

OFF COURT STREET

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

SEPTEMBER 2004

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1) UCM SEPTEMBER EVENTS

JOIN US AT THESE SEPTEMBER EVENTS!

UCM Open House

• **Wednesday, September 15, 4:00 - 5:30 PM** •
Open to Everyone . . . Yummy Snacks!

UCM is a place where students and community members can get involved, make a difference, and have a good time.

Find out about our programs & volunteer opportunities and other organizations at UCM, including the Appalachian Peace & Justice Network, the Athens AIDS Task Force, and Open Doors.

un Pranzo Italiano

**a fundraising dinner featuring
delicious Italian cuisine *and dessert supremo*
prepared by Susan Roth & Nick Polizzi**

Friday, Sept. 17, in the UCM Downstairs Café
appetizers start at 5:30, dinner will follow

Cost of the dinner: 25 50 per person on a sliding scale
Special student rate: 10 *student rate must be paid in advance*
All proceeds benefit UCM. Reservations are required.
Please call 593 7301 or e mail ucm@frognet.net
by 4:00 PM on September 15.

Appetizer: Bruschetta with fresh tomatoes, fresh basil, & garlic

Salad: Mixed green salad from Green Edge Gardens

Main Course: Four cheese veggie lasagna, with meatballs served on the side and fresh Big Chimney bread with roasted garlic on the side

Dessert, choice of: Kahlua & Coffee Crème Brulee or Cheesecake

*Wine Recommendation: Shiraz, Merlot or Cabernet
Wine will not be provided, but you may bring your own*

2) VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR OU STUDENTS:

contact ucmcf@frognet.net

Kilvert Community Center

Friday, Oct 22, 2:00-5:00 PM: Help package Halloween treats

Saturday, Oct 23, 6:00-9:00 PM: Pass out treats and judge costume contest at the Children's Halloween Party; Call UCM or email ucmcf@frognet.net for more information. Transportation arranged. Kilvert is a small, multi-cultural community in rural Athens county.

Federal Valley Resource Center

Help set up, decorate, and haunt at the Center's Haunted House fund-raiser. Transportation arranged. October, dates & times TBA. Stewart, a small town 10 minutes from Athens, has recently converted the abandoned Federal-Hocking Elementary School into a community center – be there and be scary! Call 662-4564 to sign up.

WE ♥ THURSDAY SUPPER SUMMER VOLUNTEERS

A HUGE thank you to our heroic volunteer summer coordinators **Jason Heinrich** and **Anna Nagy**. They did a fantastic job of keeping *Thursday Supper* up and running – and it takes a lot of work. We greatly appreciate the time and energy they spent shopping, cooking, cleaning,, washing dishes, recruiting volunteers and providing delicious, nutritious free meals to hundreds of community members! Thanks also to these summer volunteers - the program could not happen without your dedication! Our apologies if we mis-spelled or missed anyone:

Vicky Mattson, Star Mary Castro, Doug Christen, Kat Cline, Helen Horn, Rick Harrison, Kevin Mattson, Chuck Grierson, Tirza Costello, Carolyn Allan, Yolanda Naymick, Jeb Howard, Aaron Bechtel, Ruth Dudding, Creighton Call, Aaron Schlaghaum, Jennifer Mullen, Sean Conley, Anna Hagen, Pat Doherty, Caroline Nagy, Stephani Peterson, Pat Reddan, Rod Nippert, Linda Nippert, Nancy Beres, Pete Hill, Martha Zinn, Art Gish, Bob Sheak, Fatma Handari, Vicki Green, Jennifer Orion, Rosemary Vance, Bethany Fulton, Adrienne Nagy, Debby Dunseath, Cately Spaulding, Ashley Spaulding, Christie Truly, Celest Salzman, Ariel Salzman, Rosemary Vance, Barry Tadlock and other members of CIVITAN, Leanna Flores and Aurora and Miguel Flores, and Richard Otto.

3) UCM CALENDAR & PROGRAM INFORMATION:

MONDAYS

Take Back Democracy Film Festival –

Sept 27- Oct 25, 7:30 PM, Scripps Auditorium

THURSDAYS

Soup for the Soul – Confronting Racism On Campus & In Our Communities -

Sept 30-Oct 28, Noon

Thursday Supper - a weekly free meal open to all, no questions asked, 5:30 PM

SEPTEMBER 15

UCM Fall Open House – Open to all, 4:00-5:30 PM

SEPTEMBER 17

un Pranzo Italiano - Italian dinner to benefit UCM,

5:30 PM, ucm@frognet.net or 593-7301 for reservations

SEPTEMBER 24

Java Jive – Coffee house & open mic night, 7:30-10:00PM

OCTOBER 1

Circle of Friends – Group for students interested in progressive spirituality,

2:00 – 4:00 PM

OCTOBER 4

LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN OHIO!

OCTOBER 8

Indonesian Dinner – to benefit UCM,

5:30 PM, ucm@frognet.net or 593-7301 for reservations

NOVEMBER 2

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

NOVEMBER 5

22nd Annual Dinner & Benefit Auction - 1st Christian Church

UCM FALL QUARTER PROGRAMS:

TAKE BACK DEMOCRACY FILM FESTIVAL

With the Presidential election fast approaching, UCM and APJN are co-sponsoring a five-week series of documentary films exploring some of the key issues Americans face as we make this important choice. Free. Mondays, Sept 27- Oct 25, 7:30 PM, Scripps Hall Aud.

- **SEPT 27: Before You Don't Vote** – the importance of voting and why people should vote, even in the face of apathy, anger or despair – *this short video will play as the 2nd feature every week*
- **SEPT 27: Unprecedented, The 2000 Presidential Election** – story about the battle for the Presidency in Florida, which paints a disturbing picture of an election marred by suspicious irregularities, electoral injustices, and sinister voter purges
- **OCT 4: Uncovered: the Whole Truth About the Iraq War** – controversial film takes you behind the walls of government as officials speak out with details about the misstatements, exaggerations, and miscalculations that led the U.S. into the Iraq war.
- **OCT 11: Let My Country Awake** – a portrait of American opposition to the Iraq war and the consequences of activism
- **OCT 18: Just An American Boy** – a stirring documentary about singer/songwriter Steve Earle, who says, “The most important thing to remember is, no matter what anybody tells you, it is never, ever unpatriotic or un-American to question anything in a democracy.”
- **OCT 25: What America Needs** – An unexpected message of hope in a time of uncertainty: 500 people across the county answer the question, *what does America need?*

SOUP FOR THE SOUL

Soup for the Soul, UCM's lunchtime discussion series, will take as its theme this quarter *Confronting Racism On Campus and In Our Communities*. Each week a speaker will share personal experiences and ideas over a delicious light soup lunch. Free and open to everyone. Please call ahead if you're bringing a large group. Six Thursdays, Sept 30 - Oct 28, noon - 1:00 PM. Speakers TBA.

JAVA JIVE

Start practicing your guitar, polishing up your poetry, or fine-tuning your Dr. Evil impression – your moment in the spotlight is on its way. *Java Jive*, our monthly coffee house and open mic night will reappear on Friday, Sept 24, 7:30 – 10:00 PM. Free and open to everyone.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Stop by UCM for an organizational meeting of *Circle of Friends*, a group for students interested in progressive spirituality. Students of all faith traditions – or no faith tradition – can come together to explore, question, and exchange ideas in an inspirational, tolerant and supportive environment. Bring a friend! Friday, Oct 1, 2:00-4:00 PM.

4) ATHENS AREA EVENTS:

MONDAYS - *Peace Vigil* - Open to all, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Athens County Courthouse
People for Peace & Justice - Weekly Meeting, open to all, 4:30 – 6:00 PM, at UCM

TUESDAYS - *OUT & ABOUT: The Coming Out Group* - You are not alone! Come share and learn in this safe and confidential space. 7:00-8:30PM, Jefferson Hall 130, contact Mickey Hart, LGBT Programs Center, 593-0239, hartm@ohio.edu

WEDNESDAYS - *Open Doors* - Weekly Meeting, open to all, 8:00-10:00 PM, at UCM

ON CAMPUS: OUTWEEK

OUTWeek will be celebrated from October 4 - 11 this year, culminating on National Coming Out Day, Monday, October 11. For more information about OUTWeek activities on campus, check out Open Doors website at <http://welcome.to/opendoors>

OCTOBER 7: *OUTWeek Speaker - Judy Shepard* will share the story of the hate and homophobia that killed her gay son, Matthew Shepard, on Oct 12, 1998 in Laramie WY, admission free, 8:00-9:30PM, Memorial Auditorium, sponsored by LGBT Programs Center, lgbt@ohio.edu

OCTOBER 11: *National Coming Out Day* - Slam poet and singer/song-writer **Alix Olson**, 7:00 PM, Baker Center Ballroom, sponsored by Open Doors

OFF CAMPUS: APJN 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Believe it or not, it's been two decades since the Appalachian Peace & Justice Network was founded right here at UCM, built on values of justice, peace, nonviolence, and empowerment. Since 1984, this grassroots non-profit organization has worked to educate, train, and build coalitions within our region to support those who hope to take positive steps toward peace and social justice. Help APJN celebrate on **Saturday, October 16**, in the Fellowship Hall at the First Christian Church. Workshops and activities will commence at 3:00 PM, with dinner, reminiscences, and entertainment following at 6:00. For more info, call APJN at 592-2608.

OFF CAMPUS: EYES WIDE OPEN

The multimedia exhibit, **Eyes Wide Open**, mounted by the American Friends Service Committee, takes visitors on a journey through the words, images, and sounds of the Iraq war. A particularly memorable piece features more than 950 boots representing U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq alongside shoes representing Iraqi deaths. The exhibit speaks directly to viewers' hearts and minds, shattering the claim that the war has made America safer and challenging us to confront our fears and let our dreams, not our nightmares, shape our collective future.

Tens of thousands have seen the exhibit this summer as it traveled from Philadelphia, throughout New England, and on to Boston and, later, New York City, to be shown in juxtaposition to both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. **Rod Nippert**, of the local group People for Peace & Justice, would like to organize a group tour to see **Eyes Wide Open** on either September 25 or 26 while it is in Dayton. Contact Rod at rodnip@hotmail.com or 448-3071 if you are interested and spread the word. Learn more about the exhibit at <http://www.afsc.org/eyes/media.htm>

5) REPORT FROM NICARAGUA:

Continuing our long tradition of offering socially responsible travel experiences for students, UCM organized a two-week trip to Nicaragua in August to learn about the impact of U.S. policy and globalization on women's lives. Our tour group was composed of students and faculty from Ohio University and Hamilton College in New York, as well as three retired/activist women from Columbus, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania. Our host was Witness for Peace, a United States-based non-profit organization with a 22-year history of working for a more just American foreign policy in Nicaragua.



Doña Francesca employs workers and makes a living for her family by cleaning plastic bags salvaged from the nearby Managua dump.

The Nicaraguan people are among the poorest in the Western Hemisphere and their lives are directly affected by the burden of their government's large international debt. Since the end of the Contra war in 1990, WFP has brought delegations to this Central-American nation to witness and document the impact of neo-liberal economic policies on the people of Nicaragua. The hope is that WFP delegates will return to the States armed with the knowledge and the tools needed to change these policies through community education, activism and lobbying.

Currently, the threat of the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA - similar to NAFTA) looms large in the region, and most popular movements and civil society organizations in Nicaragua oppose its passage. The groups and individuals we met with argued, among other things, that CAFTA will have a devastating effect on small-scale agriculture and small business and industry. Nicaraguan farmers told us again and again that they are unable to compete with U.S. agricultural imports and that their way of life, along with their food security and the welfare of their families, will be jeopardized if CAFTA passes.

Nicaraguans are also concerned with structural adjustment policies that encourage the privatization of water and other public services. Dona Miriam, a community organizer and *campesina* (small farmer) in El Regadio, told us, “We can’t allow water, which is our life, to be privatized. CAFTA will be catastrophic for us, the poor.” Ruth Selma Herrera of the Nicaraguan National Consumers’ Defense Network summed it up, “If CAFTA goes into effect, it will not only deepen the levels of poverty in my country, but will make us slaves of the giant U.S. multinational corporations, provoking profound discontent.”

Poor Nicaraguan women and their families are particularly vulnerable to neo-liberal economic policies, so-called “free trade,” structural adjustment, and Nicaragua’s \$6 billion debt burden. Women are, without question, the backbone of Nicaraguan society and are working hard, organizing their communities, and fighting for the livelihoods of their families. A *maquila* (a facility producing garments for export) worker, 80% of whom are women supporting their families on less than \$2.50 a day, said of her situation, “Employment, yes! But with dignity!”

Pressure is building to bring CAFTA before Congress during the so-called “lame duck” session after the November elections, before the new Congressional members take their seats in January. We need to urge Congress to vote no on CAFTA. For more information on CAFTA, visit www.nicanet.org and www.stopcafta.org.

-Melissa Wales, UCM Program Coordinator (This was Melissa’s second trip to Nicaragua; she led her first WFP delegation there in 2000)

6) ODDS & ENDS

ALUMNI NEWS

Geetha Natarajan, UCM PR Intern 2002-2004, was recently hired as Marketing and Media Relations Coordinator for The Frick Collection, a museum specializing in 13th – 19th century painting, sculpture, and decorative art in New York City.

Congratulations Geetha – you deserve it!

WISH LIST

If a generous friend or group of friends would like to make a contribution to fill a specific current need: our Program Office staff of seven, Melissa + six interns, shares one computer. We'd like to raise \$800 to buy another eMac to ease the computer crunch.

ENDOWMENT UPDATE

Last spring, upon her retirement, the **Rev. Jan Griesinger Internship Endowment Fund** was created to honor Jan's 28 years of work at UCM. This fund is meant to ensure that we'll always have the resources to employ a student intern devoted to social justice. We must raise at least \$50,000 in order for the fund to generate enough annual income to support a ten-hour-per-week internship each academic year.

We are pleased to report that the Griesinger Endowment has grown to over \$13,000, but we still need contributions for the fund to serve its intended purpose: to continue Jan's legacy at UCM by supporting future generations of student interns in her honor. If you'd like to make a donation, you can write a check to "UCM-Griesinger Endowment," or if you'd like to use your MasterCard or Visa, or would like more information, call UCM or email ucm@frognet.net.

REV. JAN TRIBUTE: JUNE 2-5, 2004

Once again, the UCM community has come together and made a difference. "The Four Days of Jan," as we fondly referred to it, was a great success, but not without the support of the entire UCM community, staff and board. People came from near and far last spring to show their support and appreciation for **Rev. Jan Griesinger's** tireless work as she retired after 28 years as UCM's Director.

The celebration started on Wednesday, when SuBAMUH, Open Doors, Swarm of Dykes, and OU's LGBT Programs Center co-hosted an **open house** in Jan's honor. A particular highlight was **Athens Mayor Ric Abel's** presentation of an official proclamation commemorating Jan's community service; the mayor declared that June 2, 2004 was "Rev. Jan Griesinger Day." People shared fond stories that prompted us to remember how many generations Jan influenced during her tenure at UCM. **Gail Hecky, Martha Zinn** and the rest of the SuBAMUH Board, and **Mickey Hart**, Coordinator of the LGBT Program Center deserve special thanks.

Ohio University's departments of Women's Studies and Residence Life co-hosted an **on-campus reception** for Jan on Thursday afternoon. A special thanks to **Lynette Peck** for making all the phone calls and taking care of the details. On Friday, the Athens Ministerium honored Jan with a

luncheon at Toscano's. Thanks to **Rev. Bethany Fulton** of the First Presbyterian Church for organizing such a busy group of people.

The four-day celebration wrapped up with a **Gala Dinner and Tribute** on Saturday. It was a wonderful evening, not only for Jan, but for all those present; we're grateful to everyone who came for supporting UCM once again. I have a long list of people to thank for making the celebration a success; I hope I haven't forgotten anybody – my apologies if I have. First I want to acknowledge the 4 Days of Jan Committee, **Peggy Pruitt, Mary Anne Flournoy** and **Robin Riley-Casey**, for diligent planning and preparation.

Next, the long, long list: **Rick Harrison** - as always - for his stalwart work and support; **Jonathan Leal** and **Nadia Mitchell** of Gourmet Your Way and Milo's Whole World Gourmet, and Super Assistant Chef **Adrienne Nagy**, for preparing the amazing Indian dinner; Jim and Dave at the **Athens Flower Shop** for the lovely plants and flowers; **Barbara Rostad** of Entremanure who created the beautiful centerpiece; for logistical assistance and heavy lifting, **Don Flournoy, Jim Sand**, and members of OU's service fraternity **Alpha Phi Omega**; the tireless kitchen crew, **Marcia Ruhling, Danny Moates, Anna and Carolyn Nagy**, and **Jason Heinrich; Leslie Thornton** and **Clarissa Kornell** for helping the evening flow smoothly; **Nicole Wadsworth** for tending bar; **Barry Tadlock** for working the door; and our fabulous emcee **Mickey Hart**.

The **First Christian Church** graciously donated the use of their Fellowship Hall. **Jeanne and Arvin Wells** donated a week at their cottage on Martha's Vineyard as an auction prize, which raised \$1,200 thanks to high bidders **Carolyn Hayes and Carolyn Mann!** I would also like to acknowledge all of you who sent cards, pictures, notes, and stories for Jan's Memory Scrapbook – I can attest to the fact that it was overflowing!

These generous folks participated in the tribute program and helped make it a special night for Jan: **Rev. Bethany Fulton** of the First Presbyterian Church, **Rev. Robert Hornyak**, Board Chair of Ohio Campus Ministries, Jan's brother **Bill McKee**; former UCM intern **Heather Moyer**, Jan's long-time friend **Nan Worthing**, and **Carol Kuhre**, friend and former colleague. Thanks also to **Calliope Feminist Choir** for making our hearts sing with their music, **Kathy Devecka** and **Bridging the Diversity Gap Interactive Theater Troupe** for another fine performance, and **Jeanne Donado** for concluding the evening with song.

Finally I would like to thank the UCM staff, **Jennifer Kelly, Melissa Wales**, and interns **Ashley Adair, Chris Gallentine, Danielle Hutchins, Geetha Natarajan**, and **Yris Vaca**, for your continued hard work and just for putting up with me and all my ideas!

Much was said of Jan during the celebration of her life and work, but most remarkable to me was the variety of people who shared their memories in one form or another – rarely does one person influence such a wide range of people. Thanks to all of you who shared your stories and reminded us that Rev. Jan is a truly extraordinary person.

- Susan Roth (Susan, a former UCM intern herself, chaired the "4 Days of Jan" planning committee and worked relentlessly to make the whole Janapalooza happen. She deserves a big thank-you of her own)