

Over 600 of all ages came to Ottawa

Mary Bennett



Photo: Oryst Deneka

L-R Jane Perry, Music; Amy McRobert, Hospitality & Social Events, Pat Hill, Treasurer; Elizabeth Bowen, Chair; Carol Anne Deneka, Communications; Arthur Palmer, Exhibits; Joan Hill, Hospitality and Social Events, Joan Auden, Ingathering. Missing from photo: Heidi Anderson, Secretary; Alex Campbell, Worship; Joe Connor, Transportation; Meg Gourlay, Sound; David Hudson, Banner Parade; Marina Jones (UUFO), Registration; Susan McEwen, Lifespan Learning and Audrey O'Callaghan, UUFO Liaison.

With CUC Past President, Elizabeth Bowen, at the helm, Ottawa pulled out all stops to host the largest Annual Conference & Meeting ever. Indeed, after we almost hit 500 participants in Vancouver, I had hoped we'd do it in Ottawa. Final figures, however, showed well over 600, not counting the additional volunteers and presenters who came to share their gifts and locals who attended open events.

There were more people attending CanU-Udle, the annual youth conference, than

attended the whole conference last time Ottawa hosted in 1993.

The planning began in earnest at ACM 2007, where a large team from Ottawa attended the Vancouver conference, with their roles firmly in mind. They met to share their impressions and identify areas where they wanted to do things differently.

Several key areas were the creation of a "Meeting Place" where volunteers could offer help on anything from local bus routes, to restaurants to lost and >

only once in a while

BY MURIEL FORD

Today
I feel the earth tilt
My being expands
And clear air flows
through my crystal skull
This body admits no outer skin
and I absorb the far fields
Strangers I embrace with calm
My understanding extends
to the horizon

Muriel became a member of First Unitarian Congregation Church of Toronto in the sixties and in that decade served a term on the Board. She identifies herself as a Unitarian mystic and during her forty years of meditating has experienced some supra-normal states. In 2005 two of her haiga (haiku plus painting) were published in "Reeds", a US haiga journal, one of which was exhibited in Romania.

Please send short poetry submissions with a bio, to poetry editor Janet Vickers, 34992 Bernina Court, Abbotsford BC V3G 1C2, poetry@cuc.ca

UNITARIAN

<http://cuc.ca/canu>

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The *Canadian Unitarian* is the newsletter of the Canadian Unitarian Council. It's mailed free to all members for whom the CUC has a current address.* The *Unitarian* reports on newsworthy events in the denomination, including the annual conference each spring. It attempts to reflect all segments of Unitarianism and Universalism in Canada. We welcome all submissions; however, publication is based on the criteria of newsworthiness, relevance to readers, length and balance. We try to publish all letters to the editor, although they may be edited for brevity and clarity.

* Non-members can subscribe to the *Unitarian* for \$15 CDN or \$10 US. Send name, address and cheque to CUC office.

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> found; integrating kids and youth more into the overall conference and especially the large events like the ingathering; and having more music than ever before.

And they just kept "raising the bar" from that moment on.



The UU Fellowship of Ottawa took on registration and had volunteers at the Algonquin site throughout the weekend welcoming people and answering hundreds of questions.



Rev. Wendy Luella Perkins and Gordon Darvall, co-creators, brought their production "Just Food" –and performers from Kingston Unitarian Fellowship–to participants at the multigenerational lunch on Sunday.



David Hudson coordinated the Banner Parade.



Suzanne Hansen and David Belrose (right) of Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship receive the container of soil of past ACM's from CUC President Jean Pfeleiderer, as Chuck Shields from Ottawa First looks on. Soil was added from Ottawa First's meditation garden. Photo by Tony Smith

Generosity abounds

The host congregation recommends to the CUC board recipients for the Sunday offering and the Empty Bowls donations.

Over \$6,700 was given at the ACM Sunday Service, to the benefit of Child Haven International and L'abri en Ville of Ottawa. These two organizations help vulnerable individuals—providing women and children in India, Nepal, Tibet and Bangladesh with food, education, health care, shelter, clothing, emotional and moral support, and providing people with serious mental illness in Ottawa with long-term housing and support. <http://www.childhaven.ca>
<http://www.labrienville.org>

This year, Empty Bowls gifts totalled over \$4,000 which will be shared between the Ottawa Food Bank and the School Breakfast Program in Ottawa—again, supporting those who are most vulnerable.

<http://www.theottawafoodbank.ca>
<http://www.ocri.ca/schoolbreakfastprogram>

Sharing Our Faith

Congregations hold Sharing Our Faith services, usually in the first few months of the year. The funds donated are then distributed back to congrega-



The bowls were on display in the market until the swap at the Multigenerational Lunch on Saturday. Photo: Nancy Strider

tions for projects they might otherwise not be able to undertake, to enhance ministry, growth and/or outreach for that congregation and for the Unitarian and Universalist movement in Canada.

A total of \$11,630 Sharing Our Faith grants were awarded to:

- Elora and Fergus Unitarian Church (Ontario): \$2,000 to support a Religious Exploration Coordinator position
- Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley (Quebec): \$2,500 to help create an R.E. program
- Unitarian Church of Calgary (Alberta): \$3,130 to support a Youth Programs Coordinator position
- Lower Mainland Unitarian Universalist Congregations of Greater Vancouver (administered by Beacon Unitarian Church, BC): \$4,000 to support a publicity/awareness campaign

Supporting Theological Education by Rev Debra Faulk, Chair, Theological Education Committee

The CUC is pleased to announce the recipients of bursaries from the Theological Education Fund.

- Vivianne LaRiviere, Neighbourhood Congregation, Toronto, Emmanuel College of Victoria University and Toronto School of Theology
- Debra Thorne, Unitarian Church of Vancouver, BC, Modified Residency Program at Meadville Lombard School for Ministry, Chicago

The Theological Education Fund consists of transfers from the income of the Percy Simpson Bailey Trust and Toronto First's Rouff-MacKie-Jenkins Trust as well as collections taken at services of ordination and installation of ministers.

Disbursements are made in support of theological education, particularly in the form of cash grants to students.

More information at <http://cuc.ca/funding/>

Bushwhacking and Back catching

Mary Bennett *CUC Executive Director*

When asked what I do as executive director, I sometimes summarize it as “communication and administration.”



My job description (available on the web) lays out some areas of responsibility such as: human resources and organizational development; financial planning and fundraising; communica-

tions, ACM planning, lay chaplaincy, social responsibility and international connections.

Most of this, however, is done through others—a small staff and many volunteers who work with CUC staff or directly with myself.

For the ACM alone, I estimate that there were well over 100 volunteers involved in planning, communications, presentations and events.

At this time of year, many volunteers readjust their commitments, leaving vacancies. Sometimes, staff step in as “backcatchers” for the short-term, keeping things going while augmenting the team with new volunteers.

My job also involves “bushwhacking”. More formally stated, it's referred to in the job description as “Research and nurture new or special projects.”

This past church year, bushwhacking has resulted in a range of teleseminars being part of our regular services to congregations and a new Regional Shared Ministry Team structure that we hope will mean additional capacity to provide workshops and consultations.

If the direction seems a good one, I'm often the trail blazer for only a short period of time. Other staff and volunteers take the lead and I go back to backcatching!

If you're ready to consider regional or national service, look through the opportunities at http://cuc.ca/whos_who/volunteer_opportunities.htm

Board

Ron Bulmer, CUC Board Secretary

Governance as a Spiritual Practice

When is Board work a spiritual practice for me and how does our Policy Governance (PG) model help me find those moments?

Often spiritual moments for me are associated with some experience of mastery. When I'm around people demonstrating excellence in their work, I become immersed in the beauty of their craft. Usually this work is the product of sustained rigour. The PG model (www.policygovernance.com) certainly qualifies as a governance tool which demands rigour. No one dismisses the clarity of Carver's theory. The challenges arise in the implementation....not unlike living out our UU values, eh? There are few Boards in the community which use such a wholistic, systematic approach to policy creation. Being a new experience to most, this leads to a demanding learning curve of study and practice.

It is my understanding that about ten years ago, the Board adopted the model



in the hopes of using a more consistent process of governance which would better clarify their role and deliver improved results. Looking ahead at my own experience, I believe that when member congregations experience those results, I will get that spiritual feeling.

My hopes for the PG model remind

me of when I bought a franchise years ago. It was well-worth the investment to gain access to a system which, when followed, could deliver consistent value. The best franchisors continue to solicit the wisdom of their franchisees and embed it in policy and procedure – further increasing their ability to deliver.

Our Board aspires to Carver's intent for all boards: "to lead, to be spokespersons for meaningful values, to model bigness of spirit, to be a powerful representative of your ownership, and ultimately to see that tomorrow is created in a better image." Delivering on this intent, replicating value in our non-creedal experience, focusing on results that matter, imbedding our collective wisdom in a well-aligned process as we move towards excellence in all that we do; yes, these promise to create more of those special moments that I find spiritual.



As no open flames were allowed, worship coordinator, Alex Campbell at the request of retiring board member, Rev. Katie Stein Sather, provided a bouquet of red and orange tulips to "light" the chalice. At the new board installation ceremony, each board member was given a tulip. Left to right, Peter Scales, Victoria; Jan Greenwood, Kamloops; John "Mich" Michell, Calgary; Sean Neil Barron, Youth Observer to the Board; Jean Armstrong, Portage La Prairie; Rev. Christine Hillman, Olinda; Calvin Drake, Toronto; Jean Pfeiderer, Kingston and Ron Bulmer, Halifax. Photographer: Tony Smith

I actually enjoyed that!

Jean Pfleiderer *CUC President*

The man who said those words to me had a look of incredulity on his face. He had come to our recent ACM in Ottawa as a delegate from his congregation. While others attended workshops with fascinating titles, he prepared to do his duty and attend the three hour-and-a-half sessions of the annual business meeting of the CUC. He did not expect to enjoy it.

But why not? Our Council meeting is a time to recognize new Welcoming Congregations and announce Sharing Our Faith grants; it is a time for lively presentations by task forces. It can also be a time for clear articulation of positions and plans, with a vote that is a capstone on a significant period of review and debate. If we are doing our work well, each of us in our congregations, all year long, the annual meeting ought to be a highlight, a celebration, a time to enjoy.

To be fully engaged in a truly democratic process, don't we need to share our ideas for national policies and positions with each other over time? To discuss and debate in our congregations and on our discussion lists right across this land? The formal and time-limited confines of the yearly annual business meeting can't possibly provide a sufficient forum for all the rough-and-tumble of debate that leads to good decisions. They work better as the moments when we bring closure to debate, at the end of a decision-making process that has been fully engaged long before the ACM. When that happens, of course

we leave the meeting room buoyed by community, honestly exclaiming, "I actually enjoyed that!"



photo by Tony Smith

Their Fathers' Daughters

Rev. Phillip Hewett



Lucy (13), Zoe (14) and Alyson Schafer, daughter of Dick Knight, attended the Sunday banquet to hear the tribute from Rev. Charles Eddis in honour of her father. With Alyson's husband, Ken, they are members of Toronto First. Lucy and Zoe are 5th generation Unitarians. Picture by Oryst Deneka

A feature of the Sunday evening dinner at the ACM is the annual presentation of the Knight Award, set up in memory of Victor and Nancy Knight and given to persons who, like them, have made an outstanding contribution to our national movement in Canada over the years. This is normally a joyful celebration, but sadly, that was not the case this year.

Selection of the recipient of the award is made by the previous recipients serving as a committee and making a choice from the suggestions that have come in from various sources. Following this process, the name of Stan Calder was nominated for this year's award. However, during the time between the nomination and the actual presentation, Stan suddenly and unexpectedly died. Although the policy has been not to nominate a person posthumously, the special circumstances in this situation indicated that the award should proceed, and that Stan's daughter Kim should receive the certificate on his behalf.

Scarcely had this decision been made when news came of the equally sudden and unexpected death of Dick Knight, son of Victor and Nancy and one of the inaugurators of the award. So the proceedings at the dinner began with a memorial tribute to Dick by Charles Eddis, who served with Dick and his sister

Bunny Turner on the first CUC board in 1961, to which Dick's daughter Alyson responded.



John Slattery (2007), Bernie Keeler (2002) and Phillip Hewett (1995) present the Knight Award certificate to Kim Calder, daughter of Stan Calder.

Background and more information at: http://cuc.ca/who_we_are/knight_award.htm

From the pulpit

Rev. Dr. Janet Newman

As Canadian as Possible ... Under the Circumstances

This sermon title comes from a contest that the late Peter Gzowski conducted for CBC radio years ago. He asked listeners to fill in the blank, "As Canadian as...." This title is the winning entry.

During the past two years I have been serving as Interim Minister to two first Unitarian congregations, Toronto and now Ottawa. As soon as I moved here, I found that I had serious identity questions.

Might I call myself a hyphenated "Canadian-American?" My parents were born here and moved to the states, so I have U.S. citizenship by birth. My forebears are all Canadian, so I have deep roots here.

When I moved to Toronto in August, 2006, I had to face the great differences in culture between my two countries. My mantra, "As Canadian as Possible...", helped.

I WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ALL THINGS CANADIAN, AND I WANTED TO BE ONE

I wanted to know more about all things Canadian, and I wanted to be one. Who were these Canadians, my people, anyway? In books, I found very little agreement on what constitutes Canadian identity.

I learned that it is not easy to articulate the Canadian identity, but it is a country that can supply a role model to the rest of the world. The example: "How do you get 25 Canadians out of the pool? You say, 'Please get out of the pool.'"

I interviewed congregants for my research, and here is a story from the conversations: A family moves from Canada to the states, and after little Susan's first day in grade 1, the mother asks, "Susie, did you say prayers in school?" Susie replies, "No, Mummy, they don't believe in God. They believe in the flag."

These comments made me think of



Rev. Frances Deverell, Ottawa Fellowship; Rev. Shawn Newton, Toronto First; Rev. Carole Martignacco, North Hatley and Rev. Kathy Sage, Kingston represented the UU Ministers of Canada during the Sunday worship service. For the list of ministerial transitions recognized, go to: <http://cuc.ca/ministry/>

the contrast, not only between the two countries, but also between the identities of Unitarian Universalism in the two cultures.

I have observed, when guiding congregations through Interim Ministry, that some congregants, upon seeing that many of the resources that we Interim Ministers use come from the UUA, assume that the materials have little or no relevance to Canadian congregations.

I suggest that all of us, when thinking of American UU's and the resources they offer, let S-I-Z-E lead our attitude. I don't mean the size of Canada, vast though it is. I mean size as a concept developed by liberal theologian Bernard Loomer. He writes:

"By S-I-Z-E, I mean the capacity of a person's soul, the range and depth of his love, her capacity for relationships..."

I mean the volume of life you can take into your being and still maintain your integrity and individuality, the intensity and variety of outlook you can entertain in the unity of your being without feeling

defensive or insecure...."

Loomer says our S-I-Z-E is determined by our ability to encourage others to continue in their diversity and uniqueness. Yes, this means they will do and say things that we may not agree with, but our larger size allows that kind of complex tension to exist, as it does between Canadian and American UU's.

It seems to me that despite the differences in our cultures, our Unitarian Universalist principles and sources hold us in everlasting relationship with one another. In our larger size, we celebrate our principles' common language of inspiration and struggle. We partake freely of the resources that are created on both sides of the border. We look at one another without defensiveness.

I am a Unitarian Universalist among my people. That is all I need to know for the present.

As the Quakers say, let us proceed, friends, as the way opens before us.

Can Eco-Spirituality Grow Eco-Justice?

This year, the Confluence lecture sponsored by the UU Ministers of Canada featured co-presenters. Rev. Meg Roberts of Calgary and Rev. Brian Kiely of Edmonton found their topic, “Can Eco-Spirituality Grow Eco-Justice?” warranted more than one point of view.

Seeking a religious approach to environmental concerns, both speakers shared their doubts and fears. Is the human impact on climate change real? If there is something we can do, can we as a society shed our consumerist addictions enough to make a real impact?

Rev. Kiely argued that we won't voluntarily give up our destructive ways, and that the developing world wants to rise to our level of consumerism. “I feel trapped by my social environment... How do you lessen your footprint when no one else is doing it?” The planet cannot sustain that. He believes that we will have to survive a collapse that will cripple the environment and fracture all of our human systems: economic, health, government etc. In the face of that, how can one avoid despair?

In trying to answer the despair, Rev. Roberts described the powerful personal experiences that led to meaningful revelations. For her, a solution comes from centering herself in eco-spirituality. “I use the term ‘eco-spirituality’ to mean those intentional practices that awaken awareness of our connection to the eco-

system. As our understanding of these connections grow so does our desire to act out of that understanding.”

But alone, eco-spirituality is self-centred. For completion, it needs action. “Eco-justice recognizes the rights of both non-human and human parts of the living community; we depend on one another for survival within the food chain ... If we do not care for other parts of the web, we humans will face huge losses in our species, while the cockroaches will thrive. Our understanding of justice must now include the other elements of this ecological system.”

Together they form a cycle where eco-spirituality transforms the idea of the interdependent web into an embodied understanding, an understanding that inspires eco-justice actions grounded in reality, and continued action for eco-justice brings grounding.

For Kiely and Roberts the solution for Unitarians lies not only in the marriage of eco-spirituality and eco-justice, but in a complete paradigm shift.

“We humans need to recognize that we are part of the earth community, not masters of an Empire. How we choose to act must be based on this shift in our understanding. There is a bigger community than just humans. If our paradigm becomes about an earth community that is interrelated and interdependent, then we can build relationships in new, just and harmonious ways... We believe that Unitarians have to be part of leading a shift in paradigms and a change in consciousness regarding the nature of the reality in which we exist.”

Unitarians have embraced paradigm shifts in the past. In the last century we have become a church that has become more inclusive of women, GBLT persons and have seriously looked at racism issues.

Roberts and Kiely speculated on what's needed for a paradigm shift. It

began with the creation of the seventh Principle in 1984. What would happen if we made the seventh Principle the first and then reinterpreted the rest within that framework? We would expand our affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of all persons to all beings. We would seek justice, equity and compassion for all creation, and so on.

Kiely and Roberts concluded, “The streams of thought you have witnessed today are our initial offerings, ways of the future. No one of us has all the good ideas. No one person can create the solution or make the changes alone. We have to do it together. That is the way of the future. That's what we tried to embody here today. We look forward to the confluence of the streams of your ideas and practices with ours.”

“An Unexpected Confluence”

While Roberts and Kiely were thinking about a paradigm shift, the Statement of Principles Task Force had received feedback indicating that Canadian UUs are increasingly concerned about the environment. On the Saturday of the ACM, Roberts, Kiely and the Task Force members were all surprised to discover that one expression of this concern--the suggestion that the principles be reordered, to emphasize ‘the interdependent web of life of which we are a part’--had been independently raised by Canadian UUs in their workshop feedback, and developed by the Confluence lecturers.

The past six years' of Confluence Lectures can be found at:
<http://cuc.ca/ministry/>



Mark Mosher DeWolfe lecture

Rev. Phillip Hewett

An Unexpected Rescuer



CANADIAN UNITARIAN AND UNIVERSALIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Rev. Phillip Hewett, Minister Emeritus of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, delivered the Historical Society lecture at the ACM 2008.

Much will no doubt be heard about Charles Darwin next year, marking as it does both the bicentenary of his birth and the sesquicentennial of the publication of his epoch-making book *The Origin of Species*. In the chorus of condemnation of that book's thesis of evolution by natural selection, Canada's leading scientists unanimously joined. Among them was the Rev. William Hincks, professor of natural history at the University of Toronto, a Unitarian with a distinguished career in the ministry and in teaching behind him.

Hincks was the subject for this year's Mark DeWolfe Lecture at the annual meeting of the Historical Society, given by Rev. Phillip Hewett. His impact upon nineteenth-century Unitarian thinking in this country was probably second only to that of John Corder in Montreal, and similarly directed prevailing attitudes towards the conservative end

of the Unitarian spectrum, where they remained right down to the time of the Second World War. This conservatism reflected Hincks's natural temperament. It made him comfortable within the Unitarian movement, whereas his views would have made him an uncomfortable radical in any other denomination.

He owed his Toronto appointment to his Unitarian brother, Francis Hincks, who was at that time Premier of pre-Confederation Canada. Francis, like many other Canadian politicians, did not hesitate to use his position to promote the interests of family and friends. Though William was then in his 60th year, he held his professorship for the next eighteen years. Furthermore, since the Unitarian congregation had lost its minister and had been unable to find a successor, he filled the pulpit without charge for his first four years in the city and remained an active member for the rest of his life.

The appointment of a man whose primary career had been in the ministry as a professor of science would not have seemed odd at that time. It was in fact quite usual. The seventeenth-century founder of modern biology, the Rev. John Ray, had laid down his program in his book *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation*. Hincks was a many-sided scholar, publishing papers not only on botanical research, but also on zoology, palaeontology, philosophy and even economics, as well as theology. In the latter, he held a position that most Unitarians of his day had outgrown, seeing religion as essentially the acceptance of a revelation entrusted by God to a human Jesus.

Hincks's reasons for rejecting Darwin's theory echoed the general feeling that he was violating accepted scientific procedures by indulging in speculations beyond what the evidence would support. An additional reason was that Hincks had developed his own theory about the nature of species, which he regarded as permanently fixed by the Creator, however much variety might exist within those fixed boundaries. But in his final presidential address to the Canadian Institute, he acknowledged the pain he would feel "if my reason compelled me to adopt the Darwinian hypothesis.... I do not accept this as any reason for not fairly examining the evidence, since ... nothing can more dignify a frail mortal than the earnest, disinterested, unprejudiced pursuit of truth, on as many subjects as possible, even to the latest period of life."

The complete lecture is sent to all members of the Society. To join, send \$10 to secretary, Christine Johnston at christine_johnston@telus.net. Past lectures are available at \$5 each.

Karen Stevenson

Web of Life—Let's handle with care

This was my first visit to Ottawa, my first ACM as a delegate, and my first ACM as a member of the Environment Monitoring Group. What an experience! My impressions of the conference are varied and enriched by the workshops, the lectures, and the people I met – all working in special ways to live our connection to the 'Web of Life'.

What did I take away from that weekend?

First, Alex Campbell in his Ingathering homily encouraged us to consider bringing a spiritual attitude to our environmental actions. I was inspired and renewed by the Confluence Lecture. We were reminded that this is an issue that asks us to look deep to our UU roots.

Other speakers and participants, individually or collectively, are already taking on this work.

Many have for years seen the need and worked toward action but many of us are anxious to start making a difference. People like Fiona Heath of Waterloo helped us connect living our principles with voluntary simplicity. The discussion focused on our need to re-orient ourselves toward more spiritual, emotional and community building activities. Hilary Craig from Regina talked of seeing a need in her community, stepping up and now taking her message to high schools. I spent time with Rev. Wendy McNiven fine-tuning our Sustaining Wonder workshop and sharing what was important to us. Thanks to Kate Green of the USC office, 75 of us viewed a screening of Hijacked Future that warns of the immediate need to ensure a more open, accessible and secure seed supply. In all there were ten sessions that dealt with environmental issues.

On Sunday afternoon Margaret Insley of the Environmental Monitoring Group facilitated at the Environment Table at the World Café. This was a fun multigen-

erational event where young and old discussed their main concerns or fears. Discussion focused on actions which can move us in the direction of a sustainable path, including positive actions which we see happening right now.

What did I gain personally? Have I said I was inspired?

All the conversations, the talks and reflections highlighted the tension between hope and despair, apathy and action, motivation and inertia in all of us, sometime in our lives. I came away with renewed vigor and renewed hope.

So what are the next steps? What can we do?

I learned that there is so much action and activity happening. All this needs to be shared with the rest of us to encourage and support our own efforts. Join the CUC Environment Discussion group and share your success. We also need to share our frustrations and despair – we can't move forward without our supporting each other. What can you do as a member of a congregation? Support and encourage environmental initiatives. My own congregation, the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, is embarking on the Green Sanctuary process. There is much to be done but so many willing people.

At the CUC level? The resolution to strengthen the 1999 CUC Environment Resolution generated discussion and the Environment Monitoring Group now has a clear mandate for action on redrafting and gathering input from congregations. Actively support the Environment Committee when we start the study groups. We will be sending out information and



Alex Campbell, Worship Coordinator, delivered an inspiring homily on the theme on Friday night. Here he is seen as worship associate at the Sunday morning service. As well as these "from the pulpit" contributions, Alex coordinated planning of all the worship services and his efforts ran from planning meetings to checking with the coordinators of all the worship services and sometimes providing hymn books and tulips on request.

Photo credit: Tony Smith

asking for feedback this fall and we are anticipating great responses!

I'm going to close borrowing words from Paul Hawken who wrote "Blessed Unrest":

If you look at the science that describes what is happening on earth today and aren't pessimistic, you don't have the correct data. If you meet the people in this unnamed movement and aren't optimistic, you haven't got a heart. Let's take heart and roll up our sleeves.

Karen is working on her Masters in Environmental Education and Communication at Royal Roads University, Victoria, B.C.
www.sustainingwonder.ca See http://cuc.ca/social_responsibility/environment/ for links and information

ACM Keynote Speech

Jo-Anne Elder Gomes

Practising Self-Inclusion in the Web of Life

“How we let life affect us is in our hands. We daily must make decisions about who we are on the web of life. The spider or the fly. The victor or the victim.”

Allison Brewer and Will Brewer “have sometimes been pushed, if not off the grid altogether, certainly to the outer fringes of what some might consider the Web of Life.”

Allison, a second-generation Unitarian, and Will, her son, spoke about challenging the mainstream and their experience at the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton, which Allison says “accepted us without condition and embraced my family as a valued dynamic.” It was, “ironically, a godsend”.

Speaking on International Day Against Homophobia, Allison recognized those “who because they live where homophobia rules are not able to publicly proclaim their sexual orientation.” She encouraged all to look at the broader “picture that is a veritable family album of music, art, literature, politics, reproductive choices, and on and on . . . As lesbians we have been at the forefront of the women’s movement, we are active in politics and have made contributions in all aspects of academia, science, art, music and religion. We are everywhere, a vital and intricate part of the web of life. So are our brothers.”

Will introduced himself this way: “Hello/Bonjour tout le monde. My name is Will. I am 22 years old and I was born with Down syndrome. But that’s not all that’s different about me. I was born and raised with two mothers, Allison and Arlene. They raised me to be what I am today. I am someone who wants to live in a society free from racism, sexism, homophobia and discrimination against people with disabilities.”

“When people see me they see someone else but I’m not the person they think I am. When I was born they said

I would never read or write or finish high school. But guess what? I did all those things and I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak to you here today.”

Allison recognizes that Will, his sister Anna and his brother Oliver “had interesting experiences growing up with two mothers... As a family, we have routinely faced and stared down discrimination.” In Grade 3, Anna drew fire from the school for writing this passage in a book about herself: “The two adults I admire are my moms. They’re gay and they don’t feel badly about it and right now they’re fighting [Fredericton Mayor] Brad Woodside because he won’t declare Gay Pride Week. I know a lot of people don’t like gay people, but I don’t really see what’s wrong with being gay.”

Language can contribute to discrimination. A front-page article in the *Globe & Mail* described an individual as “suffering” from Down syndrome. “If anyone suffers from the condition,” sug-

gested Allison, “it’s probably those who can’t see beyond the “dis” in disability.”

Will doesn’t see himself as disabled, although he acknowledges his circumstances are “outside the norm.” Allison has always told Will that he is gifted.

And his gifts were displayed in full colour as he delivered his keynote talk. Warm and witty, eloquent and passionately engaged, Will described how the loving support of those around him, his positive attitude and his enjoyment of working with people encourage him to get involved in community projects. He has been the representative for youth with disabilities on the NB-NDP provincial council and organizes a Run for the Cure team called the Team Ups & Downs. He practices “self-inclusion” as a volunteer with the Latino Society of NB, the NB Multiculturalism Association, the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival, NB Association for Community Living and Big Hearts For the Homeless in support of the Fredericton Homeless Shelters.

We were inspired to think a little more deeply and a little differently about our conference theme, to extend our social justice initiatives to those with different gifts. Having taken the web of life into their hands, their words spoke volumes to the power of individual and collective action.

Allison Brewer watches with pride as Will Brewer delivers his portion of the keynote speech on Saturday morning at the CUC ACM.



My Last CanUUdle Ever

Christine Michell



Five years is a quarter of my life so far, which feels about right given the impact these years have had on who I am. Six CanUUdle youth conferences, and five years of UU youth community, UU youth leadership, UU youth conferences, and friendships with amazing UU youth have left an incredible imprint on me.

The Rare Sighting of Five “Generations” of CanUUdle Co-Deans, from left to right: Sanford Kome-Pond (Edmonton, 2004), Chris Michell (Hamilton, 2005), Paul Hunt (Saint John, 2006), Annelise Iverson (Vancouver, 2007), Mado Boyes-Manseau and Sean Barron (Ottawa, 2008).

My first youth con (my first UU experience outside my congregation, UCCal-gary) was CanUUdle III in 2003, and it changed my life. I was astounded by how completely each of us were accepted and welcomed, exactly as we were, for who we were. It is an amazing thing for a 15 year old to feel unconditionally loved and accepted by 80 people, and I never wanted it to end!

No matter how many conferences and events I have planned or attended, regionally, nationally, or continentally, CanUUdle has always stood out for me: the weekend I looked forward to all year. There is just something so special, and magical about CanUUdle that just can't be found anywhere else. So while it breaks my heart to realize CanUUdle VIII was my last youth con (I turn 21 in September), I'm glad I could finish with a CanUUdle.



The transitions ceremony on Sunday evening consisted of Coming of Age junior youth joining the youth community; youth of bridging age (18-20) joining the young adults network. Here the Young Adults group waits on the stage for the CanUUdlers to join them. Left to Right: Kirsten McKeown, Scotia Buchan, Joel Fox, Asha Philar, Robbie Brydon, Valerie Cobb-Friesen and Devin Murphy.

The World Café

Anneke Elder-Gomes
Junior Youth Program

I thought the World Café was awesome because I love talking to people about subjects that are really important. It was really easy to tell people what I really thought about everything. It was nice to talk about something I really cared about, like drugs, or homophobia, or diversity. The things we talked about and the way we talked about them aren't the same as talking to your friends at school about it. People at school won't really listen the way people at World Café would. I think anyone should try it. It's nice to talk about the things that really matter.

Lifespan Learning

Sylvia Bass West

We – and Many Others – Make it a Family Affair

My journey as a program staff member with the CUC began with big happy dreams which included a vision of developing and nurturing whole, multigenerational communities. I had real confidence in us. I knew we could not only deliver religious education services, but thrive and shine in our own light of lifespan learning.

It thrills me to no end that for several years now, our CUC annual conference and meeting has had over a quarter of the attendees connected to intentional, purposeful children's, junior youth, youth and young adult programming. It is a testament to our success. Coast to coast, in all four regions, we now have many "conference families" and that to me is so exciting. And mine is one of them.

LITTLE IN LIFE HAS BROUGHT ME GREATER JOY THAN HAS MY JOURNEY WITH MY CHILDREN, JESSIE AND MICHAEL.

Little in life has brought me greater joy than has my journey with my children, Jessie and Michael. They are such mature, caring young adults – very full of love. The benefits I see from their early and regular interaction within their faith community are many – their dedication to service, their being in right relation with peers and elders and the kindness and compassion they bring into their everyday interactions and their leadership. They both live their lives with personal integrity in a way that makes me forever awed and grateful.

Since they grew up UU kids and with incredible extended family support, it's hard to judge if they would have developed the same values if they had not been "U*U churchd". I'm quite sure that our faith helped bring them into



Jessie, Bruce, Michael and Sylvia Bass West – a UU Family.

knowing themselves in a way nothing else could have.

I believe our Unitarian Universalist faith helped them, just as it helps me, on a lifelong path of becoming whole and that they will carry the values they've claimed, grounded in an ethical and well balanced life, into their relationships, vocations and communities.

THE UU COMMUNITY HAS HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON MY LIFE, AS I KNOW IT HAS ON OTHERS.

Jessie participated at the Hamilton and Ottawa Annual Conferences as a junior youth leader. Michael was in Vancouver 2007 as a junior youth leader. It was such a natural fit for each. Jess had been a teacher and RE counselor at Unicamp as a teenager, and is now a junior/intermediate trained teacher. Michael

has been a leader in his school community and has worked for three summers as a leadership camp counselor with grade 7 and 8 students. It made my heart happy to have them there, contributing to community with me.

The UU community has had a profound impact on my life, as I know it has on others. I encourage you to take a moment to consider, when opportunities present, how your family might benefit from engagement as participants, or leaders, at CUC events.

Make it a family affair! May you continue to build wonderful memories together.

Sylvia Bass West has served as CUC's Director of Lifespan Learning from 2002 to 2008. You will find much of her legacy posted at <http://cuc.ca/lifespan>

Une série de réussites lors des Rencontres 2008

De 5 à 20 personnes ont assisté à chacun des 5 ateliers en français lors des Rencontres 2008 du CUC. De plus, les célébrations et les cérémonies ont intégré de nombreux éléments français. Par exemple, la chanson-thème des Rencontres, composée et chantée par Tony Turner, a été traduite par Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower.

L'organisation du programme a permis aux francophones de choisir une activité en français ou bilingue pour la presque totalité des séances concurrentes, où un choix d'ateliers était offerts à environ 500 adultes, plus de 100 ados et une cinquantaine d'enfants. Nous avons marqué plusieurs buts : d'abord, c'est la plus grande participation de l'histoire du CUC, ensuite, c'est la première fois qu'une telle présence de la langue française se fait sentir. Il faut reconnaître que cela ne se fasse pas sans quelques

Les Cloutier-Vetter, une famille de l'église Ottawa First, allume la « flamme » de la calice. (En fait, il s'agit d'une chandelle électrique à cause des règlements de protection contre les incendies.)



défis, mais la porte est désormais ouverte pour d'autres changements qui verront le jour, selon les intérêts et l'énergie des individus et des groupes. (Rappelons que l'invitation à animer un atelier ou une séance de pratique spirituelle aux Rencontres annuelles est affichée sur le site Web du CUC chaque automne.)

La première séance de la fin de semaine était un atelier sur les Groupes de Croissance spirituelle (GCS), qui correspondent aux Small Ministry Groups (SMG). Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower, qui a suivi une formation sur l'organisation et l'animation des groupes SMG, co-animait l'atelier avec Elaine Hartman. Un programme complet, obtenu de ses formateurs par Lucie-Marie, a été traduit en français par Janine Laurencin, qui est, elle aussi, membre du rassemblement Unitarien Universaliste d'Ottawa.

Cet atelier offrait non seulement des

informations pratiques sur le déroulement de GCS, mais aussi une occasion d'en faire l'expérience... un moment tout à fait privilégié, qui a permis aux personnes réunies pour la série d'ateliers français de se connaître sur un tout autre plan que ce que permettent des échanges électroniques.

D'autres ateliers ont offert aux participantes et aux participants la possibilité de partager des ressources aussi utiles qu'essentielles. Hannelore Poncelet et Elizabeth McKinney Charbonneau ont discuté d'un programme d'éducation religieuse pour les enfants francophones, et Maurice Cabana-Proulx et Jean-Claude Barbier ont partagé des ressources imprimées et audio-visuelles UU en langue française.

Les participantes et participants ont exprimé leur vive appréciation de ces activités, et pensent que l'enthousiasme pour de telles initiatives à l'avenir est assuré.

La mouvance unitarienne a fait un grand pas

Le 18 mai 2008, lors de la réception de l'International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) aux Rencontres annuelles, Hannelore Poncelet (présidente du Mouvement unitarien universaliste au Québec) et Jean-Claude Barbier (de l'Assemblée fraternelle des chrétiens unitariens, en France) ont lu les versions française et anglaise de l'Appel francophone d'Ottawa.

Les signataires de l'Appel soulignent l'importance de la diversité linguistique et culturelle au sein de l'ICUU. Les Francophones sont invités à organiser des réseaux et à participer à des activités afin de se connaître et de s'entraider. Il y a des unitariens francophones dans plusieurs pays et régions du monde (France; Wallonie; Suisse romande; Burundi; Brazzaville et Kinshasha au Congo; Togo) ainsi qu'au Canada, mais peu ont accès à des églises ou à des cultes dominicales.

Rappelons qu'une entente de coopération a été établie en juin 2006 entre le Regroupement francophone unitarien universaliste (RFUU) et les associations chrétiennes unitariennes (AFCU, ACUB, ACUC). D'ailleurs, l'ACFU est reconnue comme groupe en émergence par l'ICUU depuis 2006.

Les auteurs proposent également de suivre l'exemple des Rencontres annuelles du CUC et d'élaborer des moyens pour accueillir la diversité linguistique et culturelle, en développant le multilinguisme à tous les niveaux. Ils envisagent, entre autres, de publier des actes des rencontres tenues en France, de lancer une Église unitarienne francophone virtuelle et d'entretenir des liens entre des Canadiens et des chrétiens africains qui s'intéressent aux pratiques spirituelles indigènes.



*Viens avec moi, dans ce cercle d'ami(e) s
Où jeunes et moins jeunes, où grands et petits
Chantent d'une seule voix, à travers leurs différences
Dans ce cercle d'ami(e) s, tous uni(e) s.*

Voir l'Appel d'Ottawa, versions en français et en anglais

<http://afcu.over-blog.org/categorie-10446540.html>

Voir l'Église unitarienne francophone sur le Web <http://eglise.unitarienne.francophone.over-blog.fr>

Circle of Song

Chris White, co-founder and artistic director of the Ottawa Folk Festival, sang at the open stage on Friday night and performed gathering music before the closing ceremonies. After Welcoming Congregation certificates were given to Toronto First, Neighbourhood, Niagara, and Peterborough, Chris led the group in Joyce Poley's song, One More Step. "I make my living singing at Annual General meetings – it's a niche market," he quipped.

Chris grew up in a very musical family who were involved in Unitarian circles, including singing at Unicamp. Rev. Frances Deverell officiated at his wedding to Mary Gick in 2003, and he has recently gotten involved in the UU Fellowship of Ottawa. His mother, Vivian White, of Don Heights and aunt and uncle, Dorothy and Bernie Keeler of UCEdmonton, are regular participants in CUC events.

Chris says, "I loved the atmosphere at the conference... there's nothing like spending time with 600 people who believe in human dignity and interconnectedness! I was very impressed with how hard the delegates worked discussing

serious matters and getting important things done during the day... and how much fun they had partying, dancing and singing together in the evening! I certainly enjoyed performing my songs to people who laughed and sang along so readily. And it was wonderful to see so many young people at the conference - that's definitely a positive sign for

I LOVED THE ATMOSPHERE AT THE CONFERENCE... THERE'S NOTHING LIKE SPENDING TIME WITH 600 PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN HUMAN DIGNITY AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS!



Chris White sings for 600, but especially for his wife, Mary Gick, far right, and mother, Vivian White, second from the right. Photo credits: Margaret L. Gourlay



the future! A special conference highlight for me was meeting John and Jeanette Morgan, as I very much admire their ongoing commitment to working for global peace and justice. All in all, a truly inspiring gathering!"



Ian Corlett of Don Heights conducts the group at the Music Leaders' Preconference Day. Photo by Nancy Strider



Ottawa First Music Director, Jane Perry, had the vision of "music everywhere". For the first time, congregational music leaders came together for a pre-conference event. Photo by Tony Smith



Sacred Circle dancing has become a tradition welcoming all ages after the Ingathering and for a concurrent session. Here Ellen Newman (in white) is leading the concurrent session. Photo by Nancy Strider

Vancouver Island Unitarian Camp – A Movable Feast

Joel Fox

It was the 1950s and '60s that saw the Campbell River, Powell River, Courtenay and District, Duncan, and Nanaimo fellowships come into being. This was largely due to the encouragement of Munroe Husbands from the American Unitarian Association. In the early '60s, these fellowships and the Victoria Church formed the Vancouver Island Unitarian Committee (VIUC), with Art Lionel of the Nanaimo Fellowship as the first Chairperson. The goal of the committee was to connect the various congregations on the island. Over the years, the group has been increasingly fruitful, sponsoring summer camps, spring conferences, and, more recently, an all-island worship service. The Victoria Church took a leadership role at first, but the smaller fellowships have since taken much more responsibility.

Over time, many things have changed. The Campbell River and Duncan Fellowships have dissolved, and Campbell River people come to the Comox Valley fellow-

ship (formerly Courtenay), which now shares space with a United Church. The Powell River fellowship is not a member of CUC and has not been heard from in several years. Victoria now hosts both the Victoria First Unitarian Church and the Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Salt Spring Island has given birth to a fellowship.

The timing of the camp has changed as well. Originally held on the Labour Day weekend, Friday evening to after lunch on Monday, the dates shifted in the late 1980s to July or August and ends after lunch on Sunday.

Blending UU values with our camp hosts has not always been an easy dance. The first camp was held in either 1962 or '63 at Camp Miriam on Gabriola Island. Then it was held at Camp Pringle on Shawnigan Lake. When the administration of Camp Pringle became uncomfortable with our UU presence, the camp moved to Glinz Lake, North

of Sooke, then the United Church camp on Nanoose Bay, and next to the Lions' and Kiwanis' camps on Lake Cowichan. From 1987-89, it was back to Shawnigan Lake, at the Easter Seal Camp. Then, in 1990, it travelled to the Bethlehem Retreat Centre in Nanaimo, before heading off in 1991 to the Torchbearer Bible School on Thetis Island. In 1995, it migrated once again to Shawnigan Lake, under Camp Pringle. It has remained there happily ever since.

The VIUC summer camp has been growing steadily in popularity, and even Unitarians from outside of the Island, such as Vancouver and Port Angeles, have participated.

Joel Fox (feeltheharmony@yahoo.ca) will be coordinating the youth program at VIUC camp this summer. The camp is August 8-10. Sharon Fulton (sfulton@telus.net) is responsible for promotion and can provide more information.

For more information on UU camps and conferences, check out http://cuc.ca/links/camps_conf.htm.



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Neighbourhood UU Congregation in Toronto sponsored a special journey to Peru last March. Twenty-six Unitarians visited one of the new seven wonders of the world - Machu Picchu.

Previous trips were to India and to New Mexico. In 2009, a trip is planned to Mystic Turkey. See www.nuuc.ca or call Beverly Carr 416-939-4007

Don Hauka

Eat, Pray, Laugh: A Metaphor for Sharing our Faith More Mirthfully.

If you want to get an idea of what the congregation of Beacon Unitarian Church is like, try imagining a three-headed combination of Isabel Bayrakdarian and David Suzuki with a touch of Tom Leher thrown in: in other words, a group of folks who love their music, are passionate about the environment and social justice, and who are also fond of laughter.

Beacon is a small, but vibrant, joyful, musical congregation that has been serving the Tri-Cities area of British Columbia's Lower Mainland for 25 years. The 100 or so members are renowned for their love of singing and instrumental music of all kinds (with a dose of comedy-theatre thrown in).

Beacon celebrated its silver anniversary, having been founded in 1983. Brian Mulroney was Prime Minister, Ronald Regan was president, gas was 43 cents a litre, The Loveboat was the number one TV show and the average house in Greater Vancouver cost \$75,000 when a small but determined band of Unitarian Universalists lit a small but bright flame of hope in a troubled time.

Since then, Beacon has had an impact

out of proportion to its size. They've been leaders in social responsibility issues like welfare reform, homelessness, same-sex marriage and are partners with the SHARE Society Food Bank in Coquitlam.

The congregants have also provided leadership on many levels. Our minister, Rev. Katie Stein Sather, has just finished a term on the CUC board of directors. Perhaps most notably, John Slattery, Beacon's first president, served on the CUC board for eight years (including two as president). He chaired the Commission on Services to Congregations that was part of the process that led to the CUC becoming the principal service provider to Canadian congregations. His extensive international experience includes eight years as a member of the Executive Committee of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists. He was one of two Canadian Unitarian delegates at the ICUU's founding meeting in 1995 and wrote the initial draft of its bylaws. And in 2007, John was honoured as the recipient of the Victor and Nancy Knight Living Tribute Award, given annually to someone who has made "a notable

contribution to the furthering of liberal religious principles in Canada." His nickname these days is "Sir John."

Beacon became a Welcoming Congregation in May 2004 by unanimous vote of the congregation. The fourth anniversary of that vote was recently celebrated and Beacon is proud to be part of the first region in Canada to have all of its congregations officially designated as welcoming.

Perhaps the best way to get to know Beacon, however, is to attend one of their concerts. Whether the Beacon Choir is singing or David Hamilton is playing the piano or Minor Groove, our jazz ensemble, is playing "Blue Bossa" or Strings and Chords is giving new life to classic songs like "Down by the Salley Gardens" – well, as the song goes, "How Can You Keep from singing?"

Beaconites are thrilled to be hosting the Regional Fall Gathering for the first time ever. It will be held at the main campus of Simon Fraser University on top of the hill in Burnaby Oct. 24-26. We're a small congregation with a big heart and a sense of humour. We can't promise you the moon or all the answers at RFG 2008, but we can promise you a fun, moving experience completely in character with the three-headed creature we love to call our congregation. Carry the flame to our place this fall – you won't regret it.

Don Hauka is President of Beacon and coordinator of the BC Publicity campaign which received support from the CUC's Sharing Our Faith fund. Don can be reached at ddclauka@shaw.ca.



Upcoming Events

Aug 22 – 24 OWL K-1; Grades 4-6
North Shore Unitarian
email: lsabourin@nsuc.ca

Sept. 12 – 14 OWL Grades 7-9; 10-12
Unitarian Church of Vancouver
email: carolinefarley@telus.net

Sept 26 – 28 Lay Chaplaincy "Basics"
First Unitarian Church of Victoria.
Email: lcc-west@cuc.ca

Nov 7 – 9 Weaving Our Worship
First Unitarian Church of Victoria.
Email: laura@cuc.ca

TELESEMINARS

Sept 25, Sept 29 & Oct. 2
Tele-seminar: Policy-Based Governance
8:30 – 9:30pm (EST) with Rev. Margaret Keip
1-605 475-6000 Access Code: 652658#

Sept 29 Introduction to Lay Chaplaincy
8:30 – 9:30pm (EST) 1-605-475-6000
Joy Silver and Meredith Simon
Access Code: 140519#

More events and details at:
www.cuc.ca/calendar.htm

Western Region

Suzanne Hansen

Homeschooling – Guided by Our Unitarian Universalist Principles

When one reveals an intention to homeschool, the responses are wide ranging. So it's wise to be really clear, confident and articulate about your motivations. I might easily list negative reasons to opt out of the school system for now, but it's much more empowering to consider the positive reasons.

I like short mission statements. They have the ability to immediately clarify a decision. We have done the 'visioning' part of the work, but haven't yet got the mission statement pulled together. Our goals are to raise competent and confident daughters, who believe that they and their individual passions are worthwhile. We encourage them to pursue their own paths to insight and to gather wisdom and experience in ways and time that respect their particular needs, skills and interests. We will model learning as a lifelong pleasure. We will be successful if we have created opportunities for them to explore the rich diversity of our world, helped them to understand that they are part of an incredible creation and that they have both the power and responsibility to act in a way that honours it. To have as much fun as possible while accomplishing all this is also part



of the vision!

There's a good chance that we'll never refine our homeschool mission statement to just a few words. Hanging on our kitchen wall, easily available for reference, is a poster of the children's version of the UU Principles. Linnea and Mila both figured out early that the ability to read can open up whole worlds to them and both spend a considerable amount of time reading. One afternoon, Linnea asked me to help her read the Principles poster and as we worked our way through the words, it dawned on me that our reasons for homeschooling are perfectly reflected there.

I like living what I call a 'coherent life' where my values are revealed through my actions across the spectrum of work or roles I undertake. I look to our Principles often for guidance because of their straightforward and clear articulation of my own values. Although I know it should be obvious that the best decisions I make in my life are those based solidly in those values, I acknowledge I did experience one of my 'Oh, Duh!' moments as I read through that poster with my daughter. There are many ways to homeschool. Approaches run the gamut from very structured to the very unstructured and there are many philosophies of learning. No matter how we decide to homeschool, our Unitarian Universalist Principles serve as a reminder to why we choose to do so. Those same Principles provide good guidance as our family heads out into the world to explore, have fun and learn together.

Western Regional Fall Gathering
Hosted by the
Unitarian Church of Calgary
October 17 - 19
Details at www.cuc.ca/calendar.htm



Adrian Muhajarine, facing the first task of the triwizard tournament, uses all his ingenuity and courage to get a dragon egg from a baby Welsh Green, played by three-year old Anthony James.

Just the Ticket

Liz James

Last summer I greeted a man I thought was a newcomer to our congregation. "Hi, My name is Liz. Have you been here before?"

"Liz James?" he asked. He opened his wallet, and pulled out a card, which he handed to me.

"This Liz James?" he asked. "I've been carrying that ticket for three years." he said.

And that's when I decided to do it all again. The ticket was to the first Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a weekend retreat we ran as a kick off to our coming of age program. It started as a teambuilding experience for the group, but has spread throughout our congregation as so much more. This year, 36 volunteers gathered (including our DRE's dog, who played Sirius Black) to create something magical.

At a follow up service, we gathered to tell the story. One that started as a story about Coming of Age, but became a story about a community gathering to pay tribute to childhood and fun, to take time off from church work, and to watch faces light up as they moved through the world we created for them. To find out more about the Chamber of Secrets that sprang out of the wall, and Sam's heroic deed, and Adam's deleted scene, follow the links on the Saskatoon's congregation website (www.uccsaskatoon.org).



Feeding Body and Soul: Being UU in a Time of World Hunger

Unitarians have been meeting in Guelph since 1960. We are a lay-led congregation of 65 members and many friends. We are the home of Stuart Dixon and his beloved puppets. We've sponsored two of our youth on projects in Honduras, (one with World Accord.) We support Childhaven, AIDS orphans in Africa through the Children of Bukati Fund and USC Canada. We have been supporting a local school snack program for more than 30 years. Individually, our members are involved in many ecological and social justice campaigns. We live in a community with a strong commitment to sustainability and thriving farmers' markets. We also live in the home of the Ontario Agricultural College and Monsanto's Eastern Business Office. We know that there are no easy answers or simple solutions to

the challenges of living in this world. And still we engage, and we question.

When we gather in November, we can ask ourselves - As Unitarians, how do our Sources feed us? How do our Principles nourish the world? Balancing the personal with the global is always a challenge. How does the global food shortage affect our local efforts for sustainable nourishment? How can we balance spiritual and intellectual nourishment when our bodies get sick? How do we care for a planet when it gets sick?

Our vibrant Youth Group is excited to host its first Youth Conference. The 11 youth who attended CanUUdle will be joined by the rest of the youth from the Guelph and the Elora Fergus Congregations. They look forward to meeting old

friends and new. The invitation is open to all youth who want to come. Be assured that a warm welcome awaits, and there is loads of fun to be had by all! There will be childcare for the youngest among us and programs for children during the Saturday workshops. Please stay for the Saturday Night Social and Sunday service. Hotel and home hospitality is available for those who wish – when registered in advance!

Come visit beautiful Guelph – you'll be glad you came!

The Central Regional Gathering is November 14-16, 2008. For more information or to contribute your ideas, please contact coordinator@guelph-unitarians.com.

www.guelph-unitarians.com

Cooperation is a Choice

Rev. Julie Stoneberg for The UU Ministers of Southern Ontario

On March 30th, ministers from Southern Ontario exchanged pulpits. London, Olinda, Waterloo, Toronto First, Neighbourhood, Mississauga, Peterborough, Don Heights and Hamilton participated in a minister shuffle where each minister spoke on the same topic, "working together." Each of the participating ministers wrote one of the service elements which were shared in common.

This initiative emerged from ongoing cooperation and conversations among the ministers in Southern Ontario. We see the energy that is generated when we work together. Recently Peterborough, Durham Region, and Kingston shared an OWL program, as Mississauga, Toronto First, and Waterloo have done in the past. The fifty-voice combined choir (from

Neighbourhood, Hamilton and Toronto First) who came together for the installation at Toronto First in February, have continued singing together around the region...this after meeting each other at a music workshop in Hamilton in the fall. As ministers we asked, "how can we model, support and extend this cooperative spirit?"

Many of our congregations struggle in isolation and forget to connect. We imagine all the possibilities that can grow out of greater cooperation...sharing resources around building projects, extending our common voice on social issues, and creating ever more vibrant connections as members of the Canadian Unitarian Council. This pulpit shuffle is our contribution to increasing our awareness of one another and to foster creative ways to work together.

The UU Ministers who participated have generously shared some of their materials at <http://cuc.ca/ministry/>. You will find other lectures and sermons from our professional ministers here as well. Please acknowledge the author if you use this material in your congregation's worship services.



A group from the Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough receives their Welcoming Congregation certificate (Left to Right) Rev. Julie Stoneberg, Minister, Andrew Dennis, Lay Chaplain; Carol Andrews, RE Chair; Kathryn Waugh, Membership Chair; Jeannette Morgan and Rev. John Morgan, Minister Emeritus, Toronto First.

At the Confluence/ Réunissons Nous Où Les Eaux Se Rejoignent

The St. Lawrence River, the Cataraqui River, and Lake Ontario come together at the Limestone City--Kingston, Ontario. The confluence of the waters was sacred space for aboriginal peoples. This fall, come to Kingston, and our congregation will welcome you where the waters meet.

Friday evening and Sunday morning, we will meet at our own Fellowship, and Saturday all day and evening at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Nature Centre, with its panoramic view of the wetlands and surrounding forest, just minutes from downtown Kingston. Adults, youth, and children will all have the opportunity to explore the 406 hectares of woods, wetlands, and rough pasture during the weekend.

Youth will do their thing at the Fellowship, and a lively children's program will be offered at the Conservation Area.

Meet Unitarians from St. John's to Kingston and talk, laugh, learn, sing, and play together!

November 7-9, 2008

For general information, contact Margo Rivera at mr14@queensu.ca or 1-613-389-2388. For information about home hospitality, contact Allan Hammond, at hammonds@isn.net



Chaque année le Conseil Unitarien du Canada organise des rencontres d'automne pour chaque région du Canada. Ainsi, les participantes et participants peuvent assister à un programme-thème pendant une demi-journée ou même toute une journée. Ces ateliers ont lieu le samedi, et il y a une célébration dominicale à l'église-hôte, ainsi que des activités sociales. Des programmes destinés aux enfants sont offerts, et il peut y avoir des programmes pour ados et pour des jeunes adultes.

Cette année, la rencontre régionale d'automne pour la région de l'Est aura lieu à Kingston, du 7 au 9 novembre 2008. La région de l'Est s'étend sur plusieurs provinces, de Kingston jusqu'à St. John's. La rencontre à Kingston a pour thème « Réunissons-nous où les eaux se rejoignent » et nous permettra de connaître, explorer et fêter la géographie de la région de Kingston ainsi que ces occasions pour se réunir. Nous espérons accueillir plusieurs Francophones à Kingston, afin de poursuivre le projet d'offrir aux personnes de langues et de cultures différentes de nombreuses possibilités de mieux se connaître.

Pour obtenir plus de renseignements sur les rencontres régionales d'automne, veuillez consulter le site Web du CUC, à la page suivante :

<http://cuc.ca/programs/gatherings.htm> (en anglais seulement pour le moment)

Kingston Unitarian Fellowship Vocal Volunteers with Phyllis Robbins on left.

Du global pour tout le monde...


World Café ou Café global? Un atelier de ce genre a été offert à Ottawa, et a réussi à charmer tout le monde, c'est vrai. Offert dans le cadre de la journée multigénérationnelle, les jeunes ados et les ados ont été très appréciés par les personnes plus... mûres. Entendre les idées de tout ce beau monde, a donné lieu à un moment inspirant et passionnant.


L'atelier a également touché aux questions globales. Il nous est devenu clair que la voix collective pourrait influencer sur notre planète toute entière. Celles et ceux qui se sont réunis autour des tables pendant une vingtaine de minutes ont pu s'exprimer sur leurs préoccupations et leurs désirs à propos de plusieurs causes de justice sociale.

Lors des Rencontres annuelles de 2009, à Thunder Bay, ainsi qu'aux rencontres régionales d'automne, nous organiserons d'autres cafés. Les participantes et les participants y auront l'occasion de s'asseoir pour discuter des questions générales à propos de la justice sociale.

Engagez-vous! Nous avons besoin de vous pour pouvoir prendre soin de notre monde.



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