

2002 Committee Annual Reports

Finance Committee

Warren Mathews, Chair

The purpose of the Finance Committee is to oversee the financial aspects of our church's operations, develop the annual budget, and provide information and recommendations to the Board relating to finances.

Our work this year was colored by:

1. Continuation of the economic downturn in the country, which has led to some shrinkage of our pledge income.
2. Installation of a new integrated software system on the church's computers. This software ("Church Windows") is bringing increased efficiency to both our pledge accounting and general accounting functions. However, changing over to the new system has been a complex, time consuming, and not yet completed process, during which some functions, such as the monthly preparation of pledge reminders, have been interrupted.

Against that backdrop, our primary tasks this year were:

1. To consider, and recommend approval or rejection of, requests for budget item increases during the year. Most significant were (1) the hiring of a soprano section leader for the choir (financed primarily by budget transfers from other music department line items) and (2) the hiring of a half-time sexton (financed primarily by termination of our janitorial service and security service outside contracts).
2. To develop a proposed budget for 2003-04. In view of the economic environment, and faced with a couple of urgent or already committed new expenses, the committee solicited and received direct participation by the Board in identifying expenses that could be eliminated or reduced without significantly under-cutting the church's programs. Nonetheless, and despite somewhat smaller staff salary increases than in recent years, our initial budget projects a modest deficit, which probably will increase substantially when the R.E. transition team determines the budget requirements for a new Director of Religious Education. It is clear that the continued economic health of the church depends on our achieving a significant increase in our total pledge income.

The standing members of the committee are Carol Agate, Anita and George Brenner, Jane Donahue, Michelle Lévesque, and Warren Mathews, Chair. Ex officio members are Carol Kerr (Treasurer) and Jacki Weber (Pledge Committee Co-Chair). Regular staff attendee is Marie Kashmer-Stiebing (Church Administrator).

Pulpit Committee

Vilma Ortiz, Chair

The mission of the Pulpit Committee is to maintain the quality, consistency, and sanctity of the Sunday service. We serve at the invitation of the minister, the Reverend Judith Meyer, who is responsible for the structure and content of weekly worship services. We meet monthly to evaluate the services, discuss issues related to worship, and plan Sunday services when she is not in the pulpit. The Pulpit Committee, in collaboration with Judith, finds preachers, and pulpit hosts for one Sunday a month from September through June and for the months of July and August.

September through July. For the one Sunday a month between September and June when Judith is not in the pulpit, we rely on guest speakers. Our goal is to have Unitarian Universalist ministers lead Sunday worship as often as possible, and to have ordained clergy from other faiths at other times. Over the years, we have developed relationships with a group of clergy who have a special affinity for our congregation and these individuals are invited to preach approximately once a year. We also seek out clergy who have an interfaith ministry, or a ministry focused on an issue of concern to Unitarian Universalism. We are fortunate that we have been able to identify and bring guest preachers to the church that help us provide a consistently high quality worship service when Judith is not in the pulpit.

Pulpit Hosts. It is the practice of our church to have lay congregation members serve as pulpit host when we have a guest preacher. The Pulpit Committee recruits, trains, assigns, and assists our skilled and committed group of lay pulpit hosts, who plan and conduct individual services with the visiting ministers. This is a task requiring courage, perseverance, creativity, organization, thought, and time management. We keep a script for pulpit hosts, which is updated regularly, so that they have the support they need to conduct the service.

Summer. The Reverend Nardoni will not be available to take the pulpit in the month of August this year, as he has for the last few years. We are fortunate that the Reverend Ricky Hoyt has agreed to be with us for the month of July. In August, we will have guest ministers and speakers. We will hold one service each Sunday this summer. We believe that in the future, we will be able to provide two services as we do during the rest of the year.

Committee members include Vilma Ortiz, Gary Kinsinger, Sue Bickford, Alison Chipman, Kathy Cook, Scott Roewe.

Pledge Committee

George Brenner and Jacki Weber, Co-Chairs

For the last several years, your pledge committee's goal has been to raise pledge receipts to cover 78% of the Church's expenses. The chart below (restated to reflect our new budget policy of including all capital expenses in the operating budget) illustrates how close we have come to attaining that 78% goal through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002. We expect the favorable trend to continue; although, the current economic climate

and major external events are introducing unusual uncertainty relative to the next year or so.

Fiscal Year	Pledge Revenue	Expenses	Pledge % of Expenses
1998-1999	\$203,000	\$320,000	63
1999-2000	\$228,000	\$335,000	68
2000-2001	\$281,000	\$382,000	74
2001-2002	\$305,000	\$405,000	75

Following is a categorized chart of pledge giving:

Range	Pledging Households	% of Households	% of Pledge Revenue
\$5,000 to \$15,000	7	2	20
\$2,000 to \$5,000	17	4	16
\$1,000 to \$2,000	73	19	30
\$500 to \$1,000	108	28	22
Under \$500	180	47	12
Total Pledges	385	100%	100%

As you can see from the above chart, 2% of our members make up 20% of the pledge revenue, 47% of our members make up only 12% of the pledge revenue.

Your pledge committee's co-chairs are ex officio members of the finance committee whose job it is to compile the budget. The finance committee has looked extensively at all programs to see what is essential and has determined funding priorities.

This month (May 2003) the pledge committee embraces stewardship as part of its efforts. Stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

We hope to bring greater consciousness to both the ways we, as congregants, decide to support our church and the ways we decide to use resources as religious people to make a positive impact on our greater world.

We'll begin with a dialogue on what matters to the people in this congregation and a discussion of why we support the church the way we do. We'll seek to synthesize feedback into a meaningful mission for our church and then to create pledge materials that will speak to that mission.

The process will be transparent. We want you to be involved.

The pledge committee includes George Brenner (co-chair), Jacki Weber (co-chair), Ron Crane, Warren Matthews, and Pat Wright. There are more than a dozen additional team members assisting in stewardship efforts.

Administration Committee **Christian Collingwood, Chair**

This year the Administration Committee has built on the foundation it established last year, when it initially began its work after being formed at the request of UCCSM Church Administrator, Marie Kashmer-Stiebing. It continues to take seriously its responsibility "to act as liaison and facilitate effective working relationships within the Church so as to strengthen the quality of church administration."

The Committee has met once a month throughout the past year, on the next-to-last Wednesday. The Committee membership has grown and shrunk by one member over this time and is presently comprised of Fran Hotchkiss, Francine Moore, Greg Wood, and Christian Collingwood.

Last year, Greg Wood and Marie Kashmer-Stiebing worked tirelessly on researching various software programs to help the Church staff track all aspects of membership and financial matters in the Church office. This year, we are pleased to report that a software program was selected, purchased, and loaded onto the Church computers. While some modules of this program are still being learned, we can already see the great gains made by installing this software. We expect that, with further training and more experience, this critically important feature of the Church office will bring additional benefits to the Church in workload reductions, increased efficiencies, and a high level of accuracy in accounting and membership data.

Issues that the Committee plans to help the Administrator address in the coming months include replacing aging office equipment, such as copiers and printers; purchasing or upgrading of computers; establishing building use policies; monitoring and proposing budgets; redesigning office space to find better use for the current space prior to changes resulting from the planned move of the offices to the upstairs space; and continuing to review staffing and staff job duties to ensure that Administrative workload is efficient, as well as fairly allocated.

The Committee is comprised of Fran Hotchkiss (term: December 2001–January 2004), Francine Moore (term: December 2001–January 2004), Greg Wood (term: December 2001–January 2005), and Christian Collingwood (term: December 2001–January 2005).

Membership on the Committee is by staggered terms and as Members rotate off the Committee, new volunteers will be sought to fill those vacancies.

Building Program

Barbara Kernochan, Chair

The Building Committee took a new direction this past year. With new architect Ralph Mechur's guidance and a different design direction, we have been assigned a senior planner and are now submitting our application package to the city planning office. We are currently planning a June meeting to introduce the project to our nearby neighbors.

Our new design utilizes the existing building at the back of our 17th Street property, adding a new classroom/meeting room building, a bridge connection to the reno-vated apartment building, an elevator, and bathrooms. The plan leaves considerable outdoor space along the south side of the new building and in a plaza between the buildings. The sanctuary plans remain essentially the same, widening the sanctuary into existing office space, with offices moving upstairs. We want to recon-figure the Forbes Hall building somewhat, however, shifting one staircase to the north end and opening part of the south end of the building for storage. The new plan meets our congregation-identified need for a large gathering space (the expanded sanctuary), accessibility in both buildings, a dedicated nursery, and larger, more flexible classroom and meeting spaces. The congregation's response to this new design direction has been very positive.

Financially, the project remains uncertain. As we work closely with an estimator and/or contractor in the coming months, we will explore ways to address the need for funding additional to the one million pledged thus far if we wish to complete the entire building program. Steering the project through the city process and informing the congregation's financial decisions will be the focus of the coming year's work.

Serving on the Building Committee this year: Len Adler, Carol Agate, Wally Boag, David Denton, Rod Lane, David Olson, Steve Paddock, Jana Poirier, Greg Wood, with lots of truly helpful input from many members of the congregation.

Capital Campaign

Jim Cadwell, Capital Campaign Chair

This past year was important for the church in many ways but one of the most important initiatives we had was our fundraising efforts on behalf of our building program. (See kiosk in Forbes Hall.)

Most impressively, through the efforts of energetic church volunteers, the church office staff and the generosity and vision of many members, we have raised to date approximately \$1,045,000 in pledges. This is a remarkable achievement and to everyone who has participated thus far in the capital campaign, a very sincere thanks.

We are aware these are days of numerous challenges so we appreciate the commitment so many have made to help expand our church facility.

At this time, we have received \$552,000 in actual cash contributions towards our campaign fund, which has been safely been put aside for the express purposes of supporting the building effort. Many are paying over a three year time frame so we ask you to keep current with your contribu-tion dates (while we will remind as best we can).

The building committee is continuing to work with the city of Santa Monica on needed approvals, which can and has been somewhat slow. Groundbreaking is not all that far off, but no dates are set just yet. In the meantime, we will continue to accept new capital campaign pledges and contributions. If you would like to learn more on how you can participate, contact Jim Cadwell or Ofelia Lachtman. We'll tell you all you need to know, and probably more.

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Bienvenidos

Over 70 persons involved in the welcoming and membership development tasks of Bienvenidos started the year with a kick-off "Bash" in September. Greeters, Ushers, Hospitality, and AskMe volunteers received new red Welcome buttons to wear on Sunday mornings.

In January, we hosted a recognition for Ofelia Lachtman for her many years of service in Enrolling new members. In February, a new concept of "Enrollment Team" was

introduced. The Hospitality Booth became the Membership Center that is home base for volunteers who are available at each service to help visitors and friends accept the privileges and responsibilities of congregational membership. In order to more clearly define purposes, "UU and You" was renamed "Newcomer Orientation" and "UU and Us" became the "New Members Evening With the Minister." The membership book is now available on the second and fourth Sundays of each month after service. Our minister announces the new members on the following Sunday rather than grouping them in a large session as was done previously.

Fellowship was bolstered by get-togethers for new members, Circle Suppers, and Courtyard Connections after services on Sundays.

The Women's Alliance
Joyce Holmen, President
Sue Moore, Treasurer

In 1927, the same year as our church began; our Women's Alliance was founded. As an affiliated organization of the church, we have furthered "the living tradition" of our faith for 78 years by providing ordinary and extraordinary opportunities for leadership training, worship, community outreach, feminist studies, friendship, mentoring, good food, fundraising, and personal growth.

The Alliance has 22 members now; a goodly mix of our congregation's long-timers and relative newcomers. We gather quarterly on Sundays for lunch and a program, offering rides and childcare to make it easier for women of all ages to attend. When we meet, we always sing and share from the heart. Programs this year included favorite poetry selections read by Serena Shames, an exciting evening with a potluck in Beverly Alison's home, helping Judy Schonebaum make lovely dolls to be given to children in the greater community, and writing personal letters to elected officials concerning the war in Iraq. This spring Lyn Armondo and Debbie Durkin have arranged for us to help make dinners for Step Up On Second, and this summer we're looking forward to contributing to Interweave's annual picnic.

Meetings are scheduled for July 13 and October 19.

With dues of only \$20 each, we are able to maintain membership in the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF) and the UUWF-Pacific Southwest District (UUWF-PSWD). The continental UUWF provides us with a newsletter, program materials and support, interfaith opportunities, and workshops for those able to go to the denomination's General Assembly in June. The district group meets on a Saturday twice a year, hosted by a different congregation each time, and co-sponsors a retreat the first weekend of May at de Benneville Pines Camp. Some Alliance members also participated in a February retreat with noted UU songwriter Carolyn McDade.

Would you like to get to know some amazing women? Our meetings are announced in the newsletter, and you are welcome to come.

Camp de Benneville Pines Weekend **Marvin Pulliam and Elle Long, Coordinators**

We are one month away from our Father's Day weekend retreat to Camp de Benneville Pines. We have 90 people signed up and could have a full house this year. Financially, we are already in the black. There will be the usual activities: dam building, sing-alongs, hikes, swimming, relaxing, and coffeehouse entertainment. We, also, will have the new hot tub, yoga, aerobics, and a special workshop by Suzanne De Benedittis. There will be special activities for teens, pre-teens, and little ones. The Reverend Judith Meyer will have a session. We hope to see you there!

Poetry Group **Jeff Greenman, Chair**

The Poetry Group came into existence in, roughly, the spring of 2000. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 P.M. The group is primarily dedicated to reading and discussing prominent, published poets in sessions led by various, interested group members. Once a year or so, we bring some of our own verses to read. Meetings take place at the homes of group members with the will and the spatial resources to accommodate the group. Participation this year has ranged from eight to twelve people, with a core group of eight to ten present for most meetings (four or five men and four or five women).

The past year has been full, exciting, and also difficult. We mourned the loss of original Poetry Group member, poet, and quiet inspiration to us all, Edith Meadow, in December. We welcomed several new, regular members to the Group, including church members Arvid Knudsen and Diana Spears. We offered readings (and occasionally recordings) of the poetry of W.S. Merwin, Langston Hughes, William Carlos Williams, Eavan Boland, e.e.cummings, W.H. Auden, and T.S. Eliot--a thorough and thought provoking two-meeting session on The Four Quartets. We also heard--in translation--the vital Persian, Sufi poetry of Omar Khayyam and Rumi. We heard, too, from Li Po, among others (by dint of Kenneth Rexroth's fine 100 translations from the Chinese). On occasion, we've also invited group members to bring favorite poems dedicated to a particular theme such as love, nature, etc. As always, we welcome all newcomers

Faith in Action Commission **Charles Haskell, Chair**

Faith in Action was initiated in 2000 out of a desire and need for our congregation to find its own unique voice and vocation in minis-try for social justice and peace. The name Faith in Action indicates our commitment to live out the values and tenets of our faith in the world around us. This name connects us to the proud and vital tradition of social action in our Unitarian and Universalist congregations and communities throughout the world.

The mission of the Faith in Action Commission (FIAC) is to coordinate the varied social action efforts in the church, empowering the congregation to choose social justice issues for study and action, and integrating such activities fully into the overall life of the congregation in a way that is rooted in the moral and ethical values of our faith, as expressed in the Principles and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The FIA Commission meets bimonthly. Members of the Executive Committee of the FIA Commission are as follows: Charles Haskell, chair; Cathie Gentile, chair of the Hunger Task Force and coordinator of our emerging work in the area of economic justice; and S. J. Guidotti, chair of the Peace Committee. Members of the FIA Commission with specific liaison responsibilities include the following: Eleanor Eagan (UU-United Nations Office liaison member); Rachel Donaldson and Simon Huss (UUSC liaison members); Ron Crane (Interweave and UCCSM Board of Directors liaison member); Melinda Ewen (UCCSM Board of Directors liaison member). Members at large include: Lyn Armando; Christopher L. Brown; Christine Haskell; Patrick D. McGuire; Marguerite Spears. Rev. Judith Meyer serves as an ex officio member.

The FIA Commission is guided by a detailed policy and procedure manual that is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. In March 2003, the FIA Commission published the inaugural issue of a 12-page Bulletin that is planned for future publication on a quarterly basis. The Commission sponsors lectures, panel discussions, and other public programs in support of its work.

Based on the annual issues election of September 2002 and an all-church meeting in February 2003, four program areas have dominated our attention for the year. These include peace, hunger and economic justice, civil liberties, and support of Interweave's efforts to have our church identified as a Welcoming Congregation. Further information on these activities appears below, as provided by programmatic leaders in these areas.

Peace Committee

S. J. Guidotti, Chair

In the Faith-In-Action vote of September 2002, Peace was identified as the congregation's highest priority. This led to the formation of the Peace committee whose goals were identified as opposing the Bush Administration's unilateral push toward war in Iraq. The first steps involved discussions and information regarding U.S. policy and to this end, Saul Landau was brought to the church in October to talk about his experiences in Iraq and to show a video in which he had talked to ordinary citizens of Baghdad about the coming threat. Professor Landau's appearance was followed by a congregational vote on a Statement of Conscience in which 96% voted to oppose unilateral action by the Bush administration and urge peaceful resolution through the UN.

Throughout fall and winter, the Peace Committee publicized various peace events and activities, including a January candle-light vigil attended by children from the RE program, church members, members of at least six other UU churches from Los Angeles and Orange counties, and the Reverend William Sinkford, President of our denomination.

In December 2002, a subcommittee of the Peace Committee was established to help implement the Statement of Conscience approved by the congregation in November 2002. Max Epstein, chair of this subcommittee, has provided a separate report (see below) on the work of this group.

In January, several members of the Peace Committee played host in their homes to a showing of the Ware Lecture for 2002 given at UUA by Stephen Lewis. This lecture was a potent reminder of the importance of the United Nations and a multilateral approach to the many problems we face around the world.

Although the combat portion of the war in Iraq has officially ended, the Peace Committee will continue to work for an end to the occupation and to urge that the UN be allowed to return in order to administer the nation. We will further act to oppose the implicit threat that the Bush Doctrine of foreign policy presents to the rest of the world.

The Peace Committee meets on the first Wednesday of every month in Room A of the building across the alley on 17th St. at 7:00 PM.

Statement of Conscience Implementation Subcommittee of the Peace Committee

Max Epstein, Chair

In December 2002, the Peace Committee formed this subcommittee for the purpose of implementing the Statement of Conscience, which was overwhelmingly passed by the church, in response to the threat of war in Iraq. Those who volunteered to serve were Florence Chapgier, Max Epstein (chair), Charles Haskell, Arvid Knudsen, and Diana Spears.

Over the past four months, the subcommittee has worked on three projects: A speaker series, a bulletin, and an e-mail communication system to keep the Peace committee informed of relevant developments.

Charles Haskell heads the speaker series, and the first speaker, on April 25, was Dr. Wayne Glass, who spoke on his concerns with the Bush doctrine. Dr. Glass is Senior Adviser to the Center for Defense Information, and is currently a visiting professor at the University of Southern California. Future speakers will include Olivier Plançon, Deputy Consul of the Consulate of France in Los Angeles, and possibly a speaker from the Consulate of Turkey in Los Angeles.

The FIA Bulletin, edited by Charles Haskell, was initially published in March 2003. The inaugural issue was mailed to the church membership, and will henceforth be circulated by e-mail. That first edition was an impressive effort, and the Bulletin promises to be an important organ for the Faith in Action program of the church.

Florence Chapgier assumed responsibility for the on-going updates on developments pertaining to the role of the U. S. in Iraq, and related topics. She has kept the entire Peace

Committee well informed.

The Subcommittee will continue to meet and to explore means by which to implement the sentiment of the Statement of Conscience.

Hunger Task Force (HTF)

Cathie Gentile, Chair

At the second Annual FIA Congregational Issues Election on September 15, 2002, the congregation voted to continue the efforts of the Hunger Task Force for the 2002-2003 church year. Twelve members signed up to participate in HTF activities.

In October, donations for the Westside Food Bank's annual Hunger Walk were solicited in Forbes Hall. Over \$350 was raised by various donors and presented at the Hunger Walk on October 27, 2002.

The HTF agreed to add an additional vol-unteer activity to fill in the gap between serving dinners at Turning Point Transitional Housing. Step Up on Second was selected as an agency that met the FIA criteria. Volunteers agreed to serve dinner the fourth Saturday of every month, beginning October 2002 and have continued to do so as recently as April 26.

HTF volunteers served dinner at Turning Point on September 2, January 20 and are scheduled again for May 26.

Westside Food Bank food sorts took place in October and December. The December food sort involved 26 people filling 528 boxes with 14,400 pounds of food. Bruce Rankin, Director of the Westside Food Bank, called this a record-breaking accomplishment. It was great fun for everybody in attendance. The last food sort for this church year is scheduled for May 21.

The Religious Exploration Social Justice classes (ages 6-12) prepared approximately 75 sack lunches for Step Up in September as their first activity. The children decorated each lunch bag with drawings or uplifting messages. The Social Justice classes had a field trip to Turning Point on Sunday, April 27, where they helped prepare sack lunches and met some of the residents and the volunteer coordinator, Viveca Cole.

The ongoing commitment to serve dinner at Step Up has shown to be problematic in terms of soliciting volunteers and/or donations of money and food. A special HTF meeting took place on May 6th to address this issue.

Charles Haskell, Christine Haskell, and Marge Zifferblatt have provided liaison between our church and the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition. This group sponsors an annual celebration of people who have moved from homelessness to self-sufficiency and healthy lives. Marge, Charles, Sylvia Berke, and the Rev. Judith Meyer attended the

annual Celebrating Success breakfast on September 27, 2002. Charles and Marge are members of the planning committee for next year's event.

Volunteers who have either donated food, cooked, and/or served dinner for Step Up and Turning Point: Susan Higginbotham, Gene Murray, Pat Turcillo, Alison Chipman, Rachel Iverson, Paula Bernstein, Kathy Layton, Joseph Wood, Pat McGuire, Gerrie Lambson, Julie Calvert Hill, Charles and Christine Haskell, Maria Simpson, Judy Schoenbaum, Lyn and George Armondo, Debbie Durkin, Lisa Long-Adler and family (not church members), Heather Thomas, Janet Goodwin, Rachel Donaldson, and Florence Chappier.

Economic Justice Subcommittee of the Hunger Task Force Cathie Gentile, chair

A panel discussion to present the issues on Proposition JJ, the living wage initiative, was held in Forbes Hall on October 4, 2002. Panel members included the Reverend Alexia Salvatierra, Executive Director, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE); Mar Preston, congregation member and also representing Santa Monica's Allied for Responsible Tourism (SMART); as well as a low-wage worker from the Fairmont Hotel. There was a low turnout, but a very lively discussion.

Several members of the congregation participated in a CLUE and SMART sponsored Interfaith Freedom Seder for low-wage workers on April 15 at the Santa Monica Methodist Church. The Reverend Judith Meyer participated as a member of the Planning Committee. The Religious Exploration Social Justice classes decorated place mats for the dinner tables after a lesson presented by the Reverend Alexia Salvatierra on the successful Los Angeles janitors strike. Congregation member Judy Schoenbaum created six ceremonial Seder plates. FIA member Cathie Gentile, in consultation with long-time church member Serena Shames, coordinated the menu, which was catered by Fresh Start Catering. There were 150 guests in attendance.

There is not yet an ongoing Economic Justice Task Force, but members have expressed an interest.

Civil Liberties Working Group Dan Kegel, Interim Coordinator

An all-church parish poll was held February 9, to review the UUA process for proposing, discussing and acting on social action resolutions. After discussing the current Study/Action Issue entitled "civil liberties," the church members present decided to become involved with this issue. Dan Kegel volunteered to initiate this effort. The Civil Liberties study group subsequently met on Sunday, March 2. A mail group was established to allow ongoing debate and discussion of these issues. This group thought that it was important for UUs to be involved with this issue because "if we don't act to preserve civil liberties now, we might not be able to act to preserve them later." The group was surprised to learn how much federal law known as Patriot II would limit public access to information and how much easier it would be for the government to use torture as a law

enforcement tool. The group is seeking examples of Californians whose civil liberties are being abridged by the US government and it is considering the possibility of sponsoring a district-wide meeting on this topic in the fall.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee **Rachel Donaldson and Simon Huss, Liaison Members**

With 25,000 members and supporters nationwide, the UUSC is a powerful voice for justice and human rights in the United States and abroad. Founded in 1939 to aid the victims of Nazi terror, the UUSC has challenged injustice in more than 50 countries on four continents over the course of six decades. UUSC programs work to empower women, defend the rights of children, and support the struggles of oppressed racial, ethnic, and indigenous groups. Since September 11 and the war on terror, new challenges to civil liberties have arisen, such as those embodied in some parts of the Patriot act and related legislation. Based on an all-church parish poll on February 9, our congregation has become more involved in the issue of civil liberties. We are currently studying the issue of preserving civil liberties in the face of war, and we anticipate the development of formal programs on this issue during the coming church year.

Unitarian Universalist/United Nations Office **Eleanor Eagan, Envoy**

Action this past year concentrated on three major projects: participation in the UUA Annual General Assembly Resolutions process, formalizing UU/UNO participation in our Faith in Action Commission and continued support of the UNESCO Culture of Peace Arts Celebration.

Reviving congregational action in the UUA Annual General Assembly Resolution process at the local as well as the GA level will enable our congregation to engage in UUA policy-making to the extent our interest indicates and time permits. Our voting delegate to the GA can now be instructed about issues we have deliberated and on which we wish them to take action.

Formalizing the relationship of the UU/United Nations Office with our Faith in Action Commission has been very rewarding. The Faith in Action Commission now includes the three local UUA Associate Member Organizations: UU/USC, UU/UNO and the Women's Alliance. Interweave, a UUA Affiliated Member Organization, is also a member and other active Affiliated Organizations are eligible to join.

The local fourth annual UNESCO Culture of Peace Arts Celebration was held on April 12 at the Los Angeles Friendship Center. This is a countywide program for high school visual and performing arts students who wish to participate in the United Nations International Decade of the Culture of Peace. This year's program, drawing the largest number of participants to date, was televised by Adelphia Cable and will be shown on Channel 36. The Regional Council of Organizations sponsors this program, which is affiliated with the United Nations Association. Our UU/UNO envoy is a founding

member of the organization and a member of the Culture of Peace Arts Celebration committee.

In celebration of the UN International Year of Fresh Water, our national UU/UNO held its annual intergenerational seminar on "Water: Our Right, Our Responsibility" on April 10-12 at our national headquarters, Church Center, 777 UN Plaza, New York.

On September 8, 2002 our national office issued a Statement of Conscience Concerning a Military Attack on Iraq by the United States. On February 11, 2003, it issued a more concise Statement of Conscience in Opposition to a Unilateral Military Attack on Iraq. The Canadian UU/UNO is a very active member of our US UU/UNO and has provided our very able UN observer for a number of years. It also issued a statement in opposition to the war on Iraq.

Interweave/Welcoming Congregation

Judy Federick, President

Interweave, the UU affiliate group for bisexuals, gays, lesbians and transgenders (BGLTs), and their friends and allies, is in its third year at UCCSM.

During the past year, we held another fund-raising Annual Picnic, hosted the Coming Out Day Service, became active in the California Coalition for Marriage Equality, and, in concert with the Welcoming Congregation program, conducted education forums.

In January we hosted PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) with a forum conducted by the founder of PFLAG. Also in January, we hosted the Rev. Keith Kron as guest minister for a service and after-service forum. In February, the Center for Transgender Sanity provided a forum on transsexuality. In March, a local bisexual speaker and activist facilitated a panel on bisexuality. And, finally, in April, ten members of our congregation presented a panel on what it is like to be BGLT within a welcoming religious community.

The Welcoming Congregation is proposing a Resolution at this year's annual meeting to formalize the Welcoming Congregation designation. We are also supporting a by-laws incorporation of "gender identity" to the church's nondiscrimination clause.

For the coming year (in addition to the continuation of the Welcoming Congregation process), Interweave has selected two issues for study and action: 1) Marriage equality and 2) Outreach to at-risk BGLT youth.

For the first time this year, UCCSM will have an information booth at the annual Gay Pride event in West Hollywood. We hope to outreach to the local BGLT community the principles of UU so that others might find nourishment in a sharing, liberal religious community.

Our thanks to the many people who support our lives and who support our church community.

Ernest Pipes Distinguished Lecture
Ray Goodman, Chair

On March 8, Arianna Huffington was the 11th Annual Ernest Pipes Distinguished lecturer. We enjoyed the largest attendance ever with a large overflow in Forbes Hall. She was so well received that she signed more than 60 of her recently published book "Pigs at the Trough-How Corporate Greed and Political Corruption are Undermining America."

Music Committee
Silvio Nardoni, Chair

The Music Committee coordinates the many aspects of the music program at our church. This year our staff expanded to include a children's choir director, Rivera Gottlieb, in addition to music Director, Steve Wight and Accompanist, Louis Durra.

The most visible feature of our music program is the music offered as part of the worship programs on Sunday morning. Our goal is to represent a variety of musical styles that deepen the emotional and spiritual quality of our time together. We are conducting a survey of the congregation's response to that effort so that we can more finely attune our program to the changing composition of our community.

In addition to the Sunday morning music, the choir continues to put on one of the largest (in terms of attendance) Dining for Dollars events, which is evolving into a musical program of note as well.

Our community benefits from the many talented musicians within our congregation who contribute their time and effort to the music program in addition to the high caliber professional musicians who have graced our sanctuary in the past year. Our "Artist in Residence" woodwind quintet gave several concerts, and we hope that we may extend this program to other musical groups seeking to reach audiences in Santa Monica and the surrounding areas.

Our committee members include Wally Giffen, Aye Deal, Esther Salver, Scott Rowe, Betsy Begirt, Peter Van den Beemt, and Daly McDonald.

We note with sadness the recent death of Graham Jarvis, who gave so much to our music making over many years. He will be sorely missed.

Committee on Ministry
Audrey Lyness, Chair

The primary objectives of this committee are to strengthen the quality of ministry within this congregation, to serve as a support group for the minister, and to be a communication channel between the minister and the congregation. The committee meets periodically with the minister.

Each year the committee evaluates the minister, measuring progress in the achievement of her stated objectives, and obtaining comments and suggestions from various constituents of the congregation, including the Board, our paid staff, committee members, RE families and members at large. This year's report was sent to the Board in February. Needless to say, our minister continues to receive very favorable remarks.

Members of the committee are Karen Raiford, Felicity Nussbaum, and Audrey Lyness. Jerry Gates is our Board liaison. We are always interested in and receptive to your comments on how to enhance the value and enrich the experience of our church's ministry.

Adult Religious Growth and Learning Committee (ARGL)

Anne Welsbacher, Co-chair

Jane Machnik, Co-chair

The mission of the ARGL committee is to develop, coordinate, and present courses, seminars, workshops and lectures designed to support members in their spiritual journey, their search for understanding, and their knowledge of our Unitarian Universalist traditions.

The Adult Religious Growth and Learning committee offered 12 classes and 6 One-day workshops in fiscal year 2002-2003. Fall 2002 classes: The Four Agreements; Build Your Own Theology Part 1; Build Your Own Theology Part 3; UU and Other "Ism"; Embody the Spirit Through Movement with Music; Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Adults Part 1. Fall 2002 one-day workshops: Quaker Worship: Constructed Aspects of Silence and Speaking, What Is Fundamentalism: Religion and the Battle for the Modern Soul; Energy Management for Everyday Life. Spring 2003 class series: Concerning the Spiritual in Art; Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Adults, Part 2; Build Your Own Theology Part 2; Process Theology; Emerson the Unitarian; Embody the Spirit Through Movement with Music. Spring 2003 one-day workshops: Connecting with the Earth: The experience of being grounded; Community Drum Circle; and Why God Won't Go Away. Ongoing Offerings for 2002-03 were UU and You, Book Cart, Zen Meditation, Awareness Through Movement.

The ARGL committee has 7 members: Jean Allgeyer, Max Joffe, Ilse Kleinman, Jane Machnik, and Bernie Silvers continue to serve. New members are Ren Renshaw and Marv Pulliam. Rotating out were Joan Schumacher, Bob Tull, Phil Bonacich and, as of April 2003, Anne Welsbacher.

Website

Liz Fuller, Webmaster

As awareness of the church's website grows, so does the site itself and the informational contributions of various groups and individuals (for example, we now happily receive regular updates from groups such as Faith in Action, Interweave and others). In addition, the site continues to be updated each month, with current information from the church newsletter, Order-of-Service announcements, and other sources.

There are two goals for the coming year:

1. To update and streamline the site's navigation system, to make it even easier for users to find the information they need.
2. To further integrate the site with the church's other major communications vehicles. This is a process that's been evolving since the site was created, but which has really taken off in the last few months. Webmaster Liz Fuller is now working closely with Carol Agate, Charles Haskell, and others to figure out how church members use our various sources of information, and how we can use both print and electronic media to best complement each other and increase both efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Finally, one of the most frequent questions we hear asked these days is, "Why don't we publish the newsletter on our website?" So here is the somewhat complex answer: "Actually, we do publish the entire newsletter on the site each month, but out of consideration for the privacy of individuals mentioned in the newsletter, we don't publish a public link to it in our navigation system." We also maintain an online archive - available to members and subscribers - of the issues we have posted.

Since so many people have asked about online newsletters, an ad hoc committee is currently studying alter-native methods of posting the newsletter information on the website...and the topic will most likely be covered in an online communications survey for the congregation, which is now being discussed by the committee.

Finally, as always, comments on and new content for the website are always appreciated, and should be sent to webmaster Liz Fuller at webmaster@uusm.org We look forward to hearing from you!

The Caring Network

Jean Rutowski, Facilitator

The Caring Network works with church staff in an attempt to respond to calls about ill or hospitalized members and to requests for assistance. The Network sends cards, makes calls and visits, and provides rides and runs errands, when possible. The Network, however, is a small group of mostly older women, some of whom need assistance themselves. We invite all members of the congregation to join in by providing care on a regular or occasional basis. Needs to be filled include giving transportation for Sunday services or church events or for appointments, making check-in telephone calls, shopping for groceries or other items, and giving computer assistance. Anyone willing and able to

help is asked to contact the church office. Network meetings are held in the church office on the third Thursday of every month at 4 PM and are open to all.

The Over-50 Club **Gaye Follmer Deal, Chair**

The Over-50 Club meets at noon on the third Monday of each month, except the summer months of July and August. Usually each person brings his/her own lunch, except in December and May, when we share a potluck luncheon. Coffee, tea, and cookies are served. Speakers in this last year have included Sheila Bjornlie, who told us about native plants, and Dean Voegtlen, who read some of his Memoirs. Following the Memoirs theme, we had "do-it-yourself" programs where each person talked for five to ten minutes. Topics have been "My Home Town," and "The Most Memorable Character I Have Known." People of all ages are cordially invited. For further information, contact Gaye Follmer Deal.

Gallery Wall Committee **Shirlee Frank, Chair**

This committee is charged with mounting ten solo exhibits each year on our GALLERY WALL in Forbes Hall. In November, the Faith in Action Committee uses the wall and in December, we oversee an exhibit of work by the "artists" in our congregation.

The Gallery Wall has been "hung" with paintings, photographs, original prints, and collages for the past 35 years. Many pieces of art have been purchased and our Church has been an exciting showcase for both professional and emerging artists. Non-member artists contribute 20% from the sale of their work, while member artists contribute 10%. Our church also provides Forbes Hall if the artist wishes to have an opening reception.

Office Volunteers **Anne MacQueen, Coordinator**

Office volunteers give time and energy to the church by performing routine tasks such as assembling materials for meetings and preparing mailings by stuffing envelopes and affixing labels, stamps, and fasteners.

Irene Holland, Gist Lavoie and Anne MacQueen assemble the Sunday Order of Service and inserts. Four or five volunteers meet when the newsletters have been picked up from the printer, usually from among the following eager-to-be-there folks: Lyn Armondo, Ellen Boag, Otto Cahn, Mary Cole, Anne MacQueen, Jean Maucieri, and Grace Weaver.

Others who may be called upon, especially when new directories are assembled and mailed are: Tom Ahern, Jean Allgeyer, Sylvia Berke, Sheila Bjornlie, Helen Brown, Claire Fein, Shirlee Frank, Julie Hill, June Jamieson, George Kashmer, Gloria Lerner, Joyce Mathews, Francine Moore, Sue Moore, John Raiford, Jean Rutowski, Serena Shames, and Lee Silver.

Scrip Program

Anne Mac Queen and Warren Mathews

The scrip program offers a truly painless, no-cost-to-you way to contribute to the church. This fundraiser currently earns approximately \$2,600 per year (down from about \$5,000 several years ago).

To make your grocery store purchases generate income for the church, buy Ralph's paper scrip, use an Albertson's community card, and/or subscribe to the eSCRIP program (Von's and other businesses participate in eSCRIP). All these--Ralph's paper scrip, Albertson's community cards and eSCRIP subscription forms--are available in Forbes Hall Sundays 12 to 12:30 and in the office at other times.

Dining for Dollars

Helen Burns, Chair

The Dining for Dollars activity is a silent auction format of dinners and other events offered by church members and friends and bid on by many church attendees. It is the principal fundraiser of the church and the February 2003 bidding generated \$18,500. There were approximately 55 offers including boat rides, a ping pong tournament, picnics, a choir festival of music, a pancake breakfast, a wine tasting festival, and home dinners and brunches of many ethnic origins, a la Japanese, Indonesian, Chinese, Greek, Mediterranean, Irish, English, Spanish, Cajun, Mexican, Italian, French, and many other creative repasts from our imaginative members.

These events, also, provide a wonderful opportunity to socialize with small groups of church members and friends, usually in private homes.

We start soliciting for donors in October, and the bidding usually occurs in February, with events spanning the year from March through November.

Committee members are Shirlee Frank, Peggy Kharraz, Sue Moore, and Helen Burns, Chair. We, also, appreciate the efforts of our "part time" outside contractor in the Hollywood Hills, Patrick Burrows.

Couples' Club

George Kashmer, Coordinator

Couples' Club monthly structured potluck dinners provide a friendly, informal meeting place for church couples of all ages to become better acquainted. Dinners are held the third Saturday of the month in members' homes. All interested couples are invited to join. During the past year, our hosts have been Leonard and Elizabeth Adler, Harvey and Sheila Bjornlie, Raymond and Betty Goodman, George Kashmer and Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, Jerry and Sue Moore, Stuart and Francine Moore, and John and Karen Raiford.

Gardening Group

Fran Hotchkiss, Chair

During the past year, Howard Westley met with volunteers Debbie Fryman and Nedra Bickel to instruct them in pruning the roses and cleanup in the Church gardens. Many thanks to both of them. Anyone who would like to help with the maintenance of the gardens and on-going battle with the weeds and debris, please call me.

A new tree was planted at the Arizona entrance to the courtyard in honor of Ofelia Lachtman and new Begonias and Impatiens were planted in the patio off Forbes Hall. Also, the large tree in this area was removed as well as a tree on the 17th Street property in anticipation of the building program. Another tree near the entrance to Forbes Hall was removed as it was lifting the floor with its roots. A new planting was installed.

Hiking Group, Adult Program Committee

Richard M. Boothe, Chair

The Adult Program Committee's Hiking Group usually meets in Anderson Courtyard at 9:00 a.m. on the first Sunday of odd-numbered months. We carpool to hike in the Santa Monica Mountains, then enjoy a lunch at a local restaurant. Anyone who can walk four blocks uphill is invited. 2003 hikes include Franklin Canyon in Beverly Hills, Malibu Creek State Park, Topanga Canyon State Park, County Line Beach, Temescal Canyon in Pacific Palisades, and Santa Ynez Canyon in Palisades Highlands. Contact Richard M. Boothe for details or to suggest other hikes.

The Adventure Group (TAG)

S. J. Guidotti, Chair

In the past year, The Adventure Group has gone through a series of names to differentiate it from the newly created FUUSION group and later to correct the confusion and downright embarrassment of the earlier names. With FUUSION being limited to 18 to 35, YAG, The Youngish Adult and predecessor to TAG, was obliged to eliminate the word "Young." In short order and amid too many votes to count, the organization used and discarded the names: The Group Formerly Known As, a good joke but not after the first ten minutes, The Active Group, too geriatric, The Activities Group, see previous notation, and finally The Adventure Group. As to who can belong, we have borrowed the policy of the Pentagon, that is, a strict policy of don't ask, don't tell with regard to age.

We continue to host monthly TAG socials in Forbes Hall on the third Friday of each month. Themes are given to each gathering with the last year having seen the second annual Mardi Gras celebration, the Ba-humbug non-celebratory Christmas Pageant, the Come As Your Favorite Musician in the Grateful Dead Costume Ball, the Eighties Disco Ball, and the more pedestrian game night and potlucks. Sunday afternoon volleyball is continuing as are irregularly scheduled Saturday and Sunday hikes in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Our third annual January Sleeping Bag Testing Campout was moved from its previous location of Sycamore Canyon to the more isolated La Jolla Canyon this year, a change that was met with universal approval. Other outings included a weekend rental at Lake Arrowhead and an upcoming Bur Sur weekend. The warming weather will also bring the TAG beach party and the church weekend at de Benneville Pines where last year TAG sponsored an afternoon hike and a Saturday Night Campfire.

The last year has also seen a second wine tasting, this year bringing an actual central California vintner to discuss the wines that he himself has nurtured from seed to bottle, a fascinating and educational presentation.

As for keeping in touch and discussing proposals and upcoming events, we have our very active Yahoo Groups list serve, open to all TAG members and interested parties.

Books R' Us

Phillip and Edna Bonacich, Coordinators

Books R' Us is a monthly fiction discussion group that meets at 7:00 p.m., usually on the fourth Wednesday of the month, at the home of Phil and Edna Bonacich in the Mar Vista area. The group averages eight to twelve people at each meeting. The only rule is to have read the book before coming. Light refreshments are served.

Coffee Social Hour

Ellen Boag, Chair

In Forbes Hall after each service, coffee, tea, and cookies are there for your pleasure. The people who make this possible every Sunday are volunteers who commit to doing it once a month: Wally Boag, Nicole Burik, Flo Chappier, Alison Chipman, Debbie Durkin, Robert Kory and Kevin and Ryan Kory, Gerrie Lambson, Kathryn and Craig Lee, Dan Nannini, Greg Poirier and Will Poirier, Friedemann Schultz, Pam Teplitz, Jennifer Westbay, and Lily Wilson.

They make the coffee, set up the table and arrange those delicious goodies contributed by anyone kind enough to bring them. Then, it's serve the coffee, greet the people, and, afterward, tidy up and off until the next month. To all of them, I owe a tremendous vote of thanks for being there month after month. Without them, there would be no coffee.

We have joined the UUSC Coffee Project and now buy through Equal Exchange to help small farmers in coffee growing regions. We now share fellowship with our global neighbors as we help them to help themselves.

Men's Group

Achim Jung, Chair

After one year of meeting consistently every second Thursday at 7:30 p.m., the UU men's group wants to get deeper into our exploration of the challenges and defining forces that

form our male identities in the 21st century. We're seven more or less wild men and would like to foster an atmosphere of trust by keeping our number in the single digits. For info call Achim.

Newsletter

Carol Agate and Paula Bernstein, Editors

The newsletter continues to broaden its scope with photos, features, and interviews. We want to add even more variety in the coming months. Our editorial team hopes to meet regularly to critique previous issues, discuss story ideas, and solve scheduling problems.

These scheduling problems arise because vacations, travel, and other commitments often leave us shorthanded, needing additional help in editing, writing, designing, and proofreading. Currently we have two outstanding proofreaders, Joyce Holmen and Marie Kashmer-Stiebing. Four proofreaders would be ideal, so we could count on three in case one is away. Editors Carol Agate and Paula Bernstein can usually cover for each other when one is not available, but we both travel quite a bit and a third editor would be a great asset.

Carol Ring, a graphic designer for Santa Monica College, has joined the newsletter team, and by now you have seen the beautiful results in our May issue. She will alternate issues with our talented Pam Teplitz. Dave Knudsen, who had been alternating design duties with Pam, resigned because of work commitments.

We still get calls from all over the country asking what program we use to achieve such a beautiful newsletter. People are disappointed to hear that it's not the software; it's the skills and dedication of the designers. And if you think the newsletter looks good when you get it in the mail, join those who see it on our website. In color it's truly spectacular.

We are now examining the many issues involved in making the newsletter available on our website. It is important for people to learn more about our church by looking at our website, including the newsletter. But, of course, we are concerned about privacy issues with so many names, phone numbers, and email addresses in the newsletter. To date, we have resolved these issues with hidden postings. Subscribers get an email notice that the newsletter is posted, and then can click on the link to go to the web page. People browsing the website don't see the newsletter. As this goes to press, we are exploring other solutions.

The newsletter is yours, to read and to write. We invite you to talk to us about joining our editorial team.

Building and Grounds

Jay Gobus, Past Chair and Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, Church Administrator

Last year Jay Gobus reported a concern that Forbes Hall seemed to be settling at one corner. After a thorough investigation of the problem, he was able to report to the Board of Directors that the settling was caused by tree roots and poor drainage. The trees were removed and it appears that the settling has subsided. The drainage problem will be addressed at a later date. Also, a large cedar tree in the patio causing clogging in the drains and a tree that would hinder passage to the new building on the 17th Street property were removed as was a large, dead bush in the children's play yard.

The fountain in Anderson Courtyard continues to have problems even though Jay Gobus cleaned it, Stuart Moore arranged for an electrician to check the motor, and Jose Ruvalcaba patched and sealed the plaster. A search is underway for a fountain specialist to check it out and make recommendations for maintaining the fountain.

Following is just some of the work done around the church this year. Ventilation fans were replaced in the Forbes Hall restrooms. In Room 4, Kevin Roller removed the broken window handles and installed new ones and replaced the ballast in one of the florescent lights. Plumbers repaired leaky lavatories and traps in the restrooms, toilets that didn't flush and worn out wax seals, and the water shut off valves for the building were replaced. The kitchen faucets, drainpipe, and the garbage disposal were replaced. (An attendee of an outside renter donated a faucet, a drainpipe, two soap dispensers, and labor charges.) Repairs were made to the kitchen stoves and a gas company service man came out to grease the valves and calibrate the ovens. Stuart Moore replaced the rheostat for the lights directed at the art wall, replaced a broken light switch, and repaired a crash-bar on one of our gates. Our former cleaning crew was hired to do a thorough outside cleaning of the building.

An ongoing problem that has not been resolved is correcting the slope where Forbes Hall and the sanctuary meet so that water does not collect resulting in plaster falling from the ceiling and water leaking onto the floor. Other things that need the attention of a dedicated Building and Grounds Committee are the doors on the furnace closet that do not shut properly, the upstairs furnace is not being regulated by the thermostat, a gate that is drooping and will not open more than a few inches, the fence behind Forbes Hall is falling down, the lock on the sliding glass doors in Forbes Hall is broken, and the double doors at the Arizona entrance to Forbes Hall do not shut correctly causing a very loud bang and shaking the building.

Jay Gobus and the time and energy he put into maintaining our facilities are sorely missed. Until someone takes the position of Chair of Building and Grounds, the Church Administrator is facilitating work that needs to be done. She has enlisted help from Warren Mathews, Stuart Moore, Fran Hotchkiss, Ellen Boag, and UCCSM's part-time weekday sexton, Kevin Roller, and Sunday sexton, Jose Ruvalcaba to maintain our building and grounds and thanks them greatly for their help and their patience.