



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people
with enquiring minds

March 2010

Sunday Services

Mar. 7 "Let's Ride the Rides!"

– *Jim Glassford*

A look at living our lives fully in the moment.

****Join us** for lunch after the service.

Sunday, **March 7** will be **Toonie Soup Day!**

Mar. 14 Unitarian Universalism: Not a "Blue Plate Special" Religion – *J. Momirov*

UUism is a faith that every one of us has to work on individually and communally - and continually.

Mar. 21 Neurotheology, Spirituality and a Virtual God – *John Northover*

We will consider the possible origins of ancient religions, the roles of meditation and of drugs. People recognize their vulnerability and may create a parent-god from their subconscious memories. Brain function helps explain the nature of meditation, hallucinations of religious leaders and the strength of emotional memories from the brain's right hemisphere.

Mar. 28 Belief: Confessions of a Religious Naturalist – *Michael Battenberg*

Religious Naturalism, the child of both religion and science, seeks knowledge about the universe with the tools of science while framing human experience in a religious field of meaning and purpose. Today we follow one such Naturalist's explorations from the loftiest human yearnings to the lowliest bugs and back again.

Who Are We? . . .

On the morning of Sunday, February 21st, it was such an overwhelming experience to enter our congregation around 10:30 a.m. and there was Theresa Pothier pounding out the ivories and this incredible voice singing, whom turned out to be Kevin Jacobi. Kevin had agreed to be interviewed for this column and we proceeded from this to hear from him of where he had started to get involved with music.

Kevin grew up and went to various schools in St. Catharines. His parents were very concerned about him because he did not want to socialize with many of the other children his age. He preferred to be by himself so his parents thought it would be a good thing to get him "out of his shell." Getting Kevin involved with music was suggested by a number of people to his parents so off they went to try this out. Kevin remembers when a person came to his home to test him for his musical abilities. Here he was introduced to the accordion and singing. He was very perturbed at the time because he was missing out on his favourite program on TV "The Muppets." This resentment of missing his Muppets program was soon overcome and he became very much involved with the music world and he has never looked back. He loved "getting away from the world" as he said.

....continued pg. 2

Unitarian Congregation of Niagara

Phone: 905-687-8433
Website: www.unitarian-stcatharines.org
General Inquiry: ucn.contact@gmail.com
Communications e-mail: ucn.communications@gmail.com
Web administrators: ucn.webadmin@gmail.com

Lay Chaplains:

Ed Gilbert
Valerie Jaeger
Julianne Momirov
ucnlaychaplains@gmail.com
905-687-8433

**Unitarian Congregation
of Niagara**

223 Church St.
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8
Tel: 905-687-8433
www.unitarian-stcatharines.org

2010/2011

PRESIDENT: John Mayer
VICE PRESIDENT:
John Northover
PAST PRESIDENT:
Michael Petrocci
LAY CHAPLAINS:
Ed Gilbert
Valerie Jaeger
Julianne Momirov
SECRETARY:
Doreen Peever
TREASURER:
Carl Beckett
MEMBER AT LARGE:
Ed Gilbert
CHOIR/MUSIC:
Penny Blake
COMMUNICATIONS:
Roy Blake
DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS:
Merelie Scott-Armstrong
LAY CHAPLAINCY:
Jenny Leach
MEMBERSHIP:
Jim Glassford
NEWSLETTER:
Sofia Vuorinen
PASTORAL CARE:
TBA
PHONE: Rose Furness
PROGRAM:
Valerie Jaeger
PROPERTY:
Peter Skelton
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:
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
Will Wilson
WEBSITE: Roy Blake

When we see Kevin singing along with our choir, we would never find it easy to believe that he finds himself uncomfortable with a small group of people but he is right at home singing along with our beautiful choir. As he says, "when I am in front of a group of people like this, I do not find that I think I am being judged for who I am."

Kevin went to Maywood and later to Queen Mary where he met Theresa Pothier. He went to an enrichment program at Scottlea. After this he continued in an enrichment program at Sir Winston Secondary School, he enrolled in the biology program at Brock University and did an elective in film studies. There he won the Book Prize for the best essay in his year and he was encouraged to move into film studies as a major which he did. He did a radio show called "Film Collective" at CFBU Brock Radio for five years.

His friendship with Joan Wiley and John Storm made him aware of the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara when he heard from them about the program called Welcoming Congregations. After attending this and then looking at the calendar of events that were coming up, he could not refrain from coming back to service after service. Kevin was hooked as I was hooked upon my first attendance at a service here.

My interview with Kevin was followed by him being the service leader on this Sunday. The topic was "Ways of Seeing : How Movies Influence our Opinions." He had many quotes about film and these can be seen on our website. I will refer to some of the few that Kevin and I talked about during our interview. His love of film is from the fact that any topic can be explored from film and it can act as an enlightenment of any topic. Eugene Ionesco, a Roman playwright, stated that "A work of art is above all an adventure of the mind." As Kevin says that when he leaves our service, he thinks that the service is a jumping off for his mind to explore all kinds of facets that have been left for him to explore. The services are like rocks dropped into a pond and then we watch how the ripples affect us.

Kevin does not label films as good or bad. All films are there and can be connected to someone. Films can interact with our minds and can even change our lives. Daniel Barenboim, a Palestinian pianist and conductor states "Every great work of art has two faces, one towards its own time and one towards the future, toward eternity." Thank you, Kevin, for dropping that rock in the pond from which many ripples already have occurred and will continue to occur in the future.

– Sofia Vuorinen

Congregation News

Membership

- Now that we have had our General Meeting I will be printing our annual Directory soon. Please review your information in the Directory and let me know of any changes as soon as possible.
- Please make the following changes to your directory for Ed Gilbert:
292 Oakdale Ave., Apt. 102,
St. Catharines, Ontario
L2P3T3
email: edgilbert7@gmail.com
- Sandra Watson is applying for membership. Following the Board meeting in March, Sandra will sign our membership book during the Sunday service on March 7. Welcome Sandra.

Board Meeting

The Board will meet on **Thursday, March 4th at 7:30 p.m.** at the Church. Both the previous and new Executives are requested to attend this meeting.

- The Minutes of the January 14, 2010 Board Meeting are included as an insert to this newsletter.
- The Minutes of the 2010 AGM Meeting are lengthy. Anyone requiring these minutes prior to the next AGM should contact the Secretary.

Toonie Soup Day!

****Join us** for lunch after the service. Sunday, **March 7** will be **Toonie Soup Day!** No need to bring any condiments this time but we do request a **Toonie!** The Soup de Jour will have a touch of curry!



Upcoming Event:

Community Seder
being planned
for
Friday, April 9
at the Unitarian
Congregation of Niagara
Doors open at 6 pm

Believe it or not, Spring is around the corner and to celebrate I am getting together with some fellow congregants to plan a community Seder. What's a 'seder'?, you say. Well, its part of the Jewish celebration of Passover which in a way has some of the same themes as Easter, though it predates it by many centuries (or even millennia).

Here's a brief introduction that I think captures the essence of the holiday.

"Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew, is one of the three major pilgrimage festivals of ancient Israel. Originally a combination of a couple of different spring festivals, it is a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt--especially the night when God "passed over" the houses of the Israelites during the tenth plague--and of the following day, when the Israelites had to leave Egypt hurriedly. Centered on the family or communal celebration of the Seder (ritual meal), Passover is one of the most beloved of all Jewish holidays.

Book Club Alert

The **Book Club** will meet on
Tuesday, March 23
at **7:30 p.m.** at
Sandra Watson's place:
6 Wolseley Ave.,
St. Catharines

Join us to discuss:
The Bishop's Man,
by **Linden MacIntyre**

Please let Sandra know if you
will be attending.
905-988-9378 or
sandra.watson32@gmail.com

The origins of Passover lie in pre-Israelite spring celebrations of the first grain harvest and the births of the first lambs of the season. Within a Jewish context, however, it celebrates God's great redemptive act at the time of the Exodus, leading the Israelites out from slavery in Egypt to freedom.

The central ritual of Pesach is the Seder, a carefully choreographed ritual meal that takes place either in the home or in the community. A number of symbolic foods are laid out on the table, of which the most important are the matzah, the unleavened "bread of affliction," and the shank bone, which commemorates the Pesach sacrifice in the Temple. The Seder follows a script laid out in the Haggadah, a book that tells the story of the redemption from Egypt and thanks God for it. Although the Haggadah is a traditional text, many people--particularly in the modern world--add to it and revise it in accord with their theology and understanding of God's redemptive actions in the world."
Commentary by Louis Steinberg

Still haven't a clue? Well, stay tuned. As the commentator says, the theme is liberation, and while it wouldn't be a seder without many traditional elements -- and I don't want to lose the flavour of the original -- I also don't want to be a 'slave' to tradition. Right now I'm looking at the Jewish UU sites to put together something that will suit us at the UCN -- but also help teach

people about this unique & joyous festival. So far I've had help and suggestions from Andrea Gravelle, Hilde Wheeler and Rhonda Baker. Let me know if you have any ideas to add.

Our event is planned for the Friday *after* the Easter weekend on April 9, here, doors opening at 6 p.m. Some dietary restrictions apply (more to follow on this), it might be all or partially potluck - but it certainly won't be kosher.

Shalom,
Penny Blake

FYI . . .

I wonder if UCN members might be interested in the excerpt from the novel *Wickett's Remedy* by Myla Goldberg (Doubleday, 2005). The novel begins early in the 20th century and tells about the feelings of a young woman whose marriage moves her from the south end of Boston over the bridge: "Her acclimation to her new church was equally difficult. Prior to its re-consecration, Saint Joseph's had been a Unitarian meetinghouse and as such lacked steeples and -- even more egregious--stained glass windows." p. 23.

– John Berry

UNICAMP

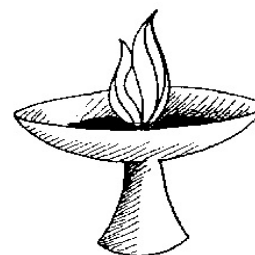
Featured program for 2010: every Friday in August, there will be a weekly drum circle followed either by storytelling or dancing! 2010 brochures are available at your congregation's Welcome Table.

Looking for somewhere to have your church picnic or board retreat? Why not at Unicamp? Contact admin@unicampofontario.ca to make your reservation today!

In July, Unicamp offers week-long camps for children ages 7-13 and youth 13-15, as well as a Counselor in Training and Leader in Training program. In August, there are 3 weeks for families to come to camp as well as weekend programs such as Sacred Circle Dance and the Magic of Music.

If you've never been to Unicamp, 2010 is the year you to discover and experience the magic yourself.

Contact admin@unicampofontario.ca or telephone 519-822-6353 to make your reservation. Or find out more at www.unicampofontario.ca



Unitarian Congregation of Niagara
223 Church St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8
Editor: Sofia Vuorinen
sofia.vuorinen@3web.net
Deadline for Next issue: **March 21, 2010**

From the Board:

Unitarian Congregation of Niagara
Minutes of the Board Meeting on January 14, 2010

Present: Michael Petrocci, Carl Beckett, Ed Gilbert, Anita Miecznikowski, John Northover, Barbara Bennett, Doreen Peever, Adolf Miecznikowski

- I. Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (December 17) Egm/CB2nd/Carried
- II. Agenda approved with additions of Rental Agent's Report, Costco Tables, Haitian Relief.
- III. Business Arising:
 - A. Treasurer's Report: Carl reported that donations were considerably over the pledged amount. CBm/AM2nd/Carried
 - B. Canvass: Covered in Carl's Report
 - C. Nominations: Michael reported that all positions are filled with the exception of Pastoral Care. He will discuss this further.
 - D. Piano: Michael reported that discussions are underway with a local company to purchase a new piano; our pianist Terry Pothier is involved in the decision.
 - E. Laptop/Copier: This was used on Sunday to create several copies of the order of service. Roy Blake suggested that this was not an efficient or ecologically sound practice. See H. "Paperless Service"
 - F. Concert Update: The date for this fundraiser is likely April; Doreen will contact Doug Miller to set a date.
 - G. "Paperless Service": Carl moved that we suspend the "paperless service" and let the incoming board consider it. EG/2nd/Carried.
 - H. CUC Communication on Lay Chaplaincy: Tabled.
 - I. Rental Agent's Report: John Northover reported that all our fall tenants have renewed. He has some concerns about the cancellation policy and suggested that tenants get a rental credit if they give sufficient notice of cancellation. However, if the day has passed without prior notice, they will be charged for that day.
- IV. New Business
 - A. Music Directors' Conference: Penny Blake would like to attend this conference at the AUA annual conference; Marie Belliveau is helping her with the application. Penny has asked the Board to consider helping her with the expense. Michael suggested that the Board offer to defray half the cost. No decision was made; it will be discussed further.
 - B. Social Action Budget: John Mayer, incoming UCN president, has suggested that the congregation increase its social action budget. A motion will be presented at the AGM to this effect. Concerns re

Canada Revenue Agency regarding donations; their limit is 10% of budgeted canvass, but there are no restrictions on other income e.g. rental income. Currently, congregants may not donate for specific causes.

- C. Chalice: The light is either too bright or too dim. Doreen is checking with the maker regarding wicking and level of oil.
 - D. Haiti: The Canadian government will match relief donations to organizations like the Red Cross or MSF/Doctors without Borders. The Board will match donations of the congregation to a total of \$500. AMm/EG2nd/Carried. There will be 2 collections on 2 Sundays (normal & for Haiti).
 - E. Tables: John Northover urged that the Board buy 4 more lightweight tables. Anita will purchase them at Costco.
 - F. Communications Chair: Roy Blake will accept this position with certain conditions; see attached.
 - G. Roof: The estimated cost of a new roof for the church is \$9600.
 - H. Proxies: Those members of the congregation who cannot attend the AGM are able to designate a proxy to vote for them.
- V. The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 pm; the next Board meeting will be held on March 4 at the church at 7:30pm.