

# Is there diversity in unity?

BY BRUCE SCHWARTZENTRUBER

**How many ways can** you slice a Unitarian? This year's Annual Conference and Meeting (ACM) featured the diversity theme as a catalyst for reflection and assessment of our inclusive Unitarian faith tradition.

We are united in our principles and liberal 'pursuit of truth and meaning in life.' But just how diverse are we? And how do we become more diverse? After all, we don't bar anyone because of race, ethnicity, language, religion, beliefs, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation.

Surely all of our UU doors are wide open and welcoming to all who enter.

Still, with our largest cities serving as the main ports of call for the 225,000 immigrants who arrive here every year, it may be in our larger UU congregations where the questions are first asked: Why are the people on our city's streets so much more visibly diverse than our congregation? What are we doing to attract the diversity we desire? Can we survive the future remaining predominantly white, Euro-centric communities?

At the Welcoming and Celebrating Congregational Diversity workshop before the official start of the ACM, a dozen congregational leaders from across Canada met with UUA's Director of Bi-Sexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgen-



*Nisga'a drummers, Cindy Tait (Sayt huuhl Gaak), Keane Tait S. (Niit'ipxaathl Gaak), Zachary Tait S. (Ts'o k wil Goshl Ganaaw) led the Banner Processional at the Friday night Opening Celebration at ACM 2007. Cindy and Keane attended the Sunday morning worship as part of the gathered community.*

der Concerns, Rev. Keith Kron, to learn how they can initiate and sustain dialogue within their congregations about the value of ethnic and racial diversity.

Prominent among them was First Unitarian Church of Victoria's Mac Elrod, outgoing Chair of the CUC Monitoring Group for Racial and First Nations Equity. A frontline civil rights worker in Nashville, Tennessee in the 1960s, Elrod explained that this workshop was the first of a series of three workshops devised by the group. They aim to use lessons learned from the Welcoming Congregations experience and the concerns of First Nations peoples and apply them to ethnic and racial diversity.

The Monitoring Group has prepared a brochure for national use expressing UU principles and featuring a front panel picture of an African-Canadian woman with the question: *Would I Be Welcome Here?* followed by the answer: *Each Person is Important and Valuable.* It is available for distribution in church vestibules and might be useful in outreach to diverse ethn-

• see "Is there diversity" page 2

## from my sketchbook

BY CAROLE THORPE

summer my father's dying  
our minister's robes in  
the front hall closet  
big-shouldered coats  
smouldering and  
her blessing  
late summer ashes  
warmth of his body  
just before dying,  
maple saplings,  
prairie thistle  
september ships in the seaway  
unclassified itineraries  
navigator next  
to spirit pilot  
three quarter family listing

*Carole Thorpe was born in Montreal and lives in Calgary. Her writing, visual arts and glassblowing reflect themes of environmental issues, peace work, spirituality, feminism and gender. Recently she was published in our CUC chapbook, Shoreline – Water Poems. Carole has joined the Unitarian Church of Calgary. This poem was written August 23, 2006, a week after the death of Carole's father.*

### New poetry editor required

This column is my "swan song." We are accepting applications for this illustrious position at poetry@cuc.ca, until July 31, 2007. Go to <http://cuc.ca/cal/PoetryEditorPosting.pdf> for a description of the role. Thank you for the privilege of serving you for five years.

*Sincerely,  
Franci Louann, Vancouver*

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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## Is there diversity in unity?

• continued from front page

Coast to Coast and then *Rainbowmaking: Local Action For A Better World* workshop. "I have had the easy part of the job. Now Jo-Anne (Jo-Anne Elder-Gomez, Incoming Chair) will have the hard work to do." That hard work will be to convince our memberships that the more diversity 'out there' than 'in here' observation means that being

welcoming isn't enough. These workshops, if implemented in every congregation, are important opportunities to raise members' awareness of how the culture of a congregation can inhibit diversity and can emphasize the differences that come with diversity rather than the commonalities all Unitarians share.

Once we are thinking differently, it is the extent to which we are able to reach out to our diverse communities that will likely play a big role in our success. As Elrod noted, "We want to build bridges to ethnic communities and work for equity and justice without being colonialists assuming, as Christian missionaries once did, that everyone else wants what we want when they hear of us."

We want to reach out to the disaffected, the unchurched, the 'spiritual but not religious,' those who are like us in their deepest desire for the freedom and acceptance to find their own spiritual path – and we should not be concerned with what they look like or how they speak.

Yes! You *are* welcome here. 

(All three workshops developed by the CUC Monitoring Group for Racial and First Nations Equity can be found on the CUC website at: [http://cuc.ca/social\\_responsibility/](http://cuc.ca/social_responsibility/))



Rev. J. McRee (Mac) Elrod led the CUC's Monitoring Group this past year. Among the accomplishments was a Thursday workshop with Rev. Keith Kron, of UUA's Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns on *Welcoming and Celebrating Diversity in our congregations*. Other achievements include a new pamphlet: *Would I Be Welcome Here?* and publishing three curricula on line.

## Letter to the Editor

I read your article on communion as I was having lunch today. I think that times they are a-changin'.... In Regina we had our first Water Communion in the fall of 2006. (I led it and was really apprehensive before it happened.) Then we had a Fire Communion in the New Year, and we are planning our first Flower Communion for the spring. I have been delighted by the enthusiasm shown for both of the events we've had so far. I think there is no doubt that they will be included in our liturgical calendar as regular rituals.

Hilary Craig  
Sunday Service Coordinator  
Unitarian Fellowship of Regina

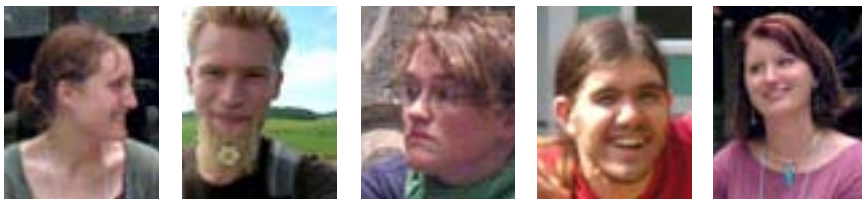
## Young Adults

by Chris Michell

# Where have all the young adults gone?

**'Young Adults' within the continental** UU young adult movement are aged 18 to 35. I have tracked down several younger young adults who have been leaders within the Canadian Youth movement.

Many have been working or doing Co-op terms; and most have been pursuing a post-secondary education: everything from Biology Co-op at the University of Victoria (Sam), Religious Studies/Political Studies at the Univer-



Would you like to “meet” Unitarian young adults in or from Canada? There are 60 of them on the Canadian Unitarian Young Adults group at [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/UnitarianYoungAdults), including our new Director of Regional Services – West, Laura McNaughton. Asha Philar from Ottawa First set up the group. Just go to [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and search for “Unitarian Young Adults.”

### Who are these ‘younger’ adults?


The young adults I contacted are aged 19 to 24, and most have been involved in some sort of youth leadership role, but have since “aged out.” It should be noted that there are many more young adults who were involved in the youth movement but weren’t in leadership roles, and many who were never involved with the youth movement at all.

### What have they been up to?

Several of them have been traveling: Robbie Brydon, now very involved in CUC and Toronto First leadership, 23, went to Ghana for four months with Engineers Without Borders; Alex Dundas, former Youth Observer to the Board, 20, traveled around North America, and is now in Mexico; Samantha Magnus, 21, previously the youth member of the CUC Statement of Principles Task Force, traveled through Southeast Asia and is currently in Switzerland; and Asha Philar, 21, a member of the first Youth Advisory Group, went to India.

city of Saskatchewan (Erica Spracklin, 20, Western Regional Youth Adult Committee member), International Development and Economics at the University of Toronto (Robbie), Environment and Resource Studies at University of Waterloo (Asha), and Honours Biology at McMaster University (Camille Twomey, 20, a past YAG member.)

They still do consider themselves UU, even if they aren’t currently involved with a UU group. Kellina Dyer, 20, who “aged out” from youth to young adult at the ACM, is involved in the UVic Campus Ministry and Soulful Sundown at First Victoria. Jacob Larsen, 24, a former UUA Board member, says he fell into the well-known “gap” between the Youth and Young Adult communities.

If this small sample contains so much diversity, imagine the diversity the whole young adult community has to offer! 

*Chris Michell was the Worship Coordinator at CanUUdle VII (the annual national youth conference) and a “bridger” (18 to 20 year-olds are both youth and young adults).*

by Joel Fox

## Brilliant new futures await us



*The young adults leading the Soulful Sundown worship service looked like they were having as much fun as the participants. From left to right: Erica Spracklin, Asha Philar and Joel Fox, Coordinator.*

A big change was stirring in the ACM this year. The young adults were in the house! We took in workshops, mingled with adults and youth a bit, but mostly we hung out with ourselves. We were tight. We stuck together like a tribe of wild baboons.

Filled with lots of hugging, quality conversations and endless joking, laughter is the soundtrack of the con to me. Also, my Soulful Sundown team was awesome and our service in the Great Hall of the Museum of Anthropology turned out beautifully, getting rave reviews.

I challenge every congregation in Canada to send one young adult delegate to the ACM next year. ACM 2008’s going to be a big one, for sure! It’s going to be seriously fun.

We YAs had a totally triumphant time this year. But everyone get ready for Ottawa!

*Joel Fox was the Soulful Sundown Coordinator for CUC ACM 2007.*

*Joel lives in Comox and was previously involved with the Ottawa First youth group and then their Young Adult group, the Noble Birds. Contact: [feeltheharmony@yahoo.ca](mailto:feeltheharmony@yahoo.ca)*



## Jean Pfleiderer

CUC President

### Enacting all our stories

#### Former United Church Moderator

Bill Phipps spoke to us at the ACM in Vancouver about “the old story,” the story of power run amok, of privilege denying its own hegemony, and of those who are not privileged being instead doomed to poverty and powerlessness. But our time together in Vancouver also reminded us to hope that we can yet leave that old story behind.

From the beating drums of the people who came first to this land, who welcomed us on to our workshops and our meetings and our meals together, we shared, not that same old story, but all of our stories. We were diversity in community.

The stories of the Universalists in Olinda are not the same as the stories of the Icelandic Unitarians of Winnipeg. Our ministers bring yet more diverse stories to our congregational mix. The stories that Vyda Ng will tell of her time as CUC President are not the same stories I will one day tell of mine. But the beauty of our religion is that it encourages us to hear and appreciate each other’s stories, without needing to judge one more valuable than the other—without needing to create “the story” to which we all must subscribe.

I am looking forward to the challenges of the year ahead as we continue working together, enacting all our stories, each of us making our own small differences at every turn in the road. As we “go on, go deep, go out, and go big,” this year, we also go together. Each story is important, and each is a part of the whole.

*Jean*

*Jean Pfleiderer is the incoming CUC president. E-mail: jeanp@cuc.ca*

## Board

by Calvin Drake

### Board updates

#### STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Statement of Principles Task Force was constituted by the CUC Board in May of 2002 to lead congregations through a review of the Statement of Principles.

“What does the current Statement of Principles and Sources mean to you?” “Could it be improved?” These are the questions that the Task Force asked our congregations and members this last year in regional and congregational workshops and small group ministry sessions.

At the ACM, the Task Force presented preliminary feedback from printed and online questionnaires. Their presentation and the responses are at [www.cuc.ca/statement](http://www.cuc.ca/statement). The Task Force will now complete its analysis and make a recommendation to the September Board meeting.

#### CUC VISIONING AND STRATEGY (AKA GO-4-IT!)

The ACM in Vancouver was a Go-4-It! Extravaganza!

The CUC Board presented its “Strategic Directions” based on its research and input received. This starts a process of feedback and collaboration with the key stakeholders (member congregations; ministers; youth; etc.). The Board also led a workshop providing more depth and inviting discussion.

The multi-generational day started with an interactive session, where participants were invited to try their hands at five separate Go-4-It! activities.

Full details and next steps are at [www.cuc.ca/strategy](http://www.cuc.ca/strategy).



### Looking back, looking forward

#### The CUC has grown up – we have

come into our own, with proven systems and processes. Our maturity was in ample evidence at the Vancouver ACM, where volunteers and staff coordinated an amazing, memorable gathering for 500 Unitarians. We were thrown some unexpected challenges, but together, found solutions (see Mary Bennett’s column.)

To Phillip Hewett, Ruth Patrick, Brian Kiely, Kim Turner, John Hopewell, Mark Morrison-Reed, John Slattery, Bert Christensen, Charles Eddis, and all the courageous others who have done the challenging, visionary work of bringing us to this autonomous point – our heartfelt thanks. Our successes have been built with the ever-expanding mosaic of our diverse strengths and skills.

Our work is far from done – being small in a big country is not easy. Embracing all levels of diversity is risky. Yet our challenges are also our strengths. We find creative ways to work together. As I write this final column, it seems that we are poised to take a collective deep breath before going on to our next phase, that of carving a path into the future for our movement. What will that path look like? We will define that together. Our Go-4-It Strategy provides a vehicle for input from Unitarians of all ages, individually and as congregations.

Phil Strapp, Financial Administrator, has likened the CUC’s forward momentum to a train – we invite you to get on board, and to stay on board. There is always room on the CUC train.

*Vyda Ng is the past CUC president*

## Does Niagara Falls need bottled water?

**Marie Belliveau, of the Unitarian** Congregation of Niagara, wasn't consciously thinking of Niagara Falls when she wrote a health policy paper at Brock University in St. Catharines. Marie's concern grew as she learned about the environmental, health, political, global access and privatization issues.

She started taking action right in her UU home, encouraging the congregation to ban bottled water in their building.

Marie frequently approaches previously innocent bystanders caught holding a plastic water bottle.

"Hi, have you checked the expiry date on your bottle?" might be her opening gambit. She then explains how plastic leaches dangerous chemicals into the water after time. To the more receptive people, she'll point out that, at up to \$10 per gallon, bottled water costs more than gasoline and that while tap water comes to us through an energy-efficient infrastructure, bottled water is transported long distances, which involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels.

"Most water bottles are made with a plastic derived from enough oil to power over 100,000 cars for a year. Huge mounds of garbage are dumped where they will take up to 1,000 years to biodegrade. Furthermore, the commercial sales of over \$100 billion per year could be spent on the distribution of safe drinking water for all the peoples of the world—at a small fraction of the price." **U**

### WATER FOR LIFE (NOT BOTTLED) AT TORONTO FIRST

In January of 2006, Toronto First voted to make Water for Life their annual social action project. The committee hosted numerous educational events including films, lectures and discussion groups. Earlier this year, they conducted a pledge campaign to refrain from personal use of bottled water. At the congregation's Annual General Meeting, June 3, a motion to limit the use of bottled water in events organized and sponsored by the congregation passed unanimously.

More information at: <http://firstunitariantoronto.org/waterForLife.htm>

PHOTO: PHIL CURTIS



Sara Jordan (left) and Marie Belliveau re-enact Marie's street activism, educating people about the perils of bottled water.

PHOTO: PHIP WIEGAND



Water bottle sculptor, Kathlene Willing (left) and Water for Life Committee chair, Sue Berlove. The sculpture was made using only water bottles found discarded on the streets of Toronto.

## Dreams come true: sharing soup and song

**Once upon a time, some weary,** hungry travelers arrived at a poor village called Old Town and asked for some food. When the grumpy villagers turned a deaf ear to their pleas, the travelers offered to make soup from a stone. A skeptical villager brought a pot and a stone. Water was added. Someone had a carrot or two; another brought some tasty beef and soon, there was a big pot of tasty soup to share. A dream was realized as people shared. The *Stone Soup* musical involving church school children and the choir at the Unitarian

Church of Edmonton included tasty bowls of real Stone Soup afterwards.

UCE also hosted a sold-out choir concert called *My Song*. Chorealis co-director Gordon Ritchie wrote, played and sang many of his original Celtic harp pieces. A highlight was a premiere performance of his composition for the 20th wedding anniversary of John Pater and Michelle Van Der Molen. Their daughter, Erin, sang a solo in it. Chorealis plans to have a recording of Gordon's choral pieces available by fall. **U**

Submitted by Jan McMillan  
Unitarian Church of Edmonton

PHOTO: DOCIA LYSNE



Composer Gordon Ritchie and Chorealis director Karen Mills mount successful *My Song* concert.

# A capital gathering – 2008 ACM

**I**n 2008, the May ACM will be held in Ottawa, Canada's capital, and the country's fourth largest city. Our hosts will be First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, Canada's largest UU congregation with more than 800 members and friends.

THE FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF OTTAWA HAS A TALENTED AND VIGOROUS GROUP OF LAY LEADERS STRIVING TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SPIRIT AND ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER IN EFFORTS TO MAKE THE WORLD A MORE PEACEFUL AND GENTLE PLACE.

### Brian Kopke is retiring.



... in June after 23 years' leadership and service at First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. We will miss our minister, mentor, comforter, wood carver, carpenter, gardener, sound technician, fund raiser, musician - who spurs us on to greater achievements.

But we can stand proud on our own feet - this is his legacy, for which we thank him profoundly. He leaves us looking forward - with our second refugee in sanctuary; many active social responsibility groups; a church humming with interest groups; a major day-care building project on site and proud owners of a new Steinway grand - a gift to ourselves and to the music community. Fare Well, Brian - we wish you a productive and happy retirement.

Ottawa draws visitors from around the world with an abundance of parks, waterways, the renowned May Tulip Festival, the rich colours of the Gatineau Hills autumn leaves, and the winter attractions of skating on the Rideau Canal as well as the Winterlude festival.

English is the predominant language but French is also widely spoken. The City of Gatineau (pop. 230,000) across the river in the Province of Quebec is largely French-speaking. Ottawa has great cultural diversity resulting from immigration and the foreign embassies resident in town. This diversity and the increasing prosperity from the growth of high tech have made Ottawa a cosmopolitan and vibrant community.

With the retirement of minister Brian Kopke, the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa is pleased to welcome Rev. Janet Newman as the interim minister for 2007-08. Rev. Newman joins a talented and vigorous group of lay leaders striving to strengthen their spirit and encourage each other in efforts to make the world a more peaceful and gentle place. The congregation has a high proportion of members over 65 (41%) and half are retired. About 50% have been with the congregation for more than 15 years and 79% have university degrees.

Music is becoming increasingly important to the community with two choirs, a regular concert series in Worship Hall, and a lot of informal music just for fun. When Music Director Jane Perry arrived at First Unitarian

Congregation of Ottawa, she was struck by the perfect concert venue the building provided, and that the grand piano on-site was not up to the standard required by many professional musicians. A new Steinway was seen as a gift to the congregation and the community at large. It was selected by committee at the New York City Steinway factory, and delivered in April of this year. It took four years of dedicated fundraising by virtually every member of the congregation to raise over \$95,000.

Social action involves over 150 people in more than fifteen groups. Beginning in March 2007, the congregation has provided sanctuary to Shree Kumar Rai, a refugee who came to Canada over 10 years ago to escape torture and police oppression in his native Nepal. Shree entered sanctuary after exhausting all the normal remedies in Canada's refugee appeal process and being ordered to be deported at the end of February. The Sanctuary Committee is now looking for new means to have Shree accepted into Canada. He is the second refugee to find sanctuary at the church after Samsu Mia, who spent 18 months at the church before being allowed to remain in Canada.

The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa members develop wings as they work at influencing opinion in the local community and on the national stage. The congregation hosts youth and adult conferences; members have been on the CUC executive and attend CUC, GA and UU-UNO conferences. They are very much looking forward to welcoming Unitarian Universalists from across Canada in May 2008. **U**

*Contributions from Carol Anne Deneka, Mike Cassidy and Havi Echenberg.*

by Don Hauka

# Humility

## A key ingredient for a new story

**Rev. Bill Phipps was expected** to challenge his audience and he delivered. The uncompromising former moderator of the United Church of Canada asked tough questions, pulled no punches and earned several standing ovations during his keynote address.

The audience was alternately excited, agitated and ecstatic during a speech that ranged from the war in Iraq to the tar sands of Alberta. One minute, they were on their feet applauding loudly and the next, you could hear a pin drop.

The heart of Phipps' speech was a lesson in humility as a key ingredient in steering humanity towards a diverse and sustainable future. "We suffer from arrogance and self-righteousness...we feel our answers are superior and that we are the smartest people ever to walk the earth."

This societal arrogance is a symptom of the defining story that has informed Western culture for thousands of years, says Phipps. The "old story" is based on patriarchy, consumption, independence and the need for power.

"Humanity has reached a crisis point where the old story has become inadequate to meet the demands of survival – our communal narrative no longer works," he said.

Phipps described visiting Africa and how people there were astonished to hear that there were children in Canada sleeping on the streets and in church basements. "They asked me: 'What kind of people are you?'" said Phipps.

A new story based on humility – a quality that will "open us up to our interdependence of life that has everything to do with diversity" will recognize that




Vancouver ACM Keynote speaker, Rev. Bill Phipps, while reading an excerpt from a newspaper article, makes one of his eloquent gestures.

no faith community or philosophy has a monopoly on truth. Phipps challenged the audience to reach out to other religious traditions.

"We're great on rhetoric, but do we really believe they have something to contribute? Or do we really want them to become one of us?" Phipps asked.

Phipps ended on a positive note, saying, "A new story is possible because people are living it all over the world." But he cautioned that the story's ending is up to all of us.

"By what name will our children and our children's children call this time? Will they speak with anger and frustration of the time of the great unraveling...or will they look back in joyful celebration at the noble time of the great turning, where their forebears turned crisis into opportunity, embraced the higher order of potential of human nature and learned to live in creative partnership with one another and the living earth and brought forth the new era of human possibility?" 

*Don Hauka is president of Beacon Unitarian Church. He lives in New Westminster, BC.*



**Mary Bennett**

CUC Executive Director

## Creating community amidst diversity

**Nearly 500 of us gathered for the** weekend conference in Vancouver. For Sunday worship at the Chan Centre, there were about 800.

This was the largest gathering of the CUC and the most diverse. The advance promotion invited people to a "Rainbow of Connection." And from our diversity – of ages and stages; preferences and priorities; we created a religious community.

Thank you to the many who contributed to creating ACM 2007: the program planning team; Vancouver host committee and volunteers; youth leaders; children's program facilitators; session presenters and CUC staff and board.

Thank you also to those who became leaders when the need arose. There were a number of unexpected situations that called forth leadership. Ottawa First music director, Jane Perry, jumped in to lead a music workshop when the planned facilitator wasn't able to. The CUC board and staff met with keynote speaker, Rev. Bill Phipps, to devise a plan for handling uninvited protesters. A life was saved due to CPR being administered immediately and consistently while the gathered community sang *Spirit of Life*. (more on page 10).

This ACM was, as someone commented, the stuff that legends are made of. Scott Peck in *A Different Drum* says, "a community is a group of leaders." We are, indeed, a strong community.

Perhaps the "C" in ACM should stand for Community rather than Conference.

*Are you curious about what the Executive Director does? My biography, job description and monthly messages can be found at: [www.cuc.ca/whos\\_who/ed/mary\\_bio.htm](http://www.cuc.ca/whos_who/ed/mary_bio.htm)*

## Things I learned at my first CanUUdle

**My experience at CanUUdle this year** is definitely one I will never forget. This was my first con ever, and I was a little hesitant at first. I had no idea what to expect but what I got out of this weekend did not disappoint me. I spent a lot of time getting to know new people from all over Canada. It felt like a very welcoming environment. We were divided into different groups to allow us to get to know each other. And the workshops and activities we attended were a lot of fun! I am also now much more aware of the things that go on with the

CUC. I never knew so many people were involved. This experience has really opened my eyes to how many Unitarian events and organizations there are. I would now like to take part more actively in my congregation, and really know what's going on. I can't wait until next year! **U**

*Zoe LeVay attends the youth program at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto*

PHOTO: SANFORD KOME-POND



*Youth Business Meeting at CanUUdle included a primer on acronyms. Information on Youth Ministry including an acronym decoder can be found at <http://cuc.ca/youth>*

## Adventure in UUtopia

**Right at the door, the six Junior Youth** (12 - 14) were welcomed by special events coordinators, Tsuki Naka, Kelowna, and Kellina Dyer, Victoria, and told they would be judging the different visions of UUtopia created by the 78 youth at CanUUdle.

But first, everyone formed a huge, vibrant circle and stated their name and their action – maybe a dance step, a gesture, or a dramatic inflection of voice – and the whole group repeated it back. The energy was enough to keep a town humming.

After a loud, paddling circle “Viking” game, a few Handshake Murder games filled the air with blood-curdling screams and dramatic plunges to the floor.

Each of six teams delivered compelling arguments, extolling the virtues of flowers and waterfalls and palaces, of “loving hearts and caring hands” and banana phones needed for good communication.

The Junior Youth judges were hard-pressed to choose the Most UUtopian Of All. Yes, in the interest of diversity and acceptance, a tie was announced. **U**



*Junior Youth were welcomed into CanUUdle community. Rupert Gomery is supported by his canoe-paddlers on either side in the Viking Game, a youth conference classic.*

## Fools take to the streets

**Fourteen ACM participants went** out to witness a day of life in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, “the poorest postal



*Leslie Kemp explained the Faithful Fools Ministry as having two parts: witness and advocacy.*

code in Canada.” The retreat was led by Faithful Fools Vancouver, a street ministry affiliated with the Unitarian Church of Vancouver started by Unitarian minister, Laura Friedman.

After an orientation recognizing their own fears and anxieties, they ventured out onto the streets. A walk through this neighbourhood revealed the raw details of life being lived right before their eyes: on a street retreat, they were encouraged to bear witness to whatever the streets had to offer that day.

Laura Friedman sums up the time, “At the end of the day we regathered to reflect on our journeys and on what we saw and

how it touched us. The street retreat is a simple act, but it is powerful.”

More information from: [mirrorsofhope@yahoo.ca](mailto:mirrorsofhope@yahoo.ca) **U**

**\$3,115 was raised from congregations bringing full bowls to the Saturday Souper Supper. This will be divided between Faithful Fools Street Ministry and Canadian Harambee Educational Society. A further \$500 in meal vouchers has been donated by Potluck Catering for use by the Unitarian Church of Vancouver and Faithful Fools for an event on the Downtown Eastside.**

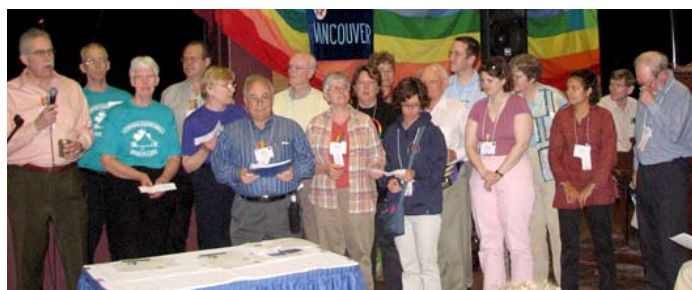
## Carry the flame of peace and love—until we meet again!



*Clockwise from top left:* Keith Wilkinson, Worship Coordinator, tended to every detail to ensure Sunday worship went without a hitch. Here he holds up UCV's chalice. Remona Charlie, a member of UCV, with son, Marcel, "light" the chalice. As the Chan did not permit an open flame, the candle was ceremoniously placed on the chalice while a spotlight highlighted the act. Rev. Steven Epperson takes a moment to enjoy the music before sharing his reflections as a regular public transit rider in Vancouver. Entitled *Which Way Do We Look?* Epperson's provocative sermon is available on [cuc.ca](http://cuc.ca). After the service, lay chaplain, Katherine Roback, took responsibility for delivering the chalice stand back to UCV.

*Clockwise from top right:* The style and rhythm of the Sunday morning worship was a familiar one to those who have attended the Unitarian Church of Vancouver.

The ACM choir with members of local congregational choirs swelling their ranks, sang an invocation and piece for meditation. As occurs every Sunday at UCV, we were invited to greet our neighbours near the start of the service. The folk group ErRatica, including UCV member Jane Slemon, sang a prelude and provided music for the offering. \$6,137.44 was collected at the service. Unitarian Church of Vancouver was able to pass along a cheque for that amount at a forum for Citywide Housing held the following week. At the end of the service, we held hands and sang, "Carry the flame of peace and love—until we meet again."



Team Ottawa sang this song at the closing ceremony to invite everyone to the nation's capital next year.

A Capital trip that'll make you flip  
is the Ottawa ACM!

We just can't wait till 2K8 to say  
"Je t'aime bien et  
bienvenue au rendez-vous."

Yes, welcome everyone.

For it does appear  
That come next year,  
we are in for a lot of fun!

*Words by Don Fraser*

## ACM online

### One of the goals for the 2007

ACM was to represent our experience in pictures that could be distributed using both traditional, like print, and



Nancy Strider discreetly took photos, while Tony Smith took tripod-assisted photos from the spot offered by the Chan, a prime location close to the stage.

non-traditional media, like our website. Nancy Strider, who coordinated the conference photography, is a new member of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver. Two energetic volunteers, Tony Smith of Saint John and Janet Vickers, an Individual Member of the CUC, assisted her. Less than

24 hours after our banner parade, photos were being uploaded to a private space on the Internet, where Mary Bennett screened the faces for people who had let us know they did not want their photographs published. A selection of the best photos will be on display on the CUC website at <http://cuc.ca/conference/2007>. **U**



Shoreline: Water Poems book launch readers on Sunday, May 20. This is CUC's first Poetry Chapbook. Readers included Carole Martignacco, Franci Louann, Helen Iacovino, Keith Wilkinson, Cassy Welburn, Janet Vickers and Diane Stevenson Schmolka.

## CUC Friends – indeed!

### Sunday morning at the

ACM began in a way very different than expected. 120 Friends of the CUC were assembled for a yearly “thank you” breakfast. Executive Director, Mary Bennett, had just welcomed people and announced the incoming CUC board executive and passed the microphone to President Jean Pfleiderer, when Don Fraser of Ottawa fell over experiencing a massive heart attack. Thanks to immediate administration of CPR and emergency services, Don is doing well and will return to Ottawa when he can safely fly.

Here's a message from two of his daughters.

Dad was delighted to have a chance to say a few words in your newsletter.

We would like to send thanks to Joan Hill, who escorted Dad to the hospital and Rev. Brian Kopke who visited him until family arrived. Further thanks to Elizabeth Bowen of Ottawa and to Rev. Jane Bramadat,



CUC Friend Don Fraser

and members of First Victoria who visited Dad and extended well wishes and support to our family.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Georges  
and Melanie Fraser

From Donald Fraser:

I apologize to CUC President, Jean Pfleiderer, for “stealing the floor” a moment into her speech. I've taken the floor at the ACMs, but never that way. My “heart-felt” thanks to Vyda Ng, Jan Greenwood, Sharon Fulton and Teilya Kiely for their life-giving assistance, while Gloria Hopewell checked my pulse from none, to weak, until the paramedics arrived with the defibrillator. From Vancouver Hospital emergency, I was “heli”-lifted to Royal Jubilee Hospital where I am now recovering from a triple bypass surgery.

I send out grateful thanks to the church for the “Spirit of Life” and their generous support and caring. We also thank the compassionate, competent care from the hospital staff. **U**

## LOTS OF CHOICE – SEVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO CHOOSE FROM 60 CONCURRENT SESSIONS



Clockwise from top: Penney Kome, Calgary, gave a workshop on *Religion on the Internet*; Jim Stephenson, West Vancouver, on *An Inconvenient Truth*; and Nicoline Guerrier, Montreal, on *Deep Ecology: The Work that Reconnects*.

# Coming (back) to Canada




Newly called ministers (left to right) Shawn Newton, Julie Stoneberg and Stephen Atkinson make new connections at the ACM.

Pretty soon our friends south of the 49th will be complaining about a trade imbalance, free trade falling apart, the 'brain drain.' Each of our brand new settled ministers, just recently called at the North Shore, Peterborough and Toronto congregations has strong American roots and connections.

Shawn Newton comes to First Toronto from the Harvard Divinity School in the Boston area, having worked in ministry since 1997. And Reverend Julie Stoneberg, a native of Minneapolis has already crossed the border, serving as a consulting minister at Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship in Thunder Bay, Ontario before her recent successful calling to the Peterborough Unitarian Fellowship. Canadian Stephen Atkinson has been re-patriated, as it were, "coming home" to the Vancouver area North Shore Unitarian Church after studies

at UU seminary Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago.

Moving to, settling in and returning to, another country does have its challenges despite our many shared values and traditions. For Shawn and his partner Bob, they need "to contend with the practical challenges of crossing the border, from itemizing all of our worldly possessions to learning (finally!) how to spell." Stephen notes that his "challenge will be, while remaining inspired by what's best about US UUism, not to import American UU customs simply because I've become more familiar with them." Julie believes "that learning the story of a place, a people and a culture, and integrating those things into one's own story can be transformative. The challenge is not to make assumptions based on previous experience." 

## International

### FOSTERING A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Rev. Brian Kiely and Mary Bennett will be the CUC's delegates at the November 2007 biennial meeting of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists in Overwesel, Germany. The ICUU brings together UU groups from all over the world to celebrate, discuss mutual interests and promote a global partnership of people and organizations. Every month, a chalice-lighting reading submitted by an ICUU-affiliated group will be distributed to UU congregations around the world. Did you know that the CUC has been providing translations of proceedings en français for the past year? And did you know that anyone can attend the ICUU meetings? For further information, go to [http://icuu.net/events\\_icuu.html](http://icuu.net/events_icuu.html)

### BRITISH UNITARIAN RETIRES – OR DOES HE?

Jeff Teagle, General Secretary of the British General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches retired in April after thirteen years' service. Although he will continue to be much involved in the Unitarian movement as a volunteer, Jeff will use some of his newly gained leisure time on the work of restoring a seventy-year-old flying machine and chairing the 2008 Overton Sheepfair – a Hampshire village festival and parade of artists and performers. Teagle also took on the role of Company Secretary for the International Association for Religious Freedom.

### WEBSITE RENOS COMPLETE

Both the US and British Unitarians unveiled colourful, attractive new websites on April 1 and May 1 respectively. The British website features a general home page with broad information for the visitor and a topic-based table of contents linking to the rest of the site. See for yourself at [www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk)

The UUA homepage features four access points entitled: 'Visitors', 'Members', 'Leaders', and 'I Am Interested In'. Within each there are many more links to a wide range of discussions, announcements and descriptions of UU life in America. Take a look at <http://uua.org/>

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## Testimony

Laura McNaughton

### Dear God, if you exist, check 'Yes'

**Hi, my name is Laura** and I'm a Sunday School drop-out. I stopped going to church on Easter Sunday, 1981 – just before my 9th birthday. Sometime in the early '80s church lost its appeal. The Presbyterian church I attended scared me. I believed I sinned all week

long without being aware of it, therefore I was terrified of the consequences for my immortal soul! Somewhere about the same time, I'd figured out that either God didn't exist or He didn't really communicate. I know this for a fact because I left a note under my pillow one night – 'Dear God, if you exist, check 'Yes' – to which I received no reply. So, that pretty much ended my relationship with that guy.

Now, I figure I was destined (if you believe in that kind of thing) to become a UU. My family moved to Saskatoon from Edmonton in the summer of 1982. We moved into a quiet neighbourhood with lots of kids about the same ages as me and my brother. We also lived two blocks from the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon and across the street from a brother and sister whose dad and step-mom were members. (Hi, Mike and Joan!)

I passed that building every day on my way to and from school and liked the stained glass piece in the window that proclaimed 'Freedom. Tolerance. Love. Reason.' I even attended a youth group overnight with Jenifer. And, I attended a Sunday service in the summer of 1992.

I returned to Saskatoon in the fall of 1993, not only pregnant, but having lived through a pretty nasty year. After my daughter was born, I went back to that plain little church where I felt safe



and at home. When I walked through the door – a single, 21-year old woman with an infant daughter – I was warmly welcomed. I wasn't made to feel I had to defend or justify myself. I was just welcomed into the community. In March of 1994, I signed the membership book and my daughter was dedicated into the congregation that May.

Since then, I've deepened and broadened my knowledge of Unitarian Universalism. I've become a religious professional. I've come to identify as a pagan. And, what I love most about this faith is that it gives people room to express their spirituality (interpret that word as you will) in any way that feels right in the moment. Human beings, like this faith, move and grow – what feels right today, may feel alien next year. What is fundamental is

that we all learn and grow and live our lives according to our Principles.

I am certainly not the same person I was when I walked into that little building at the corner of Main and Eastlake fourteen years ago. What I carry

with me is the sense of being home. Whether I'm in a building that is home to a UU congregation or with a group of UUs at a pub, I know that I'm home. ☐



**Laura McNaughton starts full-time work as the CUC's Director of Regional Services - West on August 1. She'll be based in Saskatoon and can be reached at [laura@cuc.ca](mailto:laura@cuc.ca) or through the CUC West office 604-264-0088. Currently she's working in Washington State and spending 1/4 time on CUC work.**

# The 'H' Word

## Universalism and Humanism

**A**s I see it, **Universalism** is not a subordinate identity of Unitarianism in Canada. It is an equal to Unitarianism as three existing Universalist congregations were part of the budding CUC in 1961 (Olinda, ON, North Hatley, QC and Halifax, NS). Universalism came to this continent in 1770, when the eastern part of our continent was of the British Empire, although not for long. So Universalism is not an American import. Even Unitarianism did not spring up out of the Canadian Shield; it came with the English Unitarians who immigrated here and established churches.

During much of the 19th century there were many more Universalist churches than Unitarian churches in Ontario, now all long gone including those in Quebec and the Maritimes. The dominance of Universalism in Canada didn't last, largely because people moved to cities to make a better living than they could on farms, and almost all Universalist congregations were rural.

Universalism belongs in Canada, as much a cornerstone of our tradition as Unitarianism, because there were Universalist churches here between 1831 and 1961, and because Universalism holds within it as much humanist substance as does our Unitarian side of the family. The humanism we know, which originally grew out of the classic definition of humanism, reclaimed by Erasmus well before the Reformation, dethroned the power of the church, putting critical thought, scriptural interpretation and relationship with God in the hands of common humanity. It crossed the ocean to new Unitarian and Universalist hands and new times.

In a recent letter Louise Foulds provides astute insights into the proto humanist thought embedded in 18th and early 19th century Universalism:

Among early Universalists we see [a humanist hint] by even the theologically conservative John Murray, in his statement that 'Every man's religion, be it what it may, is between him and his Maker: It is his actions and their influence in society that concern mankind' was expressing the primacy of human concern over theology in religion.....Enlightenment influence (latent humanism) is clear in Ballou's expressed confidence in human reason as 'the highest faculty we have received from God,' and his proclamation as a tenet of the faith an extensive latitude to think freely." Humanist thinking in Universalism did not emerge from a vacuum. From the Washington Avowal belief in: "...the supreme worth of every human personality, in the authority of truth known or to be known..."

Two important sources are Louise Foulds' book *Universalists in Ontario* first published in 1980, second edition 2005 and Clinton Lee Scott's book *Religion Can Make Sense*. Published in 1949, the book is a resource for recognising humanism in Universalism. Of the thirty four individuals who signed the first Humanist Manifesto, numbers of them Unitarian ministers, one signer was Scott, a foursquare Universalist. His signature is living evidence of Humanism within Universalist thought. He writes:

The larger faith of Universalism, in the inescapable consequences of all thought and action, in the unchanging laws of cause and effect in all of life, is a rational faith. This is a religion that can live on good terms with your intelligence.



Rev. Christine Hillman dedicated the 2007 ACM Confluence Lecture to George Whaley, who died May 16, 2007, only a few days before this lecture. "May we all find something of the spirit of George Whaley in our commitments to the churches we serve and lead as ministers or as lay people."

Universalist thought existed from the beginnings of Christianity. A mere 61 years after Universalism came to this continent it found its way to Upper Canada. With it came the heretical idea that God's love was a promise not a threat. In the words of the late George Whaley of Olinda (a direct descendant of those who established that church), "Love is a more positive force for good than fear."

It is clear that other than Alexander Laurie, all the early organizing was accomplished by people who immigrated from the U.S. The important note is that they did not remain alone. Canadians heard the Universalist message, were drawn to it and stood by Universalist congregations. Universalism, planted in the soil by immigrants, became tended and improved by Canadians. **U**



George Whaley, lifelong member of the Olinda congregation and direct descendant of those who organised the church in 1880.

## Solidarité entre les diversités?

J'étais sous le choc.

Cela faisait déjà quelques années que j'avais franchi le seuil du placard, décidé de vivre ouvertement ma vie comme homme gai. Mon militantisme en faveur des droits de la communauté franco-ontarienne m'avait préparé pour le combat politique que doit assumer toute communauté minoritaire.

J'ai habité un certain temps dans le quartier gai de Toronto. Peu après mon arrivée, alors que je me promenais, je suis tombé sur une boîte aux lettres de la Société canadienne des postes... sur laquelle du graffiti oblitérait les mots français.

Je le répète : j'étais sous le choc! Je ne comprenais pas comment du graffiti anti-français pouvait exister dans le quartier gai.

Certes, il était possible qu'une personne hétérosexuelle avait posé le geste. N'empêche que compte tenu de l'emplacement de la boîte, les chances étaient que...

Dans l'innocence de ma jeunesse, j'avais pris pour acquis qu'une personne lesbienne, gaie, bisexuelle ou transsexuelle (LGBT) – membre d'une minorité autant sur le plan numérique que sur le plan socio-politique – serait nécessairement sympathique à l'égard d'une autre minorité. En d'autres mots, comment se pouvait-il qu'une personne homosexuelle puisse être contre le bilinguisme et le droit à l'égalité de la minorité francophone?

Depuis, j'ai découvert d'autres exemples où des victimes de la discrimination, qu'elle soit motivée par la race, l'ethnie ou la religion, s'opposent à l'égalité des membres d'un autre groupe minoritaire.

Un de mes espoirs, c'est que le mouvement UU puisse offrir des outils de dialogue et de compréhension entre les diverses communautés.

by Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

## Small group ministry Engagement for all ages, all sizes

**A**lso called **Covenant** Groups, Shared Ministry Groups and Chalice Circles, Small Ministry Groups are groups of 5 – 12 people who meet regularly for listening, reflection and deep sharing. The experience has been described as engaging, transformative, and even revolutionary.

Larger congregations may be able to

years. Joy feels their approach has been “a really fellowship-friendly program.” Small Group Ministry programs draw new and long-time members closer to the congregation, and help all of them feel more connected and committed. “Everyone, especially newer members have expressed appreciation of the openness and acceptance in SGM,” says Johnston. “Several newcomers are very interested in joining a chalice group, as they have heard so many



Eight of the members of Chalice Groups at the Comox Valley Fellowship.

support a dozen or more small groups at different meeting times. Smaller congregations can begin with two or three groups. Lay-led and with about 50 members, Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship began two Chalice Groups after Joy Johnston and Donald Regehr attended a workshop at CUC ACM 2003. They plan to offer four small groups starting this fall. Similarly, the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton had two enthusiastic facilitators and an ad hoc committee in 2006. Their newly formed Adult Programs committee now plans to support more groups being formed.

Joy Johnston suggests adapting the program to meet the congregation's needs. Usually small groups ask for a six-month or year-long commitment. Some groups may stay together for

positive comments about them. Even long-term members have found greater depth in their relationships with people they have known for years. The open, accepting and non judgmental tenor of the groups really fosters trust and deep discussion.”

Small Group Ministry information sessions and training for facilitators can be provided through CUC Regional Service Consultants. Check out [http://cuc.ca/programs/congregational\\_wellness.htm](http://cuc.ca/programs/congregational_wellness.htm)

Resources for leading groups for family, children or young adult sessions are also available. CUC Program Staff can assist in directing you to additional resources. **U**

*Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes is the incoming Chair of the CUC's monitoring group on Diversity. E-mail: [diversity@cuc.ca](mailto:diversity@cuc.ca)*

## Friend profile

by Don Hauka

### CUC Friend “Sir” John Slattery – a friendly knight in Unitarian armour

John Slattery has had many titles – president, chair and consultant to name a few. But these days, we call him “Sir John.” John is this year’s winner of the Victor and Nancy Knight Living Tribute Award, given for making “a notable contribution to the furthering of liberal religious principles in Canada.”

John was Beacon’s first president and has chaired most committees. Currently, he’s a member of the choir, men’s group and the humanist group, and occasionally delivers the homily.

Nationally, John served on the CUC board for eight years, including two as president. He chaired the Commission that led to the CUC becoming the principal service provider to Canadian congregations and was also a BC regional consultant for three years.

Internationally, John served eight years on the Executive Committee of



Each year the Knights select someone to join their Round Table.

the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists. Along with then Executive Director, Ellen Campbell, he was one of two delegates at the ICUU’s founding meeting in 1995.

John has been recognized for his policy development and diplomatic skills. He needed all the diplomacy he could muster while traveling to the founding meeting of the ICUU.

“I found myself sitting next to Dr. Arpad Szapo, the Bishop of the Transylvanian Unitarians,” said John. “Since we have no Unitarian bishops in North America, I didn’t have the slightest idea of how to address him. The correct answer turned out to be ‘Arpad.’” □

## Across the country

### WESTWOOD 25 YEARS STRONG

In 1982, Westwood Unitarian Congregation held its first service. The festivities to kick-off the 25th Anniversary Celebrations include a Wine and Cheese evening on Saturday, June 9. Rev. Meg Roberts, from the Unitarian Church of Calgary, will speak at a special anniversary service on Sunday, June 10. Check <http://www.westwoodunitarian.ca/25.htm> for updates.

Send any photos, memorabilia, recordings, or stories about the anniversary to [dhelmig@telusplanet.net](mailto:dhelmig@telusplanet.net)

### REGINA RETIRES MORTGAGE

Joanne Green recently led the Unitarian Fellowship of Regina’s celebration marking the congregation’s mortgage free status. Her presentation, a ceremonial mortgage burning and a cake marked fifteen years of owning a Greek Revival style building – “a peaceful place where our worldly cares can fade for a time.” A UUA-granted mortgage, the efforts of long-time Unitarian Stefan Jonasson and donations from the Emil Gudmundsen Fund and the Western Canada District made it possible. For more information, contact [josiepie@accesscomm.ca](mailto:josiepie@accesscomm.ca).

### KINGSTON PHOTO DIRECTORY

In the winter of 2005 someone brought to the Kingston Unitarian Fellowship’s attention some glossy photo directories from churches across North America. Janet Miller’s first thought was, “We could never do anything like publishing a book.” She volunteered to investigate and before long the Communications Committee decided the project would be a go.

The photo session took place over three days, each person receiving a large studio portrait plus a directory at no charge. The directory ended up with 107 photos out of 140 people – one of the most successful “reaching out – coming together” projects in Janet’s memory.

## ARE YOU A FRIEND?



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## NOTICE

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