

THE NOR'WESTER

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto

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Sunday, January 8th @ 10:30 a.m.

“When I Last Spoke to God”

Rev. Jeffrey Brown

We often turn our noses at the hint of prayer. When used as a form of divine coercion, I find myself repulsed. But what processes do we employ to understand ourselves and our place in creation? In the poet Pablo Heruda’s words, how do we “keep quiet” and hear ourselves and the world around us. This morning, we’ll explore some ways by which we can ground ourselves, discover a wholeness and change the world.

Jeffrey Brown recently completed a 16-year ministry with the Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga. He began his ministerial career in 1972 and has served Unitarian Universalist congregations in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont as well as teaching in university and directing a mental health centre. Currently he acts as the Unitarian Universalist minister at the University of Toronto and represents our Unitarian Universalist movement in several social justice endeavours. This past May he delivered the annual Historical Society lecture, a presentation that became the introductory chapter for the Society’s newly published book, *Guarding Sacred Embers: Reflections on Canadian Unitarian and Universalist History*. He lives in Toronto with his partner Kate Hays, a clinical psychologist.

Sunday, January 15th @ 10:30 am

“Elephants are on the Move”

Rob Laidlaw

The Metro Toronto Zoo’s elephants have been in the news a fair amount over the past few months. We welcome Rob Laidlaw back today as he looks at the Toronto Zoo elephant issue and the pending move of the zoo’s three elephants to the PAWS sanctuary in California. Rob will also provide us with an update on Lucy, the Edmonton elephant and why her plight affects elephants everywhere.

Rob Laidlaw is Executive Director of Zoocheck, an international wildlife protection organization. He has worked to protect animals for more than 30 years in countries around the world. He is also the author of numerous reports and books.

Sunday, January 22nd @ 10:30 a.m.

“Elderly Citizens in Care”

Phyllis Hymmen

What are the conditions really like in nursing homes? Come out today to find out and learn what we can do to improve these conditions.

Phyllis is the current president of *Concerned Friends*, an organization that gives a voice for quality in long term care. She has a doctorate in counseling psychology. She is a retired teacher, counselor, counselor educator and counseling psychologist. Recently Phyllis was consulted on a series of articles in the Toronto Star on care of the elderly.

Sunday, January 29th @ 10:30 a.m.

“Beyond Political Correctness: Diversity and Equity in Canadian Educational Resources”

Nancy Christoffer

Given our Canadian multicultural society and the mandates stipulated by provincial Ministries of Education, today’s educational resources must support inclusiveness, diversity, and equity. It is the role of a bias reviewer to ensure balanced representation in both text and images; racial, ethnocultural, gender-related, age-related, and regional bias must be eliminated. A bias reviewer must also address bias by omission. Bias reviewers ensure that content is free from discriminatory or exclusionary language or images. Bias reviewers also make certain that students of all backgrounds see their own realities reflected in learning resources so that they feel connected to the content. Nancy Christoffer will talk to us about the role of the bias and equity reviewer in educational publishing.

Nancy has worked in educational publishing for almost 25 years. She has written, edited, reviewed, and overseen the production of student and teacher resources in Social Studies, Literacy, and Science as well as other subject areas. For the past six years she has specialized in conducting bias and equity reviews while caring for her daughter at home. Nancy volunteers regularly in her daughter’s kindergarten class. She also volunteered as a mentor with Big Sisters for many years, and continues a close relationship with her Little Sister.



Around the House



BOOK CLUB

The next Book Club meeting will be on **Sunday, January 29th** following the service. We will be discussing the book *An Uncommon Reader* by **Alan Bennett**.

BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be **Sunday, January 15th** following the service. Let's enjoy another potluck lunch!

SATURDAY AT THE MOVIES

Have you read the fantastic book, *The Help*? Perhaps you were part of the Book Club discussion on it. Whether you have read the book or not come and enjoy the very successful movie version at the Fellowship on **Saturday, January 29th @ 1:00 p.m.** Snacks will be provided.

Please RSVP to Grace (thejinkinsons@rogers.com). Hope to see you there!

A N ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGE FROM PARKER

An inventor in the United States has come up with a solar panel that can be put down to create a highway. This means that, theoretically, all the electrical power needed to drive the United States can be generated from solar panels. This means that we won't need sand or salt on the roads because the electric power will keep the roads warm. This means we won't need gasoline, because the electricity to power the car could come from solar generators embedded in the road. Check it out at <http://www.switched.com/2010/09/26/citizen-scientist-designs-self-sustaining-solar-street-sheets/>



ACROSS THE DENOMINATION

The **Midwinter Unitarian Retreat** will take place the weekend of **February 10, 11, 12** at the Cedar Glen camp in Bolton. This a great weekend to spend in the presence of other Unitarians, learn in the workshops, eat good food, and attend a fun cabaret on Saturday evening. Information sheets are available on the table in the entry hall.

The **Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice** are holding a **coffee house evening** on **Saturday, January 28th at 8:00 p.m.** at the Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga. The folk group *Piece of Rock* (the rock being Newfoundland) will be featured. Coffee and desserts will be available, as well as a cash bar. \$20 or pay-what-you-can.

Marilyn Harris is planning to attend both of these events (weather permitting), so please contact her if you are interested in attending.

WHAT IS THE CUSJ?

Have you heard of the CUSJ but have wondered exactly who they are? The **CUSJ** is the **Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice**. They are a national, liberal religious organization, founded to actively promote Unitarian values through social action. They develop a vibrant network for social action, at the local, national and international levels, for the relief of:

- Discrimination based on religious, racial, sexual orientation or other grounds
- Abuses to human rights of individuals or groups of people
- Poverty and economic justice
- Environmental degradation
- Breaches of peace, security and the democratic process

Additionally **CUSJ** creates opportunities for expression of Unitarian religious, humanistic and spiritual values, including the publication of the quarterly **JUSTnews**.

To learn more check them out at <http://cusj.org/>

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT UFWU



Melanie and her crew set up the tables and chairs, Dee and Tiffany decked the halls, Deb prepared boeuf bourgignonne and roasted a turkey, while everyone in the congregation chopped and stirred and baked. We were ready for our Christmas Celebration the Sunday evening before Christmas.

Barbara was the Service Leader, a job she does so very well. Most of the entertainment was provided by the Symes 55+ Senior Choir, where Marilyn is a member. Their red jackets and tuneful voices filled the Fellowship with good cheer.

But we had some surprise artists too: Claire read one of her always funny pieces entitled "Party Time", Stephen took us down memory lane with his reading of "Twas the Night Before Christmas", and Joanne's grandson, Alex (a.k.a Zander), overwhelmed us with his guitar rendition of one of Rush's compositions.

Jane closed the service with a moving reading from her mother's parish priest in St. John, N.B., followed by the choir's rendition of "Shalom" - peace - our wish for all.

And then, it was time to party - all 46 of us!

NEW YEAR'S DAY LEVEE

And the fun continued on New Year's Day!



THE GREEN THING

In the line at the store, the cashier told an older woman that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment.

The woman apologized to her and explained, "We didn't have the **green thing** back in my day."

The clerk responded, "that's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment."

He was right—our generation didn't have the **green thing** in its day.

Back then, we returned milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottle over and over. So they really were recycled.

But we didn't have the **green thing** back in our day.

We walked up stairs, because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks.

But she was right. We didn't have the **green thing** in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's diapers because we didn't have the throw away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 220 volts—wind and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that old lady is right; we didn't have the **green thing** back in our day.

Back then, we had one TV, or radio in the house—not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief

(remember them?), not a screen the size of the state of Montana.

In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us.

When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used a wadded up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right; we didn't have the **green thing** back then.

We drank from a fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water.

We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull.

But we didn't have the **green thing** back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service.

We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the **green thing** back then?

The Nor'Wester is published monthly for members and friends of the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official policies of the Fellowship, unless specifically indicated. Articles and letters are always welcome and can be submitted to the editor by email to ufnwt@bellnet.ca, or mailed to the Fellowship. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month.

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