

Building On

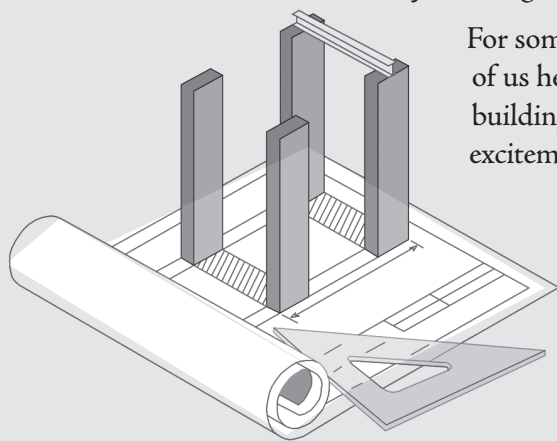
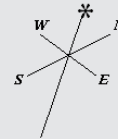


...expanding spiritual horizons at FVUUF

Volume 1, Issue 4 — November 2006

The Weathervane: *Building On* Edition Bold Dreams Needed To Meet Mission

By Rev. Roger Bertschausen



For some of us I suppose, this building process has some feeling of déjà vu. Those of us here in the 1990s participated in the dreaming and planning for our current building, the capital campaign that took place just about eleven years ago, and the excitement of construction and moving into this new space.

Constructing a million dollar building was a bold dream for 200 members. Of course, that project wasn't the first bold dream for the Fellowship. The first took flight 51 years ago when nine people had the audacity and courage to start a liberal religious congregation in a very conservative time and place. And then there was the bold dream of buying our first building on Superior Street in 1981—that was proportionately an even bigger leap than our current building.

So here we are in 2006, moving forward with a new construction project. The cost will be in the neighborhood of two-and-a-half times our 1990s project. That's a lot! But here's the good news: Our Fellowship is two-and-a-half times the size it was when we had our capital campaign in 1995. What this tells me is that this project will be a similar stretch: No doubt it will challenge us. And I have no doubt that once again we will rise and meet the challenge—just like we did in 1955 and 1981 and 1995. Many of us will have the privilege of being part of meeting these challenges twice; for a few, this will be the third such challenge; and for our four surviving Founders, this will be their fourth bold dream!

There's a simple reason these challenges have visited us with some regularity: Our Fellowship has grown tremendously from those first nine members in 1955. To meet our mission of being welcoming, we have had to make space for newcomers by adding services and finding or building more adequate space. Once again we find ourselves crowded. Our weekend attendance this fall is up 13 percent from just a

year ago. Even with the children starting in Children's Chapel rather than the services on most weekends, we're getting crowded at the Sunday services. And on many evenings every single room in the building is in use. I was surprised to come in unexpectedly on a recent Monday evening and find my office in use for a committee meeting! To meet our mission, we need additional space. Welcome to the next great challenge facing the Fellowship! ☺

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Congregation Votes For Design "D"

By Holly Park, Building Design Team

On Oct. 29, more than 60 members attended the congregational meeting to participate in the discussion and vote on the four options presented for expansion. After an hour of questions and dialog, the overwhelming choice was to proceed with Plan D, with 67 percent of the vote. Plan B had 22 percent of the vote followed by Plans A and C, with single digit percentages.

Plan D (see insert) is the option that places the octagonal sanctuary on the southeast corner of the lot (behind the current RE wing), with program space directly below in a lower level. This will require an elevator and a stairwell for accessibility. The existing kitchen and bathrooms will be relocated, as well as the playground. Many questions were asked that were answered by members of the Building Team regarding program space, cost, efficiency, seating capacity, acoustics, and green design. Members cited several factors that made Plan D the most appealing, including:

- ❖ Preservation of green space outside the existing fellowship hall
- ❖ Possible energy savings
- ❖ Sanctuary seating all on one floor
- ❖ Less noise (farther from Calumet Street)
- ❖ Possibility of natural light in lower level
- ❖ Plenty of program space
- ❖ Tornado shelter because of being underground
- ❖ Better acoustics than the curved sanctuary wall in Plans A&C
- ❖ Consistent with the shape of the existing fellowship hall (more esthetically pleasing)
- ❖ May allow for some future expansion

What Does Green Mean?

By Terry Dawson, Building project co-chair

Green design, or sustainable design, means working to make buildings which save nonrenewable energy, sustain the natural environment and promote our relationship with the natural world. This growing trend in architecture and construction is particularly well-aligned with UU principles. Our congregation's choice of a building design reflected our own principles and green design principles in energy savings, natural light, and a reduced footprint on our land.

As we go forward in our building process, we will "think green" and look for opportunities to act green. This may include building materials and construction practices, such as grassy pavers for parking. It will surely include attention to landscaping as we think about our final design and the construction processes. Landscaping concerns will be both aesthetic and

See Green on Back

Building At A Glance

Here are some statistics about the proposed Phase II building addition:

| (proposed Plan D) | Phase II | Phase I (existing building) |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Square footage | 19,005* | 10,673 |
| Cost | \$2.6 mil. ** | \$1.0 mil. |
| Construction period | 8 months | 8 months |
| Completion date | late 2008 | Fall 1998 |

*Addition is almost double current space

** \$135/square foot

The next phase is to conduct a feasibility study to determine if we as a congregation are ready to make this dream a reality. The study will be done by a consultant from the Unitarian Universalist Association sometime in January. If members are ready to commit financially to expand our building to help meet our mission, the Design Team will move forward with the design development stage. This is where the design is reviewed, changed and tweaked to meet our needs. Many people and groups will have a chance to participate in these decisions and hopefully the architect will incorporate some creative and innovative design elements to make our new space beautiful. Please begin thinking about what your commitment will be as we take another bold step in the life of our Fellowship! . ☺



Pacing Our Project

By Terry Dawson, Building Project Co-chair

As a congregation, we have proceeded in a deliberate and thoughtful way and have not rushed to judgment in any phase of our building project. This became particularly clear when we delayed the recent congregational meeting to accommodate an additional building design option (which turned out to be the choice) and to ensure that everyone who wished to cast an absentee ballot had ample time to do so. As the Steering Committee looked down the road, it became clear to us that it would be preferable to slow down the next couple of steps in our process. This does not necessarily mean that the final construction and occupancy will be delayed, but we believe it is important to do this well rather than to do it quickly.

We had originally thought to do a feasibility study on finances this fall and a capital campaign in the spring. After discussion within our own congregation and with consultants from the UUA, we decided to delay the feasibility study until the new year. Because we took a bit longer in making the design decision, we did not want to be in conflict with the holiday season. The feasibility study should tell us if we are ready to proceed with a capital campaign and how much we can expect to raise. Likewise, we had originally thought to have our capital campaign in the spring, but we believe it would be better to wait until the fall of 2007. This way we can assess the results of our annual canvass and use it as a reality check of the feasibility study results before we as a congregation embark on a major fund-raiser. ☪

Building On is published periodically to inform members, friends and the wider UU community about the Fellowship's building expansion project.

<http://www.focol.org/fvuuf/>

Building Steering Committee

Albert Park
& Terry Dawson,
Co-chairs
Miriam Douglass,
Governing Board President
Rev. Roger Bertschusen,
Minister
Diane Cochran,
Administrator
Marie Murton,
Membership Coordinator
Lisa Manske-Barnes,
Finance Committee
Nadine Miller,
Communications Team

Design Team

Albert Park
& Terry Dawson,
Co-chairs
Gerry Andrews
Jim Coakley
Sherry Gates
John Luke
Maryanne Marx
Candice Mortara
Holly Park
Dave Wallace

A Few Of Our Favorite Things

By Jim Coakley, Building Design Team

Here's a sampling of what Fellowship members said they liked about Plan D, which received two-thirds of the vote at the congregational meeting. The year they joined the Fellowship is in parenthesis. Please add your comments, questions or complaints in the Building Question Box now in the FVUUF lobby.

Pete McLaughlin (2000). Pete likes three things: 1. The sanctuary's south position (away from Calumet Street); 2. The additional program space the basement provides with a limited footprint and added a safety component/shelter; and 3. He appreciates the meditation room.

Mary Gerlach (1975). Mary also liked the sanctuary being away from the street and thought Plan D did a good job of complimenting the current building. She liked that it preserved the current green space to the north. Mary has grown used to looking at it out the windows during services and said she'd really miss it.

Tony Salsich (1995). Tony liked Plan D because it was the most compact, and he believes it will have better acoustics than the designs with the curved wall. The quality of the acoustics in the new sanctuary is very important to him.

Jenny Straight (2001). Jenny thought that Plan D was a good balance of all the other ideas. She's not surprised that it was the result of some of the early listening sessions. She admitted that she was "a balcony person" at first, but she let go of that idea. Jenny will miss the sedge meadow, but she thought some of the other options made it too crowded on the north side of the building. She hopes moving the sedge meadow into some of the green space on the north side is being considered.

Marti Wheeler (1985). Marti really liked the smaller footprint of Plan D and the resulting green space that is saved. She also did not want the sanctuary so close to Calumet Street.

It should also be noted that a number of people were questioned for this article who didn't vote, but all were happy with Plan D. They usually cited the same reasons as this group. It sounds like we have a pretty strong consensus. ☪

Jan 2007
Feasibility
Study

Fall 2007
Capital
Campaign

2007
Final
Design

2007-08
Construction

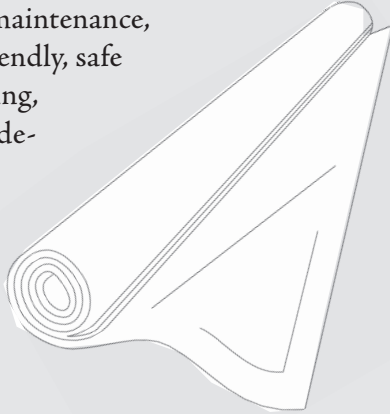
Late 2008
Occupancy

Green *Cont. from Front*

environmental, including consideration of issues like drainage and runoff, as well as maintaining a site for plants and animals. A building which reduces waste and is constructed in a low-impact way can help us live our principles. It will be a challenge for the Design Team to work toward a sustainable, low-maintenance, environmentally friendly, safe and aesthetic building, while managing trade-offs for costs.

Editor's note:

We plan to have a Green Corner ongoing feature in our Building On newsletter, so watch for it in future issues. ⊕



Building Scraps

Odds And Ends Of FVUUF Expansion News

Reading the *Building On* newsletters is just one way you can keep up with the Fellowship's expansion project. Watch for:

- ❖ A display in the lobby of the proposed addition, including a 3-dimensional view and floor plan.
- ❖ A question box to drop in your questions or comments. Watch for responses in future newsletters.
- ❖ Ask a Builder. Building Design Team and Steering Committee members will circulate after services the weekend of Dec. 9-10 to answer your questions and hear your feedback.

The next issue of *Building On* will arrive in your mailbox early in 2007 with details of the upcoming feasibility study, how we'll pay for the project and what happens in the design development phase. Plus, see what the Crystal Ball (Committee) sees for our Fellowship's future. ⊕

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