

2015 CUUWA Newsletter

Holiday Season is time for the biannual CUUWA newsletter.

GREETINGS from Council!

Please read on for a summary of what we have been doing on behalf of members and for our individual best wishes.



The aboriginal cultural renaissance has been an inspiration for all Canadians this year.

Please meet: Tlúu Jaad--Canoe Woman (2014) by April White, Haida artist living in Powell River, BC (google her website for other designs including the recent Canada Mint coins.)

“Leaving behind her high status and wealth, Tlúu Jaad has embarked on an odyssey to seek spiritual enlightenment and, in the process, is transformed, Wind Spirit surrounds her, challenges her. Hair and feather tempest-swept, Tlúu Jaad is in transition between two worlds. Caught on the cusp between air and ocean, she sings a ‘paddling song’ while touching the magic aura that surrounds the Flicker Feather paddle. SGáan—Killer Whale— a supernatural being - works synergistically with the woman, using his tail to intensify the power of the paddler’s stroke and propel Tlúu Jaad through a portal and into the spirit world. There, time and mind are suspended. There, all in the cosmos is available for the knowing.”

2015 AGM – Ottawa

Margaret Linton and her Ottawa team hosted a wonderful Anishnabe tea on Sunday, May 17. Consistent with the theme, aboriginal herbal tea, scones and jam, and feather filled tea pots were provided for attendees who were entertained by a women’s choral group. Guest speaker, Claudette Commanda, National Coordinator of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Studies and a professor at the University of Ottawa, spoke on “Decolonizing Canada: A First Nations Perspective”. The event was a success with approximate 60 in attendance. Our thanks to the Ottawa women for their version of the traditional pink tea, a popular “CUUWA tradition” at CUC meetings. Note: as this newsletter was in its final stages, we heard Ms Commanda bless the work of the newly appointed federal Commission and Minister Jody Wilson-Rayould (BC MP) used the

K'omox greeting *Gila'Kasla* in her address. Given the themes of our 2015/16 AGM teas, CUUWA truly has a special connection to this issue.

2016 AGM – Vancouver

So that we retain complementarity with CUC, we will hold an AGM and host a Tea at the Vancouver May long weekend meeting. In 2017, we'll have a teleconference AGM.

2015-16 Council Meetings

The new Council has held two teleconference meetings (September and December). Our first mother-daughter team, Jo-Anne and Anneke Elder-Gomes bring fresh ideas and energy to the Reproductive Justice and March 8 initiatives. Caroline Jondahl focuses upon the Bursary project and will develop template letters. Janice is preparing an archive. Adina and Betty ensure that the administrative work gets done. Margaret Linton does communications and would really like web site support; she also handles the treasury and memberships so she is overworked and would really like to hear from you!

March 8 Services

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes, as CUC ACM coordinator, facilitates our goal to have some component of the Sunday service closest to International Women's Day be woman-centred. We think that approximately one-third of the 46 UU Congregations and Fellowships have participated, but not all have shared their ideas on our web page. Rev. Carole Martignacco is preparing a resource package. The eventual objective is to evolve a tradition that is as beloved as the flower communion. Perhaps by the 10th Anniversary of CUUWA, we will have achieved success.

CUUWA Legacy Bursary

Motivated by the Prairie Women's Gathering donation, a CUUWA Committee has been formed to establish a Legacy Bursary. The concept also evolves from the UUWA Theology Award which has been granted to several Canadians, one being Betty Donaldson. More details will be shared by the 2016 AGM but interest in supporting this project is high; one donor has already offered \$10,000. Our goal is to establish matching grants, mother-daughter donor combinations and commemorative gifts. Building a strong financial base, with the guidance of CUC, CUUWA will use investment income to grant awards to applicants, possibly on a biannual basis. Projects must further the development of women-centred spiritual and religious insights, but will not be awarded for personal need or training. Please contact Betty or Caroline for further information.

Reproductive Justice Committee

The updated Abortion Rights Resolution that passed at the CUC AGM was the highlight of 2015. Gillian Burton, Betty Donaldson, and Margaret Linton started the writing process in August; circulated a draft to the CUUWA membership in November and met the December CUC deadline. In March, the Resolution was revised: in May it was approved and now amends 1980 Abortion Rights Resolution. As follow-up, CUUWA will lead a national monitoring group and implement the action proposal.

The Reproductive Justice Committee decided on three activities this year.

Anneke created the web CUUWA web page www.facebook.com/CANUUWA She and Jo-Anne maintain it by posting reproductive justice issues and events as well as women-related issues. It is a public site, so there is no need to be a facebook member. Please visit it, see what you think, and participate or recommend it. The second CUUWA activity this year includes writing letters and creating templates for letters that promote the policy of accessibility to abortion for all Canadians. Margaret and Caroline would appreciate your involvement.

Our third goal this year is to promote OWL and abet the training of OWL trainers and facilitators. Here is a report from Jane Fox. *“ To encourage and facilitate teacher trainings for the UU Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality program throughout Canada, promote the program individually within our own congregations and spread the word to other CUUWA members.*

OWL sexuality education is taught in positive, comprehensive and age-appropriate ways to set age groups. There are several levels: Elementary includes Kindergarten to Grade 2 and Grades 4 - 6. Junior youth includes Grades 7 -9 and senior youth is Grades 10 -12). Young adult and adult OWL classes are offered in some areas and a senior adult curriculum is being developed. See the website for curriculum and training details: www.uua.org/re/owl.

In 2015, there were two Canadian training sessions, both for elementary level teachers. After the Ottawa CUC ACM preconference, 10 newly trained teachers took OWL home to their 5 congregations. In November, 17 people from 6 congregations from BC, Alberta, Oregon and California were trained in Victoria.

If you believe, as we do, that Our Whole Lives (OWL) education would benefit your congregation and even your community, plan to attend the 2016 May ACM preconference in Vancouver conference. You will be so thankful you did.

On a personal note, I taught both junior and senior youth OWL at Ottawa First (2004-2005) and trained for the elementary age level last month. It is important learning done in a fun and respectful way and one of the best ways to teach our society how to be sexually educated, self-confident, and safe.”

UN-UNO visit

Betty Donaldson visited the UN site in New York City and attended a fundraiser for the UN-UNO at All Souls Unitarian Church. A summary of her perspective will be published in the CUC January enewsletter. It's possible that future collaboration with respect to women's issues might be possible – did you know the UN has a Women's Guild? Check it out.

Our Three Wise Women – now a CUUWA tradition - remind all members that giving is important but put yourself on the gift list of people needing love. Timeouts work! Reflection nurtures our souls during this dark and cold season. **May 2016 add wisdom, laughter, and illumination to our lives. May there be more Peace on Earth.**

MARK YOUR NEW 2016 CALENDAR:

March 8 (or thereabout) - Women's Service

May 22 – CUUWA AGM and Tea. Jenny Podlecki is the local host. Her committee plans a West Coast “Green Tea” with an ecological and environmental theme.



Blessed Greetings from the 2015 CUUWA Council Members.

***Betty Donaldson
Chair, Courtenay BC***

The Three Wise Women of Christmas: In the traditional Christmas story, Anne, Elizabeth and Mary are “full of grace” as they happily prepare for a baby’s birth. In contemporary society, women are the chief memory- makers ensuring that favourite holiday treats are available (stores stay open late), that (electronic) cards are sent to loved ones, and that everyone receives a gift, even if it is just a “Merry Christmas” to the postal worker. Who was your woman “ of grace” when you were young and vulnerable, and for whom will you be the chief memory-maker this December? We are the women of Christmas: May we have a joyful season and may we make someone else’s much brighter. For my 75th birthday, I visited New York City. While I love living on Vancouver Island, signature birthdays deserve to be honoured. It was a wonderful four days that generated good memories.

Margaret Linton, Ottawa, ON
Treasurer (Membership) and Communication

This is such a hopeful time of year - relating birth stories with the endless possibilities that new life brings. And in Canada, many women have regained hope in the possibility of: justice for their aboriginal sisters, equal voices in politics and public matters, and welcoming new families to Canada coming from desperate situations.

So I found myself last night (after the climate change march) at a feminist operetta (superb in all aspects) – the comedic moments though were most poignant. Here we are in our Canadian culture where this is the time of year we talk about Mary giving birth (Did she really say yes? Did she have a choice?). Then, in a few months, we have Mary going through the anguish of the death of same child. And we get this narrative after year - is this healthy narrative for us and for our society?

So, yes we have come a long way! The Suffragettes worked for women to have the right to vote and equal rights and including the political realm. Feminists of the 80's worked at equal rights in the work place and for ownership of women's bodies. The third wave of feminism today is focused on ensuring these rights and laws applied in practice to themselves, to all women in Canada of any race colour, orientation or creed as well as our international sisters. It calls for a change in the underlying narratives in our society to ensure persons are equal and have choices.

Adina Lyon, Winnipeg, MN
Secretary

Peace of the Season to Canadian women and, in particular UU women, who gave huge commitments of time to make political change recently. May love and cooperation give us the strength to continue the global struggle for a better world in 2016.

Janice Tait, Ottawa, ON
Archivist

I have made the big move to a retirement home in Ottawa. Unitarian House is a beautiful home close to the church and surrounded by lovely flower gardens. I'm settled in a recently renovated apartment with all the comforts one could wish for. Making friends and finding meaningful work are next on the agenda.

Caroline Jondahl, Montreal, PQ
Legacy Bursary Committee

As history has shown, when we act with our arms linked, and walk with compassion in our step, we become one with all that we encounter on our path - the life in the seas, the life on land and in the sky, and the people, strangers, friends or family. It is a glorious state, and lightens hearts - theirs and ours alike. It only takes awareness, a will to goodness, and courage. May we all be blessed by such encounters.

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes, Fredricton, NB
Vice President, March 8 service facilitator

As a mother and daughter in a large, multifaith and multiracial UU family, we are happy to offer our perspectives to the CUUWA. We bring you our passion for many commitments we share, and to which Anneke brings unique energy. We are excited to address feminist issues, reproductive rights and health, support of gender diversity and gender minorities, First Nations concerns, goddess spirituality, and youth and young adult connections with all of you and with the larger Canadian UU community.

During this holiday season, we look forward to working together towards a peaceful world, in which all people may grow and thrive together, and act always from a place of love. We look forward to 2016 as a step towards more justice, a greater appreciation of diversity, and a deeper spirit of compassion towards all who surround us and whom we will welcome.

Anneke Elder-Gomes, Fredricton, NB
Atlantic Member at Large

Revs. Kathy Sage & Carol Martignacco (ON and PQ)
Ministerial Liaison.

My Season Wish is that as Unitarians and Universalists we deepen our understanding and lived application of our UU Principles and Sources. May our Sources enliven our direct experience, awaken our Prophetic words and deeds, broaden our wisdom, love more justly all neighbours, quicken our reasoning, and harmonize our consumption with nature's fragility. Kathy.

Gloria Steinem, leader of the women's movement beginning in the 60s and 70s said:
 "A movement is composed only of people moving"; I have no intention of passing my torch – I'll keep my torch to light the torches of others." Carol.

Jenny Podlecki
Vancouver Host Committee Chair

I have just confirmed our AGM 2016 Theme and Speaker. On Sunday, May 22nd, at 1 pm on the beautiful green UBC campus, the CUUWA will host a "Green Tea". Audrey Siegl is a young, vivacious aboriginal leader from the Musqueam First Nations upon which Vancouver is built. She will speak about *Carrying on my Ancestors' Work* and focus upon how we all can be effective and responsible stewards of this land. It will be our very own Paris climate change conference! Come for nourishment of mind & soul and to share ideas.

May there be more Peace on our Planet during 2016. Blessed Be.