

Unitarian Church of Montreal Église unitarienne de Montréal



Newsletter

March / mars 2008

Worship Calendar

Services start at 10:30 am, unless otherwise noted

March 2

Adjusting to Midnight

Rev. Diane Rollert

Please bring non-perishable food for the NDG Food Depot.

March 9

Both Sides Now

Rev. Diane Rollert

March 16

A Common Word

Rev. Diane Rollert

March 23

10:30 am *Through the Garden*

Rev. Diane Rollert

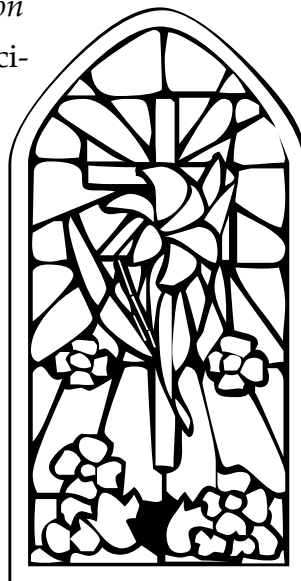
11:45 *Easter Communion*

All who wish to participate are invited for a brief communion service.

12:30 pm *Célébration en français*

March 30

Young Adults Group



From the Minister's Study

How can it be that our wonderful Director of Religious Education, Sarah Marx McGill and family are leaving us so soon? Husband Brian was made an offer he couldn't refuse by the University of Arizona in Tucson. Given this cold and snowy winter, I guess the attraction of a warmer climate, along with the merited professional opportunity, is understandable. Still...

Sarah, we will miss you. In just six short months you have energized our Religious Education program. You've brought insight and courage to your work. You've built bridges between young and old, and between a diversity of thinkers and believers.

How lucky we have been to watch you blossom in your role. You've put together a dynamite team with Tara Bissett and Rita Izzi. You've asked the entire adult community to bring their faith to the children. By asking us, "How do you want to share what you believe with the children?" you've moved us to a new level of understanding as a community.

We've learned about tikkun olam and the importance of justice from our members and friends whose roots are found in Judaism. We've learned about the radical inclusiveness of Jesus from those who celebrate their Christian roots. We've learned about the wonder of science and the gifts of humanity from those whose roots are firmly planted in Humanist soil. In the months to come we'll learn more about Earth-based spirituality and Buddhism from those in our community who are energized and ready to share these passions with all of us, young and old, together.

We've all felt the joy and energy that has been overflowing from the Sanctuary and down into the Religious Education classrooms this year. I know we'll have plenty of time to say goodbye until June, but I want you to know that you are leaving a legacy that I hope to see last a long, long time. You've helped us to appreciate what it means to be a truly intergenerational community. May we continue to strengthen what you have begun.

In faith,

Diane

President's Message

Share-the-Plate Update

I recently participated in a "tele-seminar" with a few people from various congregations across Canada. This was a seminar by telephone with stewardship consultant Grace Flesher who led us in a Dreams & Dollars workshop last March. The "Share-the-Plate" initiative is spreading to many U*U congregations and some are thinking about trying it. I was proud to tell the seminar participants how well this had been supported in our congregation and encouraged them to try it. In January, all the unidentified cash from the Sunday offertory (\$870.85) went to Le Chic Resto-pop, an organization in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve offering inexpensive meals, training and more to people in the neighbourhood. In March the designated charity is the Old Brewery Mission.

CUC-ACM – May 16-19

The Canadian Unitarian Council's Annual Conference and Meeting (CUC-ACM) takes place in Ottawa this year on the long weekend in May. Complete details can be found on the Associational Affairs bulletin board and at www.cuc.ca/conference/2008. The conference, hosted by First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, will be held at Algonquin College. The conference includes a wide variety of workshops as well as the annual CUC business meeting. I hope that we will have a large contingent from our congregation. Car pools will be organized closer to the time. But please register now for the lowest registration fee and book accommodations while they are still available.

Would you like to be a CUC-ACM delegate?

Our congregation is entitled to four voting delegates at the annual meeting. This year we have included in our budget some subsidies for the conference fees of delegates (conference fee is \$150 if registered by March 31, subsidy of \$100/delegate). If you are interested in being a delegate please contact Hannelore Poncelet (contact info on back page) in writing including a short paragraph on why you would like to represent our congregation at the meeting. Please submit by March 16.

Find that room!

How often have you found yourself roaming the halls of our church looking for a room whose name you can't find? Help is at hand! We are putting signs on the doors, at eye level, in legible type. As we considered this problem the Board acknowledged the ongoing mystery of the "Former Ministers' Room." Which former minister does this refer to? Was it Charles Eddis' office, some have asked? Among children and parents this large sunny room on Level 2 of the R.E. (Religious Education) wing is affectionately referred to as the Garden Room. So the Board voted in February to make it official. The Garden Room it is! We plan to have the signs on all the room doors in a few weeks.

Sound Issues

We've heard from many people about the challenges of hearing each other during coffee hour in Phoenix Hall. We've also had problems with the sound in the Sanctuary – specifically the lectern microphone and feedback. As well we want to record services on CD and fix speakers in the foyer and nurs-

ery. We've held consultations with a highly recommended sound specialist. The Board approved the estimate of up to \$8000 to solve these and other sound problems. We feel this is a worthwhile investment in our building. The money will come from the Phoenix Fund – a special fund for furniture, fixtures and equipment. This fund was replenished a few years ago thanks to a bequest from Patrick Irwin and currently stands at \$34,000.

Elevator Access

Please note that there is now a key to the elevator on the key ring in the kitchen. The key should be removed for use, so that the other keys will still be available, and replaced after use. Ask a Java Jiver (Sunday morning coffee servers) where the key ring is. For members who regularly use the elevator you will be contacted to receive a key and training on using the elevator.

Moving on...

The recent announcement that Sarah Marx, Brian McGill and sons Eli and Jasper will be moving to Arizona in June was met with much emotion. In the short time that the Marx-McGill family has been in Montréal they have embraced our community and we have embraced them. They will be deeply missed! And we know they'll miss us, but maybe not Montreal winters! Let us enjoy the next few months together before the tearful goodbyes.

Alison Hall

514-636-8406

ar.hall@sympatico.ca



Entre Nous

And the good news is — **Tara Bissett**, RE Assistant, flew to Singapore for a conference on February 21. She then went on to Shanghai to meet her second nephew, Lucas Lu Bissett, born on February 19 and weighing in at over nine lbs. Congratulations, family Bissett!

The documentary “Just a Lawn,” directed by Green Team member **Megan Durnford** has been screened at several film festivals since its spring launch at UCM.

Most recently, the film, which documents the harmful effects of pesticides commonly used on lawns, was shown at an international festival in Paris. Megan attended that screening as well as ones in New Delhi and St. John’s.

We rejoice with **Rev. Diane Rollert** and family who were recently accepted by Immigration Quebec to become permanent residents. Diane reports that speaking French for the entire interview was the deciding factor in acceptance and she thanks all those who have helped and supported her through this process. There are a few more steps to take through the federal system before her family’s new status is signed, sealed and delivered, but overall, this is excellent news.

In Memoriam

Jeff Browman

June 23, 1941 - January 24, 2008

There was a beautiful photograph that Jeff had by his bedside during his last days at Montreal General Hospital. An image of the sea, sailboats, and he and Sonia happily basking in warm sunlight were all he needed to be reminded of the best moments in his life. He and Sonia were married in 1967, in the Unitarian Church on Simp-

son Street by Rev. Leonard Mason. Together, they shared a love of the ocean, nature and travel.

Jeff was born in Montreal and completed his studies in psychology at Concordia University, back when it was still called Sir George Williams. He studied teaching at McGill and taught for ten years before moving into the field of sales. He and Sonia spent six years living and working in Beirut, returning here just before the civil war broke out.

Jeff loved to travel, to seek out interesting places, to enjoy new foods, and to explore the unknown. He loved to drive and fix cars. He had been quite a sportsman, sharing his joy in skiing, skating, and hiking with friends. Eleven years ago, Jeff was diagnosed with cancer of the kidney. Despite the ups and downs of treatment over the years, he and Sonia managed to continue travelling until this past year.

Jeff felt that this church was his spiritual home. The beliefs of this community resonated with his own and he found himself surrounded by kindred spirits. Over the years, he was involved in church life as much as his work and illness would allow. He participated in the Welcoming Congregation initiative, greatly enjoyed being a Mystery Friend and working with the children in Religious Education, participated in fund raising and was a Sunday morning greeter. He appreciated the support and friendship of this community, especially as his illness progressed.

Jeff will be deeply missed by his wife Sonia, and his sister Sonya, her husband and their two sons. A memorial service is being planned for April. Sonia is very grateful for the care and concern of this community and welcomes your cards and calls.

ICUU African Leadership Conference in Kenya

Rev. Brian Kiely, fellow Canadian UU, minister of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and president of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, recently returned from his travels to Kenya where he attended the Leadership Conference for emerging UU congregations in Central Africa. If you’d like to know more, please see the inspiring blog he wrote during his travels at <http://uuwithoutborders.blogspot.com>

Words of Thanks

On behalf of the Dialog Foundation I really would like to thank you for your effort to invite us to your church and to make such a successful step towards global peace and friendship by serving Noah’s Pudding on February 10th. We were really impressed by your members’ hospitality. It was great. Thanks again for the warm hugs and happy faces all of your members had on that day.

Sincerely,

Fehmi Kala
Executive Director,
DialogFoundation

Note: *Established in Montreal in 2003, the Dialog Foundation’s cultural roots stem from the Anatolian Turkish Sufi tradition. Its mission is to bring together people from all cultures and faiths on a common platform of love and tolerance. UCM was honoured to have members of the foundation share Noah’s Pudding with us, a special dessert that represents the richness of interfaith and intercultural diversity.*

Activities

New Course: Spiritual Autobiography

A five-week adult course, Thursday evenings, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Facilitated by Rev. Diane Rollert

March 20, April 3, April 17, May 1 and May 15

Through a series of thought-provoking exercises and writing assignments, this workshop provides an opportunity to explore your spiritual development from childhood to the present. Whether you love to write, hate to write, or haven't written in years, this workshop invites you to reflect on your own story and listen to the stories of others, without worrying about writing skills, technique or grammar.

Registration and commitment to all five sessions is required. Contact the church office to register.

Minimum number of participants is 6, maximum 12.

Book Discussion Group

Date: Wednesday, March 19

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Thomas Room

Contact: Kathy Douglas, 514-488-9608

Critics who hailed De Niro's *Game* as "stunning, startling, lyrical... a feverish nightmare of a book" observed that it doesn't fit the "first-novel-as-autobiography" stereotype. Author Rawi Hage is a gifted writer, artist and curator who now makes his home in Montreal, whereas the two young protagonists in his prize-winning debut novel, who come of age in war-torn Beirut where "bombs rain down daily in biblical numbers," soon turn into criminals.

Carmina Choir

Dates: Tuesdays

Time: 7:30 pm

Contact: Keith at 514-931-9028

New members are always welcome. No audition is required. Just bring a little goodwill and some ability to sing a tune.

First Friday Social

Date: March 7

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Phoenix Hall

Contact: Kirstin McKeown, 514-344-9232, caitlin@openface.ca

Join us for the first First Friday Social this year! First Fridays are relaxed gatherings centred around a potluck meal. Bring a dish or food to share.

Scrabble and Bridge games after supper.

Labyrinth Group

Date: Sunday, March 30

Time: 12:30 pm

Location: Darwin Room (beside Children's Chapel)

Contact: Aurelien Guillory 514-933-9700, cell: 514-582-4157 or Roseann Millin 514-933-5676

Midday Meal with Music

Date: Wednesday, March 19

Times: 10:00 am Scrabble and

Bridge; 12:30 pm Lunch; 1:30 pm

Music

Contact: Ruth di Giovanni., 514-934-4956

Please call Ruth at 514-934-4956 by Sunday, March 16, to reserve a seat.

Parts in Peace Choir

Dates: Mondays

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Sanctuary or Children's Chapel

Contact: Sandra Hunt, 514-484-5559

The Unitarian Church of Montreal's newly designated Sunday Service Choir commits to sing once a month in the 10:30 am Sunday service but practices weekly and informally supports the congregational singing at other Sunday services. This group loves to sing in parts from the Unitarian song book, *The Living Tradition*. We will also be looking at *Singing the Journey* which features 75 new songs in a number of different styles including jazz, folk, pop, spirituals, gospel, praise songs, call-and-response, chants, rounds and traditional hymns. We even meet at 6:00 pm for potluck before the Monday rehearsal begins. We are a very fun and loving group of people, and we sound fantastic, so come and try us out!

Pathway to Membership

An Introduction to Unitarianism and the Unitarian Church of Montreal with Rev. Diane Rollert.

Two Sundays from 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.: March 2 and March 9

Lunch will be provided. Attendance at both sessions is expected. Note a slight change in dates: We will be welcoming new members on May 4, 2008.

Play Group

Dates: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Time: 10:00 am–noon

Location: Nursery

Contact: Melani Litwack, 514-488-9884

We welcome children under five on Tuesdays and Thursdays on a drop-in basis accompanied by a (grand)parent or caregiver. Pack a snack for your child(ren). Coffee is provided. Open to all, whether church members or not. No charge but a donation of \$2/day per family is suggested.

Prisoners of Conscience

Date: March 16 (3rd Sunday of each month)

Time: After worship service

Location: Phoenix Hall

Contact: Genevieve Patterson, delmaspatterson@mediamonitors.org

Please find our table and sign a letter, as recommended by Amnesty International, protesting the incarceration of prisoners of conscience.

Rainbow Soul Matters

Date: Tuesday, March 18

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Youth Group Room

Come and share your spiritual journey with other LGBT persons. Theme for this evening—“Being Your Authentic Self”

Religious Explorations Group

Date: Sunday, March 2

Time: 12:30 pm

Location: RE

Contact: Christine Rourke 514-761-0669

Topic: The Diving Bell and the Butterfly. Blair Rourke, who has read the book and seen the movie, will introduce the topic. Please join us.

Sacred Texts Discussion Group

Date: Sunday, March 9

Time: 11:45 (15 minutes after the service) until 1:00

Location: Thomas Room

Contact: Brian McGill, mail@

brianmcgill.org or 450-672-6900

Grab a cup of coffee and come join us.

Seeking the Sacred in Stories

Led by Rev. Diane Rollert

Monthly Brown Bag Lunch Group

Date: March 11

Time: Noon to 1:00 pm

Location: Former Ministers' Room

Stories have a way of transporting us to new places. Can they also connect us to what is sacred? Come join me for lunch and lively discussions as we search for meaning in the short stories we read. Stories are read before we meet, and copies are available in advance from the office. As of January, we'll meet once a month. Future dates: April 8 and May 13, 2008.

Social and Environmental Concerns

Date: Sunday, March 30

Time: 12:15 pm

Location: Thomas Room

Contact: Mary-Louise Engels: 514-487-2665, mlenfels@sympatico.ca

Please note: Date changed this month from the third Sunday of the month to the fifth Sunday.

Join us as we discuss current projects:

1. Covered Garden: Opening the Covered Garden for refugees on Sunday afternoons
2. Darfur: Fundraising project. Solar Cookers for Darfuri women refugees
3. Update on municipal transportation speakers' event.

Soul Time Mid-week Worship Service

At our December Solstice gathering, Diane Rollert said, “There is

something magical about a small group of people coming together in a circle in a darkened room, around a table full of candles.” That magic happens every month at Soul Time – an opportunity to step off the merry-go-round, let go of all the burdens we habitually carry, re-connect with each other and with our own deeper selves, to breathe, relax, reflect and share gently what matters most. Come and join us on Thursday, March 13 at 7:30, in the Children's Chapel, and every second Thursday of the month at the same time and place.

If you have small children you would like to bring with you, babysitting can be arranged by contacting Elizabeth Morton (514-849-2739) by the previous Saturday. We also have a listserv group that gets reminders a week or so in advance – if you would like to join, let Elizabeth know.

Elizabeth Morton (514-849-2739)

Until summer, the dates will be: January 10, February 14, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12.

TaiJi: Active Relaxation

Note: Tai Ji sessions are cancelled for the month of March.

Walking Group

Date/time: Saturdays, 10:00 am

Contact: Diana Kleins, 514-747-9375 or Krystyna Matula, 514-287-0814

For those who enjoy nature and companionship, join us for walks in and around Montreal at a moderate pace and in a pleasant, informal atmosphere. A stop for refreshments after at a nearby coffee shop to plan the next week's meeting place/walk completes the morning.

Young Adult Group

Date: Sunday, March 9
Time: 12:15 to 1:30 pm
Location: Youth Room

Contact: Kirstin McKeown, 514-344-9232, caitlin@openface.ca

Are you 18-35ish? Come join the Young Adult Group for our monthly discussion. Topic for March is "What is compassion?" We will also be planning our upcoming service. Juice and bagels will be served. Hope to see you there!

Special Events

UCM Youth to host QUOM-CON Conference

Mark Abley reports that UCM Youth are hosting the Quebec, Ontario and Maritimes Conference, Friday March 28 to Sunday March 30. Registrations have already been received from groups in Ottawa, Fredericton and Kingston.

For more information contact

Elizabeth Charbonneau, 514-342-5221, e_charbonneau@sympatico.ca

Daniel Hunt, 514-488-9634

Chris Pike, 514-365-3397

Worship Committee

Have you ever been part of planning a worship service and found it satisfying? Would you like to learn more about what makes a Sunday service flow well? Do you have technical skills with sound equipment or enjoy collaborating to bring new ideas into being? Maybe worship is a topic close to your heart and you'd like to be able to contribute in some way, even if you aren't sure what you have to offer. If any of these might apply to you, please consider becoming part of the Worship Committee. We meet once a month to plan up-

coming services and discuss other topics related to spiritual celebrations in this congregation. We are currently looking for new committee members and would love to hear from you. For more information, please contact Dimitra Barnard at 514-279-4728.

Vocation lives where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need. – Frederick Buechner

Jazz & Justice

John Roney and the Silver Birch String Quartet perform together in the second concert of the 2008 Jazz & Justice series on **Saturday, March 15 at 8:00 p.m.**

John Roney is an amazing piano improviser who never seems to run out of ideas. He combines that with a finely honed intuition. His playing style is an enticing mix of the romantic and the classical, along with some solid swing.

Exciting and innovative, the Silver Birch String Quartet features four of Toronto's most gifted string graduates. This dynamic young group is quickly earning praise for their vibrant, virtuoso performances.

Did you miss the first concert? It featured the breathtaking young vocalist Sara Latendresse, backed by virtuoso guitarists Jon Gearey and Greg Amirault. How good was it? One seasoned jazz fan said it was "one of the best concerts I've been to in my whole life." And he wasn't alone.

Don't miss a note of this series,

with top-notch talent performing in our beautiful sanctuary. The third and final concert offers jazz piano star Lorraine Desmarais on April 5. (Mark your calendar now!) Proceeds are shared equally with the Montreal City Mission, L'Abri en Ville, and Équiterre. For details, go to www.jazzjustice.com.

And, tell your friends!

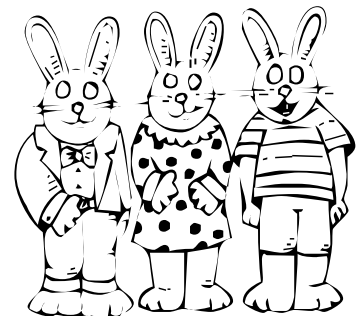
Religious Education

RE News – DRE Announces Move to Arizona

As of mid-June Sarah Marx McGill and family will be leaving Montreal, moving to Tucson, AZ. This is a return to some of their roots and a wonderful opportunity for them. Of course they will be very sad to leave our wonderful church community and we will be sad to see them go.

We've had such amazing momentum and energy in the RE program this year. It is our plan to do everything necessary so that the program will continue to grow and flourish!

The RE Committee plans to begin the search process for a new DRE right away. So if you are interested in this position yourself, know someone who would be a good candidate or want to join the Hiring Committee, please contact the Chair of the RE Committee, Shawn Dohring, at dohrings@yahoo.com.



Nouvelles du comité francophone

Voici les activités en français à venir au mois de mars 2008 :

Début mars (date exacte à préciser), le sous-comité rayonnement UU en français se tiendra une réunion de planification chez Hannelore et Léo Poncelet. Communiquez avec Vladimir De Thézier ou Hannelore pour les détails.

Le dimanche 9 mars, à midi, le comité francophone se réunira dans la salle Channing pour préparer la célébration du 23 mars. Cette réunion est ouverte aux intéressés.

Le dimanche 23 mars, à midi trente, la célébration aura lieu dans le Sanctuaire. Mais avant, il y aura un casse-croûte à midi dans la salle Phénix pour les participants. Le thème sera les communautés de base chrétiennes et Yves Manseau en assurera l'animation.

Toujours le dimanche 23 mars, à 12 h 30, les enfants sont invités à participer au programme d'éducation religieuse en français, animé par Chantal Bourdon, dans la salle "Former Ministers".

Contact : Hannelore Poncelet
450-653-5694
hanniponcelet@hotmail.com

Newsletter Deadline Change

Starting next month, the deadline for newsletter submissions will be the second-to-last **Wednesday** of the month at **5:00 pm**.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Green Corner

Earth Hour

Turn Off Your Lights
March 29



By turning off our lights for one hour, Mar. 29 we could "make a difference." Imagine Montreal in darkness from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.!

That's dinner time for many - prime time TV viewing for others. Think about telling stories while eating by candlelight. It can be done.

And, it could send a powerful message to our government leaders that we want a change in fossil fuel policies. Light bulbs symbolize carbon emissions.

The World Wildlife Fund launched Earth Hour in Sydney, Australia last year. Two million people turned off their lights. Many Canadians did also. This year a bigger global response is needed to remind our leaders that millions around the world are suffering from climate change and millions more will suffer as global warming increases.

The demonstration could be fun. Think community. We could have a pot-luck candlelight dinner in Phoenix Hall. Or, you could organize a block party or just simply enjoy being in close touch with family during the lights-out period. Organize a star-gazing party. If time permits, approach your local business and community leaders and alert your whole community.

If interested in a UCM Earth Hour gathering, Saturday, March 29, please send an e mail to: Nangor@sympatico.ca.

For details: www.earthhour.org.

Regarding another Step to Sustainability, the Green Team is plan-

ning a Bio/local food fair for April 6, after service. Come share ideas for eating low on the food chain while concentrating on locally grown foods that minimize carbon impact.

News from the Archives

Those of you who heard Kathy Sage last Sunday will remember that she spoke of some women who have been prominent in the life of this congregation: the Foster sisters, Mrs Eliza Reid and Helen Reid. Just two days before this, I had received, from Virginia Martin of the Winnipeg church, a paper she has written on Helen Reid who, along with her mother, made significant contributions not only to the life of the church, but also to the wider Montreal community. Virginia has done research and expanded on the information we have in our archives. She wants to do still more work on the paper, and will present it at the Conference on Canadian Unitarian Women to be held in Ottawa just before the CUC meetings. After that she will send me an electronic copy and I will be glad to share it with any of you who are interested. In my opinion, Helen Reid was one of the most remarkable members in the history of this congregation.

Barbara Jackson

Archivist

Memorial Flowers

March 2: Barbara Keats

March 9: Henry Thomson and Catherine Moir

March 16: Parents of Juan and Grazyna Vera

March 23: Rudolph and Rose Irvine

March 30: Larry and Jeanne O'Leary

Covenant/Vision Statement

We, Unitarians of Montreal, provide a sacred space where we embrace diversity and seek truth. We cultivate moral integrity and foster a spirit of caring, creativity, and celebration of life. We nurture spiritual search and practice, affirm the democratic process in human affairs, and visibly promote social justice, sustainability, and kinship with all of life in our neighbourhood, nation, and global community.



Adopted at the AGM on June 4, 2001

April newsletter submissions

E-mail your submissions to news@ucmtl.ca or place them in the mailbox upstairs. Please note that if you host a regular event, the Newsletter Collective needs to know of any cancellations or changes



**Deadline: Wednesday, March 19
5:00 pm**

Early submissions appreciated.

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CUC (Canadian Unitarian Council):

Website: www.cuc.ca

Mouvement universaliste au Québec:

Website: www.uuqc.ca

Key People at the UCM

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dianerollert@ucmtl.ca

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**The UCM/EUM Newsletter is published 11
times a year by the Newsletter Collective.**

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