

Eyewitness to the summit protest in Quebec City

It's 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 21. My husband, a friend and I are standing quietly in a circle of about 40 people next to the "wall," or barricade, in Quebec City. We have come with a group of Ottawa Unitarians and other faith groups to make a peaceful statement for democracy, and for trade agreements that put human rights, a healthy environment and the rights of citizens ahead of the rights of large corporations.

It's a sunny, quiet morning. We hear birds chirping. We have joined the Quakers for a religious service to start our day. About 20 soldiers are standing in line on the other side of the fence. Some Quebec police are standing near our circle. Other citizens arrive and stand quietly outside the circle.

At the end of the quiet meditation one of the Quakers sings a freedom song. Others join in and soon our circle has expanded to include many of the onlookers. Police helicopters fly overhead. A fire truck parks down the road. The service ends and we leave the wall and join the thousands of other peaceful protesters assembling for the People's March of the Americas.

Before the march, we go to *le Chapiteau*, a huge tent, to hear messages of protest, hope and solidarity from Canadian First Nations representatives, cultural leaders, indigenous leaders from Mexico and Equador, environmentalists, union leaders, peasant leaders and the Council of Canadians.

One reason I have come to this event is to be an "eyewitness" – not to have my perceptions filtered through others' reports – to see, feel, hear and smell for myself.

The speeches are over. We sit on the grass and eat our lunch, enjoying the energy and diversity of the thousands gathered to speak for fair trade. There are a good many grey-haired people in the crowd and plenty of energetic youth.

At about 1:00 p.m. we begin gathering for the march. We congregate with other faith groups



and the parade marshals inform us we have to wait until the union and women's groups pass. We wait, and wait, and wait. It seems like several kilometres of parade passes before we are allowed in. When we look back, we can't see the end of it.

As the march passes various side streets we see clouds of tear gas in the distance. At one point, we have to pull out the vinegar-soaked cloths we brought "just in case" and cover our faces to protect ourselves from the tear gas. (I am puzzled at the time because the wind is not blowing towards us from the barricade. I find out later that police have used giant blowers to spread the tear gas beyond the area around the fence.)

About three hours later, we have marched and regrouped with some of our bus-mates including several Raging Grannies. They went to the barricade and helped diffuse at least one potentially violent confrontation with the police. I admire these courageous women.

Members of Ottawa First Unitarian Congregation and the UU Fellowship of Ottawa protested at the Quebec City summit (foreground l-r): Bob Stevenson, Louise McDiarmid, Helmut Kuhn and Linda Mann

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UNITARIAN CROSSROADS – SEE PAGE 4

**GROWING VITAL
RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES
IN CANADA**



Mary Bennett

CUC Executive Director

Searching for the right analogy – is cell division okay?

The CUC turns 40 this year. As many do, I tend to mark the “decade birthdays” with a fair bit of reflection as well as celebration. The year I turned 40, I announced to the world, “I’ve decided that by definition, this is grown up.”

Friends who enjoy my humour and fun, retorted: “No, Mary, don’t grow up.”

“You don’t understand,” I replied, “I’m saying this is grown up. I’m sure I’ll continue to change and grow, but I’ve decided to recognize that I am already grown up.”

This decision or reflection, affected my life greatly. I found myself speaking with greater authority – as if I was grown up! Although I’ve felt called to leadership throughout my life, I find it easier to accept the challenges as well as the rewards of being a leader as I age. In short, I take myself and my role in the world more seriously.

This month, the CUC turns 40. On the eve of our birthday, delegates from our member congregations will vote on what we want the CUC to be as it enters its fifth decade.

Some have been using the analogy of “an adolescent leaving home” to put the proposed agreement between the CUC and the UUA in context. Others have likened it to a divorce – *splitsville*.

Looking for an alternative analogy, I asked friends trained in science to tell me more about cell division. What I learned was that when a cell divides, it creates a “sister” cell, identical at that moment, but capable of growing in complexity and adapting to local conditions.

No analogy is perfect, of course, but the cell-division one fits best for how I see the future of the CUC and UUA. By forming two cells from one, we will each grow in complexity and diversity, while adapting to unique contextual circumstances.

Letter to the Unitarian

LONG HISTORY OF REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

I am responding to the item on page five of the last issue titled, “Vancouver Sponsors Refugee,” in which you state, “This is the first time a Unitarian church has been able to do refugee sponsorship alone (not in conjunction with other churches).” This is not true. In 1978, First Congregation in Toronto applied to sponsor a refugee family of boat people from Laos, to be supported entirely by the congregation. (Now, 21 years later, they are a very successful refugee settlement: they have two teenaged children in high school, they both work and own a house and car.) In 1990 we sponsored a second refugee family from El Salvador. In both cases, the refugees were supported entirely by our church.

— Janet Campbell, Toronto

Editor replies:

We were incorrect in reporting that the recent application by the Unitarian Church of Vancouver to sponsor a Serbian refugee was a “first.” Janet Campbell is correct: other UU churches have made their own sponsorship applications before, and have supported refugees on their own. However, over the last five years Unitarian churches have had trouble getting permission from the federal government to sponsor refugees; some were refused, or had to do it in conjunction with other churches. That is why the CUC became a refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder with the federal government last year – so that any Unitarian congregation, in any part of the country, can sponsor refugees (providing they meet the government’s criteria for providing financial support to the families). This was the real “news” of our small story.

Eyewitness to Quebec, cont.

By 6:00 p.m. we are on the bus back to Ottawa. We’ve picked up three young people who have missed their rides back and hear of their experiences at the wall. They tell us of police firing water cannons on groups – including families – peacefully walking in the park outside the wall. Their stories add to several others we had heard that day of police aggression with non-violent protestors outside the wall.

This was our day in Quebec City. I have made no attempt to discuss the

issues related to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. I am left with many questions. Here are just a few:

- What are the fundamental measures of a democratic society and how does Canada measure up? How can citizens respond to elected governments that, in their opinion, increasingly lack moral and political authority?
- How do we build a strong, non-violent movement to speak for our rights as citizens to safe food, safe air, safe water and fair trade?
- International trade is important to everyone. How do we insist that our governments have a substantive widespread public dialogue on key issues

and provide opportunities for citizen input before positions are taken and agreements made? ☐

— Marilyn Kuhn,
UU Fellowship of
Ottawa



The Raging Grannies at the chain link wall in Quebec City last April

Getting to know your mystery friend

A child at the Unitarian Church of Montreal (UCM) writes anonymously to an adult member: “Which do you like better: chocolate chip cookies or fancy goldfish?”

The adult replies the following week with a query of her own: “What do you mean? To eat?”

That’s the essence of the Mystery Friends program, an intergenerational activity to help younger and older members get acquainted with each other. Similar activities went on in many congregations this past spring – in South Peel, Ontario, North Shore in West Vancouver, Saskatoon and Victoria (and probably others we haven’t heard about!).

In Saskatoon, the program is called Secret Friends, in Victoria it’s Secret Buddies, but the idea is the same – a month or so of letter-writing between pairs of children and adults, followed by a climactic event where participants reveal their identities to each other (if they haven’t already figured that one out).

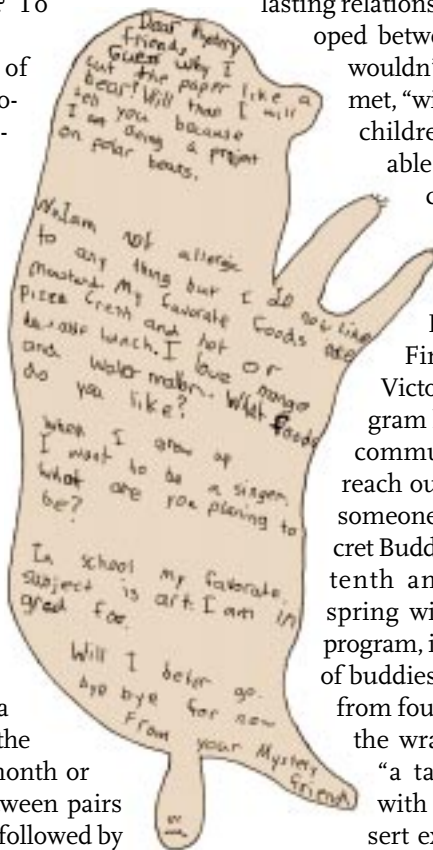
“Do you have a pet?” “Do you like to ski?” “What are your favourite books or movies?” “Do you have a hobby?” “Where did you grow up?” – these are the sorts of questions that transpire in Mystery Friends. And not only in letters. Sometimes artwork is exchanged (like the example on this page) or special objects, jokes, baby photos or other clues.

According to Trudy Blumstein, the director of religious education at UCM, “Mystery Friends is now a tradition here.” She sees great value in this “networking between people of all age groups and diverse cultural, social and religious backgrounds.” She says that

lasting relationships have developed between people who wouldn’t otherwise have met, “with the result that children feel comfortable with a widening circle of adults in our community.”

Stephanie Ippen, the DRE at First Unitarian in Victoria, says the program helps “build our community, as people reach out to get to know someone new.” Their Secret Buddies celebrated its tenth anniversary this spring with a mammoth program, involving 31 pairs of buddies, ranging in age from four to 70. She says the wrap-up party was “a taskforce event” with a lunch, a dessert extravaganza and a collaborative paper quilt.

Blumstein compares the impact of Mystery Friends to the movie *Pay It Forward*. In it, a boy proposes that if each of us did a good deed for three people without any expectation of immediate return, and if they did it for three more, eventually it would create a positive loop with its own momentum. “That’s the way I think of Mystery Friends,” Blumstein says. “Pretty soon we will truly know and appreciate each other, not just adult to child, but person to person.” □



WEB INVENTOR IS UU

The fellow who is credited with inventing the World Wide Web in 1989, Dr. **Tim Berners-Lee**, is a Unitarian who attends church in the Boston area. On his web site, he observes that, “the web and the UU concept of faith are similar in that both serve as a place for thought and the importance of the quest for truth, without labelling any one true solution. The quest for truth is always accompanied by scepticism of anyone claiming to have found it.” Berners-Lee teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His essay comparing the web and Unitarianism is at www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/UU.html. His book *Weaving the Web* was published in 1999.



HONORARY UNITARIAN

Alice and Len Evans are moving back to Winnipeg, from the Capital congregation in Victoria. Later this spring the University of Brandon will be conferring on Len an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree, in recognition of the years he spent as a representative in the Manitoba Legislature and member of the NDP government’s cabinet.

OUT OF THE CLOSET, INTO THE PULPIT

Peter Boullata, a member of the Unitarian Church of Montreal, was recently filmed while delivering a service at the church, for inclusion in a documentary on Quebeckers coming out of the closet. The film will show Boullata as a gay man coming out of the closet within an affirming, supportive environment. Boullata has finished his theological studies at Emmanuel College in Toronto and is now starting a two-year internship as an assistant pastor at the First Parish Church in Weston, MA.

PASTORAL CARE

Oceanna Hall-Heston, who is preparing for the UU ministry, has been accepted for a full-year pastoral care residency program at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton.



**Kim
Turner**
CUC President

Let's get on with 'it' – whatever 'it' turns out to be

The decision we're facing at this year's annual meeting is simple in one respect. Do we want to continue down the path (albeit at a quicker pace) of having the CUC take on more and more services to Canadian congregations?

On another level, the decision has become very complex, mostly in response to whether Canadian congregations will continue to be members of the UUA, and as a result of the UUA negotiating team's position regarding a "no" vote. (It has said that if Canadians reject the deal the UUA will no longer negotiate with the CUC; it will revert to the pre-1979 relationship of having Canadian congregations pay dues directly to the UUA, in US funds.)

Some suggest, very wrongly, that the vote is one of confidence or non-confidence in the CUC. I think a no vote should be interpreted as nothing more than Canadian congregations telling the CUC and the UUA that the proposed changes are too much, too fast. A "yes" vote, on the other hand, will demonstrate our willingness to seize this unexpected opportunity to take control of our own future.

I am excited about our future as an organization and optimistic that we will exceed beyond even our own expectations. I am also anxious. Anxious to have the decision made. Anxious to "get on with it," whatever "it" may be. This anxiety is mixed with optimism when I think about the work that lies ahead for the CUC following a successful vote.

Finally, I feel privileged to have been able to participate as president of the CUC for the past two years, privileged to have worked with so many dedicated Unitarians and Universalists, and privileged to have been able to contribute in even a small way to our journey forward together. *Thank you!*

CUC Annual Meeting 2001

Moment of decision for Canadian UUs

Canadian Unitarians are meeting in Montreal as we go to press, to settle a fork-in-the-road question about the future of their association and its relationship to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

The meeting will be the culmination of several years of debate and negotiation between representatives of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) and the UUA. It may determine the shape of things to come for the next few decades.

Formally, the delegates attending the CUC annual meeting are being asked to approve a negotiated deal worked out by representatives of the two organizations earlier this year. It would transfer the responsibility of providing services to Canadian congregations from the UUA and its districts to the CUC. (Some services to Canadians would remain the UUA's responsibility: support and settlement of ministers, youth and young adult services.)

The decision is not just administrative tinkering. It involves a separation of the complex financial arrangements

between the two organizations into a simpler system where Canadians would pay directly for services provided to them by the CUC. It would significantly change the 40-year-old continental integration of Canadian Unitarians into the UUA, and make the CUC the central affiliation for UUs in this country.

Since the deal was negotiated last January CUC leaders have travelled the country consulting with local congregations. Approximately 700 members from 45 congregations attended 26 of these meetings. If it is approved at the CUC annual meeting, the changes would come into effect in just over a year, on July 1, 2002.

Rev. Brian Kiely of Edmonton was a member of the CUC negotiating team, and is also chair of the implementation team that is working on the shape and financing of an autonomous CUC (see story below).

He says the congregational meetings were mostly "supportive" of the agreement, albeit with many concerns and questions being raised. (At two congre-

Defining the shape of a new CUC

What might the new CUC look like, if the deal negotiated with the UUA is approved by delegates to the annual meeting?

An implementation task force of the CUC board is already looking at this question. Some of its first ideas were presented at the congregational meetings held in March and April, and its preliminary report was circulated to congregational leaders in the April CUC mailing (and is available on the web site).

The taskforce proposes a new model

of service delivery, given that the UUA district model will no longer exist. It proposes three "regional councils" defined as the West (including B.C.), Ontario, and the East (including Quebec). (Another model in the report breaks this down into smaller regions.)

Each region would be served by a two-thirds time staff person, working out of a home office in the region. Each of these staff would also have national responsibility in one area of specialization: RE, growth and extension, or communications and visibility.

Across the Country

gational meetings, in Winnipeg and North Shore, members voted *against* the deal.)

Many members asked about money (is there enough for the CUC to deliver the services Canadians want?). Kiely answers that, "There's never enough money to do everything you want to do in a church." However, he thinks that the transfer of US \$1.5 million in endowments from the UUA, which is part of the deal, along with the transfer of district dues from the UUA to the CUC, "is enough money to start the process [of an autonomous CUC], but not enough to finish it. A new capital campaign should help raise the rest."

What will happen if delegates to the CUC annual meeting vote "yes" to the proposed deal? In this case, both organizations have committed to making the one-year transition work. The implementation team would work furiously through the fall to finalize the plan for a revamped CUC, for presentation to the board next January. The changeover would happen, with new staff in place, by July 2002.

(One question remains murky in the event of a "yes" vote: would Canadi-

ans still retain membership in the UUA? Last March, the UUA negotiators answered this with an unequivocal no. However, at their April meeting, when the UUA board formally approved the deal, they backed away from saying they would revoke Canadian memberships in the organization, which they cannot do without changing their by-laws.)

What will happen if Canadian delegates vote "no" to the deal negotiated by their representatives with the UUA? The answer is less clear, but the UUA board has said it will begin treating Canadian Unitarian congregations exactly like U.S. ones. It will ask for dues to be paid directly to Boston (in US dollars), instead

of going through the CUC. There will be no more "accords" to delegate responsibility and funds to the CUC. In effect, the UUA will no longer have a formal relationship with the CUC.

Is there a "third way," a compromise position between these two options? At some of the congregational meetings, members asked the CUC representatives if there was a way to retain some more organizational connection to the UUA, while going ahead with the changes in the proposed deal. Kiely argues that there may be a third way, *if* Canadian delegates approve the deal being presented at the annual meeting. In the event of a "no" vote, however, "the deal with the UUA is dead, and it won't be coming back."

The decision now rests with Canadian delegates to the CUC annual meeting. The UUA board has already approved the deal; they await the Canadian response.

News about the Montreal decision will be communicated immediately to congregations as well as posted on the CUC web site. And the next issue of the *Unitarian* in July will feature full coverage of the annual meeting. □

"In the event of a 'no' vote, the deal with the UUA is dead, and it won't be coming back."

— CUC NEGOTIATOR BRIAN KIELY

REMEMBERING JACK KENT

Jack Kent, former minister of the North Shore Unitarian Church in West Vancouver, died suddenly in April after suffering a stroke while mowing his lawn on Hornby Island, B.C. He was the church's first minister, going there in 1967 after serving several American churches. During his six-year ministry he made a mark with his outspoken warnings about environmental degradation, long before it was a popular cause. On leaving the church, he managed a shopping mall in Courtenay and assisted the Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship. After retiring, he moved to Hornby Island and made a study of the early records of what happened following the death of Jesus, and elaborated on this in a book titled, "The Psychological Origins of the Resurrection Myth."



Jack Kent, circa 1970

SPIRITUAL ADVENTURES

South Peel (Mississauga) has started a twice-monthly Sunday evening worship service, "for the spiritually adventurous." These services focus on earth-based spirituality and include dancing, singing and sometimes drumming.

GREEN SANCTUARY

Fifteen UU congregations across North America are pioneering a "green sanctuary" program, to make their churches more environmentally conscious, in actions, practice and teaching. Included in the new project are two Canadian congregations: Hamilton and Sarnia-Port Huron. A church that undertakes to become a Green Sanctuary examines every area of church life – outreach, social concerns, religious education, buildings and grounds, social events, church communication, and church administration – to see that its activities reflect respect for the interdependent web. For more information visit the Green Sanctuary / Seven Principle Project web site: www.uuaspp.org/greensanctuary.htm.

Existing CUC staff would remain as they are, with the executive director continuing to split her time between Vancouver and Toronto, and with the head office remaining in Toronto, with two administrative staff located there.

The task force proposed a budget to run this structure on a break-even basis, with the goal of moving the staff positions to full-time after undertaking a new capital campaign. The total budget would be approximately \$700,000 with almost \$300,000 of that being new money. (See the task force report for detailed figures and revenue explanations.)



Katie Stein Sather

UUA Trustee for Canada

UUA board wants whatever we want for ourselves

Watching the UUA board of trustees at work is an interesting exercise. In many ways, they are like any other gathering of UUs. Some know all the details of what is going on – others must be brought up to speed. The April board meeting was like that regarding the proposal we will debate at our annual meeting. CUC negotiator Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed attempted to help fill in the gaps, and talk about our vision for the CUC.

The UUA board has realized that their relationship to Canadian UUs is not as mature as they would like it to be. While they would like to be truly inclusive of Canadians within a continental UUA, they now understand it's not really possible.

That is what the "let's give you \$1.5 million as an endowment" is about: enabling the CUC to be a full-service governing body for Canadian UUs. While there is some sadness about us possibly leaving the UUA, there is also the recognition that we should have the means to envision our own future.

What the UUA Board really wants is what we want for ourselves, as our delegates decide at the annual meeting. The UUA will support that decision in whatever way is feasible. The agreement spells out many of the details; the joint commission will figure out the rest.

The covenant agreed upon in February puts into words the spirit of the relationship: "The CUC and the UUA Boards intend to interrelate as strong and trusting peer organizations in order to promote Unitarian Universalism across North America and to nurture and grow our respective member congregations."

The second motion that the Board passed is a reiteration of that cooperative spirit, no matter what the outcome of the vote is. We can't know exactly what will happen in either case, but knowing their intentions helps.

Testimony

Heather Lundergan

I've become a seeker, and I find it thrilling

They say that life begins at 40. I began university then. And at 45, I joined the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton. Both were pivotal events in my life.

Having rejected organized religion years before, as a student I soon decided that there was something inherently incompatible between religious belief and intellectual curiosity. However, my educational journey and my parallel discovery of Unitarianism have helped me realize that spiritual life and intellectual pursuit can co-exist.

This has to do with three things – my father, my education, and my sense of self. They are intertwined, but I will try to deal with them individually.

My father was not a religious man, but he was a spiritual being. He believed in God, and taught me and my siblings to be in awe of nature. His fascination with mayflowers, clouds and squirrels is what I remember most. He believed in me, and always encouraged me to think and question. He was not well when I was in university, but we had and still have a bond that I now understand as spiritual. It sustained us through Alzheimer's and his death on the eve of my completing my master's degree.

My education changed my life. Being a mature student is not easy, even when one has a supportive family, money for textbooks, an encouraging mentor and good friends. I was still older than most of my classmates, and yes, my values were different than those of many of my peers and professors. But what I gained from the experience of being a student was a deep understanding of who I really am. I developed a sense of self that allows

me to say I am an intelligent woman as well as a spiritual being.

It was scary, I admit, because I had reached mid-life without understanding who I really was. I was Heather: daughter, sister, wife, mother, em-



ployee, friend – but there was a spiritual side of me that needed the goad of using my mind to release it. I had to become a scholar in order to understand that reason does not exist in a vacuum. I needed to learn about myself, and find a meaning in my life that transcended home, family,

work and school. I had to learn, in the words of a favourite reading, to cherish my doubts, "for doubt is the attendant of truth." Both university and Unitarianism helped.

In the words of Kathy Fuson Hurt, I am "the seeker." And the search, now well begun, is exhilarating! My intellectual curiosity, and my spiritual search, have become impossible to curb. I understand Unitarianism to be a community of thinkers, more than a community of believers. It is also my spiritual community, in which I can question, ponder and cherish my doubts even as I work them through. It is thrilling and comforting to belong to a community that allows full and frank discussion, that presumes the inherent dignity of people, and that allows me the freedom to develop my spiritual self without denying my rationality (and vice versa). ☐

— Heather Lundergan lives with her husband in a 158-year-old house in downtown Fredericton, and teaches Political Science and Humanities at her alma mater, St. Thomas University. She is beginning a three-year term on the CUC board of trustees.

Unitarian Youth

IRRATIONAL YOUTH TAKE OVER OTTAWA!!!

by Daria Dolson, UCM Youth Advisor

Have you ever been to an Irrational Youth Conference before? Neither had we. And we'll never forget it.

Friday night

Our Montreal entourage met at the church at 4:30 p.m. on a February Friday. Being the fearless, and tardy, youth advisor, I arrived at 5:00. After packing all our stuff, we hit the road for Ottawa and looked forward to our adventure.

We stopped for a bite en route and arrived at the conference at 8:30. The Ottawa Unitarian Church was swarming with teenagers sporting multi-colored hair and bizarre clothes.

We registered (write your name backwards on the tag, and if you can manage it, upside down too) and were assigned touch-group creatures. I got to be a Manwhore (a praying mantis) and I think someone else in the group got to be a Bluebumblebutt (some sort of flying thing). We met with our touch groups and finally headed up to the chapel for the official kickoff.

Afterwards, we had a fine midnight snack where we were not allowed to speak or feed ourselves. Let the irrationality begin!!!

Saturday

After a minimal amount of sleep (about three hours) we ambled into the kitchen for breakfast. Later, we met with our touch groups again to work on skits using strange props and even stranger characters.

In the afternoon we had more silliness and broke off into the various workshops that were offered (topics that might be normal for UU youth but bizarre in the eyes of the rest of the world) such as Working with Duct Tape (I got a cool wallet made out of the stuff), Wisdom of Monty Python,

and Protesting Protesting. I was *responsible* and went to the one on UU Youth Adult Committees.

Later in the afternoon we headed off to enjoy a bit of Ottawa, including, to our amusement, some of the others doing Protesting Protesting at the parliament buildings.

When we returned we went to more workshops on things like Massage (I was the happy recipient), Calvin Ball, and Building Your Inner Monster.

Everybody was having an amazing time and I was very impressed by the calibre of these youth. I felt much more heartened about the fate of this planet when I was in the presence of these young people who sincerely wanted to change the world for the better.

We ended with the bizarre skits and finally, a powerful sharing in the sanctuary. No one will ever be the same.

Sunday

Would I ever get to sleep? After breakfast and more silliness the conference wound down and ended. So when's the next one? ☺

Youth Con Con in Waterloo, in Aug.

Con Con (or Continental Conference) is a week-long Unitarian youth conference that happens once a year during the summer. This year the dates are July 20–26, and the location is the campus of Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. Youth (those aged 14–20) from across the U.S. and Canada gather to create an inspiring, safe community. There's singing, dancing, workshops and worships – everything you'd expect at a regular conference, just stepped up a notch!

To encourage Canadian participation, special scholarships are being offered. Preference will be given to those who have to travel far to get to Waterloo. For more information about this fan-tabulous event, contact Jacob Larsen, at yak_o_mak@hotmail.com, call 416-690-3675, or email the UUA Youth Office at yruu@uua.org.

International News

BUILDING HONDURAS SOLIDARITY

A Unitarian presence is very strong in the annual effort to build homes and schools in rural Honduras, which suffered hurricane damage several years ago. Earlier this year 20 Unitarians from nine different congregations were part of a 36-person ecumenical effort to build six homes in Honduras – the most successful year ever for the program, which began in 1997. This year's helpers came from Edmonton, southern Ontario, Ottawa, Montreal and Saint John.

"*Muchas gracias,*" says **Richard Kirsh**, the Toronto Unitarian who coordinates the campaign. Contact Richard at: richardkirsh@sympatico.ca.



Freddie, the Honduran foreman at one site

SANCTIONS CHALLENGE

Victoria Unitarian **Terry Wolfwood** was part of a 50-person international delegation that visited Iraq in January, to deliver \$2 million in medical aid and challenge the UN-led (and Canadian supported) economic sanctions against the country. The visit was an illegal act against the UN sanctions. Wolfwood reported in *Justnews* that she wandered freely in old Baghdad and was treated with respect and friendliness. She was told repeatedly, "Please end the sanctions; we are suffering; why does the UN and your government want to punish us?" To make a donation in support of Wolfwood's trip, contact Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice: vanalstyn@mac.com.

EYEGASSES FOR PEACE

Frank Chavarria, head custodian at First Unitarian in Toronto, has been spearheading an eyeglasses campaign. He and his First Narayever Congregation (which meets at Toronto First) donated 226 old pairs of glasses to the citizens of Chinandega, Nicaragua. Now he's trying to expand the campaign. For more information, contact Frank Chavarria at elnic@sympatico.ca.

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Unitarian Gardens



Church gardens at Ottawa First (above), South Peel (right) and Vancouver (left)



Creating a church yard web of life

As spring gains momentum across the country, many Unitarian congregations are looking to renew their gardens, and in doing so express their relationship to members, the environment, their children and the outside world.

At **Ottawa First Unitarian**, Renée De Vry has a big project on the go. She hopes to claim the stump of a 450-year-old oak tree from another part of the city (the tree was destroyed by lightning) and move it to their garden. The mammoth stump, which is 11 feet high and eight feet across, will contribute to the "magnificence and roughness" of the church's meditation garden. "It will help people realize we're not really at the top of the pyramid," she says.

Garden tending at the **Unitarian Church of Vancouver** is largely the responsibility of the church's environment committee. Karl Perrin of the committee has reduced the amount of grass and increased the tended vegeta-

ble and herb gardens over the past five years. "Volunteers rake the huge numbers of leaves in the fall, we compost them and use this as fertilizer the following year," says Perrin. The committee uses worms to compost the five or six litres of coffee grounds cast off by the church each week. And produce from the church's vegetable garden goes to the single parents' food bank that meets in the church.

At **South Peel**, the garden is in "transition" says Karyn Burney, the RE director who also oversees the garden. It was a Sacred Circle, divided into four quadrants. The sections were used to grow pizza stuff (tomatoes, oregano), berries, native produce (corn, beans, squash), and pumpkins. However, last fall the RE program planted bulbs for the first time, to move the garden a little bit more towards perennial flowers. "It's now a Sacred Circle Garden becoming a place of peace," says Burney.

Bring on the warm weather! ☀