

# The PowerLine

The Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara



February 2007

Issue 6 Volume 7

## February's Sunday Services

### 4 - 11:00 AM - Rev. Frances Manly - *Getting Even*

From the children in the back seat to Israel and its neighbors we hear the same complaints: "He hit me first!" "She hit me harder!"

Why is this pattern so universal, and is there any way out? Come a little early, at 10:40, and gather around the piano to warm up your voice and your spirit by practicing the day's hymns.

Usher: Yvonne Stocker

Coffee Hour Hosts: Lori Zaremski, Jeanne Aydolette

Flowers: Open

### 11 - 11:00AM - Sunday School - *Love / Valentines*

Intergenerational Service

Usher: Ed McGreevy

Coffee Hour Hosts: Tom & Louise Yots

Flowers: Bonnie Soley/CRE



### 18 - 11:00AM - Rev. Frances Manly - *Into the Wilderness*

In some stories, the wilderness is a place of desolation, of wandering, of testing. In others, it's a place to be in touch with the primal realities of the natural world, including its beauty.

Which better describes the wilderness experiences of our lives? Come a little early, at 10:40, and gather around the piano to warm up your voice and your spirit by practicing the day's hymns.

Ushers: Lori Zaremski

Coffee Hour Hosts: Judi Bongiovanni, Marge Gillies

Flowers: Betsy Diachun

### 25 - 11:00AM - Don Reidell - *A Winter Spirituality*

How can winter serve as a redemption of the spirit?

Ushers: Jean Speck

Coffee Hour: Peter Diachun, Jean Speck

Flowers: Betsy

## What's Up with NOAH?

Following the outstandingly successful Public Meeting in November, the leadership of NOAH (Niagara Organizing Alliance for Hope), along with all interested members, will be meeting in February to follow up with the political and community leaders who committed to some very specific steps toward improving the jobs situation in Niagara County. Commitments included both local hiring on government contract work and job training to help more people qualify for the jobs.

On **Friday, February 9, at 2:00 PM** an Accountability Meeting will be held with those public officials who publicly pledged at Noah's November meeting. The purpose is to let them know NOAH means business

As this work continues, NOAH's emphasis for the first quarter of 2007 will be on fundraising, culminating with a fundraising banquet on **Thursday, March 29**. Funds raised will help make it possible for NOAH to hire a full-time staff person, an essential step for NOAH to be effective in the long term. If you're interested in finding out more about NOAH, being on the e-mail list for distribution of announcements about NOAH activities, or helping with arrangements for the banquet—especially selling or purchasing an advertisement for the program book—please contact Rev. Frances by phone, email, or in person.

# President's Corner

Two articles crossed my desk this month which caused me to stop and think. One is from the "Alban Weekly" and is entitled "What is the Mission of "Missions"?" by Don Hotchkiss. Frances gave this to each of the Board members. In a nutshell it states that socially active churches cast a wide, but shallow, net in their efforts to help worthy causes. (Such as our monthly outreach collection.) The author states that some churches have found it beneficial to change their "mission" statement from "We serve the needy." to "We transform our members into people who live lives of service." It reminded me of the old adage: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Again, quoting from the article "Congregations can and do make a difference to the lives of those they help through the outreach ministries they sponsor. But they

## CHURCH ORGANIZATION

After the potluck supper on Friday, Jan. 12, fewer than 20 of us got together with Jeanne Crane to discuss possible ways that small churches might be organized. No specific actions were taken but many good ideas were brought forth. The Board will be discussing them further at their February meeting.

As part of this project we will be looking at our by-laws to see where they may need to be revised. If anyone has experience in writing by-laws for non-profits or would like to work with such a group, please let Betsy or Frances know.

## MONTHLY OUTREACH DONATION

Our monthly outreach donation collected on January 21 was given to Carolyn's House, on Sixth Street. Run by the YWCA of Niagara, Carolyn's House contains apartments for women, and their children, who are trying to remake their lives. A day care center, so that woman may return to work is planned and a Culinary Arts Program is in the works, which will also be open to the public.

Casey House will receive our February outreach donation. It will be collected on **February 18**. Located on Cedar Avenue, Casey House is operated by the Family and Children's Association and offers temporary housing and counseling for Niagara County youth in trouble.

Just to recap our outreach for this fiscal year:

October 16	Niagara Hospice
November 11	NACC
December	Big Brothers Big Sisters
January 21	Carolyn's House

make an even greater difference in the lives of their own members. In planning outreach ministries, it is important to remember that the lives we can transform the most may be our own."

The second article came from our monthly Cluster meeting with the other local UU Churches. There we have been discussing "outreach." I had been considering it as promotion in order to help our churches grow. I felt this was difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish in this municipality. However, when I looked at it as a means of informing our community so they know we exist and understand our beliefs and values a bit, I felt better about it. I think our Wayside Pulpit is a step in this direction. I feel good about helping people to understand why and how we are trying to "become the people the world needs."

As always, We believe in UU and You!

**Betsy**

## BOARD MEETINGS

Just a reminder that Board meetings are held at 7 PM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have something you'd like to bring to the Board's attention, contact Betsy Diachun by the Thursday before the meeting to get it added to the agenda for the evening. Our next meeting is on **February 12, 2007**.

## ATTENTION!!

Something new: Some people are interested in honing their knitting and crocheting skills. We plan to get together maybe once a month to work as a group.

The first such gathering will be on Thursday, **February 15, at 7 PM** in Unity Hall. Bring your current projects, your patterns, your needles, your yarn and especially your questions. Hope to see you then!

## Are You New to UU?

If you've attended our church, once or many times, but have not formally become a member, you are cordially invited to attend a Newcomers' Gathering on **Wednesday, February 7, 7 - 9 PM**. Over coffee and refreshments, we'll get to know each other better, learn more about this church, and explore what it means to be a member (and how to join if you choose to do so). You can hear from some of our church leaders, and they are eager to hear from you about what brought you here, what you're looking for, and what you're finding so far. Child care will be provided. (Please let Betsy Diachun know if your family will need it.)

# Walking Together...



“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote...” So begins Article II, Section C-2.1, of the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Then follows the list of the seven Principles and the six “Sources of our Living Tradition”, from “The inherent worth and dignity of every person” through

“the interdependent web of all existence,” to “spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life...”

For those who have been members of this or another UU congregation for twenty years or less, these have “always” been the principles to which we subscribe and the sources upon which we draw. Those who have been around longer may remember that this particular statement was adopted only in 1985; and while it is has some similarities to previous statements, there are also significant differences.

UUs have been contemplating and critiquing the Principles and Purposes ever since they were adopted. The sixth Source (Earth-based religions) was added several years later (which is why it is missing from the list in the front of the hymnbook), and other changes have been proposed from time to time, though none adopted. For some UUs, the Principles seem almost like a creed, a statement of the things we all (or even, according to some, must) believe. For others, they are little more than the lowest common denominator of things we could manage to agree on, lacking in poetry and thoroughly unmemorable.

At the request of the UUA Board of Trustees, the UUA Commission on Appraisal is now undertaking, as its next project, a review of the Principles and Purposes adopted two decades ago. Such a review is mandated by

the UUA bylaws and in fact is now some years overdue.

In keeping with our commitment to democratic process, and to an ongoing search of truth and meaning, the process that resulted in the current Principles and Purposes was a broad-based one, involving UUs in congregations throughout the Association. The review now envisioned and guided by the Commission on Appraisal is intended to be equally inclusive. They have provided a packet of materials to every congregation, with guides for several kinds of workshops for adults, youth, and children. Although congregations are encouraged to send their comments back to the Commission when they’ve done the workshops, the goal is not just to gather data but also to have the process itself be valuable for the participants. As one member of the Commission has commented, “We hope to engage Unitarian Universalists in a process that involves both soul-stretching and mind-stretching.”

That sounds good to me. Some time soon we’ll be offering a chance for everyone who’s willing to participate, either through a single three-hour workshop or a more extensive series of three workshops. Meanwhile, I invite you to revisit the Principles and think about what they mean (or don’t mean) to you. (You can find them in the front of the hymnbook, minus the sixth source, or at [www.firstuunf.org](http://www.firstuunf.org) under “About Us.”)

What do you think about our Principles? Or do you think about them at all? Do they pretty well express what being a UU means to you, or do they miss the boat? What’s missing? What doesn’t belong? What would you change if you could? Or do you hate the very idea of changing them?

Whatever your answers, you will soon have a chance to help define what our Principles will be—and get to know yourself and one another better in the process. I hope that as many as possible of us will choose to be part of this exciting and challenging process.

Blessings,

*Frances*

## ***Calling All St Lawrence District Chalice Lighters***

### **Calling All St Lawrence District Chalice Lighters**

A chalice lighter is an individual (or family) who pledges to make a contribution, twice a year, to the congregation who has been dreaming big and planning reasonably for a specific growth or healthy congregation endeavor.

Chalice Lighters have helped bring ministerial leadership to many congregations in our district. They have helped congregations move into buildings of their own. They have helped new congregations get up and running, and they have helped existing congregations realize their dreams. Our church was the recipient of one such call a few years ago; it helped us increase our minister’s time with us from one-third to one-half time.

The current Chalice Call is for the congregations in Saratoga Springs and Cortland. The potential goal of the November Chalice Lighter Call for Saratoga Springs and Cortland is \$14,350 from 589 Chalice Lighters. If you’re a Chalice Lighter and have not yet sent in your contribution to this call, please do as soon as possible.

For more information about Chalice Lighters and the current call, or to sign up to become one, look for a brochure in the Narthex pamphlet rack, or go to <http://www.sld.uua.org/> and click on “Chalice Lighters” in the upper right-hand corner.

# Social Justice in SLD

Richard S. Gilbert

Social Justice Coordinator, St. Lawrence District

## Sexuality Education Advocacy Training

March 24-27

**Who:** UU and United Church of Christ youth, young adults and adult allies who are familiar with *Our Whole Lives* and want to learn how to be religious advocates for comprehensive sexuality education and community leaders on this issue.

**When:** March 24-27

**Where:** Washington Seminar Center, Washington, DC.

**More information:** Contact Meredith Schonfield-Hicks at UUA (202) 296-4672 or [mschonfieldhicks@uua.org](mailto:mschonfieldhicks@uua.org).

Deadline for registration is February 5.

**Sunday & Monday, April 23 & 24**

**Albany**

## Annual Interfaith Impact of NYS Advocacy Day

Sunday - Orientation and dinner  
for those who can make it.

Monday - Advocacy Day

Contact Robb Smith

[interfaithimpactnys@verizon.net](mailto:interfaithimpactnys@verizon.net)

## “Repairing the Bridge to Wholeness Religious Advocacy for Stem Cell Research”

### Social Justice Council District Assembly Workshop

Saturday, April 28

Dennis Ross, Rabbi of Temple Emanuel in Worcester, MA and director of the Concerned Clergy for Choice of the Family Planning Advocates of New York State, will present a workshop on stem cell research at the St. Lawrence District Annual Assembly in Utica Saturday, April 28. Embryonic stem cell research is a hot-button moral issue. How can UU’s deal effectively with this controversial topic – theologically – politically? A case study method will illustrate how we can deal with this and similar issues. Robb Smith of Interfaith Impact of NYS and Dick Gilbert, SLUUD Social Justice Council Coordinator, will also participate.

## We Want Marriage Equality!

Jessica Purple Rodela, Intern Minister, Unitarian  
Universalist Church of Buffalo

*This is an excerpt from an article that appeared in the SLD Social Justice Newsletter with a suggestion that we might to send Valentine Cards.*

The Empire State Pride Agenda has begun collating a series of local “family albums” comprised of pictures, snapshots of special occasions, wedding invitations, and other family mementos that reflect LGBT households. These duplicable albums will be used by teams visiting state legislators, to illustrate the diversity of family constituency.

In addition, locally organized portrait projects hope to create a gallery exhibit of formal family portraits. I hope to recruit our church’s LGBT families to be represented in both the informal album and the formal exhibit. Please let me know if your family is interested in taking part of this important witnessing effort.

Inspired by these family album projects, I issue a holiday challenge to ALL members of our beloved church community. Many of us send annual holiday cards and newsletters with pictures of our family’s latest fetes and feats - why not share our news and joy with New York State legislators this season - along with a message pledging your family’s support to **Stand on the Side of Marriage Equality**. The card might state words to the effect of “My family supports the right of same-sex couples to enter into marriage in New York State, with all the benefits and responsibilities that government provides to those who marry.” Pictures, and letters will be sent *en masse* to our representatives. Last spring, UUCB members sent 150 signed cards in support of marriage equality. Now that the legal battle has moved to the legislator, our voices are needed again. Won’t you give this issue the present of your presence?

Please help secure the gift of ensuring that the hundreds of state protections available through marriage, and eventually the 1,500 federal protections of marriage - including inheritance, child custody, health insurance coverage, and pension benefits - are equally available to every family. Visit [www.prideagenda.org](http://www.prideagenda.org) for more information.

## Prevention First – Contact Your Senators

The Prevention First Act (S.21) is a package of legislative initiatives that seek to prevent unintended pregnancy, increase access to family planning service, improve women’s health, and reduce the need for abortion. This legislation is practical, sensible, and moderate and should be supported by lawmakers concerned about women’s health – regardless of political party or stance on abortion. From the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

You may contact your senators at: Hillary Clinton 202-224-4451 or <http://clinton.senate.gov/> - Charles Schumer at 202-224-6542 or <http://schumer.senate.gov/>.

## FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

If you would like to provide an arrangement on a particular Sunday, or any time, please check the list in the Narthex and sign up. There is a large dried arrangement in the Founders Room which can be used as needed. As we have with the ushers and coffee hour hosts, we will try to remind you in the Powerline and in the Order of Service.

## 85 Years Celebrated

Janet McKenna

The year 2007 marks 85 years since the Unitarian Church edifice we now occupy was dedicated. The following is extracted from the article that ran in the Niagara Falls *Gazette* on Jan. 13, 1922 to publicize the dedication of the Unitarian Church building at 639 Main St.

*Beautiful new home of Unitarian Society to be dedicated on Sunday with appropriate song and service*

**First service of dedication at 11:15, Evening service at 8 O'clock—Church home unusual in its character and appointments—Remarkable growth of congregation...**

Dedication services of the new church of the First Unitarian association will be held at 11:15 o'clock Sunday morning. The new building is situated on Main street facing Monument square...the exercises will be supervised by the pastor, Rev. Orville B. Swift, Ph.D....

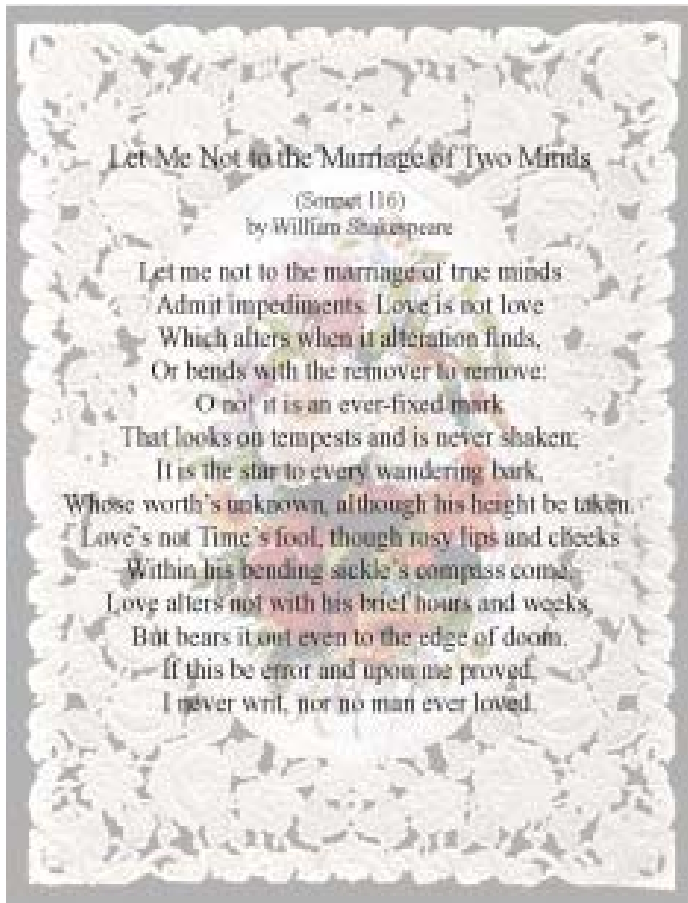
The age-old injunction to build upon the rock surely was followed by the Unitarians of Niagara Falls in their new church home. Well may they be proud of this splendid structure which they dedicate Sunday.

The architecture is colonial. The materials are stone, steel and concrete. In excavating for the basement it was found that the rock was a fine, tough limestone that could be used in building the church itself. Like the members themselves, the stones were used as they came and not cut to fit. The result is highly artistic. The rough masonry makes for a rugged sturdiness of character that blends exactly with the simplicity of design that is observed throughout the building....

The usual pew does not find a place here. Instead, comfortable individual seats are provided for the intent is that this House of God shall serve the community seven days in the week. There will be concerts, lectures and other meetings of general character as well as the service of worship on Sundays....

Doctor Swift came to Niagara Falls early in 1920 and held the first Sunday services on March sixth...On October 17, 1920 the First Unitarian Church of Niagara Falls was formally organized with a membership of thirty-four. From that time the growth went steadily on until was decided early in 1921 that a permanent Church Home was absolutely necessary. On April first the membership had reached seventy-five...The lot on Main street facing monument square...was given to the congregation by the American Unitarian [Association.]

The church is supported by free will offerings. No collection is taken at any of the services of the church. A plate is placed near the door for the convenience of the members...



### Let Me Not to the Marriage of Two Minds

(Sonnet 116)

by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken,  
Love's not Time's fool, though rasy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come,  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

## Communications

Peter Diachun

### We need everyone's help...

and cooperation whenever a note or message is left anywhere in the Church. It is important that these always be dated and signed. We have had three incidents in the last week where notes were posted (or not) on a wall or door. These were to indicate that attention was required on a specific item.

This is fine and encouraged, but in each case action could not be efficiently taken because the person did not date the note or indicate who had left it. None of these were really troublesome. In fact some became a bit humorous, but they did cause a little unnecessary concern and effort.

It is great for people to take the responsibility to post a message. It will help in responding to these messages to know when they were written and by whom. It would even be better if the writer also verbally called the situation to the attention of the person who actually takes care of the specific item. I understand that this is often not known or hard to determine. Talk to people until you find someone who accepts this responsibility. This could even be a learning experience in the mysterious working of our Church.

## UU Bed & Breakfast Directory

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and are happy to provide directions and advice for their area? The UU bed and breakfast directory UU're Home (formerly Homecomings) can fulfill your dream.

For 27 years, we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people. You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at 828-281-3253 or at [info@uurehome.com](mailto:info@uurehome.com), and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

## Way to Grow!

Sometimes congregations—including ours—find themselves feeling stuck on a membership plateau. The numbers vary up and down but stay pretty much the same. Some UU congregations, dubbed “breakthrough congregations” by the UUA, have demonstrated the ability to get off their plateau.

What are their secrets? Would they work for us? We can find the answers at a Growth Workshop, sponsored by the St. Lawrence District Growth Committee, on Saturday, March 10, 9:30 AM – 4 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst.

Three presenters will offer perspectives on how congregations can find their untapped potential to thrive. Rev. Sam Trumbore, minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, visited some of these breakthrough congregations during his recent sabbatical to learn how to help his congregation take full advantage of their building expansion program. Rev. Tim Ashton, minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst, served as a District Executive for the Massachusetts Bay District for eighteen years. He has much to share about finding the untapped potential to help congregations thrive. Rev. Dr. Tom Chulak, St. Lawrence District Executive, will have stories and insights from a denominational perspective, and beyond.

The workshop is designed for board members and “membership people”—which in our case means anyone interested in working with others to help our church move off the plateau and become a breakthrough congregation ourselves. Registration is due by March 7 and costs \$25 per person. Anyone interested in attending may speak to President Betsy Diachun for more information.

## Hymn Books

New hymnals may be donated to the church for a contribution of \$30, which covers the cost of the book plus shipping. The hymnal you donate may be given in memory or in honor of someone you specify.

## Invitation to Membership

If you are looking for a religious community in which to seek spiritual growth...

If you are eager to consider religious questions with others who are not always certain they have all the answers but who are determined to keep searching with an open mind...

If you would like the fellowship of others for celebration and worship, discussion and education, friendship and mutual support

If you want children to be helped to develop their own religious beliefs...

If you wish to preserve and extend the traditions of personal freedom and human dignity against the dangers they face today...

You may find that this church fills your spiritual and human needs.

If you wish to know more about us as you consider membership, please speak with our minister.

### *February Birthdays*

*2 - Skeeter Tower*

*19 - Pat Loretto*

*19 - Tom Yots*

*22 - Ed Tormay*

*Happy Birthday to All!*

## The Book Discussion Group:

The Book Group will meet Tuesday February 12, at 7 PM in Unity Hall. Our group of sages will be discussing the novel, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards.

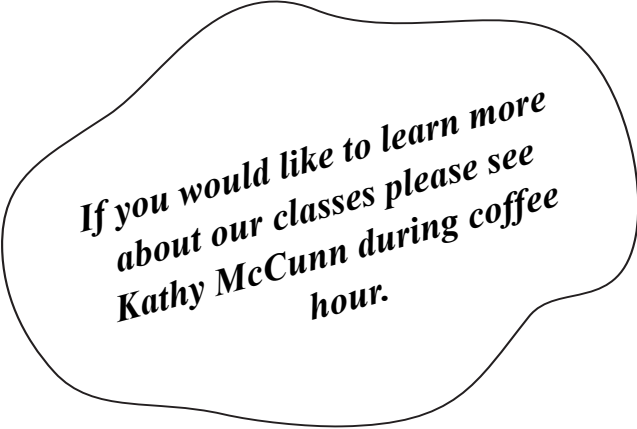
## Adult RE Discussion Group:

The adult discussion group meets 9:30-10:30 on Sunday mornings in the Founder's room. We usually discuss articles in the UU World magazine or occasionally something else of interest to the group. We spread our cumulative wisdom freely so come and join our laughter.

# The Mini PowerLine

## CRE News

### February Calendar



*If you would like to learn more  
about our classes please see  
Kathy McCunn during coffee  
hour.*

## Foreign Policy Updates

Bonnie Soley

For interesting and thought provoking articles on foreign relations and policy visit the Foreign Policy Association's website <[fpa.org](http://fpa.org)>.

I find it very informative and enjoy reading it on a fairly regular basis.

## PowerLine

Some people are still having trouble receiving their Powerlines each month. If you are one of them, please contact Bonnie Soley or any member of the Board. Or, you can e-mail directly to the church secretary, Marisa. If you would like to change the manner in which you receive this newsletter just let one of us know. Thanks for your patience.

## Liberal Religious Hour Available on Podcast

For music and interviews on topics of interest to religious liberals, including peace, justice, interfaith communications, fair trade and labor practices, community action, environmental justice, dialog with other faith communities...

Go to [UURadio.org](http://UURadio.org)

"For people who think about religion."

*The minister is available at the church office by appointment and to visit members, especially those who are ill or unable to travel easily, in their homes. If you would like to speak with her, or you know of someone who would like a call or a visit, please call her at home, at 837-9230, or e-mail [franly@mac.com](mailto:franly@mac.com). She is usually available at church on Thursdays, 10 am – 2 pm, but it's a good idea to call ahead and make sure.*

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Happy Valentine's Day



### PowerLine

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Bonnie Soley

Photographs:

Bonnie Soley

To submit an article for the

PowerLine, please e-mail it to:

[bonnie.soley@verizon.net](mailto:bonnie.soley@verizon.net) or call

316-5863.

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