

Board Member Sharing – Jan Eisenhard

Prior to becoming a member of CUF, my husband Bill and I started coming to the monthly Friday night family potluck/game nights for CUF members at the invitation of my good friend Astrid (she is Astrid Norman now, but back then and when I met her, 20 years prior to that, she was Astrid Mosely). We always had a really good time with Astrid and her kids, the Shepherd, Kelly, Sweeney, Weber, Bell, Davis, Puharich/Sronkoski and Charlson/Lant families, many of whom I already knew. This was in the basement of the old Unitarian Fellowship building on University Avenue.

I also attended a Sunday service that pretty much consisted of the RE Christmas program. It was not a very well attended service and the minister, Bill Sasso, was not there that day, so I didn't really get a good feel for what the CUF community was all about. Right around that time I heard about the Building Your Own Theology class that was going to start shortly. I called the minister, who I had never met, and asked if I could be part of the group. After some consideration, he agreed and I started attending the group at Bill and Kathy's house with a group of CUF members. It was a valuable experience for me and I started attending Sunday services. I enjoyed the services and the people so much that after a short while I signed the book and became a member, although it wasn't until shortly afterwards that we voted on the name Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship. I can't remember what the congregation's name was prior to that time.

So I became a member of CUF in the spring of 2003 and quickly became involved in different activities. Joining the Fellowship fulfilled my need for a sense of community and reverence that were missing from my life at the time. I think the first small group I attended regularly was Kaleidoscope, run by Bob Camp and Larry Bernstein, with a different presenter of varied content each month. By the way, the first person I met at a CUF service was Barbara Lesar, who took me under her wing. We were still in the old building on University at the time, there were only enough chairs for all the attendees, no empty chairs, and the little kitchen was only big enough for one or two people, so coffee was served on a tray after the service. It felt really cozy.

Serendipitously for me, shortly after I joined the congregation, one of the board members went on maternity leave and I was asked if I would serve the rest of her board appointment. It was during the time the new building on Parrish Lane was about to be constructed and we used the democratic process to choose a new name, Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship. It was kind of trial by fire, as at the time

the board meetings were lasting 3-4 hours on average. Whew! But it was a really exciting time for the Fellowship and what was cool is that I think I knew every single member, something I can only wish or strive for in the present.

I have been involved in so many things throughout the years, for example:

Kaleidoscope, Social action committee, Program committee, Awakening Heart Dharma, Round Table Readers, Image Spinners, Committee on Shared Ministry, Nominating committee, Endowment committee, Feed My Sheep, Open Minds, Pastoral Friends, Choir, I have been to Ranchhod Hospice and Orphan Day Care in Kabwe Zambia, which we supported for 12 years and now have come full circle, 360 degrees, and am serving on the board of trustees again, 20 years later.

I have made some really good friends at CUF, been involved in so many rewarding and worthwhile activities, and in the midst of it all found a sense reverence in my relationship with Sunday services. I am so happy that I found the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship and am so happy to be on this journey of self-discovery together with so many wonderful friends. The love and caring that I have felt have helped me through some really tough times in my life and I value the knowledge that we are here for each other.