



Hello, friends – and I hope the dearth of communication from network members means that you're all happily busy with other things! If they're outdoor activities, I also hope you've seen more sun than we have. It did shine, tantalizingly, for a few days – one of which was almost HOT! – then punishingly withdrew, and it's been rainy and chilly again. Still, the flowers bloom and the landscape is **very** green!

It's been encouraging to hear from a couple of you that you really enjoy this newsletter. I enjoy putting it together, too, so it seems a good arrangement. Let's begin this one with the two contributions I've received:

from **Maureen Killoran**

[mk@spiritquest.ws](mailto:mk@spiritquest.ws)

What a blessing it is to me to feel this connection, as an ex pat and a "professional itinerant."

My husband, Peter Hyatt, and I look forward to the month of July, when I will be on vacation from my ministry at River Road UU Congregation, located within the intensity of the Beltway in Washington DC. I find the DC energy strange and not a little paranoid -- but then it is 25 years since I lived in Canada and no doubt my memories of the energy there is tinged by nostalgia! We look forward to taking our Boston Terrier, Wicki, and driving up to Maine where we have rented a cottage on the water. But between now and then, I have a week's conference in Nashville with the interfaith Interim Ministry Network and then another in Charlotte North Carolina at the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly. By the end of those two weeks, this introvert will definitely be ready for two weeks of almost nothing scheduled and no internet!

Blessings,  
*Maureen*

*Rev. Dr. Maureen Killoran  
Interim Senior Minister  
River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Bethesda, MD.*

301 229 0400 x106  
828 699 9038 (cell)  
[www.interimlyours.blogspot.com](http://www.interimlyours.blogspot.com)



*By coincidence, our second contributor also has ministerial training; she's one of a considerable number who minister in a variety of ways other than leading a congregation:*

from **Elisabeth Bailey**

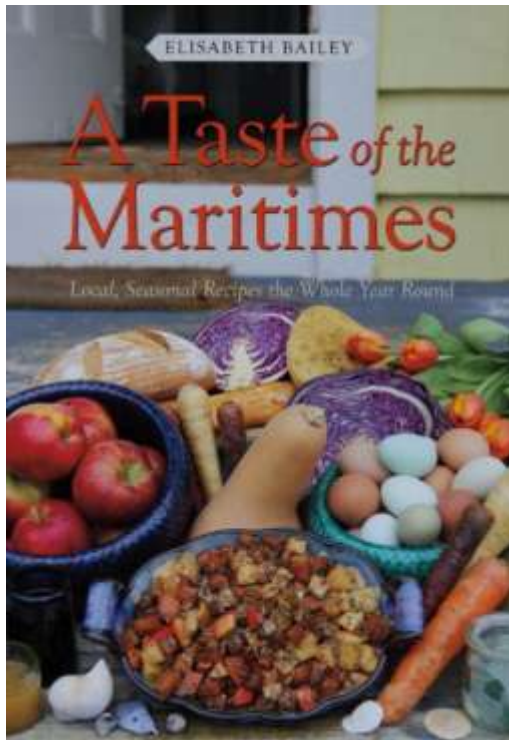
[uuelisabeth@yahoo.com](mailto:uuelisabeth@yahoo.com)

Let's see... I just wrote a cookbook. *A Taste of the Maritimes: Local, Seasonal Recipes the Whole Year Round* will be published by Nimbus this October. I'll be teaching a few recipes from the book at a cooking class in Halifax through the Ecology Action Centre on July 4, if any UUs are interested in going.

In other news, I'm enjoying the heck out of life in Lunenburg--canoeing, gardening, hiking, biking, and homeschooling our 6 year old, Charlie. I'm attaching a picture of Charlie at his first "internship"--selling candles at the farmers' market!

I always love reading your newsletter.

*Elisabeth*



(I believe this is not necessarily the final choice of cover, though it looks great to me! A.)



and from me, **Anne Treadwell**

[treadwell@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:treadwell@ns.sympatico.ca)

I've already moaned enough about the weather, so I'll move on the "*another glass of whine*": our house shows no signs whatsoever of being sold in the near future, so we're in a kind of limbo – planning our return to Ontario, but with little idea of when that will happen. Perhaps this isn't a bad reminder of the temporary nature of all aspects of our lives: we can never be sure that any aspect of the-way-things-are-now will last – even till tomorrow morning, let alone till next year – or, conversely, that the changes we're hoping for will ever happen on the schedule we'd like.

Along with recognizing that "all is flux", it's important to me to try to appreciate the good moments of this "limbo". (*You probably know the Buddhist story of the man who was walking across a field and encountered a tiger. He fled, with the tiger chasing him. Coming to a steep cliff, high above a raging river, he caught hold of a wild vine and swung himself over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above. Two mice began to gnaw away at the vine that was holding him..... The torrent pounded on the rocks below ..... The man saw a luscious strawberry near him. Hanging on to the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other. Ah, how sweet it tasted!*)

I'm still a beginner at living in the present, but I **am** enjoying my garden, though I know how transient it is. Well, no, I actually **don't** know how transient it is, just that we won't be living here **forever**. Perhaps another Spring, perhaps not .....

Here are a few images of the ephemeral June flowers, thanks to my photographer spouse.



*Warmly, Anne*

As I didn't hear from any of you who attended the Canadian Unitarian Council ACM in Toronto on the Victoria Day weekend, I'm guessing you're well occupied with processing the events and ideas and (probably) preparing a report to your congregation. Those of us who're not lucky enough to have a congregation would very much like to have a copy of your report (or impressions/ reflections) for the July newsletter – don't wait for the next reminder! Meanwhile, here are a few snippets from the CUC website – always worth browsing, at [www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca).

Go to <http://www.cuc50.ca/acm-2011-video/> for some great views of various highlights of the meetings – you may spot people you know, and you’ll almost certainly, I think, find a heightened sense of connection to our Canadian Unitarian movement, as well as some helpful information and much food for thought.



CUC’s Board of Trustees for  
2011-12:

*Back Row:* John “Mich” Michell,  
Kristina Stevens, Dr. Gary Groot,  
Jennifer Dickson, John Hopewell

*Front row:* Curtis Murphy, Glenda  
Butt, Leslie Kemp, Ellen Campbell,  
Rev. Jessica Purple Rodela.

*(Not in photo:* Micaela Corcoran, Youth Observer to the Board, and Rev. Kathy Sage, Minister Observer to the Board.)

*Also on the website:*



*(left)* Members of the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon celebrate in the June 11, 2011 Pride Parade.

More Canadian Unitarians standing on the side of love! Congratulations to the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and Rev. Brian Kiely — their same-sex marriage float is featured in Pride Week coverage in the Edmonton Journal.

>



I'll end this newsletter with some excerpts from one of the handouts accompanying the presentations by **Rev. Robert Latham** at the CUC gathering, because I think they're just as relevant to individual UUs as to those in congregations:

### **Religious Identity and Character** *Openness, Mindfulness and Reverence*

*The word character derives from Latin which refers to a mark or an engraving. It is something etched. Every religion has such peculiar characteristics. These characteristics translate into lifestyle.*

*Different religions have different characters that have been shaped by their history. The Christian church of the middle ages had a different character than modern Unitarianism. Practice is a tool that eventually etches the character of a religion in some indelible fashion.*

*What a religion announces as its character may be quite different than the perceptions of character which its attitudes and actions convey to the public. Who we perceive ourselves to be may be quite different from how we are perceived. It is possible that the character that is perceived by others is more instructive of reality than our own. For a religion that seeks to influence social destiny, how it is perceived is far more important than its own self-perception.*

*We Unitarians are very fond of our self image. When asked by others to state our perception of character traits we will usually repeat the formula of **freedom, reason, and tolerance**. We rarely question this assertion because it feels right. But is it accurate? I suggest that it may not be.*

*I was raised a fundamentalist Southern Baptist. The implication of our Unitarian "trinity" is that while in that religion I was not free. This is not true. Staying in that religion was an expression of my freedom. Rejecting that religion and becoming a Unitarian was, likewise, an expression of my freedom. Remaining a Unitarian continues to be an expression of my freedom. Freedom is endemic to my choosing rather than a result of my choosing. It is true that we honor the right to choose ones own theology. No one would deny that this is something we value. But it is not a unique mark of character that distinguishes us from other religions.*

*The choice to align with the theology of any religious group is a matter of self selection grounded in freedom. Freedom is a human birthright and not a choice. It is what defines us as humans. How, then, can it be unique to our religious character?*

*The universe has gifted humans with two marvelous capacities that are housed in our mind. One is the ability to reason which is the tool that is the architect of our existence. Reason enables us to construct meaning out of experience. It is the mathematician that separates and divides reality into boundaries and manageable identities. With reason we build civilization. But it is this very capacity that is its limitation.*

*Intuition is the other capacity of our mind. Intuition allows us to leap beyond logic and connect with essence. It empowers us to know without being able to define. It is the ground of all profound relationships of meaning. It is our agent of spiritual communion and fusion. This is so because it can transcend the boundaries and identities that reason creates and restore our connection to the ineffable. There is no better example than the experience of love.*

*Reason alone can initiate blindness and incapacity. It is only when reason and intuition are in blended partnership that we achieve the full knowing and shaping potential intended by creation's gift. Reason is only a partial expression of our gift of mind.*

*Tolerance can be many things at once. It does not produce a singular quality or effect. We are usually tolerant of those whose theology does not threaten us but we can simultaneously be intolerant of those whose theology is a threat. At the same time it is our intolerance that generates so much of the energy we invest in social action projects. Expressed intolerance is the public face of our convictions about human rights and justice. Without this intolerance we would probably be socially ineffective in raising the culture's consciousness about the need for social change.*

*Tolerance can also be a spiritual sedative that induces apathy. It can justify inaction. It can be the impetus of inertia. It can rob us of conviction and social power. We may wish to tread softly when it comes to claiming that tolerance is basic to our religious lifestyle. We are often a decidedly intolerant people – sometimes rightfully and sometimes wrongfully.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*What might be a more accurate reading of our primary religious character traits? I suggest another "trinity": **openness, mindfulness and reverence.***

*What truly distinguishes us from most other western religions is that we are open to new truth. It is this that has been responsible for the evolution of our theology and which holds out the prospect of further evolution. It is openness to truth that keeps us on the cutting edge of theological and social relevance.*

***Openness** is one of the grounds of true liberality. It is what makes it possible for us to encounter the new as we turn the next corner in life. True openness is willing to measure the value of whatever it might confront. It is the aspiration that drives our faith. It is foundational to our character.*

*Our spiritual growth accelerates when we open ourselves to the total gift of mind. When we allow intuition to join reason as an integrated whole we can experience the full measure of awareness in our encounter with life. It is in this experience that we are most likely to both expand our awareness of what we already know and meet new truth on the road.*

*Reasoned logic is a way of capturing truth within the boundaries of definition. But truth is most often first met in its free state as an intuitive encounter. This is a perception affirmed by many scientists who claim that their greatest discoveries were intuitive understandings before they became proven formulas. Intuition permits us to transcend the boundaries established by reason and become one with the being of another. Together, intuition and reason empower us to fully confront the possibilities of living. **Mindfulness** is a primal aspect of our Unitarian character.*

*That which is most obvious about the state of our world is that we must employ a different way of relating if we are to survive. And the more we know about the nature of the universe the more we know that both survival and quality of existence are grounded in how we relate.*

*Ecological awareness has failed as a means of controlling the destruction of human greed. **Reverence** is venerable respect. When reverence is the mode of our relating to creation it can restrain greed and inspire care. Not only is such an approach to relating a necessity of our survival but it is the prerequisite of profound meaning in all relationships.*

*As difficult as expressing reverence might be in cultures that externalize human worth and feed on greed, it is the cutting edge of any saving theology. It is the aura that surrounds the phrase: the interdependent web of existence. It is what the ground of being expects. And it is focal to Unitarian perspectives.*

***Openness, mindfulness and reverence** are who we are as Unitarians. As imperfect religionists we may not totally live up to the meaning of any of these characteristics. However, **if we keep them at the forefront of our mission and ministry we can be a powerful transforming force in the life of our culture.***



That's it for this month – don't forget to stay in touch with one another, to let me know of anything you'd like to see included in next month's (or later) newsletters, and to find joy in the passing moments. Whether you have told the rest of us of your concerns or contributed by simply reading and reflecting on the concerns of others, **may your joys be heightened, your sorrows lightened, and your lives enriched by the connections you find here.**



Warm wishes to you all,

Anne