

# THE NOR'WESTER

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto

Issue #8

2009



2010

February 2010



**February 7th @ 10:30 a.m.**

**“Our Kindred Fellowships Unite”**

*Peter Hughes*



Peter will provide an historical overview of the parallel and intertwined development of Unitarianism and Universalism in the United States in the 19th century that shows how the consolidation of the two as the UUA in 1961 resulted from these roots. Among the people discussed will be William Ellery Channing, Samuel J. May, Thomas Starr King, and Adin Ballou.

Rev. Peter Hughes was the minister of the First Unitarian Church of Woonsocket in Rhode Island (1986 - 1999). While living in New England he made a study of early Universalism and wrote a number of articles on New England Universalist history. He is now retired and, living in Toronto and does historical research on the roots of Unitarianism and Universalism in the Reformation

tell us about the Peel Environmental Alliance, that she set-up in high school, which connects students and teachers interested in environmental issues. She will also share her involvement in the UN Conference in Copenhagen and Poznan and also about her experience in Kenya.

Before Jasmeet speaks, Geoff Lepper will share his experience with us as running for the Green Party in the early 90s.

Currently Jasmeet is a student at the University of Toronto. She grew up in Mississauga. She developed an interest in the environment at a young age especially growing up in “car friendly” Mississauga. She has done some writing for the Toronto Star and for the Huffington Post, an online paper. She is looking forward to sharing her passion for the environment with us.

**February 28th at 10:30 a.m.**

**“Kierkegaard and the Leap of Faith”**

*Betty Trott*

Kierkegaard (1813 - 1855) rejected the idea of religious ethics and universal moral rules. He did suggest that with a leap of faith, however, we could find our way in a troublesome world. Betty will explore with us his suggestion to find out what he was really saying.

Betty Trott has been teaching philosophy at Ryerson University since 1990. She has published works and articles on metaphysics, Canadian philosophy, education, art and design and other topics. Betty also works with amateur theatre productions at the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto, both as director and performer.



**February 14th @ 10:30 a.m.**

**“Celebrating Valentine’s Day”**

*All of Us*

Do you have a favourite piece of romantic poetry or prose? Celebrate Valentine’s Day at Northwest and share some your favourites with members and friends.

Please let Geoff Lepper know, via email the title and author of your reading that you would like to read to the congregation no later than February 10th. Readings should be no longer than 5 minutes so can be an excerpt. Please join in and help make this a successful Valentine’s Day celebration.

**February 21st at 10:30 a.m.**

**“Environmentalism - Making a Difference”**

*Jasmeet Sidhu*

Not all youth are just interested in fashion, music and sports. There are youth out there who want to make a positive difference in the world. Jasmeet Sidhu is a young environmentalist who will be sharing her experiences and motivations for being involved with environmentalism with us. In particular Jasmeet will

*Give it a Moment's Thought . . .*

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

~ Mahatma Gandhi



## Around the House

### CALLING ALL BOOKIES

Our next book club meeting will be held on February 7th. It will be moderated by Helen Pataky. The book will be *The Curious Incident of the Dog In the Night*.

### CAMEO

Thank you to Barbara Euler for sharing her recent trip to Slovenia and Croatia with us at our January CAMEO. Her pictures were spectacular and allowed us to see the new screen and digital projector in action. What a great investment! Also thanks to Judy for making us her delicious homemade squash soup and quiche. It was a feast!

Please join us for lunch on February 25th at 11:30 a.m. Remember to bring \$5.00 and to RSVP to Grace by February 22nd (ufnwt@bellnet.ca). Looking forward to seeing you!

### OUT OF THE COLD

Just a reminder that we are continuing to collect for the "Out of the Cold" program. We are looking for items such as gently used clothes, preferably men's clothes in larger sizes, travel-size toiletries, toothbrushes, disposable razors and unused socks and underwear. For a complete list please contact Melanie.

### WHERE HAVE OUR FRIENDS WANDERED TO?

You might not have seen or might not be seeing some familiar faces at the Fellowship during the winter months. Here is where some of them have escaped to!

*Bernadette & Alan Trufal*  
off to Texas for 6 weeks

*Joanne Makuch*  
will be in Florida for 2 months

*Merle Charleton*  
enjoying 2 weeks in Florida

*Helen Pataky*  
going on an adventure to Egypt

*Claire Moran*  
going on a one week holiday

*Parker Smith*  
also on a one week holiday

### WELCOMING CONGREGATIONS Gay Rights Around the World



Last November I did a service about the state of gay rights in different countries. A lot has happened since then so I am writing a little update:

#### The Good:

- Same-sex marriage is now legal in Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Washington DC and Portugal, pending a signature from the Portuguese president.
- Civil unions have been granted to same-sex couples in Austria.
- Former Solicitor General Theodore Olson and David Boies, the two men who argued *Bush v. Gore* to the Supreme Court of the United States to determine who won the 2000 election, have teamed up to appeal the Californian Proposition 8 decision. The Prop 8 referendum took away the rights of gay people to be legally married. This trial is currently in court.

#### The Bad:

- The state legislatures of New York and New Jersey voted against allowing same-sex couples to legally marry.
- A bill to allow same-sex marriage in Maine was passed in May 2009, but was overturned by a referendum in November.

#### The Ugly:

- The Anti-Homosexuality Bill was proposed in Uganda in October, 2009. This bill proposes jail time and forced HIV tests for people suspected of homosexual activity. Repeat offenders will be given the death penalty, as will people who are HIV positive and sexually active. People who suspect that somebody is gay must report this person to the authorities within 24 hours or else they will face a fine and/or jail time. And Ugandan citizens living in other countries in same-sex partnerships would be extradited back to Uganda to face the law. The attempt of this bill is to "We must stop the recruitment and secure the future of our children." Many world political and religious leaders, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, have spoken out against this bill.

## ACROSS THE DENOMINATION

Direct from the CUC website:

"As Canadians know, Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, was devastated by a major earthquake. Calvin Drake, President of the Canadian Unitarian Council, Rev. Carole Martignacco, President of Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada and Katharine Im-Jenkins, President of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice join together in expressing our sorrow at this devastation and support for strong initiatives to respond to this calamity, especially critical needs in the area of health and food, water, transportation, and infrastructure...

The United Nations estimates that 2.2 million people are affected and fears that the loss of life may reach well into the tens of thousands. The destruction is widespread, with extensive damage to homes, hospitals, roads, water and sanitation services, and electrical and communication systems. Major news outlets are all reporting severe devastation. An alarming number of buildings, including the National Palace and the United Nation's Headquarters, have collapsed.

Haiti is the Western Hemisphere's most impoverished and least-developed nation. Its society is rife with radical inequality, where large numbers of the population are systematically left out. Eighty percent of the population lives in poverty. Many people live day-to-day on what they're able to earn in the informal sector. For those hundreds of thousands of poor people in Port-au-Prince, the daily struggle for food, water, and medical attention already amounted to an emergency — the earthquake has made these challenges infinitely more difficult to overcome, creating a humanitarian disaster on top of an existing humanitarian crisis. Poor Haitians who have never had equal access to services will be struggling to get basic necessities in the aftermath of this earthquake."

The Social Action Committee, on behalf of the Unitarian Fellowship Of Northwest Toronto, has donated \$200 to Red Cross Canada for Haitian earthquake relief. We urge everybody, if possible, to donate to the relief organization of your choice. Every little bit helps.

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Members of the Unitarian Church of Calgary are joining in a community "Say No to Hate" campaign after extensive damage was caused at the Calgary

Jewish Community Centre, the Holocaust Memorial and the Chabad Lubavitch Centre on Saturday Nov. 14. The Board has voted to include the congregation's name on materials promoting the Nov. 26th rally. The congregation's leaders have said, in an e-mail, "We want to send a message that Calgary is a diverse community where freedom of religious thought is celebrated and that we all stand together to combat such terrible hatred and bigotry." It is so good to see UUs standing up to show others that religion need not mean narrow mindedness!"

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The Neighbourhood Congregation is working with the City of Toronto and other investors to proceed with a project to install a photovoltaic (PV) system with a total power capacity of 20.91 kW on the south-facing roof of their church. The project will produce enough electricity for the congregation to sell back more than they use, providing the income needed to repay investors. If you are interested in learning more, investing or donating, visit their website: [www.nuuc.ca](http://www.nuuc.ca)

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Upcoming Dates:

May 14-17, 2010

Travel to Boston with a Unitarian Focus  
Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation

2010 Annual Conference And Meeting

May 21-24, 2010

Victoria, British Columbia

### AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM UNICAMP



UNICAMP Day is February 7, 2010. It's the middle of winter and it's a good time to think about Unicamp. Hiking the trails, swimming in the pond, star gazing, walking the labyrinth. Spring and Unicamp are not far away. Please take a minute February 7th, during your Joy and Concerns time to mention Unicamp and briefly share your experience.

Check out Unicamp's 2010 brochure to see what the camp has to offer this year.



## *Around the House*



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### **CHANGES TO THE DIRECTORY**

Please note Parker Smith's new phone number:  
647-801-4466

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