

UU pageants stretch time, space and imagination

BY DON HAUKA

You walk into church to find an extraterrestrial feline scientist searching for an overly-bright and furry star. Or maybe Tiny Tim getting mixed up with the Artful Dodger. Or perhaps a paean to plate tectonics or the Celtic celebration of Samhain is being performed.

What in the name of all that's holy is going on here? Unitarian Universalist pageant time, of course.

UU pageant writers do more than “think outside the box”. With freedom to roam wherever their intellects take them, there is no box, says Rev. Steven Epperson of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver.

“It’s not so much thinking outside the box as not knowing what the box is,” says Epperson, a prolific pageant writer.

“When I come across a story that has inherent theatrical characteristics and that I feel passionate about, I want to share it with my congregation.”

Whether it’s Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter, congregations from Vancouver to St. John’s enjoy productions written by Unitarians who synthesize faith traditions, time periods and



Herod (Shawn Hunsdale) eventually sees the light in Herod’s Christmas Present, an original Unitarian pageant produced at Beacon Unitarian Church in Coquitlam, BC.

genres to bring sacred stories to life.

Epperson is part of a UU pageant writing tradition that includes novelist Margaret Laurence (whose Christmas classic, *The Olden Days Coat*, started out as a Unitarian Sunday school pageant in Vancouver) and BC’s Joyce Poley (whose *Spirit of the Christmas Tree* and *Would You Like to Hold the Baby?* are classics in their own right).

Poley says she has “mailed about 300 copies of *Spirit of the Christmas Tree* and about 200 of *Would You Like to Hold the Baby?* to congregations throughout Canada and the US. Since each church only needs one copy, I would guess that this represents about 400 churches that have used my pageants.”

Adding to that tradition are writers like Lloyd Ryan of the Avalon Unitarian Fellowship in St. John’s, NL. As a teacher, Ryan created pageants like *Christmas Story*, setting the Nativity tale in the communities where he worked, including a Cree reserve in James Bay and a mining community in Newfoundland.

Inclusiveness is another hallmark of UU pageant writing. In most cases, all ages

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Autumn Haiku

BY WINONA BAKER

moss-hung trees
a deer moves into
the hunter’s silence

old graveyard
a student doing rubbings
wild geese cry

leaves soon to fall
the old one visits
a tree she planted

autumn cleanup
in house and garden
the sun’s last rays

it’s happened
my mother doesn’t know me
first autumn rain

Winona Baker has received European and Japanese Awards for her haiku. She has written six poetry books and had poems in many anthologies. Winona is a member of the First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo.

Poetry Contributions

CUC members are invited to submit short, spiritual poems. Please include a brief bio and send to CUC poetry editor, Franci Louann, at flouann@telus.net.



Mary Bennett

CUC Executive Director

Fare thee well and thank you to Sara

In 2002, we advertised for three people who “can make things happen.” The Implementation Task Force had created an ambitious plan, mandating a volunteer group to lead workshops and keep communications going between and among congregations and the CUC in each of four regions, led by a Director of Regional Services.

Since September 2002, Sara McEwan has built two Regional Network Groups for BC and Western regions, supported teams to run Regional Fall Gatherings and connected with congregational leaders from Vancouver Island to Thunder Bay.

Sara’s professional and poised contribution to CUC West has included “doing what needs to be done”—even chauffeuring, cooking, photocopying, and serving key volunteers at RFGs, CUUL school and congregational workshops. Her teams and the CUC are grateful for her time and attention to them. And now, having “made it happen,” Sara has announced her resignation as of December 31.

The ACM in Edmonton’s theme was “We are the new pioneers.” Sara has ably bushwhacked, cleared the land and found the teams to build the CUC West into a smoothly running organization. Thank you Sara! I hope all of you who have benefited from Sara’s contributions, will drop her a note – sara@cuc.ca – before December 15 to wish her well.

The job will be a different one for the next Director who will bring his or her own gifts, interests and energy to this challenging and satisfying role. To take a line from the “Hobbit’s Song” in the *Fellowship of the Ring*: “and whither now, we cannot say.”

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

Pageants stretch imagination

• continued from front page

participate in the production. “If the pageant is primarily for children and adults are not actively involved, then it allows the adults to dismiss the activity as ‘not for me,’ but as children’s entertainment,” says Ryan. “In that case, a tremendous opportunity for spiritual growth will have been lost.”

UU pageants also transcend time, space and genres. Last Christmas, Beacon Unitarian Church in Coquitlam, BC, staged


a pantomime pageant that blended the Nativity with a Puss-in-Boots motif and threw in Douglas Adams’ *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*. In the resulting *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Nativity*, Puss-in-Boots is a scientist from another planet searching for the answer to the question of life, the universe and everything, which is to be found in a little (but significant) town over which shines an overly-bright (and especially furry) star. The previous year, Beaconites saw King Herod embrace Unitarian principles and cradle the infant Jesus in his arms in *Herod’s Christmas Present*, another pantomime production.

But UU pageants aren’t just for Christmas. Nor are they bound by the confines of Christian narratives. Epperson’s last Easter pageant, *The Passion of Emily Carr*, celebrates Carr’s rebirth as an artist after a near two decades’ hiatus following a disastrous art show that she thought had ended her career. This Thanksgiving, he told the story of the building of the seawall around Stanley Park. And these are literally walks in the park compared to his *Destruction and Rebirth: A Natural History of North America*, which covers 65 million years of life on earth in five acts.



Rev. Katie Stein Sather prepares for her role as the jester-prompter in *Herod’s Christmas Present*, an original Unitarian pageant produced at Beacon Unitarian Church in Coquitlam, BC.

Epperson has produced an amazing nine pageants in four years. He finds them a “powerful way to convey lots of spiritual and cultural information” to his congregation.

“It’s a unique medium for embodying ideas and conveying them,” he says. “Sermons and lectures have their place, but a theatrical performance is a vehicle that incarnates information.” 



Don Hauka is president of Beacon Unitarian Church. He’s written a number of radio plays, TV movies and books. He’s also written two pantomimes for Beacon’s Christmas concerts, “the most satisfying and fun productions I’ve ever worked on.” Currently, he’s writing a Unitarian radio show, *The Beacon Home Companion*. He lives in New Westminster, BC.

How can the CUC live democracy? The social responsibility resolution process

HERE'S AN EXCERPT FROM AN EXCHANGE of opinions about some recent public statements made by the CUC President, and the process by which decisions are reached regarding social responsibility resolutions. We have posted the letters in whole at the *CanU* web log: <http://x.cuc.ca/canu/wordpress/>.

The CUC President and Board often take public positions without consulting the CUC membership; some express a clearly focused consensus such as our support for same sex marriage, while others are based on interpretations of extremely broad and often poorly defined CUC policy resolutions or are personal interpretations of the UU Principles. In a community founded on belief in individual freedom of thought and conscience, I don't believe that anyone has an ethical right to interpret our chosen principles or to speak on specific issues for all Canadian Unitarians without consulting the members and acknowledging dissenting views. When a public position is taken on issues and events that have not been specifically addressed by the membership, I request that public statements from the CUC state that these are the positions of the CUC Board and President and do not necessarily represent those of the members.

Bryan Carroll, Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon

A letter such as yours is helpful in reminding us of our responsibility never to make a public statement on behalf of the CUC without the support of [UU] Principles and Policy.

Both Principles and Policy were established through a complex democratic process which is laid out in the CUC *By-Laws and Social Responsibility* handbook.

In fact, we Unitarian Universalists, while respecting "the inherent worth and dignity of every person," encourage "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning," and expect that there will be differences of opinion within our membership.

The policy resolutions passed at Annual Meetings go through a lengthy process which involves considerable congregational input prior to being voted on at an Annual Meeting. You will find a complete outline of the process if you go to http://cuc.ca/social_responsibility/index.htm#current and scroll down to "CUC Board Social Responsibility Task Force Reports." Choose the heading, "5. Appendix III - Flow Chart – So you have a resolution topic!", for a brief outline of the process for proceeding to a policy decision. General Resolutions usually take three years to develop with considerable input from the congregations prior to approval.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. It has made us realize that more publicity is required regarding our policy-making process and the justification for public statements.

Vyda Ng, President, Canadian Unitarian Council



"...I DON'T BELIEVE THAT ANYONE HAS AN ETHICAL RIGHT TO INTERPRET OUR CHOSEN PRINCIPLES OR TO SPEAK ON SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR ALL CANADIAN UNITARIANS WITHOUT CONSULTING THE MEMBERS AND ACKNOWLEDGING DISSENTING VIEWS."

JOIN THE DIALOGUE!

Should the CUC President speak out on social responsibility issues? And, if so, which and how? How can individual Unitarians and congregations have their voice heard? How can we represent the diversity that we are? How can delegates be held accountable to their congregations?

Send your responses to Bryan at b.carroll@sasktel.net and/or Vyda at vyda@cuc.ca. If you are willing to have your comments added to the web log, post them directly or send to info@cuc.ca noting in the subject line "for the blog."

Would you like to receive a complete copy of the letters of Bryan and Vyda? To send a contribution by postal mail? Bryan Carroll has offered to coordinate this—send your request to Bryan Carroll at: Box 842, Dalmeny, SK S0K 1E0



**Vyda
Ng**
CUC President

We are GOing-4-IT!

“GO-4-IT!: A framework for planning throughout the Canadian Unitarian and Universalist Movement” was launched at the 2006 Annual Conference and Meeting. It builds on the work of the Visioning Task Force, crafting a strategy that could take the Canadian UU movement forward into the next phase and beyond.

I struggled with the practicalities of how the diverse Unitarian movement could make use of this framework. After mulling this over, I have come to recognize that the Go-4-It! framework provides individuals and groups with a tool to define our own ways of planning. I see each Go as encompassing three (maybe more) levels:

- **Nationally and internationally** – how does the CUC and its affiliated groups Go On, Go Deep, Go Big and Go Out in effective, meaningful ways?
- **Within our communities and congregations** – what will the four GOs mean for us as we interact with others?
- **Personally** – how will each Go help us to deepen our spiritual understandings and let others know of our Unitarian beliefs?

This fall and winter, as Go-4-It! workshops are held in your congregations, please take the time to listen with your mind as well as heart, to dream up “out of the box” ideas to reach other kindred spirits out there.

The four strategic perspectives of this framework have provided a focus for me personally. I am excited about GOing On to do what I do in more mindful ways, about pushing past my comfort level to Go Deep spiritually, and to consciously and enthusiastically Go Out and Go Big to let others know about this good thing called Unitarianism.

So, how will you Go-4-It?

*In peace, Vyda Ng
vyda@cuc.ca*

Board

by Calvin Drake

A space for free and honest enquiry

At the Annual Conference and Meeting, the CUC Board presented *Go-4-It!: A Framework for Planning throughout the Canadian Unitarian and Universalist Movement?* Right now it’s simply a space for free and honest enquiry and aspiration, but we believe this process may allow congregations and groups to both work independently and come together at key points to share ideas, manage resources and co-ordinate action plans.

Go On means continuing to do what we do well, with integrity. The CUC Board will continue to enhance the Regions and RNGs programs, working on stability and sustainability and maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Go Deep! asks, “how do we deepen our understanding and sense of spiritual connection as individuals and in community? How do our congregations, ministers, religious educators and fellow members help each one of us explore our own religious paths?”

It’s time to **Go Out!** More people would benefit from knowing about us. Imagine the impact of awakening the sleeping giant of spiritual and social progressives in Canada.

We will set our sights high! We will think “outside of the box” and explore opportunities to dramatically increase

our presence on the religious, social and political landscape. We need not be afraid to **Go Big!**


The Board believes this framework can engage all of us as individuals, in our congregations, and in the groups we belong to in a national conversation.

We invite you to consider how the *Framework* can be relevant for your community and for the Canadian movement as a

whole. If it makes sense, we can develop strategies and action plans that interact and mesh with each other.

Believing that right now it’s time to talk to each other and to listen, the CUC Board is conducting Go-4-It! workshops at the Fall Gatherings, and has provided material for you to do so with your congregation or group.

Your Board Member is interested in hearing from you – in person or by e-mail – about how you see using this framework.

Imagine the potential of Unitarianism and Universalism in Canada and the world. Let’s Go-4-It! 

Kalvin Drake, a member of Toronto First, is Vice-President of the Canadian Unitarian Council and Board Co-ordinator of the Go-4-It! initiative.

Contact: Kalvin@cuc.ca. More information at: www/cuc.ca/strategy.



FAREWELL, SARA

The CUC is bidding goodbye to Sara McEwan, its first Director of Regional Services West. The Board thanks Sara for her work in building programs and services for the West, and for her dedication to the people she worked with. We wish Sara well and hope that her journey onward opens new doors and brings excitement and joy.

Eight years at the helm of Can-U: the CUC grows up, but gets younger

WE DIDN'T REALIZE IT at the time, but my wife Nichola and I became editors of the *Canadian Unitarian* at a crucial turning point in the history of the CUC. We would document the emergence of a new, more vital and youthful organization with a better capacity for directly serving member congregations.

In the fall of 1997 our main Unitarian connection was membership in a small, new congregation in Elora-Fergus, Ontario – an “emerging group” in CUC parlance, not yet over the hump to full church status. We won the contract to edit the *Canadian Unitarian* on the strength of our communications and newsletter experience, not because we came from the CUC inner circle.

We attended our first CUC annual meeting in Victoria, BC in May 1998 and immediately observed that:

- despite being in our late 30s, we were among the youngest people at the annual meeting;
- the official meetings of the organization were pre-occupied with the CUC's relationship to the UUA and the desire for change; and
- without fail, whenever we talked to individual Unitarians (about an organizational matter, a social justice issue, or their own congregation), they were invariably fascinating and full of insight.

It took three more annual meetings before CUC members confirmed the organization's break from the UUA. Anxious to write about other things, I sometimes despaired about the endless committees and reports, and wondered how many of the 5,000-odd *Canadian Unitarian* readers really wanted to follow the slow march to autonomy every quarter. (In 2001 I became the sole editor, as Nichola returned to school to do a post-graduate degree.)

But it was a privilege to watch the careful, democratic procedure as it evolved towards the final vote in Montreal in May 2001. Although the conclusion was foregone, the emotional release when President Kim Turner announced, “It's 105 for and 22 against,” was enormous, both for those who favoured and those who opposed autonomy.

In the five years following the decision to break from the UUA, I've witnessed a profound growth at the CUC. Not membership growth – that dream has yet to be realized – but growth in the participation of members and congregations.

This has been most obvious when it comes to youth. At the last annual meeting I attended – in Hamilton, 2005 – about 100 of the 480 people attending were in the 0–35 age categories and the “conference” events far outnumbered the “meetings.” The emotional highlight of the weekend was watching 60 youth delegates carry a 500-foot-long pride rainbow banner at the opening ceremony. There was no doubt that members had been galvanized by the autonomy decision five years earlier.

This change allowed us to devote more space in the newsletter to congregations and issues – in-depth reports on lay chaplaincy and youth, for example – instead of mainly organizational matters.

So why did I quit as editor earlier this year? It was a tough decision. As my business evolved from editorial to graphic design work over the last half-decade, it got harder to fit the quarterly newsletter into my workflow. I also knew that I couldn't meet my newsletter commitments for much of 2006,



because I needed to spend time with my dying mother in Vancouver. (I was right about this; in fact, her memorial service was the same weekend as the annual meeting.)

But more broadly, I felt my time was up, that I didn't have many more creative ideas for the CUC newsletter. I've been in this position before with long-term clients, and the best solution is to simply let go, knowing that someone else will pick up where you left off, either to continue the tradition, or to build something new and better.

Best wishes to all the great people we met and worked with across the country, and good luck to our editorial successors at this newsletter. And special thanks to the two dedicated Executive Directors who directed our work: Ellen Campbell and Mary Bennett. **U**

What Art didn't mention was that as the CUC evolved, changed and grew, so did *Can U*. Art and Nichola brought a new professional look and great writing skills. They humanized *Can U* and took it great strides down the road to becoming a Unitarian magazine. As a former editor, I know just how much they improved our image. Thanks, Art and Nichola. —*Brian Kiely*

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Unitaridées

par Carlene Gardner

Paroles en l'air

Réflexion personnelle sur les programmes en français

Peu importe la langue, il est souvent difficile de parler de l'unitarisme ou de c'est quoi les unitarien-e-s universalistes (UU). Par sa nature vaste et variée, cette tradition fluide et toujours changeante échappe à toute définition simpliste et permanente. On a tous nos propres croyances et valeurs. On a tous des raisons différentes pour vouloir nous regrouper. Expliquer ce paradoxe unique n'est pas facile!

Mais peu importe comment et pourquoi on participe, il est important de le faire dans sa langue car c'est surtout le dialogue qu'on recherche dans nos rencontres unitariennes. Je réjouis de pouvoir vivre cette expérience dans la langue de Molière depuis le début de cette année à Montréal, où un groupe de bénévoles se charge d'offrir un programme mensuel en français.

Si à Montréal un grand nombre



de personnes rejette la religion, il n'est pas pour dire que les Montréalais-es soient sans curiosité ni ouverture envers les cultures du monde. Un bon exemple est l'une des célébrations récentes où l'eau et le feu étaient au centre d'une libre adaptation des rituels de plusieurs traditions. Pas très

différent des célébrations en anglais, vous dites, mais pour moi, sa pertinence vient du fait que ça s'est passé en français. Elle m'a rappelée la facture multiculturelle de Montréal, ville francophone mais tant influencée par ses gens qui viennent des quatre coins du globe.

Avec les programmes en français, le dimanche n'est plus un drôle de parenthèse dans ma semaine. Je remercie les bénévoles de Montréal pour leur contribution et leur volonté à développer encore plus le patrimoine unitarien en français. **U**



In Memory

MIRIAM CHRISTINA STEVENSON, dancer, political activist, distinguished elder, died July 12, 2006. Born August 26, 1907 in London, England, she moved to Hollywood as a teenager. Miriam rubbed shoulders with actors Rudolf Valentino, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, and made friends with musicians Paul Horn, Rosemary Clooney and Louis Armstrong. She organized the Fur and Leather Workers Union in Los Angeles in the 1940s. After defying the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1950s, she was arrested with three

others. The "Terminal Island Four" were held for six months without bail. Deported under the infamous *McCarran-Walter Act*, she fought Apartheid in South Africa and was again deported. Forging a new life for herself in Vancouver in the 1960s, she opened a boarding house in the West End and campaigned against the Vietnam War. She helped found Beacon Unitarian Church in Coquitlam in 1982. In 2006, Beacon honoured her as a Distinguished Elder. She died of complications following a stroke.

Testimony

by Linda Thomson

I didn't set out to be a professional "church lady"

I've often quoted

Unitarian minister and theologian, James Luther Adams—“Church is a place where you get to practise being human.” I believe, because I have experienced it, that Adams is right. I've heard so many people tell stories of gifts discovered and courage buoyed through their participation in one of our congregations. I know that I have been helped by my membership in the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton to see more clearly who I am, what I might become and how I might serve.

I didn't set out to become a professional “church lady.” I arrived at the congregation in 1983, as a young parent, with my partner by my side and our two young daughters by the hand. I wanted them to have some of the sense of “being held” that I had experienced in the Presbyterian Church of my childhood. I wanted them to have an understanding of themselves as spiritual creatures – hoping it would make them stronger, more grounded and more resistant to cults and fads. Somewhere along the line though I was supported and challenged while I asked myself the big questions.

When I reflect back on the years of my association with our faith I am amazed. I am a different parent, a different spouse, a different consumer, a different gardener – I am different in most ways I can describe myself. There have been times when the transitions were easy and times when they have been tough. Somewhere along the line I found myself learning about congregations, conflict, and committees. I learned about worship and welcoming. I have learned that congregations can



serve as seminaries for lay leaders. They provide opportunities for us to discern what our gifts are and how we can use them to lead lives that make sense, that are consistent with our values and that serve the world. Sometimes our congregations challenge us by asking hard questions and by challenging

our assumptions. Sometimes they hold up a mirror so that we may see ourselves more accurately. They hold us, support us and sometimes they make us mad. And, if we engage in the process, we are formed and become someone different than we might have otherwise been. I've found myself in a new career, using gifts and doing work that I could not have imagined in 1983.

The process of discernment and formation never stops though, and I've now decided it's time for me to take the next step. In January I will begin a Masters of Divinity program at Meadville Lombard, a UU theological school in Chicago. The Modified Residency format will allow me to continue with my work as the Director of Regional Services – East for the CUC. I am grateful that during my preparation for Ordained Ministry I'll be able to continue the profoundly meaningful work I'm already doing. But most of all I'm grateful that in 1983 I found a community that trusted, encouraged and challenged me to become more fully myself. **U**

Linda Thomson has worked for the CUC since summer of 2002 and previously for the St. Lawrence District of the UUA.

Linda@cuc.ca

Social Responsibility

WENDY SUPPORTS WATER FOR LIFE

Toronto First selected the “Water for Life Not For Profit” campaign spearheaded by KAIROS, an ecumenical social justice organization, for this year's focus. They had a variety of speakers and several showings of the film *Thirst*. Here, Wendy Ounpuu stands in support of the campaign.



PHIP WIEGAND

BUY A HOUSE IN HONDURAS FOR \$555

The Houses for Health Challenge is put out to Canadian Unitarians from Waterloo First and World Accord, a Waterloo-based organization, to fundraise for the construction of new homes in Honduras. World Accord has received pledges for 124 homes of the 210 that need to be built. For each \$555 pledged, the UN and CIDA add the \$3,000 needed to build one house. More information from Sara Maki at smaki@worldaccord.org.

CAPITAL CANDLE NIGHT

In Victoria, Capital UUs are turning off all the lights on December 22 to celebrate Candle Night, which began in Japan in 2001. Artwork for this poster has been provided by member Ted Harrison.



To see how you can participate, go to www.cuc.ca/social_responsibility/environment.

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE

Unitarian Church of Vancouver

VANCOUVER UNITARIANS welcome all delegates, families, church members, youth and friends of Canadian Unitarian congregations and fellowships to the 2007 CUC Annual Conference! Vancouver is a rapidly growing and maturing Pacific Rim city, located at the stunningly beautiful junction of ocean and mountains. The University of British Columbia campus, site of the CUCACM, offers fine walks, ocean beach access and world-class botanical and Asian gardens. The Chan Centre, one of Vancouver's premier concert halls, is the venue for the Sunday morning worship service. We hope you'll attend the conference and enjoy your stay with us.

The Unitarian Church of Vancouver (UCV) is honoured to serve as this year's CUC ACM "host" congregation. Founded in 1909, the members of UCV have served the Greater Vancouver community through advocacy for spiritual growth, social justice, environmental stewardship, education and a passionate commitment to enhancing and welcoming diversity in our congregation and beyond. Historically, UCV members have been in the vanguard of civic and spiritual life: articulate advocates for church/state separation, women's issues, reproductive rights, sane drug strategies, decent and affordable funeral costs, meaningful inter-faith dialogue, anti-war efforts, gay and lesbian rights... you get the picture. Inspired by the Principles and Sources of our religious and ethical tradition, we've been doing what Canadian Unitarians do; and we're proud of it!

UCV is located at the busy intersection of Oak Street and 49th Avenue; our buildings and grounds have served the congregation and the greater community for over 40 years. Designed by noted Vancouver architect (and UCV member) Wolfgang Gerson, the buildings blend modernist design with West Coast attention to detail for natural light, materials and form. UCV was cited by a panel of architects as one of Vancouver's most



Clockwise from top: *The Choir at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver; These banners have been in many marches over the years—this one was in June at the World Peace Forum in Vancouver; Nicoline Dagenais lights the chalice, with Rev. Dr. Steven Epperson in the pulpit.*

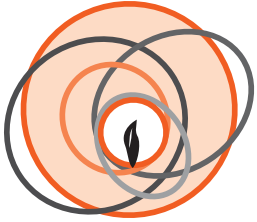
beautiful public landmarks. We value it as a home for worship, learning and celebration.

The 430+ adult members and staff of UCV are deeply committed to the principle and practice of shared ministry. Members of the congregation minister to and care for one another in demonstrable ways. This provides the nurturing that sustains us and allows us individually and collectively to affirm and promote our shared values. We work cooperatively on committees; contribute to shared, lay pastoral care; teach in our religious education program; and engage each other in kindness and friendship. Also, we seek to extend our values beyond the congregation through principled attention and commitment to our families and friends, in our professional lives, and through congregational sponsored street ministry, refugee advocacy, campus outreach and multi-faith work.

Currently, UCV is going through a significant transition. Our parish minister Steven Epperson is a relative newcomer to professional ministry and we have just embarked on a substantially

revised Lifespan Religious Exploration program with a new DRE. Fortunately, we're blessed with a large, dedicated and experienced cohort of senior members. Their mentorship to newer members is crucial for enabling UCV to move into a new era of growth and self-definition. Like most CUC congregations and fellowships, we face challenges in making our financial foundations secure and sustainable for the long haul ahead. As well, the 2007 ACM theme "Diversity in Community," is a challenge and an extraordinary opportunity for us here at home. We are a diverse community in sensibilities and outlook: humanist and pagan; spiritual "seekers"; and ardent advocates for civic and social justice, gay and straight rights, veterans and children alike. As stated in our UCV Mission/Vision Statement: "We are a community of diverse beliefs and shared values." This is our "work" and our strength. "We welcome all who would join this compassionate and visionary community." **U**

www.vancouver.unitarians.ca



*Diversity in
Community*

Maybe the ‘C’ in ‘ACM’ should stand for ‘Celebration’

AFTER ATTENDING HIS FIRST Annual Conference and Meeting, John Michell, new CUC board member, said, “Maybe the ‘C’ in ‘ACM’ should stand for ‘Celebration’”.

We’re gearing up to welcome 500 people to the UBC site in Vancouver for the May long weekend. It starts with a Friday ingathering with each congregation parading with their banner. But long before that, Unitarians and UUs from across Canada will be rekindling friendships and making new connections at pre-conference events.

Robert Corrington, scholar-in-residence, will offer a course co-sponsored by Vancouver School of Theology and the CUC midweek. *Ecstatic Naturalism: Nature, God and the New Cosmology* can be taken for credit through VST. Corrington will share the pulpit of the Vancouver church on Sunday, May 13.

Thursday sees the inaugural offering of “Welcoming and Celebrating Congregational Diversity.” This train-the-trainer program will explore how to broaden our cultural and racial diversity. Rev. Keith Kron, director of the UUA’s Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns, will lead the program, adapted from *Beyond Categorical Thinking* by the CUC’s Racial and First Nations Equity Monitoring Group.

Friday, Brian Tate will lead a singing workshop. A number of UU congregations have enjoyed similar workshops at their own locales and we expect this to be a popular event.

Associate members, Canadian UU Lay Chaplains Association and Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice meet on Thursday and Friday respectively.

Lay Chaplaincy workshops on Friday are for lay chaplains and those in



This is the view of the Rose Garden as you leave the Sunday morning worship at the Chan Centre.

training as well as congregational lay chaplaincy committee members at no charge.

Youth will stay at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver for CanUuddle, the annual youth conference, and participate in several events at UBC. We hope to meet or beat last year’s record of 30 per cent of total participants involved in young people’s programs. There will be great programs for all ages from child care, through young fun and junior youth to youth. Help us increase the number of young adults (18-35) by spreading the word and, if possible, offering congregational financial support.

Those who come early or stay late get to feel the campus “warm up” as chalice T-shirts, bags and jewelry become more prevalent and then dissipate.

Exhibits will be on the main course of the Student Union Building, our main site—a great location with wide visibility to conference goers as well as the public.

Choose from over 50 concurrent sessions over the weekend or join Ministerial Candidate and Faithful Fool, Laura Friedman for a Saturday Street Retreat in the Downtown Eastside.

Multigenerational Day Saturday will include the first CUC multigenerational “church picnic” and the 3rd annual Empty Bowls meal in the beautiful First Nations Longhouse. Youth will lead worship at 9 p.m. and a coffeehouse will go on—as long as it does!

All members are welcome to come and worship with conference participants in the impressive Chan Centre on Sunday morning.

Sunday banquet and Soulful Sundown worship, led by young adults, will be held at the Museum of Anthropology.

Then by noon Monday, we’ll begin to say goodbye with Transition ceremonies for junior youth and youth along with a Closing Ceremony and installation of the new CUC board.

Some will have to leave right away Monday or even Sunday night. Others will stay for tours or afternoon workshops, or to enjoy some vacation time in Vancouver.

It’s going to be our biggest conference and celebration yet. The CUC Environment committee encourages you to help make this the “greenest” conference ever. Hope you’ll join us! 

Youth and Young Adults

Young Adults rising up


“We are Rising Up Like a Phoenix from the Fire” went the chorus as hand-in-hand, in a circle alive with passion and spirit, Continental Young Adult gatherings Opus and Concentric came to their peak around the worship fire.

Each August, Young Adults gather for spiritual, social justice and community activities. This year over a hundred met in Maryland for the ten day conference.

Business issues focused on economic accessibility, building stronger regional ties, supporting leaders and effective use of technology. Workshops included anti-oppression, drama as spiritual practice, crochet and creative movement.



Young adult gathering at CUC ACM. Chris Wulff, third from left.

Tell one, tell all: the next gathering will be at Unicamp, near Toronto. 

*Christopher Wulff
Representative from Canada, 2006*

**WANTED: 18 TO 35
18-TO-35 YEAR OLDS!**

The numbers of children and youth have been increasing dramatically at CUC Annual Conferences—last year 30% were involved in young people’s programs.

The theme “Diversity in Community” definitely applies to Young Adults, identified as 18-35 year olds. Our UU young adults include students, parents, travelers, home-owners, and all manner of careers and pastimes.

Stephen Turnbull, a member of Ottawa First, is the Young Adult member on the ACM Program Planning Committee. He’s studying physics and trying to start up a second Philosophy and Baking Society. He was the CUC’s first Youth Observer to the Board. He’s a founding member of the Noble Birds, the Ottawa First young adult group.

A target of 18 to 35 young adults seems a realistic target for 2007 (Vancouver) and 2008 (Ottawa) ACMs. More information: www.cuc.ca/programs/young_adults.htm

WRITING CONTEST

What does Lotta’s Message Mean to You?

“IT MUST BE YOUR CONVICTION THAT MANKIND IS ONE, MADE UP OF MANY FACES.”

—Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova



We’re all interconnected global citizens and we all have a responsibility to one another. The founder of USC Canada, Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova,

knew this, and brought that belief to the work we do. Even now, after more than 60 years, that idea still drives our work.

Are you inspired by the idea that we are all connected? Tell us about it!

USC Canada, in collaboration with the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), has launched a nationwide writing contest for young Canadians.

If you’re between the ages of 12 and 20, we’d like to hear your opinion. Is Lotta’s message relevant today?

There are two age categories: 12-15 (max. 750 words) and 16-20 (max. 1,500 words). The winner in each category will receive an Apple iPod Shuffle and have their article published in both USC’s and CUC’s newsletters, as well as on the websites of both organizations.

Youth across Canada are eligible to enter, in either official language. Submissions must be received by noon on March 5, 2007. Rules at www.usc-canada.org. For details, email writingcontest@usc-canada.org.



Stephen Turnbull, the first Youth Observer to the CUC board—up a tree eating a mango. Stephen is the Young Adult member of the CUC ACM Planning Team.

Across the Country

by Bruce Schwartzentruber

Bill Haley and the Comets

were rockin' around the clock; the Suez crisis was heating up and the Second Wave of feminism was about to hit shore.

It was 1956 and a bold experiment in liberal religion – the “do-it-yourself” fellowship movement – was fostering new Unitarian congregations, the product of liberal baby boomers’ parents looking for a religious community.

In “a gloomy nook” in the Harrington Hotel in Port Huron, Michigan, a Boston Unitarian named Monroe Husbands was helping an “enthusiastic group lay the necessary foundation” of what would become the Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron.

Canada’s only international UU congregation celebrates those who cross the bridge, despite stringent border checks, for meetings in both countries. They remember when they lobbied for a family planning clinic in Sarnia and held the first public meeting on gun control.

In 1956 in Waterloo, Ontario “there was no place where a person whose religious views tended to be untraditional could go and express himself or herself frankly, freely...” Bob Whitton, later to become the first lay chaplain in Ontario, was reading Monroe Husbands’ *Organizational Guide: Aids and Suggestions for Establishing a Unitarian Fellowship*.

The Spirit of Life: Stories of the First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo is Susan Deefholts’ professionally edited



The Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon invited the whole region to its Anniversary Party. Rev. Brian Kiely, Marguerite Robbins and Rev. Meg Roberts were appointed judges for the costume party on Saturday night. All participants were given the challenge to create costumes from materials supplied by the organizers.

contribution to that congregation’s celebratory plans.

Out west in Saskatoon, Bill Etches, Garth and Edna Buhler, along with “more potential members” identified by Husbands’ Church of the Larger Fellowship, “made a formal application... to the American Unitarian Association for certification as a Unitarian Fellowship.”

Their large contingent of children and youth will be in the forefront of Saskatoon’s celebrations.

Each congregation celebrates 50 years with stories of growth and decline, of a variety of programs and ministers, of “vagrant existences”, a commitment to social action—and all the flush of accomplishments and the struggles of doubts and debts.

At half a century strong, we can appreciate a history of some making. We are no longer naïve, and have the wisdom from facing down crises and celebrating many brushes with the divine... knowing there will be many more. □

Correction

In the Summer 2006 issue, Karsten Iversen’s name was inadvertently spelled incorrectly in the Labyrinth article. CUC would like to extend its apologies for the error.

Support the Life Skills, Education and Adolescent Program (LEAD) in Bangladesh.



Through education and peer support, teenage girls and boys can do more than just succeed - they can lead others to do the same.

Visit our website:

www.usc-canada.org

or call 1-800-565-68722



to pledge your support today!

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

I believe that through the UU UNO, we can support “global citizenship as spiritual practice.”

I hope congregations will:

- form a UU UNO committee with a budget of its own;
- annually celebrate UN Sunday as well as other UN days;
- include UU UNO in newcomers’ orientation;
- elect an adult and youth envoy annually;
- subscribe to *Window on the World* (WOW) by purchasing a church membership;
- display the UU UNO logo and mandate; and
- include UN and UU UNO content in RE courses for all ages.

*Janet Hillen, UU UNO VP Canada
jhillen@cogeco.ca*

TO THE UNITARIAN YOUTH

I am the youth envoy to UU UNO at the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton. I have attended a conference in New York, helped organize fundraisers for destitute women in Africa, and actively promoted the UN’s Millennium Development Goals. I feel like I can make a real difference and I now have more of a voice in the church.

As youth envoy, you will have to figure out exactly what you want to support. Will you raise money to help build a school in Africa? Collect food donations for a local food bank? Or organize a UN-themed church service? Are you going to attend a UU UNO conference? What will you contribute to it as a youth envoy?

There are so many areas where you can help and so many different ways to help. Get out there and be creative!

Canadian youth meet up in New York City

BY CHRISTINE MICHELL

DID YOU KNOW THAT Unitarian Universalists have an office at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City? It’s called the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, and is located in the Church Center of the UN, along with offices from many other faiths, which all share a common chapel. The UN is not only a place where all nations are represented, but all religions as well!

The UU United Nations Office’s purpose, according to Katharine Im-Jenkins – a young adult from Hamilton who was an intern at the UU UNO this summer – is “to work towards peace, liberty and justice for all, acting as a conduit to educate UUs about the UN and as an advocate for issues that UUs are engaged in at the UN.”

Every year the UU UNO holds a Spring Seminar, which is a three day intergenerational (14 years+) conference that focuses on a different major UN issue related to the Millennium Development Goals each year. Past themes include: poverty; HIV/AIDS; water; and protecting human rights to life, liberty and security. The seminar takes place in New York City, and sometimes includes a tour of the UN headquarters, as well as the UU UNO, as part of the programming. Youth stay with youth advisors at one of the New York City UU churches overnight, and have some activities that are in addition to the rest of the Spring Seminar. For the daytime programming portion of the seminar all ages are together. A Statement and/or Call to Action is produced at the end of

the seminar, proclaiming the position of the attendees on the theme issue.

The seminar is mostly attended by Americans, but small groups of Canadians attend each year as well. Groups of youth and adults from Ottawa and Vancouver go fairly regularly, along with smaller groups and individuals from other Canadian congregations such as Hamilton and Montreal. Lisa Sharp, a Youth Advisor from Ottawa, commented that it was “really amazing for the Ottawa youth to meet the Vancouver youth. We would never meet them otherwise, as they are just too far away.” Although some have expressed concerns about weaknesses in the youth conference portion of the weekend, those who have attended past Spring Seminars have a lot of good things to say about their experience of the seminar as a whole.

Debra Thorne from Regina, who attended as a young adult 25 years ago, says of her experience: “The trip informed and inspired me. And gave me hope, which I’ve never lost”. Hazel Gabe, a youth from Ottawa who attended in 2004: “It’s a really great experience, one of the high up highlights of my youth experiences so far.” Sharp also commented that “while hearing about global poverty was pretty overwhelming, it was also deeply meaningful to hear about the issues of the thousands of homeless youth in Manhattan.” **U**

Spring Seminar 2007 will run April 11-14. The theme and registration information will be posted at: www.uu-uno.org.



Raman Kumar

Coming of Age in Toronto



Robbie Brydon and Rev. Debra Faulk were co-facilitators at the Terre Commune –Winds of Change youth leadership conference in Winnipeg on Labour Day weekend.

Coming of Age and congregational RE leaders started the year with an excellent weekend workshop led by Stan Crow at the First Unitarian

Congregation of Toronto, drawing participants from Fredericton to Thunder Bay. From forming a yurt circle to having a six-person team of blindfolded individuals transport an unstable system across the room, we built a lot of energy and a substantial repertoire of ideas (and methods for debriefing them!). Friday looked specifically at Coming of Age programming and introduced a rite of initiation framework encompassing four steps: mentored learning, practical testing, enacted ritual and the development of an empowering story. Saturday zoomed in on effective mentoring and coordinating a mentoring program. Among the descriptions of a good mentor we came up with: Affirming, Deep listener, Revealer of wonder, and Intensely human.

Robbie Brydon is a member of Toronto First and co-leader of their Coming of Age group this year. Brydon was a member of the first CUC Youth Advisory Group and co-facilitated Terre Commune, a youth leadership conference. He can be contacted at robbie.brydon@utoronto.ca.


East European Pilgrimage

by Rev. Kathy Sage



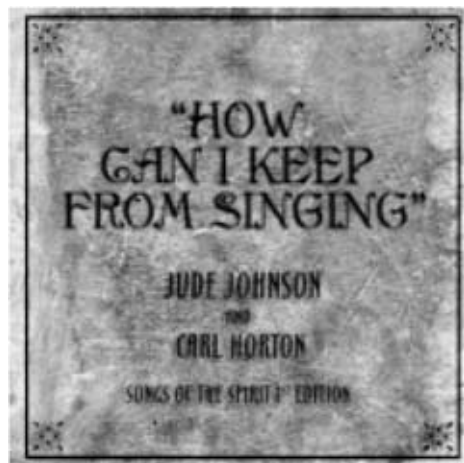
The 2006 ICUU Theological Conference in Kolozsvar, Romania provided a glimpse into our Transylvanian Unitarian heritage and our global character. Our CUC delegation included two first time travelers to Transylvania: myself and Rev. Katie Stein Sather, while Rev. Phillip Hewett returned for another visit. It became my pilgrimage to find the essence of our historical roots and to return transformed.

Our founding history inspired me at the church in Torda where the theological debates raged, and at the Deva castle dungeon where Francis David died in 1571. We viewed the sarcophagus of Queen Isabel and her son, King John Sigismund, the only Unitarian King of Transylvania. The Edict of Torda created a new form of religious freedom – “We wish that in our dominion there be freedom of conscience, for we know that faith is a gift of God, and that one’s conscience cannot be forced.”

Egy az Isten (God is One) now means to me that we are one humanity, and the quality of “love” that is often translated as “God” is for all. This phrase is not just for theists but for the many beliefs of we who gather as a people Unitarian and Universalist. 

Rev. Kathy Sage is minister to the Kingston Unitarian Fellowship.

Kingston Unitarian Fellowship is sponsoring a trip to Transylvania, Budapest, and Prague May 30 – June 11, 2007. If you are interested in exploring this beautiful land where Unitarians have gathered continuously for 450 years, contact kuf@kingston.net.



NEW RELEASE: 20 Unitarian Hymns on CD!

Jude Johnson's latest CD is a collection of 20 of our beloved hymns from *Singing the Living Tradition*. With her accompanist, Carl Horton, Jude breathes new life into the songs of the distant past. Buy it at the CUC Conference in May, or contact Jude Johnson to order:

judej@nas.net or send \$22 (taxes/shipping included) to:
Jude Johnson, 5 Pine Street, Hamilton, ON L8P 2A2 • www.nas.net/~judej

2006 Confluence Lecture

by Rev. Peter Boullata

Many words for snow

Canadian Unitarianism in the twenty-first century

Enormous cultural changes are taking place in our contemporary era and are often described as a shift from modern times to post-modern. With Unitarianism solidly the product of Enlightenment modernism, what is to become of us in the twenty-first century?

Modernist notions of the self, along with modern epistemology, are the underpinnings of much Unitarian ecclesiology, modes of worship and theology. Individual autonomy, our understanding of congregational polity, our assumption that our religious liberalism is unique to us are all expressions of this. The scientific method and the reasoning individual are modern ways of knowing that are increasingly challenged by the postmodern worldview in which experience and subjectivity predominate.

The emerging understanding of the human person is being seen more and more as a construction of the social forces that shape it. A person is not merely a reasoning, autonomous subject moving through a world of objects, but rather is embedded in a network of relationality within which identity is created.

Thus, Unitarianism is challenged to refigure its notions of the individual as self-in-relation and to examine the implications of this for our being together in community. Our emerging situation is taking a turn toward the contextual, the experiential, the collaborative and a dynamic pluralism.

While modern liberalism is challenged by postmodernism, we have within our religious movement the seeds of an emerging way of being liberally religious in this century, most notably in the role of covenant in our congregations and association of congregations and in our affirmation of respect for the interdependent



Peter Boullata was interim minister at the Unitarian Church of Montreal and is currently at Peterborough Unitarian Fellowship.

web. The essence of our covenants is relationship, not doctrine. Our movement is not creedal; it is relational. It is our relationships that are primary. How much attention do we pay to good and moral and balanced relationships in our congregations? Within our gathered communities, individuals are sustained by and contribute to the congregation's common life. Personal transformation, spiritual formation and social change are generated by and from those of us who congregate around the transforming power of love. We do this for ourselves, for each other and for the world. The bond that unites a free people is love, a reaching out in care and concern for the other. Love implies connection, the transformed inverse of isolation.

Interdependence and mutual relatedness are finding their way into our models and practices of governance. An ecclesiology of independent, autonomous congregations is inadequate for our context. Our theological view of

humanity can imagine the inter-subjectivity of selves, of selves-in-relation. The Self-Other oppositions of Enlightenment modernism are evolving into a recognition of the socially, relationally constituted self. Respect for local autonomy is simultaneously affirmed with the larger body whose authority helps constitute it

As the century continues to unfold, our congregations will be known as places of profound transformation, communities of care, personal formation and engagement where individuals are transformed by service to others. Our movement will be characterized by both our love of intellectual stimulation and moral critique, and by our emotional intelligence. Love, not doctrine, will be the acknowledged basis of our gathered communities.

Unitarian Universalist theological reflection in twenty-first century Canada will concern itself with mutual relatedness, wherein the beloved community emerges as a central norm for theology and practice. It will become clearer what binds us together, what shared values, symbols, experiences and rituals unite us and sustain us as a community of interrelated autonomous individuals and congregations. The image of the interdependent web of all existence will characterize Unitarian Universalist theology. Care for society, our historical urge toward social justice activism, will be envisioned as an enlargement of right-relation, the web of interconnectedness that defines our theological commitments. Social action will be seen as a reweaving the web of life, a spiritual practice of creating just relationships. **U**

Note: The full text of this and previous Confluence Lectures can be found at: www.cuc.ca/ministry/index.htm#Ministers

Friends Profile

George DeMille and allison calvern

Being a Unitarian-Universalist may be the firmest common ground two people need to fall in love. allison calvern and George DeMille met and became friends at the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton (UFF) before that fateful day when allison, the Writer, needed George, the Treasurer's, help completing the congregation's newsletter. There they were, huddled together, the light from the computer monitor casting a ghostly pallor over the office as afternoon faded unnoticed into night. Ah romance!




loving the people and the lyrics of the songs they sang.

As with many smaller congregations, George and allison have worn many hats, often at the same time. But it was their love of Unitarians, wherever they met them, that forged

their commitment to the greater understanding of what we are about. The congregation's strong cross-border connections with the UUA Northeast District and particularly with the Houlton, Maine UU congregation, brought separation from the UUA into sharp focus. George remembers it as a time of "some discomfort although we knew it was the right thing to do."

George was raised on a New Brunswick farm, grandson and son of Anglican Church Wardens. Later, in his first marriage, he looked for a place to provide his children with a religious education, and found the UFF. allison had a cosmopolitan life path, born in Bermuda before moving to Edmundston, then living in four more provinces and two countries before returning to Fredricton to stay. Her "search for a spiritual community," took her to a Parisian UU church,

That "greater understanding" has led allison and George to be at every Annual Conference and Meeting and eastern Regional Fall Gathering in recent years and to contribute financially so that the CUC can continue to build community wherever Canadian Unitarian Universalists meet. 

UPCOMING EVENTS

Designing and Delivering Rites of Passage ("Lay Chaplaincy Basics")
March 30-April 1 – Montreal, PQ
April 13-15 – Mississauga, ON

UU United Nations Office Spring Seminar
April 11-14 – New York, NY
www.uu-uno.org

British General Assembly
April 10-13 – Hatfield, England
www.unitarian.org.uk/

CUC Annual Conference and Meeting
May 18-21/07 – Vancouver, BC
May 16-19/08 – Ottawa, ON
May 15-18/09 – Thunder Bay, ON

UUA General Assembly
June 20-24 – Portland, Oregon
www.uua.org/ga/

CUUL (Canadian Unitarian Universalist Leadership) School
July 19-22 – Hamilton, ON

Regional Fall Gatherings 2007
Western – Edmonton, AB
BC – Victoria, BC
Eastern – St. John's, NL
Central – Mississauga, ON

International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU)
November 3-6
Oberwesel, Germany
www.icuu.net



Note: Registration forms, additional events and information for CUC events at: www.cuc.ca/calendar.htm

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CUC Friends are special people who help the organization meet its annual goals through direct financial gifts. Will you become a Friend?

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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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Deadline for next issue **January 15, 2007**



Printed on Canadian-made, acid-free, recycled paper (100% post-consumer fibre)

Canada Post Agreement #40009492
Send Address Corrections and Returns to info@cuc.ca or:
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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL

Director of Regional Services – West (“Regional Director”)

The Regional Director–West works with two established Regional Network Groups to provide workshops, communications and consultations to member congregations in the BC and Western regions. Directors of Regional Services recruit and coordinate other key volunteer teams including an annual Host Congregation Regional Fall Gathering Planning Team.

Working as part of a national staff team, they are active on weekly staff teleconferences, frequent email and on both regional and national email groups.

Can you:

- Recruit, inspire and motivate volunteers?
- Effectively use limited financial resources and abundant human resources to build a team and deliver top quality programs to our members?
- Collaborate with staff team members across the country—primarily by email and telephone?
- Set realistic goals for and with key volunteers; propose and monitor a budget of approximately \$45,000?
- Synthesize reports and policy decisions in order to create practical, relevant program resources for members?
- Speak and write with passion about our religion and its place in the country and world?
- Provide leadership development to volunteers and congregational leaders?
- Facilitate discussion, decisions and learning events whether in person, via teleconference or electronic methods?

Working conditions:

- Extensive travel and evening work—often two weekends per month
- Most work done from your own home office—some budget available for direct expenses
- Electronic communication is the primary communication method, with teleconferences second and in-person meetings a very important but less frequent mode
- Travel for team meetings include: two in-person staff meetings per year; two Regional Network Groups meetings in each region and attendance at both Regional Fall Gatherings
- Residence should be in a city with one or more Unitarian congregations in either BC or Western. We are open to proposals on how the role could be done from a smaller centre in a way that makes accessibility possible and affordable.

STARTING SALARY: \$40-45,000

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 28, 2007 EXPECTED START DATE: May 1, 2007

We are open to proposals for job sharing, for example, with one person based in BC and one in Western region.

A search committee will be set up in early 2007. Further information will be available at www.cuc.ca/hr/drs as it is determined.

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