



UUCV Newsletter*

March 2008

Unitarian Universalists of the Cumberland Valley

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We're Having a Birthday!

On March 15, 2008, the Unitarian Universalists of the Cumberland Valley will be ten years old! The tenth anniversary of our charter with the Unitarian Universalist Association gives us a terrific excuse for a full-blown celebration on that weekend. Block it off in your calendars now!

A concert by Gordon Bok, well-known folksinger, is one of the major events organized to celebrate the occasion. Bok, who will be accompanied by his wife, Celtic harpist Carol Rohl, will be performing on Saturday, March 15 at 7:30 p.m. in our sanctuary.

Bok is an accomplished singer, songwriter, poet, storyteller and wood carver. He will perform the sea songs, stories, legends and ballads he learned while he worked during summers as deck hand and mate on fishing boats and passenger schooners that roamed the country's northeast coast. Bok will also perform many of his own compositions about coastal Maine and its people.

Accompanied on both the six-string and twelve-string guitars, Bok projects a style that has earned him a reputation as one of America's most dedicated folk artists. He has appeared throughout the United States and Canada as well as in Great Britain, Scandinavia, Australia, and New Zealand. Many other musicians have recorded his songs, and his music has been used in films and published in folk music anthologies.

UUCV members Ken and Priscilla Laws have known Gordon Bok for over 45 years; he played for their wedding at the Unitarian Church in Devon, PA.

For more information about "Bok and Rohl" see <http://www.gordonbok.com/>

Alan and Kit Franklin, long time Bok fans, are sponsoring the event, so all proceeds will go directly to UUCV. Fans from as far away as Philadelphia, West Virginia, State College and the Washington area have been buying tickets. If you didn't get tickets at the auction for you, your family and friends, we still have some available for members at the special UUCV price of \$12. To reserve tickets contact Priscilla Laws via e-mail (lawsp@dickinson.edu) or call her at 243-9525.



Carol Rohl and Gordon Bok

The celebration will continue on Sunday morning with a worship service conducted by Revs. Duane Fickeisen and Judy Welles, which will include the presentation of our most recent Chalice Lighters grant to support the new Music Director position on our staff. We'll sing a song composed by Dan Bechtel as part of the celebration.

Following the service, we'll enjoy special refreshments in the Social Hall after a group photograph is taken to commemorate the occasion. Former charter

members have been invited to return and celebrate with us, so you may find some old friends here that day. Don't miss it!

MINISTER'S COLUMN

From the Well

I recently had a less-than-pleasant telephone conversation with a man whose name I have thankfully forgotten. I have been thinking about it off and on ever since, especially with regard to the things I wish I had said. Just in case this should ever happen to you, I'll share with you some of my post-conversational musings in the hope that you might do better than I did.

He called in response to a news about a Unitarian Universalist group demonstrating against the proposed state constitutional amendment which would limit the definition of marriage to one man and one woman. Asking if I were a Unitarian Universalist minister, he challenged me to explain how I could condone such a position. (Below is a much-shortened version of the conversation.)

I told him that I supported the action of the demonstrators on the basis of love. "I don't think it's any business of the state to determine who can love each other, who can make lifelong commitments to each other, and who can decide to raise a family together," I said. "I support the issue of same-sex marriage on the basis of love."

"Love!" He was incredulous. "But what about the Bible? It says in Leviticus that..."

I interrupted him. "Oh, don't give me that Leviticus stuff! You know that it also says in Leviticus that we shouldn't wear clothes woven of different kinds of thread. You can't pick and choose what to use from the Bible and what to ignore. Don't you ever wear polyester?"

He dropped the Leviticus argument, but not the Bible. "But don't you as a Christian believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God?"

I really floored him with the reply that I'm not a Christian and no, I don't believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God.

"Well, what kind of a church are you then? What is Unitarianism all about?"

I began my reply by saying that we are a liberal religion, and this time he was the one who interrupted me. "Liberal!" he snorted derisively. "I'll say!"

"I happen to be proud of the word liberal," I responded. "To me liberal means generous, broad-minded and open hearted."

"Well you are sure going to have to worry about what you'll have to say to God later on," he threatened.

"I have absolutely no concerns about how I will answer to God," I told him with assurance. "That doesn't worry me at all." I didn't think it would be fruitful to expand the conversation to what I believe happens after

death, and whether I will ever actually have that conversation with God.

"Well I tell you, you people are really whacked!" he said. "You are really going to need to have a lot of people praying for you."

"Fine," I snapped. "You pray for me and I'll pray for you." And I hung up the phone. At least I managed to refrain from saying "... for you and all the other bigots."

I wish I hadn't hung up on him, at least not without saying goodbye. Now he gets to tell all his righteous friends that the Unitarian Universalist minister has terrible phone manners.

Here are some of the things I wish I had asked:

"Are you actually interested in learning about my religion, or do you just want to criticize it? Because you're not going to change my mind and I'm not going to change yours. But if you want to learn something, I'm happy to tell you about us."

"What is your justification for inserting your religious beliefs into other people's lives? What gives you that right?"

I think it's best if we can have these conversations without using words like "bigot" and "whacked." I do give this guy credit for not ranting at me, even though he was self-righteous and judgmental. I, on the other hand, was defensive and angry, and I confess that I raised my voice a little bit.

I've often said that we need to really listen to each other when we strongly disagree with someone, and try to understand what's behind the other person's opinions. This is *so difficult* to do when both people have strong feelings on the subject. I find myself wanting to go back through my caller ID records and return his call so that we can try again, though I know that it would be fruitless. But I just wish I could be as calm and clever and reasonable and persuasive the first time around as I always am in hindsight.

May you handle your conversations with those who disagree with you better than I handled mine. I'd love to hear about them. Maybe we can work on this together.

See you in church!

Love, Judy

Next Newsletter Deadline

Monday, March 17

Please send your submissions to newsletter@uucv.net and be economical with your words.

Fewer words = more photographs and interesting graphics.

Spring Wishing

I just found some snowdrops in bloom in the garden. I wonder if that is cheerful news that Spring is coming, or is it an ominous sign of the pattern that meteorologists have been seeing of Spring coming earlier because of climate change? Probably the latter, but in the meantime I'll enjoy the budding Spring.

Spring is just one event that repeats itself in an annual cycle. Our Pledge Campaign is another. John Kallmann will be running it again this year and is making his plans now. In the meantime, I hope all of you will get current with your 2007-2008 pledges. It has been a bad financial year for some of us, and if you can't fulfill your commitment, please let us know.

I get discouraged sometimes. It has been another disappointing financial year for UUCV, too. There are things I'd love to see UUCV do, and I think we'd all like to see our sanctuary get a good overhaul. (I don't know about you, but I still sometimes feel as if we are borrowing a Methodist sanctuary when I enter that room.) But frankly, a lack of funds keeps getting in the way. It's not that we are less than generous — quite the contrary! But there just aren't enough of us. Do you realize that our membership has been at 145-155 for several years now? New people come and old ones leave at about the same rate, and we don't grow. We can all help by bringing a friend to church as often as possible. I don't want UUCV to become a mega-church of thousands, but there's some middle ground there!

Have you been noticing our Committee-of-the-Month program? In February it was the Membership Committee, and this month is the Building and Grounds Committee. Stop at the table in front of the stage in the Social Hall and find out what each committee does for UUCV and/or the larger community. You will very likely discover that special niche you have been looking to fill. There are great rewards to be found in working with other UUs on worthwhile projects.

Please join me in some Spring Wishing, and then let's work together to make our wishes come true.

Kit Franklin, Chair, UUCV Board of Trustees

Annual Canvass Begins This Month

The Annual Pledge Drive for the fiscal year running July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 will start on Sunday March 2 and run through mid-April. With a mid-April cut off, the Board of Trustees and the Finance and Fundraising Committee will then have adequate time to give our membership a proposed budget by the May 18 Congregational Annual Meeting.

The pledge drive will again be led by trustee John Kallmann with assistance of his team of one dozen or so members. If you wish to join our team of discrete pledge counselors, please contact John at

johnkallmann@earthlink.net or call John at 245-0411 (daytime) or 245-2360 (evenings).

Members are strongly encouraged to make certain their current pledges are up to date to prevent the *frightening scenario* of a shortfall in funding for our present fiscal year. If you have questions, wish to make a pledge or need some guidance, consult a Fundraising Committee member. We will have a table in the Social Hall where you may get assistance.

Sunday Morning Adult R.E.

March 2 — Retired Dickinson religion professor Dan Bechtel concludes his course on Africa: Its History, Culture and Religion.

March 9 — Elaine Livas, executive director of Project S.H.A.R.E., will talk about the organization's Gleaning and Super Bowl Sunday projects to help the hungry in the Carlisle area. UUCV is a supporter of Project S.H.A.R.E. Come learn more about this worthy organization and the good work it does.

March 16, 23 and 30 and April 6, 13, and 20 — Retired Dickinson physics professor Priscilla Laws offers a six-session series on "Caring for the Earth." See separate article in this issue.

The Adult R.E. classes meet from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. in the dining room. Child care is available if you call the office the Thursday before.

Serious Stuff Book Group

The Serious Stuff Bookgroup will meet on Sunday, March 30 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Our book of the month is *Blaming the Victims*, edited by Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens.

Its aim is to highlight what Said calls the "grotesque, almost parodistic garishness" of pro-Israeli, anti-Palestinian scholarship in the West, particularly in the U.S. For instance, Hitchens, a columnist for *The Nation*, attempts to debunk the Israeli argument that Palestinians left their homes in 1948 because Arab governments made broadcasts urging them to do so, not because Israelis forced them out. This is a challenging book.

All are welcome! People attend the bookgroup meetings who have not even read the book. Some have read just a portion of the book. There are those of us who say very little during the meeting. You need not say a word. Come out of curiosity. Come because the book for the month made you crazy. Come because you love the ideas in the book. Come because you love the idea of attending. This notice is written to reassure and encourage those on the fence about attending. If questions remain, contact Leslie Carr by e-mail at lccarr22@yahoo.com or just show up.

UUCV Hosted 41 Homeless People in December

The CARES shelter for homeless men and women that we hosted in our dining room in December was used by 41 people (4 women and 37 men). Twelve of them were first time guests of the CARES program. We offered someone a warm place to sleep 404 times during the month, and often our host volunteers also provided a hot meal. There were 41 volunteers (23 women and 18 men), and several families were involved.

In her letter of thanks, Director Shari Bellish said, “We realize that the circumstances of serving as the host congregation in December entail greater sacrifices of time, work and money than serving in other months, so we are especially grateful for all that you did... Your spirit of cheerful giving brightened the entire month for our guests...” She was particularly grateful for those who helped keep the shelter open all day on Christmas and New Years and for the individual gifts and meals that were provided. Dee Lauderbaugh reported that no other congregation provided so many eager volunteers — additional copies of handout materials had to be made twice for the overflow crowd at the volunteer training session in late November.

The shelter's presence in our building meant that several planned events and regular activities had to work around the gear that was stored in the dining room and kitchen. It took some extra patience to cope, but the presence of the shelter was a reminder of the much larger struggle that homeless people face every day to find shelter, protect their belongings, obtain healthy meals, and attend to personal hygiene. We received no complaints from our neighbors in Boiling Springs.

Our Christmas Eve special collection was designated to support the CARES vision to build a new day-use shelter in Carlisle where showers, laundry, mailboxes, and storage facilities will be available, and we suggested that they use the funds for furnishings and equipment. Our contribution to CARES of \$509 was sent to them last month.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the shelter, provided food or supplies and gifts, and helped make it possible for the shelter to be in our Meeting-house. One couple offered childcare while the parents of young children worked in the shelter. There were many ways to serve and live out part of your congregation's mission and vision. Particular thanks to Dee Lauderbaugh for bringing the request to our Board and for their willingness — despite anxieties — to say “yes!” and embrace the opportunity for service.



*This Space Available

As you see, our monthly newsletter has been redesigned. To go along with the spiffy update of our web site (www.uucv.net), we decided that it was time for the newsletter to have a new look as well. We hope you like it!

*Let's give it a new name to go along with the new format. Put on your creative thinking caps and think of an appealing title for this important communications tool. Submissions for the new name can be sent to Communications Council Chair Kim Van Alkemade at kivana@comcast.net; the new title will appear on the next edition of the newsletter, and the winner will receive... well, our undying gratitude.

And believe it or not, it will be quite easy to edit subsequent issues of the newsletter and fit them into this template. The editor of this issue (a certain Reverend So-and-so) plans to turn this task over to someone else very soon. Might that someone else be you? If you like to work on projects by yourself, have a good eye for detail, have modest word-processing skills, and can spare a few hours toward the end of each month, this is the job for you! Please contact Judy Welles (judy@uucv.net) if you are interested.

From the Change for the World Corner

We collected \$225 in January to send with Terri Smiley on her trip to Honduras, where it takes \$800 to build one house. We received a thank you note from our October recipient, the UU Church of Blanchard Valley, Ohio, which had suffered major flood damage. They wrote, “Thank you for helping us in the aftermath of Findlay's historic flood. Your thoughtfulness and \$200 donation made moving into our new home high and dry on North Main Street far less difficult than we anticipated.”

The recipient for March will be Silent Witnesses of Central PA. They are an organization of gay and straight allies dedicated to helping the GLBT community have safe and peaceful events, such as Pridefests and the showing of films or plays. They provide a non-confrontational, non-violent buffer between attendees and their oppressors by inserting themselves in front of “street preachers” and other protesters; using bodies, signs, and rainbow umbrellas as shields; or by acting as escorts for counter-protesters. They aim to defuse potential confrontations and provide open, public support for those in our society whose worth and dignity is under attack.



All in the UUCV Family

Stephen Politzer been offered a 2-year fellowship at U Wisconsin (Madison) in addition to his earlier offer from the University of Kansas. His future in graduate school is looking bright. And speaking of bright, *Michael Politzer* made the honor roll last semester at Boiling Springs High School. We are delighted that *Richard Elko* came through surgery so well, and that *Carolyn Hocker* continues to improve; send your healing thoughts to *Ken Laws*, still hoping for a reduction of pain since his back surgery. *Ann Sheehan's* son *Jonathan Drake* has a terrific internship in D.C. with the American Association for the Advancement of Science doing research on human rights issues. We send our loving condolences to *Jill Kachmar* due to the recent death of her grandfather. And in those thoughts we also include *Jessica Bear*, whose grandmother died at the end of January. *Terri Smiley* is proud of her son Levi and his wife Mandy, who have just begun a Peace Corps assignment in Ecuador, and *Terri* herself is in Honduras right now helping to build houses. *Leslie Carr's* oldest son, *Peter Baker*, has just departed for his "first real job," writing for a new English language newspaper in the United Arab Emirates.

Creating a Greeter Cadre

Greeters are the first people to welcome a new person or family to UUCV, and the first to make sure that everyone who walks through our doors feels comfortable and at home. Our community can be unfamiliar to newcomers and we never know what the circumstances are in any individual's life. A smile and a handshake can make the difference in someone's decision to come back, or improve the direction of the rest of their day.

We have a core group of great greeters, but the group is small and we often don't know who will be greeting in time to list the names in the order of service. We are planning to develop a cadre of trained greeters who will regularly assist with greeting and ushering, so we will always have greeters for both outside doors, the sanctuary door, and the visitors table, and so that more of us are comfortable with being greeters/ushers!

We will have breakfast at the church on Saturday, March 22 at 8:30 followed by training on the specific roles at each of the four greeting stations, the details of collecting the offering, and suggestions for keeping the conversations going after the service.

A sign-up sheet is in the social hall, or contact Gail Black at 243-9829 or gailblack@comcast.net.



Ministerial Sabbatical

Duane Fickeisen will be on sabbatical leave for the six weeks from March 31 through May 12. During that time Judy Welles will continue in active service to the congregation. Invited colleagues will conduct some of the worship services during the time Duane is away.

It is typical for UU parish ministers to earn one month of sabbatical leave for each year of service. The sabbatical is intended to be a time for personal and professional renewal and respite. Often that includes a particular project or study topic. Duane and Judy are each taking ten weeks of sabbatical leave this fiscal year. They took four weeks together last fall and Judy took six more weeks off in October and November. The leave was structured with input from the Committee on Ministry and the Board of Trustees to minimize the impact on the life of the congregation while supporting respite and renewal for our ministers.

Duane's focus for the sabbatical will be on use of images in spiritual development. He plans to hone skills as a digital photographer and learn to use image processing software more effectively. He plans to participate in a five-day digital photography workshop in Victoria, British Columbia. He will also visit museums and study literature on use of visual images in worship and spiritual growth.

He plans to spend quality time with his principal spiritual practice — keeping the kitchen garden. He hopes to return with fresh enthusiasm and a renewed sense of connection with the muses of creativity.

Caring for the Earth: A Six Session RE Series for Adults and Children

A series of 6 sessions on *Caring for the Earth* will begin on March 16th and end on April 20th just in time to celebrate Earth Day 2008! The sessions will be taught at two levels — one for adults who attend pre-service sessions from 9 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. and another for the 1st through 5th grade RE students.

The sessions will deal with personal responsibility and hands-on activities to help participants understand scientific issues relating to energy use and environmental degradation.

The series will begin with a web-based audit of each person's environmental footprint. The next session will include an opportunity to learn about global warming by measuring CO2 levels when a plant undergoes photosynthesis and when burning takes place. In another hands-on session students from the College's ALLARM project will help participants make basic water quality measurements.

Continued next page...

There will be two exciting field trips during the services: one to Dickinson College's Center for Sustainable Living (March 30th) and the other to its new Organic Farm in Boiling Springs (April 13th). The series will end with a give and take session on how each of us can "Care for the Earth" by reducing our environmental footprint.

— Priscilla Laws

Do you have your tickets yet?

Our own David M. Glasgow will soon be taking the stage as "Jon" (the lead role) in Theatre Harrisburg's production of *Tick, Tick... Boom!* Told from the point of view of a 30-year-old "promising young composer," this 3-person comedy, an autobiographical piece written by Jonathan Larson, the creator of *Rent*, takes a "melodramatic" look at the ways we learn to live with ourselves (and each other) as we grow into, and through, adulthood. You'll laugh, you'll cry... you get the picture.

Performances are scheduled for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, March 6 - 8, plus a matinee on Sunday, March 9, all at the Jay & Nancy Krevsky Production Center in Harrisburg. Tickets are \$25 each, and are available directly from the Theatre Harrisburg web site OR if you buy your ticket through David (e-mail david@uucv.net), more than half of your ticket price will benefit UUCV!

(Please note: because of language and subject matter, this show is not appropriate for children.)

CCC News

The Compassion and Caring Circle (CCC) recently acquired several copies of sample letters you can use to request medical records. Courtesy of Dr. Linda Rhodes, who writes a column for the *Patriot News*, the letters provide a general guide to requesting the release of records from doctors or other health care providers, either to you or to a designated caregiver. You will find them on the information table in the Social Hall.

If it's convenient for you to take a meal to members in temporary need, give rides when needed, or provide refreshments for memorial services, be sure to put your name on the sheet on the Sign-Ups table. Bee Miller, who's in charge of that department, also asks that you call her (at 776-9451) if you or a family member has a need for sickroom or convalescence equipment.

From the DRE

By the time you read this I will turned 33 and have rolled into year six on the job, and will hopefully have had some good feedback from our February 28 parents'

meeting. Here's hoping we can shape the best program possible into the next season.

To address a few dates of importance this month, March 2nd the Youth Group will be heading to Washington, D.C. for a fun day exploring the Spy Museum and the National Portrait Gallery, if we have time. The Youth Group needs to have some fun times along with social action, and we will be brainstorming how to get the social action component of our program into high gear during the trip. It is my hope that the core group of kids can expand into a thriving program into next year.

Other dates of importance in March include a visit from the choir at the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, The Unisingers, on the 9th during the intergenerational service. This group will be fun for the whole family and have the entire church moving to their groove. A Unisingers visit is a must see for everyone in your family! Also, on March 28 - 30, the OWL kids will be having a weekend retreat to have some fun and hold some marathon OWL sessions. As I write this column, the details of the weekend are still being banged out but a fun and informative time will be had by all. Please mark your calendars and if you haven't heard anything about the retreat contact Jim Freeman or me.

March means that the "regular" season of RE is fast coming to an end. RE Sunday is right around the corner (June 1), and before you know it we will be into the summer. This year's summer program is an extension of last year's under the theme of Sunday Summer Camp. We hope to have some of last year's teachers return and offer some new things this year as we have fun and learn about our world. Well, that puts everyone up to date on all the news that is news in RE. See you on Sunday!

Breaking News on the Bursary Campaign

Those of you who saw the February issue of our Social Action Matters (SAM) newsletter know that we exceeded our \$20,000 goal needed to support 98 girls this year. We owe thanks to over 100 contributors including UUCV congregants and other donors from far and near. About \$2000 of our extra funds are being combined with another \$3500 of supplemental bursary funds raised by the Londonderry School in Harrisburg.

We have offered parents living on farms an additional \$5000 to repair and expand a dilapidated residence (Lar) in the remote village of Molumbo. Karen Butt (our on-the-ground person in Mozambique) met with the parents about a week ago and plans are moving forward to start the work.

Thus, bursary donors and Londonderry school students and their parents are now enabling a total of 111 girls to stay in school beyond the 5th grade level! Thank you one and all.

Sunday Worship Services • March 2008

March 2 - "The Ends Crown Our Works." Revs. Judy Welles and Duane Fickeisen; music by David M. Glasgow.

What are the "ends" of our beloved religious community? What is the purpose of UUCV, and how are we doing at achieving that purpose? As our annual canvass for the support of UUCV's programs and staff starts up, it's a good time to look at the way we intend to "make ends meet." How well do our "ends" meet our dreams?

March 9 - "Music for the Soul: Celebrating the Six Sources From Which We Draw Our Unitarian Universalist Tradition." The Unisingers and the Music Ministry of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg; Ellen Lyon, Worship Associate.

This lively intergenerational service in words and music will involve everyone in singing and celebration.

March 16 - "Extraordinary Riches Await Our Discovery." The Revs. Duane Fickeisen and Judy Welles; music by David M. Glasgow and Dan Bechtel.

We celebrate the first decade anniversary of UUCV's charter as we take stock of whence we have come and the extraordinary riches among us which have transforming power. We will honor the vision of our founders as we look to the future. We'll sing "Within These Walls," which Dan Bechtel wrote for our building dedication. Join us for a birthday party and group photo after the service.

March 23 - "New Thoughts on Resurrection." The Revs. Judy Welles and Duane Fickeisen; music by David M. Glasgow and the UUCV Choir.

On this Easter Sunday, we will consider the most important mystery that lies at the heart of the Christian faith. But we will be looking at this story from the perspective of Unitarian Universalists, who understand it, at best, as metaphor. Early Universalists believed in "universal salvation," that is, everyone goes to Heaven after death. How can that apply to us now — we who are more concerned with life after birth than life after death?

March 30 - "Enlightenment and Enthusiasm." The Rev. Duane Fickeisen and Ellen Lyon, Worship Associate; music by David M. Glasgow.

How might UUs find enlightenment and experience spiritual enthusiasm? What are the potential dangers and benefits of embracing mystery and welcoming a sense of unity with the cosmos, of non-separateness? What practices might we adopt to embrace the holy as a source of transformation?

Other Events in March

(Be sure to check the on-line calendar at <http://www.uucv.net/calendar.html> for other information and details.)

Saturday, March 1, 9:00 a.m. to noon — SoulCollage will meet in the Board Room. E-mail Dot Everhart with questions at doteverhart@yahoo.com.

Friday, March 7, 6:30 p.m. — Potluck supper in the meeting house dining room. Music for the evening will be Classic Jazz. Bring a dish to share, join in the festivities and dine by candlelight. Contact: Bill Vernon, 249-1230.

Saturday, March 15, 7:30 p.m. — Gordon Bok concert, meeting house sanctuary. See article in this issue.

Monday, March 17 — Next newsletter deadline. Send submissions to newsletter@uucv.net.

Saturday, March 29, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. - The Writer's Group will meet at the home of Joan Campbell, 524 Carol Street, New Cumberland. Call Joan at 774-2268 or e-mail (jjcampbel@aol.com) if you plan to attend in case of changes to the schedule. You can share your own writings or read something written by a favorite author. As always, new members are most welcome.

Sunday, March 30, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. — Serious Stuff Book Group, meeting house library. See article in this issue.

UUCV Contacts and Resources

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