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After an hour of games, these kids from the Unitarian Congregation of South Peel will gather in a solemn circle to mark the passing of the year – much like the Celts did on their Feast of the Lord of the Dead (Samhain).

Discovering Halloween's deeper, spiritual connections

Ask any kid. Halloween is about parties, pumpkins, candy and costumes, right? And it has become one of the big celebrations of the year for many, right up there with the excesses of December. People decorate their houses now, make stuffed human figures to sit laconically outside, and build elaborate haunted tableaux to entertain their young neighbours.

Yet, something else is afoot too, at least among Unitarians. There's a deepened sense of Halloween's connection to ancient rituals like the Celtic feast of *Samhain* (pronounced sa-wen), and the pause in the pagan calendar before the new year.

Some even feel that this ancient new year can be a time of spiritual deepening, of connecting to our past and gathering resolve for the future. In other words, it's a time for kids and adults – and not just for frivolity, but for

some serious reflection as well.

For example, the Unitarian Congregation of South Peel in Mississauga, Ontario has a six-year tradition of parties for the kids on Halloween night. The younger ones play games, win candy prizes, and tour a haunted house set up by the youth in the church's adjacent barn, or plant flower bulbs in the garden by flashlight.

And last year they began a new ritual for their 45 children. After the games were over the kids gathered in a circle and talked about the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead. Individual children lit candles for people or pets they'd lost in the previous year, or rang a bell for new lives. They shared a plate of brownies, and then listened to a ghost story.

"I couldn't get over the kids last year," says Karyn Burney, the RE director at South Peel.

• *continued next page*

Ritual Elements

BY ANNE MONTAGNES

we are fire

a bonfire
burnt to embers
we tend

we are ashes

we are smiles on a river
wind-mastered
quicksilver in gold

we are earthworks
star gazing

Anne Montagnes is a novelist, book reviewer, and has attended the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto for over 50 years. She wrote this poem for fellow members of the "Living in Spirit" small group. Contact her at: anne.montagnes@utoronto.ca

Poetry Contributions

Please send your short, spiritual poems to our poetry editor Franci Louann: floouann@telus.net, or by regular mail to the Canadian Unitarian (address on back page).

**GROWING VITAL
RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES
IN CANADA**



Mary Bennett

CUC Executive Director

We're serious about our new base of volunteers

In the past year we have doubled the CUC staff. This is a big change – but bigger still is the fact that our volunteer base has *more* than doubled. And that's just the start.

Over the next few weeks, Sara McEwan and Linda Thomson, our regional staff, will be setting up the Regional Network Group structure in each of the four regions. Sylvia Bass West, our Director of Lifespan Learning, is forming a youth advisory team and a lifespan learning visioning team.

I am recruiting youth members for our social responsibility groups. Our administrative staff are frequently calling on folks to help photocopy, proofread, enter data or words on our computers, or for advice on technology and financial procedures.

In case we call you asking for help, you should know that we've created some "Volunteer Guiding Principles" so that we both know the premises we're working from.

The key one is that we want the work you do with us to be enriching. We commit to being clear about what we're asking for, to provide orientation, training, support and feedback, and also to seek your feedback on the work.

When it comes to committees, task groups and the overall organization, we want to have a mix of new and experienced members, and to make the process for volunteer selection easily understood. (Volunteer jobs are usually posted on the CUC web site, sent out in the monthly mailings to congregations and circulated on relevant email lists.)

Have I caught your interest? Thinking of giving us a call? *Great!*

And, finally, it's only fair to say that we've also committed to "accept graciously if you decline an opportunity or decide to leave a volunteer position before the term is complete."



The congregation of Beacon Unitarian gets together to carve pumpkins at Halloween.

A new Halloween tradition is born at South Peel

• continued from page one

"They were so receptive to it all – quite willing to be serious and reflective, even after more than an hour of games and candy."

At Beacon Unitarian in Coquitlam, B.C. the children have a party on the Sunday before Halloween, with the familiar haunted house designed and run by the youth. But they also have an adult event the night before. President Peggy Lunderville hosts a pumpkin-carving party at her house; the pumpkins are sold the next day to raise funds for the RE program.

What's with this burgeoning culture around Halloween? Caroline Parry is author of the book "Let's Celebrate: Canada's Special Days," and was recently hired as the interim RE director at the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa.

"Partly, I think it's the human love for disguise and persona," says Parry. But she also thinks it's a result of the sensitivities around Christmas and explicitly religious holidays. "Halloween isn't connected to anyone's religion, besides the pagans, so it seems more acceptable to make a big deal about it."

In any case, Parry is all in favour of reviving Halloween's ancient connections. In particular, she likes the no-

tion of an agrarian new year, which was the Celtic view.

"By late October the natural world is withering away," says Parry. "We tend to think negatively about the coming of winter, but that's because we're no longer an agrarian people. The Celts understood this time of the year as one of significant change. And they believed that the membrane between the natural and spiritual worlds was thinner as a result."

Parry believes this is the aspect of Halloween that can deepen the experience for children, and be celebrated by adults as well. "We can take encouragement from going into the fallow time of the year. We can have a prayerful quiet time, a pause before the December frenzy, to think about whose essence we want to draw in, and whose influence we want to invoke."

Her interpretation bears a lot of similarity to the pagan practice, which is to celebrate Halloween as the end of the annual wheel of life, with a pause until the new year – which comes at the winter solstice in December.

"This was a scary time way back," says Karyn Burney, who attends the two-year-old pagan group Sourcefire at South Peel. "From late October until the solstice is a dark time, so there was a pause, a gestation, before the return of longer days."

All of this gives Halloween a new, broader significance – one that's connected to the earth, to the very real traditions of the celebration itself, and even to the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Musician's Network

UU musicians 'feel the spirit' in Vancouver

Movement and dance, children's choirs, and congregational singing were the themes of the UU Musicians' Network (UUMN) Conference held in Vancouver last August.

Music and choir directors, accompanists and others simply interested in music gathered at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver for a wide variety of workshops and reading sessions where the theme of "Feel the Spirit" was very much in evidence throughout the four-and-a-half day event.

Krista Gemmill Harris of Seattle offered a series of three workshops called "Dancing in the Pews." Participants were encouraged to put the hymn book down and involve their whole body in the worship experience. Sean DellaVedova of New Westminster also led three workshops, emphasizing the importance of encouraging children to sing, along with tips on how to get and keep them (especially boys!) in a choir.

Brian Tate of Vancouver led the

whole group in world beat and spiritual-style songs designed to help congregations "feel the spirit" through music. On Sunday morning, when they led the worship service for the Vancouver congregation, they took his message to heart and the sanctuary really rocked!

Conference chair Joyce Poley noted how much the UUMN has achieved in its 20 years, and how far-reaching is its membership. The 204 registrants came from as far away as Hawaii and Newfoundland, representing 41 US states and 7 provinces. All 21 Districts in the UUA were represented, with Canada having its biggest showing ever with a total of 22 registrants.

The UUMN voted last year to remain a continental organization, so it is hoped that Canadian representation will remain high in this very important and vital Unitarian and Universalist organization. ☐

— Joyce Poley, composer and musician, can be reached at jpoley@istar.ca



UU musicians at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver in August: can you feel it?

Across the Country

CALGARIANS PROTEST G-8 SUMMIT

40 members of the Unitarian Church of Calgary were part of the large community parade held in opposition to the G-8 Summit in Alberta last June. Unitarians from Westwood in Edmonton were also part of the week of events, including a large "die-in" at Olympic Plaza in Calgary symbolizing death by AIDS in Africa. Calgary's Raging Grannies were everywhere that week, joined on occasion by Grannies from Victoria and Edmonton.

UNITARIAN GAY PRIDE

Many Canadian congregations participated in a big way in gay pride events in the early summer. Five congregations from Toronto and Hamilton sponsored a float under the banner "Uncensored Religious Explorers." In Victoria, members not only marched in the local parade, they also sponsored a gay and lesbian art show in the sanctuary of First Unitarian Church. In Vancouver, all four lower-mainland congregations were represented in the parade, with South Fraser hosting an information booth.



RACISM STUDY UNDERWAY

A CUC-sponsored study on racism in Canada is now underway. A description of the study with a questionnaire was recently mailed to all the congregations in Canada. It is chaired by Harold Koehler of London, Ontario. He says he hopes that "all will participate fully to make the Unitarian thrust to reduce the effects of racism effective and well known to all Canadians."

CANUUE ADVISORS

The quarterly newsletter for religious educators, CANUUE, has a new advisory team to assist Sylvia Bass West (the CUC Director of Lifespan Learning) and Terry Stafford (newsletter editor). Here's the team: Lynn Sabourin (B.C.), Karen Mills (Western Canada), Barb Wallace (Central), and Laura Greggain (Eastern).

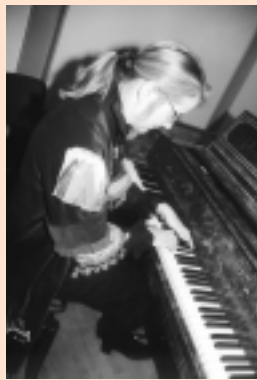


shared ministry

The sign outside the church or the ad in the newspaper may still say, “Minister: Rev. _____.” But inside Unitarian congregations with paid ministers the term “shared ministry” is increasingly common. For example, in Hamilton, the Committee on Ministry has just renamed itself the Committee on *Shared Ministry*.

“Shared ministry is defining how professional ministry intersects with lay ministry in our congregations,” says Linda Thomson, the CUC Director of Regional Services – East. “It’s an explicit recognition that we can share this ministry, and it can benefit us all.”

Still, the intersection between the roles of the minister and the lay leaders is a large grey area, and one that probably varies a lot from one congregation to another. We asked several Canadian ministers for their views on shared ministry, in general and in their own church.



Photos: (top) Rev. Anne Treadwell of Waterloo ministers in RE while the adults minister to each other upstairs; (above) Sandra Hunt ministers a rich music program at the Unitarian Church of Montreal; (right) volunteers minister a Unitarian youth conference in Montreal, last year.

MINISTRY IS ABOUT SERVICE

To me, ministry is about service. Each congregation has a ministry – if ministry is another name for the way a congregation lives out its mission. For example, we have a ministry of outreach in Kelowna that involves many of us in the operation of a shelter for street people during the winter months. We also minister to each other within the congregation, in forms like support and care during times of distress, sharing our talents in teaching a religious education class, or leading worship services when the (ordained) minister is not there.

For me as the minister of the congregation, it is clear ▶

MINISTRY IS A QUALITY OF PRESENCE

Donna, my wife, and I have shared parenting, housekeeping, cooking and ministry for over 23 years, but I've been doing shared ministry much longer. It began when I was eight. I didn't know it at the time, but I was doing ministry as a choirboy at the First Unitarian Society of Chicago.

When I was 17, I was the president of that congregation's youth group and my mother was chair of the church council. Being leaders was also a shared ministry, although I never thought of it that way. Intuitively, however, I must have known, because that's when I first thought of becoming a minister. Like me, I bet most of

you don't think of what you do as ministry.

Now I can identify ministry when I see it, and I have come to understand that it is not simply what ministers do. But still, I find it difficult to define. It is a quality of presence we bring that is grounded in our liberal religious faith. Singing and preaching, teaching and leading, caring and justice work are all ministries. It is what we do together when we gather in community. The Canadian Unitarian Council exists for no other reason than to enhance our shared ministry – these acts of caring toward one another and the world. •

– Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER

Shared ministry means that we're all in this religious endeavour together. I'm the paid professional, providing spiritual leadership to a wonderful body of volunteer ministers.

We do shared ministry by delegating the tasks of ministry to those with the abilities to fulfill them – and, perhaps more important, working together to come to a shared vision of what we're about and what we hope for.

My major challenge as a minister is keeping up with the energy of the members and friends! I also have to keep asking myself if I'm doing as fully and well as possible the things that a professional does best and that the

congregation called me to do. My chief reward is the same – working with these enthusiastic, wonderful people and having the sense that I'm fulfilling my calling. •

– Rev. Anne Treadwell

IT INFUSES ALL ACTIVITIES

Shared ministry infuses all of the activities here at Westwood, from caring for one another, creating programming, doing social justice work, to making decisions. In particular, people notice it because we always have a lay leader for each worship service, whether there is an outside speaker or when I'm here preaching as their minister. •

– Rev. Meg Roberts

defining how professional ministry intersects with lay ministry in Unitarian and Universalist congregations

▶ that a church community can't possibly be a healthy community unless many people are involved in its work. It is impossible for one person, the minister or anyone else, to do all the caring and teaching and organizing and serving that needs to be done. More importantly, people grow when they are in service to others.

It is also clear to me that members are pleased to have someone who is in leadership, by virtue of training and temperament. For the most part, they are willing to free up such a leader's time to lead, to "be the minister" on a full-time basis, by providing her or him with a salary and benefits. •

– Rev. Wendy McNiven

A PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

I believe in the value of professional ministry. I would not have spent several years preparing for this kind of work if I did not. But, ministering to others in need is the work of the religious community, not just the clergy.

This is not just a matter of the church as a "support group," although that may be a legitimate function of churches. It's also a matter of our theology, of our particular religious orientation and tradition. As descendants of the Protestant tradition of Martin Luther we have inherited his concept of the "priesthood of all believers." He argued that ministerial authority was not properly the exclusive province of the



professional priesthood. Ministerial authority is shared by all believers.

In theistic language, this is the concept that the believer has access to God directly, without a priest as mediator, that the believer has access to the scriptures directly, with-

out requiring the interpretation of the priest. By the same token, the ministry of healing, the ministry of pastoral care is not the exclusive province of professional clergy, but is the responsibility and the privilege of each of us. •

– Rev. Anne Orfald



Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

CUC President

Being in a religious community helps us value our roots

I recently travelled to Maryland with my twenty-something children Charlotte and Elliot, to visit their 98-year old great, great Aunt Ethel.

Charlotte also wanted her partner Chris to meet Ethel, and they were all solicitous of her needs and interested in her stories. On the third day of our trip we drove to Westmoreland County, Virginia, from where the Reed Family hailed 200 years ago. We stopped in the graveyard of the Siloam Baptist Church to see the new gravestone for my great Uncle Harry (Ethel's husband) who died last February.

My children's great, great grandparents, George and Sara Reed, who died in 1933 and '34 respectively, are also buried there. On the way to the family homestead I pointed out the site where George Reed had built a one-room schoolhouse over 100 years ago.

We talked to my cousin Wendell about the old days, and then picked walnuts and pecans, apples and pears just like my kids' grandfather, who is now 82, would have done when he spent his summers down on the farm.

I'm pleased that my children care about their roots. I believe that growing up in religious community made them this way. The First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY and the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto were the extended family in which they were cared for and the people they interacted with. When Charlotte was six she insisted on attending her elderly friend's memorial service. Marie died at the age of 99; Charlotte was the youngest in attendance.

In Sunday School they learned about liberal religion's 400-year-old roots. And they learned the values that make them the courteous and curious, hard-working and happy young adults that they have become.

Testimony

by Louise Bunn

From Pentecostal to Pagan – how a witch became UU

I was raised in small town Alberta, by parents who had decided that religion was okay, "for those who needed it." They told my brothers and me that when the time came we could choose a religion if we wanted but they gave us absolutely no religious education of any kind. You could call them non-denominational agnostics.

I felt called to some kind of a spiritual life, and so I went with other neighbourhood kids to their churches. It being Alberta, I tried the Baptist, Nazarene, Pentecostal and United churches. I got to be quite savvy at asking uncomfortable questions in the various Sunday Schools and was usually asked not to come back.

In my late teens (in the 1970s) I discovered Wicca and Paganism. What appealed to me then, and still does today, were the ideas behind it. That humans and the natural world are not separate from the Divine but part of it; that the Divine and humans and nature are one holistic system, and our task is to find our own way through it.

I liked the idea that we can experience the life and sacredness of the Earth, in relationship to our own lives and to the mystery of the Divine. I also liked its anti-authoritarianism. In this I find Paganism most like Unitarianism.

I came to Unitarianism as an adult. My partner and I had children and wanted them to have a religious education. He was a (very) lapsed Anglican and I was, well, a witch. We did a lot of looking but there were not many churches we could stomach together. Then we discovered the Unitarian Church of Vancouver and we knew we had found a home.



I find a lot of similarities between Paganism and Unitarianism. Both honour the material world as something good in and of itself, not as evil or "fallen." Both leave it up to the individual to discover the Divine (or Truth, or meaning, or psychological wholeness or whatever). While encouraging the individual's search for understanding, both stress the importance of searching in community.

As a Unitarian I approach my search with my intellect and my doubts. As a Pagan, I use ritual in my search for meaning, to access my subconscious and even, perhaps, the collective unconscious.

In other words, one feeds my head, and the other feeds the rest of me, except that to

say this is to exaggerate the differences for the sake of a good metaphor. What is truly important is that both feed me and contribute to my feeling and becoming a whole person. ☐

– Louise Bunn wrote the adult RE curriculum Paganism 101 ; she can be reached at logeo@axion.net.

Ed Ratcliffe: humanist and philanthropist

Ed Ratcliffe was truly a “builder” of Unitarianism in Canada.


Born in Hamilton, Ratcliffe became a Unitarian after the birth of his first child, Linda, in 1948. He joined the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, then helped re-establish the congregation in Hamilton. Over the course of his life he also belonged to



congregations in Waterloo, Victoria, Kingston, and even Honolulu. He served his churches in many capacities, and played a role in the amalgamation that produced the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1961. He served on the UUA board for two years after that.

Ed Ratcliffe was an engineer by training, and an entrepreneur by practice. He invented a unique process to manufacture stone and founded the company Arriscraft International. Without a lot of public fanfare or credit, he donated tons of stone for building or renovations at many of Canada’s large Unitarian churches: Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton and Winnipeg.

Ed Ratcliffe and his second wife Elinor Gill supported many unique projects in North America and around the world, never seeking or accepting recognition for their support. In 1999, the CUC recognized him as a recipient of the Victor and Nancy Knight Award for contributions to the denomination.

Ed Ratcliffe was a humanist, a dreamer, a visionary and a philanthropist. He died suddenly last month in Kingston, Ontario at the age of 83. 

Letters to the Unitarian

TEARS TO HIS EYES!

Never before – with all the magazines and newsletters that cross my desk – have I experienced a sense of joy and excitement that actual brought “tears” to this ancient guy’s eyes. You certainly captured the essence of what occurred at our CUC AGM in Kelowna in your last issue (Summer 2002).

– Alastair Mont, Victoria

THE PERILS OF EMAIL

I was quite surprised and disappointed to see the “resume” of my response to Mark Pezaro in the Canadian Unitarian, Summer 2002 (“Letters about Calculating God”). The last four sen-

tences of my response are actually a quote from Stephen Hawking. I cannot believe that the attribution of the words has been omitted. I admit that when I examined my letter carefully today I realize that I omitted the last quotation mark. In my email to Mark I used bold print to show attribution. How can this problem be resolved?

– Dolores Dickey, Thunder Bay

EDITOR’S RESPONSE

Unfortunately, your bold type didn’t survive the forwarded email that we received, so we missed your attribution to Stephen Hawking. We apologize. Our readers should note: in your letter titled “There must be a purpose,” on page six of the Summer 2002 issue, from the sentence, “The expansion of the universe ...” to the end is a quote from Hawking in the movie, A Brief History of Time.

Unitarian People

JOY COGHILL TO BE HONOURED

Actor, playwright and theatre director **Joy Coghill** of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver will receive a Governor General’s award in November. Now in her 70s, Coghill has a long history in Canadian theatre. Born in Saskatchewan, but raised in Scotland, she headed the English section of the National Theatre School in Montreal in the 1970s, was artistic director of the Vancouver Playhouse, and has starred in TV shows like DaVinci’s Inquest and even the X-Files.



CANADIAN WINS UUA AWARD

Stan Calder of Edmonton was given the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Mark DeWolfe Award in June – the first Canadian to receive the honour. It is awarded for his “lifetime” contribution to the spiritual, political and social well-being of Unitarians facing oppression as bisexuals, gays, lesbians and transgender (BGLT) persons. He was nominated by Interweave, the continental Unitarian BGLT support group.

VICTORIA ♥ S PHILLIP

First Unitarian in Victoria recently made **Rev. Phillip Hewett** of Vancouver an honorary lifetime member of the congregation, in recognition of his 40 years of support for their group. Although he is long-associated with the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, he has also tended the Victoria congregation at crucial points, including this past year.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES

Laura Friedman is the intern minister at Toronto First for the coming year. **Meg Roberts** is serving the Unitarian Church of Montreal while **Rev. Ray Drennan** is on sabbatical next January. **Carole Martignacco** will also begin the new year as minister at the UU church of North Hatley, Quebec. **Dana Worsnop** is the intern minister at the Unitarian Church of Calgary. And **Rev. Pat Webber** is the part-time minister at Sarnia-Port Huron.

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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@writedesign.com**



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In Memory



Jack Wallace: Vancouver's renaissance man, former editor of the Unitarian

Veteran newspaperman and former Canadian Unitarian editor Jack Wallace died in Vancouver last summer at the age of 87.

Born in New Jersey, and orphaned by the time he was 16, Wallace went to work at the New York Daily Mirror with only a year of high school education. He wasn't a reporter, but worked his way up through the editorial ranks there and at the San Francisco Chronicle. He eventually became a travelling newspaper doctor for the Hearst Corporation, redesigning and updating the chain's papers from coast to coast.

His passions were newspapers, photography and travel. In a trip to Japan he met a UBC music professor, who suggested he apply as an editor at the Vancouver Sun. He moved there with his wife Jan in 1969, bringing big city journalism to the west coast paper. He worked there until his retirement in 1980, however, he kept freelance projects going on the side, including the Canadian Unitarian, which he edited from 1974 to 1988.

He became a member of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver in 1972. Although he had belonged to Unitarian churches in Pittsburgh and San Francisco (he and Jan met at the Cali-

fornia church), he really participated in the Vancouver church. He co-led the youth group in the 1970s, was a mentor in the 1980s, and he and Jan hosted the first Book Bash – an institution at the church ever since.

Jack Wallace was fascinated by people. He loved meeting them, talking to them, finding out what they did, what they liked, what their goals were. He could ask uncomfortable questions to get to the heart of a conflict. On a one-to-one basis he paid no attention to labels. He responded to the person and he was open to new ideas, new experiences.

In retirement, he continued to edit – the Vancouver church newsletter, his housing co-op newsletter, the Bulletin of UBC's Continuing Education department. And he travelled with Jan – especially to Greece and Italy, which he loved. He was sure he had lived in Florence before, perhaps during the Renaissance.

Jack Wallace's memorial service was held at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver in September. He leaves his wife Jan, two daughters, seven grandchildren and several great-grandchildren. ☐