



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people
with enquiring minds

January 2010

Sunday Services

Jan. 3 - Reach Out Rather Than Look In – John Mayer

The idea for today was inspired by a recent article in UU World, based on a critical reflection on our principle four, advocating a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. While not denying its relevance and interest for our member individuals, it suggests that collectively this is not central; rather, we should dedicate our energies into acting in a creative and responsible manner toward remedying social ills. This has an importance concerning our budget and our visibility in our community.

Jan. 10 - Schizophrenia – Margaret Watters
S.L. V. Jaeger

Jan. 17 - AIDS Niagara – Marie Belliveau

Jan. 24 - Eliminating Poverty
– Sid and Chris Frere

The National Council of Welfare has estimated that approximately 4.9 million Canadians live in poverty. Eliminating poverty while supporting healthy communities will pay for itself in reduced health care costs and reduced crime rates.

S.L. S. Vuorinen

Jan. 31 - Sharing the Faith

Who Are We?

After Phil Curtis gave his presentation on climate change, I wanted to know more about what made him study this very serious matter so intensively. Phil, John Berry and myself had lunch together and I learned some very interesting things about Phil. He was born in the Hotel Dieu here in St. Catharines. He was one of a set of twins and weighed only two pounds and fifteen ounces at birth and was given a 50% chance of living. Thank goodness, he did. He has sent me a bio of himself which will be reproduced in full below but some of his personal thoughts are going to be put here. His father had been a very devout Catholic and had been training to be a priest but for some reason he decided to leave the Catholic church.

At the tender age of four, Phil heard his father and Dr. John Mayer debating about all matter of things. His father, Jim and John became very good friends so Phil learned a lot about philosophy in general and in particular about Unitarian philosophy. Phil always had an interest in science and felt very alone being an atheist in high school. In 1992 he was introduced to the Humanist Association in the Hamilton area and felt very much at home there. Thus his association with our local Secular Humanist Association. This week he is going to be the earth and John Berry the sun at our local Secular Humanist meeting for the winter solstice celebration.

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Unitarian Congregation of Niagara

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2009/2010

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DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS:

under review

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NEWSLETTER:

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PHONE: Beverly Russell

PROGRAM:

Julianne Momirov

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Peter Skelton

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Tba

CONTACT FOR ADULT RE:

Joan Rothman &

Marie Belliveau

RENTAL: John Northover

SEXUAL & GENDER

DIVERSITY:

Joan Wiley

SOCIAL: Hilde Wheeler

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

Marie Belliveau

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Rhonda Armstrong

TRUSTEES:

Andrea Gravelle, Don Herne

James Wilson

WEBSITE:

Roy Blake, Bruce Millar

Phil's greatest inspiration in his thinking came from our very own, Dr. Ed Lemon. He cannot give Ed enough praise for his honesty and for being a truly great scientist. Hurray for another great Unitarian, our late Dr. Ed Lemon.

Here is the bio that Phil sent me:

I graduated from the University of Western Ontario in 1985 with a degree in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering and worked as a Process Engineer and Coating Development Engineer in the paper industry before switching to a career in Environmental Services in 1990, at the Region of Niagara.

Throughout my years at the Region, I have remained in a technical group dealing with sewer infrastructure performance and asset management, including the analysis and reporting of data from climate stations.

At the Region I have enjoyed many years of golfing in its annual golf league. Although shoulder injuries prevent me from playing now, I have many nice memories from the social aspects of golfing after hours with my friends and colleagues.

Currently I am responsible for the inspection, cleaning, rehabilitation, and replacement of all large sewer pipes in the Niagara Peninsula. In my time away from work, I live very happily with my dearest companion and partner, Cindy Case, and her thirteen year old daughter, Sheridan. I also receive great joy, pride, and inspiration from my daughter Melyssa, who is studying Health Sciences at the University of Western Ontario, (again, my Alma Mater) and Macklem studying grade 10 at E.L.Crossley (where his Grandfather taught for so many years).

Thanks to the support of my family, I have developed over my lifetime, a keen interest in secular philosophy, science, and consilience; the unification of all knowledge, and strategies for peace on earth.

My many years of attending the Unitarian Congregation have taught me much, including tolerance, respect, and the art of listening. It has also spawned greater confidence in me for expressing my ideas and passions. I thoroughly look forward to chatting with as many members as possible during the coffee time after sermons. Many of you have supported me and befriended me, for which I am very lucky and grateful. – Phil

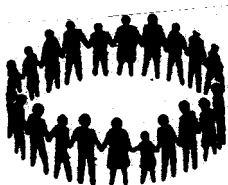


Congregation News

Out of the Cold ... a reminder

Out of the Cold Outreach Project,
Jan. 22, 2010, 4:30 - 8:30 p.m. at
Knox Presbyterian Church
Contact:

Hilde Wheeler
ah_wheeler@yahoo.ca
or call 905-685-4936



BOOK CLUB ALERT

Please note the **CHANGE** in the
date for the next Book Club
meeting:

**Tuesday, January 12, 2010
at 7:00 p.m.**

**320 Queenston St. next to
St. Thomas Aquinas Church**

There is plenty of parking in the
Church parking lot or in the
Church driveway next to our
hedge.

The book to be discussed is
"The secret Life of Bees"
by Sue Monk Kidd.

Doreen has organized a 10-book
set from the Library. Ask her!
Hope to see you then and there!

– Jenny Leach

War Story

Many of us saw the National Film Board documentary made by Al Wheeler's sister, Anne, about their father being a prisoner of war during the second world war. Here is a brief summary of the documentary.

War Story (1981)

A War Story is a National Film Board docudrama produced, written, and directed by Anne Wheeler which tells the story of her father Major Ben Wheeler as a Japanese P.O.W. during the second world war.

The thread of the film are the two diaries Dr. Wheeler managed to keep throughout most of his three and a half years of internment. One, an objective compilation of medical observations and records, the other, a series of personal reflections to his wife Nell. Collectively, they reveal the brutal, monotonous, degrading world of a Japanese prisoner-of-war, where disease, beatings and malnutrition were the norm rather than the exception.

Major Ben Wheeler was a young Canadian doctor from western Canada who graduated from the University of Alberta during the heart of the great depression when jobs were scarce. He joined the Indian Medical Service shortly after graduation and he and his wife were sent to London to study tropical medicine. They

were stationed in India when war broke out and subsequently was taken prisoner, along with thousands of others, following the fall of Singapore in February 1942. The movie recounts, through the pages of his diaries, the traumatic experiences of himself and his comrades as POWs in a mining labour camp in what is now Taiwan.

THE STORY IS CONVEYED FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES: THE NARRATION OF BEN WHEELER'S DIARY (BY DONALD SUTHERLAND) WITH DRAMATIZED SCENES OF LIFE IN THE CAMP AND ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE OF RELATED EVENTS, AND THE VIVID, PERSONAL STORIES OF DR. WHEELER'S SURVIVING FELLOW POWS. THE FILM FLASHES BETWEEN THE STORY OF THE CAMP AND WHEELER'S FAMILY LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER THE WAR, AS WELL AS INTERVIEWS OF THE SURVIVORS GIVING PERSPECTIVES OF THE EVENTS DESCRIBED BY DR. WHEELER.

Dr. Wheeler is the protagonist who is portrayed as the major reason the other British POWs survived, both physically and mentally. This is affirmed by his overarching concern for his men in his writing, in addition his love and longing for his family. Evidence of feats, compassion and selflessness are also abundantly given by the interviewees, many of whom owed their lives to him.

ALTHOUGH THE JAPANESE CAPTORS ARE NO DOUBT THE

CRUEL AND HUMILIATING ANTAGONISTS, THE FILM DOES NOT DEMONIZE THEM. IN FACT, THE FINAL INTERVIEWEE PROVIDES SOME INSIGHTFUL REVELATION ON HOW HE AND HIS COMRADES PERCEIVED THEIR CAPTORS, AND THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF WAR EXPERIENCES ON THEIR LIVES FOLLOWING THEIR LIBERATION.

Thought for the Day

Al Wheeler has included some thoughts for the day at the end of each of his emails to me and I want to share them with you.

Generally speaking, you are not learning much when your lips are moving.

ANCIENT ZEN PROVERB

When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.

CONFUCIUS

Please, Unitarians share with us whatever thoughts you might like to share with us and we can include them in our newsletter. With what we see happening in our present day world, I think we all need thoughts like those above to help us on our journey through life.

A UCN Book Club book
***Bloodletting and
Miraculous Cures*** is being
produced as a TV series by
HBO Canada.

Newsletter Schedule 2010



To help you plan your article submissions and Sunday Service descriptions for the Newsletter, the following dates will be observed as deadlines:

Newsletter Deadlines for 2010

Jan. 24 – February newsletter
Feb. 21 – March newsletter
Mar. 21 – April newsletter
Apr. 18 – May newsletter
May 23 – June newsletter
Aug 22 – September newsletter
Sept. 19 – October newsletter
Oct. 24 – November newsletter
Nov. 21 – December newsletter
Dec. 15 – January newsletter

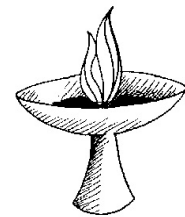
Have You Seen SNAP?

Check out the December edition of SNAP St. Catharines the free community newspaper that captures life and entertainment in the city. The front page photo of Father Christmas, Mayor Brian McMullan and Ms. Sevenpifer was taken by our Darcy Ewanchuk. Darcy has really enjoyed photographing and writing events for SNAP St. Catharines and SNAP Niagara Falls over the past year. This is her first “front page” photo – *well done!* Photos can also be viewed and events submitted online at www.snapstcatharines.com

Annual General Meeting - February 7th

Please submit committee reports to
mpetrocci@sympatico.ca
by January 10, 2010.

Thank you!



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Deadline for Next Issue: January 24, 2010