

## Two church members on opposite sides of pop case

**N**icholas Dodds, an active 15-year-old from Toronto First Unitarian, made headlines across the country last November when he forced his school board and a neighbouring one to reveal their exclusive sales contracts with soft drink suppliers Pepsi and Coke.

(Dodds discovered that his board's contract with Pepsi earns the schools \$3.7 million over five years, and the other board's contract was similar: \$5.5 million over 10 years from exclusive sales of Coke products.)

The flurry of media coverage focussed on the issues of junk food in schools and the David-and-Goliath story of a youngster against the institutions. Few people knew that Nicholas Dodds is a Unitarian. Fewer still realized that another member of the church, Jack McFadden, is vice-president of food service for Pepsi Canada – and the man in charge of the company's soft drink contracts.

The two Toronto First members are acquainted but haven't spoken to each other about the contracts. Both cherish their connection with the church, and agreed to talk to the *Canadian Unitarian* about the issue, although Jack McFadden was wary about "starting a food fight – no pun intended" within the congregation he considers a refuge.

### NO FOOD FIGHT

Nick Dodds first became curious about his school's soft drink connections two years ago, when he was in his last year of elementary school. He wanted to know why only Pepsi soft drink products were available in the school vending machines. He approached his princi-

pal, and then his school trustee, who told him that the soft drink contracts were private.

So with his father's help, Dodds filed a freedom of information request with the Ontario Privacy Commissioner, asking to see the two school board contracts with Pepsi and Coke. The case got bogged down in appeals, as the



Nicholas Dodds at his Aurora home (his father is in the background)

boards fought the request. However, Dodds got a sudden surprise last fall when the Commissioner suddenly ruled in his favour. For the cost of a \$5 application, plus his time, Nicholas had won the day (his school board spent \$50,000 fighting the case, according to Dodds).

Up until last November, Jack McFadden of Pepsi was unaware of the case, because it involved the soft drink maker only indirectly (Dodds' complaint was against the school boards). However, it suddenly became his file when the issue hit the national media.

McFadden disagrees in principle with Dodds' request. He argues, "We're a corporation, and we live and die on competition, so we can't

• see OPPOSITE SIDES, next page

## The choice I made

BY GORDON KOPPANG

*"... life has for us on the wrack  
Nothing but what we somehow chose"*  
— from *The Trial by Existence*  
by Robert Frost

If my steps were not rigid and slow,  
if parts of my brain  
had not been silenced by injury,  
would I have heard the sound  
of the great river of language  
flowing inside me?

Freed from distractions,  
I found the river,  
and the ferryman.  
Poets and teachers,  
wild men, live on that bank.  
That village is my home.

*Gordon Koppang is a member of the Lethbridge UU Fellowship. With a BA in English, Gordon studies, writes and teaches at the place where literature and religion meet. His injury is from cerebral palsy.*

### Poetry Contributions

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

**GROWING VITAL  
RELIGIOUS  
COMMUNITIES  
IN CANADA**



## Mary Bennett

CUC Executive Director

### What's a U\*U? How about a new constellation?

**Earlier this year**, I plunked an asterisk (or star) between 'Unitarian' and 'Universalist' to create the acronym 'U\*U.' It was my shorthand way of saying, 'Unitarian, Universalist, Unitarian-Universalist, Universalist-Unitarian, and everything in between.'

The idea is catching on. Calvin Drake of Toronto says that in computer searches, the star is a "wild-card," and suggests that maybe it's the star between U and U that attracts people to us.

In a recent sermon, Rev. Jane Bramadat of Victoria gave Canadian examples of the seven principles, and assigns me number three for U\*U. I accept graciously! In fact, this principle – "acceptance of one another" and "encouragement to spiritual growth" – strikes me as another combination looking for a star, since the values seem variously both complementary and at odds with one another.

Jane then extends the metaphor to say a new constellation is the result of all this U\*U activity and visioning in Canada. I like that idea. As I understand constellations, many factors make them easier or more difficult to see, and what appears close may in fact be distant.

In the constellation of Canadian U\*U congregations for instance, Lethbridge Unitarian Fellowship is "closer" to the Prince Edward Island Fellowship than to its Alberta neighbours – the Unitarian Churches of Edmonton or Calgary. Our three largest congregations – Vancouver, Ottawa First and Toronto First – shine brightly as anchor stars. But in a constellation, the brighter stars help you locate the other ones as well.

I've since read that a constellation can also be a gathering of brilliant or famous people or things, or an assemblage of splendours. Welcome to the Canadian Unitarian Constellation. Let your light shine – you *star*, you!

## Across the Country

### Opposite sides of the pop debate

• *continued from page one*

expose what we offer." He quickly saw, however, that "public opinion was damning us, and that to fight the order would make it a bigger deal than it really is." He advised Pepsi to obey the privacy commissioner's decision; it probably didn't hurt that his company's main competitor, Coke, was in the same bind.

Pepsi also announced in November that it would no longer market carbonated soft drinks in Ontario elementary schools – a decision McFadden says was due to the changing political climate in the province, and not the contract brouhaha.

#### SELLING KIDS TO CORPS

For Dodds, his main concern wasn't about incentive contracts or student health. His biggest objection is to having the school board sell a captive audience to corporations, in a place he feels should be commercial-free. Since the November decision, however, he's faced criticism from some fellow students who think his goal is to rid his school of soft drinks.

McFadden says the soft drink deals are part of a bigger issue: "Schools are doing this because of funding cuts, and they'll have a major budget shortfall if they do away with the revenue they get from soft drink sales." He points out that the Ontario government isn't offering to replace the soft drink revenue with increased provincial funding.

Although he's a Pepsi vice-president, McFadden says that visitors are sometimes surprised to find no pop in his household fridge. "My kids don't drink soft drinks routinely," he says. "It's a treat, something they have occasionally, for fun." He explains Pepsi's marketing this way: "Corpora-

tions are not people with human characteristics. They're entities put together for a profit."

#### FREE RELIGIOUS THINKING

Jack McFadden and Nicholas Dodds are both active within the Toronto First congregation. McFadden has been a member for over 10 years; he served as the finance convenor for about five years, he ran the church's recent capital campaign, and now teaches RE to six- and seven-year-olds. Nicholas is active in the Toronto First youth group.

Both value the free religious thinking that goes on in the church.

"I was raised as a Catholic," says McFadden, "but I felt like a hypocrite when my first child was baptized there,

because I didn't believe in the vows I was saying." He and his wife searched for an alternative, and never left once they found Unitarianism. "It's my sanctuary," he says, admitting that the soft drink controversy "blind-sided" him when the story broke last fall.

Nick Dodds was a little shocked when his parents announced five years ago that they were going to try out a Unitarian church (they were married by a Unitarian, but had not attended previously). Then he learned that he could define his own spiritual path, and he jumped right on board.

Now, he says, the Toronto First youth group is a big support. "They've taught me that just because you're a rabble-rouser doesn't mean you have to be ashamed of it." He calls the church, "a back-up for when the rest of your life isn't going so well!"

#### DIVERSE CONGREGATION

In any case, the Toronto church seems large and diverse enough to accommodate the needs of these two contrasting members – the corporate head looking for religious freedom, and the high-school rabble-rouser seeking peer support.



# One city, two complementary churches

**Unitarianism in Edmonton** is a tale of two churches: one old and one new, one lay-led and one with a full-time minister, one with mostly young families and the other with an older core of long-time members. But it's these contrasts that make the two congregations a complementary fit rather than a rivalry, even though the churches are less than 10 kilometres apart.

In May, the two churches will co-host the cuc's Annual Conference and Meeting, which will take place close to the smaller Westwood Unitarian Congregation, across the river from the older and larger Unitarian Church of Edmonton.

The downtown UCE is celebrating its 50th birthday this year. But that's not all the 270-member congregation has on its plate, according to President Blaise Szekely. "We're in the midst of moving from the building we've occupied for 40 years into a new, much larger space," he says. The congregation simply outgrew the old church, with even the double-header Sunday morning services running over-capacity on some weeks.

The new building is a former warehouse. This sounds stark, but it had what the growing congregation wanted: 24-foot ceilings, lots of unobstructed space, and all the facilities on ground level. They've just begun the process of renovating the empty building to suit their needs. "On Saturday mornings, a crew of 20 people shows up to invest their sweat equity," says Szekely. They begin with a 30-minute worship, then



*Sweat equity: UCE members spend Saturday mornings renovating their new church space*

get down to the dirty work.

Sara McEwan, the cuc's western Director of Regional Services, describes UCE as, "settled, established and mature." The fundraising and search for a new building has been "all-consuming" she says, "but they're up to it." McEwan also praises the UCE's other strengths, which include a strong music program, an "excellent fit" with its minister, Rev. Brian Kiely, and a dedicated core of social activists focussed on local and Alberta issues.

Westwood Unitarian is also growing, although not quite as rapidly as UCE. The 20-year-old congregation is located in Strathcona, which is part of Edmonton but sits distinctly separate on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River.


Named after Unitarian pioneer Rev. Horace Westwood, the 50-member congregation has been lay-led for most of its life, but has recently created a unique blend of professional and lay ministry.

For the past four years, Westwood has hosted three successive, ministerial students – interns – each of them ministering to the smaller congrega-

tion, with supervision by Kiely of UCE. "It's very appealing for the intern minister," says Westwood President Doug Ridgway, "but it's also great for us, because it makes things easier for the worship committee to have a minister in the pulpit half the time."

McEwan calls the little Edmonton church an "active, thriving, lay-led fellowship, with a strong social justice slant." She also points out how inter-generational Westwood is, with youth integrated into the running of the church. "They're intentional about where they're going," she concludes.

Ridgway says his family was attracted to Westwood five years ago by its well-run RE program. He believes that the church's smaller components – for example, its choir, its newly formed "chalice circles" (small group ministry), its social action (helping build a school in Nicaragua, see page six) and its men's group – all help members feel connected to the church, and give newcomers diverse points of affiliation.

McEwan is one several people who attends both churches – "floaters" as she calls them. "We think, aren't we lucky to have these *two* congregations," each with its own culture, strengths and specialties, to chose from. 



*Paula Bowering and David Deephouse met at Westwood Unitarian Congregation; their new baby is named Abigail*

PHOTOS: BRIAN KIELY (LEFT), LORIAN KENNEDY (BELOW)



# Unitarian People

## NEW TORONTO STAFFERS

Two new faces appeared in the CUC Toronto office this past fall, and have quickly fitted into modified job descriptions. **Philip Strapp** is the Information Coordinator, with responsibility for the database, mailing lists, bookkeeping, publications and annual meeting registration. With a background in office administration and computers, Phil is a new and enthusiastic member of the Neighbourhood UU Congregation in Toronto. **Paola Jani** is the CUC's Administrative Assistant – the organization's frontline person for all email and phone enquiries. She also manages the monthly mailing and record-keeping for lay chaplaincy and the board of trustees. A recent U. of T. graduate, Paola has experience in customer service, administration, and volunteer coordination. Her first affiliation was to the Unitarian Church of Hamilton. *Welcome Phil and Paola!*

## MINISTERIAL UPDATE

**Rev. Leaf Seligman** took over as the new minister at London Unitarian Fellowship in September. Also serving new congregations this year are: **Rev. Carole Martignacco** at North Hatley, **Rev. Katie Stein Sather** at Beacon Unitarian Church, **Rev. Frances Deverell** at the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon and **Rev. Meg Roberts** at the Unitarian Church of Calgary. Now serving as intern ministers are: **Danielle Gerrior** at Westwood, **Sally Du Gar** at Toronto First, **Daniel Owens** at Ottawa First.

## YOUTH OBSERVER TO BOARD

**Myda Egrmajer**, 17, of Ottawa is currently the youth observer to the CUC Board of Trustees. She says, "I am all about speaking out for youth, and I hope that someday we will change this crazy world (which definitely does not have enough pillow fights, field romps and mud sliding) one step at a time (although leaps are even better)." She attended her first board meeting in the fall, and reports that she's "enjoying belonging to the new network of communications and people across Canada."

## Testimony

by Helmut Kuhn

# If I'm to be any Thingian, I guess it's Unitarian

**I guess I'm a Unitarian.** For a long time I resisted being any kind of Thingian. But this Unitarian thing may have me.

A long time ago, I was in a situation where I had to make a "statement of faith." I was approaching the end of my training to become a Baptist minister. My studies had made me increasingly sceptical of talking about matters of belief as though they were things of knowledge – most especially talking about God as something definite.

In fact, what I found I could say in my faith statement was precious little about God, only that God – Something – is. Not a God who "exists." Not the God of Christian doctrine. Simply, God. Any effort I made to define God seemed a gross affront to the reality.

There is something about God as I discovered her – or him or it – that is defiled when we pretend to know something of her character and parade around some set attributes that we say describe her. So, my faith statement was somewhat curtailed. I could only add that I knew myself to be a dependent human being – on the earth, on my fellow creatures, and especially on my friends and family.

I guess that's when I, unwittingly, became a Unitarian. I certainly wasn't suited to be a Baptist minister!

Marilynn – my wife who had shared and shaped this faith journey with me – and I set out on a new course that led me into international development, which I increasingly came to understand as work for peace and justice.

Throughout our journeys we have always valued community. For a time we found it with some other non-con-

forming Baptists. Later, in Regina, we found it in our international and adult education work and in grassroots political and social justice activities. Fifteen years ago we moved to Ottawa and lost much of that. After some years in search of community, we began to explore some churches, including the

Unitarian.

That's where I heard probably the most exciting thing I'd ever heard from the pulpit of a church: the minister saying he was an atheist ... and nobody flinched!

Not that I'm an atheist. Sometimes I think I sense divinity. It may be in

an intimate, sincere, conversation with someone. Or it may be in an experience of love or compassion, of forgiveness or confession. I sense it in certain ideas, like the idea that we should walk softly on the earth.

So, Marilyn and I became charter members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa. We've found community there. I don't always like to go. (It has ruined my Sunday mornings!) But if I go, I'm pretty sure I'll be reminded of holiness, might even come close to it.

I'm also pretty sure that if there's help for me anywhere to become a better person, I'll find it in this community. I also have faith that as our Fellowship matures, we'll find ways to use our collectivity to add some good to the world that will be greater than each one of us doing our own good things by ourselves. ☐

— Contact Helmut Kuhn at [hkuhn@rogers.com](mailto:hkuhn@rogers.com). He chairs the CUC Peace Study Group whose resolutions will come to the CUC Annual Meeting in May.



# Unitarian Youth



PHOTO: ALI LAKE

Prairie youth form a "cuddle puddle" at the Western Regional Gathering in Regina last fall

## UU Youth are doing it for themselves, across Canada

**Canadian Unitarian youth** are rapidly building a national network of connection, even while they retain continental links with their UUA counterparts.

To an outsider, it's a confusing picture: services for Canadian youth are still a UUA responsibility, even as the CUC builds a new national organization, including a Youth Advisory Group. But on the ground, the growing regional and national youth links are obvious. Some examples:

- Last October, a successful youth conference was held in conjunction with the fall Western Regional Gathering, in Regina. Thirty youth experienced a slew of workshops, worship, games and general fun, then elected a youth steering committee for the region.
- In November, 25 B.C. youth and advisors gathered at North Shore Unitarian for a leadership development conference. They learned about consensus, meetings, youth empowerment, and worshipped in a cemetery! As well, they elected representatives to the B.C. Youth Adult Committee (YAC).
- In late February, the combined Central and Eastern regions will hold their second youth conference, in Ottawa.

They aim to "build on the bi-regional youth structure we constructed last year, under the name quom – short for Quebec, Ontario, Maritimes, and pronounced *qualm*." They, too will elect YAC representatives.

- Youth in both the Western and Central/Eastern regions have started their own newsletters to link congregations. *The Coffee Bean* first appeared in December, and *quomunication* was published last year, and again in January. They join the national youth newsletter, *Busking on the Causeway*, which appears semi-annually.

- Planning is underway for the fourth national youth conference, running in conjunction with the CUC Annual Meeting and Conference, in late May. The national Youth Advisory Group is inviting applications from youth leaders who want to plan and lead the conference. Support grants are available to help with the travel and registration costs of eight conference leaders. **U**

— For more youth info, including the newsletters mentioned above, go to [www.cuc.ca/youth](http://www.cuc.ca/youth) or contact CUC Director of Lifespan Learning Sylvia Bass West at [sylvia@cuc.ca](mailto:sylvia@cuc.ca) or Myda Egrmajer, at [youth@cuc.ca](mailto:youth@cuc.ca).



## Elizabeth Bowen

CUC President

## ICUU: our growing international UU affiliation

**Did you know** that there are about half a million UUs scattered around the globe? Although our cultures, backgrounds and conditions vary greatly, we share a common goal – the search for religious truth without the constraints of dogma or creed.

That goal, plus the desire to reach out and connect with UUs world-wide, led representatives from eight countries (including Canada) to found the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) in March 1995.

Less than a decade later the association has 19 member organizations, led by a seven-member Executive (including Canada's John Slattery). The ICUU is a communication network and promotes our faith around the globe.

It has established world-wide links by organizing Unitarian historical tours, youth conferences, a visiting ministers' program and leadership training in several countries. It publishes *The Global Chalice* twice a year and a chalice lighting monthly.

As our relationship with the UUA changes, our international connections are growing, through the ICUU. Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed and I participated in the fifth biennial ICUU conference in Prague last summer. Meeting and working with 48 participants from 19 countries was a privilege and an overwhelming experience. I became fully aware of a wonderful global liberal religious community.

UU congregations, fellowships and groups around the world will honour our international connections by celebrating the ninth anniversary of the founding of the ICUU in March. I urge you to hold an ICUU Sunday as well, or use some of the material sent recently by the CUC to enrich your services.

For more about the ICUU, visit the web site at [www.icuu.net](http://www.icuu.net).

## International Connections

### WESTWOOD HELPS NICARAGUA

Westwood Unitarian in Edmonton recently fundraised for a school in Casa Blanca, Nicaragua. And church member **Elaine Roberts** visited the village twice last year. She reports that the three-room school and accompanying well are nearly finished, with half the funds, or \$7,000, coming from Westwood.



### IRAQ OCCUPATION IS WRONG

**Medhat Rahim**, an Iraqi-born member of Lakehead Unitarian, spoke publicly about his country after a visit there last fall, his first since he left Iraq 30 years ago. He is largely critical of the current state of affairs, and thinks the U.S. should turn over the country to United Nations' control, followed by free elections. Although Rahim is glad that Saddam Hussein is gone, he argues that, "You can't give liberty to people; they must earn it for themselves."

### UNITARIANS IN INDIA

Did you know that Unitarianism is popular in a small corner of India, where about 10,000 people belong to 34 congregations and six fellowships? **Ellen and Doug Campbell** of Toronto First visited the Khasi Hills Unitarians for a week last September, and helped them celebrate their 116th anniversary. They attended services, parties and dinners, and marched in a torchlight parade. Ellen reports, "We felt the warmth of friendship, and it was hard to leave."

### GOING TO SPAIN AND FRANCE

**Beverly Carr** of Neighbourhood UU in Toronto is organizing another study tour of European Unitarianism, late next September. She expects about 20 Canadians will join her in the two-week visit to Spain and France, focussing on Michael Servetus, the Spanish theologian whose thinking influenced Unitarian founders in eastern Europe. Deadline for tour registration is March 15. Contact [bgcarr@rogers.com](mailto:bgcarr@rogers.com) or call 416-778-6657.

## 50th Anniversaries

by Rev. Charles Eddis



The London Unitarian Fellowship (UFL) celebrated its golden anniversary last November

## 1954 was the peak year of our Unitarian baby boom

**A large number** of our congregations are celebrating their 50th anniversaries this decade. Fifteen of the 50 congregations we have today began in the 1950s – almost one-third of the total – with the biggest bulge coming 50 years ago, in 1953–1954, when seven new congregations blossomed. What caused this sudden flowering?

The 1950s were the big growth years for Unitarians in Canada. The decade of 1951–1961 saw our membership jump from 1,741 to over 5,000, while the census count of Unitarians went from 3,517 to 15,062. Only five of the Unitarian churches (Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa) and the three Universalist churches (Halifax, Olinda, North Hatley) we have with us today go back to the 19th century.

The 1950s were a busy and enthusiastic time for forming new Unitarian congregations. World War II veterans, university-educated at government expense, joined by young immigrants and others, created the baby boom, new housing, suburbs, and shopping centres. Society took churches for granted on the social landscape; developers set aside land for them, and churches were built.

Doubters from the traditional reli-

gions took to Unitarian congregations in droves. We were visible, with feature articles in magazines and ministers making headlines in the press, and visible on radio and TV. Hundreds of Unitarian families moving from city to city wanted to find or found a Unitarian congregation in their new communities. *The Canadian Unitarian* was

revived in 1956 as a four-page insert that went out with all local newsletters.

We were youngish with growing families, freethinking, rebellious, anti-tradition, socially

liberal, and NDP by a slight majority. We loved to talk, to be heard, to discuss and argue religion and theology, to explore social issues (and sometimes do something about them). We had decidedly more children in religious education than adults at Sunday services.

It all seemed so easy then, apart from the threat of the hydrogen bomb lurking over us. We were enthusiastic. What we really wanted we accomplished. It was a great time to be a Unitarian, and to get to know the Universalists. ■

— Charles Eddis was the first minister of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, and of the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation

### BOOMER CONGREGATIONS

1950 Victoria 1953 Lakeshore, London 1954 Don Heights, Edmonton, Kingston, St. Catharines, South Peel 1955 Regina 1956 Sarnia and Port Huron, Saskatoon, Waterloo 1957 Calgary 1958 Thunder Bay 1959 Nanaimo



# From the Pulpit

adapted from a sermon by Rev. Wendy McNiven

## Updating the principles of our faith

**Have you ever tried** to describe Unitarianism to a curious friend? Not easy, is it? But successfully naming something you believe can be powerful.

Unitarians in Canada have an opportunity this winter to be involved in the process of naming who and what we are as a movement. We can contribute to a new statement of principles that describes us in the early part of the 21st century – a statement that could become our rallying point, just like the present statement of purposes and principles have been for the last 18 years.

The CUC's **Statement of Principles Taskforce** is leading a reconsideration of our denomination's mission over the next several years. We are encouraging Canadian congregations to hold workshops this winter, based on six inter-linked questions about our faith and identity. The responses we receive will help define a new statement of principles (or re-affirm the old one!). Here are those questions, along with my own, very personal and preliminary answers.

**Question 1: What is your deepest yearning?**

This is intended to start you thinking about what is most important in your life, what you long for, what you most wish would happen.

I would say my deepest yearning is to be at one with the divine in the universe. I want to *feel* that I am in the presence of the sacred. I want the *experience* of Godness. I want to know that the boundaries of *my* being mesh with the boundaries of *all* Being, and that All is One.

**Question 2: How would someone know what your values are?**

This question and the next are intended to evoke thoughts about how we *express our deepest values*, how we act on them in daily life. How would anyone know that I value fairness, or justice, or environmental preservation? I don't always wear a badge on my sleeve.

Am I acting according to what I say I believe? Some people say you can tell what a person values by looking at where



they spend their money; I would add to that, by looking at where they spend their time, which can be more precious than money. For me, it's important to try to act as I believe, even if I don't always succeed.

**Question 3: What is your personal ministry?**

What action in your life is of service to others, or to a cause, and also feeds you? Maybe you have not thought of what you do as a ministry. One way I define it is "spirituality in action" – a way of serving others that comes out of your deepest values or beliefs. Although I'm a minister in my professional life, when I care for an elderly relative, that too is ministry.

**Question 4: What would be missing from your life if there was no U\*Uism in it?**

This question and the next are about what it means to each of us to be associated with Unitarianism, and what it could mean for the world. If there were no U\*Uism in my life, I would miss the support I feel in being part of a community. I would miss having a place to call my spiritual home. I would miss

knowing that there are others who feel as I do about spiritual exploration and about the possibility of being open to truth and inspiration in a myriad of ways and places, not just one.

**Question 5: What can U\*Us do for Canada and the World?**

Now we're getting into a pretty challenging area – beyond personal, reaching out. How can we serve? How can we make a mark? Do we have anything to offer Canada, or are we just a club for people who think like us?

I think we have something to offer to the world. I believe that our aspiration to value diversity is our strongest and most vital characteristic. This includes theological diversity, as well as a long list of other characteristics. We value the individual, but at the same time support forms of community and institutions that allow this individuality to flourish.

**Question 6: What are the shared values and loyalties that bind us together as U\*Us in Canada, and make us unique?**

This question will help us articulate who we are and what we stand for. For me, our unique value is the premise that each person is both responsible for her or his own faith stance, and open to others' perspectives. Beyond that, I think we share these values: we affirm individual worth; we affirm the interdependent web of life; we promote spiritual searching and growth; we encourage social action towards creating justice for all. Finally, we value community.

If you have the chance, I encourage you to be part of a congregational workshop on our principles. You could influence history ... or at least have a very solid answer the next time a friend asks you about Unitarianism! ☐

— Wendy McNiven is minister of the Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna and a member of the CUC Statement of Principles Taskforce. For more information about the Taskforce, including the full version of McNiven's recent sermon adapted above, go to [www.cuc.ca/sptf](http://www.cuc.ca/sptf) and follow the "resources" link.

**The Canadian Unitarian** is the quarterly newsletter of the Canadian Unitarian Council. It's mailed free to all Canadian 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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## Friends Profile

# Why the Keelers are 'Friends'

**Bernie and Dorothy Keeler** are old Friends of the cuc. Yes, they've been active in the wider denomination for a long time. But we're not talking about that kind of friend. They're uppercase Friends – that is, they give annually to the cuc Friends fund, a vital part of the organization's annual revenue.

"We're not big donors," says Dorothy, "but we've supported the cuc steadily since Friends began 20 years ago." She explains: "The bigger you see this organization, the more strength you see in it, and the more you're willing to put your money in as well."


Bernie puts it a little differently. "We're cuc Friends because we're part of a movement, not just members of a congregation," he says. "We need the cuc to grow and prosper so that our good news of inclusiveness is shared

more widely."

Bernie's Unitarian roots go back over 40 years, when he rejected his "restrictive" Baptist upbringing in favour of what he calls the "liberating" theology of Unitarianism. Dorothy is a lifelong Unitarian, having been taken to the Toronto First congregation on

Jarvis Street as a toddler by her inquisitive parents.

When they moved to Edmonton in 1961, the Keelers joined the church and quickly became involved in denominational af-

fairs. Over the past 30 years they've attended most of the district, regional or national meetings of the cuc, plus 20 General Assemblies of the uua. In 2002, Bernie received the cuc's highest recognition of volunteer service when he was presented with the Knight Award. 



# ARE YOU A FRIEND OF THE CUC?



**CUC Friends** are special people who help the organization meet its annual goals through direct financial gifts. Will you become a Friend?

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I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE \$ \_\_\_\_\_  PLEASE SEND ME MORE INFORMATION

Send to: CUC Friends, 502-112 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, ON, M4V 2Y3