



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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## Sunday Services

**February 4** Susan Shalala, Oral Historian with the New Brunswick Archives, will speak on the importance of oral history. Susan has had several meetings with sisters Regina Clarke and Marie Rushbrook for the purpose of recording oral history as it pertains to the Harvey Universalist Church that was active from about 1912 to the mid 1970's. Barb Fairweather and Patricia desChamps have partnered with the UNB Archives to do research about Harvey Universalist Church. We had on loan from Regina Clarke a five page typed letter. Regina describes it as "Mum's History of the Universalist Church in Harvey". Regina says her mother, Mrs. Howard M. Little (Lottie) gave this address to The Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton at a Sunday service while the Fellowship was located on Charlotte Street. A more detailed article is elsewhere in this issue.

**February 11** Betty Lee presenting on "New Spring Festival: Chinese New Year." According to legend, in ancient China, the nián, a man-eating beast from the mountains, could silently infiltrate houses to prey on humans. The people later learned that the nián was sensitive to loud noises and the color red, so they scared it away with explosions, fireworks and the

liberal use of the color red. These customs led to the first New Year celebrations. *Gub nián* means to celebrate the new year; it literally means the passing of the nián beast. Celebrated in areas with large populations of ethnic Chinese, Chinese New Year is also a major holiday for ethnic groups who were strongly influenced by Chinese culture—Japanese, Koreans, Mongolians, Vietnamese, Tibetans, the Nepalese Feliz Navidad and the Bhutanese. Chinese New Year represents a time of the largest human migration, when Chinese from all around the world return home on the eve of Chinese New Year to have reunion dinners with their families.

**February 18** Rev. Kitsy Winthrop: "What Will You Leave Behind?" In response to Lessons from the Infinity Project, Kitsy will reveal what a Massachusetts glass blower is teaching her about what we as individuals and as a congregation will leave in our wakes.

**February 25** A sermon from a Founder of the CUC, the Rev. Phillip Hewitt: "Pessimism of the Intellect: Optimism of the Will". Service Leader: Heather Lunergan. Each year, U\*U congregations hold a Sharing our Faith Sunday, to remind us of the larger community to which we belong. This will be a chance to hear an inspiring sermon by Rev. Phillip Hewitt, one of the founders of the Canadian Unitarian Council, and to share stories about your involvement with that organization. Come with your memories, and join with members and friends across Canada as we celebrate "our" national organization. And please, bring your chequebook - our CUC needs our support. (tax receipts issued by the CUC)

**March 4** Allison Brewer will present her views the activism she has so fully embraced over the course of her adult life. Throughout her eclectic career path, Allison Brewer has gathered information, inspiration, and insight. Her enthusiasm touches on a spirituality that is both genuine and accessible.

**March 18** Carlos Elder-Gomes and Jo-Anne Elder will lead a service on Anti-Racism, especially from the point of view of First Nations peoples.



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## Children's Program Report

In the last issue of Touchstone we reported that Stephanie Yorke, a fourth year honours English student at UNB, had been named to the position of children's program facilitator. Stephanie has been working with the children since the beginning of January, and is assisted by Elizabeth Elder Gomes. The Children's Program Committee (Haifa Miller, Mary Scott and George DeMille, chair) held an information meeting on Sunday evening, January 14, 2007 to discuss future directions of the Children's Program with anyone from the congregation who was interested. The participation and feedback at that meeting were helpful to the committee, and committee members welcome further enquiries or dialogue from parents of current or prospective children in the program, or other interested members of the congregation, as the program evolves.

Submitted by the Children's Program Committee: Haifa Miller, Mary Scott & George DeMille



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## Welcome

Please welcome Irma Rigby. Irma has just moved to our city from Montreal where she was a member of the Unitarian Church for many years. Irma has purchased a home in Sunshine Gardens. She will be a welcome addition to our bridge group.



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## Women's Pot Luck

Regular Women's Pot Luck supper and conversation will be held on February 16th., 2007, 6 pm at the home of Travis Lane, 807 Windsor St. "Show and tell" topic is "Valentine Day". Share a poem, story, or your thoughts about Valentine Day. For more information contact Joan Brewer at jrjeb@nb.sympatico.ca or 455-5169.



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## Feb 4 Service

Please join us on Sunday Feb 4th at 11am when Susan Shalala, Oral Historian with the Province of NB Archives will speak on the importance of oral history. Susan has had several meetings with sisters Regina Clarke and Marie Rushbrook for the purpose of recording oral history as it pertains to the Harvey Universalist Church that was active from about 1912 to the mid 1970's. Barb Fairweather

and Patricia desChamps have partnered with the Province of NB Archives to do research about Harvey Universalist Church.

We had on loan from Regina Clarke a five page typed letter. Regina describes it as "Mum's History of the Universalist Church in Harvey". Regina says her mother, Mrs. Howard M. Little (Lottie) gave this address to The Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton at a Sunday service while we were located on Charlotte Street. I have keyed it in verbatim. It is as follows:

"The history of any church, it seems to me, begins not with the erection of the church building; not necessarily with the organization of a group, but with the real birth of a movement. If such is the case, then the Universalist Church in Harvey is really almost a hundred years old. It must have been somewhere in the 1860's that Matthew Little first thought his way through from the most rigid Presbyterianism - to the Liberal faith. He, with his five brothers, and two sisters, had been nourished on the study of the Bible and the catechism. Their parents - good old Scottish Presbyterians - were nothing if not genuinely religious. For John Little, the father, to know that something was right morally - was for him the green light to go ahead. If he could not see it to be right, he avoided it completely.

Now to young Matthew and to some of his brothers, there was confusion. Their bibles taught them of a God of Love, a God of Forgiveness, and doubts began to arise in their minds. But it was to Matthew who had, like Jacob of old, wrestled with God for a blessing that the flash of inspiration came. Suddenly he saw the light. He came to his Brother James - "Jims", he said, "I've found the truth - He'll save them all, and you and I will have to teach it to the rest". And teach it they did - all down through the ensuing years the descendants of these two men sought to teach the new truth to the others. Personally, I have always felt that these men founded Liberalism in their community just as authentically as did John Murray, Hosea Ballou, or any other of the Church Fathers.

So much for the early beginnings. The leaven was working but it was not until about the year 1912 that tangible things began to happen. Vivian Little, a granddaughter of James, was living in Auburn, Maine, and attending the Universalist Church there. She met and became acquainted with Miss Hazel Woodbury, who had charge of Post Office Missions in the church, It was her business to know where the Liberal Churches were located and it was she who was able to tell Vivian of the Universalist Church in Halifax with its Pastor, Rev. Charles H. Pennoyer. Now things would begin to happen for Vivian was a live wire, and I have never met a greater organizer than Charles Pennoyer. After a brief exchange of letters, Mr. Pennoyer came to Harvey and preached in a hall near where the church is now located. Needless to say, he soon had a very interested group. He explained that there was in the Halifax Church a fund known as the West Bequest Fund. This

money had been left in trust by a wealthy family of West's to be used for the extension of Liberalism in the Maritime Provinces. He began to talk about building a church and stressed the fact that provided the Liberal-minded people of the Community would do their part, the Trustees of the West Bequest Fund would certainly give substantial assistance. By this time, of course, a church group had been formed with Mr. Albert Little, a son of Matthew, as its president, and on a Sunday morning - 25 members were given the right hand of fellowship by Mr. Pennoyer. This membership grew over the next few years to nearly eighty.

The idea of building the church also grew and about the Spring of 1914 it was finally begun. Help seemed to come from everywhere - people donated lumber and other materials. Members and non-members worked day after day - many giving their services absolutely free. I can remember no campaign for funds, and yet necessary money always seemed available. Of course, much financial help came from the West Bequest Fund in Halifax. Finally in July 1915 the church was completed and dedicated with appropriate ceremonies on July 14th and 15th. I well remember on the second day of these meetings at the afternoon service, Mr. A. S. Wolfe and Mr. Edward Schaffer of Halifax came to me to learn the amount of indebtedness on the church - I happened to be Sec.-Treasurer at the time, and all bills were paid except a small one at our local store for hardware, etc., - this amounted to \$41.76. These men had been instructed by the trustees of the West B. Fund to pay the indebtedness on the church provided it did not exceed \$50.00 - they promptly wrote the cheque for \$41.76 - the bill was paid and at the Evening Service that night, the church was dedicated free of debt.

Those dedication services were inspiring - the church was filled each evening - we had excellent speaker from Halifax, St. Stephen, Calais, Houlton, Maine and other places. We also had quite a large chorus choir at this time and a few good soloists. A few years later, we added the vestry to the church - then the community Pulpit, and still later the manse which was built mostly through the efforts of the Women's Group. Mr. Pennoyer was still the moving spirit though we had several other ministers - Eric Alton Ayer, a native of Lennoxville, Quebec - a student from Tufts College, Elmer Peters and Angus Cameron, both student ministers. Miss Hannah J. Powell from Maine, Ernest M. Whitesmith from Bathurst, N.B. and several others.

We have also had several conferences - one at the Harvey Church in August 1929; one at Huntingville, Quebec, in 1930 - a two day conference. Another at Harvey August 14th and 15th 1932. Later one in Houlton, Maine; one at Oakfield and one at Caribour, Maine.

But now it is getting on towards 1935 and many of the older members - and some of the most active, have passed on. The picture of the church life looks a little dimmer, and then, to save the situation - a letter from Rev. George

F. MacKay, Eastport, Maine, in which he offers to drive up from Eastport bringing Rev. Benjamin H. Clark from Calais, Maine, to conduct services in the Harvey Church Sunday evenings. This they continued to do for several Summers for a sum that was ridiculously small. They worked mostly with the young people - a Junior Choir - also one of the Juniors chairman of the meeting - reading the Scripture lesson, prayers, etc. One of the ministers always giving the address. These men had the real missionary spirit, a strong affection grew between them and the young people, and this must have been their reward, rather than the salary they received.

After them came Rev. Robert Bath, who is still ministering faithfully to us for a few weeks each Summer. So many changes have taken place - all of the older generation have passed on. Many of the younger group have married and moved away. Some have married members of the other churches and are attending them so that our membership has now dwindled to about twenty-six, and some of these are not living in Harvey.

The outlook for the Church is rather dim, and yet the church building is there.

We are very pleased indeed that you have such a vigorous group here and also in Saint John, and we sincerely hope that the movement will spread to other parts of the Maritimes. I would like to close by saying that if, at any time, our church could be of service to you people, we will be glad to have you use it. We especially hope that some of you will be able to attend our services in July when Mr. Bath will be there. He gives us some excellent sermons, and we always regret that his congregation is not larger".

*In fellowship*  
Patricia desChamps  
Barb Fairweather



## New U Program

If your are new to our Fellowship or new to the Unitarian faith, you are invited to take part in a program called "The New U". During four sessions we will share a bit about our spiritual journey, learn about Unitarian history and beliefs and about how this Fellowship is governed. At the end of the program those who have not already joined will be invited to become members of our Congregation, although there is no obligation to do so. We value our friends as well as our members.

The "New U" schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, March 6th - getting to know one another and sharing our stories.

Tuesday, March 13th - Unitarian and Universalist history. Denominational connections. We hope to provide

an interesting look at some origins of Unitarianism and the denomination in Canada.

Tuesday, March 20th - Structure and activities of the Fellowship.

Tuesday, March 27th - We will celebrate our final meeting with delicious desserts and discussion.

All sessions will be 6:30 - 8:30 unless we agree on a change of time. Please contact Sheila Moore if you are interested in this program. 363-2480 or kmoore@nbnet.nb.ca



*Adrian Walls sings ¡Feliz Navidad! at Christmas Eve service*



## Buildings and Grounds

### Wheelchair access at the Fellowship

The wheelchair ramp has proved to be slippery during winter weather conditions. In January we added narrow strips of non-slip fabric to the ramp. It will give us all better footing.

A new one metre wide removable ramp connects the piano room to the sunken sanctuary area. It uses half the the

area between the two brass railings. This will allow persons in a wheelchair to access all of the first floor area. The ramp is made of plywood. It is painted and has strips of non-slip fabric on the 'wheeling' surface. This should also alert the able bodied that there is a step at this location. A guest fell in January, walking from the piano room to the sanctuary and not realizing there was a step down!

### Our Sanctuary Fireplace

Please make sure the fireplace brass flue lever is in the 'draft open' position before you light a fire log. The lever may not be placed back in the 'draft closed' position until the fire is out and the ashes are cold. For further information please see Ken Moore.

Please use the butane lighters for to light the sanctuary fireplace and candles. Matches are not to be used in the Fellowship. One of our members has an allergy to sulfur.

The library fireplace and the second floor fireplace have been sealed of and may not be used.

### In the kitchen

Thank you to the people who donated dishcloths and dish towels. There are cans of Sterno stored in the drawer below the new stainless steel chafing dishes. The chafing dishes are ready to be used to keep food warm at potlucks etc. One fridge is not keeping food cold and is being removed.

*In fellowship*

Patricia desChamps

Chair Buildings and Grounds



## Midwinter Reflections on a Daisy Afghan

I am thinking of my cousin and a daisy afghan.

Susan and, born a few months apart in 1954, are not a big part of one another's lives. She grows up in Bermuda, Trinidad, and Nicaragua, while i grow up in New Brunswick—but we are present to one another in the peripheral way that geographically dispersed families manage to touch. There are Christmas cards, sporadic family letters, and the odd phone call, mainly between our parents, but we are mentioned to one another. We see photographs, and became characters in the larger tableau of the extended family. Most importantly, we share a grandmother and it is Grannie who adds the afghan to this story.

As a little girl i measure myself against everything Grannie says and does. Besides watering the thousands of plants that fill her house, Grannie makes afghans, her spotted hands knitting, purling and passing slipped stitches over as needles click their way through the evening. In rainbows of colour, Grannie knits long patterned strips and sews them into soft afghans. She teaches me how to knit,

and while i struggle through a lumpy scarf, she tells me family stories—family yarns about my aunts, uncles and cousins. In this way she knits two things at once, using wool for the afghan in her hands, and words for the afghan that is our family—a vital comfort, however imperfect.

Grannie says this about my cousin: “Susan has a sweet disposition; simple things bring her pleasure.” I am not sure if Grannie means that i am like Susan, or that i should be like her, but i know i want to be what Grannie thinks is right.

Grannie subscribes to *Chatelaine*, and one day the magazine shows her a pattern for a different kind of afghan. She orders the little plastic loom and learns to make a daisy. Using Sayelle, that magically washable wool, she makes long loops into white petals, and smaller loops into a yellow centre. Then she moistens her fingers on her tongue and twirls the yarn till she can thread the darning needle, cinching the flower into completion. She makes another flower and another. The daisies collect in alarming numbers, and when she has enough, she uses green yarn to crochet them, column by row, into their afghan shape. “It looks a mite flimsy,” she says, dissatisfied. And so she modifies the pattern. Using yellow satin, she makes a sturdy backing, thereby attaching the daisies to a long and useful future. It is the most beautiful daisy afghan in the country.

In fact, Grannie makes two of these daisy afghans, one for Susan and one for me, each of us receiving a lasting dose of Grannie’s hands-on attention, so essential to knowing one’s place in life.

Over the decades, these small connections touch Susan and me—as they touch all families, of course, nothing special—and now that we are both on the far side of fifty, i see that this process of knitting families together is not so peripheral after all.

Susan’s first marriage, like mine, goes off, and she finds a second man to marry, this one a Canadian. Susan and Gordon move to Canada at about the same time i move (back) to New Brunswick. They decide to build a house in Niagara Falls, not in the tacky tourist area, but in a lovely neighborhood bordering on Niagara-on-the-Lake.

As she and Gordon heave boxes from the trailer into their new house, Susan bangs her knee. Ouch.

Meanwhile, Uncle Francis, Susan’s father, comes to New Brunswick and i have the privilege and pleasure of driving him up and down the St. John River so he can visit his sister, my mother. He is very open, and so am i, and we tell our family stories throughout the long car drives. I ask Francis about a memory i have from the sixties: Didn’t he and June drive up the Eastern edge of the American continent, bringing Grannie from Nicaragua to visit us in Edmundston? I do not remember meeting the kids—Ian, Susan, Peter and Richard—but i do remember that the front passenger seat of their car swivelled. That was the

coolest thing in the world to me.

Francis replies that he does not remember the swivelling seat; he does remember that the car was a Ford Gran Torino, and we both agree it was a two tone, white on red. “Oh yes,” he says. “Your cousins were with us on that trip.” I guess Susan and i have met as little kids.

In September when George and i are in Niagara-on-the-Lake, i call Susan from the hotel and leave a message on her machine. Amidst the plays and wine tours that George and i take in, Susan and i play telephone tag over the three days of our stay. I do not think she is entirely sure of who i am, but anybody connected to her father is welcome. On our last morning in the area, George and i find ourselves sitting in her living room listening to her charming Bermuda accent.

She says that her parents, whom she calls “Daddy” and “Mummy,” have bought the house next door to them—for visiting—and that her only child, Suelan (pronounced Sue Ellen), is somewhat estranged and recently married. She tells us about getting the house built, explaining which are her ideas vs those belonging to the contractor—a closet inserted here, the kitchen modified in this way, the extra room added for Gordon’s den. With every sentence, she reveals the strain of maintaining the perfection of her life as she needs to tell it.

Gordon lets her talk on, even when she is speaking about him. She tells us how she is the one who spots the perfect job for him, though he is retired and is not particularly looking for a job. In fact, from her point of view, Gordon is quite incidental in the job interview itself, because she has all the answers, really. And apparently Susan is right. He does love the work, and they are glad to have him.

We finish our coffee and they give us a tour of their splendid home which has all the usual rooms and contents. However, this inside space remains curiously untouched, as if it is holding its breath, waiting for permission to sigh, or, goodness, to pass wind. If a house could have high blood pressure, this one would be on ACE inhibitors.

They show us their amazing casino basement, full of table games—blackjack, bingo, craps, baccarat banque, roulette, poker. And the other games—billiards, shuffleboard and foosball. The walls are lined with jigsaw puzzles, composed and framed, and i picture Susan late at night, sorting colours, establishing the edge, and fitting together tiny pieces, the task finite, conquerable. I find myself coveting her chest of drawers made of Bermuda cedar and wonder if i might ever acquire such a piece for myself. After all, i, too, was born on that warm island.

I ask her if they often invite friends over to play all those games. “Oh yes,” she says, but right away i wonder. Susan is wound up and boxed in, tied to some internal mechanism running on expectations, guilt and inadequacy. I can picture her purchasing the foosball game—taking measurements, choosing colours, quality and durability—but i

cannot picture her playing it.

But what can i see of the real Susan—of anybody, really—in one short visit? I admire how gracious she is, so generously receiving George and me. Will she stop the next time she and Gordon drive through New Brunswick on their way to visit her brother in Nova Scotia? What will she make of my background, and of my parents' very un-lavish home? And what will she observe of me and the transparent contradictions i keep in Fredericton?

In the foyer just before we leave, we take a picture—smiles all around, well meant and only partially contrived. We take these pictures for Mummy and Daddy, and for posterity. Maybe we also take them for ourselves. I am very glad to meet Susan and her life with Gordon and a new house.

Outside, as we are leaving, Susan remembers one more thing. She opens the double wide doors of her garage to show us her brand new SmartCar. Lime green and black, it sits in its tiny space next to Gordon's huge SUV, and i can see how much she delights in this little car. She loves it, says how perfect it is for her and the running around she has to do. How happy she is to have it. And all of a sudden i see the face Grannie saw. Alight with joy, she touches the roof, lets her hand follow the edge, and her body opens to something that has been hiding up until now. Here, then, is the little girl i could happily play alongside; here is the smile for the camera—but the visit is over and we just wave goodbye.

The story goes very fast from here on, and it has to do with Susan's damaged knee. In the middle of December with her Mummy and Daddy visiting and the perfect Christmas holiday shouting its loud demands, Susan makes an appointment with her doctor because she is in pain. An old fashioned physician might pull the eyelid down and check the pinkness of the lining before prescribing blood thinner, but this doctor goes straight to the charts and easily calculates how much heparin will vanquish the blood clot he feels is in her knee.

But the problem worsens and when Susan returns, perhaps even the doctor is horrified. "We might have to amputate," he tells her.

Amputate. My mother can hardly believe Uncle Francis on the phone. This is not a word for the holiday season.

An MRI is ordered, which has a wait time of six to eight weeks and so they cross the border. An American MRI is immediately available, but it takes seven days for a doctor to interpret the results. If only the whole world had been yelling, "Hurry. Hurry. Hurry."

There is no blood clot. Susan is extremely anaemic. She should not have been given blood thinners. They will try surgery. Immediately. It is Christmas day.

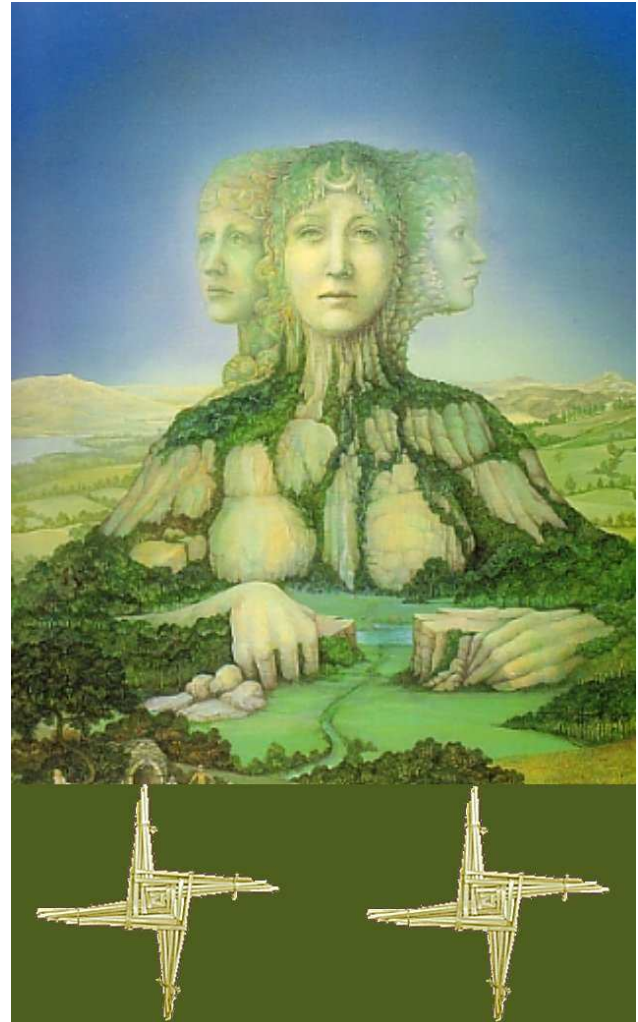
The surgeon gives her fifty-one units of blood, which is not enough. On Boxing Day at seven in the morning, Susan

dies.

I google unit of blood. I want to understand the volume represented by the number fifty-one. Each unit is one pint, says the internet. Two cups of blood. Two cousins.

How many times have i donated blood? How many times have i have banged my knee? How many times have i pulled Grannie's daisy afghan over my shoulders?

allison



*February starts with the celebration of Imbolc*



## Message from Mary

**Will You Marry Me?** February brings Valentine's Day and that can bring marriage proposals and the beginning of plans for weddings.

Across Canada, we have 87 lay chaplains who regularly receive requests "to marry me" from the public and in

congregations with no professional minister, from members. People contact a Unitarian lay chaplain for a variety of reasons. Sometimes they are unchurched or “differently churched” but want something more than a secular event. Sometimes the church that one or the other of the partners is most closely affiliated, are not willing to perform the marriage because of a previous divorce or degree of connection with the religious institution. We are also well known for our strong, positive stance on gender and sexual diversity and our willingness to perform marriages of any loving couple, regardless of sexual orientation and gender expression.

In 2001, Lay Chaplaincy resolutions were voted on at the Annual CUC meeting that affirmed the three key purposes of the program were to provide outreach to the wider community; serve the congregation and provide opportunities for spiritual development for members serving in the role of lay chaplain.

Since that time, CUC has, as mandated, provided more training for lay chaplains, and both for those beginning this role and enrichment training for those continuing in the role. As well as the number of events, we have a variety of workshops and many ministers and experienced or retired lay chaplains who deliver these programs. This has been made possible through an annual assessment of \$10 for each fee-generating rite of passage performed by lay chaplains.

A key resolution passed at that meeting was that lay chaplains would have a maximum term of six years. Just as most other roles in our congregations have maximum terms, or at least expectations, a term provides the opportunity for many within the congregation to participate actively and in various ways in the shared ministry of the church. The opportunity to serve as lay chaplain provides growth that would well suit a retiring lay chaplain to a number of significant roles in the congregation, bringing the fruits of their experience and learning. They have likely honed their public speaking skills; listening skills; and they undoubtedly have a good “elevator speech” (30 second explanation about what is Unitarianism.)

All those who were in the role in May, 2001, were allowed six additional years from that date unless, of course, the congregation already had terms (which several did). With 87 lay chaplains and a six-year term, an average of 15 lay chaplains per year would be expected to retire if all served the full six years. Because of the transition period, this year, there are 22 lay chaplains whose terms will end as of May, 2007.

There are 13 congregations with either only one lay chaplain or currently no lay chaplains. CUC has always recommended that congregations have two lay chaplains, even if the number of services performed each year are few. This provides a backup in case of illness or vacation, but as importantly provides support between the two lay chaplains. Ideally, a new lay chaplain would be coming on in

year three to make learning the role easier for the new lay chaplain. Four of our congregations have four lay chaplains.

If you’ve ever considered that you might want to marry people, and perform memorial services, child dedications and other rites of passage, talk with your congregation’s Lay Chaplaincy Committee, minister, lay chaplains or board about your interest.

If your congregation is in agreement with your attending, you are welcome to attend the full weekend “basics” program called Designing and Leading Rites of Passage. Sessions are coming up in all four regions over the next few months.

There is also lots of information at:

[http://www.cuc.ca/lay\\_chaplaincy](http://www.cuc.ca/lay_chaplaincy)

or send an email to [lcc@cuc.ca](mailto:lcc@cuc.ca) which will be forwarded to the CUC Lay Chaplaincy committee member for your area. You can find out the name of the person who is your congregation’s contact with the CUC at:

[http://www.cuc.ca/whos\\_who/index.htm#Lay\\_Chaplaincy](http://www.cuc.ca/whos_who/index.htm#Lay_Chaplaincy)

## SHORT SNIPPETS

Lay Chaplaincy Basics - in all 4 Regions Designing and Leading Rites of Passage is a weekend program for lay chaplains and lay chaplains in training. Others can attend if requested by the congregation, if space permits. In May, 2007, a number of lay chaplains will be retiring as the six-year maximum term voted on in May, 2001, comes into effect for those who were in the role at that time. We have been increasing the amount of training; providing additional support and resources and now have two lay chaplaincy committees (one for the west and one for the east). To find the committee member who is the liaison for your congregation, contact Janice Lincoln at [Janice@cuc.ca](mailto:Janice@cuc.ca) or check the Who’s Who section of [cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca).

Here are the dates of upcoming “Basics” sessions:

- UCVancouver - March 9-11, 2007 Facilitators: Debra Thorne and Rev. Jane Bramadat
- UCMontreal - March 30-April 1, 2007 Facilitators: Rev. Carole Martignacco and Lay Chaplain Nicole Guerrier.
- South Peel, Mississauga - April 13-15, 2007 Facilitators: Rev. Anne Treadwell and tba
- Regina - May 4-6, 2007 Facilitators: Meredith Simon (and tba) Check the web at:  
[http://www.cuc.ca/lay\\_chaplaincy/index.htm#TRAINING](http://www.cuc.ca/lay_chaplaincy/index.htm#TRAINING)  
We will post information there as it is finalized.

**CONNECT WITH UNITARIANS ACROSS CANADA** Several of our email groups are vibrant with conversation and sharing of resources. I can recommend to

you the email lists for Membership; Worship and Caring. Each have an individual who is facilitating discussion on these important topics. 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](mailto:info@cuc.ca) or 1-888-568-5723/416-489-4121.

Take care of yourselves and each other,  
 January 15, 2007  
 Mary Bennett  
 Executive Director of the CUC  
[mary@cuc.ca](mailto:mary@cuc.ca) [www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca)  
 416-489-4121/1-888-568-5723  
 018-1179A King Street West  
 Toronto ON M6K 3C5



The Church of the Larger Fellowship  
 (CLF)  
 asks you to

Invite a friend to  
 check us out!

**Do you know someone who**

- would benefit by a spiritual community available 24/7?
- works on a Sunday morning?
- lives in an isolated area?
- does not have access to a local UU church?
- is housebound and unable to attend a local church?
- is an active member of a local congregation who wants even more?
- is a church staff person or religious professional who would enjoy a congregation of their own?

**To check out**  
**The Church of the Larger Fellowship**  
 Go to [www.clfuu.org](http://www.clfuu.org)  
 Click on the "Welcome Banner" across the screen

All CLF proceeds support the many ministries of the Church of the Larger Fellowship.



## UU Niagara Experience *(advertisement)*

Hear the roar! Feel the mist! See the mighty Falls! July 15-17, 2007

Come experience the wonder of Niagara Falls including some great educational opportunities while being taken

care of like royalty. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four day UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every perspective, even safely riding beneath a tethered balloon. Spend four days with us exploring the rich historical and natural wonders around the Falls. For information visit our web site :

<http://www.uunex.net/>  
 Email : [info@uunex.net](mailto:info@uunex.net)  
 Telephone : (716) 791-4453



*Winter Sunrise*



## Cedar Lane B&B Experience

A B&B experience will be hosted by Cedar Lane UU Church on the Washington DC beltway during the National Cherry Blossom Festival (night of April 13- thru afternoon of April 15). Transportation to and from the airport, the Metro subway entrance, and church service on Sunday is included. A brief city tour (or Metro pass), reserved seats at the Annual Cherry Blossom Parade and a dinner at church Saturday evening are also all part of the festival package. (Participants will receive a package of tour materials and recommendations, including Metro maps, designed to make any spontaneous touring on your own easy.) Cost: \$250/single; \$500/couple. Registration form must be received by March 19, 2007, accompanied by a non-refundable deposit of 50% of the total cost. A flier with registration form is available by request from the Touchstone editor and at [www.cedarlane.org/cbfestival.pdf](http://www.cedarlane.org/cbfestival.pdf).

*Some explanation of the flier background is in order. The Covenant Group Facilitators at Cedar Lane UU Church (beside the Washington, DC beltway) have a Covenant Group, and they have chosen a service project to organize a bed-and-breakfast weekend during the National Cherry*



*Blossom Festival. Out-of-town guests will be paired with church members offering a weekend B&B in their home. A substantial amount of transportation and activities outlined in the flier will also be provided. After costs, all proceeds will benefit Cedar Lane UU Church. The "Cherry Blossom B+B Weekend" is April 13-15 (also the weekend of Cedar Lane's Celebration Sunday - it would be great to have many visitors at our celebration of liberal religion!) It is anticipated that beyond practical benefits, community will be strengthened within the covenant group program, Cedar Lane at-large, and our visitors.*



## Socially Responsible Investing

I'm writing to let the CUC-MEMBERSHIP and CUC-MONEY groups know about a recent session that the Kingston congregation organized on Socially Responsible Investing (SRI).

The idea came out of our Board's recent adoption of an investment policy for the congregation's endowments. As part of that discussion, some of us identified that there was a lack of information or understanding about what SRI is and what such a policy might address, so we developed the idea of holding this session. The goal was two-fold: 1) to educate our congregation on SRI, especially those involved with managing the congregations' funds and 2) to educate the broader community about SRI and UU-ism. What a successful event - attracting 45 people! About 1/2 of those attending responded to our various advertising strategies and so learned a lot about our congregation, as well as SRI, with the other 1/2 being regularly attending members of the congregation and Board.

We had two presenters - a local financial planner who specializes in SRI's who invited a co-presenter, the Executive Director of the Social Investment Organization ([www.socialinvestment.ca](http://www.socialinvestment.ca)). As part of our evaluation of the session, at least four people indicated that they wanted to become SR investors themselves and several others indicated that they would attend a follow-up session on becoming an 'ethical consumer.' Others intend to follow-up with our Board and Finance Committee to help develop a SRI policy for KUF.

This was a wonderful example of how our committees can work together (we worked with our Membership & Finance Committees ) to attend to both congregational matters (i.e., a specific Board policy) as well as engage in our local, national and global communities (i.e., educating them on a specific issue, as well as UU-ism, more generally). The session helped to empower attendees in making them realize that they have choices when it comes to how to spend their money or invest and that in doing so they need not check their values at the door.

I think that SRI is an incredible phenomena with a great deal of potential for Unitarian-Universalists participation. I'd be happy to speak with people about how they might go about putting together such an event for their congregation or about SRI, more generally.



## Editorial

*Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.*

*Joel 3 verse 10*

*And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

*Isaiah 2 verse 4*

*Micah 4 verse 3*

Those familiar with Touchstone know that, as editor, I am more just a document compositor. I take submissions from the congregation as is and put them in this publication. I select from among CUC correspondence and use that material to fill out the newsletter and some of my readers like to see that material since they have limited access to the electronic sources. I usually resist the urge to exercise the right of an editor to insert editorial opinion content. The appearance of the above two quotes in an editorial cartoon a few weeks ago (Chuck Asay, January 5) intrigued me and a quick search in an electronic copy of the King James bible found the several references above to transforming swords and spears to farming implements and vice versa.

I thought "this deserves some comment" but it has been very difficult to write what has been in my mind. When this month's Touchstone was ready for the press, I had about half a page of text on the ninth page. Ideally, I try to fill an even number of pages so that both sides of all sheets are reasonably full but if the letter extends to more than five sheets, it reaches the next weight range for postage, so we try to stay under ten pages. A few comments, then, to give the reader something to think about, I hope, and to fill column inches. I really wished that I had more time to develop this article on the one hand but on the other I was sorely tempted to just publish the two quotes in opposition.

The bible has been one of the most successful works of fiction in history and, of course, many people might be offended by my assertion of my belief that the bible is a work of fiction. Inspired by the concept of god, to claim it proof of the existence if god is to engage in the sin of circular reasoning. Part of its success, though, is the ability

to pick and choose and find little gems that bolster just about any argument. Mind you, the bible could very well be the literal word of god, it is beyond difficult to prove the non-existence of something so vaguely defined. It is the responsibility of each individual to decide for themselves how much, if any, credence to give to the various belief systems and to choose that which best reflects the "Truth" as they perceive it.

The main lesson to learn is that context matters. Always search out the context of any statement since context can change the meaning in such deep and fundamental ways.

Times and situations change, what is appropriate at one point in space and time may be completely inappropriate when either change. Very little is absolute and even (or, perhaps, especially) moral values are relative to the society and the problems and opportunities that it faces from within and without.

The bible is filled with metaphor and to take every word literally inevitably leads to contradictions. In short, come the "rapture", my car will still have a driver.

*In fellowship*  
Tony Fitzgerald

This space wants your material!