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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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Sunday Services

- January 2** Listening Circle *Looking Forward*
- January 9** allison calvern *United, Unitarian, Uniting: Who do they say we are?*
- January 16** T.B.A.
- January 23** Sister Eleanor McCloskey *Tell Me a Story - A New Story* Service leader: John van Abbema.
- January 30** Maureen Bilerman *Connections*
- February 6** Judy Coates *Social activism and Spirituality*

Women's Pot Luck

The monthly women's pot luck dinner for January will be held January 28, 2011. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. allison will host the evening at her home, 259 Lynhaven Street. Information about the discussion topic will be circulated in the Sunday bulletin and the email circuit at a later date. For more information contact Joan Brewer at 455-5169 or jebrewer@rogers.com

New U

An introduction to Unitarianism for new members and non-members. Four sessions, the first beginning Sunday, Jan 30, shortly after the service. Lunch provided. For more information or to register contact Glenna Hanley, chair of public awareness and membership committee at 472-8431 or by e-mail at ghanley@nb.sympatico.ca (Please note the dates given in the December Touchstone newsletter have been changed.)

Congratulations Rita and Herman



December 21, 59 years ago, Rita and Herman van Groenewoud were married in Holland. Here they celebrated their anniversary at Oakland Farm & Lodge with family and friends.

General Meeting to approve the budget for 2011

Please plan to attend a general meeting of the membership of the Fellowship on January 30, 2011 at about 12:30 PM, following the Sunday service, to review and approve the

budget for the new year. Please make an effort to attend the meeting as a quorum is required to pass the budget and continue the work of this community.



My first Solstice Celebration



I went down to the South East Corner of Morrell Park at 7am as I was instructed, to celebrate Solstice. There were only two vehicles parked. I got out of my car and proceeded over to one them and spoke to the occupants, saying “Not a good morning to light a fire.” “No” was the reply “It is not a good day to go for a walk either as it is very wet and slippery.”

I then realized these people are not here to celebrate the Solstice, and thought to myself “The Solstice Celebration must have been cancelled” We shared a few more words, I said my farewells, proceeded back to my car and left the “maybe” lovers alone.

I drove back to my home and checked my computer for a notice of cancellation and there was not one. I then went back to the site and, by that time, a group of drummers had arrived to celebrate the Solstice and to honour one of their members who had died recently. They informed me that Moon Joyce’s celebration was postponed until tomorrow. I thought to myself that is like postponing Christmas Day or Remembrance Day. Today is the Solstice and we celebrate today.

I don’t remember their names, but they were very friendly to me. We tried to light a chip of wood, probably a special piece, but it was too windy and wet for the match to stay lit. They shared a bag of little pieces of wood with me, and we let them go to the wind and the water. Then I was offered one of their drums to drum, while one of them went back to the car to get another musical piece. We shared a few moments of drumming, words and song as it became lighter by the minute, but no visible signs of the sun. We just had to imagine.....

It was one of the most miserable, dark, cold, windy and wet mornings I have experienced, but one of the warmest memories that will stay in my heart forever.

Judi

editor’s note: I apologize to Judi that she did not receive the notice of postponement of Moon Joyce’s Solstice celebration. I will refer everyone to the November newsletter article “Keeping in the Loop” about the various mailing lists that different people keep.



Fund Raising Ideas???



Recently at a meeting of the Finance and Facilities section of tUFF the subject of fund raising activities was discussed. We reviewed the process for our annual pledge campaign and discussed the Goods and Services Auction as well as the Art and Crafts Sale. The discussion then turned to other possibilities. Various ideas were put forward but none that the committee really got excited about. Then, the idea of asking the members and friends of the congregation for ideas was suggested. It was hoped that members may have experienced or heard of fund raising activities that were a little different - perhaps something that would be unique in Fredericton. So members and friends put your thinking caps on and share your ideas with:

- Ed Leslie, Chair, Finance Committee
- Tom Hanley, VP, Finance and Facilities
- Jeff Frooman, AVP, Finance and Facilities
- Ken Moore, Chair, Buildings and Grounds

or any Board member.

Thanks for any help you can give us.

Tom Hanley
VP, Finance and Facilities



Shogatsu

Japan adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873. Before that, it had used a calendar based on the Chinese lunar calendar. Festivals adapted. The Shinto new years festival of Gantan-sai, also called Shogatsu, moved to the start of the new year in the new calendar.



While Shogatsu means January, it is celebrated for the first 3 days or the first week of January. These days are

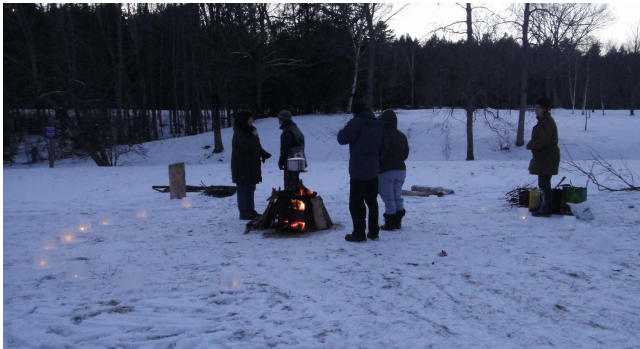
considered the most important holidays for the Japanese, comparable with the celebration of Christmas in the west. During this time business and schools close for one to two weeks. It is also a time for people to return to their families. The Japanese decorate their houses with pine and bamboo, sacred straw festoons and oval rice cakes, but precede decorating with a general house cleaning.



Solstice Celebrations

The Wyrd Sisters in their "*Solstice Carol*" begin:

A fire is burning, the long night grows near,
All who need comfort are welcome by here,
We'll dance 'neath the stars and toast the past year
For the spirit of Solstice is gathering here.



In Odell Park, a Fire Burns at Sunset

Pagan traditions varied from locale to locale, the name of the Goddess similarly varied: Hecate, Isis, Diana, Demeter, Kali, Inanna, Astarte are a few we still remember and many more have been forgotten or purged. The Winter Solstice is one of the four "quarter days" or "Lesser Sabbats" which are observed by Neopagan groups and are loosely based on Germanic festivals. The "cross-quarter days", "fire festivals" or "Greater Sabbats" fall approximately midway between the quarter days and are inspired by Gaelic fire festivals. Modern interpretations vary widely in keeping with Pagan tradition.

The ancients lacked modern technology which allows us to determine the moment of the Solstice to within a minute but even they could be sure by the 25th that the Sun had stayed its journey ever lower across the sky and was beginning its long climb that would bring warmth and life once more to Northern climes. It was likely the need to know this turn of the wheel that inspired the ancients to build their star wheels, the most famous of which is Stonehenge. As in modern science, the star wheels proved the cyclic nature of astronomical events but, more importantly, allowed the priestesses to predict the coming events, to set the date for the commemoration of the death and the celebration of the re-birth of the Sun King.

Today, community and celebration are the centerpiece of

religious festivals. The chance to build friendships among people with similar beliefs and interests. The opportunity to come together to realize something of significance. The joy of sharing hugs as we are willing and able, to share food as our kind has done since at least back to the very beginnings of hunter/gatherer society. The awe of sharing something greater than us which is still beyond our complete understanding.



Greeting the first sunrise after the Solstice

This year, it was my pleasure to partake in two Solstice celebrations. The first, organized by people with practical considerations, children and jobs, opted to celebrate on the Saturday evening before the Solstice, the second deferred to nasty weather predictions and deferred to the morning after the Solstice when the forecast was only for miserable weather. Had I thought about it a bit, I should have joined Judi to see if anyone would brave the weather and celebrate regardless.

The pictures I took were before the start of the Saturday ritual and during a break in the sunrise greeting. It's hard to take a picture while participating in a dance or a song and the activities did get very lively. Come yourself next year and share the joy.

Tony Fitzgerald



The Barefoot Student

The Monday following Remembrance Day was a cold, pre-wintery day. Temperatures hovered just over 0° C, and wet, sticky snow floated down from time to time. People scurried about shivering in their clothes with palms tightly clenched in the sleeves of their upturned jackets.

Sharon and I had been attending an Inter-Faith discussion group that autumn in the lounge behind the St. Thomas University Chapel. We met each Monday at 12:30PM for a sharing of ideas from different faiths, including Catholic, Protestant, Baha'i, Unitarian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and others.

This day, as we headed across the campus to the Chapel,

we noted that all the students had not yet donned winter clothes. Some young men still wore shorts, sneakers and summer shirts. Many of the young women were sporting short skirts and lightweight hood-less jackets. One tall female student passed us wearing fish-neck stockings, accompanied by low-cut suede cowboy boots. We commented to each other on her very unique look, and wondered if it could be detrimental to her health. Mentally, we 'Tsk-Tskd' about the lengths young people would go to be 'macho' or 'cool'.

Sharon saw her first. The next young woman heading our way was dressed in jeans and a light fall jacket, but not wearing shoes. She was walking barefoot on the cold concrete walkway. Sharon could not resist asking, "Aren't you chilly on a day like this? Won't you catch your death of cold? Where did you leave your shoes?"

The student simply replied, "I'm supporting an International Amnesty program. Many children in the world do not have shoes; we have been encouraged to walk without shoes for one day, to show solidarity with those less fortunate than us. We were touched by her sincerity and her willingness to be involved, bearing great discomfort, for a cause much bigger than her.

Those few moments of contact with her made us realize how quickly adults can misjudge the intentions of young people unless we, ourselves, take the effort to listen actively to them. In that space of time, on an icy cold sidewalk, we gained a mind-changing view of that student's selflessness and maturity.

By the time she said goodbye, we were filled with admiration for her spirit and strength of character. We later noticed several other students, equally self-assured, walking barefoot from building to building. It was a sight that warmed our hearts.

John van Abbema

editor's note: following is email John received from the STU Amnesty group.

Dear John,

Yes, it was indeed STU/UNB Amnesty International that held "One Day With No Shoes"! It was a new initiative our group decided to take part in this year. The event is an event created by Toms Shoes, an organization that for every pair of shoes they sell, they give a pair of shoes to a child in need. Toms shoes endorsed a nation wide no shoe day in the United States, our group thought it was such a great cause to bring to the attention of our fellow colleagues.

We wanted to spread awareness about the impact a simple pair of shoes can have on a child's life, while challenging the students to make the cause real to them as they felt the discomfort and pain caused by not wearing shoes. Our group also raised money and collected lightly worn shoes which were donated locally and abroad.

Our small but mighty group was able to raise over 300\$ and 200 pairs of shoes - a success that surpassed all of our beliefs.

Our Amnesty branch meets once a week at STU to discuss different issues that are going on and what we can do about them, whether through letter writing, advocating these issues to the student body or by taking on an issues and making a bigger campaign, like the One Day with No shoes.

It is so exciting to hear back from people who have noticed our efforts and are spreading the word!

If you have any further questions or inquiry, I would love to help you out in any way I can!

Take Care & Happy New Year!
Alicia Gagnon



I have noticed even people who claim everything is predestined, and that we can do nothing to change it, look before they cross the road.

Stephen Hawking



Invitation to Toronto

In 1961, Unitarians and Universalists came together in Toronto to establish a national organization of congregations across Canada. They called it the Canadian Unitarian Council, and its purposes included strengthening the connections between our congregations and representing them to the Canadian government on social justice issues and legal matters. It was an all-volunteer body initially, and its members continued to depend for services on the newly-amalgamated Unitarian Universalist Association in the United States.



Trust the Dawning Future

In 1991, we celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of that founding at our Annual Meeting in Winnipeg. We took a look back at our history, especially the Icelandic connection. As an "anniversary project," Bunny Turner, a member of the first CUC Board, put together a complete collection of the Canadian Unitarian, our newsletter, and displayed other historical materials.

In 2001, we celebrated our fortieth anniversary by ending our bilateral relationship with the UUA. We affirmed a collegial relationship, parallel to those we have with Unitarian and Universalist associations in the UK, India, Transylvania, and other groups in the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists.

In 2011, we will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of our national body. First Unitarian

Congregation of Toronto is honoured to host you on this very significant occasion. We look forward to welcoming you all, as we honour the pioneers of the past and move into the future.

In that momentous meeting forty-nine years ago, the assembled body sang one of the beloved hymns of the day—one we still sing:

As tranquil streams that meet and merge
And flow as one to seek the sea,
Our kindred hearts and minds unite
To build a church that shall be free.

The third verse includes these words:

A freedom that reveres the past
But trusts the dawning future more,
And bids the soul in search of truth
Adventure boldly and explore.

An anniversary is an opportunity to look both ways-back to see where we've come from, and-most importantly-forward to the coming years. The theme we have chosen for the conference is "Trust the Dawning Future."

The conference (accommodations and all events except the Sunday morning service) will take place at the Chestnut Residence, a U of T residence in the heart of downtown Toronto and steps from public transit, restaurants, theatres, shopping, etc.

The Sunday worship service will be held at the U of T's Convocation Hall (1.5km - about a 20 minute walk - from the residence). Bus service will be provided from the residence to and from Convocation Hall for those who want it. We're expecting upwards of 1,000 people at the service!



Financial Update

Reverb: A musical note from the treasurer (allison calvern), the treasury (TUFF's income projections), and the treasurer's treasured assistant (George Abacus DeMille—somebody you can count on)

Hello Everybody, allison here.

Thank you for reading what amounts to a financial update prior to our January Budget Meeting in which we, as a congregation, will vote on how to manage our finances in the new year, 2011. We are glad (and lucky) to have The Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton in our midst, a home for our ideas, our ideals, and our hearts.

Before we get to the details, let us begin with a heartfelt thank you to all who have responded to our recent financial campaign with pledges of support. Your gift of money will help us get through the year with enthusiasm and song.

In many ways, TUFF sings its presence to our larger com-

munity of New Brunswickers, who are beginning to know who we are, even as we discover ourselves, who we are. Our bread-and-butter book, *Singing the Living Tradition*, reminds us of, "The cathedral music of history. . . Faith, hope, and love: Let all our heats prepare them place."

Also, from the world of music, the idea of Reverb, which is a slightly hollow sound, an unhappy echo when applied to the current state of our treasury. Pledges for 2011 are down fairly significantly from the past few years, and we will all need to think about what might be done to compensate for this reduction in revenue.

Typically, our fall financial campaign yields \$26,000 in pledges, but this year we received only \$16,000.

While it is silly to think that things will always stay the same—especially as the world turns on its financial heels—still we are struggling with those absent dollars, all ten thousand of them. Also, typically, we receive funds throughout the year over and above the pledges, and we trust that this will continue to happen throughout 2011. However, funding for our two main programs—Children's Religious Education, and Sunday Worship Services—depends on pledges.

If for some reason or another you have not yet received a pledge form from the fellowship, and if you are inclined to support it financially, please let us know.

Thank you so much.
allison calvern
Secretary Treasurer



Beach Cardiology by Franci Louann

all of the stones
on this beach
are shaped
like hearts

Franci Louann, past poetry editor of the Canadian Unitarian, known to members of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver and Beacon Unitarian Church, whose work can be found in several of the CUC's annual poetry chapbooks, now has her own - *Beach Cardiology*, a collection of poems covering five decades and four continents.

The title refers to the dreams and hopes that expire unrequited, and turn to stone on a beach somewhere.

The first stanza of the eponymous piece, which appears on the back of the cover, seems at first, to be optimistic, hopeful, as though everything on the beach where land ends and the ocean begins, is in tune with the human heart. However the final stanza reveals the fear that follows hope.

The heart sees signs in everything. The poem titled "That Night" is about openings in images and relationships when

Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* comes to town, foreshadowing the meeting of a new love.

In these poems, inanimate objects predict what the mind doesn't want to allow. The backpack foretells the end of an affair, the half moon announces the ache for the missing half, a Palestinian scarf becomes a flag when a rabbi and his family walk by.

Franci Louann was born in Stratford, Ontario, (known then as Frances Louann Workman) and moved to the West Coast in the late sixties. Her poems have appeared in *Woman's Eye: 12 BC Poets* (edited by Dorothy Livesay, Vancouver: Air, 1974), various other publications, in print and online, and have won prizes from Pandora's Collective, Burnaby Writers' Society, and the Vancouver Folk Music Festival 25th Anniversary Memorable Moments contest. In 2007, she received World Poetry's Volunteer Media Award, and was appointed World Poetry Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand 2009-2010.

Available at Lipstick Press: 767 Chelwood Road, RR #1 Gabriola BC V0R 1X1 lipstickpress@shaw.ca, and through Franci - flouann@telus.net.

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Letter from Linda Thomson

Worship and Sermons and Hymns! Oh My!

The question of language, theology and congregational identity is one that can, at least some of the time, cause tensions and challenges in Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist congregations. Reactions to traditional language can be seen, depending on who you are talking to, as reasonable or as out of proportion. Church, congregation, and fellowship are some of the names we call our communities. In some congregations there is an address on Sunday morning and in others there is a sermon. Some of us sing hymns and others are sure we sing songs. In some congregations we're okay talking about God (perhaps as long as it is one option that includes other descriptors for the 'greater than we know' concept) and in others the 'G' word is strictly taboo. Sometimes there is an implicit understanding about the dominant theology (if you can call it that) of a congregation, and sometimes there is not. In some cases the people involved can be quite easy going about this variety of expression, and in others people find it quite difficult.



I don't want to get into describing the reasons that people react as they do, because truthfully, only they can tell us what they are thinking. Too often, in the name of having

this conversation about language, we've resorted to labeling and diagnosing those who disagree with us. Yes, some people are wounded by their past religious experiences, but I can't know if that is why they object to a word. Yes, some people are more emotional than reasonable when talking about theology and congregational language, but I can't know if that is why they embrace words and concepts.

What seems more important than guessing about why people react the way they do is the conversation about how our varied theologies and use of language can both attract and detract from congregational vitality. I'm more interested in considering how our choices and our tension sound to the visitor. I'm more interested in having the conversation about the needs of the visitor who has previous religious affiliation and the one without, and whether or not a 'one size fits all' approach is possible. On the one hand there are those with previous religious affiliation who want 'none of it'. Others come from good experiences, but with a desire for a more open theology. Some of those who come without any previous affiliation want a church, but are attracted to our theology. Others come with a hesitation to join a 'church,' wanting to distinguish themselves from their understanding of a 'religious person'. Some come with no understanding of our standard format, of the rituals that make up a worship experience.

It seems to me that if we fall too decidedly in one camp or the other we run the risk of alienating someone who really is interested in finding out what a Unitarian or Unitarian Universalist congregation can offer. More and more I'm convinced that most of our congregations are diverse and that it makes sense for a variety of expressions. Some people will feel comfortable using 'churchy' language and others will not. It's my hope that we can, collectively, remain non-reactive, allowing people their authentic expression, even if it isn't ours. The openness I'm advocating has the potential to speak volumes about our affirmation of the value of a 'free and responsible' search. If some people call it church and some call it prayer and some talk about God and others avoid that language and instead talk about the congregation, meditation and spirit of love and compassion, we'll be letting people know that we don't agree on these matters. If we couple that diversity with opportunities for people to talk about the ways that they find and seek meaning in their lives we'll be helping them understand what it means to belong to a theologically diverse community. If we keep talking, not about others, but with others, we'll be demonstrating our commitment to the power of community. I believe the openness I'm advocating can help us welcome newcomers, and that, in the process, it can challenge us to open both our minds and hearts and encourage us to celebrate the diversity that already exists in our congregations.

In faith and with affection,
Linda Thomson
Director of Congregational Services