

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
DAVIE, FLORIDA

MARCH 2014

IDES SAY SO

by Rev. Amy Carol Webb, Consulting Minister

According to the first century Roman historian Plutarch, in the year 44 before the current era, a haruspex (a “diviner” of the ancient Roman Etruscan religion) named Spurinna warned Julius Caesar that harm would befall him by the “Ides” of March – March 15.

Caesar, thinking himself imperial and impervious to danger, set out to the Theatre of Pompey to join in the revelries of what was held as the New Year on the ancient Roman calendar. Passing the seer along the way, Caesar mocked him saying “Behold, the ides of March have come!” dismissing the prophecy as a trifle. To which Spurinna gravely replied, “Aye, Caesar – but not yet gone.”

Later that night the plot of some sixty conspirators culminated in Caesar’s assassination at the hand of Brutus.



Oddly enough, I keep pondering this story arc reflected not in a drama of persons, but in the plight of our planet in the wake of the weird weather events of late – from the polar vortex blasting Atlanta, to abnormal warmth slushing the snow for the Winter Olympic games in Sochi, Russia. Earthquakes in Oklahoma and Kansas last year. Record numbers of record strength tornadoes – some where tornadoes are expected, others in places rarely seen. Extreme cold. Extreme heat. The beach sucked into the rising tide along Florida’s Atlantic coast. Whales washing ashore. Monarch butterflies dwindling. Bees dying off.

I’m not a climate scientist, but my friends who are say these are dire signs for our planet -- and for us. It would seem Mother Earth and her creatures issue warning after warning ... after warning. Beware, humans, lest you think you are immune to the consequences of your selfish and systematic destruction of your very life source; the day is coming beyond which there will be no return.

In reply deniers mock science and Earth herself, saying our planet can’t possibly be warming because some folks can see snow out their windows.

But then ... all that snow has to go somewhere when the Sun comes out. So cities southward of all the big rivers brace for rising waters in the Spring, even as California dies of thirst.

And we’re running out of time. Even if we cannot repair the damage already done, there



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CALENDAR

(Click [here](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html) or go to www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html)

MARCH SUNDAY SERVICES



- March 2, 10:30am *Justice Sunday*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- March 9, 10:30am Service led by Wild Pine Covenant Group
- March 16, 10:30am *Youth Service*, RoG Youth & Rev. Amy Carol Webb
& 7:00pm *Neshamah: Gather in Spirit* with Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- March 23 *The Magic of Believing in You*, Marylin McGinness & David McElroy
- March 30 TBA

OUR PRINCIPLES

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

OUR SUNDAY LOCATION

11850 W. State Road 84, Suite 1, Davie, FL 33325

EVERY SUNDAY

Worship Service: 10:30 to 11:30 am. **Hospitality Hour:** 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Faith Development Classes: 11:00 am to 12:00 noon

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

There is plenty of parking outside the sanctuary, but please leave the closer parking spaces for our guests and physically challenged worshippers.

All meetings are held at 11850 W State Road 84, Suite 1 in Davie unless otherwise noted.

River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Shared Ministry Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
Stewardship Ken Bresnahan
Worship Kathy Jens-Rochow

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Marjorie Loring, Board President



A COMMUNITY WORTH HAVING



Nothing ever comes to one, that is worth having, except as a result of hard work.

~ Booker T. Washington

Every morning when I arrive at my job at Barry University, my inbox greets me with an email titled “Daily Ray of Hope”, inspirational words and messages from the Sierra Club.

As I sit here today to write my president’s newsletter article and the River of Grass world spins around in my head and heart, I am humbled by today’s message and inspired by its image. There we are, gathering for nourishment and support, taking in our spiritual life one bite at a time, tasting both the intentional and subtle flavors of the messages woven into each Sunday sermon, breathing them into us, and growing in body and spirit, both as individuals and together as a community.

I can also see a glimpse of the future. Our future. For the caterpillar must one day turn into a butterfly or wither away. I see the butterfly as our five-year vision - the beautiful reward for all that hard work. I see River of Grass taking flight into a new tomorrow.

But here is the catch – flying takes hard work too, so it is here that I return to the quote which says “worth having”, not “worth getting”. That means we must continue our work to have the community we envision.

We have attainable goals, but not without some sacrifice. This is where our time, talent, and treasure comes in. At our mid-year meeting, it was re-affirmed that members of this community want a settled minister. It was re-affirmed that members of this community want more space to accommodate our growth and increase in programming. It was re-affirmed that our children’s programming is growing. It was re-affirmed that our outreach is making an impact in our world. It was re-affirmed that members who have spent years in leadership roles are ready to take a break and let others step in to lead the committees and small groups. As a community we are all responsible for the work that needs to be done and the price that needs to be paid for the things we want to have. As a community, we are all accountable for the outcome of the decisions we make which leads to what we have and what we don’t have.

If you can give us more of your time, then give it by showing up for our activities and programs. If you can step up with your talent to chair or co-chair a committee, then step up. If you can increase your financial commitment, then do it. This is the hard work of a spiritual community. Do the hard work and make the sacrifice. This is where the rewards of things “worth having” come from. Make River of Grass an integral force in your life, not a peripheral novelty.

May the force of our intention be with us - may it inspire us, drive us, push us, and comfort us. May we step up to inspire and feed this faith together, and nourish it in whatever ways we can with the love and commitment it deserves.

IDES SAY SO

(Continued from page 1)

is still hope to slow down the damage we do. Step around the deniers and get to work, no matter how they might mock us. Call to account the greedy conspirators who would yet drain the life out of our planet for their profit. Shake awake the oblivious populace, stumbling through their, and our, days unaware.

Heed the foreboding of the seers who only seek to save us. Beware the ides, indeed!

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Date
Friday, March 7th

Movie
E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial



BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Board Secretary

The fox knows many things; the hedgehog knows only one. A great one.

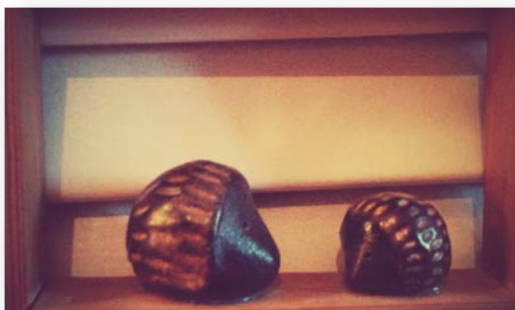
~ Greek poet and philosopher, Archilochus

Inspired by an article in Natural History Magazine, I provide this hedgehog's view of this month's report on the Board of Trustees activity.

The Nominating committee will begin work on seeking potential board members for next year. There are several leadership position openings this year; please consider volunteering for this important work. Email the committee at nominating@riverofgrassuu.org if you have any questions or would like to be considered for a position.



After much discussion and listening to feedback from the mid-year congregational meeting, the board decided to step forward into the settled ministry discernment process for our congregation. We will follow the Unitarian Universalist Association's checklist included in the "Settlement Handbook for Ministers and Congregations". The process requires nimbleness but not haste as we intentionally journey toward year four of our Five Year Vision. I see our envisioning day process as our time of the fox, when we explored broadly our hopes and dreams. When we explored the wide forest we re-affirmed our goal to return to professional ministry within five years' time.



Now as we begin our new journey towards a settled ministry, consider the hedgehog. The hedgehog is small and unassuming, but resilient, aware of the surroundings and ready for any challenge by looking inward and keeping unified in its presentation to others. I envision the hedgehog is a determined, hard worker who is kind and respectful of others-- all qualities we have and will need to proceed to establish a settled ministry.

We will be seeking your feedback and participation as we step out with humility and determination. Keep posted for more details about this process as we head down this road together.

THE BRAND STORY

Rev. Peter Morales, President, Unitarian Universalist Association

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is making changes—changes to where we do our work, how we do our work, and how we tell the story of our Unitarian Universalist movement to the wider world.

The dramatic shifts in today's religious landscape demanded that UUA leadership take an in-depth look at our strategic communications and how effectively our voice is breaking through the competing noise of our high-tech society. We examined our core values, our unique personality as a faith, and the impact Unitarian Universalists hope to make in the world. We asked UUs from across the country, of all ages with various levels of involvement in our faith, to answer three questions: Who are we? What do we do? And why it matters? From these conversations, and more, we began to form our brand identity for the future of our religious movement.

We engaged a top-notch branding agency to help us synthesize this information and explore ways to tell our story with more clarity and effectiveness. This is important for each of us, and it's crucial in our efforts to reach out to others who share our values. Today, I am excited to share with you one of the tools in an ongoing process of improved communication strategies, the Unitarian Universalist Association's new logo.



Our new logo, for many, will be the first introduction to who we are. It's meant to entice a person to learn more. And it's

(Continued on page 10)

FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Ginger Parrish, Faith Development Coordinator

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

~ Margaret Atwood

Just about anyone who grew up in the North can tell you about spring cleaning. The first warm week of the year feels magical, exhilarating, invigorating! Windows and doors are flung open across the country; stale air and dust bunnies are vanquished. Rugs are beaten, dogs are bathed, and the soggy remains of last year's garden are plucked away to make room for the new planting.

Even in subtropical South Florida, the arrival of spring feels like a call to action, a time for getting down to work. . . and not just for adults.

Some of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences that we can give our children are not paid for in dollars and cents, but in dirt and sweat. Working side by side on projects that benefit our community forms deep connections and truly helps children to understand that they are an indispensable part of our interconnected web. (And yes, middle and high school students can even earn service hours for most of their volunteer work!)

So what can your child do to help make a difference in the world? Here are just a few ideas for upcoming events (some at River of Grass, and others in the larger community):

- ◆ Attend the Young Voices Youth Workshop after service on March 2 to help plan the March 16 Youth Worship Service.
- ◆ Alternatively, attend the Empty Bowls Workshop on March 2 and make a bowl to be used in this important fundraiser.
- ◆ Sing a song, play an instrument, do a reading, or share another talent in service.
- ◆ Make and fill boxes and stock the shelves at LifeNet4Families. Our next congregational volunteer day is coming up on Saturday, March 8.
- ◆ Learn about water conservation at Broward County's Water Matters Day, on March 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Tree Tops Park in Davie. (For more information, please see www.broward.org/watermatters.)
- ◆ Brighten someone's day at the One Beautiful World nursing home visit, also on March 8, at 12 p.m. (For more information, please see www.one-beautiful-world.org.)
- ◆ Help clean up our waterways at the 18th Annual Town of Davie Waterway Cleanup on March 22, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Davie Town Hall. (For more information, please see www.davie-fl.gov.)



In other words, there are lots of opportunities for children and youth to participate and lend a hand at River of Grass. Throughout the year, take a look at our announcements and calendar with an eye toward how your child can become involved. I promise that it will be a rewarding and memorable experience.

YOUNG adults

YOUNG ADULT CORNER

Zena Tucker

ATTENTION Young Adults!

Get to know your River of Grass compadres!

When: March 9, 12:30pm – 2:00pm

What: Social time and no-host brunch. Each person responsible for their own food/drink

Where: 595 Tap and Tavern, 11300 Florida Hwy 84, Davie, FL <http://goo.gl/maps/VBImq>

Who: All River of Grass members and friends ages 18-35

More info: See Zena Tucker or email secretary@riverofgrassuu.org

SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Judi Oltmans and Steve Jens-Rochow

LIFENET4FAMILIES JANUARY VOLUNTEER DAY

Thank you to Steve, Bernardo, Ginger, Carmen, Bennett, Daniel, Toni, Sheryl, Karen, Stan, Ann, Scott, Miel, and Anne for volunteering at the LifeNet4Families pantry on February 8th! Our volunteers packed up close to 100 boxes! They filled boxes up with food until there were no more places to put them! Toni Cattell said it was, “A wonderful group of grown ups and kids making a difference.” Thank you all for your service to the community! If you’d like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. Upcoming dates are March 8 and April 12. Check our River of Grass calendar for all the LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer days in 2014. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the sanctuary or email us at ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org.

Can’t make it to LifeNet? Every Sunday you can bring canned foods for LifeNet4Families to River of Grass and place them in the basket at the SSJC corner. They are especially in need of peanut butter and canned meats such as tuna, chicken or beef.

STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE’S “THIRTY DAYS OF LOVE” PROGRAM



From January 18th through February 16th, River of Grass members participated in Standing on the Side of Love’s “Thirty Days of Love” period of intentional action towards ending bigotry and oppression. Members signed up for the daily “30 Days of Love” emails, and created artwork and poems that expressed their thoughts on ending bigotry and oppression with the power of love. Ginger Parrish held a 30 Days of Love art workshop for the children and presented the material in a beautiful way that included excerpts from social justice stories and encouraged them to develop their own ideas.

The artwork and poems that were created by members were displayed on the 30 Days of Love banner at the SSJC corner. Each person who created a piece received a Standing on the Side of Love button!

Some of our River of Grass groups, including the Couple’s Enrichment Group and the Men’s Group, used the Standing on the Side of Love small group curriculum for one of their meetings.



As part of the 30 Days of Love campaign, on Sunday, February 9th, Steve Jens-Rochow presented the Courageous Love Award to LifeNet4Families’ Chris Polzer for his dedication to the marginalized communities in Broward County. Chris truly stands on the side of love. Thank you to Rev. Amy who wrapped up the 30 Days of Love campaign with a beautiful “Sunday of Love” service on February 16th. It was a real joy to participate in our 1st Annual 30 Days of Love!

If you would like to donate to Standing on the Side of Love and support the amazing programs it sponsors go to: <https://giving.uua.org/SSL>. (Standing on the Side of Love is an interfaith public advocacy campaign that is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association.)

RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

Esther Sampol, Concert Committee

Still on the Hill - Saturday, March 22, 2014

Show starts at 8:00 pm - Doors open at 7:30 pm

The creativity and originality of these two blows through the stale air of singer-songwriters like a gale of genius.

~ Rich Warren, Sing Out! Magazine

Seemingly oblivious to the limitations of what two musicians can create, Still on the Hill has set new boundaries of originality. This duo uses traditional instruments from their home in the Ozarks (mandolin, banjo, fiddle, guitar, harmonica and scrub board) and other oddities such as the musical saw, ukelin and tenor uke to create a kaleidoscope of musical color and texture: "These musicians have grafted the wild climbing vines of bluegrass, folk, classical and mountain music onto the hardest of Ozark rootstock. The result is a yet-to-be-named hybrid music that simply compels people to stop and listen, to pause in their hectic lives and pay attention to something they've never heard before. It's magic, and there's simply not enough magic in the world today.

Visually, Still on the Hill is full of color and motion; instrumentally, they command their instruments with power and grace, producing a sound that is both fresh and ancient at the same time; lyrically, their original material is packed with new ideas, social awareness and a level of intellect and consciousness that's seldom found in contemporary tunes.

Still on the Hill are the consummate professionals, whether they're performing for an audience of one or for thousands. Their high-energy show seems to emerge from somewhere deep inside their souls. They play music for one reason: it's a spark, or maybe a raging bonfire, inside each of them that has to come out, something that's shared just as easily with a large festival audience as it would be with a quiet Ozark forest.

Tickets: \$15 Advance Purchase / \$20 at the door

For tickets, click [here](#) or go to www.riverofgrassuu.org – Events – River of Grass Café



CASINO AND AUCTION NIGHT

Sheryl Cattell and Esther Sampol
Auction Co-Chairs 2014

Our Casino and Auction Night held on Saturday, March 1st was amazing! (See the pictures on the following pages.) We raised over \$16,000 for our congregation and LifeNet4Families.

Special thanks go to all the River of Grass members who helped by donating gift certificates, services, workshops, items, parties, concerts, and so much more! YOU ROCK!

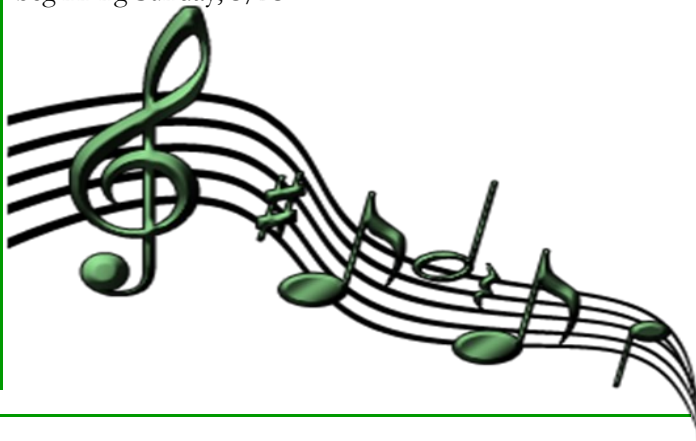
And thanks to our amazing Auction team - without you we could not have pulled this off! Thanks go to Toni, Marjie, Allen, Gary, Jenn, Susan, Pixie, Deb G-D, Debbie Kitner, Johnnie, G.L., Kathy, Ingrid, Rick, Zena, Elly, Janet, Ken, Ginger, Monica, Audrey, our office administrator, Sophia, and our teen volunteers: Lavonte, Carmen, Tony, and Giselle and to all who stayed AFTER the event to help transform our facility from a casino and auction venue back to our spiritual home!

You are ALL amazing!!!! Thank you for your commitment and love!

WE HAVE A CHOIR DIRECTOR!!

By Gayle Giese

Hello River of Grass Choristers! I am SO excited to tell you that ANNE SMITH has decided to be our choir director on a volunteer 30-day trial basis. Let's show her that we mean to SING! Mark your calendars: Our kickoff meeting will be Sunday, 3/16 at 1pm in the sanctuary with Anne and Rev. Amy! Bring your voice and your dreams for the River of Grass choir! All interested in singing in the choir are enthusiastically invited! Choir practices will be Sunday mornings 9-10am, beginning Sunday, 3/23.







DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!

Susan Juncosa, Facilities Chair

Folks, we are at war. Yes, it's a silent, subtle war, but nonetheless, war is what it is. Temperature wars. No, I'm not talking about global warming or climate change.

I'm referring to *Thermostat Wars*. We all have preferences for temperatures and different comfort levels, and lately there has been a lot of readjusting the thermostats during the service by anyone who gets too cold or too hot. You've probably seen this before – most offices have a similar situation. Often it gets so bad that the management puts locking boxes over the thermostats so that most people can't adjust it.



The plain truth is this – our congregation is situated in an industrial park in a building which was designed to be a warehouse. The air conditioning system is not configured for a house of worship and thus we have an AC with powerful fans which sometimes do not suit a worship service. As many of you may remember, when we first moved in, the AC would cycle on and off with a very notifiable bang which was disruptive to some parts of the service. Sometimes that cycle would last so long that the air would start to get stale. For this reason, it was decided to leave the fan on at all times during the services.

Here are some guidelines for air conditioner use.

1. When you enter the facility, one of the first things you should do is set the thermostat(s). Always set both thermostats in the sanctuary hall to the same temperature, even if you are only using one end of the room. This prevents a single unit from overworking.
2. The minimum temperature setting on the thermostats should be 73 degrees. Contrary to popular belief, setting the temperature lower will not cool things down faster.
3. When leaving, reset the temperature to 82 and the fans to “off” or “auto” (depending on which unit you are adjusting).
4. Keep the doors closed as much as possible. Don't prop them open for extended periods.
5. The ushers will be in charge of setting and checking the thermostats for Sunday services. Please don't adjust them during the service.
6. Try to sit in different parts of the sanctuary. Some areas are directly under a fan vent, and you'll feel colder there. We really don't have assigned seats.
7. There are two portable fans in the facility. Use them when needed – they really help on those humid August days.
8. Remember to be as considerate of others as you wish them to be of you. People on the stage or in the kitchen may be having a completely different temperature experience.
9. If you're always cold, maybe the problem is you! Bring a jacket.
10. If you're always hot, maybe the problem is you! Bring a swimsuit!

OK, we may need to rethink that last one, but you get the idea. Let's be mindful of others – and mindful of how the thermostats are set for our facility.



THE BRAND STORY

(Continued from page 4)

doing just that. Our random testing groups of UUs and non-UUs described emotions and images evoked by this logo with words such as brave, enlightening, warm, spiritual, energizing, having integrity, welcoming and determined. Our logo is the first innovation among many that the UUA plans to implement to better tell our story. [Learn more](#) about this process.

You will be seeing this new logo, and more components of our brand identity, being implemented across all UUA communication channels over the next few months. And many of these changes will be featured at our General Assembly in Providence, RI, this June.

We look forward to conversations with you, in congregations, districts, regions, and affiliated organizations, about your own brand identity and how it fits into the new direction of the UUA. This is the beginning of a transformative journey to tell the story of Unitarian Universalism and inspire individuals to join that journey.

BUUKIES BOOK GROUP

by Toni Cattell

Hi booklovers! We have some great upcoming selections, and would love to have you join us in discussion. You can drop in anytime you see a book on our reading list that calls out to you! And if you don't see books that interest you, please feel free to recommend good reads.

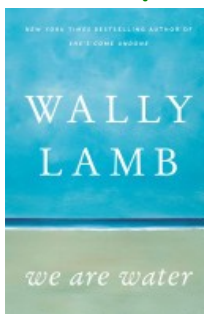
If you want more information, want to be added to the bUUKie email list or just want to make a suggestion, email us at buukies@riverofgrassuu.org. Or strike up a conversation with **Toni Cattell** or **Kathy Jens-Rochow** - this year's bUUKies co-chairs.

Upcoming selections and dates for the **bUUKies** Book Group are listed below- all are welcome. We encourage you to read the selection, but it is not required - all that is necessary is an interest in the book.

7:15 pm - meet at River of Grass for munchies and sharing

7:30 - 9:00 pm - book discussion and sharing

Wednesday, March 19 - *We are Water* by Wally Lamb

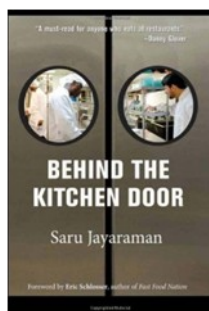


We Are Water is a disquieting and ultimately uplifting novel about a marriage, a family, and human resilience in the face of tragedy, from Wally Lamb, the New York Times bestselling author of The Hour I First Believed and I Know This Much Is True.

Wed April 16th - TBA (look in weekly newsletter)

This year's UUA Common Read: NEW DATE: **Sunday May 18**

Behind the Kitchen Door - Saru Jayaraman - led by Rev Amy Carol Webb (immediately following hospitality time – about 12:30 pm) (Available at the UUA bookstore and Amazon)



For all its talk of organic foods and sustainability, the restaurant industry pays little mind to the health and welfare of its own low-wage employees. In this persuasive volume, Jayaraman draws attention to servers, bussers, runners, cooks, and dishwashers across the country 'struggling to support themselves and their families under the shockingly exploitative conditions that exist behind most restaurant kitchen doors.' ... Jayaraman champions employee causes and argues fervently against discrimination, giving restaurant owners, diners, and readers considerable food for thought. —Publishers Weekly

FULL MOON DAUGHTER CAMPING TRIP

Diane Lade

The days were sunny, the nights cool, the river fast and the food fabulous! The Full Moon Daughters winter camping trip to Jonathan Dickinson State Park, north of Jupiter, was just about perfect. We had 29 women and girls, both tenting and “glamping” (or glamorous camping, in this case staying in cabins) in this lovely park on the banks of the Loxahatchee, a federally designated “wild and scenic river.”



Some of us spent part of our day on the water, pulling our kayaks through bushes or over small islands, while others took river tours and bike rides. (See photos on page 12.) By the time the sun set, we were ready for our fabulous communal dinner and evening campfire, where we sang, wrote each other valentines and built new friendships.

Full Moon Daughters, the River of Grass outdoors group for women and girls, hosts two camping trips yearly and an activity every month, excluding July and August.

Our next event will be on Saturday, March 15th. Join the Full Moon Daughters for a walk through the Wakodahatchee Wetlands in beautiful Delray Beach. The activity is open to all River of Grass women and girls and their friends. We will meet at 9:00 am for a leisurely walk on the elevated boardwalk with our own nature expert, Christy Schultz. 140 species of birds and wildlife reside in Wakodahatchee, a favorite spot for nature viewing and photos. After the walk we will lunch in a scenic local restaurant.

Event sponsors are **Christy Schultz** and **Laura Secord**. Please RSVP at fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org, or on a sign-up sheet during hospitality time after Sunday service.

If you want to join our email list and keep up with where we are going, just send a note to: fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org.

See you on the water, along the trail and under the stars.

FULL MOON DAUGHTER CAMPING TRIP – JONATHAN DICKINSON STATE PARK

