

You're Invited! PLEASE COME!!

On Saturday, January 26, at 5:30, we will celebrate the experiences of UUFVB's Coalition for Racial Justice/Black Lives Matter, a sub-committee of the Social Justice Steering Committee. Come to meet this group as they share their energy and briefly review what they have done, are doing, and plan to do. There will also be finger food refreshment. Also invited are folks from many religious groups in the community who share an interest in racial justice. A wildly original 2018 comedy (*Sorry to Bother You*) will follow the reception for those interested in staying. Put the 26th on your calendar!

Supermarket Sustainable Seafood Scorecard

Greenpeace recently evaluated major US grocery retailers on their efforts to protect our oceans and the people who depend on them. Whole Foods, Hy-Vee, ALDI, and Target (in that order) topped the list for their sustainable seafood practices. Kroger was #10, and Publix ranked #17. Of the 22 assessed retailers, 90% passed which is notable progress because in 2008 when Greenpeace first issued this report, all supermarkets failed.

[from: Greenpeace's *Compass*, Winter 2018]

200th Anniversary of Discovery of Antarctica

Extensive scientific analysis by Antarctic seafloor biologist Dr. Susanne Lockhart and her team from Greenpeace supports pending proposals for an Antarctic Ocean Sanctuary, a marine reserve in Antarctic waters. That seafloor is bursting with amazing creatures, from tiny sea spiders to feather stars, glass sponges, sea squirts, corals, and more.



The Greenpeace exploration also sampled for microplastics and persistent chemicals to learn more about pollution there. Sadly, the scientists found microplastic waste and persistent hazardous chemicals. An Antarctic Ocean Sanctuary would preserve the pristine nature of the Antarctic Ocean and form a safe haven for penguins, whales, and seals to recover from the pressures of climate change, pollution, and overfishing. Visit greenpeace.org/usa/antarcticlife to learn more.

Rhinos and Tigers as Medicine

In what environmentalists called a “death warrant” for endangered rhinos and tigers, China lifted its 1993 ban on the use of rhino horn and tiger bone in traditional Chinese medicine.

Chinese authorities say only animals raised on farms can be slaughtered for medicine, but activists say poachers will simply label their illegal wild kills as “farmed.”



[from: *The Week*, November 9, 2018]

Plastic in Your Table Salt

National Geographic.com reports a new study of 39 brands of salt from 21 countries (including the US) which found that 90% of the samples contained microplastics with sea salt being the most contaminated, followed by lake salt, and then rock salt. Plastic levels were highest in samples from Asia, a hot spot for plastic pollution. Sale sold in Indonesia was the most polluted. The study estimates that the average adult consume 2,000



pieces of microplastic every year from salt. Plastic particles in the gut could affect the digestive system's immune response, researchers said, or aid in the transmission of toxic chemicals and pathogens.

[from: *The Week*, November 9, 2018]

Two States Strike a Blow Against Jim Crow Laws

As we know, Florida voters passed a constitutional amendment to overturn a law barring people from voting because of previous felony convictions. The ban had been in effect since 1868 when Florida rewrote its constitution.

In Louisiana, voters overturned another Jim Crow relic of its constitution (adopted in 1898) by passing Amendment 2, which requires jury verdicts in criminal trials to be unanimous. Before the vote, a person could be sent to prison, even for life, with just 10 of 12 jurors agreeing to a guilty verdict. Oregon is now the only state that allows non-unanimous criminal verdicts.

[from: *Southern Poverty Law Center REPORT*, Winter 2018]

Two Documentaries You'll Want to See

Put these dates on your calendar:

Monday, Feb. 4, 7:00 PM – The free film “**Toxic Puzzle: Hunt for the Hidden Killer,**” sponsored by ORCA (Ocean Research and Conservation Assoc, Inc.) will be shown at the Emerson Center. The film is a medical and environmental detective story narrated by Harrison Ford. Illnesses such as Parkinson’s, ALS, and Alzheimer’s are on the increase, and scientists believe environmental toxins found in algae can trigger these neurological diseases in a gene/environment interaction.

Tuesday, March 5, 7:00 PM – AAUW is showing a film about Title IX at UUFVB. Details TBA.



Who Runs Things in American Society?

Wonder why women are at a disadvantage, from paychecks to sexual harassment and discrimination?

- Only 23% of US Senators and 19% of House members are women.
- Just 6 women are governors.
- Of the 7, 383 state legislators, only 25% are women.
- Of 2,400 elected prosecutors, 79% are men, 95% are white, and 1% are women of color.
- White men are 31% of the population, but they comprise 79% of 42,000 elected officials.
- Women hold only 5% of CEO positions in Fortune 500 corporations.
- More than 75% of US corporate board members are white men.

[from: *The Hightower Lowdown*, Nov. 2018]

Standing By the Paris Climate Agreement

The Trump Administration abandoned the Paris Climate Agreement, but 16 states and more than 400 cities have vowed to stand by it. The city of Orlando set a goal of generating all of its energy from carbon-free sources by 2050. In the Southeast, the Environmental Defense Fund is part of a coordinated effort led by Florida to save vanishing longleaf pine forest ecosystems. The work benefits imperiled species like the red-cockaded woodpeckers and the gopher tortoise.

[from: *Solutions/edf.org/* Fall 2018]

Environmental Effects of “The Wall”

The 2,000 mile frontier between the US and Mexico encompasses wetlands, deserts, and mountains. The borderlands are home to more than 1,500 native plant and animal species, many of which are endangered or threatened, including jaguars, ocelots, antelope, bison, and wolves. This abundant biological diversity is already under pressure from industrial development and climate change. A vast concrete barrier would only worsen the situation.

If President Trump’s border “wall” is ever built, the damage would start with the construction itself and all the infrastructure that would come with it. Because of legislation passed in the wake of the September 11 attacks, construction would be exempt from the most basic environmental safeguards, including the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act the Endangered Species Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Bulldozers tearing through wildlands is just the first environmental danger. Walls and other barriers cut wildlife off from food and water sources. Border barriers also make it more difficult for struggling animal populations to increase their numbers and maintain genetic diversity; only about 100 Mexican gray wolves remain in the wild, and Texas has as few as 80 ocelots. Some species are naturally migratory, while others will be forced to shift to new habitats.

[op-ed by Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune, *Sierra Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2018]



How Do Pets Affect the Environment?

Little research has been done, but a recent study indicates that dogs and cats combined are responsible for around 1.5% of US emissions of methane and nitrous oxide. Their diet of meat accounts for up to 30% of the environmental impact from all animal production, in terms of the use of land, water, fossil fuel, phosphates, and biocides. Pets also disturb bird populations. There are close to 90 million registered dogs in the US. We need better control of pet dogs and cats and stronger efforts to contain feral populations through spaying and neutering.

[from: *Sierra Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2018]