



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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Sunday Services

November 5 *Reclaiming Language* Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

November 12 *Thoughts on Peace* presented by a member of the Quaker community.

November 19 *Hope* Mary Scott will speak. Hope can be important to us in good times and bad. But what is hope and what causes it? Are some people just born with lots of it or can it be enhanced? For those who want something more than wishing but may not have certainty or faith, learning more about hope may be useful. The contributions of worldview, physiology and activities will be considered, albeit briefly, during this service. There will also be reference to Unitarian-Universalism, and you might find Elvis.

November 26 *Identity as a Faith Community* Eldon Hay.

December 3 *Celebrating the Piano* Service leader Patricia DesChamps, celebrating the refurbishing of the piano, with Baha'i community (who contributed \$1,000 to the refurbishing project), Music Festival organizers, and an appearance of our own Joyful Noises. This Sunday will have a huge pot luck lunch afterwards.

Children's Religious Education

We are so thankful for all of the wonderful children and helpers in our RE program. Everyone brings so much to the group! We wrote up great "Thanks for.." cards for our Thanksgiving tables this month and designed Doves for Peace during our UU-UNO Sunday Children's Worship service. We sang our favourite UU songs and even shared some of our own writing. I would still like to see more submissions of our own writing for the children's program and will be continuing to encourage this. We are still hoping that a musician will step forward to help play for us on the 4th Sunday and would love to have a few more names on our childcare helper list. The person that would be great for this position would be available to babysit some Sundays and an evening now and then. They don't need to be a member, just a responsible friend. Thanks to all of you who have volunteered to help facilitate upstairs. It is great to have lots of congregational involvement in the Children's program!

Sharon & Don

Women's Potluck

The next Women's Potluck will be held at the home of Allison Calvern, 259 Lynhaven Street, on Friday November 24th. at 6pm. The show and tell topic is: How does a woman know when she is "older" (that time is passing on)? What does being older mean (how do you respond to time passing on)? For more information contact Joan Brewer at jrjeb@nb.sympatico.ca or 455-5169.

Communications and Outreach

This is a short note on the latest and greatest developments in Communications and Outreach. The Building

Use folks are working on a new Building Use Policy. The current policy is open to interpretation and doesn't do a very good job at prioritizing use (i.e. "first come, first served). With any luck we'll have something in place in time for the new year. The building is getting used a lot this fall. Thanks to Patricia over in Finances and Facilities / Building Grounds and Maintenance for doing such a great job at fixing up our spiritual home!!

The Social Justice Committee has been busy organizing and promoting social justice initiatives (see Sharon's article elsewhere in Touchstone). The Membership Committee has plans for welcoming more new members, continues to work on more information packets and is updating the Fellowship directory. Please talk to folks on the membership committee if your information in the directory is out of date. Membership also has some great ideas for welcoming new members....stay tuned! Advertising continues in the Gleaner thanks to the hard work over at the Public Awareness committee. Do you have any ideas on publicizing events/services at the fellowship? Let us know!! We'd love to hear from you! And on that note...

We've been given another opportunity to submit an application for West Trust funding. The West Trust provides funding for outreach initiatives. More information on the fund can be found at:

<http://www.cuc.ca/programs/mailings/apr.03/0304WBapplication.guidelinesVDec2002.pdf>

Some folks around the Fellowship are already working on some ideas. If you have one, please feel free to email it to me (donflatt@nb.sympatico.ca) and I'll bring it to the board. I would like all Fredericton West Fund requests sent to me by SUNDAY DECEMBER 3RD. This will give me enough time to present them to the board in time for the December meeting and take them to the West Fund early in the new year.

Keep track of all the events going on at the fellowship Go to our website, www.uff.ca and follow the links to the Fellowship Schedule (it's on the left...at the bottom). There's lots going on. Why not get involved?

Happy Fall!
Don



Wheelchair Access

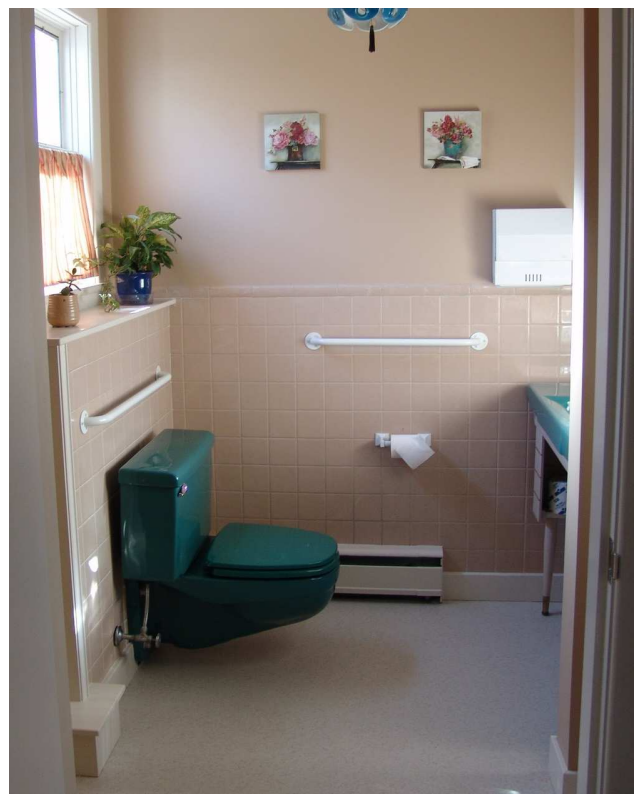


By the time you get your copy of Touchstone the ramp, door and washroom should be finished. What a wonderful upgrade that will give us a lot of pleasure for years to come. The renovator, Mario Hebert has been a joy to deal with. He is the best 'clean up after yourself renovator' that I have ever worked with!



Wheelchair Ramp

We are short of money for this project. Barb Fairweather and I will be displaying photographs for sale. Please keep them in mind when you are buying gifts for others. Each photo is framed and has a label on the back about our fundraiser and about each printmaker. The printmakers have donated their work for this project.



Accessible Washroom

As well, our after service Sunday Soup fundraiser will continue throughout the winter and spring. Every Sunday a member or friend of the Fellowship makes and donates a pot of soup. It makes a great light lunch or an appetizer for dinner. There are 850ml and one liter containers for sale if any is left over. This project has been well supported

over the summer and fall.

In fellowship
Patricia desChamps
Buildings and Grounds



Social Responsibility

The Beehive Collective visited our Fellowship this month as a social responsibility educational event. I have had great feedback from folks who attended and will definitely invite them back when they come by New Brunswick again. They left us a video entitled Plan Columbia which follows through with the ideas they presented to us that evening. I will be organizing a showing at the Fellowship some evening soon. They also left me posters of their banners which I will bring to the video showing. They billeted at our house for 2 nights which was a real treat. If you missed the event but would like to know more about them, just visit Beehivecollective.org.

The social responsibility surveys were not a big success in finding out the common ground we all hold in our hearts for social responsibility activities, events or education opportunities at our Fellowship. So, I will take note of the handful of surveys that have been returned to me and send a simple email around, asking you to share your ideas, concerns and favorite causes with me. I have already been asked to organize a Christmas package for a needy family and organize a team to help out at the food bank/soup kitchen every month which is doable if enough folks are interested. As well, I have also heard from a member who is not interested in helping at the food bank in any way and who does not agree that the Fellowship should help the community in this way. So, watch your email boxes for my mini-questionnaire. I would very much like to follow the lead of our members in regards to social responsibility events, education and action.

Keep your eye on the UFF website and your email for social responsibility events and action ideas. Until I have discerned a focus for our congregation, I will continue to send you a broad variety of worthy causes and event information. If I am missing your favourite social responsibility event, please forward it to me.

Keeping the Faith!
Sharon Flatt
Social Responsibility Chair



Membership Committee Quiz

1. A co-worker mentions that he is looking for a new church to attend, and asks about your church. Do

you:

- (a) mumble something about freedom, reason and tolerance
 - (b) stammer and sputter and say something about Emerson
 - (c) I'm not for religion myself, but I picked this up somewhere, and you might be interested in it
 - (d) you reach for the red wallet card "What Do Unitarian Universalists Believe" and hand it to him.
2. A friend who knows you go to the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton asks you to tell her about Unitarianism. Do you:
 - (a) laugh self-consciously and say, "Molson was a Unitarian"
 - (b) the Unitarian Service committee was started by us
 - (c) meekly say we accept diversity
 - (d) hand her the red wallet card "What do Unitarian Universalists Believe".
 3. A friend asks why you go to church when you don't believe its a sin NOT to go. Do you:
 - (a) look away and say something about being comfortable
 - (b) say "I have a lot of friends there that I don't see too often, and I like to talk to them at coffee hour"
 - (c) proudly assert that we're not a religious organization
 - (d) hand her the red wallet card "what Do Unitarian Universalists Believe"

OR DO YOU SAY

Because Unitarianism provides a spiritual home where i can feel accepted and welcome, with my questions, my convictions and my doubts, and my dreams

Because in the Fredericton Unitarian Fellowship I am encouraged to struggle with and live out my beliefs

Because I am supported on my spiritual journey by a community of fellow seekers

And, because I have a responsibility to help others in their search and to encourage their spiritual growth. Thats why I attend my Fellowship and why I support it.

Please think about what the Fredericton Fellowship means to you, and be prepared to tell the world.



Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, wine in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming.... "HOLY COW - WHAT A RIDE!"

— with apologies to Hunter S Thompson



Fall Building & Grounds News

The heat has been turned on. Please make sure you turn the heat down when you or your group lock the doors and leave the building. Michel is working upstairs cleaning the carpet in the Children's RE room today (Friday October 20th). He found the heat was set as high as it would go which is about 90 degrees Fahrenheit. It is important not to waste our heating dollars.

Capital Safe and Lock repaired our deadbolt on the Library door. After Small Group Ministry on October 4th, Patricia couldn't lock the door. George kindly came back and he couldn't get it to work either. Michel took it apart the next morning and said two tiny screws were missing in the lock mechanism and the deadbolt striker was bent - a wear and tear issue. At that point it was necessary to call the locksmith. Aberdeen Sales and Service repaired the top oven in the kitchen - it hasn't worked for many months. The switch for 'cooking time' must be left on manual for the oven to operate!

The City of Fredericton Parks and Trees division took down two dead trees that were on the street right-of-way. NB Power trimmed a tree with dead limbs.

We are having a significant problem with dry rot, mildew and moulds on the north side of the house. It is so overgrown that we have an air flow problem. This spring we had green moss growing on the north shingles where the large spruce tree touches the roof. A good trimming of the tall spruce tree solved the problem. We trimmed the hedges and George cut the eastern hemlock shrubs (just outside the sanctuary window) back from the house. The two huge Mugo Pine shrubs have been removed. Their carcasses are on the north lawn - several people have asked for bits and pieces of them. If you are looking for boughs for winter decorating please help yourself. I hope we can get rid of this brush before snow falls. Michel power-washed the north facing sidewalks - they were black with pine pitch, dirt and acid rain. Michel re-leveled two sidewalk slabs as well - it will keep us from tripping. We still have a major problem with our north-side oak door and sidelights. They are black with mould that is very deep! The damage is significant. Michel has sprayed them four times with

a chlorine bleach solution to no avail. They are going to have to be sanded and refinished in the spring. There are a lot of raccoon dropping on the porch and sidewalk - it's new each week. I hope our resident raccoons will move on now that that area is less bushy and when the red berries on the hedge are finished.

We have a new commercial clothes rack in the cloakroom that we purchased from a clothing store that closed last year. The rack and 'tangle proof' hangers retail at \$190 - we were able to buy the rack and hangers for \$25. It is a wonderful rack with adjustable height so it will be excellent for use by people without good arm strength who can now hang their coat 'lower'.

We have replaced the 'cowboy' lamp in the kitchen ceiling (near the ovens) with a plain fixture that Barb Fairweather bought at a yard sale. A quiet commercial ceiling fan has been purchased to keep the heat from going upstairs. The fan is still a bit of a quandary - the ceiling in the foyer and the upstairs hall is very low! I will get advice on how to proceed from our heating/insulation expert.

Michel used my steam carpet cleaning machine to clean our carpets and our chairs in the sanctuary. We used a product made especially for multi allergens (dust mite waste, pet hair and dander and pollen). I had no idea the carpet was so dirty - the container on my steam cleaner holds two liters of dirty water. Michel said he emptied it almost twenty times before the carpet was clean. He said the water was the colour of strong coffee. Yuck! We cleaned the two area carpets as well - they were very dirty too. We are planning to refinish the piano room hardwood floor in July 2007. Michel is at the Fellowship today cleaning the upstairs carpets. You will find the basket of knitted slippers laid out in the cloakroom if you would like to remove your shoes. You could bring 'inside shoes' with you if you would like.

The renovator, Mario Hebert, has installed our new insulated steel kitchen door. It is wheel chair accessible width with the required lever opener instead of the normal passage set. Our same key still works in the deadbolt. The door has a window that can be opened for fresh air. The wheel chair accessible powder room area is nearly complete. The building code required 60 inches of clearance around the toilet to meet standards for accessibility. This meant removing the large closet and a wall to make the powder room the required size. Chris Aalders has been a good resource person on this project. New commercial grade vinyl flooring has been laid in this area. Mario still has to put in the wheel chair accessible width bathroom door and install the grab bars. He is starting the wheel chair ramp this week. It is such a pleasure to work with him. He keeps in touch and communicates so well about little changes and unexpected things that always happen when you renovate - and he cleans up! Our members and friends will appreciate this upgrade for years to come.

We are having a great problem with large piles of dog fe-

ces around the property but especially on the lawns, north porch and sidewalk. This is an issue with our floors and carpets in the Fellowship and also a public health concern for our children. Janet Stevenson put her wonderful old dog Fancy to sleep in August and has only Shay. She told me she allows Shay to go to our lawns unattended, but she watches her and then picks up after her. Janet Stevenson is a good 'dog neighbour'. Patrick Daley's dog Misty is usually loose and is unattended. Misty is trained not to cross York or Montgomery streets which means she frequents the back yards of York, Mitchell and Montgomery streets. Our yard is the largest in this area. We have dealt directly with the city about Misty being off-leash.

Leachman Plumbing and Heating re-routed the hot water heating to take the front entry out of the loop. Leachman was the company who installed this system in 1962 and they are familiar with it. This means we will no longer heat the front entry on the north side of the house. The front entry heat radiators were designed so that they would be 36 Celsius when the sunken living room was 22 Celsius - it's the Wal-Mart concept, a blast of hot air when you come in from the cold and it keeps your coat and boots toasty warm. The front entry glass and doors have a very low R factor - they aren't insulated. We waste heat dollars by continuing to heat the front entry in this manner. The sunken living room (now our sanctuary) is on the same hot water loop as the entry way. The solution was to cut the line, drain the heating system, solder the line to exclude the front entry and re-start the system. If we ever sell the property it would be easy to re-connect - nothing has been removed. Leachman's invoice for this alteration was \$175.94. For a reason unknown to me they kindly gave us a discount - their usual price would be \$232.83. We should save about \$200 each year in heat costs.

The Pagan Group has done a lot of trimming of bushes on the east and south sides of the property. They have offered to take over the care of the flower and shrub bed under our Unitarian Fellowship sign on York Street. This fall the city will pick up bagged leaves only (the first Wednesday in November). We will pile the brush until spring when it must be cut into one metre lengths and tied into bundles for spring leaf and brush cleanup. We need more volunteers for fall cleanup and the raking of fall leaves. Rakes are in the garage and the plastic leaf bags are in the garage tool closet. Tony plans to do raking and Allan Walls has kindly offered to repair our leaf bag holder.

Michel finished putting in the red stakes with nylon rope on the edges of the driveway. It works well to keep drivers from parking on the lawns. The stakes near the street are sometimes pulled out by passers-by. Please take a moment to put them back in if you see them lying on the driveway.

The two basement rooms are finished and ready for use. You are welcome to book them for activities. Please ask for each room by its name when you book it. The large room facing north will be labeled as D1. The smaller room

facing south will be labeled D2. The basement is a dangerous place to leave children unattended. There are electrical panels, and a large sump pump hole in the basement floor. The basement will continue to be off-limits except for persons using the two finished rooms for activities and meetings.

The contents insurance has been increased from \$23,000 to \$75,000. The cost to add \$52,000 contents insurance is \$26.50 per year - a bargain! Contents insurance would cover replacement of the Steinway grand piano, the computer system and photocopier, our furniture (including our sanctuary chairs, office furniture and furniture in each room), books, sound system, dehumidifier and air conditioner, vacuum cleaner, area carpets, all kitchen ware including two refrigerators, and our lovely pulpit.

We received copies of the original documentation that is on file at city hall when the house was purchased in 1999. It includes the lot plan, re-zoning undertakings and a parking plan that we agreed to follow when we purchased the property. We will put a copy of these documents in the office.

Respectively submitted,
Patricia desChamps/Barb Fairweather
Buildings and Grounds Committee



Diary Entries

Thursday, February 2, 10am In order to write of days and conditions long ago, I turn off as many things as I can, but the furnace still cuts in, as does the electric fridge, and the tap drips. It isn't possible to cut out all the sounds. Perhaps I should describe the kitchen as it was when I was a kid.

We had a wood stove with the wood box beside it. The wood box opened into the shed, too, so that when Edwin or Roy filled it, it didn't involve the kitchen. I remember that on a rainy day, or if we were getting under foot, we liked playing in the wood box, doing cut outs, likely from the Old Eaton's catalogue.

Our cupboards were varnished wood and went right to the ceiling. They were quite different from kitchens today. We had a sugar barrel, and a flour barrel on a swinging apparatus, so that you just had to open the cupboard door and could easily pull out the barrel. Mum kept her sifter, rolling pin, and measuring devices right in the flour barrel. I guess sugar and flour were bought in 50 or 100lb bags then. Pup said when he was a kid, it was not unusual for a farmer to look into a neighbour's flour barrel to see if they had enough to last the winter.

There was a kitchen shelf that held the clock (which Pup wound, and took upstairs with him at night). There, you would also find matches, a large box for lighting the fire,

and often, a little dish for change. I seem to recall looking there for mail. There was also a little pantry under the stairs. In it was a bread crock, a gallon jug of vinegar, molasses, several covered cans for storing food. A shelf held the steamer, a round metal container with holes in the bottom which always had doughnuts, biscuits, cinnamon rolls, or cake in it. There were also pickles, and mincemeat, and sometimes, a gallon jug of wine. I was port I think but who cared? Sometimes we'd have a little right out of the jug. I just remember one case of hiccoughs, or was it hiccups?

Friday, February 2, 9:15am Storm brewing Beside the little pantry-type closet, was a large sink, at least I thought it was big. Everyone washed hands there and dried them on the roller towel which hung under the kitchen shelf. Heavens, Pup's razor strop also hung there! We were threatened with it from time to time, but it was mostly used to sharpen Pup's straight razor. We were a bit afraid of the razors, too. Pup shaved everyday, sometimes twice. He had a shaving mug and a brush, and he sometimes 'whiskered' us when he got all lathered up. Periodically, Mum would shave his neck. She would shave him, and wipe the razor on a piece of newspaper that was hung up on a hook, and disposed of when the process was finished.

The medicine cabinet hung up over the sink. It had a mirror and we liked to get up on a chair to look in it. Later, it was a great place for setting our hair. A little shelf beside the sink held Pup's shaving mug, some 'Surprise Soap' for dishes and other cleaning. There were no soap powders or detergents then. It also held a big dipper for filling the kettle or watering plants, and for taking a drink. If Pup called for one of us to "fetch him a drink," he wanted half a dipper. When Mum had a drink, it was always a few sips. We had no hot water from our taps, but we had beautiful drinking water from a spring—we still have. Before Pup build this house, he asked his Uncle Alex for the rights to the spring. He really had it made, he thought, but the pressure would only bring the water up to the kitchen, and not to the second storey. Even so, it was pretty great and even if the power is off we have drinking water. Pup kept a comb on top of the pantry door, and a brush full of 'Cuticura' salve, for his hair. We felt there was something magic about that brush, and perhaps there was. Pup lived to be 97 and he still had hair, and no bald spots!

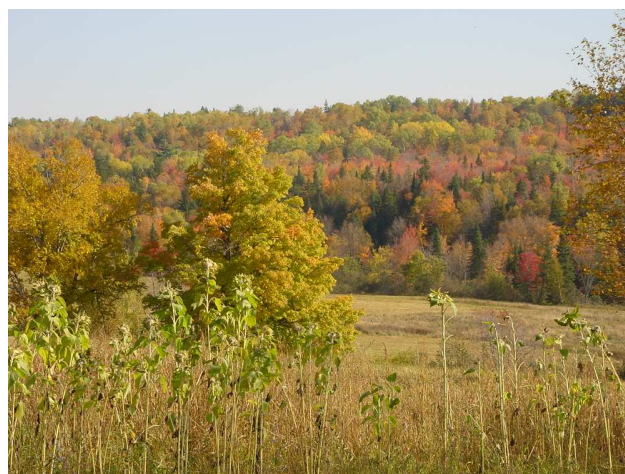
Saturday, February 4, 9:30am Cold Naturally, people didn't have electric dishwashers back in those days. Our dishes were always washed in the dishpan on the kitchen table. We had a second pan to put them in for rinsing and drying. Our dishes sparkled because we had soft spring water. Mum had a strict routine for the dish washing performance. Sometimes we tried to get away without rinsing, but no dice. Vernice was here often as were were growing up and she noticed how our glasses shone. She even mentioned a white blouse of mine in school, but this

was the difference in water. Their water was very hard, and of course, these were the days before water softeners.

Instead of one big window overlooking the dam, we then had two smaller windows that went down lower, so we got a full view out back. How Mum enjoyed her view all her life, as I enjoy it now.

Another source of entertainment for us kids and our company, was the toy drawer. It was a bottom cupboard drawer and it held fascinating things to play with, not just toys. We sat on the kitchen floor to enjoy our bounty. One day I was playing with my cousin, Edgar Wilson. I showed him how smart I was by taking a train apart. He thought I broke it and he was so exasperated, he wrapped his fingers in my hair and pulled out a whole handful. I screamed, and cried. I received a lot of attention, as did he. After that, I never could stand to have my hair pulled, but I was always very fond of Edgar. Our mothers must have handled it just right.

R.E.C.



Fall Colours: Mazzerole Settlement Road



Message from Mary

October 10, 2006

Glimpse of the Eastern Region of the CUC I write this from Bouctouche, New Brunswick, where I am spending 3 days catching up on "paperwork" and teleconferences before continuing Linda Thomson's and my "Second Annual Eastern Road Trip."

I thought you might enjoy a glimpse of this region which stretches from Kingston to Newfoundland. Coincidentally, the two CUC Board members for the region are from the outer reaches of the region: Jean Pfleiderer from Kingston Unitarian Fellowship and President, Vyda Ng from Avalon Unitarian Fellowship in St. John's. The region has 24 per

cent of the total membership of Unitarians/Universalists in Canada (The 4 regions are approximately the same size) and includes the largest congregation—Ottawa First at 549 and one of the smallest PEI at 13. The average size of the 11 congregations is 114, but the median (for those of you who like statistics) is only 62.

The region includes two of the three congregations whose history is Universalism: Halifax and North Hatley. It includes the oldest congregation, UCMontreal, as well as several others that are over 100 years old (Halifax, North Hatley and Ottawa First). It also includes two that are “young enough” that they became members of the CUC during my time as Executive Director—Ottawa Fellowship and Avalon (St. John’s).

But these statistics may not tell you much about the spirit of the region—which is strong.

The most obvious differentiating characteristic is that this is the “most bilingual” region and I’m hoping that CUC Annual Conference & Meeting in Ottawa, May, 2008 will set a new benchmark for use of both official languages. In several of the congregations, Sunday morning will find coffee time conversations easily switching between French and English. Many have regular parts of the worship service that are done “en français”—and some have Francophone worship services, small group ministry or discussion groups as well.

May I hide behind the phrase “je ne sais quoi” to say there is a certain “style” - that shows itself in music, hospitality and culture that I do indeed find it hard to describe, but it feels different—and I like it.

I will be interested in hearing responses from those of you who are in the Eastern Region as to how you would describe your region.

Keep in mind that although our Regional Fall Gatherings are designed primarily so those in the area can get together to celebrate, network and learn, all are welcome. The Eastern Region’s gathering is always on the first weekend in November—this year it’s in North Hatley, Quebec.

If you are one of the many Canadians who’s always wanted to go to Newfoundland, you could mark down November, 2007—the Avalon Unitarian Fellowship will host the “ERG” and - you’re invited!

Take care of yourselves and each other,
Mary Bennett
Executive Director
CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL

SHORT SNIPPETS Lay Chaplaincy Basics - UCMontreal - March 30-April 1, 2007 The popular full-weekend “basics” (Designing and Leading Rites of Passage) will be offered in Montreal and facilitated by Rev. Carole Martignacco and Lay Chaplain Nicole Guerrier. For other Lay Chaplaincy Training programs go to:
http://www.cuc.ca/lay_chaplaincy/index.htm#TRAINING

BOOKMARKS AND WALLET CARDS We are going to reprint bookmarks and wallet cards with the Principles and Sources on them. If you order 1000 at one time for \$200, you can have your congregation’s contact information printed on them at no extra charge. Otherwise, they are just \$20 for 100. Available in English or French. Order at www.cuc.ca/store or contact Phil Strapp phil@cuc.ca 416-489-4121/1-888-568-5723.

CONNECT WITH UNITARIANS ACROSS CANADA There are many email groups that let you connect with others with similar roles and responsibilities or just interests. To highlight just a few, under the “L” we have cuc-linda (to receive a monthly message from Director of Regional Services - East, Linda Thomson); cuc-labyrinth (to connect with others who walk, draw or build labyrinths) and cuc-lay-chaplaincy-news (1-2 messages per month about Lay Chaplaincy training and news). A complete list of CUC-sponsored email lists, along with “technology tips” can be found at <http://www.cuc.ca/business/technology.htm> or contact Janice Lincoln or Phil Strapp at info@cuc.ca or 1-888-568-5723/416-489-4121.



Note from Linda

The Power of Leadership

From my perspective the congregational year has gotten off to a quick start. Already the various Service Consultants and I have visited or have planned visits to 13 of the 28 congregations in the Central and Eastern regions. The work we’ve been doing includes: mission & vision planning sessions, Ministerial start-up workshops, leadership retreats, canvasser training workshops and facilitator training. The work is immensely satisfying and feels useful. Recently at one visit I was asked what I found most energising and enjoyable about my work. After thinking about it I replied, “the opportunity to see the care and effort that lay leaders put into their congregations.” It truly is a wonder to me when I think of the meetings, the practices, the work parties, the classes taught, the visits made and the worship services that go into making each of our congregations what they are. I know, because I have been active in my own congregation, how much love and how many hours go into making them run. The Shared Ministry Task Force reminded us that the work our congregations does is ministry and that each of us who participates in it is a minister.[1] Some congregations work with ordained ministers and others do not, but the overall effort is ministry. Ministry is the act of serving and our congregations serve. A quick scan of newsletters reminds me of the scope of that service. In addition to Sunday worship our congregations serve through their children’s and adult

programs, their justice work, their environmental efforts and their support for various aid agencies. All that goes into making that service possible, whether it is financial stewardship, coffee making or grounds maintenance is also ministry.

Leadership is one form that ministry takes in our congregations, and is one that often challenges us. Many are ambivalent about leadership and others among us are uncomfortable. In my observation UUs often have a reluctance to claim or grant leadership authority. We have elected and called leaders, but struggle with the concept of leadership. My impression is that we find a too easy acceptance of leadership as a bit unseemly. We worry about the potential for the abuse of authority. And the result in many of our congregations are leadership positions where those serving us have a title, and little in the way of clearly delineated responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities. Our tradition of congregational polity^[2] and our commitment to democracy teach us to value participatory membership and as a result our leaders are often left wondering what their role is. Our sensitivity leaves many of us with an uneasy feeling about leaders and leadership.

I doubt most of us would suggest that symphony orchestras ought to operate without leaders. Most of us are pretty clear of the benefits a skilled conductor brings to an orchestra make up of equally skilled and hardworking musicians. Each is called to do their part and to work under the direction of the conductor to the benefit of the collective effort. The conductor helps others do their job in service of the vision.

What would it look like if we could get our collective heads around the idea of leadership in our congregations? I think members and leaders would each understand their respective roles and that each would know the limits of their responsibility and authority and would understand clearly how they were accountable.

Greater clarity regarding leadership would mean those in leadership roles would know that their role is to lead on behalf of other individuals and to work to strengthen the congregation. Leaders would know what they might reasonably do on behalf of others based on some pre-agreed parameters, and they'd remember to keep the voices and faces of the membership in mind while they worked, (not the voices and faces of individual members, but of the membership - the collective whole) remembering they serve on behalf of and at the behest of the membership.

Greater clarity would help leaders understand how they were accountable to the congregation. They'd know that active and informed members might reasonably expect clear and regular reporting and that requests for explanations and clarification were to be expected and welcomed.

And greater clarity would, I believe, make it easier for individual UUs to feel comfortable in the role of leader. Feeling comfortable as a leader comes from knowing what the

job is, having the resources, skills and training necessary and from having the courage to see yourself as a leader. Leadership is not dictatorship or tyranny; it is working on behalf of a group, using your skills, and your knowledge to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes are realized. It involves finding your voice to articulate the commonly held vision, so that others can hear, engage with it and be inspired by it. It is helping them find their own voices to do the same. It is really not so scary, but it is at times, difficult.

In a book called, "The Courage To Lead", R. Brian Stanfield observes that without reflection it is possible to continue on the same path, even if the results are not what we'd hoped for. It leads to the ability to choose new paths, to understand what is really going on (rather than jumping to conclusions) and group learning. ^[3] He believes reflection is absolutely necessary practice for leaders.

Deliberate reflection and clarity of role, vision, purpose and expectation are qualities we'd do well to nurture in our members and in our emerging leaders. Deliberate reflection and clarity of role, purpose and expectation are qualities we'd do well to nurture in our congregations. Doing so will, I believe, help our congregations that have ambivalence about leadership, as they begin to develop a newer understanding of the role of leadership in the congregation. The end result? Leaders who are aware of themselves, the tradition in which they operate and their current reality and who know that they hold the vision and vitality of their congregation in trust for the future.

"Castle" Leadership

Lance Secretan, a Canadian who writes and lectures on Leadership, says there are six elements to leadership.

1. Courage
2. Authenticity
3. Service
4. Truthfulness
5. Love
6. Effectiveness

<http://www.secretan.com/>

Healthy Congregations Comes to the Eastern Region

One of the programs that some of the participants in this year's Eastern Region Fall Gathering will choose from is called Healthy Congregations. The material covered in the stream is from the 6 workshops developed by Dr. Peter Steinke. Steinke is author of several books that explore congregational systems and the role leaders play in promoting health. His three books; *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What*, *How Your Church Family Works:*

Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems and Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach have been of use to many UU leaders. The full version of the program has six different workshops that explore systems theory, anxiety and stress in the congregation, leadership, relationships, generosity and the spiritual life of the congregation.

Last year Dr. Steinke came to Toronto and conducted facilitator training for 16 UU leaders. This February (Atlantic congregation and exact date to be confirmed) Rev. Ray Drennan and Linda Thomson will lead the full program. Congregations are encouraged to consider sending a team of leaders to this workshop. Board members, committee chairs and emerging leaders will find the material particularly useful. Details will be shared via regional e-mail lists, in the congregational mailing and on-line as soon as they are available. The program supports congregational leaders' acquisition of knowledge and skills in order to:

- Cultivate leadership capacities to lovingly challenge congregational patterns.
- Develop healthy patterns for community life
- Focus on strength, resources and options for the future.
- Lead with calm and thoughtfulness

We're confident the program can be useful to congregations. We look forward to spending time with Atlantic UU leaders.

Are we encouraging members to think of themselves as consumers?

The consumer model of church life may have crept into our congregations unnoticed, but it is there. I read church newsletters, I attend meetings of a lot of our fellowships and read reports from many of our congregations and I am aware of language commonly used in new member material, "Here are the services you can expect from our congregation" and "Please let us know if we can meet your needs". On reflection I believe this consumer model challenges many of our congregation. Here are some of the problems I believe we encounter when we work with the consumer model of congregational life.

1. It encourages a sense of entitlement and some members feel indignant when decisions or directions that make them uncomfortable are taken.
2. It fails to engage many members in meaningful ways in the mission of the congregation.
3. It encourages us to understand ordained Ministers as employees rather than partners. And while they are

in a legal sense, employees, the role is more appropriately seen as a partnership. Not all partnerships endure, but the quality of the relationship demands more than employer - employee responses.

4. Those who do engage in the life of the congregation, and who deal feel a strong responsibility for the health of the church; find themselves with an ever increasing workload. They find the list of committees grows annually, as the congregation sometimes almost frantically strives to meet the needs of its members and they sometimes come to resent other members who don't choose to get involved in the same way.

So how do we move beyond member as consumer and how shall we frame and understand the work of congregations to ensure the real, rather than the busy, work of religious community can take place? UU minister Roy Philips suggests that 'rather than helping members discover how the congregation can serve their needs, we help them to see more clearly who they are, what they can become, how they may be inclined to serve'. In short, we can help them consider some of the BIG questions most of us struggle with and consider. When we invite people into the ministry of the congregation, to join us as we struggle to consider how we can best express and live our values and ideals.

Conversational Prompts and Questions - Members as Consumers

People need to feel welcomed and comfortable if they are to stay around long enough to engage meaningfully in congregational life. If we don't ensure their children are well cared for and if we fail to feed them with quality worship or deep, affirming and challenging relationships they may drift away. Unitarian Universalism doesn't offer a compelling theological imperative for attendance or participation. Members who do not find what they need may choose to leave. But are we unwittingly encouraging them to do so? The following questions may help you to reflect on the degree to which your congregation encourages consumer attitudes:

1. Our literature refers to congregational programs as services
2. Do we focus more on the expressed needs and concerns of individuals more than we do to the collective vision and health of the congregation?
3. Do we find ourselves stalling or deferring action on agreed upon directions because some members have concerns or questions?
4. Do we spend a lot of time and energy (talking, gossiping, and worrying) on the decisions of members who chose to leave?

5. Do we have the courage to define who we are, what our congregational ministry is and then invite people to share in it with us?

These are tough questions, and there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. However they may help us consider how well we strike the balance between accessibility and consumer-based thinking. If we don’t dare to ask the deep questions and to challenge our members and our congregations then we really just reinforce the status quo. If we don’t address obstacles to participation then we lose the chance to engage meaningfully in the exploration of meaning with members.

Finding the balance is the challenge!

The Canadian Unitarian Council has coached and supported volunteers in each region who work with lay leaders and staff to support congregations.

Service Consultants provide workshops, training, coaching and consultative services to congregations as needed. They will work with those in Regional Networking roles and the Directors of Regional Services and Lifespan Learning to determine needs and appropriate services.



Same-sex marriage showdown

TWO GROUPS OF RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS FACED OFF ON PARLIAMENT HILL TUESDAY AT THE NATIONAL MARRIAGE CAUCUS. THE EVENT WAS ORGANIZED BY THE CANADIAN FAMILY ACTION COUNCIL.

The one-day Ottawa event was organized by the socially conservative lobby group Canadian Family Action Council.

It was an opportunity for interested parties to speak up about reopening Bill C-38, the Civil Marriage Act, which allows any two adults to marry.

Not all religious leaders oppose same-sex marriage. One group held a press conference to support same sex marriage. Their leaders encouraged the government not to reopen the debate.

“No couple should be excluded from marriage simply because of their sexual orientation...no one else is harmed,” said Elizabeth Bowden of the Unitarian Church, which has been marrying same-sex couples for several years.

Rabbi Steven Garten of Temple Israel in Ottawa spoke out against a predominantly Christian-based opposition to same-sex marriage.

“The Jewish community is not of one mind about the sanctity of marriage,” said Garten. “However it is of one mind

about one religion imposing limitations on the beliefs of the others.”

A group of religious leaders who support the reopening of Bill C-38 also spoke. The group emphasized it isn’t asking for Bill C-38 to be repealed yet – just that it be studied more closely.

Louis Deserres of Vote Marriage Canada says the current law may protect the rights of adults at the expense of the rights of children.

“Children have a right and it’s confirmed by nature,” said Deserres, “Same-sex marriage says it’s legal and acceptable to take away the natural parent of a child.”

Members of the group supporting same-sex marriage cited research by the Canadian Psychological Association that shows children benefit by having the relationship between their parents sanctioned by society, regardless of the sex of their parents.

The Religious Society of Friends, a Quaker Christian organization, hopes the government will not spend time revisiting same-sex marriage, but instead open dialogue on poverty, global warming, illiteracy and war.

Both sides have meetings planned with MPs to lobby their position.

The federal government is preparing to hold a vote on whether to reopen the same-sex marriage issue. It is also considering how to protect the rights of clergy and teachers who disagree with same-sex marriage, if Bill C-38 is left unchanged.



Additional Correspondence

Editor’s note: a number of correspondences were received from the CUC which have not been included for various reasons: space, less general relevance, format of correspondence difficult to convert, etc... Most of these I can forward upon request if you are interested and some of these I can print for you if you wish. Simply ask.

- CUC budget information for 2007
- “*What is Worship?*” a new pamphlet—coming soon!
- “*Organizational responses to change*”, from Linda Thomson, information for congregations in transition.
- “*List your events at CUC.ca*” If your congregation is planning an event that is open to other UUs, feel free to provide your information by completing the form.
- “*good tips re taxes*”

- “*My recent testimony*” Art Brewer’s testimony at Toronto First.

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald

This space wants your material!