

From: Margaret Townsend
Sunday February 29
Wed, 18 Feb 2004

This Sunday February 29 is the first Sunday February 29 since 1976. On that special day we dedicated our new building on Nicolls Road with all the pomp and ceremony the occasion warranted. UU dignitaries from the UUA in Boston, from the Metropolitan District, and from the Long Island Area Council, came to celebrate with us. A huge rainbow adorned the back wall of the sanctuary. A ballet written by Dorrie Prouty, about a unicorn in our woods discovering our presence, was performed with Krystal Barbasso appearing as the unicorn in a gorgeous head-mask created, I believe, by Nedra Carlson. George Michos was President of the Board.

From this dedication performance came our newsletter's name "The Unicorn."

When we chose Sunday February 29th as the special day for our dedication, we were quite aware that the next Sunday February 29 would not come until the next century--far off in 2004. Too far in the future to even imagine. Now, looking back 28 years is much easier.

I hope you will celebrate your anniversary and solicit memories from those members who were there on Sunday February 29, 1976.

Best wishes and hugs to you all.

Gone but still remembering in Rhode Island, Margaret Townsend

(ed. Others in the play were: Virginia Gallagher, Wilma Myers, Margaret Townsend, Mike Doris Wittschen)

Dedication Service for the Fellowship House of The Unitarian Fellowship of the Three Villages

Feb. 29th, 1976

NARRATOR: Once upon a time a unicorn lived in a blueberry and oak wood. It was very old although it did not know it. It possessed that oldest, wildest, grace that horses have never had, that deer have only in a shy way. And goats in dancing mockery.

The unicorn's neck was long and slender, making its head seem smaller than it was, and the mane that fell almost to the middle of its back was as soft as dandelion fluff and as fine as cirrus. It had pointed ears and the long horn above its eyes shone and shivered with its own seashell light.

UNICORN: (moves and turn as if in a world of its own) MUSIC

NARRATOR: Unicorns are immortal. It is their nature to live alone in one place; usually an unsuspected place, near a medical center or a Fellowship building. They are a little vain knowing themselves to be the most beautiful creatures in the world, and magic besides.

This unicorn has no idea of years and centuries, or even of seasons. It is always February 29th in its place. The sight of people fills it with an old slow strange mixture of tenderness and wonder. The Unicorn never lets one see it if it can help it, but it likes to watch people and hear them talking.

MAN AND WOMAN enter: strolling

MAN: My great grandmother saw a unicorn once. She used to tell me about it when I was little.

WOMAN: And did she capture it with a golden bridle?

MAN: No, she didn't have one. You don't have to have a golden bridle to catch a unicorn; that part's the fairy tale. You need to be pure of heart.

NARRATOR: The unicorn stepped softly into a thicket as they turned, and took up the trail only when they were well ahead of it once more. The people walked in silence until they were nearing the edge of the wood.

MAN: Why did unicorns go away, do you think? If there ever were such things.

WOMAN: Who knows? Times change. Would you call this age a good one for unicorns?

MAN: No, but I wonder if any person before us ever thought that their time was a good time for unicorns. LIGHTS FADE ALL EXIT MUSIC

Page 2 The Unicorn

NEXT SCENE:

Committee meeting, small table, three people bring in chairs (or high stools), sit and work. Sign on the table reading: COMMITTEE MEETING, 1973, Bayview Ave. Fellowship building.

1. (Holds up survey map) Did you know that 75% of our membership lives within this 5 mile radius? that doesn't give much potential for growth with ½ of our territory covering Long Island Sound. Now what else do we have to report for this survey? (Reads from Sharing in Growth folder) How many children were registered in your Fellowship/ church school in 1970? 1971? 1972? (pauses) 1970? How the hell would I know? Wasn't that the year Irving Carton taught the whole Fellowship school in one room?

2. (Counts money continually throughout scene) Now if I pay the phone bill, and reimburse Doris for the coffee and paper cups, I'll still have enough left to pay the mortgage.

3. (Talking on phone) Well, I don't know if that is enough rent or not. Let's see, first we met at the American Legion Hall and we paid \$15. Then we moved to the Suffolk Museum. I can't remember if we paid rent there or not. Then we had the house on Cedar Street. When they went up on the rent, we bought the Bayview Avenue house. Yes, that's when we first had space for other groups. The Art Barn started renting then. (Pause)

Well, they don't use it every afternoon. Perhaps you could have it on Thursday from 4 to 7. Oh, no, excuse me, I just remembered — that's when our LRY meets. How about Friday? No, that's when the Identity series meets. Saturday? That might work. We have dinners for nine but we meet at individual homes, not at the Fellowship. (Pause) All right, call me back after you check your calendar.

2. (Goes to kitchen window labeled Veatch) Had stacks of bills with rubber bands. Virginia Gallagher takes money from kitchen)

Yes, I'm sure that's right – \$1,068 dollars. That pays us up through 1974 on the Nicolls Road property. Do you suppose we will ever build on it?

LIGHTS FADE - TAKE CHAIRS AND TABLE OFF STAGE - MUSIC

Page 3 BACKGROUND MUSIC FOR UNICORN (Unicorn wanders onto stage)

TWO CHILDREN: (wearing butterfly wings wander as if walking and romping through the woods)

UNICORN: How can it be? I suppose I could understand if this was here when I wandered through in July but never a broken branch.. Roof all finished, lights installed, even people running about. The ground looks a bit muddy as if a truck or two had been here.

CHILD 1: I am a Uni-Uni child.

UNICORN: Child, what are you doing out on such a windy day? You'll take cold. Do you know what I am, child?

CHILDREN: (Wander, hop, skip, stand on their head, cartwheel, frolic about)

CHILD 1: You're my everything, You are my Sun- shine - (runs about singing)

You are pink and pearly and full of shine. (Goes off and dashes back on) You're Piglet!! (pauses)Your name is a golden ball hung in my heart. I would love to call you by name.

CHILD 2: Go and catch a falling star! Love is a circle, round and round (singing). You are my friend: We welcome you today. I know your name.

UNICORN: Say my name then. If you know my name, tell it to me.

CHILD 1: (Happily) Rumpelstiltskin! Right?

UNICORN: (nods and plods on amused and disappointed.) MUSIC FOR UNICORN

NARRATOR: "It serves you right," the unicorn told itself. "You know better than to expect a child to know your name. They know songs and poetry and television commercials. They mean well, but they can't keep things straight. And why should they?"

(Unicorn and children rejoin each other and travel together.)

CHILD 1: Do you have a home?

UNICORN: Sort of. It's just for me and I've always lived there. There is a deeply felt need for places where we feel at home. Our feelings about such places run very deep and we need these places if we are to grow, to become and to take hold in the world. I leave it now and then just because it is special to come back to. Do you have a home?

CHILD 2: We're just getting a new one. There's a hallway and rooms and the walls are painted white. It's all shiny and it smells, well, – kind of like a new house. And you know what? We might put up a swing.

UNICORN: A home needs a swing - or a fern or a tree root just to make it a special place where people can dream. A home needs a door so you can leave.

CHILD 1: Otherwise, you'd be trapped.

CHILD 2: But when you go out the door you can go for a ways. But not too far. Cause if you went too far you couldn't come back and you'd be lost.

CHILD 1: (Turns to leave) Bye, bye, I must go to woodworking now.

UNICORN: Farewell. I hope you get your swing.

NARRATOR: Which was the best way the Unicorn could think to say goodbye to a child, but the children did not leave, but dashed about making the unicorn nervous.

UNICORN: Run along, it's too cold for you to be out.

CHILD 2: Unicorn. (Teasing) "unus" — one "cornu" — a horn A fabulous animal. Bye.
(Runs off stage)

UNICORN: (Startled and happy to hear its name)

Oh, you do know me! (Dances for joy gradually slowing and falling asleep.) MUSIC

LIGHT GO DOWN ---- Lights come back up again.

AGAIN Enter Margaret, Wilma, Mike
COFFEE HOUR - SIGN SAYS "COFFEE HOUR, 1974, BAYVIEW AVE"

the pair to another - spotlight focus on pair talking. Spot goes off as pair moves to new positions and unicorn
rejoins next group. Spot on that group. People do not acknowledge unicorn)

DIALOGUE ONE:

the warmth and charm of this house, but do you think it's possible to build new quarters?
the split vote on this house – it tore us apart. But, yes, I do think we can. — Look, we've outgrown this place.
We're elbow to elbow – WATCH OUT! - Don't spill your hot coffee on that little one.

DIALOGUE TWO:

ere's a marvelous new curriculum that we did a workshop on at Southold called the Haunting House. I know you
like that age group! (Sits)

pstairs is so small that I never could manage it. Ask me again when we get in the new building. I love this
house, but we've really grown too big for it!

DIALOGUE THREE:

k we could rent the Episcopal rectory hall again? It's been months since we had a pot luck.
you mean. The dinners for 9 are fun, but the children can't come. (Sit)

DIALOGUE FOUR:

music program we planned for Dec. 5th wont be able to come. There is just no way we can arrange for a piano.
That set at the Slavic Center covers the whole floor — Another program scratched due to
circumstances beyond our control.

you mean. I'm hoping they get rid of the Auschwitz prison camp set before our winter holiday program. (Sits.)
y much for the setting, but people keep coming in spite of the handicaps. Attendance is up! (Sits)

DIALOGUE FIVE

t was so nice last evening. I don't know when I've been in a group that seemed so supportive. And I was really
down before I went.

were really great. I loved when you told about getting your hair cut. That really brought back a lot of memories
that I had completely forgotten. I enjoy the sharing we do.

DIALOGUE SIX

by a person

ever been a spell on me before

y exactly how you feel. It's a rare person who is taken for what he or she truly is. There is much misjudgement in the world. Now, I knew you for a unicorn when I first say you and I know that I am your friend.

ome her. What is this place?

o feel at home. It is for living and dying. It is for strenth and happiness. It is a place for giving. It is a place for intimacy, for solitude, for dreaming, for doing.. It is called a Fellowship. It is a universe.

ant this Fellowship House?

may, for this is a place connected to the world and yet, separate from it.

e we go to during the week (exit)

nd smiles - end of scene) LIGHTS DOWN

man in Dialogue #6, Woman and Child (Terry)

popscotch, chanting "U - N - I - "

se was fun. I feel at home here.

l a swing or a tree house.

t of courage to build it.

about it.

l about building it and being in it.

y that it is built, what does it mean?

urn? Who will play here? What will go on here?

place in their memory?

CHILD: (together - addressing themselves to the audience)

What shall we make of this place, on this day, and in the days to come?

USE: (Narrator leads the audience in response)

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world

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beings
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h can be heard
of silence
r!