

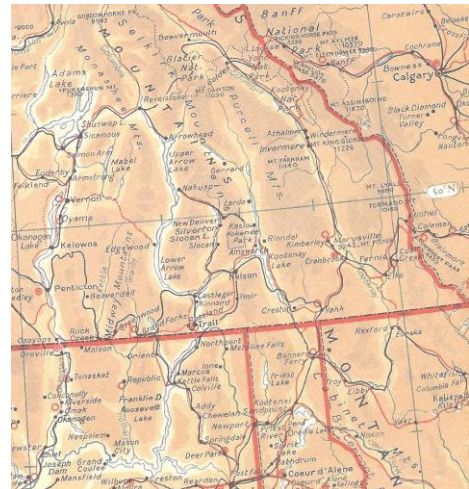


Dear friends,

I'm writing this at the end of a most beautiful sunny weekend, with temperatures around 20C here in the Maritimes, and the Summer's harvest ripening everywhere. Although few of us look forward to the end of Summer as much as to its beginning, most of us enjoy the early Fall with its wonderful colours and sense of fruition – here's hoping it will be a lovely season for all of us.

It's a great pleasure this month to welcome a new member of the network, Rainer Rohr, from Creston, B.C. – a small town which sounds quite idyllic from its website description:

*The town of Creston is located on Highway 3, 28 km south of Kootenay Lake and 11 km north of the United States border. At the geographical centre of the Kootenays, Creston is experiencing a significant increase in economic development and is becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination. The climate of Creston is temperate with a mean daily maximum of 12.9°C and a minimum of 2.2°C.*



from **Rainer Rohr**

[rainer.rohr@gmail.com](mailto:rainer.rohr@gmail.com)

My name is Rainer Rohr and I am 55 years old. I was raised as an evangelical christian and followed that path until I was on the doorstep of becoming an ordained minister. In 1983 I stepped away from the ministry but continued to cling feebly to a faith I now mistrusted.

Just within this past year my wife and I moved from city life (Calgary, AB) to small town life (Creston, BC).



At the same time I finally let go of false ideas regarding the inerrancy of scripture, deity of Christ and the existence of an eternal hell for the punishment of people. Wow! It's a whole new and wonderful world out there. I am a part of it all and am slowly finding out who I really am. I feel refreshed and strengthened by things written by and about Unitarians. I have lived long in the evangelical Christian camp but not without a lot of mental torture and doubt.

I have finally fallen off the fence and landed outside of the camp. The more I look around and read, the more universalist I become. Thank you for access to your current and past newsletters. I am eating them up!

*Rainer*

from **Rebecca Hogue**

[rhogue@pobox.com](mailto:rhogue@pobox.com)

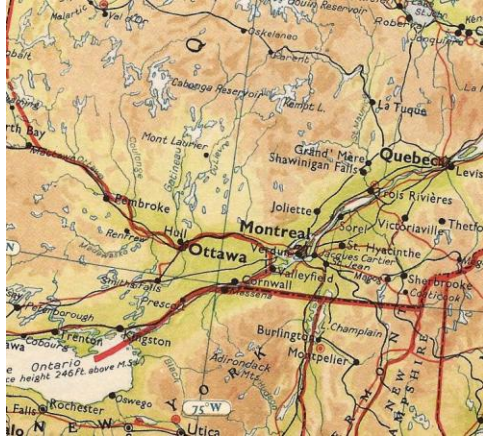
Sorry it has been so long since my last update. Life has been pretty crazy – I don't even remember what I said the last time I sent something, so I'll just tell you a little bit about where we are at right now.

At the end of last September, I hopped on a plane to B.C. to help my parents move from Kitimat to Welland Ontario. On the same day as I left, my husband, Scott, went back to work for Alcatel-Lucent. It was quite a transition for both of us – me mentally thinking about my parents leaving the "home town" when I grew up, and losing my connection to a "home", as they returned to the home town where they grew up. With their move – much closer to us and my brother's family – it means we will see them more often, but it still felt like a loss of home to me. I am destined to be someone without a "*home town*" as Scott and I are likely to move in the next few years. Scott went back to work full time after being off for 2 and half years (a year and a half biking, and a year trying to decided what to do next). The opportunity he went back to is a really good one, and now that its been almost a year, Scott is finally starting to admit that he is mostly enjoying what he is doing.

In January I began a Ph.D in Education at the University of Ottawa. It has been quite a transition, as my last degree was done 100% online, and now I'm studying at a University that doesn't really understand online education. It is also quite a transition going to school full time. I'm now finding myself really busy. Over the summer I got involved with some free online courses and ended up collaborating with a group of seven researchers from around the world. A paper we wrote was accepted to a conference in Beijing – and aeroplan actually worked out – so in October, I'm off to Beijing where I'll get to meet at least 4 of the other researchers in person!

OK, that's all for now. I must get back to completing scholarship applications!

Cheers, *Becky*



*Becky lives in Ottawa – but as with many of our network members, I don't have her address. I realized this when Linda Thomson from the CUC asked me for contact information for IMAUU members, so the CUC can improve connections with us all. If you'd like to send me your address/ phone # etc. (**completely voluntary of course**) I'll have better records – and I promise I won't turn up on your doorstep unannounced!*

from **Noreen Smith**

[smithfsj@gmail.com](mailto:smithfsj@gmail.com)

I have been enjoying a nice summer up here in Fort St. John. The weather has been quite nice, however unusually windy everyday. When the wind stops we seem to suffer from an also unusually large aphid hatching - the little critters fill the sky like summer snow!

I did a bit of travelling in Alberta and BC to visit family, enjoying camping in our new tent trailer - a big step up from tenting on the ground. I continue with my ECE course through the whole summer and am really feeling burnt out. I started up September with two more courses and a third practicum placement. I will have one more in late winter to complete my ECE certificate then hopefully will have the steam to go on to complete my diploma.

I started a new job this week, giving up my WOW Bus job due to my low contract hours of 10 per week. I just couldn't get ahead with schooling and such a small paycheck. I started a one year full time position at the Northern Lights College Daycare center. I will be able to complete this practicum while being paid - first time ever! Before my WOW bus job I worked for the College as an administration clerk. It was nice to be back and see so many familiar faces while starting a 'new' job.

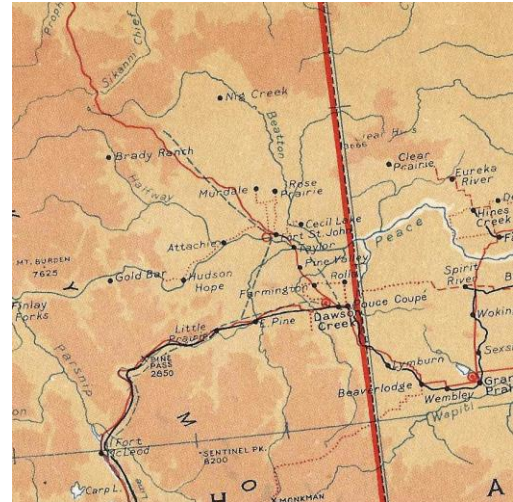
My daughter is back in gymnastics for another season and my son is looking forward to completing grade 12 this year. My husband is also back to work this week - he also works for the College and coincidentally is instructing a class for the month that shares a wall with the daycare. So far he hasn't heard *itsy bitsy spider* or other delights transfer through the walls.

My sister in law and her family moved away from FSJ last month to relocate in Lethbridge, AB. This leaves us all alone with out any close family support. I think I depended too much on my sister-in-law as my sole source of friendship and am now finding that I am going to have to make a significant effort to branch out to my acquaintances and start building some new friendships here.

I have a real adersion to social networking such as twitter and facebook which seems to be the key way of 'getting together' nowadays, and with my hectic schedule its going to be tough, but I'm sure I'll figure something out :-)

So with that I will have to say bye for now. Wishing good health and happiness to all,

*Noreen*



*You may notice that the maps I'm using are rather old – scanned from an ancient atlas – and although the topography probably hasn't changed, the relative size of communities may have done. If you'd like to send me a more current illustration of where you live, that would be great! It's very informative and “connecting” to see how we're scattered all across Canada, mostly in smallish communities but some much larger.*

from **Bunty Albert**

[bunty1948@gmail.com](mailto:bunty1948@gmail.com)

2011 motorcycle adventure -- Vernon Bridge, PEI, to Frankfort, Michigan and return: just over 6000km. Sixteen days of driving, 10 of visiting.

Best things about the trip (besides visits to children and grandchildren):

1 - Seeing parts of Canada and the US for the first time: the Bruce Peninsula, northern Vermont, Algonquin Park, Georgian Bay. We live in a beautiful country, as do our neighbours to the south.

2. People: friendly, helpful, welcoming. We were taken in, fed, and provided with a bed by a farm family south of Lake Simcoe so we'd be sure to be out of a line of thunderstorms before they arrived. Staff in Tim Hortons lent us phone books so we could find B&Bs. People everywhere willing to provide advice on roads, restaurants and gas stations.

3. Curvy roads and just driving to the capacity of the bike: the Matapedia valley, lake and farm country north of Montreal (how we avoided the city), over Jay Peak in Vermont, around tailings near Thetford Mines....

4. Bridges: Wonders of engineering and beauty at Sault Ste Marie, over the Straits of Mackinac, the Thousand Islands bridges at Ivy Lea, and two in Vermont over the north end of Lake Champlain. The views were incredible and only the Mackinaw one was scary.

Worst things about the trip:

1. Bad drivers who don't signal turns or lane changes, who drive too fast, and who think just because you're a motorcycle they can tailgate you, and must pass you.
2. Tropical Storm Irene. Although, after you're soaking wet, and if it's relatively warm, driving in rain isn't so bad. Wind can be worse: on one bridge in NB fighting a cross wind as SUV's passed us, the bike wobbled like a top.
3. The only photos I brought back were of grandchildren; the SD card with photos of the Bruce Peninsula failed.

Outstanding image: The motorcyclist going in the opposite direction in a heavy rain in Algonquin park who pumped his left fist in the air! I laughed out loud and chuckled until it stopped raining. Carpe diem, indeed.



This photo was taken 3 years ago in PEI but it's me (with shorter hair), the same bike, hard cases and the gear I wore on the trip (plus a helmet of course).



*Bunty also contributed a book review for this month's newsletter – of a book she'd mentioned earlier with a strong UU connection, i.e. the UU orphanage Child Haven. Here's her review, slightly condensed:*

## Secret Daughter by *Shilpi Somaya Gowda*

### Plot summary:

Two families, one in India and one in California, are entwined in the telling of this story. The Indian family is poor and Kavita spares her second daughter, Usha, from female infanticide by secretly journeying to Mumbai to leave the child at an orphanage. The family's third child is a boy and when he is an infant they move to Mumbai seeking a better life.

In California, two medical students meet and fall in love. Krishnan, from Mumbai, becomes a skilled and renowned surgeon, Somer, from California becomes a family clinic doctor and is sometimes made to feel inferior due to her career choice. The news that they will not be able to have children devastates Somer but eventually she agrees to adopt from an Indian orphanage financially supported by Krishnan's mother .....

### Comments and Review:

The language is rich and evocative and the book is easy to read. Gowda brings to life the slums and poverty of Mumbai, sumptuous Indian weddings, and the seeming sterility of California life. She voices well the disappointments, love, and emotions of the protagonists and builds well rounded characters.

The themes of motherhood, loss, identity, love, and forgiveness are central to the book. There is no mention of religion or race as factors in the novel, and while the contrast in cultures and income are central to the plot, they are not critical to the inner lives of those in the story.

Because her web site said to do so, prior to presenting Secret Daughter at my book club, I e-mailed Shilpi Gowda and asked her about her audience: "*So, is this a chick book?*" Her reply: "*70% of all fiction buyers are women, and I think that they tend to read books about family and relationships more. But I have heard from many men who have read my novel and enjoyed it!*"

The book leaves much unanswered and therefore many things to think about, such as: **Is inter-cultural adoption a good thing and when is it not? Does wealth make you happy and is there a point at which poverty and privations are so great that you cannot be happy?**

Note: **Childhaven International, founded by UUs Fred and Bonnie Cappuccino**, on which the orphanage to which Usha is taken is modelled, does not allow foreign adoptions. In fact, many of the children in Childhaven orphanages are not orphans at all, but children of mothers with no income.

Good reading to you!

*Bunty*

from **Janet Vickers**

[janetvickers@shaw.ca](mailto:janetvickers@shaw.ca)

I have just witnessed a very powerful aspect of community that you will rarely find reported in the celebrity-worshipping glossy mags, or daily newspapers.

On Gabriola Island on August 3rd, a long time island family were attacked at knifepoint. The mother was killed and her 18 year old son was in critical condition for a long time, but has recovered. The daughter was not around at the time but is now needing to care for her brother as well as her own infant child.

Soon after this tragedy, **People for a Healthy Community** and **Gabriola Arts Council** organized a concert to raise funds for Amy and Trevor Schwartz. I attended the concert and listened to the music and outpouring of love from so many artists and musicians that I was filled with the immediate sense of power that springs from compassion and engagement.

I can't remember how many musicians donated their time to this event but the concert began at 7 and finished at 10:30pm. As well as performances there were many donations of art given for the silent auction. Nearly \$10,000 dollars was raised.

If this can be achieved for one tragedy, one community's loss, what could be achieved for the planet when human resources are applied for the greater good instead of hegemony?

regards

*Janet Vickers*

from **Stacey Anne Vickery**

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

Things are good here. The children have all gone to school; with homeschooling everyone until October last year and the youngest until this year, it's quite a change for us - but a lot is getting done around the house .....

I am starting to get into rereading my inspiration books again, it is helping me feel more centered. if anyone has a suggestion for some UU insprational reading I would love to hear about it.

I am trying to find my path again spiritually and wholistically. It has definitely moved in another direction again - what is life but change?

I would be open to having a "*mentor penpal*" with actual letters sometimes, the computer is my only connection with the UU path and having something to hang onto and be able to touch would be lovely. Anyone interested? I am still quite new to the aspect of sharing and would like to learn more.

Short, sweet, some questions and I am off to work on soapmaking...

Peace

*Stacey Anne*

Later, Stacey Anne added:

I am checking out the Church of the Larger Fellowship site (<http://clf.uua.org/>) -- any course recommendations?? Any books I could look at that might help me feel more "connected"?

*Before answering Stacey Anne's questions myself, I'd like to invite other people in this network to respond. We have some experienced UUs, and even some UU Ministers and Ministers-in-training on the list, and one of them might be willing to act as a "mentor penpal" (great idea, btw!) to you or others.*

*We also have people who've been doing their own reading and exploring and can share with you what they've found most helpful. **All responses will be welcomed!!***

*I'll limit myself to three suggestions for the time being, but keep asking till you get the responses you need, not necessarily from me!*

1. Those of you with children at home may find this page of the Church of the Larger Fellowship site of particular interest: <http://clf.uua.org/uume/archives.html>
2. One of my own favourite books about our UU movement is this one, available from the UUA Bookstore in Boston (<http://www.uuabookstore.org/>)



## **A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism**

Authors: **Forrest Church, John A. Buehrens**

Publisher: Beacon

In Stock      Price: **\$16.00**

And if you want to know about the development of the UU movement in Canada, I recommend once again that you go to <http://www.cuc.ca/> -- and also consider investing in one of these books or videos, available for purchase from the CUC office. (Contact Philip Strapp, [phil@cuc.ca](mailto:phil@cuc.ca))

### **Books**

**Side by Side** (bilingual worship book) \$15

**Unitarians in Canada** \$25

### **Videos**

**Religious Education Spans a Lifetime** \$15

**Sharing Our Vision** \$15

*(the videos are particularly good for helping us feel connected, I think)*

3. *This is a suggestion I made some months ago and would like to encourage once more: find the congregation nearest to you (even if it's a long way away), or one with which you already feel some affinity, and contact them by email (see that good old CUC website again, under "Congregations"). Tell them that you're not close enough to attend or be a regular member, but that you'd like to be an Associate, or Friend, or whatever they call non-voting/ paid-up members. My guess is that they'll be delighted to say YES, and (probably for a small cost if it's not available online) to send you their newsletter and other communications. **Then you'll have a (distant) congregation!!!** (But **please** stay in this network, too!)*

from **Kim Rogers**

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

Everyone seems to love the Fall. I have yet to meet anyone who says, "I wish Fall would just hurry up and be over". I guess the Creator gave us autumn as a gift; to ease the transition out of summer and into winter. It's easier to handle the loss of summer and the approach of winter when there's been such a beautiful, bountiful season in between.

This fall is particularly packed with activity for me. I feel much like a squirrel must feel at this time of year - I have to make the most of every minute. In the Yukon the Fall is rather short - starting in about mid-August, and going only until the end of October. By Halloween, there is ALWAYS permanent snow on the ground.

But September is just glorious, with yellow and orange leaves everywhere against the green, purple and gray mountains that surround Whitehorse. No maple trees here, so we miss out on a lot of the reds except in some of the ground shrubbery, but it's gorgeous just the same.

And then there's the low bush cranberries that start to pop out....there's something really satisfying about picking these berries and making 'wild' cranberry sauce for Thanksgiving and /or Christmas dinner.

My family is taking a trip to Thunder Bay and Peterborough to visit relatives this year at Thanksgiving, and staying for a few weeks. What a great thing to be Thank-ful for! It will be really nice to extend our Yukon fall a bit by taking in the beauty (and warmer temps) of Ontario at this time of year. Then time to hunker down, batten down the hatches, buy some good books, and make sure the cupboards are well stocked. Winter is.... of course....long, dark, and very, very cold in these parts.



Wishing everyone a happy Autumn.

Kim

*(I reminded Kim that “there are Unitarian congregations in both Thunder Bay (Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship <http://www.luf.ca>) and Peterborough (Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough <http://www.peterboroughunitarian.ca>) so I hope you can make it to at least one Sunday service – it will do so much to help you feel UU-connected!” Kim in turn reminded me that “the Peterborough chapter is where I first attended!”)*

and from me, **Anne Treadwell**

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

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, my husband John left for his annual 3 months of volunteer teaching in Georgetown, Guyana, S.America. This means that I’m on my own and feel more than ever the distance from family, old friends and a UU community. I’ve mentioned that our house is on the market here in Nova Scotia, but it’s a terrible time to be selling as the economy here is at a very low ebb, and there’s been hardly any interest in the property. John made a little video to supplement the realtor’s listing – if you’re interested, it can be seen at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUk01xZM9IE>

Now that we’re sure we want to move back to Ontario, we’re hoping that we can sell before next Summer, even if it means “taking a beating” financially. Meanwhile, we’ve had some lovely early September weather, and our wild and weedy garden/field (the camera certainly flatters it) is resplendent with goldenrods and other late bloomers, so all is not doom and gloom by any means! I do miss John, though, and am hugely grateful for email and Skype which allow frequent, easy and free communication – how did we live without them?!

(Oh, that reminds me of something I should have included in my suggestions above to Stacey Anne: thanks to the Internet, we have access to various UU courses and learning resources online: check out <http://clf.uua.org/learn/> for a start.)

And because this newsletter is already at 10 pages, I’ll stop now – except to say that anyone who’s wondering what kind of teaching John does in Guyana might want to check out his blog at <http://revjoc.blogspot.com/> . If you find it intriguing, I’ll happily add you to those who receive weekly reminders when another blog instalment is posted – just ask me.

This seems a wonderfully full newsletter: thanks to all who’ve contributed, and if you haven’t done so for a long time, or ever, don’t be shy about starting now – in fact, email me as soon as you think about it and I’ll hold your thoughts for the next newsletter!

In faith and love,

Anne

