

Dedication and Celebration, April 7, 2012

By the Building Task Force, Jill Pickett, and Steve Burns



The groundbreakers held shovels tied with ribbons and rosemary on May 1, 2011, to start construction on a new Social Hall for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD). (Left to right): Jeff Gold, Architect; Mike Busch, former UU Board Chair; Reverend Elizabeth “Beth” Banks, Senior Minister; Cathy Bleyer, Building Task Force Chair; Steve and Pamela Harrison, Co-Owners of Harrison Construction. [Photo by Frank Roe]

Program cover, 7 April, 2012, to dedicate and celebrate the finished project [Photo by Laurie Friedman]. Featured pen and ink sketch by Marilu Carter, View, facing east, depicts the proposed Social Hall to adjoin the existing Sanctuary on the right.

Celebrating the New Social Hall. For a while, Odin Quintanar, Project Manager for Harrison Construction, was taken aback. He stood in the new building he had helped to construct over the past eleven months. An elated crowd, some 236 persons, gathered around him—the minister, congregation, friends, honored guests, and attending founders of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD).

Odin smiled. Above, a banner proclaimed, “*Ode to Odin*,” as members of the UUCD Building Task Force (BTF) recited verses addressed to him. “*An ode is owed to Odin, / An ode from those that knowed him*” / . . . “*An ode was owed to Odin, / An ode from us that knowed him.*” The lyrics by Laura Sandage praised his constant attention to safety, courtesy, and management. He often worked late into the evenings to move the project along.

Building Contractor Steve Harrison testified, “Odin’s blood, sweat, and tears can be found all over this project. He is passionate about doing things right, and it shows in his work.”

The completed work, a 4,325 square-foot social hall, now occupies the center of the oak-shaded UUCD campus on Patwin Road and Russell Blvd., just west of Davis city limits. The new social hall features a skylight opening up its grand central space awash in natural light and color. Adjacent rooms surround the expansive space—a meeting room, gleaming kitchen, ample storage spaces, pantry, countertops, shelving, and restrooms. Skylights and motion-sensor lighting will reduce energy use.

The original UU community in Davis began in 1954 as a lay-led group of young families. In 1968, the distinctive sanctuary was designed and constructed as if by Noah himself, resembling an upside-down “ark.” The “ark” now adjoins the new social hall, supporting multiple uses and aspirations, giving back to the larger community. As Reverend Elizabeth “Beth” Banks, indicated, “This year we’re going to experience something increasingly precious in our society. This rarity is where groups coalesce, creative ideas bubble up, and new movements are born.”



*Construction underway, sky peaking through the new rafters.
[Photo by Frank Roe]*

Designing the Project. Architect Jeff Gold, of Jeff Gold & Associates, Nevada City, California, acknowledged, “The initial seeds for this new social hall were planted fifty years ago by the founders. What incredible vision in creating this meetinghouse and green sanctuary!”

Jeff admitted he felt “a sense of completion amongst us, like reaching a much-anticipated site after a long hike. How might we measure what we have completed? In the tons of steel and concrete?

Or the spatial proportions of width and height? Or, the time line of many meetings over the years? Or the count of so many hands that carefully crafted the new social hall? It seems that these measures, even when added all together, don’t tell the whole story. The dimensions I most feel are the resolve and commitment through every step. It is the care and consideration of others and the spirit of the commons that has infused the making of this building. And these qualities are as visible as any others.”

Jeff added a note of promise, “We feel great pleasure in setting down the tools, being able to gather inside, and now fully use this spacious Social Hall. But, this new building is much more about ‘beginnings’ than ‘completion’. How many gatherings and possible occasions have been imagined for this flexible hall? Such possibilities and potential can now open up. It seems that these views of the future have guided the whole process.”

Difficulties and Rising Costs. For a while, it seemed as if there were too many obstacles to overcome. Bud Swank, UUCD’s Capital Campaign Consultant, recalled that 2008 was not a promising year to begin a fundraising campaign for new construction. Not since the Great Depression had the economy been so troubled. But no one hesitated or changed course. Instead, individuals and teams worked together to solve regulatory demands, legal codes, substantial upgrades, and above all, rising costs.

By 2010, unforeseen construction expenses loomed ahead. The infrastructure had to abide by safety codes and soil quality. Fire protection codes mandated improved access and an increased-capacity water tank. Systems supplying water, electrical, gas, septic, and HVAC were upgraded. Codes mandated flood protection and safety in walkways, access, and parking. Extensive new infrastructure cost some \$600,000. Improving the sanctuary cost \$120,000.

However, the congregation came together, offering work-equity time, talent, and money. When sufficient funds were raised, loaned, or pledged, groundbreaking began in May 2011. In addition, the BTF team created a Master Plan to develop the property decades ahead, making future expansion easier and less costly.

Steve Burns recalled that in 2005 Diane Parro, Sandy Westfall, and Sharon Hale led the congregation to envision what it wanted. What the congregation wanted more than anything was improved, expanded, accessible space.

The Reverend “Bud” Swank and Chair Steve Burns led two financing teams. “Reverend Swank served as our fearless Baptist consultant,” Steve Burns commented, “who knew little about the UU faith initially when he accepted the task of advisor.” Responsible for both financing teams, Burns was described as “relentless” in reaching goals.

The financial teams offered examples of outstanding leadership in this congregation. Steve described the team members: “John Ashby joined the second team and created the “ATBAQ” sheet, which if you know John, stands for “About-to-be-Asked-Questions.” John Jungerman kept saying “YES” whenever he was asked to help! Patti Lawrence became the stalwart champion of accessibility. She would have loved to see this day. Lyn Parker kept our lists in order. Jon Parro became our spiritual guide. Jill Pickett delivered two great events—a Dinner and Dessert. Virginia Thigpen prepared amazing communications—a brochure and slideshow.”

Throughout the fundraising campaigns, Rev. Beth guided the teams, particularly with Lisa Oakes during the push to close the Gap in funding.

Some 115 volunteers assisted in multiple financial drives. Over \$1.9 million dollars were raised, including the loan amount, \$540,000. Some 450 pledges and non-pledged donations came in. A plaque is planned to list all donors to the project.

Volunteers put in incalculable hours of sweat-equity work to defray costs of construction. Mandy Dawn Kuntz, UUCD Office Administrator, noted, “Countless hours were put in by those who make sure the bills are correct, are paid, and that everything happens in a timely manner with the bank, insurance, contractors, supplies, and more—Rich Bradley, Building Project Budget Tracker, Anya Clasen, Financial Officer (through 2011); Stacie Frerichs, Financial Officer (fall 2011), and Jennifer Johnson, Bookkeeper. All their work is behind the scenes—it's labor- and time-intensive.”

Reverend Elizabeth “Beth” Banks in hardhat [Photo by Laurie Friedman]

Constructing the Project. Since breaking ground, May 1, 2011, contractors Steve and Pamela Harrison of Harrison Construction, supervisor Odin Quintanar, subcontractors, and construction workers completed the structure in less than a year. Steve Harrison revealed his “great pleasure and a strong sense of accomplishment to have been part of a team.” He noted, “Roughly 20,000 work hours went into the project. That is equivalent to fifteen full-time construction workers . . . these are the people who truly built your dream. It meant food on the table with a roof overhead for many families.”

Marty West commented, “It was wonderful to hear from the architect and contractor—how they found the interaction with representatives of UUCD so powerful and positive. So it was much more than an ordinary construction project—it was a community effort.” Leslie Snow added, “I was particularly happy that the construction crew was recognized for its work. All those construction jobs came in a down economy.”



Project Oversight. Over the last five and a half years, the Building Task Force (BTF) members steadfastly shepherded the project. Cath Bleyer, as Chair, led the team—developing, nurturing, strategizing, and coordinating it with the architect, builder, minister, Board, and congregation. Members were Rich Bradley, Virginia Thigpen, Ron Wike, Jerry Friis, Jack Whitsett, and Bob Young. Ex officio members were Barbara Bower and Marilu Carter. Patti Lawrence and Steve Brennan served in the project's early years.

Each member brought singular skills to the BTF. Together, they emerged as an unstoppable force at every phase of the project, lending untold time and talents. And they don't seem to stop! During the dedication, Cath expressed gratitude to individual BTF members.

As Building Project Manager, Virginia coordinated with the professionals and congregation, interpreting blueprints, adding *value engineering* elements and training church members how to use the new space. Cath addressed Virginia, “You brought such passion and generosity of time to this building. And your contractor and interior design skills are precious gems. We see your vision in many places. And special thanks for nurturing a warm, professional relationship with Odin, our onsite supervisor.”

Rich Bradley was the BTF Budget Tracker. Cath: “Rich, your tireless efforts resolved our bank loan and flood insurance requirements. Groundbreaking would have been late without you. Thanks for the staggering number of hours spent balancing our books. You kept us in budget.”

Ron Wike served as past BTF Chair and then Site Infrastructure Manager. Cath: “Ron, you traversed the abyss created by the new FEMA mapping changes. Thanks to you, we're no longer in a flood plain! With your engineering background, you mastered the complexity of our water pump, well, and septic system. You took on drainage and roadways too.”

Jack Whitsett served as Program Council Liaison. Cath: “Jack, you never let us off the hook early in making decisions. Had everyone been heard? Were all options weighed? Invaluable, too, was your lawyer’s eagle eye during complex architectural and building contract language drafts.”

As Project Archivist, Bob Young recorded phases of project. Cath: “Bob, thanks for your optimism. You bucked us up over some tall hills with your infectious enthusiasm.” Bob created a slide show to document the progress over time.

Jerry Friis carried out duties as Landscape Liaison. Cath: “The disruption to our beautiful grounds was unavoidable. Thanks for your sensitivity. A tree might hold special meaning for any one of us. You collaborated with our Landscape Committee, keeping them informed. And, thanks for recycling much in the Great Hall before the wrecking ball came.”

Ex officio BTF members were Barbara Bower, coordinating Volunteers, and Marilu Carter handling Communications. Barbara organized many work parties, offering her time and talents. She estimated that volunteers donated over 500 hours of work. As construction progressed, Marilu passed on Virginia’s updates to the Weekly Bulletin, keeping the congregation well informed of ongoing transformation.



Under the banner “Ode to Odin,” Building Task Force members recite the ode by Laura Sandage honoring Odin Quintanar, Harrison Construction’s Project Supervisor. (Left to right): Rich Bradley (Budget Tracker), Jack Whitsett (Program Council Liaison), Bob Young (Archivist), Jerry Friis (Landscape Liaison), Ron Wike (Site Project Manager), Virginia Thigpen (Building Project Manager), Cath Bleyer (Chair), and Odin Quintanar. [Photo by Frank Roe]

A Day to Celebrate. On the afternoon of April 7, 2012, outside the new hall, children waved streamers to welcome everyone. An overflowing sanctuary dedicated the new space and stepped into the adjoining social hall to celebrate it. Reverend Banks and UUCD Board Chair Jill Pickett recognized the attending founders of the 1950s and 1960s—Herbert Bauer, Ellen and Ray Coppock, Dorothy Foytik, Lois Grau, Milt Hildebrand, Pat Hok, John and Nancy Jungerman, Barbara Knox, Mary Major, Oliver “Chip” Northup and Peggy Northup-Dawson. Ellen Coppock later divulged, “I was so thrilled to be one of the honored guests at the dedication. It just felt so good—we’ve had a grand ride being part of the beginnings of the church. We have wonderful memories!”

Jill Pickett noted, “It felt like a different atmosphere once we entered that new space.” Steve Burns’ biggest joy was “marveling at the beauty of the structure . . . on entering to see it “all dressed up”—elegant, but not pretentious.” Stephanie Klose said, “It felt like it was our new home, and it had always been our new home.” Ruth Hall commented, “I thought the whole weekend was fantastic! For a huge crowd, that was the best-planned event I’ve ever attended in all my 87 years. And I’ve attended a lot of events! Such creativity!” Don Saylor acted as chauffeur, shuttling people in a GEM car from remote parking. Bob Young’s slide show gave evidence of the intricate building process and volunteers at work.

Ruth and Bill Hall donated their piano to the new social hall. Musician Barbara Meixner thought, “We Juliebells were so thrilled to be a part of this momentous occasion. I am sure that every musician who

already loves performing in our sanctuary will enjoy the added ambience of our spacious social hall after the concerts.”

Cath Bleyer reminisced, “Afterwards, I was singing, “*We’ll Build a Land*,” reflecting on the beauty of Saturday’s dedication and celebration. Thank you so much, everyone. Images flowed through my mind. The beauty on entering, waters with fruit on one side, wine glasses on the other. Enticing smells wafting from the kitchen.



Perfect weather. Just as Jeff Gold spoke—I looked over at our founding members. At that moment, he mentioned the vision of our founders. . . . And the *Ode to Odin*—Odin loved it! A special joy was the excitement and anticipation of our guests, the UU Society of Sacramento. Architect Jeff Gold has completed their master plan; they hired Bud Swank, our capital campaign consultant, as their consultant. They had a ball at our party. Our success has them really psyched.”

Men testing the new kitchen, preparing Easter Sunday pancake breakfast. (Left to right) Jerry Friis, Alex Plude, Thomas Harter, Steve Burns, Bryan Plude, Bill Lower. [Photo by Laurie Friedman]

The Food! Carol Corbett, Stefan Harvey, Reeda

Palmer, Jill Pickett, and Leslie Snow, tested the new kitchen, turning 300 legs of chicken into “Chicken Marbella” drenched in prunes, olives, and capers. It took several days to shop, prepare, and cook. Fruit and raw vegetable platters disappeared as quickly as they appeared. Seanain Snow and Tanner set up tables and chairs.

Lending energy and ambient color to the rooms, artist Emma Luna generously loaned her mixed media monotypes framed under glass. A time capsule went into place. The following morning, a breakfast crew continued celebrating with pancakes. A thousand sticky blessings upon the Easter Brunch Crew: Steve Burns, Thomas Harter, Bill Lower, Alex Plude, Bryan Plude, Wayne Raymond, Steve Reynolds, and Neil Rutger. Many thanks to the intrepid photographers for recording events—Laurie Friedman, Frank Roe, Susan Steinbach, Virginia Thigpen, Bob Young.

Nine-year-old Ryan Baker Buscher of Winters and UUCD Building Project Manager Virginia Thigpen stash the new Social Hall’s Time Capsule to be opened in twenty years, that is, in the year 2032. [Photo by Laurie Friedman]

And to All the Many Volunteers. To those who served on the day of dedication and celebration, April 7, 2012—and the following day—and to those who served during the weeks, the months, and the years of planning, our community is forever more purposeful and grateful for your exceptional efforts. You turned an afternoon and an evening into a thing of grace and beauty, an inspiration to experience and remember.



Who are Unitarian Universalists (UUs)? Historically, UU congregations represent liberal-minded social reformers of two Christian sects: Universalists and Unitarians. Among well-known reformers were Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Henry David Thoreau, Susan B. Anthony, and Charles Dickens. Today, UUs welcome diversity in world beliefs, ethnicities, cultures, gender orientations, and physical abilities. They embrace peace, tolerance, social justice, healthcare for all, and “green” activism.

In Davis, Reverend Elizabeth “Beth” Banks is the UUCD’s Senior Minister. UUCD supports the Interfaith Campus Council, a campus ministry for UC Davis students, and community service organizations—STEAC, Progress Ranch, and Davis Community Meals.

For more information, please visit the UUCD Website— <http://www.uudavis.org/>.



Founders celebrate the new social hall. (Seated, left to right): Jobyna Kingsbury-Gankin, Teresa Kaneko, Herbert Bauer, Jerry Kaneko, Roman Gankin. (Standing, left to right): Milton Hildebrand, Nancy Jungerman, former UUUCD Minister Rev. Jay Atkinson. [Photo by Laurie Friedman]



Founders lift a glass to celebrate. (Seated, left to right): Ellen Coppock, Ray Coppock, Oliver Northup, John Jungerman, Nancy Jungerman, Milton Hildebrand. [Photo by Laurie Friedman]

We Deeply Honor our Unitarian Universalist Founders Who Attended 7 April 2012:

Barbara & Bill Knox, 1962

Barry Wilson, 1963

Captane & Helen Thomson, 1966

Dorothy Foytik, 1964

Gale & Stephen Sosnick, 1967

Gerda & Marc Faye, 1964

Herbert Bauer, 1955

Jerry & Teresa Kaneko, 1959

Jobyna & Roman Kingsbury-Gankin, 1957

John & Nancy Jungerman, 1955

Kay Smith, 1966

Lois Grau, 1956

MariLyn Brinton, 1963

Mary & Ben French, 1961

Mary Major, 1959

Milton Hildebrand, 1955

Oliver Northup, 1955

Pat Kleps Hok, 1955

Peggy & Stan Northup-Dawson, 1955

Ray & Ellen Coppock, 1963