



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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Sunday Services

Feb 5 Sheila McPhee *Eco Art*.

Feb 12 The Rev. John Baros Johnson (retired of Halifax).

Feb 19 Matthew Hayes *Occupation Movement*

Feb 26 allison calvern *Take this cup: How to deal with pain*



Small Group Ministry

Also known as Circle Conversations

I was asked by allison if I would take her file on Small Group Ministry and look after facilitating the group which had started meeting Friday mornings in the Fall. We started with what we agreed was the minimum number of people to have such a group and now half of our group are on extended absences so we have suspended our meetings until the spring.

I want to look over the material which I received from allison and put together a longer article for Touchstone next month. In the meantime, if you are interested or just curious, please speak to me. The idea is to have a second group which will meet during the day for those who would rather keep their evenings free and have more time during the day.

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald



Charlie Ponder

A memorial service was held on Sunday, January 15, 2012, for Charles Ponder. The family suggests that memorial contributions be made to a charity of the giver's choice.

Charles Alexander Ponder of Fredericton, loving husband, father, grandfather, and designer of more than 200 bridges and other structures in the Maritimes, passed away with dignity and grace on Jan. 4 at the Chalmers Hospital. He was 81 years old. Charlie, as everyone called him, is survived by his beloved wife, Betty, and three children from his first marriage, to Margaret (Reid), Charles of Fredericton, Daphne (Michael Camp) of Fredericton, and Ann of Calgary, and grandchildren, Edward and Thomas Camp. Charlie was also much loved by his stepchildren, Linda Neilson (Tony Rhinelander) of Fredericton, and Jennifer Scott (Brian) of Amherstburg, Ont., and their children, Jason and Lila Rhinelander, and Leta and Michael Scott.

Charlie delighted in spending time with his adult relatives and grandchildren, who spent many hours and days in the Ponder home. They loved his passion for life, his glorious sense of humour, his gift for words, and his endless supply of salty expressions. Most of all they loved Charlie's spirit, his generosity, his wisdom, and the extraordinary range of his wonderful mind. Charlie was born in Montreal on July 31, 1930, to Arthur and Sarah (Cameron). He attended Lower Canada College and the University of New Brunswick, receiving a B.Sc. in Forestry in 1952. After working several seasons deep in the Quebec forest, he returned to university to earn a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering in 1956, winning the Ketchum medal for highest academic achievement in his class. He spent the following six years in the bridge department of the New Brunswick civil service before being recruited by a small Fredericton outfit called Associated Designers and Inspectors, later known as ADI Limited. Charlie designed bridges and other structures at ADI for the rest of his professional life, serving as a partner and director of the company as it prospered and grew into one of the leading design firms in the Atlantic region.

Charlie's remarkable legacy as a designer can be found in every corner of New Brunswick, from Upper Nepisiguit to Little Lepreau, and everywhere in between. When he was honoured with the Engineering Award of Merit in 1992,

the citation noted that it would be difficult to travel any distance in this province without encountering a bridge designed by Charles Ponder. The gorge bridge in Grand Falls, the TCH bridge in Florenceville, the Westmoreland Bridge in Fredericton, and the Miscou Bridge on the Acadian Peninsula are just a few of the structures that came to life on Charlie's design table at ADI. Always an innovator, Charlie was known in the industry for his ingenious designs in steel and his pioneering work with prestressed concrete. In 1996, he received the Kirby Award for Engineering Excellence. Throughout his career, Charlie generously shared his knowledge and experience with others in his profession. He presented papers in Canada and the United States on the latest bridge design technologies and even helped designers in Jamaica build safe, affordable bridges with appropriate materials and safe construction practices.

Aside from his professional life, Charlie loved the outdoors. He had a passion for salmon fishing on the Miramichi River and duck hunting with his friends in the marshes around Maquapit Lake. Perhaps his greatest adventures were in the air with Betty, who shared his love of flying small airplanes, starting with a two-seater that needed a pull on the prop to start the engine. Later, Charlie and Betty flew their Cessna 172 across the United States, taking short hops from one remote landing strip to the next – an unforgettable journey that he talked about for years afterward. Each year, when the weather turned cold, Charlie and Betty spent much of their winter on the slopes of Crabbe Mountain and the rest, skiing the higher altitudes of Utah. Charlie loved the mountains, the deep snow, the bright sun, and the wide-open spaces above the tree line. Charles Ponder lived his life with energy and joy. He will be missed by all who knew him.



Toronto First Fundraiser

Concert and Fundraiser for Regent Park School of Music if you are near Toronto at the end of March.

When: Saturday, March 31, 2012 at 2:30 pm

Where: First Unitarian Toronto Congregation - 175 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto

Cost: \$15.00 per person, or pay what you can

The choir at First Unitarian Toronto Congregation consists of nearly 40 talented people. On the last day of March 2012, they will be performing some of their best pieces, and they will be joined for some of them by the Parkdale Children's Choir.

The Parkdale choir was founded just over a year ago as part of the Regent Park School of Music's satellite expansion program. This choir is led by professional musicians who have volunteered their time, including four from First

Toronto. At present there are 16 children, all under the age of 8, who take part in this after-school program. In addition to allowing the kids to have the fun of singing with their peers, participation in this choir also provides a well-rounded, age-appropriate musical education.

The Regent Park School of Music provides high quality, affordable music education to youth-in-need in Regent Park and other high priority areas in the City of Toronto. They currently have over 600 students enrolled in both private and group lessons.

The concert on March 31 will consist of performances by the two choirs, resident musicians of First Toronto, and accomplished musicians from the Regent Park School of Music.

The funds raised at this event will go directly to the Regent Park School of Music, to help support their programs.

If you enjoy music, this is a concert you can't afford to miss.



CUC Activities

Happy New Year to you all! I am writing to give you a brief update on CUC activities and to remind you about some important initiatives that are moving forward.

ACTIVE DEMOCRACY PROJECT

Two years ago, the CUC appointed an Active Democracy Study Group to explore and clarify how we can effectively use the democratic process as Canadian UUs. That Study Group has now asked us for our thoughts and dreams. This is your chance to participate in creating a CUC that listens and responds and interacts in ways that model our deepest desires for democracy. Please visit (hideously long URL, please contact the Touchstone editor if you want a copy of the original message) (on our new CUC website) for details and links. Your congregation's participation is important. Individuals are also invited to complete the survey.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM – May 18-20, 2012, Ottawa, ON

This year's Spiritual Leadership Symposium is gaining momentum and generating a lot of interest. Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom will be our Keynote Speaker and "guest provocateur". Erik will engage and support exploration as to how we can transform the busyness of congregational and denominational life into spiritual work that nurtures our souls. In Erik's words "This is the most exciting project anyone has ever invited me to participate in!" See the Upcoming eNews and CanU for more information, and the CUC website for ongoing updates.

This summer's CUUL School will be taking place at McMaster University in Hamilton from July 19-22. Please consider talking about it to emerging leaders in your congregation who would benefit from a deeper grounding in Unitarianism Universalism and congregational life. Please contact me – kelly@cuc.ca – if you have any questions or would like more information.

EASTERN REGIONAL FALL GATHERING – October 12-14, Ottawa, ON

This year's Regional Fall Gathering is being hosted by the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa on October 12-14. The Theme is "A Time For All Ages." The Keynote speaker will be Dale McGowan, author of *Parenting Beyond Belief* and *Raising Freethinkers*. Dale will also facilitate a break-out session later in the afternoon. Because there will be no Renaissance training module for professional religious educators offered during our national gathering this year, we are considering offering a Renaissance module along side this gathering. We are currently gathering information to determine which program would best serve your Religious Exploration needs. If you are interested in participating please fill out the following short survey – <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YQQ2RVW> – to ensure that your needs are considered.

With the resignation of CUC Executive Director Jennifer Dickson this November, the Board moved quickly to review the Executive Director's job description. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the role's description be aligned with the current needs and priorities of the organization. A call for a new ED will be made in the next month. The CUC staff are currently being supervised by an Executive Director Committee of the CUC Board comprised of Gary Groot, Mich Michell and Ellen Campbell. Congregational Development staff enjoy a strong working relationship and have continued to work without disruption.

Congregational Development and other CUC staff will be meeting with the CUC Board in early March to formalize our 2012 work-plan. Within the limits of our budget we will continue to provide support to congregations, strengthen UU identity in Canada and offer educational opportunities to a range of congregations in our regions. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions. I look forward to continuing our work together and deepening our connections within and without the region. My office hours are 9AM-3:30PM, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Warmly,

Kelly McDowell
Congregational Development - CUC Eastern Region
(705) 745-1078 — kelly@cuc.ca — www.cuc.ca



From Your President

Hello everyone!
Happy New Year, it's 2012!

Your Board of Directors has been busy over the last couple of months with financial stuff the annual pledge campaign, working on budgets for the different committees, reconciling the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton's budget for 2011, and finalizing our budget for 2012. We have been so fortunate that George DeMille overcame his medical problems to make sure everything is in order. Thanks so much, George, for all the work you do in being Treasurer Allison's treasured assistant!

General meeting

We worked on the budget for 2012 at our Board meeting early in January, in preparation for the General Meeting held on January 29th. The congregation, with 28 people in attendance, approved the budget for 2012 and we're off to the races!

One of our biggest budget items is building and grounds, which takes up around half the overall budget. It's an older house, with electric heating, and costs associated with maintenance and upkeep continue to rise. But, thanks to volunteers, rental income and conscientious users of Unitarian House, we'll continue to manage it well. Allison Calvern has offered to come in each Sunday morning at 9 a.m. to turn the heating on so we'll be warm enough for the Sunday Services.

The other big ticket items are ministry/Sunday Services, and our dues to the Canadian Unitarian Council. We pay the CUC approximately \$90 each year for each Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton Member.

Two other items came up at the General Meeting. One was a motion to slightly amend the wording of the process for the Primary Focus of the Social Responsibility Committee, which Tom Hanley covered by removing the words "and friends" from the beginning of the process. That was approved by the meeting.

The other motion approved by the congregation was Joan Brewer's suggestion that we establish a committee to explore part-time ministry for our Fellowship. We've approved this 'exploration' so we've given the go ahead for this to happen in due course. At the moment Joan's attention is on personal time for her ailing mother. If someone else would like to start this process, she'd be happy to share.

Board meetings and other things

As you may know, we always open and close the Board meetings with lighting the chalice, accompanied by a few sage words. I'd like to share some of those as the op-

portunity presents itself. A recent example is “**To love creatively, we must lose our fear of being wrong.**” (Joseph E. Pierce).

Priorities

The Board all agree that it will be useful to have some priorities to work to this coming year.

One of these will be to ensure that Tony Fitzgerald gets the required training to be a Lay Chaplain. Another is to ensure that everyone who needs it is taken ‘care of’ by members of the Caring committee. For sure, we don’t want anyone who needs ‘caring’ falling through the cracks, so to speak.

Telephone

As Glenna has been away in Norway, our telephone has been answered, with messages efficiently dealt with, by Betty Ponder. Our condolences go out to Betty in her recent bereavement in the death of her husband, Charlie.

Hospitality

Haifa Miller has offered to ensure that there is milk and sugar ready to go with the coffee and tea for a very important part of our Sunday Services, and she’ll be calling on people to help supply goodies and treats each week. Thanks for organizing this, Haifa!

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Thompson
President, Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

Remember the past, dream about tomorrow, but live for today. (anonymous)



Editor’s Note

As I write this, I am pleasantly exhausted and it’s mid-Friday evening and I’ve formatted the few submissions received for a relatively thin newsletter. You get what you give.

Were I not exhausted, I might make more of an effort to put together what was once criticized as filler by a correspondent who took exception, vaguely, to an item

(unspecified) in a Touchstone. Others have expressed appreciation for these “fillers” and to you I apologize.

We’ve finally had a real snowstorm. It’s taken a long time this “winter” with so many storms raining on the bit of white with which they opened just to leave a coating of ice once the cold returned. I’ve come to like snow. Moving it out of the driveway and walks is a mindless task which, done right, gives a combination of aerobic and resistance exercise, both of which we are now being told can help defer various effects of aging. Get to it early so that you can avoid the roar of machines which shatter the stillness as they convert non-renewable resources to green house gasses and yield not the beneficial exercise, just a lumbering walk as the machine takes its own time.

Since retiring, I’ve taken to walking since the weather has been too cool for the bicycle or canoe and there was no snow suitable for snow shoeing until the past couple of days. My regular day involves a six km walk which I’ve chosen to avoid the noisier streets and can actually get about two km without having to cross a street along the “green” and up the trail to the bottom of the UNB campus. If the weather’s nice, I’ve been adding 12 to 14 km in the afternoon either walking up to and through the University Woodlot or down and across the walking and Westmorland bridges. I thought I was in reasonably good condition.

Three hours on snow shoes in the University Woodlot yesterday and two in Odell Park today (the park is quite good for snow shoeing once you get off the well-travelled trails) and here I am, exhausted. But it’s a good exhaustion, nothing hurts.

You can go places on snow shoes which are inaccessible to any other mode of travel. Stop and listen to the bits of silence hidden between the distant occasional sound of traffic. Perhaps the call of our provincial bird, just one, in the distance. Respond with “pssh-pssh-pssh”, pause then repeat. If you’re lucky, you’ll soon have a small flock flittering around in the trees above your head wondering what you’re up to. Yesterday, I think I had two dozen at one point.

Our interdependent web: fascinating, fragile, threatened.

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald

This space wants your material!