

Unitarian People

NEW TORONTO STAFFERS

Two new faces appeared in the CUC Toronto office this past fall, and have quickly fitted into modified job descriptions. **Philip Strapp** is the Information Coordinator, with responsibility for the database, mailing lists, bookkeeping, publications and annual meeting registration. With a background in office administration and computers, Phil is a new and enthusiastic member of the Neighbourhood UU Congregation in Toronto. **Paola Jani** is the CUC's Administrative Assistant – the organization's frontline person for all email and phone enquiries. She also manages the monthly mailing and record-keeping for lay chaplaincy and the board of trustees. A recent U. of T. graduate, Paola has experience in customer service, administration, and volunteer coordination. Her first affiliation was to the Unitarian Church of Hamilton. *Welcome Phil and Paola!*

MINISTERIAL UPDATE

Rev. Leaf Seligman took over as the new minister at London Unitarian Fellowship in September. Also serving new congregations this year are: **Rev. Carole Martignacco** at North Hatley, **Rev. Katie Stein Sather** at Beacon Unitarian Church, **Rev. Frances Deverell** at the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon and **Rev. Meg Roberts** at the Unitarian Church of Calgary. Now serving as intern ministers are: **Danielle Gerrior** at Westwood, **Sally Du Gar** at Toronto First, **Daniel Owens** at Ottawa First.

YOUTH OBSERVER TO BOARD

Myda Egrmajer, 17, of Ottawa is currently the youth observer to the CUC Board of Trustees. She says, "I am all about speaking out for youth, and I hope that someday we will change this crazy world (which definitely does not have enough pillow fights, field romps and mud sliding) one step at a time (although leaps are even better)." She attended her first board meeting in the fall, and reports that she's "enjoying belonging to the new network of communications and people across Canada."

Testimony

by Helmut Kuhn

If I'm to be any Thingian, I guess it's Unitarian

I guess I'm a Unitarian. For a long time I resisted being any kind of Thingian. But this Unitarian thing may have me.

A long time ago, I was in a situation where I had to make a "statement of faith." I was approaching the end of my training to become a Baptist minister. My studies had made me increasingly sceptical of talking about matters of belief as though they were things of knowledge – most especially talking about God as something definite.

In fact, what I found I could say in my faith statement was precious little about God, only that God – Something – is. Not a God who "exists." Not the God of Christian doctrine. Simply, God. Any effort I made to define God seemed a gross affront to the reality.

There is something about God as I discovered her – or him or it – that is defiled when we pretend to know something of her character and parade around some set attributes that we say describe her. So, my faith statement was somewhat curtailed. I could only add that I knew myself to be a dependent human being – on the earth, on my fellow creatures, and especially on my friends and family.

I guess that's when I, unwittingly, became a Unitarian. I certainly wasn't suited to be a Baptist minister!

Marilynn – my wife who had shared and shaped this faith journey with me – and I set out on a new course that led me into international development, which I increasingly came to understand as work for peace and justice.

Throughout our journeys we have always valued community. For a time we found it with some other non-con-

forming Baptists. Later, in Regina, we found it in our international and adult education work and in grassroots political and social justice activities. Fifteen years ago we moved to Ottawa and lost much of that. After some years in search of community, we began to explore some churches, including the Unitarian.

That's where I heard probably the most exciting thing I'd ever heard from the pulpit of a church: the minister saying he was an atheist ... and nobody flinched!

Not that I'm an atheist. Sometimes I think I sense divinity. It may be in

an intimate, sincere, conversation with someone. Or it may be in an experience of love or compassion, of forgiveness or confession. I sense it in certain ideas, like the idea that we should walk softly on the earth.

So, Marilynn and I became charter members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa. We've found community there. I don't always like to go. (It has ruined my Sunday mornings!) But if I go, I'm pretty sure I'll be reminded of holiness, might even come close to it.

I'm also pretty sure that if there's help for me anywhere to become a better person, I'll find it in this community. I also have faith that as our Fellowship matures, we'll find ways to use our collectivity to add some good to the world that will be greater than each one of us doing our own good things by ourselves. ☐

— Contact Helmut Kuhn at hkuhn@rogers.com. He chairs the CUC Peace Study Group whose resolutions will come to the CUC Annual Meeting in May.

