



874 York Street, Fredericton, N.B., E3B 3R8 (506) 451-0919

Sunday Service 11 a.m.

Web Site: <http://www.uff.ca>Email: tuff@nbnet.nb.ca

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Announcements

Our formal children's program has ended for the summer. Baby sitting / child care will continue through the summer months, although Elisabeth Elder-Gomes will not be available on some Sundays. Depending on the number of children present each week, we may want to call on parent volunteers to assist with the children. The full program resumes in September.

You are encouraged to collect, if you will, water from your travels over this summer, in order to bring it to the September 7th ingathering and water ceremony service.

Pot Luck Garden Party

with Nancy & Charlie

Those who remember Rev. Nancy Anderson and husband Charlie Scholz are invited to a "remember when and what are you doing now?" get-together at Janet Crawford and Hans Martini's, 155 Aberdeen Street. Saturday, August, 2nd at 5 pm.

Please RSVP to hmartini@nbnet.nb.ca

Condolances

On behalf of the congregation, the editorial staff of the Touchstone extends the deepest condolences to Allison Calvern on the death of her father, Donald Miller, on July 18th.

Women's Pot Luck

The next women's pot luck dinner is planned for August 22 at 6 PM. Linda Sprague will host the gathering in her home at 29 Fleet Court. The show and tell topic is not yet decided. More information to follow in the Sunday bulletin. For more information contact Joan Brewer at jebrewer@rogers.com or 455-5169

Growing Our U*U Community

Rather than being born into it, most of us choose Unitarian Universalism as adults. As U*Us in Fredericton we might consider the following gestures—centering, reaching out, announcing—to encourage our larger community to try us out. How tUFF can it be?

Centre

- Wearing your name tag at every service.
- Sitting beside a visitor; talking to someone you don't know at coffee time.
- Introducing a friend to a Sunday service.
- Welcoming a return visitor.
- Calling somebody you haven't seen at service for a while; asking them how they are.

Reach out

- Offering to be a greeter.
- Informing a non-member about an upcoming service.

- Asking someone their opinion on a provocative comment heard at a service.
- Emailing a sermon or giving a copy of WORLD magazine to a friend.
- Sharing information on our many resources: lay chaplaincy; websites (<http://www.uff.ca/> - <http://www.cuc.ca/index.html>); rental space.

Announce

- Putting a U*U decal on your car; wear U*U jewelry.
- Displaying our U*U principles at home, at work, and/or on your website.
- Buying a copy of “Singing the Living Tradition” for your home.
- Hosting a dinner or a party for both members and non-members.
- Organizing an event that welcomes outside people to our building, such as a coffee house, or concert.



Notes from the President

I hope everyone has been enjoying this lovely summer and that your trips, family visits, and special projects have all been successful.

The first board meeting will be held after service on Sunday August 10 at 12:30 p.m. at the Fellowship. I trust this will be a short meeting, not over an hour long. The main topic for discussion and vote, will be the report and recommendations from the ad hoc committee led by Ken Moore.

The committee recommends we hire a part-time minister for a four month trial period. The concept of hiring a minister, even part-time, is a sensitive topic for many people. For that reason, and to satisfy the request of those who favour the idea, a trial period is being suggested to see whether the fellowship as a whole would like such an arrangement on a more permanent basis.

If the Board accepts the proposal, we may have the minister do services once a month plus other related pastoral work as well. To be fair to the minister and to all members of the fellowship, a congregational meeting would be scheduled at the end of the four months for a final decision,

I have circulated the committee’s report to all Board members, Chairs of committees and Lay Chaplains. I would appreciate your feedback for Board consideration by email or by telephone.

Board meetings are open to all members of the Fellowship and any reasoned input would be most welcome.

Other minor topics at the Board meeting would be to set

a schedule of meetings for the year and to bring forth a list of topics for discussion at subsequent meetings.

I am pleased to have so much new talent on the executive this year and I look forward to working with you all.

Respectively submitted,
John van Abbema



Eulogy

July 22, 2008,
written for Don Miller by his daughter,
alison calvern

He had mountains inside his mind, great heights and deep valleys. He had a pocket full of opinions and gumption to share them. This did not always leave room for tact. But under the surface—behind the discussion, the letter to the editor, the running for public office—there was in him a critical mass of love, a biological certainty of connection, which is the universal religion.

Albert Donald Archibald was born in 1927, another son for Nathan and Allison Miller, and the air thick with hope that this one would not die. He emerged with red hair and a temperament to match. “Look at that head,” said the doctor, lifting the baby boy high into the air for Papa to admire. “The size of it.” And Mama, exhausted, sank proudly back against her pillow.

Last Friday, following a valuable and time-honoured tradition, Don Miller died. Son, brother, friend, husband, father, grandfather—he was ours whom we loved, and at his death we gather, as if we are learning for the first time how to mourn.

Dad never wanted to live anywhere but here, never even wanted to travel much. “Edmundston has all anybody could want,” he said. Especially once he got Libby here.

Dad married a beauty from Bermuda and managed to fill his house with children. He filled his days with the wild clamour and smells of the mill, and his weekends and evenings with golf and curlingoooooh, and Sunday afternoon football on tv. “Could you keep it down to a dull roar.” Which was more of a command than a request. Of course, all those children meant that Libby’s days, and evenings and weekends were also full. (Thanks, Mum. We’re with you.)

“By the way,” I told Dad in his hospital room in palliative care. “I’m glad you and Mum managed to find one another.”

“So are we, dear,” was his immediate reply.

Then I told him that I had just seen a photo taken of him in 1942. “You were hot,” I said.

It took a while for him to answer, a few hard won breaths on this last afternoon of his life, "I'm still hot." Dad was a chemist at Frasers, but in retirement he escaped the frenzy of obligations that marked his work and the demands of a needy family. It amazed him to get so many years on pension. And though he faced his death with unrelenting grace, still, he would have liked a little more time in this world. To have seen Gabe grow up. To have had Stephen one last time. But our country has too many provinces and Stephen arrived too late for the final hug. The good thing is, Dad knew Steve was coming. And he knew that his grandchildren were rushing to see him, seven of nine are here today in this place of connection. Knowing we were all coming brought him joy.

Dad never said a bad word about anybody. He did not gossip. Neither did he complain about the wrongs done to him. He was the most honest person I have ever met; was never any good at pretense.

I have sat with him at Tim Horton's while people came over to the table. They spoke of the weather, would sometimes hazard a comment on a matter of technical or social complexity, listening always to what Dad had to say. They loved spending time with him, and I was proud to sit across the table watching this parade of respect.

Everybody learned how to tell if the blue Jays had won their most recent game.

People have said how much they enjoyed conversations with him. People like me, for instance. He and I were conversing a month or so ago, talking about organic chemistry. Which was a topic that drove Stephen, Barb, Dawn and Alex right out of the kitchen. But I persevered. I always loved talking with Dad. Smack-dab in the middle of his commentary on carbon and hydrogen molecules, he asked a question: "Where do you think the soul resides?"

Thinking of gluons and quarks, I was caught off guard. "The soul lives in chocolate," I said joking my way out of his unexpected leap of imagination. But he was serious, and he continued.

"I think the soul resides in the organic molecules that make up life," he said. "In the subatomic space between neutrons and protons, and electrons."

"Holy cow, Dad," I said.

"And when we die, we're good for the grass. We leak back into the chain of life—well, we never leave it. We are transformed, but our soul remains intact. We never really die, because we have the universe in us. The soul."

He was my father for fifty-four years, and I never knew he thought about the soul. Molecular connection. Love. Always be prepared to be amazed.

Was it Martin Heidegger who said, "I fear to cease?"

In his last couple of days, Dad would move abruptly in his sleep. Just a dream, I thought, but his nurse said that his

jerking leg might be fear, a common feeling for those close to death.

On Thursday last, Dad had trouble holding a conversation. He did not speak much. Instead his mouth closed on some private pain. He had run out of opinions. He had run out of all the small answers in a life. And the great conclusion coming near.

"Did I do my duty?"

"Was I a good enough husband?"

"Was I a good enough father?"

"Was I a good enough neighbour?"

It was a privilege for us to spend these last days in Dad's close company. We watched as he let his body do its work of dying. He asked no more of it, nor any more of us, than we could do. He expected nothing that was not appropriate to the hour. I asked him, "Did you have a happy life, Dad?"

"Oh, yes," he said, swiftly, which took his breath because his heart was so weak. He had a hard time to talk and smile at the same time, and at this he was smiling. "I have been very lucky," he said. "With your mother, and with you children."

"Oh, do you like us, then?" I asked him, pushing a little. "Very much," he said, and I let him go back to sleep.

Dad loved our mother and all she can do. One of his last pleasures was looking at her painting of a winter scene, which we hung on the wall facing Dad's bed in palliative care. To all the staff, Dad bragged about his wife, the painter. "She's good," he said. But he was not content to leave it at that. "She's very good," he added.

Actually this was his last sentence, talking about Mum.

"Ah, ton père," said the nurses. "Il est très speciale." They took wonderful and tender care of him. One nurse, Colombe, brought him strawberries.

"Tiens, M. Miller. J'ai choisi les fraises les plus rouges, les plus juteuse." She knew him from Tim Horton's, herself an addict. Mum fed them to Dad, one strawberry at a time. "I love you dear," and, "I love you, too," the phrases they shared and repeated, as each of them got their stories told to one another. Agnes and Hector came to see Dad on Friday afternoon.

"How are you feeling?" they asked him.

"Not too bad," he responded. They stayed a short time, full of prayerful silence, and when they left, Dad thanked them for coming to visit, his sense of community as strong as ever, even in his last hour of life.

I thank the world for making way for this man: our neighbours on rue Bellevue, thank you for putting up with our unorthodox landscaping, and other things. And to Fraser Papers, for the employment that allowed Dad to support us all into adulthood. Thank you to all the golfers who may have learned a few new words spoken 'quietly' from

the rough, or even more ‘quietly’ from the green. Thank you to the employees at Tim Horton’s (for saving Dad all those Tim Matin’s), and for loving him. Thank you to the staff at the Edmundston hospital, wonderful people. Thank you all—and others whom I did not think of specifically, but who count nonetheless—for making a place for Dad.

One cannot avoid seeing love and respect for Don Miller. He was an honest man, who loved his wife, his children, his family, his friends, these beautiful hills, the lovely St. John River. He loved Edmundston and he loved New Brunswick.

His final lesson to all of us was on how to die with dignity. We children can take all of these gifts as a legacy, and be very thankful.

And also, it seems to me that strawberries make a lovely last supper.



Lessons from Geese

By Angeles Arrien

Geese flying in a V-formation have always been a welcome sign of spring as well as a sign that heralds the coming of winter. Not only is this a marvelous sight, but there are some remarkable lessons that we can learn from the flight of the geese, because all that they do has significance.

- 1) As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for others behind it. There is 71 per cent more flying range in v-formation than in flying alone.
Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of purpose can get there more quickly.
- 2) Whenever a goose flies out of formation, it feels drag and tries to back into position.
Lesson: It’s harder to do something along than together.
- 3) When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the head.
Lesson: Shared leadership and interdependence gives us each a chance to lead as well as an opportunity to rest.
- 4) The geese flying in the rear of the formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.
Lesson: Encouragement is motivating. We need to make sure our “honking” is encouraging and not discouraging.
- 5) When a goose gets sick or wounded and falls, two geese fall out and stay with it until it revives or dies. Then they catch up or join another flock.
Lesson: We may all need help from time to time. We should stand by our colleagues in difficult times.

Printed in *If Only I ‘d Said That*, by Peter Legge, Eaglet

Publishing, 1998.

A number of people have asked for a copy of the piece I read at the AGM about Geese. Could you please put it in the next issue of Touchstone.

Thanks.
Anne Leslie



Diary Entries

Tuesday, February 7, A kinder day, grey and calm

I am enjoying writing and remembering so much. It was a whole different world back then and I want to write on many topics.

We had a rural telephone line and could call anyone in York Mills without going through the switch. We had rings like, one long, and two short, and to make a ‘ring’, you simply turned the crank on the side of the phone box, which was usually mounted on the wall. Every ring was heard in every household on the line. People would recognize their own ring, and pick up the phone. On our list of phone numbers, our ring was ----, Elmer’s was ---, Sterling Brown’s was ——. I’m showing off a bit because I suspect no one will question. If we needed to go through the switch—one long—we rang Bell Embleton (Ted’s mother) and asked her to put us through to Jim Nesbitt’s or Albert Little’s. I think we only had to go through one switch to talk to Aunt Nan or Grandma, but if we had to ring the doctor we had to go through Tom Lister’s, and perhaps another. If a ring was heard a lot over a short period of time, a neighbour might lift the receiver to see if there was something he or she could do to help. There were many neighbours in each area who automatically ‘listened in’—sometimes with shocking results! If ten short rings went in, it meant there was a fire, or a call for help, and everyone answered. Nobody liked hearing that ring. If we wanted to have a party or a dance, we’d just get on that old party line and spread the word.

We kids loved the phone. We knew who ‘rubbered’ and we had all sorts of tricks for spreading rumours. Like we’d ring our own number and pretend we were talking to another number. When we heard the click of a receiver we were ready to spread our stories, risqué joke, or whatever. It may not have been one bit funny, but we thought it was hilarious! And, of course, Mum and Pup always warned us, before they went away, to “Stay Off the Phone!”

Wednesday, February 8 Sunny

Since I have begun this reminiscing, it seems I am now hearing people on the radio talking about things as they used-to-be. Like when you went to the bank, and the teller made out your deposit and withdrawal slips, and wrote in your bank book by hand, without computers. That does seem a while ago.

My Dad said that if a man had saved a \$1,000 he was con-

sidered to be pretty 'well off.' I often remember hearing people say, "I wouldn't do that for a \$100," or, "If I had a \$100 a month for the rest of my life, that would be wonderful." Of course, they never thought it would happen! Now, everyone over 65 gets three times that much, and some even get six or seven hundred dollars each month, and it still isn't enough.

When we asked Mum or Pup for money for a treat, it was for a penny or a nickel. Sometimes he gave us a dime, but we sure didn't ask every day. We were traders in school, I soon learned to buy butterscotch in town and sold it for a cent each—way above the buying price. Some of the kids had apples from their orchards, and these were a much in demand. They could be traded for a pencil, or even a fountain pen. Highway robbery!

When we went to town for the Fredericton Exhibition, Pup gave us 25 cents each for rides and treats, and we had one whale of a time! The exhibition buildings were grand. The main building was two or three stories high. You could sit upstairs and look down one floor, at least, maybe two. The rides were so wonderful. The merry-go-round was beautiful and bright with all the coloured horses, and the music was so distinctive. It isn't at all like today, and that's too bad. Some of those horses are now collectors' items.

R.E.C.



Mary's Message

July 15, 2008

Of Coffee, Question Marks & Light Bulbs...



Did you hear the one about the religion who chose a cup of coffee for their symbol?

Well, you who are reading this might be thinking: That would be us! Unitarians love their coffee! You may even have hummed along with Rev. Chris Raible's "Coffee! Coffee! Coffee! Coffee!"

And the coffee cup even has a question mark emerging from it as steam! You must have heard the jokes about Unitarians and question marks. For instance, "I know my humor is outrageous when it makes the Unitarians so mad they burn a question mark on my front lawn." – Lenny

Bruce

I wish I'd thought of it, but, in fact, the coffee cup with a question mark is the logo for the Wonder Café, part of the Emerging Spirit program of the United Church of Canada.

Here's part of a statement sent to churches when the controversial advertising campaign first hit the media:

The ads are designed to attract attention, elicit conversation, and point people toward the WonderCafe website. Their intent is not to make fun of personal religious belief or diminish basic religious understanding. The campaign is designed to communicate to a generation of primarily 30- to 45-year-olds who have very little or no knowledge of organized religion and the contemporary church.

You can browse at all 11 posters at www.emergingspirit.ca, but here's a flavour of what you'll see:

One ad shows a wedding cake with two grooms holding hands on the top with the line: Does anyone object?

Another has a bible with dozens of coloured post-it notes marking various pages and a key noting green means "agree" and red "disagree".

A third shows a can of whipping cream with the caption, "How much fun can sex be before it's a sin?"

A recent addition shows a stained glass window with an energy-saving fluorescent bulb in front of it. The caption reads: And God said, "Let there be energy efficient, fluorescent light."

I think you'll find there's a lot at emergingspirit.ca and wondercafe.ca (or en francais: www.cafechange.ca) that would be of interest to Unitarians.

The advertisements are quite fun, but there was a lot more to the conference than that.

Keynote speaker, Diana Butler Bass, spent three years researching 50 successful mainline churches. Her findings are in her book, "Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighbourhood Church is Transforming the Faith". She outlined 10 "Christian practices" stating that Hospitality was the most apparent in the congregations she visited. There's a chapter for each in her book: hospitality, discernment, healing, contemplation, testimony, diversity, justice, worship, reflection and beauty.

I attended two workshops, one on leadership and one on technology.

I'm grateful for how welcomed I was - the only Unitarian in a group of 80 or so.

I led a forum discussion at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver about "What Unitarians Can Learn From the United Church of Canada?" Even on a sunny, summer Sunday, a dozen folks came and actively participated in a discussion.

I listed the ten Christian practices listed above and then

asked, "What would do you think are Unitarian practices?" The first response, was repeating the same list back. Then, we got into a discussion about possible interpretations or additions.

I'll be facilitating a teleseminar on this topic and sharing some of what I learned on Wednesday, August 13, at 8:30 pm Eastern if you'd like to join me just register by following the links at www.cuc.ca/calendar.htm

I'd also invite your comments at my blog at www.unitarianmary.wordpress.com

(After learning more about Web 2.0, and how most of the content on WonderCafe is user-generated, I've decided to - once again - try blogging.)

I hope you're having a good summer. I always enjoy it when people reply to this message which goes to 800 people. If you reply, rest assured it goes only to me, not the other 799 people!

Take care,

Mary
Mary Bennett
Executive Director
Canadian Unitarian Council
mary@cuc.ca

PS - You can find one answer to the question, "How many Unitarians does it take to change a light bulb?" at our stalwart webweaver's personal web pages:

http://www.bertc.com/subtwo/uu_humour.htm



Tag lines

Greetings. One again we Unitarians - a collection of atheists, theists, spiritualists, secular humanists, wiccans and more - are seeking to better define ourselves in this latest discussion thread... Despite the risk of being labelled - ironically - a contrarian here, I would say, instead, to our new and old acquaintances who may (re)join us: let our actions be your guide. Explicit, formal, institutionalised tag lines and related words can be our guide internally, but to expect too much more of them externally re: lasting or meaningful growth is perhaps unrealistic.

As a parallel, can anyone tell me what - if any - the tag line is of the Protestants, the Catholics, the Muslims, or any of their myriad denominations and off-shoots? I always appreciate some PR/corporate-styled creativity re: our branding, etc... but simply question our motivation for

such an exercise at this time... Are we rapidly shrinking in membership? Are people widely ascribing false actions to us? Are misleading things being written in the wider community about UUs?... Do we have growth targets not being met? No? Then why the fuss?... On the other hand, of course, word play is often fun and perhaps enough of a reason... Perhaps.

"By becoming attached to names and forms, not realising that they have no more basis than the activities of the mind itself, error rises and the way to emancipation is blocked." -Buddha

Peace,
Rodney Ashfield
Unitarian Fellowship of Regina

Greetings, I was thinking about the discussion on identity and growth. One of the key elements of both is a moving, encapsulating "knock your socks off" tag line. I think a great tag line would do miracles for all Unitarians who lose their ability to communicate in a muddle of nuances and considerations when asked the ever-challenging, "so what are Unitarians about?". It would, undoubtedly, add zip and attention grabbing clarity to our outreach efforts.

I was on my daily walk along the river this morning when this tag line popped into my thoughts, An inclusive spiritual community promoting a compassionate, just and sustainable world. A tad long, yes. But its shorter than the three paragraph explanation, and it is short enough to be catchy-it caught in my-what passes for-memory for 6 km!

What do others think?

Blessings!
Norm



Eastern Region Fall Gathering

At the Confluence:

Réunissons Nous où les Eaux se Rejoignent



November 7-9, 2008
Kingston Unitarian Fellowship

Start planning now to attend.

editor's note: I have forms for submitting workshop ideas for those who are interested.

This space wants your material!