

LAKE CHAPALA UU FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER – JULY, 2022



We are now having in person services and NO RESERVATION is required. There will no longer be a limit to the number of people who can attend. Masks will no longer be required and we will continue to maintain safe distance spacing of chairs.

July 3 – UU Resistance - Unitarians and Universalists have traditionally led the charge for social change resisting unjust, cruel and morally reprehensible social norms like slavery, war, denial of human rights, minority oppression and religious zealotry. This Sunday's service will highlight Unitarian Universalist "Resistance" since the two denominations merged in 1961, focusing on our role in the civil rights movement, Viet Nam war protests, Immigration reform, marriage equality, economic justice, climate change and most recently the Black Lives Movement. Kriss Gang will give the presentation and Deb Gang will be the service leader.

July 10 – Pursuit of Happiness - What is happiness? Is it possible to 'pursue' it, or is that an elusive objective? We'll delve a bit into the recent science of happiness, and what, if anything, might make us happier. Rev. Matt Alspaugh will give the message and Carol Johnson will be the service leader.

July 17 – Here There Be Dragons – "Here there be dragons" means dangerous or unexplored territories, in imitation of a medieval practice of putting illustrations of dragons, sea-monsters and other mythological creatures on uncharted areas of map. D'Vorah Kelley will share her story - through song, readings, and a fairy tale in three parts - of being confronted with one particular Dragon that showed up on her path and changed her life. Cate Howell will be the service leader.

July 24 – Remembering the Future – Rev. Matt Alspaugh has been following the work of futurist Jane McGonigal, who uses massive multiplayer games as simulations to forecast the future. She believes that actively trying to imagine or daydream the future can make us more resilient, better prepared for whatever comes. Can we imagine optimistic rather than a dystopian futures? Will this help us? We'll spend a little time recalling possible futures. Anne Morris will be the service leader.

July 31 – Gun Violence in America - Gun violence is a complex subject and the US has lost perspective of gun violence. It is so common now that we have become numb to it. But there are organizations that work for gun control, and they bring new hope. What can we learn from these efforts? Johannes Bjorner will talk about gun violence in America, and Heidi MacLennan will be the service leader.



We are also meeting on-line, at our usual time, Sundays at 10:30, using a service called Zoom. Here's how to get set up. We suggest you do this before the meeting.

To join via video on your computer, tablet or smartphone, please click the link below – you will be stepped through downloading a free app that will let you connect to the meeting. <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/233941792>
Meeting ID: 233 941 792

Or, for audio, just dial-in by your location

- +52 229 910 0061 Mexico
- +52 554 161 4288 Mexico
- +1 253 215 8782 US
- +1 301 715 8592 US
- +1 778 907 2071 Canada
- +1 438 809 7799 Canada
- +1 587 328 1099 Canada
- +1 647 374 4685 Canada

Elsewhere? Find your local phone

number: <https://us04web.zoom.us/u/fnTR4N3JJ>

We encourage you to try to connect early, to get things set up. However, you won't be able to join the service until about 10:00am on Sunday. But it's good to get set up early.



JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 20 Bobbe Dannenbrink
- 25 Tom Dowdy-Winslett
- 26 Lamar Allen
- 28 Lew Crippen



MATT'S MESSAGE

This week, I participated in the Unitarian Universalist Association (USA) Ministry Days, in Portland Oregon. When I was asked by minister colleagues where I was serving, I'd explain that I served a congregation in central Mexico. Some would say, "oh, an expat congregation" and I'd patiently explain that this was really largely a migrant congregation. Now that might seem like some kind of liberal hair-splitting distinction, (a bit like "homeless" versus "unhoused" — another topic that came up often as we encountered many people living on the sidewalks in tents in downtown Portland). But I do think words make a difference. I've come to see an 'expat' as a person located away from their country of origin, usually for work, who plans to return to their home country. They typically don't seek to assimilate, and stay strongly connected to their home country. On the other hand, a 'migrant' is a person who has moved to seek a better life, with no fixed plans to return. While I do know of some people in our congregation who plan to return 'home', and others who split their time between two places, I believe the majority of our people are committed to stay in Mexico permanently. I think that makes us a congregation of migrants, and puts us in solidarity with many other migrant communities around the world. I think by our very existence, we embody our sixth principle, which is "the goal of world community, with peace, liberty and justice for all." Such a world community depends on people being able to move freely, in order to make their lives better. World community depends on migration. Somos migrantes - we are migrants.



LCUUF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Kriss Gang
Vice President	Charles Jacobs
Secretary	Cat Barnett
Treasurer	Lorna Dean
Member at Large	Catherine Luria
Member at Large	Susan Miller



HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

The Humanist Discussion Group will meet on Wednesday, July 27, 2022 at 4pm. Via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86577912863>

Can artificial intelligence come alive? That question is at the center of a debate raging in Silicon Valley after a Google computer scientist claimed that the company's AI appears to have consciousness. This leads us to our zoom discussion question for July: Do the benefits of artificial intelligence outweigh the dangers?

If you wish to receive the reading materials prior to the meeting and are not on the mailing list please contact Bob Koches at: bobkoches@gmail.com



BOARD MEMBER'S MESSAGE

Susan Miller, MAL

I need to get over myself. Counting my blessings is proving to be difficult, and I need to concentrate on what is going well in life and what I am thankful for. Like, right now.

I assumed that once Covid-19 became less of an issue in our lives, things would get back to normal. In many respects they have (although several friends and acquaintances in the U.S. have come down with the virus recently), but I'm not so sure that I like this new normal. "normal" during the height of the pandemic was, in essence, cocooning. I shut out much of the world: no travel to speak of, fewer and fewer interactions with friends and family, and a general ignoring of local, national, and international news. Bad idea. It's time to pay the piper. Dave, my husband, and I are on our third trip to the U.S. in six months. Our first trip back, to our daughter's long-delayed wedding, was fun. The second trip was for a long-delayed funeral and umpteen medical tests. This, our third trip, involves doctors, facing a storage unit full of "valuable" belongings that have been stored for ten years, and being exposed to a lot of local, national, and international news that we don't want to know about, and can do nothing about.

This is where the counting of the blessings must come into the picture, and now. I am thankful for the (mostly) good health of our family, the fact that I got our puppy spayed before she gifted us with offspring, that our Mexican SUV is surviving the damage I continue to inflict on it. (Thank you,

gigantic curbs in Ajijic). That only two of the skylights in the casita are leaking, That our friends who have suffered the loss of loved ones seem to be faring as well as can be expected. That our Sunday services continue with only intermittent craziness, and that soon enough there will be enough Board members back in town to have real-life in-person meetings. Also, that we have friends who have opened their homes to us so we can couch surf, use their laundry facilities, and enjoy their company. And the weather has not been horrible. And there are Target stores.

I am hoping with all my heart that once we return we will be able to see more and more people at the Fellowship on Sunday mornings. That we can lose our anxiety about socializing, and bask in the warmth of people we have missed for far too long. Meanwhile, I'm keeping a list of the good things, large and small. And keeping my fingers crossed that our new LCUUF normal is as much fun as the pre-pandemic "normal." And that people stay healthy and eager to see each other, and ready to get on with the business of making the world a better place.





SHARE THE BASKET

Our policy for Share the Basket, during the coronavirus crisis, has been: If we collect more than MXN 5,000 pesos in any month, the full amount will go to an organization providing assistance to low-income members of the Lakeside community. If we collect less than MXN 5,000 pesos in donations in any month, the balance will be subsidized from the LCUUF treasury, as long as this is financially feasible. If you pay your pledge or make a donation to LCUUF by PayPal, by Bill Pay, or pesos directly to Lorna Dean or David Hudnall, you may specify the amount that you want to donate to the Share the Basket program.

Operation Feed is our recipient for Share the Basket donations in July 2022. Operation Feed is a group of people dedicated to providing food and improving the lives of the very poor and marginalized people of the village of San Juan Cosalá, less than a 10 minute drive from Ajijic. They provide weekly food despensas for those who would go hungry without the aid. Many of the recipients are elderly, disabled, and children who are hungry. Operation Feed also supports new program initiatives to involve the people in developing additional income sources and skills (such as English), thereby offering them a “hand up” and not just a “hand out”. Operation Feed’s goal is to help these people live productive lives, free from hunger. Finally, although Operation Feed doesn’t provide monetary support, they do participate in other initiatives in San Juan Cosalá, such as the Token Store and the music program to help increase the dreams of the people of San Juan Cosalá.



Several UUs gather at Black & White Coffee on the Ajijic Plaza on Thursdays at 10:30. Come and join us for coffee and conversation.



Longtime member, John Roam, passed away in June. He will be greatly missed.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

I have been asked by many people how they can view past member spotlights. I am in the process of downloading several issues of the newsletter to the LCUUF website so you can read about many of our longtime members. I hope to have this completed by next month's newsletter. In the meantime, I am attaching three member spotlights from 2007.



Sharon Woods

Sharon is a very creative person. She is also a collector and her house and garden are filled with wonderful things - paintings, glass works, and a virtual jungle that she planted and watched grow over the past ten years. Years after getting her BA in English Literature, Sharon studied landscape

design. Obviously, to judge by the garden that surrounds her house, she was an excellent student. She also designed all of the LCUUF wooden furniture, the hand blown chalice and the decor. She says she did not inherit the gifts of her artistic mother and grandparents, but I disagree. There are many definitions of an artist. Sharon fits.

In 2011 Sharon was on the board of the Lake Chapala Garden Club. Their community project for that year was to remodel the LCS Wilkes Library garden. Sharon led the project, did the design and hired the contractors who installed new walkways, planters, and patios as well as all of the garden plantings. The new garden is a huge success. Her love of things Mexican seems to have had a very early start. One of her first memories in Southern California is picking avocados with her Mother. She remembers loving guacamole. Her first trip to Mexico was around age 6 when her family rented cottages on the beach cliffs in Baja California. Later she came here in the summers to visit her grandparents who had retired to Chapala in 1957. They took many road trips in her grandfather's Nash Rambler to colonial villages across the country. This was the beginning of her collections and love of all things Mexican.

What Sharon is most proud of is her independence. Her parents did a good job of instilling that. They could afford to pay for her college education, but thought it would be good for her to pay for it herself - so she did. She also bought her first car by herself and later her first house. These acts gave her a great sense of pride, a feeling if she could do these things, she could do anything. Her employers recognized her strengths. She was always the "go to" person.

Sharon has been involved with computers since 1968. She worked for a computer manufacturer who taught her how to program their "BIG" 4K computer which involved hard-wiring the program boards. Her second computer-related job was for a large cable TV company as their national

computer trainer. She and Norman met at that company. Always ready for a new challenge, Sharon decided to become a realtor. She partnered with another woman to buy and fix up houses to sell. Sharon lists over 5 businesses she has owned and more than 15 jobs she has held, including corporate computer trainer, home designer and landscape designer. She loves challenges, considers herself an entrepreneur and is always looking for new opportunities, even today.

About seven years after they met, Norman invited her to go dancing at a loud country and western bar where Norman leaned over and said something in her ear. The music was so loud she didn't hear him, so she got him to repeat it. What he said was "I think we should get married." So they did. They flew in a Unitarian minister from Los Angeles to Las Vegas, and he presided over the lovely ceremony that she and Norman wrote. That was 36 years ago this coming November.

Ten years ago they moved to Ajijic where they had bought a fixer-upper house - sight unseen. After a year of designing and renovations, they knew they had created their dream home. Sharon and Norman are charter members of LCUUF. Their many contributions to the Fellowship are ongoing and very much appreciated.



Norman Woods

Your sound quits in the middle of your U.U. presentation. You want the music to start at a specific place in the service. Who you gonna call? Call Norman, the ghost buster of LCUUF audio/video problems and sound man extraordinaire. (Please don't call him Norm).

Norman, a life-long Unitarian, is the tall guy who sits in the front row with his wife Sharon, with the remote in his lap, ready to jump up and help at the first sign of trouble or when anything needs to be done. He quietly goes about doing it all without fanfare. Norman comes by his take-charge ways naturally, being the eldest of 3 boys and growing up in Argentina, learning early how to cope in a different country and culture. He has a quiet, shy and strong personality and is very intelligent.

Two stories stand out from his school years. In third grade, after the words "one nation under god" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance, he refused to recite it. He knew early in life where his beliefs stood and has remained steadfast in them. The other happened between middle school and prep school. His mother decided to take him to Russia in 1959 to let him see first-hand how communism was functioning. It quickly changed his political views. Communism, that abstract political view of Marx, didn't work.

He spent fourteen years and most of his school years in Argentina. His parents sent him back to the US for high school and, after a gap year, to university as well. During the gap year he and his best friend Jim Luce (now a published author) travelled through Latin America visiting with leaders of industry. They gained introductions from Jim's uncle, an industry leader in the US who thought the boys could use some real life education. Norman and Jim have remained "friends forever" and Jim was recently here for a visit. Norman received his undergraduate degree in General Social Science from Oregon State University in 1967 and his MA in Foreign

Trade (International Business) from Thunderbird in Glendale AZ in 1968.

Norman's proudest achievement is co-founding and running two successful enterprises: a microwave link between Las Vegas where he lived and Los Angeles where his company headquarters were (he later sold the company to Sprint), and then another communications company which successfully competed with Hughes Aircraft. That company has sold microwave communications systems in over 60 countries in its 25 years. He and Sharon married in 1981 and have been in Mexico for ten years.



Kathy Koches

Kathy Koches is all about music, travel, writing, editing, animal rescue, friendship, and many more things. She grew up in Los Angeles where she graduated from high school in 1965. She married and moved to Germany in 1966 with her husband and infant son, Brian. After two years they moved to Oregon where her daughter, Wendy, was born. She moved to Vancouver, WA in 1975 and got a job as a legal Secretary. Kathy got a divorce and went back to school, graduating with honors from Eastern Oregon University. She then became a para-legal and was named Washington State Legal Support Professional of the Year in 1992.

Kathy met Bob through her work, and he wasted little time whisking her away for a romantic holiday in Mexico, where they discovered many common interests, and she was hooked! They married in 1990. They both sang in the UU choir in Vancouver, WA and they toured England, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, and Germany with the Vancouver USA Singers. Besides that tour Kathy and Bob visited Spain, Austria, Germany, France, the

Bahamas, Canada, Italy, and many places in Mexico, before retiring to Ajijic in 2007. Together they raised Kathy's 13 yr. old daughter Wendy. They also raised their oldest granddaughter, Angel, from age 8 to 18 years. They now have six grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Kathy & Bob are charter members of LCUUF and the LCUUF choir. Kathy served on the LCUUF Board as Secretary for six years and also on the Sunday Service Committee for six years, being Chairman in 2015. Kathy & Bob joined Los Cantantes de Lago, a 60 voice choir here at Lakeside in 2007, and have sung in more than 20 concerts with that choir. Kathy has been on the Los Cantantes Board since 2008 where she is now Board Secretary and edits the choir's newsletter. She also founded Las Hermanas de Los Sombreros Rojos, a Red Hat chapter here at Lakeside, and has served as Queen since 2007. Kathy is also the on-line administrator of Lakeside Advocates for Animals.

Since retirement Kathy has re-discovered her passion for writing, and has had her stories and poetry published in *El Ojo del Lago* over 30 times, has written her autobiography, and this year had a story published in an award winning anthology, *These Summer Months*. Kathy is now into her 11th year at Lakeside and still enjoying life with Bob and their rescue dog, Queri. If you ask, she will tell you she lives in "paradise," and clearly she does!