



The Touchstone

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Upcoming Services

Sep 4: Corn Boil Join us for our annual corn boil !! TUFF members and friends greet the September schedule with food !! Come for corn, bring a lunch dish to share, and enjoy our first gathering of the (pre-)fall season !!

Sep 11: In-gathering Service Bring water, and or stones. The story of creation is not over once it is told, for it is really a story of re-creation, that happens continually, uninterruptedly, and always. Join us September 11 for our In-gathering Service, wherein we regroup from our summer busyness, re-creating our congregation. Bring to this service the water and/or stones you have collected from your trips and activities over the summer months or bring tap water and local stones that represent your summer. Individually we will place these waters and stones into a common vessel, thereby merging the spirit of our comings and goings, into the spirit of our re-creation as a congregation.



president's message September

The congregational year starts, for real, in September. It is in September that we begin our religious education programs for children (and often plan not-on-Sunday programs for adults), that our Board resumes much of

its regularly-scheduled business, that people return from vacation, and that committees get into the full swing of their work.

For members of the fellowship, it is a time for us to reconvene after some sort of hiatus. I have often been amazed at how the pace seems to pick up before the Labour Day weekend – even when it never seemed to slow down! For many of us, this can be bittersweet. Whether we are coming back from the camp or never got there, packing up the fans and lawn chairs or starting a new job, it's easy to get the end-of-summer blues. Thank goodness we can make the blues a celebration in Fredericton. As well as the upcoming Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival, we can ease our way into the fall with the Craft Fair, the FREX, plans for upcoming literary festivals, theatre performances and exhibitions.

September means back to school. For parents and children, students and professors, the year definitely begins anew. In Fredericton, when the students come back, the traffic and the economy surge forward. Reading the local news reports, which tally the contribution students make to the economy, I am struck with how large and unfairly treated this group often is. Let's make campus ministry an area of shared ministry this year, by thinking carefully about what it means to us to have young adults in our neighbourhoods and in the chairs of our sanctuary.

This year, according to our tradition, we will reconvene with a water ceremony. Water is a rich symbol, often evoking the unconscious. Along with its depths of peaceful contemplation and its (possibly narcissistic) reflection of our beings, we are certainly aware of its awesome, awe-ful force. After the tsunamis and the devastation closer to home, in the land of many of those deported from our area 250 years ago, it is hard not to be aware of its power. I believe that food security – distribution of resources, stewardship of resources – is the major challenge of our century. It is hard not to think about how vulnerable we all are, both to human stupidity and to natural threats.

But perhaps there is a way to put human and natural powers back into balance. Think of what water means to you, and to us: going with the flow? Accepting the ebbs and tides? Riding the wave? Channel or Web surfing? Surfacing? Immersion? Purity?

The CUC's ACM next May, in Saint John, will be built around the theme of water. A call has just gone out for

a chapbook of poetry on this theme. Take a moment to meditate on the rich meanings of water, a chance to breathe in the midst of the hurried return to “real life” and its sad tendency to absorb us into its current:

And if the earthly no longer knows your name,
whisper to the silent earth: I'm flowing.
To the flashing water say: I am.

— Rainer Maria Rilke

That we are, who we are – as a liberal religious community, as well as individuals – matters. Daring to speak up, to sign our names to important declarations of justice and daring to listen to the voices of others drowned out by the anonymous noise of power, are both acts of faith and affirmation. I read on the UUA Web site the following history of the Water Communion ritual:

”Most of us don't realize that this service originated with angry women. Carolyn McDade and Lucile Shuck Longview were asked to create a ritual for the Women and Religion Conference at East Lansing, Michigan, in 1980; their service was intended to speak to the worship needs of women, which some felt had not been widely included in the movement up to that point. As McDade, social activist and song writer, recalls, ‘It was a strong service, about community taking power...about creating a political and liberating theology.’ ”

By my quick calculations, then, we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of one of the traditions of our faith group.

Welcome back to “us”. May our year together refresh and nourish our spirits.

In fellowship
Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes



From the VP C&O

Hi Everyone. Please allow me to introduce myself.

I'm the VP Communications and Outreach with a new and improved mandate for 2005-06. Let me explain - During some workshops over the summer a bunch of folks decided it might be nice to have a point person for all internal communications around the fellowship. Since we already have a board structure to address external communication it just seemed to make sense - in the interest of good communication to have all communication rolled into one person. That's me. So if there's something you need to know, someone you need to contact, something you want to share or any and all of the above please contact me and I'll try and get the

information out. All beefs, kudos, concerns, comments, announcements welcome! Let's stay connected!

Here are my co-ordinates:

donflatt@nb.sympatico.ca

don_flatt@cbc.ca

home: 506-454-7634

cell: 506-470-3321*

*inactive while CBC workers remain Locked Out.

In fellowship
Don Flatt



Children's RE Bulletin submission

I am thrilled to have the privilege to be able to hang out with the Fellowship children this year. As the new Children's Programming Chair, I'd like to write a few words about what you can expect this year for the UFF kids. After a great summer of many meetings with the Friends of the Children's RE, we have decided to do some things a little differently this year. We are going to run a Children's "Worship" service with all the fixin's! It will run the same time as the adult service and the children will still start the day with their families downstairs. Then, they will come upstairs with two RE facilitators to participate in a child oriented, small group ministry styled worship service. The service will include readings, singing, performances, dramatic interpretations and even quiet moments and "prayers"! We will be using our own hymnal as well as other UU curricula for resource materials. I, for one, am looking forward to these services as I will selfishly be getting the!

benefit of a church service while getting to hang out with the children. As well, several members of the congregation have volunteered to help co-facilitate the children's services which is super! If you would also like to co-facilitate, please do contact me as there are never too many helpers. This brings me to the other "firsts" this year for the Children's RE program. We have adopted some new policies for the Children's safety this year which include a Behaviour Plan, a Child Protection Policy, a Healthy Food Policy and a Health Policy. Basically, these are all common sense policies which are meant to put the children's safety at the forefront of our minds. We will have two responsible people with the children at all times during our Sunday program and will be providing child-care for services and other church sponsored events where required. Allison Calvern is the contact if you'd like to request child-care for your event but before that happens, we need your help compiling a Child-care worker list. So, if you know of anyone who has an interest in kids and would like to be considered for our list, please do get in touch with Allison or myself.

The other policies are health related and are meant to help create an optimal atmosphere for learning, spiritual growth and fun. We are asking that all snacks that are brought in for/by the children be healthy rather than junk food. Of course, as usual, the RE group will be providing a healthy snack for the children every Sunday anyways but above and beyond that, we would like folks to be aware of our new policy. As well, if your child is ill we would ask that they not come to church. We hope that everyone understands the reasoning behind our new policies and ask that you contact me if you have any questions or concerns in this regard. We have prepared orientation packages for the parents, children and facilitators to help with the transition into our new church year.

Thanks to you all for your support and enthusiasm. Without you, the children would not benefit from such a holistic, Liberal religious education! It truly does take a whole village to raise a child!

In fellowship
Sharon Flatt

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Poetry Chapbook - call for submissions

Ed.Note: *the following was forwarded from the Poetry Chapbook Committee and may be of interest to our poets*

The editorial board of the CUC Poetry Chapbook 2006 project are seeking submissions of poetry from self-identified Unitarians*Universalists living in Canada, for possible publication in a chapbook we hope will enhance the theme of water (tides, lakes, oceans, rivers), to coincide with the next CUC ACM theme "Riding the U*U Tide". We are looking for material that reflects our religious and spiritual values.

Please submit up to five unpublished poems to Jo-Anne Elder at edit@ellipsemag.org or 180 Liverpool Street, Fredericton (NB) E3B 4V5, att'n: CUC Chapbook, by November 25, 2005 with a 100 word bio. Our preference is for material in electronic format, as attachments in Word, Wordperfect, Rich Text or .pdf. Please be sure that "CUC Chapbook submission" is in the subject line. For those who are unable to send via electronic mail, please send three hard copies of each poem, and include an S.A.S.E. to receive a reply. All work will receive notification of acceptance or otherwise by March 21, 2006.

*and/or/or the reverse

❁

Board and Committee Covenant

In July, the Board and Committee chairs held a retreat. This is something we try to do every year as a chance for us to get to know one another, how we interact, and a bit about how we work. One of the exercises we held was to draft a covenant between us and with the congregation as a whole.

We thought the final result good enough to share and we present it now:

*We, as a group of liberal religious thinkers and doers, covenant to work together for the common good with respect, trust, co-operation, caring, acceptance, companionship, sharing, a sense of purpose and humour, while honouring the U*U Principles.*

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald

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Many Thanks



We would like to thank everyone who gave a donation to the Fredericton Emergency Shelter as a gift in celebration of our marriage on August 20 at Unitarian House. We are grateful for the good wishes of so many Fellowship members, and their kindness is very much appreciated.

In fellowship
Margaret&Tony Fitzgerald



Eastern Region Fall Gathering

Bridging the Distance

Plan now to attend the 2005 Eastern Region Fall Gathering in Montréal, a city with many bridges, from Friday, November 4, to Sunday, November 6. This year's event will be hosted by the Unitarian Congregation of Montréal. The theme is "*Bridging the Distance*". Additional details as they become available.



Multifaith Calendars

THEY'RE HERE!

Order yours now! The 2006 Multifaith Calendars are here and ready to be shipped. Get your order in right away!

This year's theme is The Contemplative Circle: The Contemplative Circle is a reminder of the ubiquity of this geometric form in our daily lives. Seasons and calendars are rooted in the motions of the two lighted circles in the heavens, the sun and the moon. On earth, at least in flat places, the horizon is experienced as a circle. Plants, animals, and many of our human artifacts exhibit the circular form. The world's religious traditions have long incorporated the circle into their symbols, art, architecture, and rituals to express their deepest beliefs and practices. For believers and others, the circle continues to inspire contemplation of the mysteries of existence and the meaning of life. We invite you to explore with us The Contemplative Circle.

The Multifaith Calendar is perfect compliment for your own spiritual journey, and makes an excellent gift!

The Multifaith Calendar is celebrating its 20th year with this issue! Plan to join us at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday, September 25th when we will be celebrating this significant anniversary!

As the major fund-raiser for the Multifaith Action Society-mail each year, sales of the Calendar have allowed the Society to continue to bring British Columbians of many faith traditions together in dialogue and to work cooperatively in areas of common concern such as public policy and environmental action. We ask you to take part in helping the Society continue this work by promoting and selling the calendar to your faith community.

Bulk discounts available, contact Teresa for details.

To order, you can call or email the office, or mail the order form from the web site with your cheque.

<http://www.multifaithaction.org/2006orderform.pdf>

I look forward to hearing from you!
Sincerely,

Teresa Conkin

Calendar Distribution Manager

The Multifaith Action Society of BC
305-41st Ave. West, Vancouver, BC V5Y 2S5

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teresa@multifaithaction.org

www.multifaithaction.org



Letter from Mary Bennett

Mary's monthly message

August 15, 2005

Past, Present, Future – Where am I?

I just got home from two weeks holiday camping on Hornby Island, a small (and I think idyllic) island in BC. Like many of you, I am switching gears. One thing I like about Hornby Island is that there are few decisions to be made. For breakfast I can either make my own breakfast at my campsite or go to Jan's Café. (The fact that Jan was greeting me by name by my second trip to Hornby will give you a clue of the bias of this decision!)

Back home and back to work, I am noticing how many decisions I make throughout the day and how the myriad of choices available in the city are both a blessing and a challenge.

On Hornby, I buy tickets to all the concerts over the 11-day Arts Festival. I just tuck the tickets into my backpack and pull out one a day. The choice really is to go to a concert or not. They're always at 8pm and they always have the same refreshments available at the intermission even. It was pretty easy to keep in the present moment a lot of the time; but back home, my mind moves frequently between reviewing the past and planning the future, stopping off briefly in the present now and again.

A lot of our CUC work over the summer, is finalizing dates and places for regional and national events over the coming church year. Our four Regional Fall Gatherings are all set and posted on the web; several lay chaplaincy workshops have been advertised (although after two people responded with "probably but I can't commit this early," I decided to wait till later in the fall to finalize the facilitators for next year's workshops); and I'm looking through proposals for a venue for the CUC 2007 conference in Vancouver.

Planning, projecting, prioritizing is the name of the game! In our congregations, too, you are getting ready to gather back together following a summer that had a different rhythm to your community life.

Every September congregation is different from their June predecessor. Some in obvious ways - a new minister or director of religious education; a new meeting place or time; new programs and new curriculum. And probably some visitors trying out the idea of attending church, and your congregation in particular. There are so many possible reasons why someone might show up on any particular Sunday they've moved; they've had a significant life change, perhaps a major loss; or they just have a vague notion that something's missing and somehow - through a friend, a web-site, a newsletter - are considering that they might find what they're missing in your UU congregation.

As well, there may well be people who were with you in June who are not present when you reconvene in September. There is, indeed, an ebb and flow to life and "the UU tide!"

My hope for you, me and everyone is that we will allow ourselves to take in these changes and feel the variety of accompanying emotions. To mourn losses and still open our hearts to new people.

In Mary Oliver's poem (#696 in Singing the Living Tradition), she says:

To live in this world
You must be able
To do three things:
To love what is mortal; To hold it
Against your bones knowing
Your own life depends on it;
And, when the time comes to let it go,
To let it go.

Take care of yourselves and each other,
Mary

Mary Bennett
Executive Director
Canadian Unitarian Council
mary@cuc.ca 1-888-568-5723

PS The events I mention can be found listed at:
http://www.cuc.ca/CUC_calendar.html

Update on the CUC Poetry Workshop on line
Among the many email lists where U*Us in Canada converse, is cuc-poetry@yahoogroups.com. It's a friendly little list and includes active members from coast to coast. Janet Vicker's poem/chalice lighting "Breath of this Moment" was birthed there and now I can offer you a French translation. To join, just send a blank email to cuc-poetry-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

SOUFFLE DU MOMENT Souffle du divin, donnez vie à la flamme de la réflexion
pour découvrir le sens profond de nos actes
Souffle de la création, donnez vie à la flamme de la compassion
pour créer des liens qui nous unissent

Souffle de l'émerveillement, donnez vie à la flamme de l'inspiration

pour nous inciter la participation active de tout notre être.

Souffle de la peur, donnez vie à la flamme du courage pour être qui nous sommes : consciencieux, vulnérables et diversifiés.

Souffle du moment, donnez vie à la flamme de la célébration

pour que notre avenir puisse se déployer grâce à notre engagement d'aujourd'hui

BREATH OF THIS MOMENT

Breath of the divine, light a flame of reflection in all that we do.

Breath of creation, light a flame of connection in our circle of care.

Breath of wonder, light a flame of inspiration to cultivate participation. Breath of fear, light a flame of courage

to be who we are: sentient, vulnerable, and diverse.

Breath of this moment, light a flame of celebration for our future unfolds the covenant of this day.

-Version originale en anglais : Janet Vickers

-Version française : Gilles Marchildon, Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bowers, Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

SHORT SNIPPETS

www.cuc.ca/store

Gearing up for fall – Order pamphlets, wallet cards and book-marks from the CUC. Our prices are good (based on cost recovery) and the more we sell, the more we will have the resources to produce additional pamphlets and products. Order at www.cuc.ca/store, where you'll also see samples and photos or call 1-888-568-5723.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We're looking for a "scribe" to join the national Annual Conference Planning Committee. The main task is to write notes on five teleconferences and get them out to us within 48 hours. More details can be found at http://cuc.ca/whos_who/index.htm

LAY CHAPLAINCY TRAINING SESSIONS

(Please put these in your congregational newsletter or share with people who will be interested).

Ever considered being a lay chaplain? Lay chaplains offer ceremonies for weddings, memorial services and other transitions. The Canadian Unitarian Council provides training. Upcoming sessions include: Enrichment training for experienced lay chaplains on Memorial Services

- Unitarian Church of Vancouver November 18-20 - Designing and Leading Rites of Passage ("the basics")

- Westwood Unitarian Congregation, Edmonton. November 25-27, 2005
- First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo, BC, March 10-12, 2006
- First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, April 28-30, 2006

Edmonton and Hamilton sessions will include a Saturday session for experienced lay chaplains on voice work. More details including facilitator information when confirmed and online registration form at http://cuc.ca/lay_chaplaincy/index.htm#TRAINING or call 1-888-568-5723.

To keep up-to-date on Lay Chaplaincy news and training, join the announce only email list (1-2 messages per month) by sending a blank email message to cuc-lay-chaplaincy-news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Take care, Mary

PS - I will be in Vancouver till Labour Day and then in Toronto for September-October and part of November. Mary Bennett Executive Director Canadian Unitarian Council 018-1179A King Street West, Toronto ON M6K 3C5 www.cuc.ca 1-888-568-5723 Vancouver: 604-617-0142



Letter from the editor

Greetings! This is the inaugural issue of Touchstone with yours truly as editor.

I want to make couple of housekeeping items and some general comments.

The end of summer is a difficult time to get people to do things, so I am hoping that the October issue will have greater local content with information extending further into the future.

Upcoming service information is posted on the web site as soon as it comes available to me, so check <http://www.uff.ca> and use the Upcoming Services link on the left. This, and the future issues that I do, will be available in PDF format on the web-site by using the Touchstone link on the web-site.

This issue is being composed in a bit of a hurry, so is not as pretty as I want to make it and I will work on the mark-up macros that generate the letter to clean up some of the things that don't look quite right to me now but would take more time than I have to chase down.

Finally, this is your news letter. I am just a compositor. Please send me your poetry, your musings, your letters through the month. I have a mail folder which I will store them in until I start composing the new issue. Anything which is in harmony with the Unitarian and/or Universalist principles will be published. I will run the articles through a simple spell checker, however, I sometimes will not have read all the articles in detail until after the final printed copy is out. Please advise me of any special formatting you would like me to try, bearing in mind that the news letter is published in a two column format.

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald