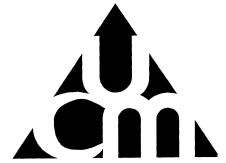


Off Court Street



the newsletter of ucm: center for spiritual growth & social justice
at ohio university

● October 2005

It's Colossal! **It's Stupendous!**

It's Quite Superlative in Every Conceivable Way!

It's UCM's 23rd Annual Dinner & Benefit Auction!

DIZZYING HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AMAZING EVENING:

*A Gourmet Buffet resplendent with delicacies from
Purple Chopstix Restaurant courtesy of Ed Fisher,
our local guru of Eclectic International Cuisine!*

LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD DONATIONS FROM
LOCAL BUSINESSES, SERVICE PROVIDERS, ARTISTS, AND
RESTAURANTS UP FOR AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER!

Brilliant Silent Auction & Monumental Fishbowl Lotto!

Those Super-Cool Cats, The Greg Bikowski Jazz Trio!

THE ASTOUNDING CALLIOPE FEMINIST CHOIR!

**THE FABULOUS PAT & WANDA SHERIDAN,
OF THE TREMENDOUS SHAMROCK AUCTION SERVICE!**

Everyone will be there! Don't miss a single second of it!

**For the Auction, Jack and Sandy Turner have donated a
one-week stay in their lovely Sanibel Island, FLA condo!
Wouldn't you like to be the highest bidder?**

It's a 2-bedroom, 2-bath top-floor corner unit with lots of light,
pleasant breezes & beautiful views of the gulf. The island is
approximately 60% nature preserve & has 23 miles of bike paths,
beautiful beaches, excellent shelling, world renowned birding,
fishing, canoeing, nature walks, restaurants & shops of all kinds!

Check it out at: www.frognet.net/~jturner

UCM's 23rd Annual Dinner & Benefit Auction

Friday

NOVEMBER 4

5:30 pm

First Christian Church

*At the Corner of N. Congress
and W. State Streets*

\$25-\$50 on a sliding scale
student/low-income/senior: \$15

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

593-7301 or

ucm@frognet.net

*All proceeds will benefit
UCM: Center for Spiritual Growth
& Social Justice*

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UCM CALENDAR:

TUESDAYS...

SOUP FOR THE SOUL - lunchtime discussion series, October 18; noon - 1:00 pm

THURSDAYS...

THURSDAY SUPPER - a weekly free meal open to all, no questions asked, 5:30 pm

FRIDAYS...

BROWNBAG BOOKCLUB - October 21, November 11, noon - 1:00 pm

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS - weekly meeting of UCM's student organization; Progressive spirituality and social justice come together; open to students of any faith, or no faith, tradition and all spiritual journeys 1:00-3:00pm Baker Center Front Room.
Contact: Sarah Michelson, serph17@yahoo.com

OCTOBER 25

OU LATINO STUDENT UNION PANEL DISCUSSION
Migrant Workers in Appalachia; 7:00 pm at UCM

OCTOBER 26

MUSLIM STUDENT ASSOC. RAMADAN FAST-A-THON AND EVENING DINNER, "go hungry for a day so someone else won't have to" (see page 3)

OCTOBER 26

"SACRED CHOICES AND ABORTION" 8:00 pm, Scripps Auditorium (see page 3)

NOVEMBER 4

23RD ANNUAL DINNER & BENEFIT AUCTION - First Christian Church, 5:30

NOV. 28 - DEC. 3

JUSTICE ON THE BORDER: WINTER BREAK TRAVEL SEMINAR TO THE US/MEXICO BORDER

UCM PROGRAMS:

BROWNBAG BOOKCLUB: Faith & Politics

UCM's **BrownBag BookClub** continues to meet on Fridays over brownbag lunches to discuss Jim Wallis' *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*. Wallis (an evangelical Christian and founder of Sojourners) argues that the Right has hijacked the language of faith to prop up its political agenda, while the Left continues to ignore faith and the connection between individual morals and public policy. Wallis articulates the urgent need to reclaim the key values of the prophetic religious tradition.

✪ Fridays: Oct. 21 and Nov. 11, noon - 1:00 pm; open to students and community members

SOUP FOR THE SOUL ... "DIVERSE DIALOGUE: FAITH CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ISSUES"

Fall quarter's *Soup for the Soul* lunchtime discussion series continues to generate dialogue among students from diverse faith backgrounds. Share a variety of perspectives on the faith issues of today and exchange ideas on relevant topics that affect faith communities. Open to everyone; free light soup lunch; please call ahead if you're bringing a large group.

✪ Tuesday, Oct. 18, noon - 1:00 pm, downstairs at UCM

OU LATINO STUDENT UNION PANEL DISCUSSION MIGRANT WORKERS IN APPALACHIA

The OU Latino Student Union will present a panel discussion concerning migrant workers in Appalachia on **Tuesday, October 25 at 7:00 p.m.** in UCM's lower level. Light refreshments will be provided. The hour-long program is intended to convey general knowledge on the topic of migrant workers in Appalachia and address such questions as:

- *For how long have migrant workers come to Appalachian Ohio?*
- *From where do the migrant workers come?*
- *How do they get to Appalachian Ohio?*
- *Where do they work here in Ohio?*
- *Why do we need migrant workers?*
- *Are these workers treated fairly?*
- *What relationship do migrant workers have with the local residents of the communities in which they work?*
- *How do these workers preserve their culture while in Appalachia?*

Speakers may include representatives from Rural Opportunities (a private, not-for-profit regional community development and human service organization providing services to farm workers, low-income families, and economically depressed communities in Ohio and other states), and from the migrant worker community in Southeast Ohio. Space is limited; if you are interested in attending, contact Melissa: ucmcf@frognet.net

Coming in Winter Quarter...

SOUP FOR THE SOUL: "THE ROOTS OF -ISMS"

Explore the historical, political and faith-based origins of "isms" such as racism, sexism, ageism, and classism. Guest speakers from the OU faculty will share their ideas during this five-week discussion series. Dates & speakers TBA.

MUSLIM STUDENTS ASSOCIATION RAMADAN FAST-A-THON

"go hungry for a day so someone else won't have to"

On **October 26**, the Muslim Students Association at OU will host its first annual **Ramadan Fast-a-Thon and Evening Dinner**, an event to raise awareness about hunger in our community and to collect food donations to benefit UCM's Thursday Supper.

With a strong belief in inter-faith dialogue and cross-cultural sharing, the MSA invites students, staff, faculty, and community members in Athens to pledge to abstain from all food and water from sunrise to sunset in order to gain empathy for the hungry and to learn through experience about a key tradition in Islam. During the Islamic month of Ramadan, which began on October 5, Muslims fast during daylight hours as an act of submission, solidarity and remembrance, and to call attention to those who go hungry every day, not as an exercise of religious expression, but as a fact of life.

After participants fast from sunrise to sunset (6:35 am to 6:35 pm on Oct. 26), the MSA will provide an Evening Dinner to allow them to break the fast. During the dinner, an informal program will feature speakers: from the MSA, to elaborate on Ramadan, and from the Second Harvest Foodbank, to discuss poverty in Athens County and the growing worldwide hunger problem.

The MSA will collect nonperishable food donations for Thursday Supper at the Evening Dinner. Nonperishable food items may also be donated from October 20-26 at Baker Center. For details visit the MSA website, www.ohio.edu/~muslimst, or contact Heather Irwin, 698-0887, or Jordan Robinson, (614) 475-2664, or msamedia@frognet.net.

"SACRED CHOICES AND ABORTION"

UCM and Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Ohio present "Sacred Choices and Abortion: Ten New Things to Think About," on **Wednesday, October 26, at 8:00 pm in Scripps Auditorium**. This video documentary explores the misconception that religion is inarguably opposed to a woman's right to choose. Scholars from major faith traditions, as well as women and girls whose lives have been forever changed by abortion, are featured. Following the video, PP field organizer, Alyssa Jerzyk, will facilitate a discussion to help foster understanding and inspire dialogue among differing viewpoints of this highly controversial issue. Contact: alysajerzyk@ppao.org

APPALACHIAN PEACE & JUSTICE NETWORK

OCTOBER 21 & 22

"EYES WIDE OPEN OHIO"

WALK-THROUGH EXHIBIT

Reflect on the war in Iraq and the terrible toll it has taken on the lives of Ohio soldiers and Iraqi civilians. Understand the true cost of the war, both in human lives and in dollars. Free & open to the public, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm, outdoors on campus: Howard Hall site at the corner of College & Union Streets.

"Eyes Wide Open Ohio" is a memorial for Ohio service members and Iraqi civilians who have been killed or injured in the ongoing war. Boots, poppies, and civilian shoes represent the casualties. EWOO is a smaller version of the critically-acclaimed American Friends Service Committee exhibit "Eyes Wide Open."

Volunteers are needed to staff the exhibit; if you would like to help, please call Christie Truly at 592-2608 or email apjn@frognet.net. Sponsored by APJN, People for Peace & Justice, InterAct, Students for Peace & Justice, and the UU Fellowship of Athens, with the support of UCM.

AREA EVENTS:

MONDAYS...

PEACE VIGIL - 11:30-12:30, Athens County Courthouse

PEOPLE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE - bi-weekly meeting, 4:30 - 6:00 pm, at UCM

OUT & ABOUT: THE COMING OUT GROUP -share & learn in a safe & confidential space, 7:00-9:00 pm, South Pole, garage level of Nelson Commons; contact Mickey Hart, LGBT Programs Center, 593-0239, hartm@ohio.edu

UNIFY - student organization weekly meeting, 7:00 pm, Lindley Hall, unify@ohio.edu

WEDNESDAYS...

ATHENS FRIENDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS [AFIS] COFFEE HOUR - 11:30 am - 12:30 pm, Voight Hall Lobby, Contact: Jane Palmer, 597-1567, palmerj@ohio.edu

OPEN DOORS - weekly meeting (while OU is in session.), open to all, 8:00-10:00 pm, at UCM

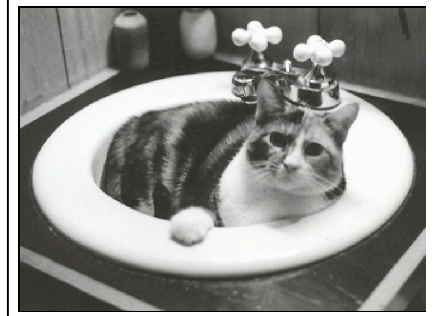
NOVEMBER 8

ELECTION DAY - state & local candidates & ballot issues

NOVEMBER 11 & 12

JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN SEMINAR - Columbus (see p.4)

YOUR MOMENT OF ZEN



finding each other...finding our voice:

UCM SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM CONFERENCE IN THE WORKS

UCM continues to develop ways of bringing progressive people of faith together, including our ongoing BrownBag BookClub which is bringing community members, faculty, and students together to discuss the ideas found in Jim Wallis' best selling *God's Politics*. You can still join in the discussion – the next meeting is Friday, Oct. 21, noon – 1:00 p.m. We have a copy available to read in house; you'll find it on top of the piano in the UCM lounge!

Another vision blossoming at UCM involves bringing folks from throughout Ohio together at a Spiritual Activism Conference held in Athens, possibly in spring 2006. The goals would include:

1. Providing a forum for bringing progressive people of faith together,
2. Challenging the misuses of religion in politics,
3. Becoming the vocal, visible majority instead of the silent majority,
4. Learning how to communicate with those who seem to be in opposition and finding common ground.

Planning for such a conference is very much in the preliminary stages. Such an ambitious project will need a core group of committed organizers to help make this vision a reality. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Evan or Melissa for more information.

NOVEMBER BALLOT ISSUES: REFORM OHIO NOW

The following is a press release from the group Reform Ohio Now.

Ohio leads the country in job losses, and young people are leaving in droves. Our capitol is racked by numerous scandals, and elected officials still pander to big donors and ignore working people. We need a change and now there's something that Ohio citizens can do about it.

Reform Ohio Now is a nonpartisan coalition of groups and individuals working to clean up Ohio politics restore faith, trust, and confidence in our state government. With numerous coalition partners and volunteers across the state, Reform Ohio Now is working to pass four common sense reforms — Issues 2 through 5 — this November 8th. These reforms will make our elections fairer and get corrupt politics out of our state.

- Issue 2: Makes it easier to vote by allowing all Ohioans to vote by mail.
- Issue 3: Helps stop the influence of big money in elections by greatly reducing campaign contributions.
- Issue 4: Stops the politicians from drawing their own legislative districts and puts an Independent Commission in charge of this process.
- Issue 5: Places a bi-partisan Board of Supervisors in charge of Ohio's elections, instead of a partisan official who backs candidates and takes sides in elections.

The Athens News recently said: "Buckeye voters have to decide whether Republicans' mastery of the system has throttled a fair chance for democracy to prevail, both now and in a theoretical future when Democrats are in charge. If voters think it has, they must conclude that our election system is broken, and that Issues 2-5 are good first steps in fixing it."

Local organizations that endorse Issues 2 through 5 include the Ohio Fair Schools Campaign, the Appalachian Peace and Justice Network, the Buckeye Forest Council, and the Ohio Association of Public School Employees/American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 4.

With the election only weeks away, we need as many people involved as possible. In the coming weeks, we'll be passing out literature door-to-door, putting out yard signs, and attending community events. If you'd like to help clean up Ohio politics, please contact Selena Hoffman, Southeast Ohio organizer, at shoffman@ohiopirg.org or 614-596-9029. For more information, visit www.reformohionow.org

JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN SEMINAR

On November 11-12, **John Dominic Crossan**, author of *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom*, will lecture in Columbus at the 2005 Spiritual Searcher program hosted by the First Community Church. The seminar, "In Search of Paul-- Then and Now," is Dr. Crossan's follow-up to "Jesus and the Future of American Christianity," presented earlier this year.

Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at DePaul University in Chicago, Dr. Crossan has written 20 books on the historical Jesus, four of which have become national religious bestsellers: *The Historical Jesus* (1991), *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (1994), *Who Killed Jesus?* (1995), and *The Birth of Christianity* (1998). He is a former co-chair of the Jesus Seminar, and a former chair of the Historical Jesus Section of the Society of Biblical Literature.

SCHEDULE & CONTACT INFO:

Friday, Nov. 11, 7:30 pm,
Keynote Lecture:
"Paul and Empire"
Sat., Nov. 12, 9:00 am-3:30 pm
Lecture Series: "Paul and Luke;" "Paul and Justice;"
"Paul and Gender"

For details and information about fees and registration, contact First Community Church, 1320 Cambridge Boulevard, Columbus, OH 43212, 614-488-0681



**ANTI-WAR MARCH IN WASHINGTON
UCM PROGRAM DIRECTOR MELISSA WALES**

Athens was well represented in Washington, D.C. at the September 24th mobilization to express opposition to the war in Iraq. UCM, Appalachian Peace and Justice Network, and OU student groups Circle of Friends and Students for Peace and Justice, organized a two-van caravan for the drive to Washington; at 2:00 a.m., 24 community members and students pulled out of town to join the kick-off rally at the Ellipse for the march around the White House.

Road weary, we received a quick shot of adrenaline at the sight of metro car after metro car funneling friendly, fired-up march-goers from the suburban Maryland stations to the epicenter of the political powerhouse of the world – the nervous system of empire. The mass of humanity that greeted us at the rally on the Ellipse, public backyard of the White House, was awe-inspiring, sprawling all the way to the Washington Monument.

The crowd was energized, yet somber, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the human suffering that followed the storm. Many of the speakers (who included Cindy Sheehan and Jesse Jackson) pointed to the mounting cost of the war (nearing \$200 billion at this writing – www.costofwar.com) as a disastrous mismanagement of resources that could have been used in rescue and relief efforts on the Gulf Coast. Many activists called for deeper analysis of our national spending priorities and of how racism and classism stubbornly persist in the “greatest democracy.”

Mary Morgan & Rev. Jan Griesinger in Washington DC



I was thrilled to see so many different faces – it looked like the clientele at the grocery store I frequented while living in downtown Columbus...all ages, colors, genders, abilities, and religious faiths were represented. We were so many that the march actually bottle-necked for at least an hour, as streams of protesters attempted to feed into one beautiful river of hope on 15th Street, on the way to our destination at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. A group of young activists stood atop a cornerstone demanding that we tell them what democracy looks like. “*THIS is what democracy looks like!*” we responded enthusiastically with a goose-bump-inducing renewed

understanding of the “D” word. The mood was upbeat, righteous, and peaceful as we strode past DC’s finest, spaced every 10 feet, guarding the temples of power, holding clubs and riot shields in anticipation.

We knew the object of our impassioned messages – the particular DC resident we’d traveled nearly 1000 miles roundtrip in 24 hours to impress- was conveniently away. We knew there was a glaring lack of political leadership present at the rally (thank you, Georgia congresswoman Cynthia McKinney for being there!) We knew the media, if they covered it at all, (and they probably wouldn’t because it was peaceful) would do so on the 7th page, or half way through the news program. and would grossly underreport our numbers.

But WE knew we were there. And HE knew we were there. And the international community knew, because although we don’t need to know about them, the rest of the world has to pay attention to us – it’s sometimes a matter of life and death.

Perhaps our 250 – 300 thousand-strong mobilization sent the message that Americans *do* care about the lives and deaths of those who live beyond our borders. Maybe the largest U.S. peace rally since the 2003 invasion of Iraq sent a message of hope to the many Americans who were not able to travel to Washington. Hopefully news of our gathering conveyed to our service women and men overseas that “support the troops” means more than car ribbons, that they are not forgotten. A country at war should never mean business as usual; instead it demands a relentless effort to hold accountable a commander-in-chief who has recklessly and dishonestly put U.S. soldiers and Iraqi citizens in harm’s way for almost three years.

To Serve the Spirit

by Evan Young, UCM Spiritual Director

Part of my ministry here is to attend to the spiritual needs of students and to promote their spiritual growth. I think that may be the part that attracted me the most. But it offers a fair amount of ambiguity too. What is spirituality, for instance? What does it look like when it grows? and how can we tell?

A recent Newsweek/Beliefnet poll found that 24 percent of Americans consider themselves “spiritual but not religious,” and that 79 percent of Americans believe that someone who does not share their religious beliefs can “go to heaven or attain salvation.” Many younger Americans today draw spiritual sustenance and wisdom from a variety of traditions, and the experience of mainline Christian denominations over the last several decades indicates that young adults are becoming increasingly suspicious of, and skeptical about, religious institutions.

To me this means that traditional notions of spirit, and spiritual growth, might not be very applicable to the context in which I am called to minister. Which is fine, because I’ve never identified very closely with traditional religion. But it still leaves the question about spirituality and how it grows.

So how do I understand spirituality? Well, begin with us. Each of us is a part of the radically interconnected web of life on this planet. And because we’re so interconnected, we’re mutually dependent. To me spirituality is the experience of, and response to, that interconnectedness. Experience in the sense that we have a sort of gut recognition of the unity of the whole; and response in the sense that we understand the choice we are given to work either for or against the good of that greater whole.

Spiritual growth, then, would be increased capacity to feel oneself as connected, as part of a greater whole, coupled with increased capacity, desire, and commitment to work for the good of that greater whole. That’s what we’re here to offer to students—the opportunity to grow in these ways.

The assumption behind all of this is that spiritual growth understood this way is good, or desirable, or beneficial, rather than just so much self-indulgent navel-gazing. I believe it is good. Because what I see in people is an inborn wholeness that reaches out to, yearns for, wholeness in the world and in relationships. And in this world where so much seems to be broken, so much wholeness compromised, I believe our best hope is in seeing others as ourselves, and responding to their needs as to our own. That’s the involved, interfaith, hands-on ministry I feel called to do with you.



UCM Interns Sarah Michelson and Joe Buzzelli working hard at Thursday Supper...





Welcome! My name is **ANGELINA JOHNSON**. I am the new Community Service Intern. I'm from Cleveland and I'm a sophomore majoring in psychology and sociology. I volunteered at UCM in the spring and I really enjoyed it. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to be compensated for work I would do for free. I know working here at UCM will be a memorable and joyous experience.

◀ *Angelina at the MGC*

Multicultural Genealogical Center Workday: Five students spent Saturday, October 8, as hardworking community service volunteers, sweeping,

cleaning, and pulling up carpet tacks at the Multicultural Genealogical Center in Chesterhill. [www.mgcenter.org] MGC works to preserve and promote the histories of people of Southeastern Ohio, particularly people of color. They plan to move into a recently purchased 150-year-old house within the next year. However, the building needs a great deal of work to make it a usable meeting, office, and archival space. As MGC President David Butcher said, "We caught it just in time!"

MGC founder Ada Woodson Adams, and board members Butcher and Mildred Vore, treated the diligent group to some yummy local pizza and enlightened us with stories of lost and found histories, the legacies and contributions of local people of color, and the founding of MGC. UCM will continue to support MGC as they work to become a national resource for genealogy and multicultural history. We look forward to our next work trip to Chesterhill!

Alumni Update: **ASHLEY ADAIR**, UCM PR Intern 2004-2005, is working as an associate producer with NBC 4 in Columbus. She'll write and work with a team to produce the internet news segments. Way to go, Ashley!

The Spirit of Gandhi: UCM's Indian Benefit Dinner, "The Spirit Of Gandhi In 2005," on September 30, came off smoothly, deliciously, and successfully. Many, many thanks to the gracious chefs, Dr. Sushila Gawande, Anita Giri, Vijay Conjeevaram, Karthikeyan Karunanidhi, and Suzy Shanmugham, and to the wonderful volunteers from Alpha Phi Omega, the OU Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, Kappa Delta Pi, and the Residence Life staff of the Brown-Pickering Complex. Special thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Collins, OU Philosophy Department, for sharing her reflections on Gandhi, what his life and activism mean to her today, and what it might mean for the future of the peace and justice movement. She evoked some of his enduring lessons, including patience, and recognizing the power of nonviolence to create sustainable change. We're also grateful to all who attended for their support of UCM; we raised \$800, which will go towards this year's operating expenses.

Life does not always go your way, and sometimes it seems as if all the odds are against you. I have found that in these trying times, we must turn the tables; we must continue to persevere to realize the greatness that we truly have, but sometimes allow to become dormant. I happened to come across this poem by Walter D. Wintle while surfing the net. It has since become a source of inspiration that reminds me of my true capacity.

*If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win but think you can't,
It's almost certain you won't.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But sooner or later, the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.*

- **Cherrelle Turner,**
UCM PR Intern

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finding each other... finding our voice :
UCM SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM CONFERENCE IN THE WORKS, see page 4

UCM's 23rd Annual Dinner & Benefit Auction

*Our most Glorious, most Lavish, most Foremost
Fundraising Event of the Year*

✦ **Read all about it on page 1** ✦

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