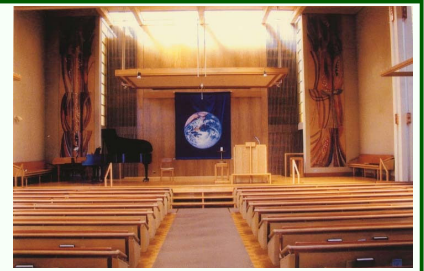




The Bulletin

Unitarian Church of Vancouver

949 West 49th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 2T1 604-261-7204
www.vancouverunitarians.ca Fax: 604-261-7205



JANUARY 2012

Sunday Services

All services begin 11 am.

January 1

Fire Communion: Embracing Loss
Mary Bennett, Patrick Dubois
and friends

Loss happens—entropy is inevitable, growth requires death. But beyond the zero-sum game of physics is a creative world of constant renewal.

Our cauldron will be ready to receive your memories of 2011. There will be lots of great music—much of it original compositions by Patrick.

A quiet time to acknowledge both the good times and the bad times of the year past, and to let it go.

Mary and Patrick have co-led this service for several years—it's become a UCV tradition.

January 8

What Is Wisdom/Who Is Wise?
Rev. Steven Epperson

We all recognize wisdom and esteem it as one of our most cherished ideals. But how do we define it? What is its story? How might we cultivate it in our own lives?

Join us for an exploration of the history and science, the mysterious nature, of this timeless virtue.

January 15

What's So Great About Happiness
Rev. Steven Epperson

It's Blue Sunday/Monday 2012. For those of us feeling the relentless social pressure to "put on a happy face," it's high time for us to take a closer look at why we're supposed to be feeling happy; why we're supposed to "get with the program," and what may be the down side of our happiness culture. Feeling contrary? This service may be for you!

Ingathering singing at 10:45 with Joyce Poley.

Bring a Friend to the January 15 service. *The New U Committee will be serving our famous, picked-by-our-own-hands and frozen Bumbleberry Sundaes!*

Share what it is that you love about this community with someone who just might be a Unitarian and doesn't know it!

January 22

Unusual Beliefs and Mental Well-Being

Rev. Steven Epperson

Has anyone ever told you that your beliefs and experiences are just plain crazy? That they're just a delusion, an obsession, just too bizarre, and that you need to get rid of them as soon as possible?

In this service, we'll explore some alternative, constructive ways of understanding and working with unusual beliefs and experiences.

January 29

Who Owns History?
Karen Bartlett

Do historical artifacts belong to everyone? Should they be removed from their environmental context and displayed in museums? What about artifacts that are plundered and sold, only to remain in private collections, or in some dusty basement?

This service will explore some of the motivations that have worked to preserve the silent voices of the past. We will consider cases of stewardship of selected archeological sites, and the power of cultural and physical environments that may speak to the psyche as well as the intellect of the stewards.

Karen Bartlett is a member of the Worship Services Committee, with a life-long interest in the culture and archeology of the American South West.

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> News > Monthly Bulletin



The Bulletin is the monthly newsletter (Sept. to June) of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver.

Editor: Connie Wigmore

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Email your submissions or comments to:

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UNITARIAN CHURCH OF VANCOUVER

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President's message

Pros and cons of UCV's future options

Keith Wilkinson (president@vancouverunitarians.ca)

At the November 2011 EGM the congregation expressed caution about expanding UCV strategy to actively embrace site partners with similar values until such time as options for acting independently were re-examined.

A significant number of congregants appeared to feel that they didn't know enough about the *Interspiritual Centre of Vancouver Society (ISC)* to know if we should enter into formal collaboration with that organization as a key strategy at this time. Accordingly, the EGM voted to hold another EGM where the pros and cons of various options could be reviewed in more detail.

Subsequent to the November EGM, Rainer Borkenhagen, who, with me, co-chaired the *UCV Interspiritual Centre Task Force*, and who, with Reverend Steven Epperson, co-chaired the most recent *UCV Site Development Committee*, began earnest work on mapping out the financing of several options for the future. The pros and cons of these options will form the basis for further discussion with the congregation at the special EGM scheduled for Sunday, February 19, 12:30 pm, in Hewett Hall.

In addition to this meeting, the UCV Board is scheduled to meet in January with board members of the ISC so that board members of both organizations can become a bit more knowledgeable

and comfortable with each other.

The primary reason for suggesting that we expand our current vision of UCV is that, despite excellent programs and excellent ministry, our membership has not been growing in numbers over the past decade, and we continue to run annual operating deficits. Although our site is valuable and we have considerable financial assets, the church is restricted in the way it can use many of those assets. It is for these reasons that the two most recent task forces and committees that have examined our future development have recommended, as a first strategy, collaboration with organizations with similar values.

No matter which strategic direction UCV chooses for the future, improvement of existing buildings and grounds will be a priority, so I hope you'll all do your best to support those improvements by donating to our 2012 Capital Campaign. And many thanks to those who generously donated to that campaign in the 2011 tax year!

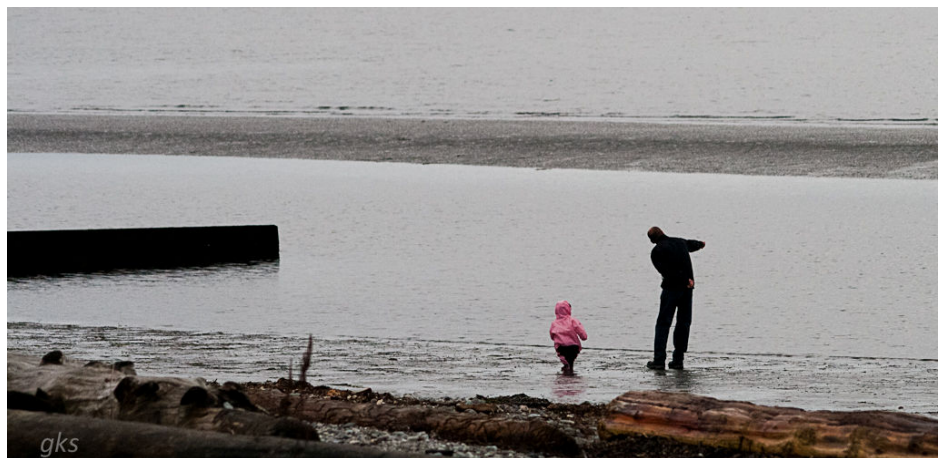
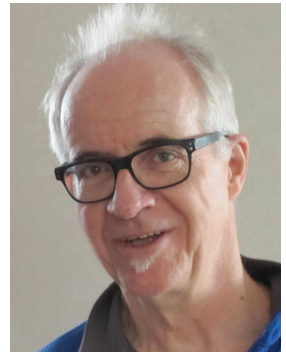


Image by Gail Stephan

From the minister's workshop

In praise of Russell Hoban

Rev. Dr. Steven Epperson (minister@vancouverunitarians.ca)

I was saddened to read the news that Russell Hoban died on December 13, 2011. Hoban was an American-born author of dozens of children's stories, including the *Frances* books—charming and edgy tales of a delightful young female badger, and of twenty adult novels, including *Kleinzeit*, *The Lion of Jachin-Boaz*, *Pilgermann* and *The Medusa Frequency*, among others.

This deeply original and eloquent writer will be remembered above all for being the author of what I think are and will be two enduring classics of modern writing—*The Mouse and His Child*, a full-length “children’s” novel published in 1967 (the Epperson kids, and their father, loved reading it out loud), and *Riddley Walker*, published in 1980, an adult, “post-apocalyptic” novel. Set in the remote future, some 2000 years after a nuclear war in England, the main character—a Huck Finn-like young man—sets out on an extraordinary quest across a ravaged, resource poor, mythic landscape. I’ve never read anything like these two books—both are personal favourites; in fact, I think I read *Riddley Walker* just about once a year. Speaking of *Riddley Walker*, the novelist Anthony Burgess, wrote, “This is what literature is meant to be—exploration without fear”; and John Clute called *The Mouse and His Child* “the most resonant and haunting book for children published in the past half century.” Yes, I think they’re that good!



Some words about these two books. *The Mouse and His Child* is the story of the adventures of a wind up, clockwork toy mouse whose child he holds aloft in his hands. When the mainspring that winds them up in a spinning dance gets broken, they are able to “travel”—and thus, a fable of escape and an amazing journey ensues in search of a family, a home, and a territory they can call their own. They search for the freedom and autonomy of “self-winding”. It’s a richly dark, funny and profoundly philosophical story that works on a number of levels—the kind that can fire the imagination of children and that can challenge and entrance adult readers as well.

At first glance, *Riddley Walker* looks like a book written in a foreign language, until you read the words out loud—then

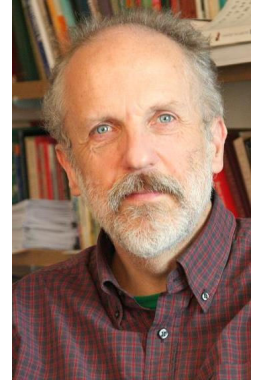
you discover that it’s written in what’s left of the English language and culture after having passed through the needle’s eye of catastrophe, loss and dimly recovered memory and myth. Inland/England is a ruined earth whose inhabitants eke out life by foraging and subsistence farming. The land is governed by a shadowy elite that rules by brute force and propaganda disseminated by itinerant puppet shows. The book’s hero, Riddley Walker, is rare in that he can read and write and has the ability to draw out intuitive and prophetic meanings from his own people’s grim experiences and from the scraps of legends and myths that survived the “Bad Times.” In contrast to those who struggle to rule and who believe that the key to power rests in the recovery of lost, destructive technologies, Riddley’s quest is marked by a yearning for a deeper “spiritual” power. His adventure is both a coming-to-adulthood narrative and a religious journey.

I can’t begin to tell you how wildly imaginative and moving this book is—a mash up of *Beowulf*, *Punch and Judy*, *Huckleberry Finn*, the *Tao Te Ching*, and Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. It’s a unique creation. By the end of the story—and I don’t want to give too much away—Riddley achieves a recognition of the danger and moral morass of the will-to-power. Let me quote his words, and in so doing, bring this month’s column to an end:

“*The onlyes poweris no power.*” (Later he amends that formulation): “*I sust that wernt qwite it. It aint that its no power. Its the not sturging for Power that’s where the Power is. Its in jus letting your self be where it is. Its tuning in to the worl its leaving your self behynt....If you cud even jus only put your self right with 1 stoan. Thats what kep saying its self in my head. If you cud even jus put your self right with 1 stoan youwd be moving with with the girt dants of the evry thing the Big 1 of the Master Chaynjis.*”

Walk on Bruder Riddley!

Farewell and thanks Russell Hoban! (1925-2011)



Fostering community

Ann Foster (afos72@vcn.bc.ca, 604-736-2117)

Your humble scribe recently caught up with spry nonagenarian and UCV member **Vera Marton**, who moved in August to Honoria Conway Residence at 33rd and Heather. But unfortunately, an auto accident in September has been causing her considerable pain ever since. She broke several ribs as a passenger in that accident, and is slowly recovering. She still has the same phone number and has been enjoying contact with her circle of friends. Vera's native tongue is Hungarian and she's also fluent in French, which she taught for many years, as well as serving on our partner church committee.



Unfortunately, **Pat McEwan** has suffered another setback, after seemingly recovering well from a heart attack in September. In late November, a stroke put her back into Burnaby General Hospital. At this writing, close friend **Willa Walsh** reports Pat is stable. She is enjoying visits and cards from family, friends and neighbours, some of whom are also helping her 97-year old husband, **Bill**, who is becoming frail. Pat would welcome even more visits and cards.

Better elder news. Birthday congratulations to **Arthur Hughes**, intrepid mower of lawns, voice of the services auction, and Poppy King, who turns 80 on January 5.

Jenny and Dwight Ivany are expecting their third child early in the new year. They might not be around church for a while, but look forward to returning when they're ready.

Dwight is grateful to **Way Kent** who stepped up to chair the Worship Services Committee until the end of March.

It's been nice seeing **Clarence Phelps** coming to UCV services recently. Clarence, AKA Mr. Sharp, is also the knife and scissors sharpener at our Farmers' Market. His prices are reasonable, too.

Another relatively new person is **Brian Teaman** who is on sabbatical from his teaching position at a college in Osaka, Japan. He will be in town until April.

A hearty welcome as well as to oldtimer **Barbara Schaefer** and her daughter **Avril**. It's good to see you again!

Franci Louann and partner Joe (Jose) left for Montevideo in early December, then to La Plata, Argentina (one hour south of Buenos Aires), where Joe has family. Unfortunately for us, they'll be coming less often to UCV when they return because they live closer to Beacon.

Regional news. Did you know that Eliot Institute organizes wonderful conference vacations for Unitarians, especially those from B.C., Washington and Oregon? It may still be possible to sign up for Winter Eliot, and you'll surely enjoy this delightful five day holiday spent in good company with others of our faith. Eliot also offers two weeks in the summer, which always fill fast. And this year, they're adding a third week focusing on the arts! Eliot always tries to save spaces for newcomers too, so why don't you be one of them. Perfect for all ages. For more information, contact www.eliotinstitute.org or just talk to **Gavin Grandish**, **Eva Perjes** and their kids who are frequent attenders.

Let's ring in the new year with some new news for Fostering Community!

Happy 2012 everybody!

From the ground up

A roof over our heads

Elaine Spilos, Chair of Buildings and Grounds Committee

In the 2011 Capital Plan adopted by the Board this September, the biggest item, both literally and financially, is new roofing for our buildings.

When we think about it, a roof is one of the most important structures in a building. In our climate, it shelters us from the elements—especially rain—and helps regulate the interior temperature. It provides a sound barrier. Most importantly, it protects the interiors and the structural components of our buildings.

In the case of UCV, we have not one but three roofs. Roofs have a lifetime of approximately twenty to twenty-five years. Our current roofs were replaced in 1993. At that time, money had been put aside in a *rainy day fund* to pay for the roof.

UCV's current roofs will be twenty years old in 2013, and twenty-five years old in 2018. Buildings and Grounds has



been informed that we must also do some necessary repairs to ensure the roof will last until 2018. Our plan is to make them last that long for sure.

In 2011 dollars, the roofs will cost \$195,000 plus HST. We have seven to eight years to create another *rainy day fund*. If our elders could build this church, all of us can replace these roofs—and more—to ensure our religious home remains beautiful and appropriately maintained.

Please give generously to the upcoming capital campaign!

UCV/MPNH community kitchen

Family Cooks

Connie Wigmore

(cwigmore1@shaw.ca)

A team of great UCV volunteers has just completed their first ten-week community kitchen series at Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House.



The programme has been developed for mothers of preschool children, particularly those who experience food vulnerability. During this first series, an average of six to seven moms participated. Children attended the preschool drop-in programme in the room next door.

Some comments by the participants:

"My kids love Canadian food. When I bring it home my older kids say, 'Mmmm, delicious'."

"It's more nutritional, helping children to get healthy food, the right way, not just junk food."

"You are like my aunts."

"You guys are all great—organized, smooth, friendly, nice relaxing place to be. Done on time, no rushing."

Here are examples of some of the food the participants cooked under the watchful eyes of kitchen facilitators, Marlene Conway and Catherine Hembling: Salmon Chowder, Toasted Barley, Bell Pepper and Corn Salad, Cheddar Cheese Scones, Vegetable Korma, Seven Vegetable Rice, Cheesy Broccoli Pasta Bake, Sweetly Spiced Chicken with Squash and Apples, Chocolate Zucchini Loaf. Each week, participants made two or three dishes, and then everyone sat down together for lunch. There were usually extra portions to take home for another meal.

It was interesting that this food was identified as *Canadian* by several of the participants!

The last week, the women made a Christmas Seasonal Dinner, with roast turkey and root vegetables. The older children helped to decorate shortbread cookies. A Japanese mom told us that in Japan, people often celebrated Christmas by getting take-out chicken from Colonel Saunders.

In late January, Marlene Conway and Hanno Pinder will host the next Family Cooks series, sponsored in part by the Canadian Diabetes Association.

Are you interested in helping occasionally? Please contact me if you would like to be part of this.

Folk/jazz/Beatles and such Sing-a-long with Jane Slemon

Friday, January 13

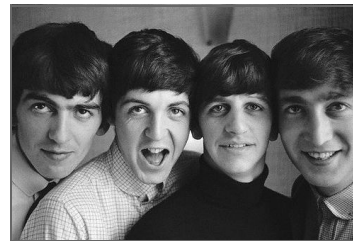
7:30 - 9:30 pm in Fireside



Merva Cottle is our host. This is a Services Auction item left over from March 2009! Jane Slemon is our song leader.

Come ready to enjoy yourself, to sing and to listen, and generally to smile a lot.

\$5 each at the door; refreshments available.



Send song requests to
Jane Slemon
(604-873-2208)

Mark your calendar!



UCV Services Auction
March 10, 2012

Planned giving advisory

Instead of simply remembering the Unitarian Church of Vancouver in your Will, consider purchasing a life insurance policy for the Church. This could make an enormous difference to the health of the Church. Any premiums you pay qualifies as a charitable donation, provided the Church is the owner of the policy.

For more information call Rainer Borkenhagen, Legacy Committee (604-221-6631).





Reflections on teaching RE at UCV

Tai chi lessons

Brock MacLachlan (bjmaclac@shaw.ca)

It was quite a learning experience!

When I began teaching tai chi through the UCV's Wellness program this fall, I simply followed the usual formula. As is typical of most tai chi classes in North America, students are taught the basic twenty-four posture Yang-style short form. The teaching of this form typically takes ten to twelve weeks.

The students come to classes one evening every week; and are taught two or more postures; building on what I had taught the previous week. By Week Ten, adding more postures to the ones they have learned in previous weeks, students get to the point when most have a good grasp of the entire sequence of the form from beginning to end.

It was by the end of the second week that anxiety levels—both students' and instructor's—had risen. I realized that I had to abandon this conventional way of teaching tai chi. It was counter-productive insofar as communicating tai chi's benefits. The fault lies in the belief that if the student learns a particular form (typically, the Yang 24 short form) there will be a point in the student's practice when the core benefits of tai chi begin to kick in.

This belief is rife with contingency. For starters, it is contingent on whether the student is practicing diligently on a daily basis. Further, the student is typically too preoccupied with getting the hands, arms, shoulders, legs, knees, hips (and all other parts of the body) in sync with any particular posture, that any attention to tai chi's core principles (those that yield the real benefits) is at best, by happenchance.

I came to the understanding that if I wanted the students to more quickly access the real benefits of tai chi, I would have to be more attentive to teaching the core principles of tai chi.

The new curriculum I have set begins with some warm-up exercises to loosen up the body. This is followed by a series of exercises in which students repetitively practise various tai chi components. Practising each posture individually allows us much greater attention to the structural integrity

of the posture; as well as how to carry it forth in the transition to a succeeding posture. The beauty of doing it this way allows me to bring in the *breathing* aspect of tai chi—so key to adding more texture to the tai chi experience. The learning of the actual form, which is still part of the curriculum, is of secondary importance.

What I am aiming to achieve in the training program is a more textured awareness of how the body is structured in the various tai chi postures and—more importantly—how this structural integrity is maintained through every transitional point from one posture to the next, at a pace and comfort level that allows for improved awareness of the practice. No doubt the students will be realizing how they carry themselves more effectively in their otherwise daily routines.

To sum up, I will not be as emphatic about teaching specific forms on any kind of fixed schedule. Students will eventually learn the Yang forms. There will be a slower progress towards learning the forms; but with better preparedness.

The change in my approach translates into a new fee schedule for the next round of Tuesday evening tai chi lessons. The monthly fee will be \$30.00 and the drop-in fee is \$8.00 per visit. Anyone, at any time, can drop in and begin the training.

Watch for Brock's classes at UCV in the winter months.



Image by Gail Stephan

Library Committee

Library news

Elizabeth Murdoch



Welcome two new members to the Library Committee: John Omielan and Errol McKinstry. The Library Committee is a going concern and we invite others to join us.

To start the new year, Arthur Hughes highlights two books he has donated to our library:

The Civil Rights Chronicle: the African-American Struggle for Freedom, editor Clayborne Carson.

“I have read several books and articles on this subject and can state that there is no more comprehensive and provocative work on this key aspect of U.S. history. I encourage any Unitarian with interest in current American society to read this book.”

With or Without God by Gretta Vosper, minister at West Hill United Church, Toronto.

“This book proposes a radical and fundamental change in religious faith today, in the direction of just and compassionate living. The sub-title reveals its premise, *Why the Way We Live is More Important than What We Believe*. It is a most interesting read for any Unitarian.

Have you read a book from our library that you'd like to encourage others to enjoy too? Why not write a mini-review and email it to me at ermvcr@yahoo.ca

We're delighted to focus this month's list of recently catalogued materials on those created by UCV members:

Non-fiction

Men & Women & Tools by Marcia Braundy. Excerpt from Fernwood Publishing review: “...Canadian women still represent less than 3 percent of tradesworkers. Why does this disparity continue to exist? *In Men & Women and Tools*, Marcia Braundy—herself a tradesperson—explores this issue...”

Children's fiction

Maggie de Vries has two new books published! ***Chance and the Butterfly*** and ***Somebody's Girl***.

Music CD

Breathing August by Jane Slemon. Jane launched this CD earlier this year. We're glad to have a copy available for borrowing.

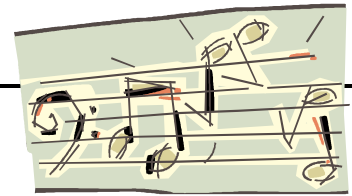
Just a note for those who'd like to donate materials for possible inclusion in the library collection, please ensure that there are no hand-written markings before your bring them to us.

The next incredibly popular Book Bash will be in March. Our cupboards are overflowing with many donations. Thank you! We can't accept more donations—please do not bring any more donations until after the next Book Bash!

We'd love to see you in the library! Drop in, Sundays 10:30 - 11:00 am, and 12:00 - 1:00 pm.

For further information please contact: Aphrodite Harris, Library Chair (604-987-5339, aphrodite_harris@telus.net)

Saturday, January 21
7:30 - 9:30 pm
Hewett Centre



Coffee House

Adults and families come together for these wonderfully cozy and astonishing evenings, infused with the spirit of the low key grass-roots coffee houses of our youth.

Celebrate UCV's vein of gold—our youth and young adults—in folk concert.

Listen to those whose ears are pressed to the world's complex issues and who offer us hope, fun and direction, as we head off into our lives, strengthened by community.

Tickets: \$5 or \$10, or what you will. Proceeds go to youth activities at UCV.

Performers contact: Jane Slemon (604-873-2208)



New member signing breakfast

Prior to the service on January 15, 2012, there will be a *New Member Signing Breakfast*, 9:30 am, in the Fireside Room.

This is for anyone who has attended *New U in a Day* and is interested in becoming a member of UCV.

Rev. Steven Epperson will witness the signing of the Membership Book.

For more information, call Dianne Crosbie (604-876-6543).

Arts Committee



In January,
“Wilderness Flowerings”
by Joko Kaneko.
Sumi (black ink) brush abstract paintings.

Daytimers

Wanda Justice (604-327-1851)

May we all enjoy a healthy, happy and peaceful two thousand and twelve.

Daytimers begin the year with a heart-felt thank you to Gay Kuchta, Pat MacBain, Chris Pearce, Shirley

Brunke and Sherry King for their generosity and kindness in providing a delectable and festive luncheon for seventeen Daytimers and UCV staff, on December 8.

Art and religion are two of the subjects that will engage the interest and discussion of our group in January. You are welcome to join us on the second and fourth Thursdays, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, in the Fireside Room. Bring a bag lunch.

Thursday, January 12. Alice James will speak on *A Healthy Religion*.

Thursday, January 26. *History of the Louvre*, a DVD presented by Ursula Litzke.



First Friday Café

Appreciating B.C.— the ABC's of 2011

Randall MacKinnon (604-582-IDEA)

January 6, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

What were the high points and the low points in *The Greatest Place on Earth*?

While we are at it, exactly where is *The Greatest Place on Earth*? And who were the great people who so declared it?

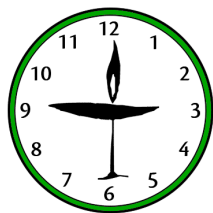
What did you appreciate?

What do we have to build on?

What do we have to celebrate?

What do we have to repair?

Anything to forget about 2011?—or should we simply forget about that matter instead?



Refugee Committee

Virginia Crabill (604-731-9393)

In Canada, there is currently a backlog of hundreds of thousands of refugee applications for private sponsorships.

The strategy being employed by the Conservative government to deal with this is to deny **all** applications for private sponsorships for the next two years, beginning December 15 2011. As we go to press, this is a matter of life or death for many, and certainly gives us a desperately tight deadline for our applicants.

Our pending applicants are the parents of the young Palestinian man whom we sponsored, and who arrived in June 2010. You may have met him, assisting us at our Sunday lunches.

His father was a maintenance engineer for the city of Baghdad and is fluent in English. Being members of the Palestinian community in Iraq, they were subjected to the worst kind of persecution by the Shia majority. Many of their close family members were killed. The parents fled to Syria and then had to flee to Cyprus, where they have been for four years. Now Cypriot nationalist organizations are turning against asylum seekers. These people are stateless, and twice displaced.

Many of his other family members have been sponsored by faith groups who are members, like us, of the Vancouver Interfaith Refugee Committee (VIRC). We have been working closely together. We have also benefited from the support of the local Muslim community.

I personally want to thank all who have been pitching in to help with our lunches, especially the clean-up, and with working at our Thrift Sale Table in Hewett most Sundays. We greatly appreciate your donations of small items which are either sold to raise funds, or passed along to our newcomers.

The Refugee Committee meets the



fourth Sunday of each month in Biddle at 12:30 pm.

For more information, contact the co-chairs, Virginia Crabill and Julia Myers.



Unitarian Music Club

New year, old club

David Donaldson

The Unitarian Music Club's first meeting of the new year will be held on Monday, January 30, at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary.

The evening will consist of a short informal concert and will include performances by Michiko Shelly, David Jordan, Janet Tsukioka, Ann Foster, and Michael Bradshaw.

The Music Club welcomes all styles of acoustic music. Performances are arranged in advance. If you would like to perform, come and we will set a date.

Everyone is welcome. When you come, please bring a contribution to refreshments.

More information: Jeannie Corsi (604-224-1040, nichorsi@interchange.ubc.ca) or David Donaldson (604-224-6010, dvdd@telus.net)



Unitarian Social Group

Saturday Night Social

The second Saturday of the month

January 14, 6:00 pm

Come out to eat and socialize at a potluck with fellow Unitarians. Everyone is welcome – families, singles, couples, all ages.

Please bring some food to share. Bring your board games if you like. Contact Eva Perjes (604-873-0770) for more information.

An evening with Koko Tanimoto Kondo

Living with Hiroshima, my memories of 66 years

**Sunday, January 29, 6:30 – 9pm,
Unitarian Church of Vancouver
(admission by donation)**

Ms. Kondo was born in Hiroshima. She speaks about the effects of the bomb on her life, and her ongoing work for peace.

This event also includes a performance, *Futility of War* by mime artist Yayoi Hirano to *Bolero*, music by Maurice Ravel, played at the piano by Sara Beuchner and Chihiro Honma (four hands).

Young people from Vancouver who have participated in the Hiroshima/Nagasaki Study Tour will give their testimonies.

The event is presented by the Unitarian Church of Vancouver Adult Education Programme and the Social Justice Committee, and co-sponsored by the Peace Philosophy Centre, Save Article 9 and MOA.



Food Banks: charity or the right to food?

Leslie Kemp, Social Justice Committee member

By the time you read this, you may have already enjoyed your mid-winter/Christmas dinner. Traditionally in northern societies, this time of year marks the end of the food grown, produced or hunted over the previous season. It is a time of celebration, knowing that the months ahead may be lean until spring which brings new growth and more appetizing food possibilities.

Today we live in a world of mechanized farming, food shipment around the globe (strawberries at Christmas!), and urban life. We are not always conscious about the cycles of growth, harvesting, preservation, and living off the fruits of the last season even though these cycles are reflected in many of our traditional celebrations. Most of us no longer experience the lean months of watching the supplies from last year's harvest dwindle, hoping to make it to spring.

This is not true for 2.7 million Canadians who are *food insecure*. Food Banks Canada's annual hunger count (conducted in March 2011) reported that 851,014 Canadians, representing 349,842 households, were assisted by food banks. This usage is 26% higher than that in 2008. In BC, 90,193 people used food banks. And many people suffering food poverty do not use food banks.

But are food banks the answer to this food shortage? Are food banks part of the problem or the solution to feeding hungry Canadians? On December 11, this question was posed by Professor Graham Riches, former director of the UBC School of Social Work, at a Social Justice Committee Forum.

On the positive side, Graham noted that food banks are a practical way of demonstrating compassion for our brothers and sisters. Many of us are moved to help people who do not have the means to adequately feed themselves.

However, Graham also pointed out that food banks, which started as a *temporary* measure in the early 1980s, have now become institutionalized

and are part of a major global industry operating in over forty wealthy countries. Increasingly, food banks are part of the corporate world. Moreover, food banks are failing to ameliorate hunger—35% of food banks reported that they are not able to supply the food needed by their clients and are rationing food distribution.

Perhaps one of the biggest problems with food banks is that they are enabling governments to look the other way and not address poverty. Canada is a signatory to the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Article 11 of this covenant recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living. This includes the right to adequate food, clothing, housing, and *the continuous improvement of living conditions*. It creates an obligation on parties to work together to eliminate world hunger.

Food banks eliminate the dignity of being able to choose what food we eat. Surely, this is in violation of our first principle as Unitarian Universalists: respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

For further information about Graham Riches' work on this issue see the following: <http://thetvee.ca/Life/2007/08/28/FoodLines/> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWBT11Zc2tM>

The Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church meets the third Sunday of each month at 9:30 am in Hewett Centre. We are focusing much of our work this year on *Inequality*. We welcome interested UCV congregants to join us.

Please contact socialjustice@vancouverunitarians.ca for more information about the committee.



UCV Calendar – January

Sun. 1	Office closed thru Jan. 2		
Tues. 3	Office re-opens	Thur. 19	5:30 – 7:30 pm. Eat, Meet, and Write, Hall
Fri. 6	6 – 10 pm. First Friday Café, Fireside	Thur. 19	7:30 – 9:30 pm. ARE: Madness Radio, Hitschmanova
Sun. 8	12:30 – 1:30 pm. Forum, Fireside		
Mon. 9	7 – 9 pm. Sacred Circle Dancing, Fireside	Sat. 21	7:30 – 9:30 pm. Youth Coffee House, Hall
Wed. 11	7:30 – 9:15 pm. ARE: Jungian Study Group, Fireside	Sun. 22	12:30 – 1:30 pm. Forum, Fireside
Thur. 12	11 – 2 pm. Daytimers, Fireside	Thur. 26	11 – 2 pm. Daytimers, Fireside
Sat. 14	6 – 10 pm. UCV Social Group, Fireside	Fri. 27	5:30 – 9 pm. Fourth Friday Film, Fireside
Sun. 15	12:30 – 1:30 pm. Forum, Fireside	Sun. 29	12:30 – 1:30 pm. Forum, Fireside
Sun. 15	12:30 – 2 pm. UCV Book Club, Lindsey-	Mon. 30	7:30 – 9:30 pm. UCV Music Club, Sanctuary

UCV Forums

Mary Bennett

Sundays from 12:30-1:30pm in the Fireside Room. All are welcome.

January 8

MLA Welfare Challenge:

Can you Live on \$610 a Month?

Bill Hopwood

Raise the Rates, an anti-poverty coalition, challenged BC's MLAs to live on the single person welfare rate of \$610 a month.

Jagrup Brar, MLA for Surrey Fleetwood, announced in November that he had accepted the challenge. For January he will have \$610 for his shelter, food, transit, phone, personal hygiene and all other expenses – just what the government of BC expects 90,000 other people to do every month.

In addition there are a further 90,000 people living on disability welfare, a higher rate but still in poverty as they have higher living costs. The Challenge, while not the same as living long-term in poverty, will highlight the need for change in BC's welfare system.

Bill Hopwood is the organizer of the MLA Welfare Challenge and will speak about the purpose of the Challenge and the need for *Justice not Charity*.

January 15

Why Hiroshima now?

Tama Copithorne

Tama Copithorne will discuss the significance of the current Museum of



Anthropology (MOA) exhibition, **Hiroshima**, by internationally praised Japanese photographer, Ishiuchi Miyako. The MOA exhibition ends on February 12.

In conjunction with the exhibition, there have been various public events programmed throughout the city and Tama will describe two of these.

Living with Hiroshima: My Memories of 66 years by Koko Tanimoto Kondo will take place on Sunday, January 29, from 6:30 – 9:00 pm at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver. (See event description elsewhere in The Bulletin).

Tama will also talk about the play, **One Thousand Cranes**, by Colin Thomas and translated by Toyoshi Yoshihara, performed in Japanese by Bunkaza Theatre Company (Tokyo), with accompanying English surtitles and storytelling. February 10, 7:30 pm and February 11, 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm, at UBC Frederick Wood Theatre.

Tama Copithorne was born and educated in Japan, Canada, and USA and has lived and worked in Ottawa, Vancouver, and many different parts of the world with her Canadian foreign service husband and their two sons. Until retirement she was director of Japanese Culture and Communication at David Lam Centre for International Communication, Simon Fraser University. Tama is a founding member of Vancouver Save Article 9 and a Past President of the Board of Vancouver Chamber Choir.

January 22

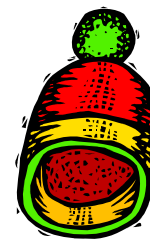
Board Forum

There are important projects about to begin at UCV. The Board has not finalized the focus for this forum.

January 29

Social Justice Forum

The topic for this forum has not yet been finalized. Stay tuned.



Winter on the

Downtown Eastside

Lily Ha is knitting up a storm making hats for people who don't have them or the money to buy them. She made sixty and donated them recently!

I'm a bit of a knitter too, and we wonder if there are people in our midst who have yarn remnants that could be donated for this effort.

Thank you, Gail Stephan

gailstephan@live.com