

Greetings, and a special welcome to those who are new to this informal network of Individual Members! (Well, the network itself is newish, but a couple of people have joined us since the last issue.)

We may possibly need a new name for people on this list, as we're not all on the CUC's official list of Individual Members. Hmmmm "*Scattered Canadian UUs*"? "*Disconnected Individuals*"? No, neither of those sounds exactly right to me – I invite your suggestions. No big rush, because I don't think the CUC office is going to be rigid about who may use the Individual Member name – and if you go to the website at

http://www.cuc.ca/programs/individual_members.htm

you'll see that some changes have been made (thanks, webmaster Bert Christensen!) to build in a little flexibility.

In practice, perhaps we can just capitalize on a spelling distinction – I've been using "*Programme*" whereas on the website it's "*Program*", and maybe that's enough to distinguish the CUC list from this informal one. In any case, I want to emphasize what I said last time: once I have your name as someone who's expressed interest, I will only remove it from this mailing list at your specific request.

Last time I encouraged you to send "personal news and views" so that we can gradually get to know one another. It occurred to me afterwards that maybe I should start the ball rolling – and fortunately I can now follow that with introductions to two other IMs.



As you already know from my first message, I'm a retired (for 4 ½ years) Unitarian Minister. I served congregations in Montreal/ Lakeshore, Olinda and Waterloo, following a late career change from adult education. My spouse John O'Connor is also retired -- from hospital Chaplaincy in his case. It's the second marriage for both of us, and between us we have 5 children and 6 grandchildren. We moved from Ontario to rural seaside Nova Scotia in 2005, where we're too far away from the only NS UU congregation (in Halifax) to attend. My major interests are gardening, family history/ genealogy, literature, philosophy, puzzles of all kinds, and many (sometimes puzzling!) aspects of nature, human and other.



Here's a photo of me and one of a view from our home – I hope some of you will send photos for the newsletter, too!

Now, I have permission to share the following from Janet Vickers (tojan@dowco.com):

“It was interesting to be introduced to Jacques (Babin) and know where he is. Currently I am on Gabriola Island and have been busy enough that I haven’t yet ventured out to the Nanaimo Fellowship. I work for the CUC for a few hours as Social Responsibility Administrative Support and volunteer on the Chapbook committee. We are working on our third annual poetry chapbook to be published for the ACM in May at Thunder Bay. I would like to hear from others on this list about their epiphanies, their spiritual musings, inspirational writings found and created.”

Thanks, Janet – that’s a good start for us in getting to know you! Now, a happy coincidence: I was browsing the website of the UUA’s Church of the Larger Fellowship the other day, and in a 2005 issue of their magazine “Quest”, I spotted the name of the latest person to add his name to our list, Lloyd Ryan! Here’s part of the piece, which Lloyd has agreed I can share with you:

Quest September 2005 **Unitarian Banner Held High in Newfoundland and Labrador**

Like many CLFers, Dr. Lloyd Ryan, a retired educator living on the northeast coast of the island of Newfoundland, off the east coast of Canada, is a Unitarian loner. He is one of a very few Unitarians within this vast region. However, he has made a significant contribution to a greater awareness of the Unitarians in that remote area.

The Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador recently ruled that denial of same-sex marriages in Newfoundland and Labrador was unconstitutional, leading to a decision by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizing the legality and constitutionality of same-sex marriages. Almost immediately, the churches of the province declared that same-sex marriages would not take place in "their" churches, and clergy were threatened with defrocking and expulsion if they dared to defy the dictates of their church hierarchies. Moreover, the mayors of the principal towns in the central and northeast region of the island, all of them associated with more-or-less fundamentalist churches, and all having "marriage commissioner" status —appointments from the provincial government authorizing them to conduct civil marriages —announced that they would not officiate at same-sex marriages and promptly resigned their commissions, with the exception of one mayor who is petitioning the government to permit him the right to discriminate as he sees fit.

Dr. Ryan was troubled that rights recognized by law were now being denied to most couples who wished civil marriage ceremonies. Ryan promptly announced that he had applied to the provincial government for appointment as a marriage commissioner. If he is so appointed, he is prepared to provide ceremonies to any couple with the requisite marriage license. Dr. Ryan was interviewed on radio and TV about his decision to step forward, and stories about his decision were also carried in several of the province's newspapers. In every case, mention was made of the fact that Dr. Ryan is of the Unitarian faith. Dr. Ryan says that, aside from immediate family and the few Unitarians in the area, he has received almost no support for his decision and that the commentary directed to him has been almost completely negative.

However, Dr. Ryan says he is not intimidated: "Marriage Commissioners, like civil servants and police, are servants of the law and have no public opinion of the law. In particular, as servants of the law, they do not have the right to discriminate.... The clergy have chosen to forget the rights of gays and lesbians; the mayors have also chosen to forget them. I choose not to forget them.... I have always believed that the responsibility to do something about a problem rests with the person who perceives the problem. One can't always hand a problem on to somebody else. I see a problem. I believe that I have an obligation to do something about it."

I asked Lloyd's permission to quote, and for a possible update. He wrote:

I did not receive the appointment as marriage commissioner, but received a feeble excuse instead. I think I would have been too much of an embarrassment. My wife and I have since moved close to St. John's -- which has proven fortuitous [for reasons of my wife's health -- as] we are only 20 minutes from the hospital.

If you want another angle I am a story teller. I have been collecting stories of "my people" in Notre Dame Bay since I was a kid - even before I knew I was collecting the folk stories. Now, I am recalling, retelling, and rewriting the old stories, realizing that I may be the last repository of many of the stories and if I don't get them written and archived somewhere, then they will be lost to posterity forever.

The Quest article ended: **"We are proud that Lloyd Ryan is one of us."** I echo that!

Lloyd's additional contact information is:

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I'll end this March edition of the IMAUU newsletter with the same words as last time – and underlying the words is delight that we have indeed made progress in knowing one another, and have also been stimulated to thought and discussion.

"In order to get this issue out before my aim of 'mid-month' is past, I'll close it now – and I look forward to more responses from as many of you as possible. Send ideas, critique, hopes, suggestions, or (and perhaps this is most important of all) personal news and views! May you see this newsletter, and this programme, as a means of contact with UU friends – and of getting to know them better."

Warm good wishes from the Editor,
Anne Treadwell

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