



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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Sunday Services

Dec 2 Daniel Ruiz *Reflections on the Day of the Dead in Mexico.*

Dec 9 Intergenerational *Tree Trimming Service.*

Dec 16 Susan Machum *Local Food Movement.* Susan has been working with the New Brunswick Food Security Action Network for the past two years and has a pretty good sense of some exciting local initiatives Fredericton Unitarians could participate in.

Dec 23 John van Abbema *Christmas: Joy vs Adversity.* Christmas is a time of year when we gather with family and friends to reminisce and to “eat, drink and be merry”. However for many adults, Christmas can be a time of sadness (Blue Christmas) as they dwell on hurts and regrets from the past. John would like to provide an opportunity for us to share the joys we remember at this time of year.

Further questions, just give John a call.. 454-1551 or email <jva1940@gmail.com>

Dec 30 Talking in the Round *The New Year.* Janus, the Roman god of transitions, gives his name to the month of January. The god has two faces so that he may simultaneously look to the past and to the future. Bring to share, either a hope or thought for the future or a regret, concern or sorrow whose time it is to be released into the past.

Jan 6 the Reverend Mary Tingley



Women's Pot Luck

The women's pot luck group will meet next on Friday, December 28th. at the home of Geneviève LaLoux, 845 McLeod Avenue, Apt. 224. We gather at 6pm and eat at 6:30. Discussion topic: The bitter and the sweet of the holiday season. Share some of your memories, thoughts, feelings about this time of the year. For more information contact Joan Brewer at 455-5169 or jbrewer@rogers.com



From your President

I don't know about you, but I'm glad that some people have put up lights early this year. I know some people think it's too early to put up Christmas lights, but I find them cheery and fun as the nights draw in. I hope the birds have found (and will find again in the spring) our lovely new garden set up especially for them. The cold has arrived, and we had some flurries tonight that stayed on the ground.... winter's here, I guess. So our thoughts turn now to how we're going to approach the holiday season and the pending snowfalls (at least my thoughts do).

News from the Board

The new Board is getting well and truly into their roles now, only to find out there's sometimes more to it than first anticipated. But everyone is pitching in to help. Rhonda Connell is doing a wonderful job as the new Treasurer, with guidance from George DeMille, and Tom Hanley is supporting the Vice President's role by taking on much of the activity involving our Annual Pledge and pulling together budget requests for 2013.

Yes, it's that time again – when we look to what the Fellowship offers us, and find ways in which to support that. As Sheila Moore said to me the other day, what would we do if we didn't have the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton? I know some people don't come as often as they'd like to, some people choose to come when they're interested in the speaker, and, some participate in the 'extracurricular' activities. All that's great! We all have our own reasons for wanting the Fellowship to be a part of our life in some

way.

So, those of us who can, make our Pledges and work to honour those pledges throughout the year. Some people offer an annual donation, some offer quarterly or monthly donations, others contribute when they are able. Some donations are prepaid by cheque, others by direct deposit, and still others come in weekly through the Offertory at Sunday service. We are fortunate that our budget is reasonably healthy at the moment. However, we must ensure we can meet future obligations - like building work and payments for visiting ministers and speakers. It is our practice to save up and pay for what we need - no splurge buying on credit cards for our Fellowship!

Which brings me to - Wait for it! Our Semi-annual congregational meeting to approve the budget is coming up the last Sunday in January (the 27th). We're fortunate that George DeMille is continuing to help out with Rhonda Connell's transition as the Treasurer and Vice President of Finance and Facilities, and her side-kick, Tom Hanley, as Associate Vice President of this same committee. Committee chairs will be getting their budget requests in by the middle of December, so we can pull together the budget for 2013 (where DO the years go?!)

The Unitarian Fellowship will be included in an Inter-Faith Directory being compiled by a student at Saint Thomas University.

So what else is going on? A couple of things come to mind- Josephine Savarese is on sabbatical and will be heading to Hawaii to study for the next few months. Sharon and John van Abbema continue to babysit the Frooman's cat while they are on sabbatical in Europe.

The first of hopefully many coffee get-togethers pulled off by Janet Crawford on the 22nd of November was a resounding success. Thanks for all your effort (and the scones), Janet! We'll watch for the date of the next one, for sure!

Social Responsibility

Those with internet access will no doubt be seeing information, and requests for action, to support various activities that involve social responsibility. Tom Hanley, Chair of the *Social Responsibility Committee*, will keep us informed about upcoming actions and opportunities to contribute to the wider issues, through periodic email notices and announcements on Sunday mornings.

Don't forget that we continue to collect food for the Fredericton Food Bank, and take it there after the Last Sunday of the Month. This month, I'm sure we'll be taking more food prior to the Christmas holiday season.

Sunday services

We are working to include a regular announcement in the Order of Service reminding everyone about the opportunity to submit suggestions for Sunday services to the

Sunday Services Committee (Sylvia Hale, Allison Calvern, George DeMille, Tony Fitzgerald, Heidi O'Donnell and Joan McFarland). The Board has agreed that we will continue to invite visiting ministers approximately once a month. The ad hoc committee on part-time ministry will be reconvened to explore costs associated with perhaps quarter-time committed ministry. In addition, the Board has agreed to pay expenses for visiting speakers who come from further away than 50 kms and are not an ordained minister. If you have any ideas or suggestions, don't hesitate to share them with a member of the *Sunday Services Committee*.

Committee help!

Like many other organizations, the UFF relies on volunteers to contribute a range of talents and time, and we've been blessed with the generosity of our volunteers.

Having said that, I will repeat last month's plea, as we could still use some 'minds and bodies':

The *Children's Program Committee* could use a willing soul to help out while Jeff Frooman is in Europe. If you're able to help, the committee could sure use your input. Contact Rhonda Connell through email: rconnell@nbnet.nb.ca

Tom Hanley is looking for a third person to assist him and Janet Crawford on the *Social Responsibility Committee*. For more information contact Tom (459-8559) thanley@nbnet.nb.ca or Janet (454-0441) janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca

I know that Glenna Hanley is looking for help on the *Membership Committee* (contact Glenna on 472-8431, ghanley@nb.sympatico.ca).

Membership

Speaking of Membership, did you know that we have a Membership Book that has been going since our inception in the early 1960's? We work on three levels of participation: "Official" members, "Other" members, and "Friends" of the Fellowship. If you are not a signed up Member of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton, and are considering it, you could speak to Glenna Hanley about the book, what membership means, or anything else that comes into your mind that you'd like to know about participating.

Issues? Questions? Please feel free to contact me or any other member of your Board. The contact list is posted by the inside back door. Minutes of the Board meetings are also available if you're interested.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Thompson

President, Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

Tel: 455-3665

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Coffee at the Fellowship

Coffee at the fellowship was quite successful in November.

For December: **Coffee and Scones**, Jon Oliver's Recipe. WARNING: They can be quite addictive.

Wednesday, Dec 12 at 10 am until we are ready to leave.

Drop in for a bit or come and stay.

Children welcome, and if anyone would be interested in reading them a story, let me know. Otherwise there is no program for them, but we would love to see them.



Ring a Bell Campaign

The Story of Dots for Kids Day

Two years ago in Fredericton, Maureen Bilerman, the mother of a teenager with serious mental health challenges, reached out to her community for help in raising awareness and support for better treatment and services for kids' mental health in New Brunswick.

At 12 noon on December the 8th 2010, 1,200 people connected the dots physically, fingertip-to-fingertip, from the Mental Health Centre downtown all the way to Legislative Building, 1.3 kilometers away. Everyone fanned out along the route with dot stickers on their shirts, raising their arms to make the connection with each other for one minute on the issue of kids' mental health. Over half of the participants were youth; led by a group of middle school students called the Dot Squad, and a youth group from Saint Mary's First Nation.

After the event, Maureen decided to continue advocating for better treatment and services for youth and children in New Brunswick, and founded Dots NB, a provincial non-profit organization committed to excellence in kids' mental health through youth, family and community empowerment.

One year later, Dots NB inspired churches in the Fredericton area to ring bells on the anniversary of the event, to mark the possibilities that were revealed when community cared enough to act on behalf of kids' mental health.

What started out as one family's personal story has now turned into a provincial grassroots movement for change. This year, with the help of Bell Aliant, the Dots for Kids Day – RING A BELL Campaign for mental health is connecting communities right across New Brunswick.

Students in grades six to eight are leading the way by learning more about this issue and ringing bells in their schools in support of kids' mental health. Churches will be responding to this amazing show of youth-led leadership

by ringing church bells of support in their communities.

For More information:

Visit www.dotsnb.ca or see the YouTube video - Connect the Dots Story

Softball Canada Competition-Development



World to End

The last day of the Mayan calendar corresponds to the 21st of December, 2012, in the Gregorian calendar. Combining a number of different cycles, the end date completes a 5,125 year cycle. The end of anything lasting this long will invariably invoke ideas of end of world events. This also is the date of the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere, at 12 minutes past 11 in the morning coordinated universal time (UTC), presumably the precise moment that the world will end. "So long, it's been good to know ya", as a once popular song went.



The interNet is wonderful. In doing my brief research for this item, I stumbled over the word "eschatology" (the study of last things). There is simply not room here to go into any level of detail, however, it appears that many religions have an "End Times" as a central or at least very important tenet. One is minded to recall the Goon Show skit in which the group have gathered to greet the end of the world and are discussing what will happen and what things will be like. At the appointed hour, they call out "Behold, the end of the world! Behold, the end of the world! Behold, the end of the world!" There follows a pause... nothing happens... then one says "Oh well, same time next week then, eh lads?"

If you're curious, use your favourite search engine to look up eschatology and see where it takes you. Just one bit of a trail that I found, looking at the major middle eastern religions that have flowed out of the successive revelations of their respective prophets. Zoroastrianism has Frashokereti, the final renovation of the universe when evil is destroyed and everything else will be in perfect unity with God. Judaism has the book of Daniel containing four apocalyptic visions of the punishment of Babylonian monarchs and the overthrow of their empire. Since the book of Daniel was written while the Jews were in diaspora in Babylon, this upheaval would have been significant to them. Christianity has the book of Revelations, enough said. Islam tells of the Beast of the Last Days which will appear after the sun arises in the west and signals the coming of the Last Day. The Baha'i are taught in the Book of

Certitude that each spiritual world ends with the coming of the prophet-founder of the next religion, thus Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and Baha'u'llah each ended the previous dispensation and signalled the "Day of Resurrection" for that religion, but in spiritual, not physical truth.

It did not stop there, but I shall.

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald



Warrior Nation

Noah Richler on our warrior nation

Submitted by Glenna Hanley

Author Noah Richler says Canada's image of peace-keeper has been eroded and displaced by a new image of "warrior nation".

Richler, son of the famous Canadian writer, the late Mordecai Richler, delivered the 12th annual Dominick S. Graham Lecture at UNB on Nov. 14. These lectures are hosted by the Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society.

The title of Richler's lecture was "Is Canadian Multilateralism Dead?" and it dealt with the subject of his latest book, *What We Talk About When We Talk About War*.

The author and journalist started off with the summer excursion Prime Minister Stephen Harper made to the north where a previously secret special force of the Canadian military put on a demonstration for him, the story line being that they were catching an illegal migrant off an eco-tourism ship.

Open to the media, the intent was to "encapsulate all the whipped up fears about environmental activists and terrorists jumping the queue" that have become the new normal in Canada as a warrior nation said Richler.

His new book explores how Canada turned from a peace loving, peace-keeping country to this new nation of warriors and wars in less than a decade.

"I'm interested in how we use stories about war as something positive, rather than something to be lamented," said the author.

Well aware of how one is pilloried for daring to criticize the war in Afghanistan and Canada's role in it, how one can be labeled as someone who "doesn't support our troops", still Richler waded in to his subject and, in making his arguments, made comments that would be most unpopular in some circles.

Richler said he respects and supports Canadian soldiers and his book is not a judgement of them.

But he noted during the Afghan war soldiers who died

were treated as heroes, with ramp ceremonies and very elaborate and very public funerals. Yet neither the government nor the military afforded such honours for three fallen peace-keepers, two RCMP officers who died in an earthquake in Haiti and a Canadian soldier killed serving on the Israel/Lebanon border during this decade of war. They were wearing "the blue beret" noted Richler.

The writer feels that Canada's earlier role - begun under former Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in the 1950s - as peace-keeper and peacemaker, with federal foreign policy that matched it - is Canada's natural role. It is a path that evolved out of how our country was formed.

He traces it back to the Hudson Bay fur traders who landed on these shores to do commerce and trade with the First Nations, not to wage war and conquer.

Settlement was largely achieved through treaties and negotiations, not with guns and military might (although there was that little wrinkle, the Riel Rebellion/gth).

To live in a country where generations of us have never experienced war on our own soil, only on the soil of other nations, has impacted our national psyche.

"A distinct trait of Canadians is that, at our best, we understand our uncanny good fortune and how it is incumbent upon us to share it. Not to give it away, we are not saints, but to do what we can to allow other people to share in such good fortune and know it for themselves," said Richler.

That has led to the development of an open, tolerant society that embraces immigration and multiculturalism. That, plus the fact that we are sparsely populated and a difficult country to defend militarily, lead to a "selfless foreign policy" and "alternate thinking about ways to achieve a better society".

Now the new foreign policy of the Harper Conservatives nurtures the warrior nation and has "detracted from the multilateralism that used to define us".

We were among the first countries to sign on to the United Nations and NATO, and our reputation in the world as the honest broker, skilled in resolving conflict through negotiation - "instead of the idea that war is the best way to do that" - has been sullied said Richler.

He claims that "the germ" of these tendencies, empathy for others and peacekeeping is "in our bones". It is the kind of thinking that allows one to understand that the enemy may not be all that different from us, or that "an Afghan detainee might have rights, such as the right to receive the H1N1 vaccine."

That is in stark contrast to the simplistic warrior nation thinking, where one side is all saintly and good and the other "all monstrously bad and not deserving of any human consideration", said Richler.

But our complex society takes hard work to maintain.

Richler said after 9/11 “it was an effort people in positions of power were no longer prepared to make” .

Stories that are told are important because they influence how we see ourselves as a country said Richler. Stories about war heroes displace other stories, like stories about immigrants and families who come here and struggle to survive and to fit in. Or, again, the stories of the two RCMP officers who died trying to help the poor in a devastated Haiti.

He is critical of the way the “story” of the Afghan war kept changing. First it was a military “mission”, then a war, then, as it dragged on, back to a mission again.

That is because wars are won or lost and then you go home, whereas a mission just ends said the writer.

Richler would like the government and the military to achieve a “clarity of purpose”, to be able to explain why 20 years of peacekeeping in Bosnia was called a failure but the war in Afghanistan “was deemed a success.”

“What is the meaningful barometer?”



Poem for CanU spring Issue

Dear Poets

Planning has begun on the ACM issue of The Canadian Unitarian. The release date is being bumped up to mid March, in order to allow readers to register before the early-bird deadline, if they choose.

The theme of the issue is the same as that of the ACM ~ **Diversity: Creating a Shared Understanding.**

You are invited to submit a poem that in some way connects either to the ACM or the topic, to poetry@cuc.ca in the body of the email or as an attachment.

Deadline is January 15, 2012. You will be informed whether your poem is selected or not by the end of January.

Thank you for your time and your creativity.

Best regards,

Janet Vickers
poetry@cuc.ca

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