



THE Chalice

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ELORA & FERGUS UNITARIAN CHURCH
MAY – JUNE 2008

SEEING THE "BIG PICTURE"

Our congregation reminds me of a poem by John Godfrey Saxe about The Blind Men and the Elephant. Each of the blind men had their own perception of what the Elephant looked like but none of them had ever seen one.

As UU's we pride ourselves on creating our own theology from our own experiences. However, we should remember that the reason we come together as a community is to learn and explore the beliefs of others in order to gain a better view of the "Big Picture".

In the past the Christian view has caused some controversy in this church. I come from the very strict Christian Reformed religion and have rejected it for most of my life. However, that does not mean I have thrown out the baby with the bath water. There is much to be learned from Christianity just as we can learn from all the other religions.

In going through the Welcoming Congregation process, my sincere hope is that we can learn to open our hearts to all. Not just to the Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Community but also to the Christian community.

Some of us come from households that have both Christian and UU's. The Christian point of view is just that, a point of view and has something to offer us if we keep our minds open. My hope is that we open our hearts and minds to all.

Catharina Walhout, president



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Sat. April 12th was our dinner and again it was a great success! There were 18 of us, including Toni Ellis, our guest of honour, and a good time was had by all.

Good food, good music and to top it all off, Chris and Norm brought everyone together with a great game. Chris stitched up 20 little cloth bags, each with an object we had to identify and list on paper. It was a lot of fun. Thank you Chris and Norm for this great initiative!

And thanks to all who helped put everything together and to all who came. It would have been nothing without you :-)

Deb Forman, membership



GROWING UP UNITARIAN....

When I was asked to write about growing up Unitarian I thought no problem, that should be easy. But as I thought about it I realized that I really didn't have any strong memories specific to growing up "Unitarian". I remember going to Sunday school excited to see my friends, colouring with Mr. Sketch smelly markers, and playing hide and go seek/tag while my parents talked on AND on AND on, but the funny thing was I don't really remember any particular lessons. We did all sorts of neat things from writing and performing plays to building the reproductive system out of balloons and straws, to visiting other places of faith, but nothing that I saw as specifically "Unitarian". I went to church with my parents and was a Unitarian because my parents were Unitarians, until one day when I was about 13 years old I realized that* *I *was* a Unitarian.

It was at Unicamp, and like most young UU's I had stopped going to church, but had found a comfortable niche at Unicamp to hang out with my friends. There was quite a bit of buzz going around in Unitarian circles as they were working on some important document and there were a lot of discussion about what the exact wording should be. Most of these discussions just sounded like blah, blah, blah to me. Then one day I had a look at the document and do you know what it was? It was our 7 principles...



Lake at Unicamp

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

As I read through them I was astonished to see all my personal values and principles that I thought that I had figured out on my own there in black and white on paper. Now the question was did I in fact figure them out on my own or had they somehow seeped in through all those Sunday mornings and summers at Unicamp? Regardless, it was at that moment I became a true UU.

Deirdre, Jim's daughter, Ellen's stepdaughter and Sebastian's sister and well-known to the Elora & Fergus teens for teaching the OWL (Our Whole Life) course. She is also the Lay Chaplaincy Committee chair of the Guelph Unitarian Congregation and will be the assistant camp director at Unicamp part of this summer.

OF YOGA AND DONKEYS

What did the donkey say to the yoga instructor? Well in the case of the donkeys at the Guelph Donkey Sanctuary, if they could, they would be saying, “Thanks”. Let me explain.

With the gracious donation of time from a few of the area’s yoga teachers, the Fergus & Elora Unitarian church sponsoring free/donation yoga classes on Sunday mornings at the Victoria Park Senior’s Centre. These classes offer newbie and experienced yoga practitioners alike an opportunity to start the day with a refreshing and peaceful hour devoted to being good to the body and the soul.

I took my very first yoga class last week. No one would call me ‘buff’, and the folks at Racquets have given up calling me to try to get me to come back there, so I must admit I was a wee bit unsure if I really wanted to go. What amazed me was how easy it was to be in a class and yet go at my own pace. No racing heart; no ankles stuck behind my ears. Just gentle, easy movements explained by kind, non-judgmental teachers. It was great.

I couldn’t help but notice that the philosophy of yoga and the philosophy of the Unitarian Church seem to compliment each other quite nicely. Both allow the participant to come in and join a group at their own pace. Both seek harmonious living—within the self, between and among all people, and in harmony with the earth and the other members of its ecosystem. And both recognize that that harmony is the product of a balance between self-discovery, selflessness, service, and devotion to something greater than the self.



Unitarianism encompasses many forms or paths: in our church Christian Unitarians pray beside Atheist Unitarians who laugh with Pagan Unitarians who celebrate with Humanist Unitarians who sing with Environmentalist Unitarians. Each have their path; their pace. But they do it together, in a kind, non-judgmental religious community. They join together because within that diversity each person can work to strengthen their character, extend their reach to make their world a better place, and increase their spiritual flexibility as we ponder that which is beyond what we are.

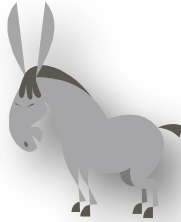
In yoga, most people are familiar with the physical postures—the stretching and flexibility part called asanas. But the true depth of yoga also encompasses a much broader lifestyle and approach to life in its totality. This includes Yamas, which are similar to moral restraints—things like non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity and greedlessness, and

Niyamas, which are similar to moral disciplines—things like purity, contentment, discipline, study and devotion.

Like the many paths of Unitarianism, there are also many branches of yoga which focus on different aspects of the practice. These include Jnana Yoga (the path of wisdom); Karma Yoga (the path of selfless action); Bhakti-Yoga (the path of love); Mantra Yoga (the path of sacred sound); Raja-Yoga (the royal path of yoga which includes the eight-limbed path); and Hatha-Yoga (the path of inner power which focuses on the physical body).

Any time you do selfless action, giving to the community without thought of remuneration or praise, you are in effect, practicing Karma Yoga. Which is exactly what the group of yoga

teachers who are offering the free yoga classes at the church are doing. The classes are held every Sunday morning from 8:30-9:30 at the Victoria Park Senior Centre (150 Albert Street, Fergus). They will continue until June 8, and then resume in September when the Unitarian church resumes its services.



Oh, and the donkeys? Well, each month all of the money contributed by the yoga participants is donated to a different charity. The children of our Sunday School, as part of its social action program, are raising money for the Guelph Donkey Sanctuary. The yoga teachers chose to support this deserving charity for April. I think some of them are hoping to get the loan of a real donkey for our next Christmas pageant out of the deal!

If you would like to check out the free yoga classes, please drop in on Sunday Morning. We'd love to see you!

Dwight Pile, a member of the Fergus and Elora Unitarian Universalist Church, is grateful to Karen Murtagh, one of the yoga instructors, for providing the background information for this article. Learn more at our website: www.efuuc.org, or join us at the Victoria Park Seniors Centre, 150 Albert Street, Fergus. Services and Sunday School start at 10am Sunday mornings. Our last service before the summer break is June 8.



*Dwight Pile, Sunday Services
Committee*

*This article will be printed
in the Fergus-Elora
NewsExpress, April 29th in
the Spirit Lines Column.*



TREES FOR THE EARTH

In honour of Earth Day Chris Nye arranged to pick up 20 trees free of charge. The trees have been made available by the County of Wellington Green Legacy programme. Each member of the church should take a tree and plant it somewhere. Either in their own garden or in a friend's or relative's garden. The trees will be distributed at church on May 11th.

In Lieu of payment a donation for the local Food Bank would be much appreciated!

WHAT'S ON AT CHURCH IN MAY & JUNE 2008

All services begin at 10:00 a.m.

May 4 SHORT SERVICE and AGM

Service leader: Dwight Pile
Please join us for the AGM. As we need a quorum to make decisions we would like to see you all there!

**May 11 MOTHER'S DAY
June Gilbertson**

Celebrating the Mother in all of us.

**May 18 PAIN IS INEVITABLE. SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL.
Kim Muller**

A sermon by Rev. Mike Young presented by David Steuernol.
Suffering is a set of habits of mind that we have unconsciously and passively learned for how we will respond to those inevitable pains that life throws our way.

**May 25 GRACE
Linda Reith**

There but by the grace of God go I.
What grace? What God? Together we will explore ways to invite grace into our lives and ways to encourage grace to linger.
Service Leader: Kim Muller

**June 1 CELEBRATING OUR
WELCOMING CONGREGATION**

Service Leader: Dwight Pile

June 8 PAY ATTENTION!

A sermon by Rev. Mike Young presented by David Steuernol.
Your freedom and your power is right in your own hand.

MUSIC

At this final service we will also be featuring musicians of our congregation and beyond!

June 15 CHURCH PICNIC

Our traditional potluck picnic, marking the end of the Church year and the beginning of the summer recess. This time hosted by Kelsye Coulter and Paul Hennekens.



UPCOMING POD DUTIES

POD #1 Kerry*, Karen & Rob, Dwight and Jill.
Date: May 11

POD #2 Anna* & Don, Arwa, Miranda, Louisa & Nardo.
Date: May 18

POD #3 Kelsye* & Paul, Jennifer, Leigh & Teresa.
Date: May 25

POD #4 David*, Ineke, Catharina, Julie and Kim.
Date: June 1

POD #5 Chris* & Norm, Deborah, Jim & Ellen.
Dates: May 4, June 8

* denotes contact person for the POD



WHAT ARE THE KIDS DOING IN SUNDAY SCHOOL?

- May 4** Celebrating May Day (Pagan Spring Celebration)
- May 11** Mother's Day
Reflecting on our wonderful moms and making a gift just for her.
- May 18** Principle 3
Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.
- May 25** Principle 4
Free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- June 1** Principle 7
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence.
- June 8** Game Day!
Come prepared for outdoor fun (indoor in case of rain).