



## UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people  
with enquiring minds

### January 2007

#### Sunday Services

##### January 2007

- Jan 7     **The Limits of Spirituality in Religion**  
          – Brock Shaver
- Jan 14    **Your God is Too Classical**  
          – Herb Gruning
- Jan 21    **All Roads Lead to Home**  
          – Vivianne LaRiviere
- Jan 28    **Black History** – Rick Bell

##### February 2007

- Feb 4     **Sharing the Faith Service**
- Feb 11    **Straight Talk on Queer Issues**  
          – Art Brewer
- Feb 18    **Annual General Meeting**
- Feb 25    **Water Supply and Treatment**  
          – Chado Brcic

##### March 2007

- Mar 4     **Spiritual Shopaholism**  
          – Michael Battenberg
- Mar 11    **International Women's Day**  
          – Julianne Momirov
- Mar 18    **Unitarian-Universalism and the Uses  
of Mystery** – Monica Hornyansky
- Mar 25    **Natural Burials** – Janet McCausland

### Sheila Stahl-Smith

We learned with great sorrow that Sheila Stahl-Smith passed from our midst while on holiday at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina with her husband Jon. On November 22 Sheila fell and hurt her head. At first neither of them realized the seriousness of Sheila's injury, but on Thursday, after consulting with a physician it was decided to fly Sheila to Charleston, South Carolina, where more adequate medical facilities were available. Unfortunately Sheila became comatose, and after diagnosis the doctors informed Jon that she has had a massive brain hemorrhage, and that she was unlikely to recover consciousness. Sheila died on Sunday, November 26. In addition to Jon, Sheila has left behind two sons, David and Paul, and a daughter Shelley, and their families.

She was cremated in Charleston, and her ashes were brought home. A Memorial Service was held at our church on Saturday, December 2, and there were so many people who wanted to pay their respects, that regrettably some had to be turned away because the church could not hold everyone. Sheila has been a volunteer at Bethlehem Place, and the family asked that anyone who so wishes may make a contribution to Bethlehem Place in her memory. Their address is 58 Welland Ave., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 2M5. We extend our deepest sympathy to Jon, and to the Smith families.



Unitarian Congregation of Niagara  
[www.unitarian-stcatharines.org](http://www.unitarian-stcatharines.org)



**Unitarian Congregation  
of Niagara**  
223 Church St.  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8  
Tel: 905-687-8433  
[www.unitarian-stcatharines.org](http://www.unitarian-stcatharines.org)

**Executive Council  
for 2006/2007**

PRESIDENT: Fred Bolton

VICE PRESIDENT:  
Philip Curtis

PAST PRESIDENT:  
Marie Belliveau

CHAPLAINS:  
Doreen M. Peever  
John Mayer

SECRETARY:  
Pam Spear-Wilson

TREASURER: Valerie Jaeger

MEMBER AT LARGE:  
Shari Virtue

PROGRAM:  
Julianne Momirov

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:  
Lisa Laughton

MEMBERSHIP:  
Jim Glassford

PROPERTY:  
Peter Skelton

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS:  
Pamela Spear-Wilson

NEWSLETTER:  
Sofia Vuorinen

COMMUNICATION:  
Judith Barker

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Will Wilson  
SOCIAL: Joan Rothman

WEBSITE: Phil Curtis

TRUSTEES:  
Monica Hornyansky  
Andrea Gravelle  
Don Herne

RENTAL : John Northover

PASTORAL CARE:  
Jennie Leach

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## Membership. . .

- **Congratulations** to our own **Dr. Valerie Jaeger**, who been awarded the family physician of the year in our area. This award is given by the Ontario College of Family Physicians.
- **Welcome**, we are very pleased our members **Adolf and Anita Miecznikowski** are able to return to attending our church. In addition, Welcome to Hilde and Al Wheeler in our church on a regular basis.
- The Building Your Own Theology course begins on Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at the Church. Please use back door. If you are interested in attending, please see Jim Glassford to obtain a reading before the first session.
- Anyone wishing to form a choir to practice hymns approximately a half hour prior to Sunday service, contact Adolf at [adolfm@niagara.com](mailto:adolfm@niagara.com) or call 905-468-8491. The pianist was supportive.
- We need service leaders for some of our speakers in 2007 and we're calling upon you once again to come forward and volunteer to lead a service. We have a guidebook to help you out. Please pitch in and help us out!

*Jim Glassford*

*Membership Co-ordinator*

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## Notice for the UCN Annual General Meeting Sunday, February 18th at 11:00 at the church

All members are welcome. Non-members are welcome as observers.

We ask that all **committee reports** be emailed or submitted to Pamela Spear-Wilson by **January 21st**. Thank you.

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## Who Are We?

### Member Profile of

#### John Northover

John was born in 1937 in the village of Keynsham, between Bath and Bristol in SW England, and he remembers the devastation of central Bristol during the Second World War. He attended elementary schools in Bristol and later in southern Gloucestershire (now Avon). John's mother introduced him to the Anglican Church when he was 10, and he joined the choir and attended Sunday school on Sunday afternoons. At age 11, John attended the boys-only Bristol Grammar School, and became interested in chemistry, physics and botany. By age 16, he could no longer believe in biblical miracles and a Christian God who did not intervene in wars and global disasters. So he stopped attending church services.

Seventeen years later, John married Gerda, his girlfriend from Hilversum, near Amsterdam. They attended Catholic churches regularly, and as their two daughters entered school, John became involved in the Catholic Parent Teachers' Association to understand the religious training given in the Separate School system. John was initiated as a Roman Catholic, but admitted that he could not be a full believer. John joined our Unitarian church in 2004, and became a member in 2005. For almost a year he has been the Rental Agent for the

Church and enjoys meeting the people who rent our facilities.

John obtained an Honours B.Sc. degree in botany from Bristol University in 1960, and took a technical position at the field research station of the Imperial College of Science and Technology situated close to Ascot and Windsor in Berkshire. Imperial is one of several colleges of the University of London. He conducted research on the chemical control of two cereal diseases, and received his Ph.D. from the University of London in 1965. That same year he accepted a one-year Postdoctoral Fellowship from the National Research Council of Canada (now NSERC), and worked at the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa. In 1966, John came to St. Catharines to work at the federal research laboratory that was being relocated to Vineland. For 36 years he worked on the fungal diseases of fruit crops, such as brown rot of peaches and cherries, scab and storage rots of apples, and powdery mildew of grapes. A major emphasis was the identification of fungicide failures due to the emergence of strains of the pathogens resistant to some of the fungicides then in use. He enjoyed discussions with fruit growers to understand their concerns, and to request their use of new strategies to minimize the further development of resistance to new fungicides. The results of John's research have been published as research papers in scientific journals with international distribution. Also, he enjoyed publishing many technical

articles designed to reach fruit growers, who wished to stay ahead of new disease problems.

John retired from Agriculture Canada almost five years ago, and has developed a number of new interests. Gerda and John are delighted to have six grandchildren ranging in age from 10 months to four years. Jennifer's family lives in St Catharines, so John is involved in taking her twin sons to hear the Junior Niagara Youth Orchestra, and being taken for walks by their friendly German Shepherd. Suzanne's family is based in Toronto, but is currently on a three-year transfer of work to Bucharest, Romania. John and Gerda are regular supporters of the Niagara Youth Orchestra with which John was involved as assistant manager or manager in 1966-1967 and again in 1984-1991. They both enjoy gardening with John concentrating on the vegetables and Gerda looking after the flowers. They enjoy walks in the Short Hills Provincial Park, and when home, they listen to classical orchestral music on the radio and from CDs. Since joining our Church, John has been very interested in the origins of religious beliefs and their associated conflicts. John enjoys reading popular science articles and trying to understand the nature of sub-atomic particles and hypotheses of the origin and evolution of the cosmos. John and Gerda are most grateful for their good health and attribute it to plenty of veggies and a daily fresh fruit salad 🍎

## **"The Great Water Bottle Controversy"**

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"Sales of bottled water are gushing. Many consumers say they prefer the taste of bottled water to tap, believing it's safer than municipal water supplies.

But Health Canada's website on bottled water reports that there's no evidence to support this. In fact, Professor Rolf Halden of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, had this to say about water in U.S. cities. "The truth is that city water is much more highly regulated and monitored for quality. Bottled water is not. It can legally contain many things we would not tolerate in municipal drinking water."

The same is generally true of drinking water in Canadian cities.

So where does the water in bottled and branded bottles come from? A recent report by Bloomberg News explained that "Atlanta-based Coca-Cola, the world's biggest bottler, uses municipal water from Calgary and Brampton, Ontario, for its Dasani brand."

The same article also points out that "Bottled water is far more expensive than municipal water. A liter (33.8 ounces) of tap water in Canada costs taxpayers an average of less than one-tenth of a cent, Toronto's city government says. That means a liter of bottled water selling for C\$2.50 is almost 3,000 times more expensive."

Aside from concerns about bottled water, such as landfills full of empty bottles and plastic leaching toxins, there are also ethical ones. Although affluent Canadians can afford to buy water, those on limited incomes can't.

Buying bottled water sends a powerful message to our elected leaders that there's little need to maintain and improve Canada's water infrastructure."

Taken from the David Suzuki Foundation Newsletter: [www.davidsuzuki.org/](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/)

*The purpose of including this article in UCN's newsletter is to begin a dialogue within our congregation on the banning of bottled water for church functions/use. If we profess to care about our environment and that food and water should be basic human rights, then should we support the bottled water industry that would contribute to the privatization of water and contribute to the destruction of our environment? This privatization could and has happened in the countries that are far too poor to be able to pay for water to be supplied to their villages and farms and it could happen in Canada. Maud Barlow (Council of Canadians) believes that that is the end goal and I for one agree with her. Let's talk about it! Do you think UCN should have a policy about bottled water in our church?*

Marie Belliveau

## **Terminator Seed: CUC Letter to PM**

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The Right Honourable  
Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

It has come to my attention that the official Canadian position on the on-going ban of terminator seeds is ambiguous, and that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is preparing the road for approval of terminator seeds. Unitarians across Canada are very concerned. We strongly urge you to promote the continued ban of terminator seed technology.

Unitarians consider it a religious imperative for all concerned citizens to protect the sensitive interdependent web of life on this planet, our only home. The primary purpose of every species on earth is to continue life by reproducing itself. Creation is made up of many diverse species and sub-species living in complex ecosystems based on relations of interdependence. We have no idea what the consequences of introducing something as dangerous as terminator seeds into this web of life will be, and we have no way of testing in advance to find out.

There can be no possible justification for introducing a technology that goes so against the ways of the natural world. The only apparent reason for

supporting such a practice is to give the powers of private ownership and property rights to corporations for their personal profit. In the past, in Canada, farmers, universities and governments have worked together to develop new varieties of seed for all to use. In some cases today, corporations take the seed developed by many generations of farmers, make one genetic change, and patent that seed. The introduction of terminator seeds is a step in the process of taking control away from independent farmers and granting control of the world's food supply to private companies.

Such a concentration of power over the basic needs of life should not be in the hands of people who are not ultimately accountable to the public good. It would also be a major violation of the rights of farmers to save and reuse their own seeds. It threatens farmer livelihoods, food security, and agricultural biodiversity, globally, and here in Canada.

Farmers have saved seed since the beginnings of human agriculture. Each farmer has saved the seed that thrived best in a particular place under particular conditions to ensure the best possible results for the next crop year. The diversity of the seeds have provided optimal chances for survival under different conditions. Terminator seeds promote reduction in genetic diversity. The Seeds For Survival program of the

Unitarian Service Committee is a proven model that has helped poor farmers in the third world survive drought and bring land back into production. This program empowers farmers to stay on the land and feed their families.

So far, Canada has supported the international moratorium on Terminator Seeds at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. We applaud this decision. The Canadian Unitarian Council appeals to you to be firmly committed to maintaining this ban.

Canada's position on terminator seeds is important to the rights and independence of Canadian farmers, but it is equally important to millions of farmers around the world. Canada is considered a leader in the area of agriculture. This is an environmental and an economic justice issue. The choice we make will influence the ultimate decisions of the world on this issue.

Please instruct the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to ensure and promote a ban on terminator seed globally. In Canada, we ask that you enact legislation banning all research, field-testing, and commercial production of terminator seeds in Canada. Take a clear stand on this issue. Let us walk on this planet with an attitude of humility, a respect for life and for the way of nature. Affirm the rights of all farmers to save and reuse their own seed. Affirm life.

Yours sincerely,

Vyda Ng  
President,

Canadian Unitarian Council/  
conseil unitarien du Canada

Cc: The Hon. Chuck Strahl,  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-  
Food

Wayne Easter, Liberal Agriculture  
Critic

André Bellavance, Bloc  
Québécois Agriculture Critic

Alex Atamanenko, NDP  
Agriculture Critic

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## January Social Lunch

Instead of a salad fixin's lunch there will be Chili on January 21st to help keep out the chill! As usual there will be dessert, tea, coffee and fruit juice. Keep the date free if you are able.



## Coffee Making

The coffee making sign up sheet is now posted on the bulletin board. It is waiting for volunteers to offer their services to make the tea and coffee which we enjoy so much after the Sunday service.

*Yours in fellowship,*

*Joan Rothman*



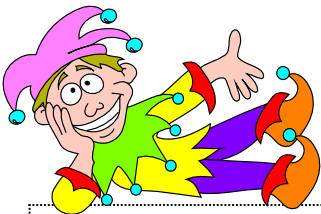
### Church Rental Times for 2007

During the January to June period, our Church facilities have been rented on the following days:

- Mondays** 9:30 am – 12 noon Yoga Unlimited  
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Yoga Unlimited.
- Tuesdays**
- Wednesdays** 6:45 pm – 8:30 pm Yoga Unlimited
- Thursdays** 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm Yoga Unlimited  
6:45 pm – 8:45 pm Niagara Dance Co.
- Friday** First Friday of each month 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm, Niagara Action for Animals.
- Saturdays** Generally the third or second (May)  
Saturday monthly, Niagara Branch of the Council of Canadians.
- Sundays** 10:30 am – 1 pm Weekly church service.

If you are not attending a group activity, please do not enter the Church during rented periods to avoid interrupting the renting group. Please check the calendar on the notice board for current information, or phone the Rental Agent, John Northover at 905-934-7487.

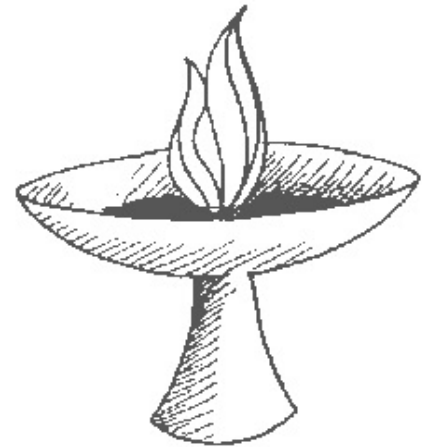
Thank you.



Three religious persons are discussing when life begins.  
The Catholic says: Life begins at the moment of conception.  
The Jew says: Life begins at the moment of birth.  
The Unitarian says: You're both wrong. Life begins when the last child goes to college.

## How to Stay Young

Youth is not a time of life . . . it is a state of mind. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair ... these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust. Whether seventy or sixteen, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and of star-like things such as thoughts, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing child-like appetite for what's next, and the joy of the game of life. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair. (Anonymous)



### **Unitarian Congregation of Niagara**

223 Church St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8

Tel: 905-687-8433 [www.unitarian-stcatharines.org](http://www.unitarian-stcatharines.org)

**Editor:** Sofia Vuorinen

905-563-8615

[sofia.vuorinen@3web.net](mailto:sofia.vuorinen@3web.net)

Deadline for Next Issue:

**January 21, 2007**