

SEPT. 11 – Unitarians turn to each other for support

When confusion and terror struck North America on Sept. 11, the response of many Canadian Unitarians was to turn to their congregations for solace and support. It happened very quickly in many cases. A dozen or more churches held special evening services within hours or days of the attack. And most of the country's 45 congregations experienced a swelling of their ranks the following Sunday.

"People were looking for comfort, not answers," says Rev. Nancy Anderson of Fredericton. "They needed to be held in community." Her 75-member congregation held a service the evening of Sept. 11, attracting 30 people on a few hour's notice. They spent an hour lighting candles, singing and sharing their feelings in an impromptu service. "Many people lit candles for their children and families, even if they were grown and far away. People were wanting to feel connected to people they cared for."

Across the country in Edmonton, a similar service took place, with members from the two Unitarian churches in the city attending. After an hour-long service, 35 members stayed for another hour, talking with each other. "Everyone seemed to want the same thing," says Rev. Brian Kiely of Edmonton, "a safe space to affirm their human connection." (The church even attracted two strangers who were driving by and just dropped in on the event.)

Winnipeg also held a service the day of the attack. "People needed the comfort of others, and a chance to share and mourn," says Rev. Susan Van Dreser. One member, a flight attendant, was distraught to learn that his colleagues on the doomed airliners had been rendered helpless by the hijackers. "All he could think about was that the passengers had to die without the moral support of the people trained to care for them, and it hurt him deeply," says Van Dreser.

First Unitarian in Toronto attracted 100 peo-



ple to an evening service two days after the attack. Almost half of them shared their thoughts and feelings as they lit candles of hope. "There was a real sense of togetherness," says Rev. Donna Morrison-Reed. She found that the shock of the events was especially difficult for those who had a trauma in their past. "It brought the memories flooding back, and they had to talk about it."

According to Rev. Andy Backus of Vancouver, "Our congregation members wanted a memorial service, a chance to begin grieving, not just the loss of lives, but in the more abstract sense, the loss of our naïve hopes for modernity."

After the mourning, Unitarians also wanted to act, to make a difference in the world, however small. In one impressive example, the minister and two members from Mississauga joined with 24 other congregations (Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and others) for an inter-faith press conference at an Islamic mosque (see pages 4-5 for photo and details). ■

100 members of First Unitarian in Toronto found solace in a "vesper service" at their church the week of the Sept. 11 attacks.

PHOTO © MIKE SLAUGHTER, TORONTO STAR, USED WITH PERMISSION

AFTER SEPT. 11
SEE PAGES 4-5

**GROWING VITAL
RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES
IN CANADA**



Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

CUC President

The response to Sept. 11 is what gives me hope

Some events are simply so traumatic they become etched upon our souls. Where were you when you heard about Princess Di? For many black people, Apr. 4, 1968 – the day Martin Luther King was assassinated – was such a day. Other people have lasting memories of Nov. 22, 1963, the day John F. Kennedy was killed. And I have no doubt that Sept. 11, 2001 will join these as a day people will be able to recall in detail for many years.

The terrorist attacks were despicable. The catastrophic loss of life has left us grieving. Having witnessed our vulnerability, North Americans are fearful. Our faith in human nature is also shaken.

Amidst all this, what gave me hope was people's reaction to this premeditated attack. Individual unpremeditated responses were to reach out: the heroic efforts of New Yorkers, the hospitality of Canadians to the stranded, the donations, the contributions of blood, the multi-faith solidarity with the Muslim community.

Across Canada, our congregations became part of a public response: memorial services, multi-faith vigils, press conferences, letter writing. But I am also aware of many private acts of connection: family members checking on one another, siblings who reconciled, and old friends who called.

In this particular way, I hope we never forget Sept. 11. In the face of this act – the intention of which was abrogated human community – the overwhelming response has been a reaffirmation of human community, and the power and importance of being in relationship.

There are reasons to be hopeful, and the outpouring of love is the most important. In this regard we can be proud of how we, as Unitarians and Universalists, lived out our faith in the aftermath of Sept. 11.

Testimony

by Vicky Sanderson

Ever since I was a girl, that 'voice' has stayed with me

Although my family did not attend church when I was a child, I was often invited by the mothers of my friends to attend services, Sunday school, picnics and Christmas bazaars at the King City United Church.

I also belonged to the CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training), a happy band of girls who made crafts, helped out in the community and who all adored the kind and lovely women who ran the group.

One year we participated in a candlelight Christmas service, and that evening is a brilliant, beautiful picture in my memory. I remember a hushed and darkened sanctuary, lit only by flickering candles that played with the radiant colours of the stained glass windows. I was awed.

Soon after the service began, I started to feel strange, as though someone was whispering to me over my shoulder. The presence was not a malevolent one; rather, it was connected to the beauty of the night, the stillness of the sanctuary and the even breath of the girl next to me. But the feeling was strange enough to make me cry.

Another girl leaned in and asked, "What's wrong?"

"There's something behind me," I whimpered.

"Oh yeah?" she whispered back, "it's prob'ly God."

Frightened, I cried even harder.

I came from a family in which religion was either ignored or held in contempt. I loved being in church, but it was hard to accept the ease with which my friend suggested that God could get so close to us. And as I grew, I wrestled more and more with traditional

Christian doctrine, and I began increasingly to feel that I was in the church on fraudulent terms.

Sadly, I didn't take my doubts to anyone in the Church. I just stopped going. The voice, however, stayed with me, whispering, comforting, provoking. Eventually, I began to describe myself as a "spiritual person without a church of my own."



Fast forward 20 years. I find myself at First Unitarian in Toronto, ostensibly because I wanted an environment in which my children would experience community, realize the importance of social justice, and reflect on the miracle of being alive and conscious.

I was happy to have found such a place.

So it seemed odd that for a long time I would burst into tears two or three times during a service. Finally, I realized I was crying with relief at belonging to a church that would have me and my questions, and that the tears expressed a kind of grief at the loss of my first spiritual home.

Eight years later, I'm still widely recognized as one of the congregation's more accomplished weepers. But I've become comfortable with that, because I know that I'm sharing my tears with a family of faith, a family that will stimulate and inspire me – intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

This family encourages me to learn from others, whose paths to (and away) from God are as varied as their individual histories. It's a place that allows me to honour the kind and gentle women who brought me to their house of faith, while celebrating the path that is uniquely mine. □

CUC Implementation Taskforce

Meet the people designing a new CUC

Following the last May's annual meeting, the CUC established an Implementation Taskforce of ten people and asked them to develop a plan for restructuring the organization and the services it provides. Here are the members and their "portfolios."

REV. BRIAN KIELY

• Minister at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton / Taskforce Chair

• Starting next July, the CUC will be delivering many more services formerly handled by the UUA Districts. Our job is to offer a way of organizing Canadian regions, suggesting how many new staff must be hired and how they should be utilized.

• brikie@aol.com / 780-455-9797



JEFF BAILEY

• Unitarian Church of Vancouver and Toronto First / Technical Advisor

• Our goal is, "A UU in every home" – and building a CUC to get us there! My hope is to help find a way to overcome the difficulties of running a national church body over a geographically, culturally and class diverse group.

• jbailey@nisa.net / 416-703-5778

REV. ALLISON BARRETT

• First Unitarian Church of Hamilton / Ministry and Chaplaincy

• We must envision a way to serve the growing needs of our national church in a way that is consistent with our UU values, that builds our institutional health and strength, and is practical as well as inspirational.

• revallybar@sympatico.ca / 905-527-8441



ART BREWER

• First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto / Affiliated Groups

• Many of the organizations affiliated with the UUA operate continentally and represent significant connections between UUs in Canada and



the US. No one wants to sacrifice or endanger those connections, so it's important to hear from all the "affiliated groups" who may be affected by the transition.

• art.brewer@sympatico.ca / 416-483-4206

MARY BENNETT

• Unitarian Church of Vancouver / CUC Executive Director

• The taskforce is charged with developing an operational plan for Canada from the outline agreement between the CUC and UUA last year. Along the way, we must allow Canadian UUs to have input into creating this new CUC. The taskforce's recommendations will go first to the CUC board and then to the annual meeting in Kelowna next spring.

• mary@cuc.ca / 416-489-4121



REV. ANN BUCKMASTER

• The Unitarian Church of Vancouver / Religious Education

• Our job is to create a workable plan for service delivery in Canada by next January. I think this is important work because services are directly linked to congregational and leadership health. I want our congregations to be healthy, growing places and for Unitarianism in Canada to grow significantly in the coming decade.

• abuckmaster@look.ca / 604-261-7206



LEE DICKEY

• First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo / Finance and technology

• We won't be able to afford everything we want right away, but



we can set our goals high and work toward them. I am optimistic and see good things ahead for the new CUC. This is not to say that we won't have our struggles, but isn't that what it's all about?

• ljdickey@uwaterloo.ca / 519-884-0733

MARY ANN HIGGS

• Kingston Unitarian Fellowship / Growth and Extension

• I see growth not as a separate entity but as integrally connected to all of the other portfolios on the taskforce. In the short term, the upcoming changes in service delivery require us to address pragmatically what must be done. In the longer term we need to examine how we can do things differently in order to transform our congregational lives and connections in ways that might make us feel more vital and also be more inspiring to others.

• higgsma@kos.net / 613-548-7399



JACOB LARSEN

• First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto / Youth and Young Adults

• Our role is to envision a better CUC and begin to shepherd it into being, identifying people and imagining new ways to be a religious community. We need to balance the needs of all our constituencies with our limited resources.

• yak_o_mak@hotmail.com / 416-690-3675



JOHN STORM

• St. Catharines Unitarian Fellowship / Project Planning Consultant

• My role is organizational development for the taskforce and the CUC. We want Unitarianism to make a smooth transition from the connection with the American side to the singular Canadian side.

• js1553@yahoo.com / 905-685-3692



Let us resist rhetoric and call it when we hear it.
Let us resist racism and work to overcome it. Let us watch for
the rays of hope, lift them up, let them shine into the dark
places of our lives. Let us be peace. Be love.
Let us be the change we want to see in the world.

AFTER SEPT. 11

rhetoric, racism and rays of hope

Will anyone ever forget where they were on Sept. 11, 2001? There has never been a time, not in my memory, when one event has had such a massive impact, so close to home. In the initial days my thoughts and feelings were focussed on the victims, their families, and the terrible loss of life.

Odd things would pop into my head like: How are the New York funeral homes going to cope? How will teachers, while losing friends and neighbours, be able to help their children? How are clergy finding strength to give support to their congregations?

The long-term repercussions are enormous and hard to face. But as people who value freedom and reason and acceptance of diversity, we have a role to play in keeping a balanced perspective in the aftermath, resisting overreaction and rhetoric.

The rhetoric that comes from extremists like Jerry Falwell – who claimed the attacks showed God’s anger at homosexuals, feminists and others – is just too ridiculous for words. We have no trouble rejecting such rhetoric. But I hope we also reject the rhetoric coming from those who say America “had it coming” or “they deserved it.”

America didn’t “deserve what it got.” Nor do the Afghani people deserve what they are getting in their own country. Nor the Palestinian people in their homeland. The thousands who died on Sept. 11 did not deserve what they got. No victim of terrorism does.

I am speaking to you as an American. I have spent about half my life in the U.S., and the rest in Canada. So I’m American by birth, Canadian by choice, and my heart is in both places. I had the same initial shocked reaction many Americans did: “Nothing like this has happened before.” Sober reflection after the fact puts that in context. We have not been eye witnesses to a man-made catastrophe of such magnitude, on our own soil. But for many other parts of the world, death, destruction and terrorism are not so novel.

People say: “Our world will never be the same.” Of course our world will never be the same. But the world has never remained the same. It is always changing, from day to day, from place to place, from year to year. Change is the only constant, sometimes it is exciting, and sometimes it is frightening.

Our world was never the same after Pearl Harbor. Our world was never the same after Hiroshima. Our world was never the same after the Montreal massacre. Our world was never the same after the industrial age began, the nuclear age, the telecommunications age. It changes with every event, sometimes for the good – and sometimes not.

From the first day after this attack, we heard the cry, “this is war.” But it’s not a war, unless we choose to make it one. It is a frightening, devastating terrorist attack. If it was meant to create terror, it certainly succeeded.

But I do not understand how this kind of horrific and evil behaviour can be “conquered.” Perhaps there are ways to stop it, perhaps there are ways to get at the roots of hatred underneath this event, but I seriously doubt that waging a war is the answer.

Do you remember the “war on poverty” a few decades ago? What ever happened to that war? Did we win it? Did we call a truce? Have you heard about the “war on drugs?” How successful is that campaign? If the mighty U.S. cannot win on those battle fields, how will a war on terrorism be fought? How will it be won? When will victory be claimed?

There is one parallel with a previous war that we must not forget – the general demonizing of a whole people. I was a child during World War II and clearly remember that there were ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’. We were the good guys and the Japanese were the bad guys! In both the U.S. and Canada, citizens of Japanese descent were rounded up and transported far from their homes to internment camps.

I also ask you to reject the generalized statements you will hear about “the Americans.” We are no more one unified body than are Muslims. I heard a TV commentator (one opposed to the U.S. military response) saying, “Americans are 100 per cent behind Bush on this.” Don’t you believe it!

On the other hand, we shouldn’t be fearful of critiquing American foreign policy (and our own), nor be shy from criticizing the excesses of capitalism, nor



“When any of us is attacked, we’re all attacked,” said Rev. Jeffrey Brown (centre) of South Peel Unitarian at a multi-faith press conference on Sept. 27. “This gathering shows we stand together in solidarity.” He was joined on the podium by Arafat el-Ashi (right) of the Muslim World League and Muhammad Ashraf (left) of the Islamic Centre of Canada, and by 80 members of 24 different Mississauga congregations. The event received prominent coverage in the media.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MISSISSAUGA NEWS

should we turn away from the plight of people in Afghanistan, Iraq or Palestine.

We should point out the contradiction of a U.S. government that continues to fund and support the School of the Americas – which trains terrorists who operate in Latin America – while also declaring that its enemies include all nations that harbour terrorists.

As people who value freedom, reason and tolerance, we have an important function and that is to “speak the truth in love” and to keep our balance.

I have talked about the danger of rhetoric and about the threat of racism. But my title also promises some rays of hope.

Those whose faith looks up to God are asking “Where is God in this?” For those whose faith is grounded in Humanism, the question is “Where is the hope?” This is a shaky time. We have been terrified by the terrorists, and few of us are finding comfort in the voices of revenge and retaliation. Where is the hope? I have to find it in small things.

The people who called home as their plane was going down didn’t call for revenge. They called to say “I love you.” I find hope in the love and caring and compassion that has not been destroyed. I find it in my loved ones, I find it here in this community. I find hope in my simple faith, which is neither dogmatic nor superior to any other, this simple faith that we are one family of humanity, that we have one home, the earth, to share with all – this simple faith that love is stronger than death.

For me, what has helped is making connections in the community, doing my small bit to make peace. I have chosen to focus on the response to the potential backlash, the threat of racism. For my own part, the past ten days have been extremely busy and it is because this community has rallied on all kinds of levels.

As co-chair of our local Community and Race Relations Committee, I was involved in an emergency response to the crisis. We got in touch with the mayor’s office to encourage him to make a statement at the beginning of city council. We joined the New Canadian Centre in a letter to the editor. And we brought together many of the major actors in the community to compare notes.

Where do we find hope? We find it in simple words of inspiration.

Mohandas Gandhi said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Let us, with care and love, resist the rhetoric, and call it when we hear it. Let us, with compassion and understanding, resist the racism and work to overcome it. Let us, with optimism and enthusiasm, watch for the rays of hope, lift them up, let them shine into the dark places of our lives. Let us love one another. Let us be peace. Be love. Let us be the change we want to see in the world. ☐

— Rev. Anne Orfald is minister of the Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough.

This is a much-abridged version of her Sept. 23 address.

How the cuc is responding to the current crisis

- On Tuesday, Sept. 11, cuc leaders “talked” quickly by email and then issued a press release before the end of the day. It called on world leaders, “to remain cool and clear-headed,” and to, “seek a political solution rather than a military one.”
- Also on Tuesday, cuc President Mark Morrison-Reed wrote to Bill Sinkford, president of the UUA, expressing his condolences to UUs in the United States.
- Later in the week, Morrison-Reed wrote to representatives of Canada’s Muslim community, offering friendship and emotional support in the face of hostility.
- Finally, the cuc struck a new monitoring taskforce on the current crisis, to advise cuc leaders and staff. It includes Rev. Brian Kopke of Ottawa, Elaine Harvey of Kingston, Keith Jobson of Victoria, and Thomas Homer-Dixon of Toronto. (Homer-Dixon is director of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto, and author of *The Ingenuity Gap*, a non-fiction bestseller.)

Across the Country

CUC HIRES EXPERT HELP

The CUC recently contracted two new communications specialists. **Terry Stafford** of Coquitlam, B.C. is the new editor of CANUUE, the newsletter for Religious Educators across the country. She is the Director of RE at Beacon Unitarian and has taught RE for a decade. Contact Terry at re@cuc.ca. **Penney Kome** of Calgary, Alta. is the CUC's new media relations consultant. She has been a journalist for 30 years, with six books to her credit, and a decade as columnist for *Homemaker's Magazine*. Contact Penney at media@cuc.ca.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES

Rev. Kathy Sage will be installed as the new minister at the Kingston Unitarian Fellowship on Oct 28. **Rev. Christine Hillman** has been called as the new minister for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda. Two new interns have been hired for the coming year: **Dena Ellery** at Toronto First (their first-ever Canadian intern) and **Meg Roberts** at the two Edmonton churches. **Rev. Jane Bramadat** has resigned her post at London and is taking on a five-month interim position in Anchorage, Alaska. **Rev. Vann Knight** has left First Unitarian in Victoria for a new post in Massachusetts. **Rev. Rod Brown** has resigned as minister at the Unitarian Church of Calgary to resume a career in education. **Rev. Kitsy Winthrop** has started at the Saint John group part-time. **Rev. Katie Stein Sather** has left Avalon Fellowship in St. John's to do a one-year interim ministry in Detroit.

GAY PRIDE SERVICE OF UNION

Lay Chaplain **Wendy Starr** of the Sarnia-Port Huron Unitarian Fellowship made local history on August 11, by performing the first public service of union for same sex couples (two gay couples, one lesbian) in Sarnia. The ceremony was conducted on the steps of City Hall and followed the area's third annual Gay Pride Parade. Each year the Unitarian Fellowship has played a prominent role in the parade, providing religious leadership and support.

Western Canada District

Keeping the beat in the jazz band of our diverse faith

Western Unitarians met in Gimli, Manitoba in late September, to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Western Canada District. Keynote speaker at the event was Rev. Wayne Arnason, who grew up in Gimli, but is now a minister in Ohio, and secretary of the UUA Board. Here are excerpts from his address.

Moving out of my local congregation and becoming involved in the district level youth organization changed my relationship with Unitarianism and changed my life. I would never have become interested in leadership roles within my local congregation without that incentive, and I would never have become a minister.

Being part of the district was not something I would have described back then with the dry phrase "delivery of services." Being involved in the district meant being inspired, educated, expanded and motivated to do things back home with greater dedication and insight and resources.

The reasons for being in relationship and cooperation with each other as Canadian congregations sharing common interests and geography will not be changing. Those reasons have to do with the faith of Unitarianism and the message and model of religious life that we bring to the world.

In light of the terrorist attacks this month, the perspectives we bring to the table of interfaith reflection and to national and international dialogue about the future of our world become even more important.

One of the most important components of our Unitarian message is that fundamentalism is an enemy of humanity, and we must name it as

such. Fundamentalism can occur in all faiths and belief systems. It is a distortion of religion that occurs when believers distill their faith into a few central beliefs and arrogantly elevate them above all the rest of human experience.

What we need to trust is that our [Unitarian] principles and our purposes provide the bass line of continuity and rhythm that holds together the diverse instruments and talents in the jazz band of our faith. Half a dozen different sounding theological instruments can make sacred music together.

Unitarianism is not a string trio of humanists, Christians and theists any more – we're a jazz combo with a pagan percussionist, a Buddhist saxophone player, a humanist pianist, a Christian vocalist, a nature mystic on guitar, and a young but very strong bass player plunking out the music of our seven principles – keeping all these creative improvisers connected and on track. 🎵



Western Canada District president Linda Henderson (right) presents an award to the local group that worked diligently to restore the Gimli, Manitoba church (on left is Lilya Arnason, Wayne Arnason's mother).

International Council of Unitarians & Universalists

UUs from around the world meet in Montreal for business, worship

Have you ever been to a worship service where the musical accompaniment was provided by a Scot complete with bagpipe and kilt? How about one that featured a classical ballet dancer from Latvia? When was the last time you chaired a finance committee that included a Unitarian bishop and a member of the UUA Board?

This past May I experienced all of this and more at the fourth meeting of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) in Montreal. Founded in 1995 in Essex, Massachusetts, the Council meets every two years to share and to plan for the support of our faith across the globe. There are close to 30 members, provisional members and emerging groups in the ICUU and most of them were represented at this year's meeting.

We met at the Loyola Campus of Concordia University. The campus is a former Jesuit College, the irony of which was not lost on our Transylvanian members when it was their turn to conduct a service in the former Jesuit chapel. (The Jesuits led the Counter-Reformation in Poland that resulted in the Unitarians there fleeing to Transylvania, among other places.)

Our days and evenings were busy. We started on Sunday evening and finished at Friday noon. From Monday through Thursday we began each day with a worship service (organized by combinations of national representatives) and a business session that lasted until lunch. A couple of hours of "free time" were followed by focus groups. After supper we attended working groups or further business sessions, culminating with an evening service at 9 p.m.

Since we only meet every other year, many of the early business sessions



ICUU president Jill McAllister

featured reports about the events and activities of the preceding two years. These included leadership development programs in Transylvania and India, partnership programs for the Philippines and India, the first-ever meeting of South American Unitarians, our Visiting Ministers program and a publications report.

Two new groups were admitted to provisional ICUU membership: Spain and Poland. We also decided to create our very first paid staff position – a part-time office administrator to be based in central Europe.

A contested election saw Jill McAllister re-elected as President and myself as Treasurer. Istvan Miko of Hungary was elected Vice-President and the CUC's past-executive director, Ellen Campbell, became our new Secretary. Representatives from Britain, India and Germany were elected or re-elected as members-at-large.

Following all this we spent some time setting priorities for the next two years. Coming out at the top of the list were leadership development conferences, a youth conference (our first), a publicity workshop and continued support for our Visiting Ministers program.

For additional information about the ICUU see our website at www.uua.org/icuu. 

— John Slattery



Mary Bennett

CUC Executive Director

How I managed to visit India – in the middle of Boston

I recently spent a day in Boston with Darihun Khriam, a 26-year-old Unitarian from the Khasi Hills area of India. There are 9,000 Unitarians in this region, close to twice as many as in Canada!

Darihun is a fifth-generation Unitarian. She speaks fluent English and has a masters degree in sociology. She works for the Indian Council of Unitarian Churches as a "church visitor." However, this year she is working in the International Office of the UUA in Boston, as well as attending classes at Harvard University.

India's Unitarians do not consider themselves Christian. The prevailing creation story in this area tells of a tree with seven roots and seven huts, with the trunk connecting heaven and earth. Humans are descended from these seven families, not from Adam and Eve.

As the bell sounded at the Boston church we were attending, Darihun asked, "How many times do they ring the bell?" I shrugged and said I didn't know. As often happened during the day, though, I realized her context was so different. In the Khasi Hills – without watches and clocks – the church bell rings half an hour before the service and again just before it starts. "If the bell didn't ring; no one would come," Darihun explained simply.

It was interesting for me to see Boston through Darihun's eyes, a young woman who until stopping in Toronto had never ridden an elevator, seen a skyscraper or been on a boat. Just finding a restaurant with the simple food she prefers was difficult.

I'd love to visit the Khasi Hills of India some day, but for now, personal connections (like my day with Darihun) are as close as it gets. I suppose that if Mary can't go to the Khasi Hills of India, the Khasi Hills will have to come to Mary!

The Canadian Unitarian is published quarterly by the Canadian Unitarian Council / Conseil unitarien du Canada

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

CUC Executive Director **Mary Bennett**

Office **55 Eglinton Avenue East, #705
Toronto, ON M4P 1G8**

Phone **416.489.4121** Fax **416.489.9010**

Email **info@cuc.ca** Web **www.cuc.ca**

Editor **Art Kilgour**

Office **RR #2, 176 South River Road
Elora, ON N0B 1S0**

Phone **519.846.8994** Fax **519.846.8995**

E-mail **art@writedsign.com**



Printed on Canadian-made recycled paper (30 per cent post-consumer fibre)

Deadline for next issue **January 15, 2002**

Canada Post Agreement #1774530
Returns to: CUC, 55 Eglinton Avenue E., #705, Toronto, ON, M4P 1G8

Unitarian People

B.C. Unitarian has a passion for colour and fabric

It's not hard to spot Donna Hamilton at a CUC annual meeting: she's the one with the table full of colourful t-shirts, batik scarves, stoles and post-cards. She's the most prolific creator of Unitarian fabric arts in the country, and her work adorns many ministers, pulpits and banners. If you see fuschia, indigo, turquoise, ochre, crimson, apricot and gold all in one place, it's probably a piece by Donna Hamilton.

Up until this year Donna was a part-time artist, however, she recently quit her day job so she can focus on what she loves: playing with colour, creating and sewing. "It's my passion," she says, "and it was getting crowded out of my life." The 1992 graduate of the textile arts program at Capilano College is now ready to make artwork her main thing.

As an active Unitarian, both in her Beacon congregation in Coquitlam, B.C. and with the Pacific Northwest District, Donna is well-connected to Unitarians south of the border. This has given her products wide display in the larger denomination. In fact, she now sells most of her work through Uni-Uniques, the U.S. distributor of Unitarian crafts and fine art (see examples of Donna's work at members.aol.com/UniFineArt2/Hamilton.htm, or email to uniuniques@aol.com for a catalogue).

Her work adorned the pulpit at the UUA's 1994 General Assembly (GA), and she recently created a gift stole for outgoing president John Buehrens. She has also created banners for the CUC, for her own church, for First Unitarian in Victoria, and for Beacon's partner church in Romania.

Her largest project to date was a huge banner, commissioned for the 1995 GA, and now hanging



at UUA headquarters in Boston. It measures nine feet by seven feet and features a starburst of rainbow colour around a gold chalice (see photo below – to see the colour version go to the web address above).

She had to make the large banner in four sections, using 40 colours of silk fabric, three kilometres of thread and six metres of black velveteen for the background. Even with a project of this scale, Donna doesn't sketch the design in advance. She works with the fabric – cutting, placing, trying different combinations until she gets the look she wants, then appliquéing the pieces with her sewing machine.

Donna may be a quiet-spoken artisan who soft-sells her work at CUC annual meetings, but she insists firmly on one important point: "My designs are copyrighted. If you want my design, please buy it from me – don't copy it or ask someone else to reproduce it." Donna can be reached by calling 604-944-3113, or by sending email to donna-h@istar.ca.

