

Greetings to all in this gradually-growing network of Individual UUs! We have two new members this month, and another whom I hope to introduce to you next time.

Noreen Smith (smithfsj@gmail.com) wrote to the CUC office,

“How can I find UU followers near me? I am very interested in what I have learned so far (online) about UUs, but I would love to talk (email? but preferably in person) with those who follow UU beliefs. I live in Fort St. John, BC. Can you connect me with anyone?”

It felt good to be able to tell Noreen about this fledgling network, and I was delighted when she wrote back:

“Thanks for the low pressure inviting approach. It is scary to reach out to a stranger/ organization when you are not exactly sure what it is you are looking for and who it is that may answer you.”

And **Stacey Vickery** (greenwillowwytych@yahoo.com), who used to be in the Waterloo congregation but is now in rural Nova Scotia, wrote,

"Your project sounds interesting, I would love to participate in it. I will be quite truthful - we are busy and have a lot of projects of our own, so time is limited. I look forward to hearing more from you and any other people who are involved, and understanding more and using the lessons in my teaching.

Our project list is big at the moment. I am homeschooling my children, running a child care business (two extra children, both under the age of two) and starting a Barter Community called Annapolis Barter - this is my community based initiative project and takes up a lot of my spare moments.

Since moving to N.S. I have learned how to bake bread and pizza, how to knit (straight knitting so far, my scarf is taking forever to finish) and how to grow a garden, it looks like we may get broccoli and tomatoes (the beans and peas look like they bit the dust). It has been a learning year..."

Welcome, Noreen and Stacey! And please, everyone, feel free to contact these two new IMs, either directly or through a note to me which can be included in the next newsletter. (May I suggest, too, that when introductions are being made a photo shared can be hugely helpful in “personalizing” the contact. It would be excellent, eventually, to have a IM photo-page on the CUC website.)

A couple of people responded to my question about how you prefer to receive the newsletter, and from that small but unanimous sample I have the sense that “text-only”, in the

body of the email, with a link to the website for the full version, is best. Let me know, please, if I've read this right or if you have a different opinion. Nothing is set in stone, nor will be.

IMs Scott and Becky, whose wonderful travel blog some of us have been following, are now back in Canada (from the far east) – here's a small excerpt from a recent posting, and their whole excellent adventure can be found at <http://goingeast.ca/blog/2009/>

Sunday, July 5th, 2009

Our journey brought us to Kitimat so that we could visit Becky's parents, and so that we could attend Becky's twentieth high school reunion. Becky finds it hard to believe that it has been 20 years since she left Kitimat. It seems like yesterday and yet so much has happened since then.

Much of our time was spent visiting some of Becky's closest high school friends; unfortunately, not everyone she wanted to see was in town. She really enjoyed the brief chance to catch up with Gwen and Natalie – both of whom are doing very well. The reunion committee did a great job setting up a few events, and we used those opportunities to see just how much people have changed in the last 20 years. Most of the girls looked the same but with a few more wrinkles. A lot of the guys were completely transformed. Many are much more friendly people than they were in high school – funny how aging does that too us. Not too surprisingly, Becky won the award for having travelled the farthest to get to the reunion – a nice MESS (Mount Elizabeth Secondary School) T-shirt. It's hard to beat a journey of 42000 km, although not all by bicycle.

We also spent a little bit of time on the computer updating blog posts and doing research, and touring around Kitimat on our bikes. Now that we're out of southern B.C. we get quite a few more comments and questions about them. No-one at the reunion was willing to try them out though.



At one point, as Scott was working on the computer, he glanced out the living room window and noticed something moving. After a double-take, he realized it was a female moose and her calf walking up the street. A true [Northern Exposure](#) moment!

Earlier this year, someone suggested that it would be good to have regular “*check-ins*” with people in this network of individual members. Picking up on that, I invite you to email a paragraph each month telling us what’s happening with you – accompanied by a photo if you like. To make it easier, I’ll send a note early each month reminding you that your “*check-in*” will be welcome – but of course there will be times when you’re not so inclined or too busy to participate. Keeping in mind that many of us miss congregational life, this will be a small way of coming closer to the “*sharing of joys and sorrows*” which is part of many UU Sunday services. We may not want, especially at first, to share deep personal matters in print, but we can open the way for that varied one-to-one communication which I hope very much will happen.

Just to start it off, here’s my check-in for this month:

On Canada Day, John and I took the ferry from Digby NS to Saint John NB, then drove to Newport, Vermont, for a reunion of John’s family. It was a good time, except for the weather. At one point, 20 of us took the “tram” to the top of Jay Peak, from which, we’d been assured, the views would be marvellous unfortunately, deep fog assured that we could only see the signs pointing to all parts of Quebec and Vermont! On our return to Nova Scotia a few days later, however, we’ve enjoyed more than a week of glorious sunshine and I’ve been outside working happily in our garden for many hours. Photos below show me (fuzzily) at Jay Peak in drizzly fog, and part of our garden in sunshine.



I’d also like to suggest two other regular features of this newsletter:

first, a **Question Box** – specifically, but not exclusively, for people new to Unitarian Universalist thought and practice. Ask away, and if I can’t answer your question, someone else in this network will probably be able to, or to direct you to a helpful source.

second, a **Request Box** – for those of you who joined the network hoping for some of the things I mentioned in the initial (January) newsletter, in which I wrote that you might want:

*Enhanced access to appropriate **worship material, R.E. resources, etc.:** I'd like to compile and even develop worship and **educational materials appropriate for individuals rather than congregations**, so let me know if you have thoughts on what could be useful. I'd also be happy to compile and distribute **talks (from lay people and Ministers) which are likely to be particularly of interest to individual UUs.***

Maybe you also have your own wish-list for the programme, and I'd love to know about it. Of course, there are no guarantees as to what can actually be done, but saying what you hope for is a great start!

Do please send me your **questions and requests**, as well as the **names and email addresses** of any people you think might enjoy or benefit from this IMAUU connection. Meanwhile, as always, warm good wishes from the Editor, who is again looking forward to hearing from you!

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