

# THE NOR'WESTER

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto

Issue #2

2009



2010

August 2009



## Fun Summer Programs!



**Sunday August 9th @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**One of a Series of Congregational Meetings**

**Facilitator ~ Judy Magney**

A time for Members and Friends to meet, listen and discuss Fellowship matters.

**Sunday August 16th @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**Sing-A-Long and Potluck & Pool Party at Dee's**

**Host ~ Dee Ho-A-Shoo**

As in previous summers, folks can meet at the Fellowship for a lively sing-a-long, followed by a potluck and pool party at Dee and Deb's. Deb will be preparing her salmon, roasted veggies and chicken souvlaki. Please RSVP with Dee if you can attend and the potluck item that you will be bringing.



**Sunday August 23rd @ 11:30 a.m.**  
**"The Role of the Elvis Impersonator in Modern Society"**

**Host ~ Parker Smith**

Northwester Parker Smith has become fascinated with the phenomenon of the Elvis Impersonator by singing Elvis karaoke songs in karaoke clubs, going to the Annual Elvis Festival in Collingwood, Ontario (this year from July 23 to July 26), and studying books on "The King". He has developed some thoughts that he would like to share about the implications and meaning of the Elvis Impersonator in Modern Society, that is, in Canada today.

Elvis Presley has been called the "Greatest Entertainer of the 20th Century" and his life has been controversial since his emergence as a popular singer and actor in the mid 1950's.

But today, 30 years later, vigils and Elvis memorials and festivals are growing at the Graceland mansion every year and have spread to other parts of the world

including Canada.

Both Coquitlam, B.C. and Collingwood, Ontario have Elvis festivals every year, 30 years after his death and the question is why. There is no end to the fascination and interest. In fact, it is growing.

What is the fascination with the man and his music. Why the study and idolization. Is it just academic, or something more?

Some have suggested that Elvisology, the study of the life of Elvis, is something more than a branch of musicology.

Is Elvisology, like Scientology, an emerging religion? Is it a cult?

These theories and more, Parker will discuss in his in depth discussion of the life of Elvis Presley, and the implications of all the impersonators who admire and make a life out of tribute performances to the King of Rock and Roll. Or is it just, The King?

Come prepared to sing, because Parker will have both Elvis and non Elvis karaoke available for the conclusion of this fascinating study/workshop.

**Sunday August 30th @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**Welcoming Congregation: Milk**  
**Host ~ Melanie Walters**

Please join Melanie this morning for a lesson in gay history. "Milk" is an Academy Award winning film starring Sean Penn and Josh Brolin. It is about the life and death of Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay elected public officials in the world. It chronicles his foray into city politics, and the various battles he waged in the Castro neighbourhood (San Francisco) as well as throughout the city, and political campaigns to limit the rights of gay people in 1977 and 1978 run by Anita Bryant and John Briggs. His romantic and political relationships are also addressed, as is his tenuous affiliation with troubled Supervisor Dan White.

Please note the film runs about 2 hours. Refreshments will be provided.



***Claire's July 12th summer program, "Your Favourite Readings" was very much enjoyed! Some people who were there have agreed to share their readings. Enjoy!***

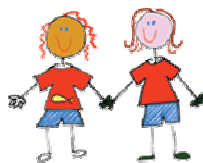
Our humanity is caught up in that of all others. We are human because we belong. We are made for community, for togetherness, for family, to exist in a delicate network of interdependence. We are sisters and brothers of one another whether we like it or not, and each one of us is a precious individual.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu  
from "No Future without Forgiveness"

~ submitted by Claire Moran

## **Holding Hands**

Sixty years ago, Pauline and I held each other's hands. She was seven, and I was eight.



Every morning, we walked the mile to school, usually boring each other silly relating the dreams we had had the night before. In the afternoon, we retraced our steps, laughing and talking and sharing childish confidences. And always, we were holding hands, because that's what best friends did in those days.

A couple of years later, I moved away. Pauline went to her high school, and I went to mine. We grew up, found jobs, and grew apart, which is the way things usually happen. She married Ron and had two children; I married Norman and had two children. We moved on, in our separate lives. However, every few years or so, one of us would phone the other just to catch up on what was happening, and to make vague plans to get together sometime, but it rarely happened.

Last September, it was time for one of those periodic calls, and Pauline and I were dismayed to hear we had the same news for each other: our husbands were both dying of cancer. That was a long phone call, as we both poured out our stories

of roller coaster hopes and fears. We kept in touch a lot last fall, each of us dreading the inevitable news. My Norman died first. Her Ron followed, two months later. We shared each other's grief and funeral rituals.

Of course, this horrible shared experience has brought us back together again. We both know that we can pick up the phone and call on the other for emotional support, if we're having a particularly bad day. We know we can reveal our deepest thoughts and strangest concerns without judgment or censure. We're traveling this lonely journey through grief together, to the extent that one possibly can.

Recently, in spite of living in different parts of town, we both received an invitation to a grief seminar, and we made arrangements to attend. We drove over in Pauline's car, but we were surprised to find the upper parking lot full. Consequently, we ended up parking in a far, dark corner of the much lower lot, which meant we had a steep climb ahead of us. Wasn't this the perfect metaphor for what we had been experiencing this past year?

As we climbed this steep hill to go to this grief seminar, which neither of us would have dreamed two years ago that we would be attending, a strange thing happened. We reached out and took each other's hand, because that's what close friends do.

~ submitted by Marilyn Harris

## **Ordinary Miracles in *Rejoice Together***

edited by Helen Pickett

May we attend to the ordinariness of our days  
And remember that they imprint our spirits,  
Line our eyes,  
Weary our hearts,  
Stimulate our memories,  
Callous our hands,  
And make whole our lives.

*Elizabeth Tarbox, adapted*

~ submitted by Judy Magney

***I Would Pick More Daisies***

Don Harold (adapted)

When the late Nadine Stair of Louisville, Kentucky, was 85 years old, she was asked what she would do if she had her life to live over again.

"I'd make more mistakes next time," she said. "I'd relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been on this trip. I would take fewer things seriously. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but I'd have fewer imaginary ones.

"You see, I'm one of those people who live sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments, and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I've been one of those persons who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, and a raincoat. If I had to do it over again, I would travel lighter than I have.

"If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds and I would pick more daisies."

~ submitted by Joanne Makuch



**LIVING GREEN IN THE CITY**

**The Second Annual Sustainability Event of Toronto Unitarian Congregations**

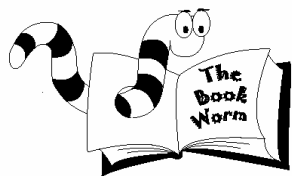
**Saturday, September 19, 2009  
1-4:40 p.m. (doors open at 12:30)**

**First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto  
175 St. Clair Ave., W.,  
Toronto, Ontario, M4V 1P7**

This year's event will feature a keynote speaker at 1:00 p.m., followed by four other presenters, environmental exhibits, storytelling and an environmental art exhibit for kids, and door prizes! If you would like to volunteer for this Unitarian event, contact Judy Magney

*Looking Ahead to September  
A Water Ceremony*

Our Summer journeys are over and we'll celebrate the coming of Fall and resume regular Sunday Services on September 13. Water has been an important part of our recreation, our Summer journeys, and our gardens. Please bring memories about the Water in your Summer and share them in our Water Ceremony which will be led by Judy Magney.



**The Pullet Surprise  
A Year on an Urban Farm**

*By Michael Kluckner*

Part meditation on the noble art of farming, part whimsical how-to on the daily and seasonal mechanics of working a small farm, *The Pullet Surprise* is graced with Kluckner's own charming watercolours of farm life and activities. More than a century ago nine-tenths of Canada's population was engaged directly or indirectly in farming. Today, as Kluckner himself says, his adventure in the country has "as much to

do with dreaming as it does with agriculture." But what a dream!

Michael Kluckner is a writer and artist whose books on the history of Canadian cities, heritage, planning issues, and art include *Vancouver the Way It Was*, *Toronto the Way It Was*, *Vanishing Vancouver*, *Heritage Walks Around Vancouver*, and the recent Michael Kluckner's *Vancouver*. His work has won numerous awards, including a B.C. Book Prize, the Vancouver Book Prize, and the Heritage Canada Medal of Achievement. Currently he lives on a farm in Langley, British Columbia.

~ submitted by Johanna Bristow



## *Around the House*



### ***FROM OUR VERY OWN ELVIS—AKA PARKER!***

“Yes, it's real. I'm appearing at the largest Elvis festival in the world this week-- the Collingwood Elvis Festival in Collingwood Ontario .”

Parker sang in two performances and said his songs went well but he now knows a lot more about being a performing artist and it's pretty demanding.

#### **From Judy, Jim, Joanne, and Julie:**

Congratulations Parker for entering the competition and getting us to see and enjoy the Elvis Festival in Collingwood!

We picnicked, dodged the rain, made our way through the crowds, and had a fun time riding together. We will do it again next year if you do, Parker .

### ***THINKING OF GRACE & HER FAMILY***

Grace's husband, Andrew, undergoes neurosurgery for a benign brain tumour on August 11th. Our thoughts are with Andrew, Grace, David, Joshua, and Victoria.

### ***WHAT'S MERLE UP TO?***

Merle Charlton is enjoying a long week with family at her cottage. We wish her a good time and great weather.

### ***BEST WISHES FOR MARILYN!***

Marilyn, here is a bouquet from us all with wishes for more rest and better health.

### ***THANK YOU AND AU REVOIR FROM JOHANNA***

I knew Judy was making me a cake but she outdid herself! I think she also picked out the precious little book which everyone signed and I will keep to inspire me.

I appreciated having this time to say "au revoir" to my Fellowship friends. It's hard to do but happily the start of a new adventure, which I hope to share by email and visits to Toronto. You are all in my heart forever.

Love from Johanna

**A note from Judy**—Johanna is having a month's well deserved vacation! We hope your dreams for big changes will come true!