



Hello, friends:

As I did at this time last year, I'm starting out with a few Spring photos from our Nova Scotia garden – because although the season is colder and later than in 2010, the flowers are perhaps even more uplifting to the spirit, and the visiting pheasant, which we seldom see, is a bonus! I hope that wherever you are, and whether Spring is early or late, you'll find spirit-lifting moments in what you see around you. (And I'd love it if you'd tell me about them for inclusion in next month's newsletter.)

*Now to your contributions – annotated with my comments, as I heard no objections last time. But there are very few contributions this time, which I hope is not a silent response: I can't read your minds, so PLEASE let me know if you prefer me **not** to add my babblings and just let your words stand alone as they're quite able to do!*

from **Bunty Albert**

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I'm in England. First we spent a week in Salisbury in a self catering house, did lots of walking and attended a concert in Salisbury Cathedral: the London Philharmonic and Choir, the choir of Clare College Cambridge and three superb soloists doing Elgar's Dream of Gerontius. The performance and venue were outstanding, but I didn't like the work. If I am going to listen to Elgar, I'd rather Pomp and Circumstance or one of his Enigma variations that is also sung as Lux Aeterna. (I can send a photo of the cathedral later.)

We are now in London, and will be here for another week. This morning I attended the Unitarian Church in Kensington at Essex House for a lovely service on being one's true self.

About 40 people, mostly over 50 but a few younger folks, lovely solos and a duet, and hymns that were new to me as hymns, one to the tune of "this old man" and one of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech set to music. It was so nice to be in a congregation larger than four, our current number in PEI, and to be able to sing.

I have not finished reading Secret Daughter, so the book review won't be for a couple of months!

By the way Ann, I see that the W5 program on Childhaven is tonight - and I'll miss it.

Oh, and I hope you're going to advertise the meeting in Buctouche on the weekend before Easter.

Bunty

*In case you, too, missed the (excellent) Child Haven half-hour on W5, you can see it at*

<http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/WFive/20110401/w5-childrens-champions-110402/>



*and here is a note from the show's producers:*

Garry Dwyer-Joyce, W5 Producer

Date: Sat. Apr. 2 2011 6:56 PM ET

When W5 Editor, Michael Morningstar, and I were choosing clips from interviews with the founders of Child Haven International, Bonnie and Fred Cappuccino, he commented, "These people are so optimistic, but so gentle and calm."

At a time of seemingly endless calamity, where whole communities have been destroyed by earthquakes and dictators turn guns on their own people, it was refreshing, almost therapeutic, to meet people who had so much hope for the world and faith in the goodness of human nature.

As we watched the Cappuccinos describe their work, we also realized that underneath their relaxed demeanor was a dogged determination to make the world a better place, a determination forged in the love Bonnie and Fred have shared for over 50 years.

Child Haven International is a Canadian charity that provides shelter, food and an education to poor and orphaned children in South Asia. Many other charities operate in developing countries, but what sets Child Haven apart is the remarkable couple who started the organization.

Their life's journey together began in 1953, when Fred Cappuccino, a Methodist minister who later became a Unitarian, fell in love with Bonnie McClung, a student nurse.

They married and started a family.

So far, so very ordinary -- nothing to set them apart from thousands of other couples in the 1950s.

But the Cappuccinos were different. They were conscious of population pressures around the world, so decided to have just two children born to them and adopt one or two more. But, as Fred affectionately described Bonnie, "She gets carried away and there was one more and one more and two more and one more."

They ended up adopting 19 boys and girls from Korea, India, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Barbados and the United States – a total of 21 children, all crammed into a farmhouse in Maxville, Ontario.

And they didn't stop there. In 1985, they established Child Haven International and now look after more than 1,100 children in eight separate homes in Nepal, Tibet, India and Bangladesh.

***Child Haven International is a project all Unitarians can feel proud about!***

*Bunty also mentioned "the meeting in Buctouche on the weekend before Easter". If you happen to live, as a few of us do, within reach of this lovely place in New Brunswick, and haven't made unbreakable plans for next weekend yet, do call and see if there's still room for you. Here's the information you'll need:*

*April 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> 2011  
5th Annual UU Bouctouche Spring Gathering, Bouctouche, NB  
Contact: **Ray or Ann, at (506) 743-5568***

*Having attended this Spring Retreat in the past, I can promise you that you'd find it wonderfully worthwhile. It's open to all people of a Unitarian spirit and would be another great way to make connections!*

And in similar vein, here's a reminder that the Canadian Unitarian Council Annual Conference and Meeting will take place in Toronto this year, on the Victoria Day weekend (as always), running from May 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. For more information, visit

<http://www.cuc.ca/conference/2011/index.htm>

keeping in mind that you do not need to be a member of a congregation to attend. It's one of the best possible introductions to the Unitarian movement, and with several hundred UUs attending, you're sure to make new friends of similar spirit to your own, with whom you can stay in touch year-round!

from **Kim**, North of 60

[planetgemini@hotmail.com](mailto:planetgemini@hotmail.com)

Well, my quest for resources and ideas for my daughter's spiritual education has been paying off lately. A few weeks back I received a package of stuff I had ordered from the UUA.org website, and have been quite impressed. For the benefit of other parents and educators who may be interested in ordering this type of educational material, here are some titles that I would particularly recommend:

*Tending the Flame - the Art of Unitarian Universalist Parenting*  
*Religious Education at Home (this one is great! a small and easy to read overall guide)*  
*Accept and Value Each Person (for kids)*  
*The Family Book (for kids)*  
*Sunday and Every Day - My Little Book of Unitarian Universalism (for kids)*

Spring may not have 'sprung' yet in the Yukon, but my daughter's development in the UU realm is actually starting to sprout some buds! You may recall that last time I wrote, Georgia had been asking me whether the Great Spirit is a boy or a girl. Well recently she said to me out of the blue: "Mom, I think there's a girl Great Spirit, a boy Great Spirit, and a baby Great Spirit". You gotta love the open mind of a 3 year old!

I'm also doing some development of my own. In keeping with the UU value of being open and accepting of all beliefs, I've been examining my own attitudes lately about fundamental Christian religions and how negative my view has been toward these beliefs. This is a longstanding challenge for me to be sure, but I'm beginning to see where my own prejudices might need just a bit of tweaking and a bit more compassion.

In other news, we've basically just been struggling to survive in the cold and flu "petri-dishes" of our home, our work, and Georgia's daycare! This winter it seems to have been a revolving door of one bug after another for most people in Whitehorse. I say bring on the warm weather, so we can at least get our windows open more often.

At the end of April I'll be going down to Skagway Alaska (about 2 hrs from here) to perform at a small Folk Festival there. I have been a singer/songwriter for many years now, and while I don't do much of it professionally anymore since becoming a mom, I do enjoy the odd opportunity to get out there and play. (It's also generally more 'spring-like' down along the alaskan pacific coast, so I'm looking forward to getting away from all the snowbanks that are still piled up around here!)

Blessed Be to all, and have a Happy Easter/ Beltane /Passover / St. George's Day or whatever other celebration you choose to have this month!

Cheers,            Kim Rogers    Whitehorse, Yukon  
*Always take the High Road. There's usually less traffic there .*

. ~ k ~ .

from Janet Vickers

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Spring is arriving on Gabriola. We have daffodils and robin song.

I am catching up on my other work since the play *The Odd Couple* (female version) [http://www.gabriolaplayers.ca/scrapbook/2011/odd\\_couple/The\\_Odd\\_Couple/index4.html](http://www.gabriolaplayers.ca/scrapbook/2011/odd_couple/The_Odd_Couple/index4.html) is now over, and looking forward to more walks down to Berry Point to hear the sea lions and flocks of sea birds. The eagles with their young seem to have moved elsewhere but the remains of their lunches, cleaned up to bare bones by raccoons, dot the road.

Tony and I are looking forward to vegetables in the garden. At least we imagine them now. At our book club recently we read "In Defense of Food" by Michael Pollan and feel optimistic about our new health rituals and produce from the back yard.

I attach a picture of Twin Beaches - a nearby location to gather deep thoughts and a little sea weed for the compost.

regards

Janet



**Twin beaches, Gabriola Island**

from **Alison Kilpatrick**

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During the past month, I have been emerging slowly out of a particularly grey set of winter doldrums. Winter did not last particularly long here in Nova Scotia, but we anticipate spring so much --and the outdoor activities, e.g., walking and gardening-- that the painstakingly slow onset of spring in this province can drive one mad.

That was one of the reasons Jim and I elected to become Snowbirds for this first time in our marital career. We took off for parts South Carolinian and Virginian in the US for the month of March...and we did, indeed, get lots of spring weather. Camellias, azaleas, jasmine, and wisteria were blooming in abundance.

We attended a service at the Unitarian church in Charleston. What a magnificent church, and the service! The theme was music, both serious and light-hearted classical...everything from *The Flower Duet* by Délibes, to humorous fare by PDQ Bach. Interspersed with the kind of readings that one looks forward to in a UU service, it was inspirational and felt like coming home. We toured the cemetery, adjacent to the church, afterward -- a wonderful, tumbling memorial of plants and time-worn stones, many dating back two hundred years or more.

The other reason we felt a keen need to escape was the death of our beloved canine companion, Maggie, a border terrier. She lived an eventful and vigorous life for 15-1/2 years, and it was very hard to let her go. Our time away was restorative and helped put our feet on the path of the rest of our life, with cherished memories of a pretty outstanding doglet.



Jim (Ludwig) with Maggie, 2004

*Books read recently and recommended:*

When Alice Lay Down with Peter, by *Margaret Sweatman* (Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2001)  
... if any of our IMAUU band of merry readers have read this one, I would love to hear their impressions of this book. It ranks as one of my favourites.  
The Underpainter, by *Jane Urquhart* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1997)  
Anil's Ghost, by *Michael Ondaatje* (Vintage Canada, 2001)  
The Seamstress, by *Frances des Pontes Peebles* (Harper, 2009)

*Book almost finished: A Map of the World, by *Jane Hamilton* (Doubleday, 1994).*

I've started up a new company, Quercus Arborealis Publications, wading into the weird and wonderful world of editing and publishing. First jobs include two novels by Jim, his first and its sequel: a story of eco-terrorism but, of course, with a love story as the sub-plot.

Somehow, I'm going to fit all this in while (a) preparing for a Grade III Piano exam in June, and (b) getting reacquainted with, and continuing to design and grow, our gardens. I am pleased to report that our two Windmill Palms (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) weathered the winter very well. One of the fronds was damaged from the weight of snow but, otherwise, I think we have found the formula for keeping these plants out-of-doors in our Nova Scotia climate :-). Next trial for "pushing the zone" will be hybrid Camellias, bred for winter hardiness. This is so much fun!

Best regards to all our IMAUU friends, Alison Kilpatrick

And here's my own check-in:

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After six very good years here in south west Nova Scotia, we've made the decision to move back to Ontario – not instantly, but when we can sell our house, which may take quite a long time in the sadly depressed economy of this area. It's not that we haven't loved it here (and John would actually be glad to stay here forever) but I'm missing my family, old friends and Unitarian community more and more as time goes by. We've had a good season here, and now another season is coming.

In case you immediately wondered if I'd abandon this newsletter when we move: NO! I would very much like to carry on with it, unless anyone finds it inappropriate for someone who hopes to once again have the joy of congregational connection. IMAUU has meant at least as much to me as to any of you, and I want to carry it with me!

Easter is late this year (makes me wonder if there's some mystical connection between this totally artificial date and the totally natural unfolding of Spring!) so I'm in good time to share with you a favourite reading. I've used this as the Opening Words to Easter services many times in congregations where I've ministered – and since being an Individual UU, I've shared it in other ways. It's one of my very favourite pieces, and it's by *Dianne E. Arakawa*:

*Today we give thanks for having made safe journey  
through the cold and long winter months  
when silence engulfed us and stillness encased us  
and barrenness left its mark.*

*We remember those who have helped us make passage,  
who have held us, fed us,  
nurtured us, healed us,  
and offered us enduring encouragement.*

*Let us enter this new season  
with appreciation for the past,  
with patience for things that require time to change,  
and with hope for the resurrection of the Spirit of Life.*

Here's another good reading about Easter, followed by some other parts of a service,  
which I hope may stimulate your own thoughts and reflections:

*"Blessing the Blend" by Jane Rzepka*

*Every year I fight the feeling that our UU churches just can't win on Easter. Our familiar  
congregation will come through the doors, alongside a number of Easter visitors we've never  
seen before. Why do they come?*

*To hear familiar, traditional, Easter music.*

*To **not** hear familiar, traditional, Easter music.*

*To be reminded of the newness of spring, the pagan symbols of the season and the  
lengthening days, without a lot of talk about Jesus and resurrection.*

*To be reminded of Jesus and His resurrection, without a lot of talk about the newness of  
spring, the pagan symbols of the season, and the lengthening days.*

*To participate in a family service, where children delight in discovering the many roots  
of our religious tradition.*

*To participate in a family service, where adults celebrate the undeniably Christian  
holiday, Easter.*

*We each have religious stories, spring dreams, seasonal celebrations. And on Easter  
they're with us, joining together ..... It is our glorious celebration, and by considering the blend  
a blessing, we win every time.*

Reflections: *Easter for Children*

What's today? ..... What's it about? ..... What a mixture of things! Jesus and the Easter Bunny, Springtime and chocolate eggs! I'm going to read you a story which is just as mixed up. It's not really about Easter -- but it is about an egg. It's not exactly true, because what happens in the story couldn't possibly really happen. At least, that's what you may think. That's what a lot of us think about some of the Easter stories, too.

But then again, when we look at daffodil shoots poking through the ground after a long winter like the one we just had, we think that if this can happen maybe anything can happen. Some of you, and some of the grown-up people, may want to think about what's true in this story and what isn't. Or you might just want to enjoy it and not try to figure anything out. It's called Horton Hatches the Egg, and it was made up by the same person who made up the Grinch story which I always like to read at Christmas.

Reflections: *Easter for Adults*

You know, I think Easter for grown-up people is more or less the same as Easter for children. It's a blend of fantasy and truth, myth and mundaneness, just as that reading from Jane Rzepka suggested, just as the story of Horton suggested. There's meaning for old and young and in-between in the many elements of this secular and religious, pagan and Christian holiday, elements which come from all the ages of human history and are to be found not just in Christianity and the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, but in many cultures and times.

I've heard recently that "Easter" was originally the name of a goddess, way back in prehistoric times, but there's a kind of chicken-and-egg quality about this, if you'll pardon the pun. As far as I can tell from my various reliable sources, the word can be traced back to the Indo-European word for "*shining*" or "*dawn*", which then was deified as the Germanic goddess of the dawn, who was worshiped at the Spring Equinox. The first Christian missionaries shrewdly combined their celebration of the resurrection with the older pagan festival honouring the goddess, so that Easter now means the whole Christian and pagan package, or any part of it you want to pull out. And they fit together so beautifully, the story of the coming-back-to-life of Jesus, and the coming-back-to-life of the earth. I can't imagine how they cope with this in Australia, where Easter, or Spring, is celebrated in the Fall. It must be even more confusing than singing "*In the bleak midwinter*" while catching some rays on the beach in high summer.

There's another element of Easter which we sometimes overlook, but which is integral to the Christian celebration, and that's Passover, the Jewish holiday which Jesus was celebrating with his disciples the night before he died, and which marks the beginning of the journey by the children of Israel into the Promised Land -- another kind of coming-back-to-life, from slavery to freedom. Once, on what Christians call Good Friday, I came across this poetic meditation by Lynn Unger, about the night of Passover:

*They thought they were safe that spring night,  
when they daubed the doorways with sacrificial blood.  
To be sure, the angel of death passed them over, but for what?  
Forty years in the desert without a home, without a bed,  
following new laws to an unknown land.  
Easier to have died in Egypt or stayed there a slave,  
pretending there was safety in the old familiar.  
But the promise, from those first naked days outside the garden,  
is that there is no safety, only the terrible blessing  
of the journey.  
You were born through a doorway marked in blood.  
We are, all of us, passed over,  
brushed in the night by terrible wings ...  
... that we might, at last, glimpse the stars,  
brilliant in the desert sky.*

All these themes merge in our celebration of Easter: the ancient salutation of the dawn, of the life which returns with each new day and each Equinox, each Springtime, the ever-renewed struggle of oppressed peoples to move from bondage into freedom, the faith that these forces, of the dawn, the spring, the exodus, the resurrection, are worthy of our faith and our commitment. In the words of another UU minister, *Mark Harris*,

*Is the resurrection real? If we believe in a creative power which shatters the icy tomb of winter with the life-giving miracle of spring, we have seen a resurrection. If we believe in a creative power which moves tens and then tens of thousands of people to cry against the injustices of society, enabling the downfall of hatred and prejudice, then we have created a resurrection. If we believe in a creative power lying within each human breast which enables us to break the bonds of personal pain and know the hope of new tomorrows, then we have experienced a resurrection.*

*At Easter time ..... we celebrate the untold number of courageous individuals and groups who have sacrificed their lives to liberate others from oppression and create a more just and loving world. We celebrate the ability of the human heart to overcome personal tragedy or handicap and affirm once again the ability to love or excel when many others would have given up all hope. Easter celebrates the times of witnessing, experiencing and creating the resurrections of human life.*

*Perhaps the most critical part of the Easter message to Unitarian Universalists is the power within the heart of each person to bring life out of death. There is great undying potential buried beneath lifelessness and hopelessness. In the resurrection story there is both humiliation and death, but in the end also a new life of the spirit. For us it means confronting the deep wounds and scars we have suffered and then allowing ourselves to be transformed anew. When we are enslaved by bonds of sorrow or hate or greed, the experience of turning our lives in a new direction means we can forgive ourselves for imperfections. When this forgiveness occurs we are free to reach out and begin fulfilling lives of genuine human sharing.*

So this is Easter for all ages. Eggs and bunnies and chocolate for the children. Dawn and Spring and Passover and Resurrection for the adults. Stories from the ancient past and from a mere two thousand years ago and from Dr. Seuss and from each other, as we tell our tales of personal coming-back-to-life. I wish you a happy Easter, and -- more than that -- a time of transformation, of changing from all that is not fully alive to all that is, a Springtime of the soul.

### An Easter Sunday Sharing:

The symbols of Easter are not only things we look at, such as the flowers and the frisky little lambs, and the bunnies. They are also the foods we share together, particularly chocolate Easter eggs and special Easter bread.

*Let's share these things together now, and we'll remember the Easter message that out of death comes life.*

Bread is blessed -- by the elements of which it is made, by the work of its making and transformation, by the love with which it is given. This bread is blessed in these ways. May it also be blessed for us in our eating it together, in this family, this community.

*The ingredients of the bread and chocolate were once living -- wheat and yeast and cocoa beans and sugar cane -- but in order to become the food that nourishes us they had to die. As we eat them, let us give thanks for the food itself and for the opportunity to eat it together.*

(Bread and chocolate eggs are shared and enjoyed.)

*Life is a gift for which we are grateful. May we do all we can to sustain and renew it, not only at Easter, not only in Springtime, but in all the seasons of our lives.*

**Love and warm wishes always,**

*Anne*

