



“Stories Without Borders” participants in a collaborative theatre exercise

Stories Without Borders Art, Peace, the Middle East

By Claire Lyke

MONTREAL — The Montreal City Mission of the United Church of Canada and the McGill University Middle East Peace Program have created **Stories Without Borders**, a team of young, creative, and committed individuals gathered in a new community-based, multimedia project. It may help pacify a war-torn region.

The aim of this project is to develop a common language between young adults living in communities in the Middle East and in Canada by working with groups to tell their own stories and by listening to the stories of others using a variety of creative media.

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The Call of Harrington Harbour

This two-point charge at the extreme eastern edge of M&O Conference on the Quebec-Newfoundland border needs a minister.

Services in Harrington Harbour, (pop. 300) occur at the Seniors Home with occasional worship in the local church. Church services in Chevery, five kilometres away, are held Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving,

Remembrance Day, and in Advent. Travel between the two communities is by boat in summer, snowmobile in winter and by helicopter when the ice is thin.

In early March more than 40 gathered in the Aylmer Sound church (now closed) for an annual service followed by a picnic on the ice of a nearby brook where sandwiches, barbecued caplin, baked rabbit, sweets, and steaming coffee were served up on improvised tables of upturned komatiks (sleds).

United Church members here share with Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Dr. Amy Evans (a local

Licensed Lay Preacher profiled in last September's issue of *The Clarion*) says.

"The new Minister should . . . be a teacher, and pass on to others the skills they need in order to carry out their ministries."

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The McGill Middle East Program (MMEP) was founded in 1997 out of the belief that the promotion of civil society and social justice are intricately related to peace building. The MMEP in cooperation with its Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian institutional partners has established eight rights-based community centres in the Middle East. MMEP fellows are a group of Masters students from across the region doing a two-year program split between McGill and their home country.

Last autumn in Montreal and in each Middle-East Centre, they brought together groups to explore the use of narrative as a tool of community-building, cross-cultural understanding, and peace-building. These groups learned how to tell their story through a variety of media (such as – painting, dance, theatre or embroidery) with the ultimate aim of creating a representation of that story that they could share with other communities.

Since January the young Montrealers have met one Saturday a month for workshops on the use of narrative, creative skills and collaboration in urban dance, sound-work and editing, stop-motion

video, photography, theatre (traditional and theatre of the oppressed) and more.

To document their processes, talk with each other, and eventually collaborate on a combined display of their work, they have access to the **Stories Without Borders'** new "web magazine".

Supplied by YourMagz, this is a forum where group leaders can post articles, share their progress, share their ideas, and post video clips, photos, and links.

The reward for all the hard work comes in August when the Montrealers travel to the Middle East to meet the other groups engaged in this process.

During this 10-day trip, the Montreal group will be hosted by groups in the Middle East, volunteer at MMEP rights-based community centres, and exchange narrative work.

In the autumn the final products of the work will be exhibited in Montreal, elsewhere in Canada and in the Middle East.

Claire Lyke is Youth Program Coordinator of the Montreal City Mission

Le Vélotour du Synode Montréal-Ottawa (un partenariat avec l'UMiF)

par David Fines

Le « Vélotour du Synode Montréal et Ottawa » est un camp d'été « itinérant » offert aux jeunes de 14 à 19 ans. Chaque jour nous pédalons de 40 à 60 kilomètres et nous passons la nuit dans l'une ou l'autre église unie (ou d'une autre dénomination) qui se trouve sur notre route.

En neuf ans, des jeunes francophones, anglophones et hispanophones de nos paroisses y ont participé. En 2008 nous avons reçu 24 jeunes de l'*Église réformée de France*, qui se sont joints aux douze jeunes de nos communautés, pour vivre une expérience interculturelle des plus enrichissantes.

Dix-sept jeunes provenant de quatre consistoires de notre synode ainsi du synode Bay of Quinte sont inscrits au Vélotour 2009 qui se déroulera... en France !

Ils seront accompagnés de trois adultes. Nous voyagerons du 8 au 23 juillet, avec une arrivée à Paris et un retour par Lyon.

Le trajet en vélo se déroulera entre les villes de Saint-Étienne et Lyon. Dans cette ville, durant les trois derniers jours nous participerons à une rencontre internationale de jeunes appelée « Le Grand Kiff ».

Notre campagne de financement a proposé diverses activités : soupers communautaires, bazar de Noël, soirée de quilles, spectacle de musique, collecte de bouteilles vides... Les jeunes s'impliqueront dans le site internet du Vélotour.

Plusieurs organisations soutiennent financièrement ou autrement le Vélotour : en plus de plusieurs paroisses locales, notons l'appui du Synode Montréal et Ottawa, de l'Unité des ministères en français, du consistoire Laurentien et ceux de Montréal, de Québec-Sherbrooke et d'Ottawa, ainsi que du programme national des ministères des jeunes (YAYA).

Que ce soit ici ou ailleurs, les trois buts principaux du Vélotour demeurent les mêmes : 1-inviter les jeunes à un camp d'église pour y vivre une vie de groupe unique et enrichissant ; 2-permettre à nos jeunes de découvrir d'autres Églises et de découvrir d'autres coins de ce monde qui est le nôtre ; 3-permettre aux jeunes de vivre une merveilleuse expérience interculturelle.

“SOME ARE CALLED TO BE”

By Eileen Lavigne

Kemptville, Ont -- The M&O Conference family stewardship event, ‘**SOME ARE CALLED TO BE**’ takes place July 15th to 19th, 2009, at the Kemptville, Ont., campus of the University of Guelph.

Theme speakers are **Rev. Gretta Vosper, Rev. Pix Bott** and **Steve Sharlow**. **Rev. Vosper** is Chair of the Canadian Centre for Progressive Christianity and author of -- *With or Without God: Why the way we live is more important than what we believe*. **Rev. Butt**, who calls herself a teacher turned preacher, is minister at Richelieu Valley UC in Montreal Presbytery. **Mr. Sharlow** is Stewardship Coordinator for M&O Conference. **Mardi Tindal**, Director of the 5 Oaks Training Centre, will be the special speaker on Saturday evening. Mardi is one of the people nominated for Moderator at General Council in August.

For more information, contact Eileen Lavigne through the Ottawa Office

Deadline for registration June 15, 2009. Checks payable to Montreal and Ottawa Conference

Worship Matters in Ottawa this June!

Ottawa -- The United Church of Canada's national event called "Worship Matters" takes place from June 18th to June 20th at Dominion Chalmers United Church, Ottawa. This event is for everyone who believes that worship really matters!

We look forward to engaging 200 enthused worship leaders, receptive pew sitters and dynamic church musicians from across Canada and the United States.

We are gathering together in Ottawa to hear some phenomenal keynote speakers: **Dr. Anna Carter Florence** ("Taking the Sermon beyond the Blog"), **Dr. Miriam Therese Winters** ("Songs for a Quantum Universe") and **The Rev. Joan Wyatt** ("Expanding Worship Language").

As well as these not-to-be-missed addresses, there are a dozen mind-shifting workshops to choose from, including authentic prayer writing, the ecstasy of joyful singing, lay preaching made easy, Biblical frame drumming for beginners, emerging patterns in youth ministry and a lot more.

A highlight of the weekend will be the "re"-introduction of Biblical drumming for worship today.

This drumming in the style of Miriam is the warm up for a Dixie gospel concert (7pm Friday June 19) by The Hot Five Jazzmakers. Tickets for this send-up concert are \$10 from Dominion Chalmers United Church or at the door.

'Worship Chatter' provides discussion group time for learning and sharing about intercultural worship, worship and French language congregations, worship and technology, worship and art, worship and stewardship, and more. Everyone, registered or not, is warmly invited to worship with us at our opening and closing services. **Dr. Anna Carter Florence** will preach at the opening service (3pm, Thursday June 18). We close Worship Matters with a Communion service conducted by **The Right Rev. David Giuliano**, Moderator of The United Church of Canada (4pm, Saturday June 20).

Come see our extensive UCRD book and music resources offered by The United Church of Canada, Music Plus, Leading Note, and others. Liturgical arts from the Ottawa area will also be featured.

For registration details see www.united-church.ca/get-involved/events/worshipmatters. Or call 1-899 268-3781 extension 4157

A Message From the President

By Anna Barr

ROEBUCK, Ont. -- The 2009 Annual General Meeting is fast approaching and promises to be a week-end full of meaning and inspiration.

As our Church prepares for the 40th General Council this coming August, the business section of our AGM includes additional pieces of work.

We will be electing the 26 Commissioners to represent us at GC 40. Any proposals coming out of M&O Conference will be discussed and considered at this meeting.

Lynn Boothroyd, our Lay Representative to General Council Executive is reaching the end of her six-year term.

Just as we are greatly appreciative of all her contributions on our behalf, we look to our members to prayerfully consider who will follow her into this important role.

The ongoing work of the Conference will be recognized. We are blessed to have several candidates for

ordination this year. They will be presented to the court for consideration on Friday.

We will rejoice in the Celebration of Ministry service on Saturday evening - on the lawn at John Abbot College.

Rev Neil Wallace will be installed as President on Sunday morning when we will also recognize the new Conference Executive, including the next President-Elect, to be chosen by you this same weekend.

There is one time slot, one afternoon, in which to take advantage of the slate of motivating workshops that will be offered.

Be sure to check the website to see the impressive list from which to choose.

As you can see, we have much to celebrate and much business to conduct over the weekend.

Interwoven throughout the weekend, will be the worship and theme time presentations. **Rev Bill Steadman** will lead us as we "Dare to Ask, Dare to Serve".

A UCC Stewardship resource says "Jesus saw the steward as the willing custodian of all that God has entrusted to us: all life, the earth, and the gospel news of God's love."

Bill has spent time with our Stewardship Network and in particular, with **Paul Sales**, as he prepares for his time with us.

Paul and Bill have collaborated on the worship and music preparation and as a special gift to us, Bill has written a theme hymn.

We are privileged to have Paul Sales and **Peter Woods** leading us in the ministry of music throughout the weekend and to have **Nicole Beaudry** working alongside Bill to offer us bilingual presentations.

As a special treat, Friday evening we will have a chance to relax in a coffee house atmosphere as we take in the first ever "M&O Conference Idol".

With **Rev Mike Perreault** as M.C., and with the many varied offerings of talent across our conference, this is sure to be a memorable experience.

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This will be the last time I write to you as President of M&O Conference. I want to take this opportunity to tell you how truly rewarding this past two years has been for me and how deeply honoured I am to have been able to serve in this role.

This has been a rich experience for me - rich in learning and in growth. You welcomed a quiet, shy woman from Roebuck Pastoral Charge, allowed her to offer her humble gifts, and then encouraged and supported her as we journeyed together.

There are some great things happening across our conference as we seek to be relevant in our place and in our time.

Even in our struggles, we risk, we journey on, and we trust in the footsteps that have gone before us, in the one who picks us up when we stumble.

May God bless this Conference and all the work we do in Jesus' name.

*Anna Barr is
President of Montreal &
Ottawa Conference*



40th General Council 2009

The United Church of Canada's 40th General Council 2009 will take place August 9 to 15, 2009, at the University of British Columbia (UBC), in Kelowna, B.C., hosted by Kamloops-Okanagan Presbytery.

The theme of the General Council will be "Down to the Potter's House" (based on Jeremiah 18:1-6): How is God shaping The United Church of Canada? What are we being shaped to hold, to pour out? How do we make space for God's work? In what ways are we being drawn "down" to hear God's word?

United Church members may participate in many ways: as a commissioner to the 40th General Council 2009; as a steward at the 40th General Council 2009; as a delegate from your presbytery to Youth Forum; as a delegate to the Children and Young Teens Program; by nominating a candidate for Moderator

Translated from the newsletter of le Consistoire Laurentien

DARE TO ASK – DARE TO SERVE

by the Rev. Dr. Bill Steadman

This year as the Conference theme speaker, I want to examine our theme within two parts: “Dare to Ask” and “Dare to Serve.”

I realize in choosing these words I may have already overstepped the bounds of political correctness. We are not in the habit of ‘daring’ anyone to be or do anything today.

I am convinced, however, that it is usually the case that unless we ask, we will not receive.

Now there is Biblical language to back that up, even if we tend to ignore it. “Ask, and it will be given to you.” (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9). We tend to stress the “searching” and “knocking” parts of that aphorism – we celebrate those who seek what they need, and find what they must find in order to be successful....those who “search for” and “knock upon” doors of opportunity.

But to uplift someone who simply asks? Where is the Protestant work ethic in that?

Actually Jesus was much more provocative where he dismisses the traditional view of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”

As Jesus put it: “Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn them away.” (Matthew 5:42)

If results are that certain, why do we refuse to ask? Why, indeed!

I have learned within my own experience that many of my key life actions are a result of someone asking me.

I was asked by my kindergarten teacher to lead the rhythm band, and I still can picture that experience. I was asked by my grade three teacher to be Class President of the Red Cross Society, which began a career of thinking about others.

I was asked to lead in worship before I was a member of the church, and so I continue to look for gifts in others of all ages.

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I was asked to apply for the position I currently hold, and I know that I would not be here had I not been asked.

We hesitate to ask, primarily I would suggest, because we are reluctant to be challenged ourselves. Are we willing to give of ourselves? Will we serve in ways that demand something from ourselves? Are we eager to stretch our commitment? Do we see life as burdened by the fact that we are doing all that we can do, or are we excited that God will be with us to do all that is required of us?

(As one motivational speaker remarked at a conference I attended: “Are you the

kind of person that wakes up and says “Good morning, God,” or are you, instead, the type who remarks “Good God, it’s morning?”)

Together we will look at the Biblical witness, the experience of the church, even examples in nature (and so the woodpecker in the logo) to show us the value of being eager to share who we are, and willing to serve when called upon. I invite you to share the dialogue and reflection with me at Conference June 5-7, 2009: “Dare to Ask...Dare to Serve.”

Rev. Dr. Bill Steadman, is Executive Minister, Financial Stewardship, The United Church of Canada

The Clarion/Le Clairon is inserted three times a year in The United Church Observer “to tell our story and share our faith so as to further God’s purpose” in the Montreal and Ottawa Conference.

Our copy deadline for the September 2009 issue is August 1st., 2009. The next meeting of the editorial board will be at 10:30 am on August 3rd in Montreal at St. James United Church. The board has vacancies from Ottawa Presbytery and le Consistoire Laurentien.

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