

Peterborough puts inter-faith principles into action

The Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough, Ontario took a bold step in June when it moved in as a major tenant of the Beth Israel synagogue. The Unitarians, with 100 members, had outgrown their church, while the Jewish congregation had lots of space, but couldn't afford to run it with only 30 families in regular attendance. The two congregations joined forces in a model of interfaith cooperation.

"With this partnership," said Rev. Anne Orfald of the fellowship, "we have the opportunity to give our children first-hand experience interacting with another faith community, not just giving them lessons on the holidays and holy days of others."

Larry Gillman of Beth Israel was also effusive about the new arrangement. "For both of us this will be a win-win situation," he said. "It shows what happens when two communities can get together and talk things through."

The Unitarian tenancy in the Jewish synagogue made a lot of sense, because the Jewish Sabbath runs Friday to Saturday, and the building is unused most Sundays. However, the details of the three-year lease agreement took some negotiation. Jewish holidays do sometimes fall on a Sunday, in which case the Unitarians will yield use of the space. The synagogue was happy to welcome the quilted Unitarian banners inside their sanctuary (it helped that there were no crucifixes depicted), and they agreed to a joint sign on the street. For their part, the Unitarians agreed to respect kosher food preparation in the kitchen of the 40-year-old synagogue.

Our ACM report starts on page three

Or go to www.cuc.ca/conference for more photos and the texts of the major addresses



Larry Gillman of Beth Israel synagogue with Rev. Anne Orfald of the Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough.

"It will be a change for us because we're very much a potluck group," said fellowship chair Paula Greenwood, "but it's not a challenge." Looking at the spacious synagogue she declared, "this is a sacred space."

Gillman admitted that there was one dissenter to the arrangement in his membership, "someone who was concerned about same-sex marriage." He says the synagogue neither supports nor endorses the arrangement, but the Unitarians will be permitted to conduct such marriages in the building.

The sharing of space was natural, with Unitarianism being rooted in Christianity similar to the way that Christianity is rooted in Judaism. "Our principles are very much aligned," said Gillman. "I think there's more that harmonizes us than causes division," said Greenwood. 

Any Bowl

BY HUGH MACPHERSON

Any bowl can be a chalice;
Any vessel can be sacred
if it holds the flame of hope
and the fire of a boundless faith.

Any bowl can ultimately serve
to quench the unending thirst
for truth and understanding,
justice, holiness and peace.

Any bowl can too, be used
to bear the tears of thousands
and to nourish those for whom
calamity is commonplace.

Yes, any sort of bowl will do
for caring, sharing
and for sacrament.
Bring, then your bowls
to this circle
not in sacrifice but in service to all.

As a Unitarian for many years, Hugh MacPherson has assisted in forming poetry groups in Montreal (Uni-Verse), and in Kelowna (Sacred Circle), and has published in periodicals in Canada and the U.S. Sacred Circle included this poem in their book "Writing the Journey." Hugh is a member of the Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna.

Poetry Contributions

Short, spiritual poems by cuc members are invited. Please send them to poetry editor Franci Louann, floouann@telus.net, or by fax to: 604-731-0228.



Mary Bennett

CUC Executive Director

Tales from my diplomatic mission to a 'foreign' country

It's June 30 and I've just returned from six days in Long Beach, California, at the General Assembly (i.e. conference) of the Unitarian Universalist Association, our former parent denomination.

GA is a mammoth gathering, compared to our own annual conference. I wondered how we would be received, now that we're autonomous from the UUA. It felt like I was on a diplomatic mission to a foreign country.

CUC President Brian Kiely and I led a workshop called "What's Happening in Canada?" To our surprise, about 40 people showed up. They were curious about how we are handling social justice issues like drug policy, peace and same sex marriage. In terms of our relations with the UUA, I heard a wide range of perspectives about the transition. Some examples (paraphrased):

- I hear things are going well. We should have done it 10 years ago.
- Have the Canadians changed their mind and decided to rejoin the UUA?
- I hope there'll be more cross-border events like Cascadia.
- We're still mourning.

It was important to be there and listen to these and other comments – and to share my own perspective of what's happening in Canada and at the CUC.

I think our change was the right step, and at the right time. I don't think 10 years earlier would have worked. We won't be going back to the old relationship; we can be intentional and positive about continuing to craft this new relationship of equal partners.

I hope there will be more cross-border conferences and events – and that those who are mourning will, when the time is right, participate or even help create those events. The CUC will continue to be represented at GA and continue to be grateful for the opportunities it offers.

Testimony

by Elisabeth Bailey

'This is the place for me,' I said immediately

Sometimes I tell people that I was raised UU, but that's not entirely true. Even though both of my parents attended a UU church growing up, in terms of both moral leadership and Sunday morning focus, I was really raised New York Times. I grew up pitying people who "had" to go to church, dressing up in starchy clothes to go sit quietly on hard, wooden pews, while I was watching cartoons in my pyjamas and eating doughnuts.

But as I got older in my small hometown of Galesburg, Illinois, I felt a growing need for spiritual community. I knew that I wasn't going to go to hell for my doughnut eating ways, and that racism and homophobia couldn't possibly be what God intended. But it's hard to be a lone wolf for liberal ethics in a playground full of conservative Christian playmates. My grandmother told me all about her experiences at the First Unitarian Church of Chicago where she had taken my father as a boy, and I decided that when I grew up I'd go there. And I did.

It was ... okay. I liked what the minister said, but there weren't any people my age and no one ever talked to me. After a few months I decided that it didn't matter if it was a great community if I wasn't really a part of it. Then one day a friend at work told me how much he liked attending Second Unitarian of Chicago. I decided to check it out. The next Sunday I walked up to the church and immediately saw a face I recognized. Sharon was a frequent scotch drinker at the bar of the



Yes, that's a flaming chalice tattooed on Elisabeth's right arm!

restaurant where I was waiting tables.

It turned out that she was also the DRE of the congregation. Sharon grabbed me right away and took me on a tour of the religious education program. I walked into the common room for children's worship and saw a group of five-year-olds working on a banner for the new lesbian minister

and her partner. "Welcome Lynn and Kelsey!" it said.

"This is the place for me," I said immediately. I got involved in the congregation and eventually found myself wishing that I could do the same thing with my life that Reverend Lynn was. (But surely someone as irreverent as me couldn't go into ministry?)

It's six years later now, and I'm one credit shy of graduation from seminary and happily anticipating a long career in ministry – hopefully in Canada! I watch other young adults finding their places in congregations and know that part of my work has to be guaranteeing that there *are* places – and community – for them to find.

As we learn to engage our youngest members we will grow as a movement in ways we can't even imagine today. I look forward to getting to know hundreds of you over the years as we immerse ourselves in this work. 

– Elisabeth Bailey is the recently-appointed Canadian Regional Organizing Consultant for the Young Adult and Campus Ministry Office of the UUA. She and her husband John Frauzel live in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia with their two dogs. They are expecting their first child at Yule 2004.

Getting things done, and having fun

Rev. Brian Kiely, the cuc's new president, is warm, fun-loving and enthusiastic. He likes to sing and party. He seems immensely proud of his new family (wife Teilya and one-year-old Lily). You'd think he'd never read *The Importance of Being Earnest* – at least when it comes to his full-time job in the pulpit or his new volunteer role as head of a national religious denomination.

first wife introduced him to Unitarianism, and he started attending regularly after he moved to Toronto.

Although he was working as a newspaper reporter and photographer, Kiely was impressed by Rev. Mark Mosher DeWolfe, a new minister at the nearby congregation in South Peel. DeWolfe's charisma made Kiely think, "I want to do that; I *could* do that." DeWolfe died

from the Unitarian Universalist Association. He was on the committee that negotiated the division, then chaired the taskforce that invented the organization's new regional structure.

During his term as cuc president, Kiely hopes to finish the job that he started four years ago, when the organization struck out on its new independent path. Here are his three main priorities:

1. To finish the tedious work of policy revision at the board level, to update the organizational practices for a larger, more complex cuc.
2. To help the cuc and its field staff consolidate the new structure and fill all the volunteer positions.
3. To lead the "Growing Forward" endowment campaign to a successful conclusion next fall, with its goal of raising \$1 million over five years.

More generally, Kiely wants to help the cuc meet its growth targets, an indirect challenge that can only be met by supporting its member congregations. "There's no secret to growth," says Kiely. "You need congregations that feel welcoming to newcomers, that have consistent Sunday programs and good children's programming."

He hopes the cuc can provide the spark for that growth, with exciting and vibrant denominational meetings at the regional and national levels.

"I feel very good about stepping into the presidency right now," says Kiely. "I hope my term is marked by the attitude of 'let's get things done.'" □



Rev. Brian Kiely lights the chalice at the Sunday worship of the cuc annual conference in May. Below right, in party attire with Teilya and one-year-old Lily.

But Brian's easy-going demeanour shouldn't lead you to think he's a less-than-serious leader or thinker. He was a major part of the drive to invent a new, all-Canadian future for the cuc. He leads a growing Edmonton congregation that's in the process of moving to a much larger building. And he's determined to solidify the cuc's financial base through membership growth and an endowment campaign.

Kiely, 49, came to Unitarian Universalism as a young adult, and the same goes for his career as a minister. He was raised Catholic in Montreal and schooled by the Jesuits at Loyola College. "They taught me to ask questions," he says, "although my questions led me right out of the Catholic church!" His

of AIDS in his mid-30s, just a couple of years later, but in the meantime Kiely changed his life and went to divinity school. The last sermon that DeWolfe preached was at Kiely's ordination at Toronto First Unitarian in 1988.

From there, Kiely moved west to serve the start-up congregation of South Fraser in Surrey, B.C., and like many new ministers, juggled several part-time jobs in his early years (including a stint as editor of this newsletter). In 1997 he gained his current full-time posting, as minister of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, where he now works.

In addition to his congregational work, Kiely has been a cuc board member for four years and was intimately involved as the denomination separated



Youth-led worship was highlight of youth con

BY ALI LAKE, YOUTH DELEGATE

Every year, Unitarian youth from across Canada gather at a youth-organized event with another goofy UU acronym for a name: Canuudle (pronounced canoodle). This past May, 77 youth Canuudled at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton at the same time as the cuc Annual Conference and Meeting. I was lucky enough to be one of them – my fourth youth conference, but my first experience at a national event.

You take home many things from a youth conference: new friendships, ideas, inspiration and ... a mug book! I'm referring to the photocopied booklet that includes Polaroid snapshots of each youth and advisor at the conference, along with contact information for everyone and amusing late-night doodles by the mug book team.

The culture of Canuudle comes to life as I flip through the pages of my book. The only people not grinning for the camera are making funny faces. People are playing games, participating in teamwork activities, giggling, hugging,

napping, dancing, and whispering long into the night. On a page titled "Hand Cream Orgy" you see youth and adults in a circle laughing as someone squirts hand lotion onto their collective slippery mass of hands.

There are also some more serious-looking pages – teenaged conference-goers are conferring about a thing or two, complete with minute-takers, chairpersons and flip-chart agendas.

I knew what I was getting myself into when I registered for Canuudle, thanks to my previous con experiences, but as always, there were many times when my expectations were surpassed. One such time was the worship service organized and led by youth, offered to adults as well at the main conference.

Seven speakers, each born in a different decade (see photo below), reflected on the current stage of their life journey. Songs and poetry created a mood of introspection. The service was humorous, touching, lively and unlike any I had attended before. I could see shimmering new bridges stretching between generations where before there were none.

It helped me understand the importance and power of representing diverse perspectives during Unitarian worship. I also began to agree with the many youth that advocate holding more integrated activities with C a n u u d l e



youth and cuc adults at the annual conference.

The array of workshops offered in Canuudle was also impressive. I attended one led by an Alberta anti-racism organization, I helped make quilts for charity and I participated in a discussion of sex and gender-roles. I missed out on the drumming workshop, the rewriting of the seven Unitarian principles and the workshop about sexuality – but I did manage to stay awake during the business meetings, unlike a few people.

It was hard to avoid a nap during the day because nothing beats the friendly spontaneity of late-night activities. Wandering around after the regular midnight worship session, I could hang out with people from across the country who had been complete strangers just a day before.

In one room of the church, there's a spur of the moment guitar sing-a-long. In another, there's Scrabble and a table of things to eat and drink. One room is completely dark with everyone lying in sleeping bags chatting about school, sexuality, friends, religion, the future, or anything at all – a safe place for saying what's on your mind. (And yes, a couple of rooms are devoted to sleeping!)

Many times I've caught myself wondering how anyone grows through adolescence without affirming, educational experiences like Canuudle. I hope that youth will remember these wonderful communities constructed in a single weekend, and use our leadership skills to spread caring and creativity – youth con culture – wherever we go. ☐



These were the presenters at the youth-led worship (left to right in descending order of age by decade): Sterling Haynes (in his 70s), Gloria Hopewell, Mike Gladman, Meg Roberts, Krista Taves, Leif Anderson, Fiona Mackie.

Delegates support new cuc policy on peace

Close your eyes and try this. Imagine the sound of a single pin dropping in a large metal bowl. *Its tiny “ping” represents the explosive power of the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, killing 100,000 people.*

Now, imagine the sound of three metal pellets dropped into the same bowl – a lot louder, but not lasting much longer. *This represents all the bombs used in WWII, including the two nuclear bombs dropped on Japan.* Next, try to imagine the sound of 1,275 pellets dropping into the bowl. It’s a thunderstorm by comparison. *This is the explosive power of the 5,000 nuclear weapons currently on high alert in the U.S. and Russia.*

Finally, cover your ears as 7,725 more pellets cascade into the bowl. Their cacophony goes on and on, and you feel pretty sick after about 10 seconds. *They represent the remaining 25,000 nuclear bombs that are stored around the world, at various levels of readiness.* It almost goes without saying that detonating just a tiny portion of these weapons, in war or by accident, would mean the end of human civilization.

Helmut Kuhn of Ottawa gave this demonstration on nuclear proliferation at the cuc Annual Conference and Meeting last May. Kuhn chaired the two-year peace study group that reported to the meeting with four resolutions, which all passed. They commit the cuc to work for global peace, nuclear disarmament and non-military approaches to solving global conflicts. (For the complete resolutions go to www.cuc.ca and follow the social responsibility link to *peace*.)

Kuhn is putting together a Peace

Monitoring Group for the cuc (the eighth such social responsibility committee working on the organization’s behalf). Kuhn plans to have individual group members responsible for specific areas of concern: war prevention, United Nations, weapons of mass destruction, the arms trade, ballistic missile defence, defence policy and peace-keeping. As well, he foresees an education component, to develop reli-



Helmut Kuhn demonstrates the scale of nuclear proliferation at the cuc Annual Conference and Meeting.

gious education materials relating to peace.

He hopes that the peace monitoring group will produce monthly actions, in the following four areas: letter-writing to politicians on the cuc’s behalf, proposals for congregational action, media releases on peace issues, and briefs to government. Kuhn wants the group to be pro-active, not just respond to peace issues already on the public agenda.

The new peace policy is having an impact. The monitoring group helped craft a cuc media release in mid-June, calling on the federal government to halt negotiations about participation in the U.S. ballistic missile defence program, because the scheme involves putting weapons in space. **U**

Annual Conference Tidbits

EXCELLENT UNITARIAN SERVICE

The cuc’s annual Victor and Nancy Knight Award, for exemplary service to the denomination, went to Ruth Patrick of Edmonton this year. As her name was called out she tearfully tried to decline the award, protesting that others were more worthy. However, a committee of her peers (all the previous award recipients) were unanimous in their choice.

GIVING AWAY GIFTS

The offering collected at the large Sunday worship service during the Annual Conference and Meeting totalled over \$4,500. It was donated to two Edmonton community organizations: the 124th Street Drop-in Centre (serving natives near the large Edmonton church) and the Youth Emergency Shelter (for homeless youth, supported by both of the Edmonton Unitarian churches).

SHARING OUR FAITH

The recipients of the cuc’s “Sharing Our Faith” grants were announced at the annual meeting. The Neighbourhood UU Congregation in Toronto will receive \$1,000 towards producing a meditation CD as will the UU Fellowship of Kamloops, for assistance with ministerial leadership. The UU Church of North Hatley will be getting \$5,000 for support of their part-time minister.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY RECOGNITION

The cuc recongized these social responsibility projects from the past year:

- Susan Berry’s RE class at South Peel, who were active on local air pollution.
- Jamie Milroy of Neighbourhood UU, who chaired the cuc’s Gender and Sexual Orientation Monitoring Group.
- Leslie Kemp of UC Vancouver, who chairs the congregation’s large and active social justice committee.
- Ria Heynen of Ottawa First, a Raging Granny who is active on the issues of peace, poverty, disarmament and more.
- Fran Johnson of Comox Valley Unitarian Society, a gardener and environmentalist.
- Beryl Mottershead, also of Comox, who is involved in fair trade campaigns.

First-time delegates: what they found

Why do Unitarians and Universalists first go to a cuc annual conference and meeting? And what do they find there? We asked three first-timers what they were getting out of the conference. (Quite a bit, it turns out!)

Ron Jones is a lay chaplain from North Shore Unitarian in West Vancouver. He and his wife drove up to Edmonton in their camper van, and the hotel allowed them to park it in the outdoor lot, conveniently next to the hotel restaurant!



Jones was struck by, "the richness of people here, flowing by you like a river." He felt, "goodwill, support and positive vibrations" in the smaller group meetings and workshops he attended. He notes that his congregation was missing its connection to the old Pacific North West District of the UUA. However, by attending the cuc conference, "I think I've captured a little bit of the bigger vision of the Canadian Unitarian movement."

Jones volunteered earlier this year with the Central America Project, travelling to Honduras with other Unitarians to work on a small construction project. In Edmonton, he was able to meet the project coordinator Richard Kirsh of Toronto, as well as participants in other international programs. "It was broadening to see our project as part of the broader picture of our international involvement," he says.

His favourite event of the weekend was the spiritual dance workshop on Friday night. "It was tremendously quiet, healing, meditative and harmonious." □

Sharmila Khare runs a young adult group for the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. At the annual conference she attended a session on contemporary worship, led by Michael Tino of the UUA. "I liked his comparison of the traditional 'sandwich' model of worship (hymns and readings on either side of a meaty sermon) with an Ethiopian platter model, which offers a wider variety of smaller things."

Khare jumped into the conference with both feet, volunteering for the cuc choir – an instant choir made up of all the willing singers attending the conference. The catch is, they rehearse three times in 48 hours, in time to sing several pieces at the large Sunday worship. "It's a lot of fun to be part of such a big service," says Khare, referring to the 300 delegates and Edmonton members who joined forces on Sunday.



Khare is an economist with the federal Ministry of Finance in Ottawa, so she's no stranger to procedure. She was impressed by the parliamentary process used at the formal business meetings. "It was very laborious," she observes, "but necessary for setting direction that will affect the whole organization." □

Marnie Girvan is president of the Guelph Unitarian Fellowship, a lay-led congregation in southern Ontario. She came to the annual conference looking for connection to the broader movement. She says her breath was taken



away at the Sunday worship, "with 300 Unitarians singing together in a single room." It was a big contrast to the group of 50 she worships with on a normal Sunday.

She also attended workshops titled, "No More Begging: Three steps to an Effective Canvass" and "The Inclusive and Inviting Congregation." Girvan says she found "everything useful," and learned that "other people are facing the same issues that we are."

She recently retired from a globe-trotting career with the Canadian International Development Agency (she was a key Canadian organizer of the 1995 Conference on Women in Beijing). At an evening presentation on international work, Girvan met Myda Egrmajer who would soon be travelling to Tanzania. "I lived there for four years," she says, "so I was able to mentor Myda, encouraging her in her journey and assuring her that Swahili is an easy language to learn!" □

cuc Annual Conference and Meeting 2004

SCENES FROM AN ANNUAL MEETING

(top to bottom): Keynote speaker, Alberta Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole (right) greets Winnipeg delegate Leuba Franko • Delegates get to know each other at the Friday night In-Gathering worship service • The “Young Fun” kids program attracted over a dozen 7- to 12-year olds from across the country; here they are at their closing service • Gordon Ritchie of Edmonton co-led the cuc choir, plus he played harp at the Sunday morning worship • John Pater of Edmonton led two popular workshops on the theology of the Harry Potter series



Unitarian People

FRED COGSWELL: 1917–2004

The legendary poet, publisher, editor, and Order of Canada member **Fred Cogswell** died in June at the age of 86. His life was celebrated with music and poetry at the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton, where he was a member, on July 11. He was known as the Friend of Poets for the way he nurtured writing, as a university English professor, poetry editor and book publisher.



OTTAWA SANCTUARY

The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa has sheltered **Samsu Mia** for over a year now, since he decided to seek refugee status. They stepped up their campaign for Mr. Mia in June, when **Rev. Fred Cappuccino** took voluntary sanctuary in support. Cappuccino, 78, is retired, but serves as minister emeritus for the UU Fellowship of Ottawa. Cappuccino said he took action, “to spur the Canadian government into showing the compassion this case deserves.”

THE HOUSE THAT EMILY BUILT

Nancy Krygsman of First Unitarian in Toronto is now living in “the house that Emily built.” Canada’s first woman doctor, **Emily Stowe**, was a member of Toronto First in the 19th century. She built a large, red brick structure in 1883 as the first permanent home of her women’s medical college. It was turned into condos in the 1980s, one of which Krygsman moved into last year.

SUMMER SERVICES IN GIMLI

The Gimli Unitarian Church opens its doors in the summer only – the opposite of many congregations. The 99-year-old church is like a lakeside cottage for the permanent Arborg Unitarian Church. This year it has bi-weekly Sunday services, mostly led by **Rev. Stefan Jonasson** of Winnipeg. Topics include: “How to Fix (Almost) Anything” (on the impulse to repair, or to live with things that can’t be fixed) and “My Life as a Muggle” (on those who insist on non-magical explanations for everything).

The Canadian Unitarian is the quarterly newsletter of the Canadian Unitarian Council. It's mailed free to all members for whom the CUC has a current address.* The Unitarian reports on newsworthy events in the denomination, including the annual conference each spring. It attempts to reflect all segments of Unitarianism and Universalism in Canada. We welcome all submissions, however, publication is based on the criteria of newsworthiness, relevance to readers, length and balance. We try to publish all letters to the editor, although they may be edited for brevity and clarity.

* Non-members can subscribe to the Unitarian for \$15 Can. or \$10 U.S. Send name, address and cheque to CUC office.

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From the Pulpit

by Rev. Charles Eddis

The past shall guide us

Charles Eddis concluded his address to the Sunday worship of the annual conference with reference to the following four themes for the future (much abridged).



Reason and evidence should guide us. No authority, no teaching, should prevent their clear exercise. I am not advocating a cold rationalism. Evidence is the beginning point. Evidence is experiential. We should, in the words of Jacob Trapp, "keep our capacity for faith and belief and wonder," but let "our judgment watch and question what we believe."

The second theme is naturalism. There is no higher power intervening in the normal events of the universe. God is in the world, or behind the world, but not above it. Nature has its rules. Nothing, so far as we know, intervenes to suspend the rules from

time to time, for any reason, good or bad.

One thing that has grown on me in my 60 years as a Unitarian is **respect for our ancestors.** To be fully who we are as a religious community we have to know, and we have to tell stories, about

our people. Our identity is tied up with the stories we tell, about such people as Michael Servetus, Joseph Priestly, Emily Stowe and John Cordner.

I have a Hebrew word to introduce my fourth theme: **tikkun**. It means, repairing the world. Healing the world means justice. It means love. It means sharing power. It means sharing wealth. It means taking care of the environment, of caring for all creatures, and all living forms. 

- The full text of Eddis' address is on the web site at www.cuc.ca/conference

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