
high standards of relationship.

We value a free, open, and mutually
respectful exchange of ideas. We
honor all voices and encourage
thoughtful freedom of expression.

We respect each other's views,
backgrounds, and spiritual ideas. We
listen to each other without judgement
or interruption and speak directly with
a person instead of about a person.
We will address issues and behaviors,
rather than people and personalities.

We will be considerate but
courageous in name behavior that
diminishes our community. We offer
forgiveness and understanding and
expect that from each other. In all
situations, we strive to honor
everyone's dignity and wellbeing.

We trust this Covenant will help us
work well together to make decisions,
solve problems, and express
differences of opinion in a considerate,
respectful, and genuinely caring
way.

SUNDAY SERVICES

December
Theme

MYSTERY

- 12-03-23 LANGUAGE IS A POWER TOOL**
Speaker: Sharon Whitehill
Worship Associate: Kay Azar
- 12-10-23 CCPS FAMILIES IN TRANSITION**
Speaker: Lisa Bratton, LCSW
Worship Associate: Dennis Shaw
- 12-17-23 WINTER SOLSTICE**
Speaker: Rev. "Fairie & Divine Priestess" Elaine Silver
Worship Associate: Lorrie Douglas
- 12-24-23 MUSIC/HISTORY SERVICE at 5:30 PM (No AM service)**
Speakers: Fellowship Members and Friends
Worship Assoc.: Laura A., Ryan R. and Ryan S.
- 12-31-23 TOPIC: TO BE DETERMINED
(Potluck to be held after service.)**
Speaker: To Be Determined
Worship Associate: Kay Azar

THE BOOK OF LIFE

Your Book of Life entries or announcements you would like read from the pulpit Sunday mornings are important. Make sure your entry or announcement gets read on Sunday morning; send it to:

If you have an emergent/urgent need to be announced after that, please call the worship associate directly. See info in Weekly Update.

bookoflife@uufcc.org

by 6:00 p.m. Saturday



Your
Worship
Associate
Committee



12/03 Carole Burkett
12/07 Dorothy Parmenter
12/13 Florence Martin
12/15 Marti Rosenberger
12/24 Lisa Roberts

For a Birthday Shoutout, contact Stephanie Garrett
editorialboard@uufcc.org

Weekly Events

Sundays — 09:00 am Conversation Among Friends
10:30 am Worship Services

Wednesdays — 07:00 pm Happy Hour with John Lee

Links

Use **UNIVERSAL ZOOM** for most activities
<https://zoom.us/j/93526372148>

To add to **SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS** or **BOOK OF LIFE**
 email bookoflife@uufcc.org by Saturday night

CONVERSATION AMONG FRIENDS
<https://zoom.us/j/95584243345>

CHALICE CIRCLES have their own Zoom links.

Azar Chalice Circle
<https://zoom.us/j/92886172999>

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE COMMITTEE
<https://zoom.us/j/97789863043pwd=c2tUenpGMmhjSExaUINOL3VHNIK5UT09>

UUFCC Social Group Sign-Up
social-uufcc@googlegroups.com

Spanish for Beginners
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81408957224pwd=cUhGejBuOVVRckU0L1R2SkM2SXhZQT09>

DECEMBER 2023 EVENTS

12/01 Fri	Art Takedown
12/02 Sat	10:00 am Board Retreat
	10:00 am Worship Assoc. Meeting
12/03 Sun	Noon PFLAG Steering Cmte
12/04 Mon	12:30 pm Williams/Whitehill Chalice Circle
	01:30 pm Shaw Chalice Circle
	04:00 pm Azar Chalice Circle
12/05 Tue	08:00 am Men's Coffee Group
12/06 Wed	10:00 am Fred's Class
	11:00 am Membership Committee
	Noon Brown Bag Luncheon
	04:00 pm Immigration Committee
	06:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
12/08 Fri	01:00 pm Communications Committee
12/10 Sun	11:45 am Social Justice Committee
12/11 Mon	10:30 am Program Committee
12/12 Tue	10:30 am Men's Coffee Group
12/13 Wed	10:00 am Fred's Class
	10:00 am Caring Committee
	01:00 pm Open Art Studio
	06:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
12/14 Thu	04:00 pm Buddhist Meditation
12/17 Sun	BIRTHDAY CAKE SUNDAY
12/18 Mon	12:30 pm Williams/Whitehill Chalice Circle
	01:30 pm Shaw Chalice Circle
	04:00 pm Azar Chalice Circle
	06:00 pm PFLAG Support Group
12/19 Tue	08:00 am Men's Coffee Group
12/20 Wed	10:00 am Fred's Class
	04:00 pm Immigration Committee
	06:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
12/21 Thu	02:00 pm Board Meeting
12/24 Sun	05:30 pm Christmas Eve Service
12/26 Tue	08:00 am Men's Coffee Group
12/27 Wed	10:00 am Fred's Class
	01:00 pm Open Art Studio
	01:30 pm Book Group
	04:00 pm ARAY
	06:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
12/28 Thu	04:30 pm Buddhist Meditation
	06:00 pm NAACP General Meeting



MISSION: UUFCC offers a caring and diverse religious community. We are guided by reason and conscience, encourage intellectual inquiry, foster individual spiritual growth, and promote social justice and environmental responsibility. *UUFCC PPM.*

PURPOSE: UUFCC is a religious community committed to diversity and social justice where spirituality, reason, compassion, service and fellowship meet. *UUFCC Bylaws Art. III (Adopted 03-27-22).*

VISION: In five years, we, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County, will be a thriving, intergenerational, racially diverse, and Welcoming Congregation. We will have an inspiring minister, committed lay leadership, enhanced facilities, uplifting music and art and vibrant activities and programs that support our mission. *UUFCC PPM.*

WELCOMING: UUFCC strives to practice non-discrimination by embodying what UUFCC hopes to see in the world—a just, loving community in which people are free to be themselves fully and without fear. *UUFCC Bylaws Art. IV (Adopted 03.27.22).* [UUFCC was founded in 1969.]

SUBMISSIONS INFO

COMMUNIQUE welcomes submissions of 300 words or less.

Submissions may be edited for spelling, grammar, punctuation, clarity, legal ramifications, length, or general taste at the editors' discretion. Editors reserve the right to refuse to publish submissions for the same reasons. While acceptance rules are lenient, the editorial board will reject that deemed potentially libelous, racist, hateful, or a personal attack.

Anonymous submissions are not accepted.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT SUGGESTIONS & IDEAS

Yes, we'd like to get to know you if we could ... (Spanky & Our Gang flashback?)

Tell us about you. What is your background? Where are you from?

Tell us about your life journey. What brought you to Florida and when?

Tell us about your career paths. Accomplishments? Interests? Hobbies?

How did you come to UUFCC? What keeps you here?

Tell us about current and past UU roles or involvement.

Something else? You decide! You tell us what you want us to know!

UUFCC directory/archives picture is used unless another is provided.

REALITY CHECK — DISCLAIMER — THE FINE PRINT

Views and opinions expressed in submissions are personal and belong solely to the author/submitter.

Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official view, policy, Principles, Covenants, or positions of UUFCC or its newsletter editors.

Views and opinions expressed are not intended to malign any religion, ethnic group, organization, individual, or anyone or anything.

Guarantees are not made as to completeness, accuracy, usefulness, or timeliness.

SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER'S INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS

Content is not intended to be negative, divisive, and/or diminishing.

Encourage and value a free, open, and mutually respectful exchange.

Uphold one another's First Amendment right to free speech.

Take all content kindly and in the spirit in which it was intended.

UUFCC CONTACTS

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worship@uufcc.org

UUFCC

COMMUNIQUE

Can you say kuh-myoo-nuh-kay?

EDITORIAL BOARD

Stephanie Garrett

Herb Levin

MaryLou Kennedy

300-word limit articles due

1-wk before last day of month:

editorialboard@uufcc.org

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