



Dear friends,

Inspired by the first message below, I'm including some maps in this newsletter, to give us (I hope) a better feeling for where we scattered UUs are actually living and journeying.

from **Bunty Albert**

bunty1948@gmail.com

My partner Frank and I are leaving today or tomorrow for Frankfort, Michigan, on our motorbikes; we'll be gone three and a half weeks. We intend to travel there via the north shores of the St. Lawrence and of Georgian Bay and to return via Manitoulin Island, the Bruce Peninsula, Kitchener, and the northern US. In Frankfort we'll visit my son, Michael, daughter-in-law Amy, and grand daughter Annabelle, who live in Thailand but are staying with Amy's parents in Michigan. In Kitchener we will see my daughter Danielle, Adam, and the two grandchildren: Charlotte and Callum. It's a logistical challenge getting everything you need (but not everything you want) on the bikes without overloading them, having extra layers, rain gear, maps, and these days, chargers for all the various electronic equipment we SEEM to need. Thanks heavens we're not camping; I have no idea how we'd pack it all!

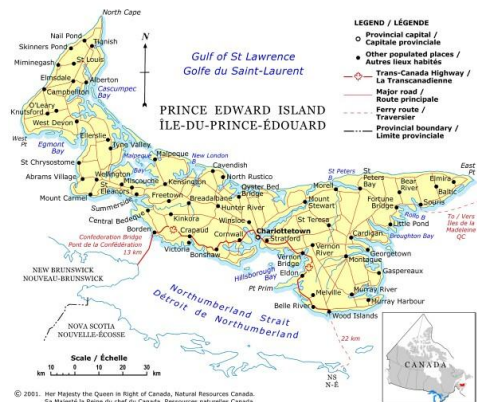
This is the longest trip we've ever done and the first long one in almost five years. Biking is exhilarating but requires 100% concentration. A rider from Boston once told me it was the closest she ever comes to being present all the time. And the best part of the trip, of course, is seeing the little ones, now 1, 3 and 1.

Blessed be.

P.S. I still owe you a book review on Secret Daughter!

Bunty Albert

**Trans Canada Highway,
Vernon Bridge PE**





< And here's the scope of Bunty's motorbike trip west.

We'll look forward to hearing about it!

from **Elisabeth Michnick**

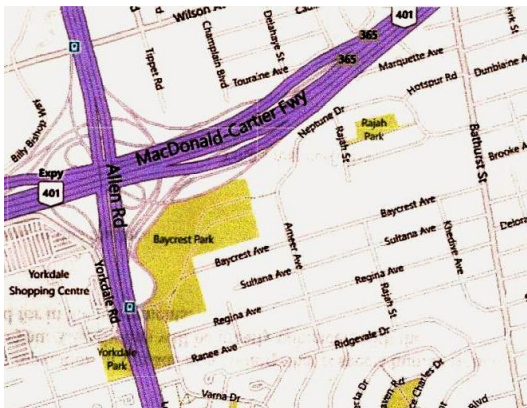
bert.michnick@sympatico.ca

Don't have too much about Unitarians to report except that 1st Church Toronto continues during the summer to have great services. An excellent summer Minister in July and a very interesting sermon from a congregation member last Sunday. We very wisely hired some professional musicians recently and between them and our regular music director and our pianist and our excellent choir we have great music at every service. Our beloved Minister, Shawn Newton, will return later in August,

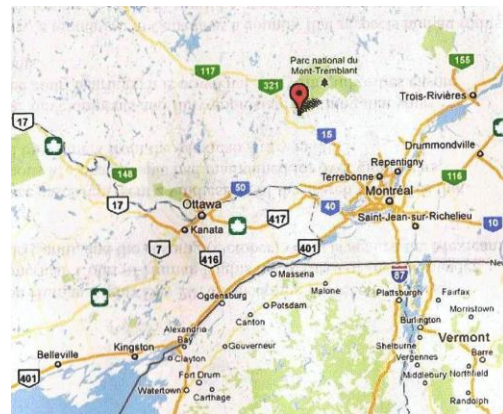
Otherwise, my summer has been quite exciting, with a trip on "Porter" to Mont Tremblant with my daughter, visiting home from her job in Turkey, and two unexpected weddings of my two younger grandchildren. one was that of my granddaughter to a young man from Israel, and the other my younger grandson whose new wife is from Chile. Both occasions were small but beautiful. I had the pleasure of singing at both ceremonies. Now I am just recovering but always seem to keep busy.

Love to all, Elisabeth

**Baycrest Centre, Ameer Ave.,
Toronto, ON**



home in Toronto



visit to Mont Tremblant

from **Stacey Anne Vickery**

greenwylowwytch@yahoo.com

We just came home from a pagan festival here in the annapolis Valley. We had an amazing time. I really enjoyed singing with the drums and teaching a song to a few new friends. Cara was able to watch over a "little one" for friends and learned a lot about herself and really came to a "growing up" place. I am very proud of her. Brianna had a blast running and playing with the other children and Nicholas had so much fun he threw up on the third night (poor baby)...

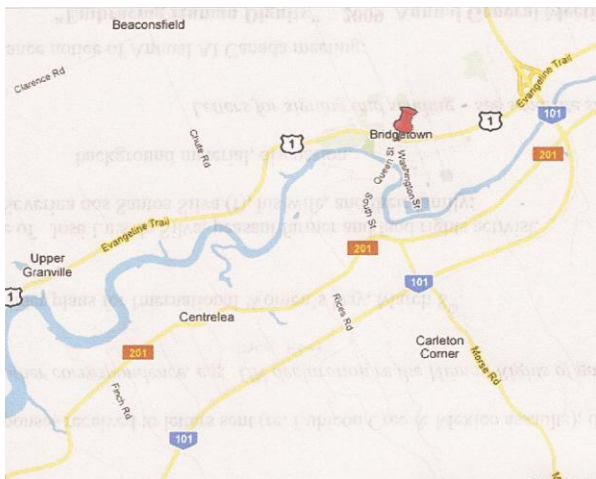
We are getting ready for the 4H exhibition, both girls have projects to submit. Cara participated in Foods and will be baking more muffins... Brianna was an explorer and has several pieces to show off.

Nicholas will be starting school this year - grade one (we held him back for Primary), I am excited for him and sad to see him so grown up. the girls look forward to school as well, I never thought I would be sending my babies to school, I did love homeschooling.

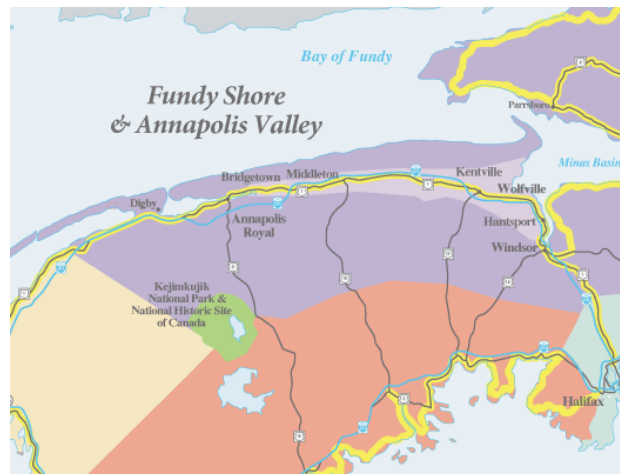
Things with David are uncomfortable right now - I am not sure what will happen, but I think that change is coming. Wish us luck and peace through the process.

Stacey Anne

Hwy. 201, Bridgetown, Nova Scotia B0S 1C0



Hwy. 201, Bridgetown



Annapolis Valley, NS

from Janet Vickers

janetvickers@shaw.ca

The weather here has been lovely and our vegetables are doing well. The figs on the fig trees are not yet ripe but they are plentiful.

We have had our first murder since 2005 and I must confess I felt it more here than when this happened in Abbotsford. We have become used to not locking our doors, giving lifts to strangers when we see them on the road. But we feel very closely the loss of the mother who was killed, the killer who is lost himself, and the young man of 18 who is critically injured.

From Lipstick Press - we have had a very successful response to our call for healing poems for Jack Layton. Please visit the site and read through a few:

<http://lipstickpoetry.blogspot.com/>.

On a more positive note - there are many concerts, plays and festivals happening now here. So much that one is forced to choose and cannot attend all the offerings.

best
Janet

RR#1, Gabriola, BC



Gabriola Island (facing Vancouver)

and from me, Anne Treadwell

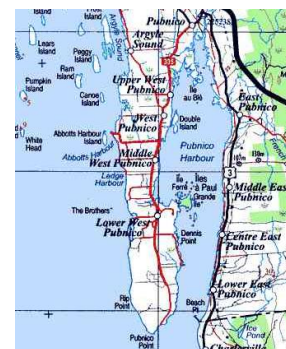
treadwell@ns.sympatico.ca

We lead a very quiet life here in Middle West Pubnico. You can perhaps sense that from the fact that this week's excitement at our home was seeing a kingfisher (juvenile belted kingfisher to be exact) on our deck railing. (S)he was patiently watching the pond below but, as far as we know, didn't actually make off with any of our goldfish. It's only the second time we've seen a kingfisher here – our pond may be too small to generate much (king)fishing interest, although we think it's just the right size. You can see the kingfisher at the top of this newsletter, and below are some views of the pond.



Today, a neighbour in her 60s was canvassing us for a local cause; seeing our “For Sale” sign she asked “Where are you moving to?” (I liked that she assumed we would sell the house one day) I told her we were going back to Ontario to be closer to family and church community, and she commented, “I’ve never lived anywhere but Pubnico, though I’ve moved from Lower West to West and now Middle West, and all my family are within a few minutes of here.” Typically, she’s one of 11 children, though the next generation is Canadian average size!

That’s a common story in this close-knit little Acadian community (or collection of communities: there are eight Pubnicos!) where everyone is (literally) related to everyone else, and people are more easily identified by first name and location than by one of the prevalent last names! We’ll be sorry to leave in many ways, but I’m looking forward so much to being once more in a place where I’m not only closer to children and grandchildren but have an extended family in a UU congregation. Wish us luck with selling (the housing market is **extremely** depressed here), while knowing that we’re likely to be here for quite some time yet.



Some orientation to where “here” is, in southwest Nova Scotia, near Yarmouth

Because the focus in this August newsletter contributions has been on places and on journeys, I'll end it with the following rather randomly-chosen pieces, loosely on that theme. I hope you enjoy them, for reflection and (perhaps) response.

(Author unknown, used for Chalice Lighting at the beginning of a Sunday service)

In the mystery of life about us, there is light.
It shines upon a place to be, to grow, to rejoice.
It opens pathways to love.
Let the light we kindle go before us,
Strong in hope, wide in good will,
Inviting a new day to come.

.....

There is a Hasidic story about the child of a rabbi who used to wander in the woods. At first his father let him wander, but over time he became concerned. The woods were dangerous. The father did not know what might be lurking there.

He decided to discuss his concern with the boy. One day he took his son aside and said, *"You know, I have noticed that each day you walk into the woods. I am curious why you go there."*

The boy said to his father, *"I go there to find God."*

"That is a very good thing," the father replied. *"I am glad that you are searching for God. But, my child, don't you know that God is the same everywhere?"*

"Yes," the boy answered, *"but I'm not."*

.....

from **Joseph Campbell**:

The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world.

Milky Way Amusement Park from Parables from other Planets,
by Hugh and Gayle Prather

The true implications of many great sayings go unrecognized on the planets where they originate. One of the most profound sayings originated on the planet Earth, where the words have been set to music and are often sung, but are basically ignored by the millions who have heard them. But in other parts of the galaxy, travellers have listened to the words during their visits to Earth and have returned home to repeat them. As a result, they now hold the hallowed position of a galactic hymn.

The Milky Way Amusement Park, which occupies three planets and a moon, has constructed its main water ride around the theme of this anthem. Enlightenment Way, as it is called, is a thousand-mile-long river ride that could take many years to complete. Yet if traversed correctly it can be completed easily within a day.

At the start of their journey, travellers are given only a copy of the hymn and a seat belt. At first, they may not realize that the river moves deceptively fast, but this becomes increasingly evident the longer they are in their boats. Scattered along the river's path are alluring ports of pleasure whose sights and sounds promise countless means of easing one's way; mock battles on the shores over an endless list of issues on which one is urged to take sides; public service announcements on how turning round and rowing up the river would have cardiopulmonary benefits; signs that warn of indescribable disasters unless one leaves the river; and spotlights on other boats that have stopped to be outfitted in either fashionable or unconventional trimmings. Rapids, whirlpools, waterfalls and swamps suddenly appear and disappear along the way. One is often sucked under or hurtled forward only to discover -- if the disaster did not succeed in driving the traveller off the river -- that the boat's progress has been unaffected and the journey's end is all the more assured.

The words of the anthem after which this ride is fashioned counsel that you must keep your hands busy in purposeful activity but that you must not take the activity too seriously, remembering always that the actual work is being carried on by the current which conveys you upon its back. The hymn goes on to make this remarkable promise: that if you will but allow yourself to be carried along in this manner, you are guaranteed to be rewarded with four parts happiness to every three parts of non-interfering effort. Nor has the explanation been omitted for why this must be so, because the riddle of human life itself is solved in the anthem's final words.

The hymn itself is very short and runs as follows:

Row, row, row your boat

Gently down the stream.

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,

Life is but a dream.

from *Henry David Thoreau*

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by human feet; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if you advance confidently in the direction of your dreams, and endeavor to live the life which you have imagined, you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. You will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within you; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in your favor in a more liberal sense, and you will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as you simplify your life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness.

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

A Walk in the Park *Rev. John Weston*

Some years ago, during a weekend in New York, my wife Susan and I took in the Guggenheim at length. After what must have been two hours, making our way from picture to picture, advancing and pausing, advancing and pausing, we made a mad, albeit limping, dash for freedom and Fifth Avenue, swearing we would never go to another museum in our lives.

What do we do now? Dismissing the prospect of alternative instances of High Culture we hopped a southbound bus the twenty blocks to Central Park Zoo. There, we spent the next hour making our way . . . are you ready? . . . from exhibit to exhibit, advancing and pausing, advancing and pausing. And then, refreshed . . . refreshed! . . . we made it back to the Guggenheim, re-energized, for another hour of delight.

Time and again we have puzzled over what it was at the zoo that re-equipped us to face the pictures, until a piece in the New York Times "Science" section a few weeks ago cleared it up. Everyone is equipped with two neural networks for paying attention, we learned: one for examining phenomena closely, and another for receiving sense impressions spontaneously.

Either one of these networks can be overtaxed, apparently, at which point exercising the other one provides relief. The randomness of a walk in a natural setting, where sense impressions come to one unbidden, is thus restorative to hardworking, over-focused people such as Susan and me—and, I daresay you.

I have long known that “a walk in the park” is good for me and for my outlook on life. Thus, I walk four to five miles a day in the city of Boston, and over the last few summers I have backpacked across the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire on the Appalachian Trail, with Maine to come this summer. But let me tell you about the other day in Boston.

I was walking through the Public Garden at about 7:30 on a chilly March morning when I glimpsed a critter running up a tree. It was black, three-and-a-half to four feet long, included a long, bushy tail of about a third its length, surefooted and agile as could be. An oversized domestic cat? An aerial dog?

Nope—it was a fisher, a.k.a. fisher cat, cousin to mink, weasel, and otter. Not a cat, doesn't eat fish, but a fisher cat nonetheless, looking like the product of the interspecific union of a river otter and a black fox. What was he doing out of the North Woods, running up and down trees in the Public Garden? He was looking for a squirrel breakfast, most likely. In the process, he gave me ten minutes of the purest and most unalloyed pleasure I've had in some time—talk about spontaneously received sense impressions!

So, if you find yourself bent over and limping with the sheer psychic weight of attending to phenomena that someone, if not you yourself, feel it's important for you to attend to, take a walk in the park. Who knows what will reveal itself to you?



That's all for this month – but keep in touch with me and with each other at any time!

In faith and love,

Anne