



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people
with enquiring minds

February 2007

Sunday Services

February 2007

- Feb 4 Sharing the Faith Service
Feb 11 Straight Talk on Queer Issues
– Art Brewer
Feb 18 Annual General Meeting – see pg. 2
Feb 25 Our Mysterious Universe
– John Northover

March 2007

- Mar 4 Spiritual Shopaholism
– Michael Battenberg
Mar 11 The Beading Heart: The Meaning of Beads
in Women's Lives – Julianne Momirov
Mar 18 Unitarian-Universalism and the Uses
of Mystery – Monica Hornyansky
Mar 25 Natural Burials – Janet McCausland

April 2007

- Apr 1 USC Speaker
Apr 8 A Pagan's Easter – Michael Hornyansky
Apr 15 Humanism – James "Will" Wilson
Apr 22 Water Concerns – Frank Fohr
Apr 29 Unitarian Universalist Views of the Bible
– Jim Glassford



Unitarian Congregation of Niagara
www.unitarian-stcatharines.org

Who Are We?

Dr. Valerie Jaeger was born in Southport, England. She spent the first three years of her life in Khartoum, Sudan where her father was teaching at a college. Her early education was in Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Montreal where she arrived when she was seven.

She met her husband, Dr. Michael Petrocci in an anatomy lab while studying in the medical school at McGill. Her undergraduate work was done at the University of New Brunswick and her PhD was in Pharmacology at McGill. She completed her PhD in 1979 and her Medical Doctor's certificate in 1982. Upon completing her PhD she realized that research was not going to be her chosen life's work so she went on to Medical School and completed her Doctor of Medicine in 1982. Both her and Mike were interested in being country doctors so they went to New Brunswick to practise medicine. At McGill they had grown food in the community garden plots that were provided by the University. They came to Niagara because they had a continuing interest in growing fruit.

Mike was born in New York City. When his mother became ill, they went to work in Massachusetts for three years to be close to his mother.

Valerie had grown up as a member of the United Church. She did not feel this was the right place for her so she began "church shopping." In Pittsfield, Massachusetts she drove past the Unitarian church there and saw this sign.

*"Unanswered questions are better than
unquestioned answers."*

She felt she had come home at last and began attending the Unitarian church.

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of Niagara**
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**Executive Council
for 2006/2007**

PRESIDENT: Fred Bolton

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Monica Hornyansky
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Annual General Meeting

Sunday, February 18th, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

All members and friends are welcome to attend this
important annual meeting.

Please note: only members are allowed to vote.

Please mark your calendars to be sure to attend
and participate in the important matters of your church.

Thank you.

Annual General Meeting Luncheon

After the Annual General Meeting, **February 18th**,
there will be an opportunity to socialize
at a Sandwich Luncheon.

Various kinds of sandwiches will be served
as well as veggies, fruit, cookies, tea, coffee
and juice will be provided, as usual.

*Yours in Fellowship,
Joan Rothman
Social Coordinator*

Fair Trade Sale

On Sunday, February 25, Pamela will bring in
some fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate to sell.

The food comes from the NOTL store
called Ten Thousand Villages

Who Are We? ...Continued

Dr. Valerie Jaeger

We are most fortunate to have Valerie become a member of our congregation. She has been the service leader on several occasions and we are always certain that these services will always be not only informative, but also entertaining. She is our treasurer for the year 2006-2007. At present she works in the Brock Student Health Service. Valerie does pandemic planning for the public health department and is on call for the sexual assault program.

Her hobbies are walking, reading, knitting and gardening. Her daughter, Alexandra is 21 and is studying art history at Princeton. Her son, Marc is 22 and is a ballet dancer with the Milwaukee Ballet.

Last but certainly not the least, we are so proud of Valerie for receiving the award of being the best family physician of the Southern Region for the year 2006. The award is given by the Ontario College of Family Physicians. She was nominated by her colleagues at Brock with support from the Public Health Department. This award is a recognition of Valerie's work as a clinician, teacher, researcher and for her community service. Congratulations to Valerie from all of us. WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU! 🌸



Three Cheers for Margaret Glassford

Marg noticed that the church members were not recycling quite a large amount of our trash. She went out and bought us recycling bins and all that we need to recycle properly.

Thanks Marg!!!

Used Furniture

Although it is thoughtful for members to donate used furniture to the church, the board is asking that you check with some of the executive as they wish to be part of the decision.

As the old saying goes: One person's meat is another person's poison!

Sharing Our Faith

The "Sharing Our Faith" service is the day when we extend our thinking and support outward toward Unitarian-Universalist Congregations in Canada that may need financial assistance for special projects.

We do this by joining other congregations in setting aside one Sunday a year to focus our thoughts on other U-U's across Canada and to have a special Offertory collection. All money collected is sent to the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), who distribute every penny of it among as many congregations as possible whose grant projects have been approved. Our congregation was one of the chosen congregations in 2006, when we received a grant of \$1200 to help us in our search and hiring of a Religious Education Director, Barbara Worthy. As funds applied for often exceed the actual

amount available congregations are asked to be as generous as possible; all identifiable donations are eligible for a tax receipt from the CUC. All loose money in the collection plate will go for this cause, if you wish your contribution to go specifically to your congregational pledge, please put it in an envelope and designate it as such. Unless otherwise designated all of the February 4th's offertory will go to the "Sharing Our Faith" fund, cheques for this fund should be made out to the "Canadian Unitarian Council".

"SHARING OUR FAITH" - A good way to link our Canadian congregations and to help all of us to grow!

Joan Rothman, Marie Belliveau & Lisa Laughton

CUUL School

CUUL School is coming up and if you want to learn how to take a leadership role in your Unitarian church and faith, this is the place! Just ask the people who have attended, Marie, Fred, Pam and Shari. They will be happy to tell about their great experiences in CUUL School!

2007 CUUL School will be at McMaster (the site of the wonderful CUC ACM 2005!) University in Hamilton, July 19-23, 2007. More details and a poster to print and share with others can be found at the CUC Event calendar <http://www.cuc.ca/calendar.htm>

Poster

<http://www.cuc.ca/programs/leadership/2007CUULschoolposter.pdf>

Full CUUL Program

<http://www.cuc.ca/programs/cuul/CUULFullLeadershipProgram.pdf>

If you have taken CUUL School, perhaps you'd like MORE!

At the above link you'll find information about how to become designated CUUL!

The form for you to record workshops that you have already taken is called a Participant Record and can be found at:

<http://www.cuc.ca/programs/leadership/ParticipantCreditRecord.pdf>

Bottled Water Policy

Dear Readers: I am submitting this article on "Bottled Water" as a follow up to the previous newsletter article on the same subject matter. I do this in hope of stimulating some interesting and meaningful dialogue amongst our congregation members and readers and also in hope of our congregation creating a "Bottled Water Policy" within our building. If you wish to respond to me personally you may do so in person or by phone

(905-704-0189) or by email (weemb@sympatico.ca). I would be pleased to talk with anyone of any opinion on this subject.

Marie Belliveau

Bottled Water: A Global Environmental Problem

Source:

OneWorld.net, February 5, 2006

Title: "Bottled Water: Nectar of the Frauds?"

Author: Abid Aslam

Faculty Evaluator: Liz Close

Student Researchers: Heidi Miller and Sean Hurley

Consumers spend a collective \$100 billion every year on bottled water in the belief-often mistaken-that it is better for us than what flows from our taps. Worldwide, bottled water consumption surged to 41 billion gallons in 2004, up 57 percent since 1999.

"Even in areas where tap water is safe to drink, demand for bottled water is increasing-producing unnecessary garbage and consuming vast quantities of energy," reports Earth Policy Institute researcher Emily Arnold. Although in much of the world, including Europe and the U.S., more regulations govern the quality of tap water than bottled water, bottled water can cost up to 10,000 times more. At up to \$10 per gallon, bottled water costs more than gasoline in the United States.

"There is no question that clean, affordable drinking water is essential to the health of our global community," Arnold asserts, "But bottled water is not the answer in the developed world, nor does it solve problems for the 1.1 billion people who lack a secure water supply. Improving and expanding existing water treatment and sanitation systems is more likely to provide safe and sustainable sources of water over the long term." Members of the United Nations have agreed to halve the

proportion of people who lack reliable and lasting access to safe drinking water by the year 2015. To meet this goal, they would have to double the \$15 billion spent every year on water supply and sanitation. While this amount may seem large, it pales in comparison to the estimated \$100 billion spent each year on bottled water.

Tap water comes to us through an energy-efficient infrastructure whereas bottled water is transported long distances-often across national borders-by boat, train, airplane, and truck. This involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels. For example, in 2004 alone a Helsinki company shipped 1.4 million bottles of Finnish tap water 2,700 miles to Saudi Arabia. And although 94 percent of the bottled water sold in the U.S. is produced domestically, many Americans import water shipped some 9,000 kilometers from Fiji and other faraway places to satisfy demand for what Arnold terms "chic and exotic bottled water."

More fossil fuels are used in packaging the water. Most water bottles are made with polyethylene terephthalate, a plastic derived from crude oil. "Making bottles to meet Americans' demand alone requires more than 1.5 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 U.S. cars for a year," Arnold notes. Once it has been emptied, the bottle must be dumped. According to the Container Recycling Institute, 86 percent of plastic water bottles used in the United States become garbage or litter. Incinerating used bottles produces toxic byproducts such as chlorine gas and ash containing heavy metals tied to a host of human and animal health problems. Buried water bottles can take up to 1,000 years to biodegrade.

Worldwide, some 2.7 million tons of plastic are used to bottle water each year. Of the bottles deposited for recycling in 2004, the U.S. exported roughly 40 percent to destinations as far away as China, requiring yet more fossil fuel. Meanwhile, communities where the water originates risk their sources running dry. More than fifty Indian villages have complained of water shortages after bottlers began extracting water for sale under the Coca-Cola Corporation's Dasani label. Similar problems have been reported in Texas and in the Great Lakes region of North America, where farmers, fishers, and others who depend on water for their livelihoods are suffering from concentrated water extraction as water tables drop quickly. While Americans consume the most bottled water per capita, some of the fastest collective growth in consumption is in the giant populations of Mexico, India, and China. As a whole, India's consumption of bottled water increased threefold from 1999 to 2004, while China's more than doubled. While private companies' profits rise from selling bottled water of questionable quality at more than \$100 billion per year—more efficiently regulated, waste-free municipal systems could be implemented for distribution of safe drinking water for all the peoples of the world—at a small fraction of the price.

UPDATE BY ABID ASLAM

Consumer stories are a staple of the media diet. This article spawned coverage by numerous public broadcasters and appeared to do the rounds in cyberspace. Perhaps what seized imaginations was our affinity for the subject: apparently we and

our planet's surface are made up mostly of water and without it, we would perish. In any case, most of the discussion of the issues raised by the source—a research paper from a Washington, D.C.-based environmental think tank—focused mainly on consumer elements (the price, taste, and consequences for human health of bottled and tap water), as I had anticipated when I decided to storify the Environmental Policy Institute (EPI) paper (in honesty, that is pretty much all I did, adding minimal context and background). However, a good deal of reader attention also focused on the environmental and regulatory aspects.

Further information on these can be obtained from the EPI, a host of environmental and consumer groups, and from the relevant government agencies: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for tap water and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for bottled water. Differences in the ways these regulators (indeed, regulators in general) operate and are structured and funded deserve a great deal more attention, as does the unequal protection of citizens that results. Numerous other questions raised in the article deserve further examination. Would improved waste disposal and recycling address the researcher's concerns about resources being consumed to get rid of empty water bottles?

If public water systems can deliver a more reliable product to more people at a lower cost, as the EPI paper says, then what are the obstacles to the necessary investment in the U.S. and in poor countries, and how can citizens here and there overcome those obstacles? Some of these questions may strike general readers or certain media gatekeepers

as esoteric. Then again, we all drink the stuff.

NEW

Ban Terminator Campaign

postcards now available! Order now and take action!

Join the new Campaign!

Notice: January 16, 2007

We are writing from the Ban Terminator Campaign to let you know that new postcards addressed to the Prime Minister are ready for distribution in your community! The new postcards ask for a BAN IN CANADA on Terminator seeds – seeds genetically engineered to be sterile after first harvest.

UPDATE: The first postcard campaign of November 2005 - March 2006 was a great success! These postcards plus letters and other actions in Canada and around the world created enough pressure to force the Canadian government to (reluctantly) allow the United Nations moratorium on Terminator to be upheld and strengthened. However, our government has still not stated its opposition to Terminator! Instead, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency says it will approve Terminator as easily as any other new genetically engineered crop. And, in August 2006, Monsanto announced it wants to buy the company that owns the first Canadian patent on Terminator! Unless there is a national ban, seed and biotechnology companies will continue developing Terminator and will choose the best moment to push hard for approval in Canada.

Your action and commitment is needed now and in the next two years as we work to establish a complete and lasting ban on Terminator in Canada. We need the government to create legislation to prohibit field trials and commercialization of Terminator technology (also called Genetic Use Restriction Technology or GURTs).

The postcards are one of many important actions you can take as part of the national and international campaign. Please take action in your community and join us in our coordinated strategy.

Protect the rights of farmers to save seed, protect wild and cultivated plants from contamination, protect future generations and world food security.

TO ORDER POSTCARDS:

As a partner in the Campaign and a Member of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), USC Canada (www.usc-canada.org) is coordinating postcard distribution. Cards will be mailed out from the USC office in Ottawa. To order, simply email btpostcards@usc-canada.org or leave a voice message at 1-613-234-6827 ext. 237. You are asked to consider a donation to help cover the costs of printing and postage (Suggested donation: 5 cents a postcard. Please consider a further donation to support the campaign.). Make your cheque out to: "USC Canada", clearly note it is for Terminator and mail to Kate Green, USC Canada, 56 Sparks Street, Suite 705, Ottawa, ON K1P 5B1

OTHER ACTIONS:

Individuals and groups write to your Member of Parliament, the Minister of Agriculture, and the Prime Minister. Groups endorse the campaign: <http://www.banterminator.org>

Groups make resolutions against Terminator - please inform us. Order Ban Terminator Buttons (1 inch pins) (\$1 each or good bulk rates). Organize an event in your community – contact us for assistance. Write articles and letters to the editor of your local newspaper. Donate to the Campaign. Contact us.

MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.banterminator.org/canada>
www.cban.ca
Subscribe to the CBAN News and Action Listserve: cbanaction-subscribe@lists.riseup.net

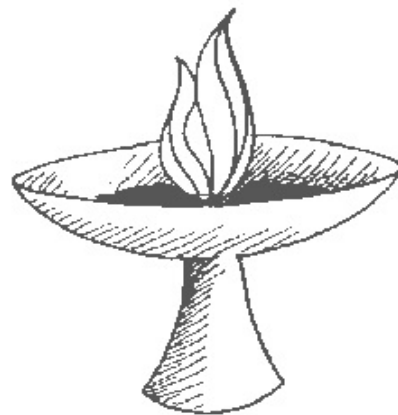
This campaign is organized by the new Canadian Biotechnology Action Network which brings together many of the social justice, environment, international development, church and farmer groups that you are already familiar with – groups that speak out for food security, social justice and for environmental health and safety. For details please see www.cban.ca or contact us at info@cban.ca or 613 241 2267. CBAN is located at 431 Gilmour Street, Second Floor, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0R5 Please consider a donation to support our work.

A New Growth Resource

For congregations looking to provide a new way for their newcomers to make connections with other Unitarian Universalists, we're piloting an email list specifically designed to meet the needs of new people. Newcomers, after joining the list, will be encouraged to introduce themselves and to participate in discussions on topics of interest to new people. This is a good way to help new people in your congregation feel like a part of the UU community and give them a chance to explore what Uuism means to them. As an added bonus, it doesn't add any tasks to the plate of the membership committee!

New people can be added to the list by sending a blank email to cucnewcomers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Feel free to put an ad for the group in your newsletter or visitor's materials. Contact Liz James at lizjames@shaw.ca for more information.

Mary Bennett
Canadian Unitarian Council



Upcoming Workshops

As a result of a questionnaire circulated amongst the congregation, the following workshops will be offered as part of our Adult Education program. Sign up sheets will be available following the Sunday service.

1. Celebrate the Rhythm of the Earth:

A drumming workshop with Niagara on the Lake percussionist and teacher Penner Mackay, a drumming session using a colourful array of percussion instruments, from tambourines, shakers and cymbals to a variety of snare and bass drums. Awaken the drummer in you! For adults of all ages.

Date: Saturday, March 3rd, 1:00 p.m.. 90mins.

Cost: \$10.00

2. Unitarian Book Club:

Book One: The Pagan Christ by Tom Harpur

Meeting: Tuesday, March 27th, 7:30 p.m.

Location: TBA

Meetings will take place, once a month (when possible), and on the last Tuesday of the month. The host will offer their home, and the 'leader' will present background information on the book and author. Please indicate on the sign up sheet if you are willing to take on one of these roles.

Background: The Pagan Christ by Tom Harpur: Harpur is a columnist for the Toronto Star, a Rhodes scholar, and a former Anglican priest and professor of Greek and New Testament at the University of Toronto. In this book Harpur digs deep into the origins of Christianity and early Christian attempts to reveal the Bible as myth. "What began as a universal belief system has become a ritualistic institution headed by ultraconservative literalists." Harpur reveals a "cosmic faith" built on truths that the modern church has renounced. His message is clear: blind faith in literalism is killing Christianity.

3. Planning Your Own Memorial Service

Leader Doreen Peever will help you plan for the inevitable. Choose the elements of your own memorial service: choose your hymns, music, or readings; prepare your own eulogy, family history, life experiences, and determine your choice of who would participate. The church will file your details safely for when the inevitable day comes.

When: March, 2007. Exact time and location TBA
(No cost.)

Further workshops to take place: *The History of Unitarianism* and *The ABC of Aging*.

Please watch for sign up sheets.

For further information please contact members of the Education Committee: Barbara Worthy, Marie Belliveau, Joan Rothman or Lisa Laughton.

Winter solstice celebration inspires reflection

More than 80 people paused during the busy holiday season to celebrate the winter solstice at the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara on Dec. 20, 2006. As dozens of candles flickered and the fragrance of white pine boughs scented the air, celebrants from as far away as Oakville and Brampton filled the church to observe the returning sun, lengthening days and the divine spark that resides within each person. The second-annual event was organized by Transgender Niagara, the St. Catharines chapter of PFLAG Canada, and TransParent Canada. They are all partner organizations of OUTniagara. Although chiefly intended for Niagara's gender- and sexual-diverse community, the service was also open to the broader community. "After two winter solstice services and a summer solstice celebration, these well-attended events seem to fill a need within the LGBTQ community," said Christine Martin of Transgender Niagara, who also read two seasonal readings during the service.

Creating a sacred space at the beginning of the event were First Nations drummers performing upon the Ohnia:kara drum, a Mohawk word describing the Niagara area. The drummers also closed the service and at that time described solstice and winter traditions in their culture and the details surrounding the making and naming of their drum. Drummers volunteered to drum after the service for an appreciative audience. As well, more than 20 members of the all-female WomEnchant choir entranced the congregation with four seasonal

selections. Led by Laura Thomas, their close harmony brought a strong spiritual element to the service. Kathleen Addison from Welland Avenue United Church led a responsive reading and Doreen Peever, chaplain at the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara, lighted and extinguished the chalice and also read the invocation. Cathy Mackenzie of PFLAG read the closing words and Joan Wiley of TransParentCanada acted as service leader and led the candle-lighting ceremony. Pianist Rob Anderson accompanied the congregation with two traditional carols, Joy to the World and Silent Night.

The Yule altar at the front of the church contained elements of the central images and mysteries of a traditional solstice festival. Pine branches represented the life of the new year; a leafless branch reminded celebrants of winter's power; apples and pomegranates honoured the earth's bounty; and candles celebrated the returning sun and the unique light in all people.

A free-will offering collected \$105.69 for Community Care.



Now I'll tell you a real story that happened in our Sunday school. The Kindergarten class was discussing "prayer", and the children seemed aware that the way you end a prayer was with "amen." Does anyone know what "amen" means, the teacher asked. There was a long silence. Then one little boy piped up, with appropriate, computer-age gestures, and said, "Well, I think it means, like, "send"



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Deadline for Next Issue:

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