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**PRESCOTT  
UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
FELLOWSHIP**



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**A Pandemic Year in Review**



*So nice to "see" everyone!*

We are a year into the COVID-19 pandemic and Sunday service Zoom meetings. Our last in-person Sunday service was March 22, 2020, the last time PUUF members were able to offer handshakes and hugs. Since April, our online Sunday services consistently bring together 16 to 20-plus members and friends, which means the services are fulfilling a need for contact, comfort and connection. They have been gratifying for us all.



Many thanks to the Program Committee (Glenna Hudson, Eunice Ricklefs and Marlee Terry) for their efforts to find speakers and propose topics on issues we all care about, and to Jerry Matiatos and Mark Mathewson for coordinating music, video, and all things Zoom.

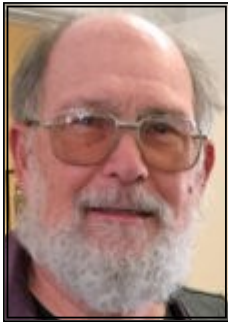
Here are some of the programs (not a complete listing) in which we celebrated ourselves and the world during the past year.

**March 2020:** We experimented with what Zoom is and what we are capable of doing with it as we "chatted" with one another in our virtual Hugh Grant Room.

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**THE PRESCOTT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP IS A LAY LED CONGREGATION. AS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO EMBRACING AND CELEBRATING THE DIVERSITY THAT MAKES UP ALL HUMANITY. WHATEVER YOUR THEOLOGY, THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN, YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY, YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND, OR YOUR PHYSICAL ABILITIES, YOU ARE WELCOME AT OUR FELLOWSHIP.**

## President's Message



Hello everyone. Spring has finally sprung as I write this. We are having temperatures in the 60's and 70's and I think winter is over. Fingers crossed. Trees are leafing out and everybody seems to be starting their garden. At PUUF we also are looking forward and starting to work in the garden. We had a spring cleanup party on April 10 with food provided! We appreciate all who came.

The irrigation system set up by Mark and Debra last year and the non-fish aquaponics of Mr. Ed performed very well. There was a ton of tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots and summer squash that were donated to the local food banks. Well done for all who helped on the garden last year.

PUUF is still closed for in-house services. The board will discuss this issue at each board meeting with an eye as to when we might re-open the doors at PUUF. Our Sunday service meetings on ZOOM are well attended, so thanks to all who attend these services and enjoy the chat time after the service. A huge thank you to the

program committee, Eunice, Marlee and Glenna. With the technical help from Jerry, they have done a great job under difficult conditions this past year.

Empty Bowls was held Sept. 13 and 19 at Granite Peak UU. This is an annual event to raise money for the local food banks. This past year we were blessed with some large donations and, with the help of El Gato Azul doing a soup sale, the amount raised was \$21,000. A huge thank you to the people from PUUF who helped out: the Hudson clan, Jean Owen, Anne Geoffrion, Sue Tone, Ed Hamilton and Marlee Terry, Ron Ricklefs, and Jerry Matiatos. Well done, gang. See you next year on the plaza, we hope.

As we look forward to springtime in Arizona and a nice wildflower display, please stay safe and my hope is that we can all get together again in the near future for in house services. It's been quite a year, one we never want to experience again. Stay safe, folks. So get your vaccinations, I am. One more thing. Thank you all for voting in November. 2021 has to be a better year than 2020.

*Al Schober*—President

### *Review, from page 1*

**April:** We viewed a TED Talk on urban gardening, and discussed the PUUF garden and the need for food in our community. We followed along a pilgrimage in Ireland recognizing the uncertainty and constant change we live with. We learned that what we see out in the world is often a reflection of what is happening inside us.

**May:** The Garden Committee prepared, planned and planted the raised beds with vegetables. People are identifying some positive aspects of self-isolating with cleaning projects, taking walks, enjoying pets, giving ourselves haircuts (or not), and connecting by phone

with others. In other words, “living each day in gratitude,” as Ed Hamilton put it. PUUF members contributed more than \$2,000 to local food banks. Melvin Hill shared his jokes and one-liners to much laughter.

**June:** We looked at the aftermath of George Floyd’s death and asked: Is violence ever justified? Does violence solve problems? Do I condemn or condone? The garden is producing lettuce, spinach and radishes. We shared stories about fathers, whether absent, unknown, or full of wisdom.

**July:** We expanded our understanding through short videos discussing racial justice. The garden and



Ed Hamilton weed whacks while Al Schober, Anne Geoffrion and Ron Ricklefs supervise during the July 2020 Work Day.

hydroponic beds continue to produce. The volunteer clean-up crew worked diligently trimming, chipping, bagging, hauling dead and overgrown brush.



Anne Geoffrion and Ed Hamilton, Gothic PUUF.

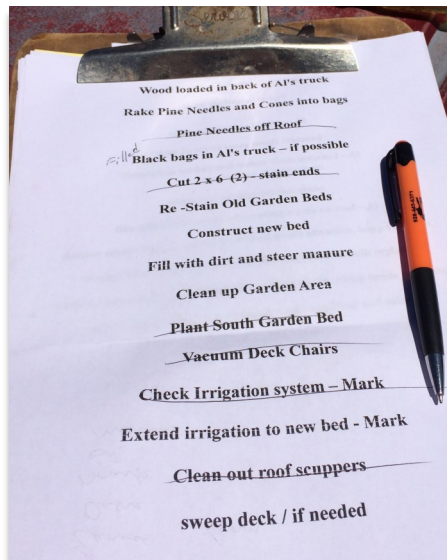
See *Review*, page 4





### April 10 Spring Clean Up

The Spring Clean Up for the property and facility took place Saturday, April 10. Al Schober provided a list of tasks which volunteers energetically tackled. Thanks to all who contributed their labor: Al, Eunice, Ron, Mark, Debra, Anne, Ed, Marlee and Sue.



### Weekly Offering for PUFF

The PUFF website includes a "Donate" button for members wishing to make contributions through credit card or PayPal account.

Checks may also be mailed to:

**PUUF**  
**P.O. Box 11685**  
**Prescott, AZ 86304**

### Melvin Hill – Address

Melvin Hill has changed his residence. He is not yet receiving visitors, but you may call him at 928-634-5278, or drop him a line at:

**Melvin Hill**  
**c/o Austin House, Room 322**  
**195 S. Willard St.**  
**Cottonwood, AZ 86326**



*Review, from page 2*

**August:** We watched TED Talks on deconstructing racism, and learned about separation of church and state and Supreme Court decisions. We gained some understanding about fear – it can be entertaining, used as a motivator, affects our decision-making process, and justifies violence. We looked at what might happen if we choose to live without fear. Naomi Klein (keynote speaker at UU General Assembly) talked about the New Green Deal, and how moments of shock can lead us forward or back.

**September:** PUUF members participated in the Empty Bowls drive-through event which brought in a record-breaking \$21,000. We viewed videos on the Environmental Justice Movement and discussed what that means locally. Gennady Medvedev challenged members to write poetry as we were reminded, “What is this life if full of care / We have no time to stand and stare?”

**October:** Matthew Phillips gave an update on the U.S. Vets organization – the percentage of homeless veterans in Yavapai County has decreased from 30% to 20% as services have increased. PUUF volunteers tackled the trees, shrubs and never-ending pine cones to “Firewise” the property. We learned more about environmental use of property in low income areas.



Debra Mathewson revving it up as she hauls brush to the chipper in October.

**November:** Before Election Day, we enjoyed some political satire, and Melvin’s one-liners generated more thumbs up (and groans) than thumbs down. Marlee entertained us with her own parody of “Bye, Donny, Goodbye.” As Veterans Day neared, Sue Tone introduced members to military service people she interviewed as a reporter. Tom and Christa Agostino once again proved the power music has, especially moving political action forward and for creating cultural continuity. We finished out the month with some guided reminiscing.

**December:** A valuable lesson in meditation and developing self-compassion included this prayer: May I be safe. May I be peaceful. May I be kind to myself. May I accept myself as I am. Al Schober gave a special Saturday presentation on the season’s night sky. We heard about the sustaining power of music from Kellie Walker Hart, and emphasized that message the following week by celebrating with music videos as contributed by many members. The final Sunday service of 2020 was all about family traditions around the New Year. It is a time to embrace, explore and delight – a magical opportunity for a new start, a fresh chapter.

**January 2021:** More conversation on traditions that take us into a new year. We heard a personal account of trauma and the process of working through it. This involves: *Attention* to how one is feeling; *Acceptance* of the damage done; *Alignment* in feeling whole, enough, complete; leading to *Peace* when there is no discord between what we think, say and do – we celebrate the present, along with a reminder that there is no life without sorrow. Rosemary Dixon gave an update on local events and efforts for social justice. We traveled around the world to different music halls and learned that “Music is the soundtrack of the good and bad times of our lives.”

“It’s the action, not the fruit of the action, that’s important. ... It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there’ll be any fruit. But that doesn’t mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action.” – Mahatma Ghandi

**February:** Sisters Sue Tone and Gini Norgard showed short videos on family stories and genealogy, and encouraged PUUF members to start (or continue) to document the stories of their lives for future generations. On Valentine’s Day, members shared some of their favorite love songs, leaving many also sharing tears as the music deeply touched them. Another presentation on genealogy gave us strategies in how to get started.

**March:** We learned from Prof. Parul Sha how to live fully with a debilitating illness. Tom and Christa Agostino helped bring in the spring season. We heard from Alex Harris what PASS offers the community and how we can help.



Tom and Christa Agostino

**“We acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of every person.”**

Jill Ann Branning-Bush, a forty-year resident of Prescott, Arizona, passed peacefully on January 21, 2021, at the Glencroft Home for Modern Aging, Glendale, Arizona, seven days before her 91st birthday. She was an artist, musician, business woman, loving mother and world traveler.

Jill was born in Rockford Illinois, Jan. 28, 1930, and moved with her parents to Phoenix, Arizona, in 1943, where she attended North Phoenix Union High School and Phoenix College majoring in music and music theory before marrying Norman Bush Sr. in 1951.

Ms. Bush started a career as a real estate agent in Phoenix, and later became a Real Estate Broker working with her husband in the title and trust, mortgage banking, and real estate speculation businesses. In 1970, Jill and Norman Bush Sr. bought property in the Groom Creek community five miles South of Prescott where they built two homes.

Retiring from real estate, she took an active part in the Prescott



community where she worked and attended class at Yavapai College, Prescott, and later completed a Bachelor's Degree program in Sociology from Prescott College.

Jill was a lay minister for the Prescott Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (PUUF) where she played piano and organ and was their choir and social director. Her musical, artistic and writing talents (prose, poetry and short stories) were praised with acclaim, and she continued to enjoy playing piano, writing and producing artwork throughout her life.

Ms. Jill Ann Branning-Bush is survived by her two sons, Norman G. Bush and Theodore A. Bush, and three grandchildren, Nicholas Gill-Bush, Alex Bernard Bush, and Emily Ann Bush.

She will be interred with her husband in the wall at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Prescott, Arizona, with a celebration of her life at a time to be announced.

*Published in the Prescott Daily Courier Jan. 28, 2021*



## Alex Szecsody

Sept. 14, 1930 - May 29, 2020

Alex Szecsody passed away May 29, 2020, peacefully without pain after suffering a broken hip. He was born Sept. 14, 1930. At age 10, Alex's mother died and he went to live with Mrs. Gurr - "Mom" - until he graduated from Hicksville High School. Alex was called "Sonny" and was about the same age as his new brother George.

Alex attended Clarkson College of Technology in upper New York State, an all-male school, where he received a half scholarship and also worked.

Alex and Irene met in 1950 when Alex was sent to get some homemade wine and Irene, home for the summer from Oswego State Teachers College, was painting an entranceway. Thus, they began their friendship over wine. They wrote letters to each other, and a few times during the two years

preceding their marriage, Irene visited Alex in Potsdam, New York, for the weekend. Irene kept Alex's letters, storing them in her Prescott closet.

Alex was Presbyterian and Irene was Catholic. Before getting married at St. Stephen's Catholic Church, the Franciscan priest tried to convert Alex. He refused, yet they still married in church in front of the gates to the altar in order to please Irene's mother.

After their first child, Valerie, was born, they attended the UU church of Northboro, Massachusetts. Twenty months later, their son, James, was born in Marlboro.

*Information provided by Irene Szecsody.*

*Alex Szecsody first signed the PUUF membership book in 1994.*





We stay warm zooming together inside our homes.

Mark and Debra Mathewson are found outdoors clearing the wet stuff from the walkways and parking lot - and meeting some unexpected critters - after heavy snowfalls in January.



**ANY PERSON MAY BECOME A MEMBER OF THIS FELLOWSHIP, WHO IS IN SYMPATHY WITH ITS PURPOSE AND PROGRAM, BY SIGNING THE MEMBERSHIP BOOK, AND THEREBY ACCEPTING THE OBLIGATION TO PARTICIPATE AND TO HELP SUPPORT THE FELLOWSHIP BY FINANCIAL OR OTHER MEANS.**

**PLEASE SEE AL SCHOBER FOR INFORMATION.**