

Fellowship News

Infolettre UUFO

SPRING ISSUE

MARCH 2023



Canadian Unitarian Council National Symposium May 19-21

Now more than ever we need to come together to strengthen our connections, kindle hope, and move forward in love.

This Spring, Ottawa Unitarians (our UUFO in partnership with First Unitarian) are hosting the Canadian Unitarian Council's National Gathering at Algonquin College. This is an AGM and Symposium for all Unitarians. Folks will be joining us both in person and online from across the country. It is an opportunity to engage with our like-minded faith community, to reach out beyond our walls, and create connections face to face.

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Weekend at a glance:

FRIDAY:

CUC Annual General Meeting
Welcoming Ceremony



SATURDAY:

Full day of engaging presentations, rich discussions, and opportunities to connect with Unitarian Universalists from across Canada

+Congruent Children's Programming, Youth Conference, and Young Adult programming

Talent Night!

SUNDAY:

National Worship Service

Multi-Gen Day: Fun all-ages workshops and activities!

Our Whole Lives training begins

Register!

Join the experience!
Sign up to participate!

Registration coming in early March.

Volunteer!

It takes many hands to make an event like this possible! Sign up to volunteer. Opportunities include:

- Signing people in at registration
- Collecting meal tickets
- Tech and Zoom support
- Accessibility support
- Hospitality support
- Runner/driver/signage/set up, all manner of helpful bodies needed!

... and more!

Caring and Sharing

We wish our travellers and snowbirds well, (and aren't jealous at all) as they soak up the sun in warmer climates.

Allison sends warm wishes from Florida:

“While I am here with Sooky Dunton (UU with Ottawa First) in Port Charlotte, I am part of two groups: Sooky's Maple Leaf (ML) neighbourhood, which has many clubs and activities; and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County (UUFCC). The most interesting aspect of belonging to two communities, happens when there is a crossover. For instance, one afternoon at my ML Life-Writing class, I mentioned our UUFO Writers. Right away, a woman named Donna admitted that she, too, is a UU—a sweet connection! Though I am not sure how these overlaps work, knowing Donna to be both a writer and a UU with me, enriches my participation in both communities.

The UU fellowship here meets in a lovely building with a welcoming sanctuary, an adjacent meeting hall for coffee, and two porch/patio areas surrounding the central foyer. Besides their very active worship team, they have a 20-member choir, and a fabulous pianist/music director. Plus, the grounds are beautiful, including an alligator and turtles in the creek that runs between the church proper and the parking lot. Sooky and I attend every Sunday, and tomorrow we will go to their fund-raising auction, an event for which excitement has been brewing since our January arrival in Florida. This congregation, also, is emerging from the pandemic, with numbers and enthusiasm still to reach pre-covid levels, according to Sooky, who has been a winter-member for many years. Their services are thoughtful, weighted in favour of social action, and include a lot of lovely music, all from the two UU songbooks. I love singing with them--and having such a robust choir contributes a great deal to the overall sense of joy at each service. This is why I am thrilled with Claire and Joe, who are quietly building our own UUFO choir!!

I am busy in Port Charlotte. I do pottery! On a wheel! Throwing bowls, and other bowl-like objects. I have found square dancing, another active community of people. I am writing in two writing groups. I am happily keeping up with Sooky, who turned an astonishing 90 years old this week. But, as with other UUFO-ers who travel, especially for weeks at a time, I miss our UUFO—Sunday gatherings; committee meetings; choir; Bourget eggs; guitars in the sanctuary; engagement with the community and the world. Some days, all I can think of is how much I miss you. I sure hope you are all doing well! (Say Hi to Liz for me, thanks!)”

Meanwhile, **David B.** is in Mexico and will not be back in Ottawa until May.

Back in snowy Ottawa, UUFO skiers have been taking advantage of opportunities to head outside. See more on page 7!



Skiing outing enjoyed by Tom, Mark, Nanci, Nick, and Fran



Après-ski soup

Remembering John Johnson

by Pat Lucey, with many thanks to Claire Heistek, Mark and Elinor Mueller, Marilyn Kuhn, Louise McDiarmid, and Marlene Hewitt for their fond memories.

Our long-time member John Johnson has passed away peacefully at the age of 96. He is predeceased by his parents (Gudmundur and Elin Johnson), his siblings (Mundy, Steve, and Ella), and his daughter (Rae Johnson).

He was a devoted husband to his beloved wife June Johnson (née Reid) for over 73 years, was the proud father of his son Allan (Wendi), and proud grandfather of Adrian (Jen), Joslyn (Ricky), June (Mark), Curtis (Lyndsay), Chelsea, and Kristin (Miguel), and even prouder great-grandfather of Everly and Blythe.

John spent his life serving his country. He volunteered to join the Navy during WWII when he was a mere 17 years old. He fought bravely in the Battle of the Atlantic as an ASDIC Operator aboard the HMCS Dauphin. Upon discharge from the Navy at the end of the War, he became a Registered Industrial Accountant for the Federal Government of Canada until retirement in the 1980s.

John and June joined UUFO in 1997, and were active participants in the life of the Fellowship for many years. They attended the First Unitarian Church on Elgin Street in 1963 and remained steadfast members until they decided to join the Unitarian Fellowship a year after it was established.



John and June Johnson

Some memories of John from his Fellowship friends:

John always seemed such a lovely, gentle person. He spoke fondly of his roots in the Gimli area north of Winnipeg, and he was descended from the Icelanders who settled there.

June was very proud of the fact that folks at the Perley seemed to know and appreciate seeing John as she pushed him down the halls. He was a gentle soul - very bright but also very unassuming. I know that she and her family will miss him keenly.

In his professional life John was a Certified Public Accountant, and he lent his expertise to, and was appreciated for, his audits of the Fellowship finances. For a number of years, early in our history, John did our annual financial review. It was a very quiet but significant contribution to our Fellowship.

John had a quiet presence, but he was always happy to share stories with us about his years of military service. And he was an expert curling skip at the RA, and enjoyed playing golf.”

Friends may pay their respects at the Memorial Gathering on Friday, April 14, 2023 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at Beechwood Funeral Home, 280 Beechwood Ave., Ottawa. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Perley Health Foundation.

Here's the link to John's obituary in the *Ottawa Citizen*: <https://ottawacitizen.remembering.ca/obituary/john-johnson-1087151703>

And there is a Memorial page for John at the Beechwood website:

<https://beechwoodottawa.ca/en/services/john-johnny-johnson>



Board Walk:

An Invitation—To You, to Others.

By Nick LePan, Board President

In the priorities the Board laid out last fall, increasing membership was not among them. That reflected the idea that we needed to rekindle energy and connection in the Fellowship as we were able to gather more in person as Covid waned. The Board saw that as a precursor to being the fully welcoming and attractive community we want to be to potential newcomers.

So the Board has supported a lot of work related to worship lead by the Worship Cluster, but involving many others. We've made technology investments and enhanced technical back-up to make hybrid services more reliable and easier to operate. We've supported the Worship Cluster planning process to make it less onerous. We're revamping the help-for-service-leader guide.

Social action is very important to us as UU's. Our Social Action Cluster had already started in the spring of last year re-envisioning itself with new members and specific focus on three issues—indigenous matters and reconciliation, climate action, and affordable housing. The Board is supporting this re-vitalization.

We have more work to do to be the welcoming community we want to be but we are on a good path. It's an ongoing journey as a Fellowship and individually.

We have talked about how important it is to our ongoing vitality and viability to promote new friends and members.

So at our meeting in December the board decided to start to put additional focus on membership and outreach. At our meeting in January we were joined for a discussion by the Membership Committee—Hoppy Roy, Carole Seguin and Andrea Young. One strategy that attracted a lot of support was making us more visible in low-cost, low-effort ways in communities of like-minded people. We already have our website (though it could be updated), a facebook page among other things. Do we need more of an online presence? Other ways to let people know about us. What about partnering more with like-minded organisations, including social justice organisations—Do you have an idea? People talked about 'bring a friend to a service'—effective in the past. How about enhancing our linkages with Heartwood House organisations and their volunteers? In the past we've occasionally had fellowship-sponsored



events that were attended more widely. Can we enhance our presence at community or social action events?

There was also a "let's talk about it" session on the membership topic later in January that was open to everyone. There were lots of great suggestions. Coming out of that there was interest from a number of people in analysing as much of our aggregate information we can pull together from past years up until most recently. That would include analysis of membership/attendance trends and things that seem to influence engagement.

The Membership Committee is doing great work in welcoming newcomers, and dealing with the challenge of converting the initial contact into those who are trying us out being interested in signing up for follow-up.

What's the way forward?

In all the recent discussions there was consensus that outreach should be the focus of a new separate group. Are you interested? It doesn't have to be a huge commitment. If so, let me or another member of the board know. And if you have an outreach idea you would like to pursue let us know.

All the best as we move into spring!!!

FUN WITH FINANCE!

For the past 5 years, the amount of **pledged donations** has only dropped **below \$70,000** once. Do you know what year saw this drop?

(Find the answer later in this newsletter!)

Fellowship Pub Night

The monthly Fellowship Pub Night is a tradition which goes back many years, but we had to put it on hiatus three years ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Ottawa Public Health COVID restrictions began easing up a bit last summer, we gathered in June for our first patio pub night in a long while. It felt so good to be hanging out with our Fellowship friends again in a safe outdoor space, enjoying some food, fun, and good conversation together! We continued to meet throughout the summer, and as the weather turned cooler, we cautiously moved our monthly Pub Night indoors, keeping an eye on all the latest health regulations and COVID advice from OPH.

In past years, we moved around all over the east side of Ottawa from pub to pub, trying to find the place we could call our “pub home”, and now at last we have settled on Patty’s Pub for the time being. The food is good -- well prepared and with a varied menu, with selections for vegetarians and vegans. The staff is very friendly, and they feature local craft brewery beer on tap. And they have a very large patio area, so when the warm weather returns, we can meet outdoors again.

We’re all grateful to Claire and Hoppy for taking on the task of organizing our Pub Nights – Claire takes the head count of those who expect to show up, and Hoppy reserves a table for us. So please remember to let Claire know whenever you plan to join us – reminders will always be there in Friday Notes.

Everyone is welcome at our Fellowship Pub Nights, and it’s an excellent opportunity to newcomers to get to know us in a welcoming and casual setting, so don’t be shy – come join the fun!

Worship Cluster Notes

By Pat Lucey

I’m looking out my window at a **lot** of snow piled up on the ground, and some more of it sifting gently down from above, so let’s switch to my personal winter relief plan, and start basking in the promise of May and June (after appreciating all that March and April have to offer, of course).




Our theme for the month of March is “**Social Justice**”, and we will begin with a well-known public figure, Maude Barlow, who will speak about “Lessons from a Life of Activism.” Many thanks to Marion for inviting this distinguished guest. Our other guest speakers on this theme will be Carolyn Whitzman, whose presentation will be on affordable housing, and Kayoki Whiteduck, who will tell us about the Ajashki Food Security and Climate Change Learning Centre (FirstU’s “Special Project”). And on March 19th, the Board will lead us in a celebration of UUFO’s 27th Anniversary.

In April, we will explore the question “**What is Enough?**” with some Fellowship speakers, and with Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana, who will speak about what is “enough” for a refugee vs. a middle-class Canadian. Rev. Evangeline Danseco will be our speaker on Easter Sunday, and we will celebrate Earth Day with guest speaker Dave Hendleman, who will talk about climate justice.

Our theme for May-June is “**Affirmation**”. Chipi will be returning as a guest speaker, and other guest speakers, and UUFO members and friends, will be affirming their own values and beliefs during these last few weeks of our 2022-2023 program year. On May 21st, there will be no service in our Sanctuary, as we will be attending the CUC National Worship in Ottawa at Algonquin College as part of our national Symposium weekend. And on June 11th we will come together for our traditional and beloved Flower Celebration. Ah ... flowers. I know they’re down there somewhere .. under all this snow.

PUB NIGHT

Fun, food, and good conversation with Fellowship friends!



Thursday
5:30 pm

Mar. 16th
Apr. 20th
May 18th

*We meet at Patty's Pub on 1186 Bank St.
Everyone Welcome!*



Worship Cluster Team:
Sarah Baxter (Worship Coordinator), Allison Calvern, Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower, Laura Evans, Pat Lucey (cluster contact), Katie Lunn (Board liaison), Martha Nabatian, Nancy Rubenstein.

Welcome and Membership

By Hoppy Roy

The return to "in-person" services, has brought some new faces to our Fellowship as well as more energy and opportunities for building new connections and sharing ideas within our Fellowship.

Elinor Mueller inspired us to hold a "Let's Talk About It" discussion which was held on Zoom on January 18. Prior to this discussion, we met to discuss our own priorities as a committee and then met with some members of the board of directors to prepare for this important discussion. The focus was on the Welcome and Membership Committee, but broadened out into other possible areas for discussion!

Sixteen (16) people attended the "Let's Talk About It" Zoom discussion. We looked at four key areas:

- The current role of the Welcome and Membership Committee within our Fellowship
- Past and present statistical trends (and concerns) in terms of membership numbers and attendance at services (including on Zoom), as well as identifying factors that may be affecting those trends (e.g. aging membership, lack of children and young people, deaths and moves away from the area, affects of Covid-19 and our lay-led vs minister-led format)
- Ideas on how to improve internal connections and activities and well as working with other committees and the board to improve outreach (including our relationship with Heartwood House)
- Our need for new committee members and perhaps new committees (e.g. social, outreach, communication) to support and improve the life of our Fellowship

We found the "Let's Talk About It" discussion very useful and feel this is an excellent way to explore ideas and encourage broader discussion within our Fellowship.

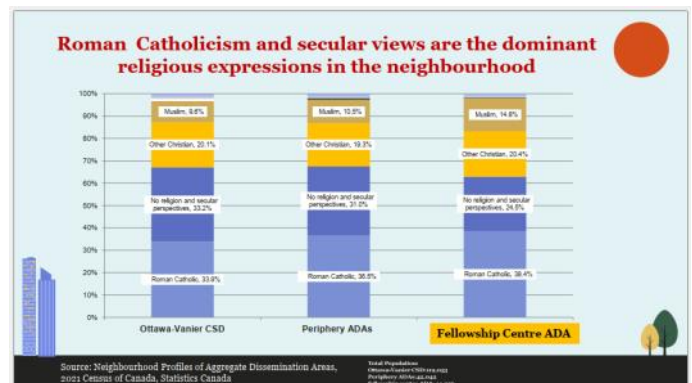
We hope to hold a "newcomers luncheon" sometime in the spring for anyone wishing to find out more about Unitarian Universalism or who may be considering becoming a member.

As always, we would love to expand by one or two new members. We generally meet twice a year (or as needed), work with the Sunday set-up teams to welcome visitors and newcomers, and with Sarah and the board to organize new member ceremonies, keep track of our UUFO Friends and Members and update our directory once a year. Please contact Hoppy, Carolle or Andrea either in person, or by email if interested.

Hoppy Roy - hopyroy@gmail.com

Carolle Séguin - 4carolle@gmail.com

Andrea Young - andreamkentyoung@gmail.com



Neighbourhood Engagement :

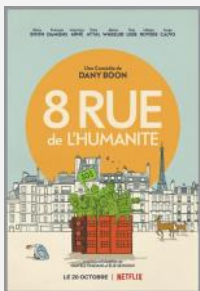
Did you know that we are located in an area with a large Roman Catholic population? About 35% of people in our UUFO neighbourhood identified as Catholic on the 2021 Census, while around 25% chose "no religion / secular."



Winter Fun Together

Mark and **Elinor** graciously offered to host a ski along the river one Saturday for those with cross country skis. After 2 weather cancellations, we were finally blessed with a sunny day but not the best ski conditions. Some folks decided not to risk a ski but joined in for a soup lunch at the Mueller's to celebrate those who did ski. Mark is an amazing soup maker, for those of you who have yet to taste his delights. He also does not do badly on skis, if you can keep up with him. Thanks to both Elinor and Mark for initiating such a purely for fun event.

The UFO Film Club recommends:



Movie Musings

By Michel Jan

Hello everyone! There have been some changes to the days of the week and month that we are holding our movie discussions, but all is stable now, and the discussions are now on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 on Zoom.

On Dec. 15th, 2022 we discussed *The Rules of the Game* by Jean Renoir. Most of us felt that the movie was dated, however that it was daring for the time. It was made in 1939 in France and is critical of wealthy and prominent people. Some of us didn't finish watching the film but it is considered an important work so kudos to people that watch it all and even more so to people that like it. The second film we discussed was *The Wonder* which is on Netflix and was playing at the ByTowne. We liked this movie and recommend it. It does start out slowly but stick with it -- it is worth it.

Our next movie discussion was held on Jan. 19th at Patty's Pub. This was because pub night was supposed to be the week before but the weather was awful so we combined pub night and movie discussion night. We discussed *Stuck Together*, a delightful film about people in Paris who live in an apartment complex and are not allowed to leave the complex because it is the early days of Covid and they are in lockdown. It is funny, sad and endearing all together. It has a heartwarming ending. We also, discussed Guy Maddin's *The Saddest Music in the World*, which is an experimental film with a story, but still different. We didn't like it much but if one likes experimental films one may enjoy it.

Lastly we held a movie discussion on Thursday Feb. 9th and discussed two films about amateur inexperienced people pushing their way into competing in very important competitions for their chosen sport. Both of the films are based on true stories, the first being *The Phantom of the Open* about a working class guy who decides he wants to compete in a high brow British golf tournament. He manages to get to compete and the rest is history. We all enjoyed this film very much. It is on Netflix. We also discussed *Eddie the Eagle*, about a working class guy who wants to compete in the Calgary winter Olympics in the ski jump competitions. The rest, here too, is history. We enjoyed this film though most of us preferred the golfer story, but they are both fun and both on Netflix. I hope you check some of these films out and please feel free to join our discussion on zoom anytime you want.

COIN FRANÇAIS

Rassemblement Unitarien Universaliste d'Ottawa

Du nord au sud : une danse de valises

Par Gustavo Gottret

« Nous [...] sommes voués à la reconnaissance et à la promotion de la liberté et la responsabilité de chaque personne dans sa recherche de la vérité, du sens de la vie et de la signification des choses. »

Celui-ci est l'un des principes unitariens universalistes qui nous avait le plus séduit, à Miriam et à moi, il y a déjà une quinzaine d'années lorsque nous venions d'arriver au Canada en provenance de la Bolivie, notre pays natal. Certes, notre voie spirituelle n'est pas identique à celles des autres membres du Rassemblement, mais nous nous sommes toujours sentis respectés dans ce sens. Et nous nous sommes également énormément enrichis avec les démarches spirituelles des autres membres, lorsqu'elles étaient partagées à travers les différentes activités du Rassemblement.

Atteignant l'âge de la retraite, nous sentions que le moment était arrivé pour rentrer en Bolivie. Ceci fut une expérience profondément spirituelle pour nous. Et nous allions aussi apprendre que la spiritualité et la bonne humeur vont souvent main dans la main. Permettez-nous de partager une anecdote à ce propos.

Ottawa à la veille du Nouvel an : le départ

« 23 kilogrammes et 300 grammes, oh non! »

C'était le poids de ma seconde valise, et on n'avait droit qu'à 23 kilogrammes par valise. J'étais fier d'avoir acheté une valise qui n'avait pas besoin de cadenas externe puisqu'elle comprenait une serrure à code intégré que je venais de programmer à un nouveau numéro. La serrure ne s'ouvrait cependant pas et je n'arrivais pas à ouvrir la valise pour enlever quelques affaires et les mettre dans une autre valise. C'était une heure du matin et, avec la fatigue, j'avais certainement fait une maladresse au moment de programmer la serrure.

« Qu'est se passe-t-il mon chéri? Tu ne viens pas dormir? » me demanda Miriam qui s'était levée pour aller aux toilettes.

Vingt-sept ans de mariage, à chaque fois que nous voyageons ensemble, Miriam a toujours ses valises prêtes plusieurs jours à l'avance. Et moi, toujours à la

dernière minute. Tant de fois j'ai regretté ne pas avoir appris de son esprit plus responsable et organisé que le mien.

Je pensais passer le temps nécessaire pour essayer les mille combinaisons possibles pour ouvrir ma valise, ce qui voulait dire ne plus dormir du tout. Miriam m'avait fait cependant comprendre que je devais dormir un peu. Et j'étais si fatigué...

Deux heures après on quittait l'appartement. Mohammad, notre gentil voisin iranien, nous aidait à descendre notre bagage et prendre le taxi. En fait, les taxis parce que, par erreur, j'avais appelé deux fois l'entreprise Blue Line. Heureusement finalement, parce que tout ce qu'on avait n'aurait pas pu entrer dans une seule voiture. Miriam était partie avec l'un des taxis et moi je la suivais dans l'autre.

La pensée de ce que j'allais faire avec ma valise avec surpoids continuait de me tracasser. Mon chauffeur, un immigré du Moyen Orient, me parlait avec humeur et enthousiasme de lui et de sa famille, ce qui me permettait d'apaiser mon esprit.

Une fois dans l'aéroport, je pris un chariot pour mettre la plupart de notre bagage. Miriam prenait soin de deux grandes valises à roues. Dans le comptoir de United Airlines, plusieurs passagers faisaient la queue. Un agent de l'entreprise s'approcha de nous et nous salua avec gentillesse : « Bonjour, quel plaisir. Ne vous faites point de souci, je m'occuperai de tout ». Il nous demanda nos passeports, et me demanda le poids moyen de chacune des valises. Il introduit nos passeports dans une machine et nous donna nos cartes d'embarquement jusqu'à Miami, via Newark. Il plaça les valises dans le chariot et nous accompagna jusqu'à l'entrée dans la zone d'immigration américaine. Ce qui était le plus incroyable c'est qu'il nous demanda s'il pouvait prendre une selfie avec nous!

Alors que j'exprimais à Miriam mon étonnement, elle m'expliqua : « Mais, ne te souviens-tu pas de lui? C'est le mari de Merlinda, mon amie albanaise avec qui je suivais des cours d'anglais quand on était de nouveaux arrivants au Canada. On est allé chez eux plus d'une fois ». Pauvre petite mémoire la mienne! Et quels joie et soulagement.



Nouvel an à Miami

Peu après Miriam et moi partions vers Newark où nous devions changer d'avion pour continuer vers Miami. En fin d'après-midi, nous arrivions à l'aéroport de Miami où nous allions passer la nuit. Après avoir pris tout notre bagage, j'essayais inutilement de prendre un chariot puisque le distributeur ne paraissait pas fonctionner. Je demandai du secours à deux dames qui semblaient travailler dans l'aéroport. « Attendez un petit moment », me dit l'une d'elles. Elle sortit vite de l'aéroport et prit un chariot qui avait été laissé sur le trottoir et me le donna. Cette gentillesse fut un baume pour nos cœurs.

Déjà dans l'hôtel de l'aéroport, et après avoir mangé quelque chose, Miriam et moi nous sommes effondrés dans le lit. Quel plaisir de dormir toute la nuit! La nuit de Nouvel an.

Le lendemain, tôt le matin, on était face aux comptoirs de BOA, la ligne aérienne de la Bolivie. Miriam m'avait conseillé de mettre mes vêtements d'hiver dans ma valise moins lourde puisque je n'en aurais plus besoin. Lorsque je plaçai la valise sur la balance, l'agente de la ligne aérienne me dit, « Votre valise pèse deux kilogrammes de plus de ce qui est permis. Vous devez enlever ce surpoids ». Je repris mes vêtements d'hiver pour les mettre dans l'une des valises de Miriam qui était moins lourde. J'étais assez nerveux parce que l'agente n'avais pas encore pesé mon autre valise avec surpoids, celle dont je ne pouvais pas ouvrir la serrure.

À ce moment, un autre agent est arrivé et se mit à peser vite toutes nos valises pour les mettre de côté avec celles qui allaient être transportés dans l'avion. Ouf!

Nouvel an en Bolivie

Après sept heures de vol on arrivait à l'aéroport de Santa Cruz, en pleine Amazonie bolivienne. Après deux heures d'escale nous devrions prendre un dernier avion vers Cochabamba, notre destination finale. Je priais

(Continued on page 10)



Célébrations Francophone



Nos **Célébrations francophones** sont toujours aussi enrichissantes tant au niveau communautaire que spirituel. Nous sommes bien reconnaissant(e)s pour la coopération et la participation de nos dévoué(e)s francophiles et l'ensemble de notre « Fellowship ». Nous envisageons une saison remplie de créativité, de fructueuses rencontres et d'importantes prises de conscience.

Équipe de planification :

Claire, Urbain, Andrea, Lucie-Marie

Futures Célébrations :

Le 26 Mars à 12h30:

Thème: Ce que nous sommes en tant qu'UU

Le 23 avril, 12h30:

Thème : Qu'est ce qui est suffisant?

Le 28 Mai 12h30:

Thème : Affirmation de notre potentiel

Le 25 Juin 12h30:

Thème : Rencontre spéciale et Rétroaction

Cercle de croissance spirituelle, le premier jeudi du mois à 13 h dans notre petite salle communautaire. Si l'écoute profonde et le partage t'interpelle, ce cercle tout simple et spontané est tout à fait pour toi. C'est toujours un privilège d'accueillir une autre personne qui nous apporte la richesse de sa présence. C'est vraiment un temps de paix, de prise de conscience et d'élan spirituel que l'on se donne.

Sois bien à l'aise de te joindre à nous. Tu es le (la) bienvenu(e)! S'il te plaît nous faire signe, contacte : luciemaricb@gmail.com

la danse de valises continue...

(Continued from page 9)

pour ne pas passer la douane à Santa Cruz parce que je n'aurais pas pu ouvrir la valise qui avait la serrure bloquée.

« Tous les passagers qui vont à Cochabamba, placez vos valises ici », ordonna un agent de douane, alors qu'un passager qui allait rester à Santa Cruz criait parce qu'un autre agent de douane révisait l'une de ses valises et lui disait qu'il n'avait pas le droit de faire entrer dans le pays certains produits.

« Ne craignez rien », nous dit notre agent de douane, « Vos valises iront directement à Cochabamba ». Encore une fois, quel soulagement!

Quelques heures après, tard dans la nuit, on arrivait à l'aéroport de Cochabamba. Je ne pouvais pas croire qu'on nous permettait, aux passagers internationaux, de simplement sortir de l'aéroport avec tous nos bagages.

Une fois dehors, mon frère et sa famille nous attendaient avec joie. Ils avaient deux voitures et nous amenèrent dans le bel appartement où nous allions habiter cette année.

Déjà chez nous, et prêts pour dormir, je pris la valise avec la serrure bloquée et je la plaçai près de moi de façon à essayer, tôt le matin, une à une toutes les combinaisons pour l'ouvrir. Je mis les trois chiffres de la serrure à 000 avec l'idée d'aller jusqu'à 999.

« Ce n'est pas intéressant ce que tu fais », me dit une voix intérieure, « Tout le monde ferait la même chose ». Alors je décidai d'aller à l'envers : je plaçai les chiffres à 999 pour continuer le lendemain. À ma grande surprise, à ce moment la serrure s'est ouverte toute seule!

Cette nuit-là Miriam et moi nous sommes endormis avec nos cœurs pleins de remerciement. On se sentait enveloppés de l'amour de tant de personnes qui nous voulaient le meilleur. Le lendemain, nous allions commencer un nouveau cycle dans nos vies.



Miriam et moi, le lendemain de notre arrivée à Cochabamba



One poet whose work touches many people, especially UUs, it seems, is Mary Oliver. Here is one of her poems that can be found recently on Facebook. I hope you enjoy it.

—allison calvern

"Messenger"

by Mary Oliver, from *Thirst*

My work is loving the world.
Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird — equal seekers of sweetness. Here the quickening yeast; there the blue plums.
Here the clam deep in the speckled sand.

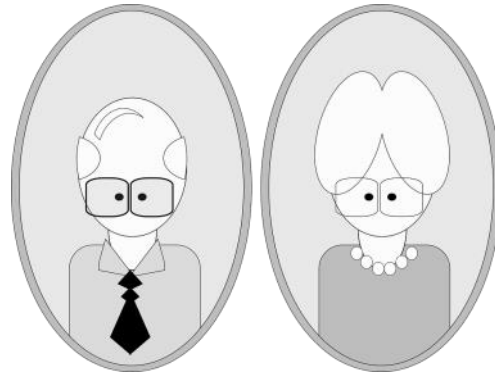
Are my boots old? Is my coat torn?
Am I no longer young and still not half-perfect? Let me keep my mind on what matters, which is my work,

which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished.
The phoebe, the delphinium.
The sheep in the pasture, and the pasture. Which is mostly rejoicing, since all ingredients are here,

which is gratitude, to be given a mind and a heart and these body-clothes, a mouth with which to give shouts of joy to the moth and the wren, to the sleepy dug-up clam, telling them all, over and over, how it is that we live forever.

Adult Religious Exploration:

Exploring Self, Spirit, and the
World Around Us



Who, Me, an Elder?

From the UUA Tapestry program introduction:

Imagine ... that you are having your portrait made, your face carved in beautiful wood. Not all of us would feel comfortable, especially as we grow older, with someone noticing our wrinkles and spots. At times we fear that our faces will betray us, showing our soft spots and weak places ...

*But if we trust in the force that created us—the force that knows us at our core and cherishes us the way an artist cherishes her creations—we may feel less afraid. If you’ve ever made anything, you know that mistakes can lead to new discoveries and unintended beauty. If you’ve ever carved, you know that the grain, the natural material you work with, is as fascinating as anything you could imagine. — Eliza Blanchard, in *The Seasoned Soul: Reflections on Growing Older**



We will be presenting **Hindsight, Humour and Hope: Who, Me, an Elder?**, a program in the Adult Tapestry of Faith program developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association. I haven’t read the whole program since I will be learning and exploring along with you. This 5 part discussion series will identify and explore the positives about being an elder. We will be encouraged to use journaling as well as “colour and line” as expressions of spirituality and creativity. The workshops are designed to help participants claim inner wisdom and remain adventurous in thinking about the future.

We will meet during the day starting in April going into early May. Once we have a few people signed up we will (try to) find a time suitable to meet, at the Fellowship. Please reach out to Laura or Sarah with questions and to sign up: ARE@uufu.org

OWL Training: An Opportunity For Outreach

Sunday May 21-Tuesday May 23

Following on the heels of the CUC’s National Symposium, is a training opportunity to become a facilitator with the Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education curriculum.

This program offers courses at every age group (Kindergarten, Grade 5, Jr High, Sr. High, Young Adult, Adult, and Older Adult!)

Running OWL is always a great outreach opportunity. This year, 16 kids (between ages 4-8) signed up for OWL at First Unitarian (with only about a third being families of regularly participating members).

Join a Q&A session on Monday, April 3rd on Zoom if you are curious to learn more.

Email ARE@uufu.org for Zoom link.

THE CIRCLE IS OPEN

How We Engage with Social Justice at UUFO

New year...new name! The Social Action Cluster is no more. Action for social justice at UUFO has not disappeared, but has expanded to three groups, with room for more!

Look for the articles from the Climate Action Group and Affordable Housing Group on the next page.

Reconciliation Action Circle

The members of the former Social Action Cluster will continue with a focus on issues affecting Indigenous peoples/communities and issues related to our relationship to these communities. We will pursue activities that we hope will take us along a path to right relations. We are still pondering a new name for ourselves, but for the time being have decided on: Reconciliation Action Circle. The “circle” is open. Feel free to ask us questions. Join us to plan and implement our programs. Or suggest an initiative you would like to undertake. We will also continue to share information about opportunities in Ottawa to learn from, celebrate with and support Indigenous groups in Ottawa.

We will continue our commitment to developing relationship with the urban Indigenous community of Ottawa, by sharing with you some information about the organizations that serve this community. Most are happy to welcome non-Indigenous community members to share in their cultural activities. The motto of the **Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health** is “one circle, one centre.” Wabano has weekly culture nights that welcome non-Indigenous participants. To be aware of the many special events they host join their mailing list. One of our group often attends. Please join us.

Mādahòkì Farm – is a new Indigenous attraction and gathering place in Ottawa’s Greenbelt (madahoki.ca). It is another centre for Indigenous experiences featuring a marketplace, powwows, celebrations such as the Summer Solstice Festival, equine and culinary training and much more. The marketplace is open Thursday - Sunday 11-4pm. Go to the market and visit with their herd of the rare and endangered Ojibwe Spirit Horses, Canada’s only Indigenous horse breed. In short it is a welcoming gathering space for the whole of the Ottawa community.

The Reconciliation Action Circle will continue to plan periodic Sunday Services, bring forward current issues for discussion and action and offer opportunities to deepen our understanding of Canada’s history and current relationship to Indigenous Nations. We hope you will continue to join us in this journey.

Claire, Elinor, Gary, Helmut, Marilynn, Nanci



Ojibwe spirit horse

What if the issues that matter to me don't fit into one of these three groups?

1. Our small action group model welcomes new groups!
2. Ask a board member about how your idea/issue might fit in
3. Set up a Zoom session to share your idea and attract support (email Sarah to schedule a “Let’s Talk About...” session)

Climate Action Group

Contact: Fran Mowbray

Last October some of us from the UUFO, concerned about climate change, attended a 3 hour workshop entitled “How to Face the Mess We’re in Together”. It was led by Robin Macdonald from “Work that Reconnects”.

Following on from that, ten of us met again in November. At that meeting we shared what we had been doing personally to reduce our carbon footprints, what we’d like to know more about, and what more we’d like to do to address Climate Change. It was a chance to hear from others about their thoughts, feelings and concerns. We met again on Jan 10 of this year. Many of us shared how difficult it was to keep motivated to take any kind of action in light of the magnitude of the Climate Change problem. Being in community and having an action focus were identified as important elements to help keep up morale. We identified three “projects” of interest to us. On Friday Feb. 10, we met to discuss these projects and the progress made to date. The three projects are: considering solar panels for the building, emergency preparedness, and education through services and talks. There has been lots of activity on each of these files, much of which we hope to share with the Fellowship in the months to come.

Anyone who would like to join us is very welcome. Come and see what we’re talking about. Add your ideas. There is no pressure to do more than you want.

Our next meeting will be Friday March 31 from 1-3 pm at the Sanctuary. For more information contact Fran Mowbray at francesmow97@gmail.com.



Affordable Housing Group (AHG)

Contact: Chris Baddeley Girard

As part of our research into affordable housing programs, members of our group recently had a meeting with Adrian Benjamin who is the Manager of Community Engagement and Volunteers with Multifaith Housing Initiative. We learned of the history of MHI, their current management of 5 buildings in Ottawa, two future building projects and how we could support MHI in its work to provide safe, affordable and well-maintained housing in inclusive communities. We will continue to follow and look for ways to support MHI in their response to the new City of Ottawa budget, their strategic plan and new projects. (See more about MHI on p. 15, one of our Heartwood House neighbours!)

On Sunday, March 12, Elinor and Bill will be leading a service with affordable housing as the theme. Dr. Carolyn Whitzman, (Adjunct Professor, Dept of Geography, Environment and Geomatics) who recently participated in a panel on TVO with Steve Paikin on affordable housing, will be the guest speaker. She is extremely knowledgeable about the theory and practice of creating housing to meet people’s needs. Carolyn has agreed to participate in a discussion after this service. Bring your questions and ideas.

The AHG will schedule its next meeting once the Alliance to End Homelessness releases its report on Non-Profit Housing in Ottawa, hopefully by the end of February. In the meantime, our group continues to monitor news sources, federal, provincial and municipal initiatives and budgets, attend meetings of various housing advocacy groups and discuss what actions would be useful in advocating for affordable housing in this city. AHG and other organizations are monitoring the progress in the City budget as well as the Province’s legislation related to housing and the effects of Bill 23.

We see housing as a right and as a faith community we see that our voice can be important.



The Cat Mom who Became a Cat Granny

By Pat Lucey

Having lived out in the country for over 30 years, Gary and I have been surrounded by cats, dogs, and chickens for a good long time. And although the COVID-19 pandemic severely curtailed our human contact, the work, joy, and pleasure of taking care of animals was never interrupted, so our furry and feathery friends became our non-human social safety net.

When you live on a little farm on a country road, the universe blesses you with cats – sometimes in the form of a wandering and unclaimed pet, sometimes as a “ditch kitten” stealthily dumped from a car in the dead of night, and sometimes as a snarling, hissing, spitting “career feral” looking for a

barn to sleep in and an occasional dish of food. So I was hardly surprised to discover two skinny, hungry, wary white cats in our garage on a cold morning in February 2022. I set out food and water for them without any expectations about how long they would stick around. Stray cats come and go – sometimes they stay and become part of the family, and sometimes they disappear without warning. But I always feed them, and if they seem to be attaching themselves to us as a prospective farm cat, I hustle them off to

Pandemic Pets

By Nanci Burns

Many of us found companionship, love and lots of fun with new pets during the Pandemic.

These two cuties, Coco and Snowball, waddled into our home the first months of the Pandemic we reached out to local dogs rescues to see if they had any dogs in need of fostering. We got a call from a small dog rescue group: “There are two of them. It will only be two maybe three weeks. Sweet little Chihuahuas, lifetime pals.”

Sure, we said. We're not going anywhere. It's not like we're going to become attached to them. They are not our type of dogs. We've always had big, active sporting dogs.

But three weeks became three months, and no one offered to take them. We became used to them, and they seemed to get used to us. One day, the four of us looked at each other and said: “We choose you”. And we're glad we did.

They made us laugh. They got us out walking each day. We met neighbours we had never met before. They loved us and they brought more love into our home.



Coco and Snowball

the vet for spaying, neutering, and deworming.

The white cats were immensely appreciative of the food and shelter – they slept in their own secret places in the garage – but were in no hurry to become friends with me, and I learned to quickly pull back my hands when setting down their food and water dishes, to avoid their swiftly scratching paws. Their skinny bodies began to fill out nicely from the regular feedings. And then they continued to fill out alarmingly around the middle, and in mid-April both cats showed up for breakfast looking decidedly post-natal, and we could hear faint mewing overhead in the garage loft. Although the mother cats remained aloof and skittish, they eventually permitted us to play with the kittens – a clever trick on their part, as they seemed to know that when humans bond with your kittens, those kittens will be well cared for. And they were so right: all the local animal shelters were full of cats waiting for homes, so I decided to foster them all and find homes for them (or keep them – I promised their mothers that their babies would always have a home with me).

Fast-forwarding to March 2023, all our kittens from 2022 have been spayed and neutered, and three of them have already been placed in their forever homes. We have some prospective homes for two of them, but if you know of anyone who is looking for a tame, charming, cute half-grown kitten who has already been neutered, dewormed and immunized, please do keep me in mind!

**How about you?
Do you have a
Pandemic Pet
story to share?**

Who are the People in our Neighbourhood?

Spring Spotlight on Multifaith Housing Initiative

By Nanci Burns



At first the name caught me. It sounded like a religious housing site, but in fact it is totally aligned with UU principles of inclusivity. The “multifaith” simply refers to the fact that it was founded and sustained by close to 70 faith communities in Ottawa. This includes our Fellowship as well as First Unitarian, with both being voting members. MFI was established in 2002 by religious leaders here in Ottawa who realized the shortage of affordable housing. They have teamed up ever since to address this gap in our city. MFI currently has 5 affordable housing sites across the city. Blake House is close to us in Vanier; Kent House and Somerset Gardens are in Centretown; the Haven is in Barrhaven; and the most recent site is Veteran’s House - The Andy Carswell Building, located on the former military base in Rockcliffe Park. LeBreton Flats is a recent focus and in partnership with Dream, an affordable housing partner, MFI will provide 130 additional units, with 30 designated for Indigenous people.

In researching their mission statement, I like the simplicity and the scope of their message: They want safe, affordable housing to become the norm for everyone: *When one person or one family has a safe, adequate and affordable place to call home, their lives are changed. When entire communities and cities like Ottawa provide housing and basic social services to the poor, the country is positively changed.*

You can learn more about them by visiting their website or become a volunteer. If you are an experiential learner, like I am, you can attend their AGM on April 23rd and share in a vegetarian meal afterward. Their main fundraiser is the Tulipathon that will be May 28th. We are all welcome to tiptoe through the tulips and advocate for affordable housing by raising funds for housing subsidies.

As Jennifer, their Manager of Communication and Marketing says:

“We are small but mighty and are always looking for more volunteers to join our cause.” You can apply here: <https://www.multifaithhousing.ca/volunteer.html>



Tulipathon 2022

Fun With Finance Answer:

In 2021 we saw pledges drop, as the realities of Covid not going anywhere soon began to have an impact.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa

Everyone Welcome | Bienvenue à tous

The Unitarian Fellowship of Ottawa is a spiritual community of people with shared values and diverse beliefs.

We are guided by the warmth of love, the light of reason, and the call of justice.

We come together to nurture meaning, hope, and reverence for the earth as we pursue a more just and compassionate world.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa

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Many thanks to our contributors and editors!

Editorial Team

Allison, Nanci, Pat,
Sarah



Spring at UUFO

Monthly Activities

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
(Worship)				Cercle de croissance spirituelle (UUFO)	Writer's Group (UUFO)	Meditation Circle (UUFO)
(Worship)	Board Mtg (Hybrid)			Film Club (Zoom)		
(Worship)				Pub Night (Patty's)		Meditation Circle (Zoom)
(Worship) (Célébration francophone)						
(Worship)						

Special Events

MARCH 12, 12PM

Affordable Housing—Discussion with guest speaker Carolyn Whitzman

MAY 19-21

Canadian Unitarian Council National Symposium!

- Workshop streams exploring dismantling oppression
- Multigenerational activities
- Talent Night!
- Banner Parade and welcoming ceremonies
- National Worship Service at Algonquin
- Photo booth: get your photo taken with Uni the Unicorn!



Spot Uni the Unicorn at the CUC Symposium!

Weekly event info & Zoom links come to your inbox in our Friday Notes!