

Annual Report 2003-2004

May 16, 2004

STAFF REPORTS

Religious Exploration

Catherine Farmer, Director of Religious Education (DRE)

We have a Religious Exploration program to be proud of here at UCCSM! In a year of significant transition, the program has remained strong, and is now ready to more fully embrace the vision for our program created two years ago when the decision was made to transition into the Way Cool Sunday School model of RE. Indeed, much of this year was focused on holding the program steady as I arrived and began acquainting myself with this congregation, its members and its structure. It's been a good first six months, and I am very grateful for the enthusiastic welcome shown by everyone in this community. The RE program and I are both ready to begin stretching our wings – there are lots of exciting things in store for next year!

The nature of the DRE position necessitates an overlapping of many tasks with various people in our congregation both to create and run our RE program, and to provide leadership for our church community. Some of the items listed below were accomplished exclusively by the DRE and others were done in cooperation with the RE Council, RE committees, or other church/district groups. This year's RE Council was chaired by Wendy Salz Johnston, July-March, and Alicia Van Ooyen, April-June. Members of the Council during the year included Beth Rendeiro, Karen Patch, Chris Brown, Lisa Stewart and Cathie Gentile.

Way Cool Sunday School - Year Two: This year was the second year of transition into the Way Cool Sunday School RE model, an experiential RE format incorporating regular Worship and Social Justice, as well as curriculum-based Classroom Sundays, all grounded in a common focus on our Unitarian Universalist principles and values. Our focus for this year, across the elements of our program, was the First UU Principle: the Inherent Worth and Dignity of Every Person.

Worship: Kindergarten-6th/7th Grades met together on the first Sunday of every month for a Worship Sunday, planned and led this year by the DRE, with support and collaboration from Diane Fletcher-Hoppe, Beverly Alison, Rev. Stefanie Eitzbach-Dale, and additional Sunday helpers. Topics this year included a Day of the Dead celebration in November, an Easter Wildflower Seed Celebration and Egg Hunt, a celebration of "Mistakes that Worked", "Wash Away the Old Year and Welcome in the New," a "Celebrating Our Gifts" worship, and so on. The focus of these Sundays is on celebration and recognition that something special happens when we come together at church. These Sundays have gone well, for the most part, but our current space limitations impact their quality. Neither room 4 nor the open lot outside at 17th street are ideal for creating sacred

space. Next year, we also intend to tie the themes of our Worship Sundays more closely to what happens on Classroom and Social Justice Sundays.

In addition to the Way Cool Worship Sundays, this also included periodic involvement in the sanctuary, preparing and sharing stories and celebrations such as introducing Guest At Your Table, co-producing the “Three Miracle Births” pageant in December, telling the story of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s childhood on MLK Sunday, introducing our Wildflower Seed Celebration on Easter, and celebrating the DRE Installation in February.

Classroom: The second and third Sundays of the month are Classroom Sundays for all ages. At each service, we offer a preschool class, K-1st Grade, 2nd-3rd Grade, 4th-6th (9:00)/4th-5th(11:00) and 7th(9:00)/6th-7th(11:00). Our 8th Grade Coming of Age program meets during the 9:00 service, and our Senior High YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) group meets during the 11:00 service. Our preschool, 7th Grade, Coming of Age, and YRUU classes meet every week and are not part of the rotational format. Overall, our classes have gone well this year, thanks to the many dedicated volunteers serving as teachers in our program. As with the Worship Sundays, our physical space impacts the program that we offer – our classrooms are small and dark, and our teachers have done an admirable job of presenting quality programming in less than adequate space. Our communication systems need improvement, however, and that will be a primary focus in our planning for next fall. Classroom Sundays will be better linked with the other Sundays, in content as well as visibility, and a new RE subcommittee is being formed, the Classroom Support Committee, to aid the DRE in providing organization, support and training for the 46 teachers in our RE program.

Our middle school program has struggled to find a focus this year. We started out the year offering one 7th Grade class at the 9:00 service, but recognized as the year progressed that there was real need for a class to be offered at the 11:00 service as well. This new class started in January, with 6th and 7th graders, using lessons pulled from various UU curricula that focused on Principle 1. Next year, we look forward to strengthening this part of our program and plan to offer a comparative religions curriculum developed for UU middle school students, Neighboring Faiths, for our 6th & 7th grade classes at each service.

Social Justice: On the fourth Sunday of every month, our K-6/7 students met together for a Social Justice Sunday. Thanks to the leadership of our SJ Committee chair, Cathie Gentile, and the support of committee members Linda Van Ligten, Kit Shaw, Michele Pritchard and Eleanor Gaver, this year has included trips to Berkely Convalescent Hospital for holiday caroling and to Turning Point Transitional Housing to make sack lunches and share a snack with the residents. We’ve also had visitors from the Los Angeles SPCA for a presentation on Native Wildlife, the Fringe Benefits theatre troupe for an interactive presentation on diversity within families, and a special visit from an HIV-positive teen to talk about HIV and how it has affected her life. This is the portion of our program where kids truly “put hands and feet on our UU Principles.”

Coming of Age: This year the size of our COA class has more than doubled! We have nine highly engaged and enthusiastic 8th graders who have been working hard all year on exploring their personal faith within the context of our UU faith, and developing their credo statements to share with us in a Sunday service of their own creation on May 23rd. The program's success is due to the dedication of our four COA leaders, Beth Rendeiro, Michelle Levesque, Gary Kinsinger and Ernie Pipes, and the support of the nine church members who signed on to serve as mentors to each of the youth.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU): This year our YRUU group has expanded to include ten high school youth, who meet each Sunday morning with advisors Chris Brown, Liza Cranis and Stephanie DuPont. The highlight of the year came on April 18th, with our Youth Sunday service, planned and led by the YRUU group after months of planning and practicing. This year we have seen the creation of a core group of youth who identify strongly as UUs and enjoy coming together for social events, deep discussions, and worship planning. With the addition of this year's COA youth, our YRUU group will approach 20 next year, and is ready to further develop their program to include all five elements of a balanced youth program: community building, learning, worship, social action, and leadership development.

Youth Activities: The Youth Activities Committee, chaired by Karen Patch, plans monthly social activities for our Coming of Age and YRUU youth to attend together. Many churches struggle with how to transition youth from middle school into the high school youth group, but this is not a problem here – every one of the COA youth from the last two years is active in YRUU, and I feel very strongly that the events planned by the YAC are directly responsible for that 100% retention! Not only is providing social activities vital for building community within our youth groups, but our format also ensures that by the time youth enter high school, they already know and feel connected to the older members of the group.

Our Whole Lives (OWL): OWL is a very important element of our educational ministry to children and youth, and I am very proud that we are a congregation that offers all five levels of the Our Whole Lives lifespan sexuality education program! This is thanks to the long-term dedication and organization of our OWL coordinator, Beth Rendeiro. This year, in addition to adult OWL (facilitated by the Adult Religious Growth and Learning Committee), we offered 5th&6th Grade OWL (taught by Francois Bar, Victor Paddock, Jana Poirier and Beth Rendeiro), and Kindergarten & 1st Grade OWL (taught by Francois Bar, Victor Paddock, Beth Rendeiro and Linda Van Ligten). Next year, we will offer the Jr. High and Sr. High OWL classes.

Nursery: This year has seen a lot of transition in our nursery program, with the departure of both of our Nursery Caregivers in the first part of 2004. Great thanks are due to Nursery Assistants Tom Ahern and Adrienne Silsbee for their support of the program through the transition. We have now hired a new head Caregiver, Aishia Gray, who brings a new level of professionalism to the position. She is highly skilled and experienced in working with young children, and greets parents and children alike with warmth and enthusiasm on Sunday mornings. We are still looking for one more

Caregiver to fill our second open spot, but our Nursery program is once again stable and welcoming.

Additional elements of the DRE position:

Events and Activities: Included support for as well as attendance at RE and church activities in addition to our Sunday morning classes.

Events for this past year included:

- UNICEF Carnival
- Pilgrim's Feast
- New Member Dinner
- Guest at Your Table fundraiser of UUSC
- Cookie Bake
- Winter Holiday Pageant intergenerational service
- Christmas Eve service
- DRE Installation
- RE Newcomer Orientation
- RE Volunteer Picnic
- Easter Wildflower Seed Celebration
- Youth Sunday
- New Member Orientation
- Coming of Age Sunday (upcoming)
- RE Sunday (upcoming)

Communication/Networking: Included monthly column in the church newsletter, announcements in the Orders of Service, monthly DRE reports to the Board of Trustees and the RE Council, annual DRE report to the congregation, planning RE Council meetings, greeting and following up with RE visitors, communicating and meeting with parents and families both in person and via phone call, email and snail mail, and supervising the Nursery Caregivers.

Meetings:

- Monthly meetings were RE Council, Board of Trustees
- Weekly staff meeting with Minister
- Subcommittee and other meetings ranging from 1-6 times/group included Youth Activities Committee, Coming of Age, YRUU, Teaching Teams, Our Whole Lives orientations, Winter Holiday Pageant
- Meetings with many church committees including Personnel, Stewardship, Building, Executive, Bylaws Review, New Member meetings, etc.

Maintenance and Administration: Included registering and tracking enrollment and attendance of children and youth, managing the RE budget, coordinating supplies and

juice for Sundays, researching and making equipment purchases for the program, creating the Nursery Caregiver job description, etc.

Research and Planning: Included research both online (through REACH and LREDA resource/idea sharing discussion groups) and off. This benefits our RE program and church community by enriching and broadening our understanding of the goals we are working toward, providing new frameworks and models, and connecting us to a larger movement. Some of this is event/program specific; the balance is organizational, management or philosophical in nature.

Also included developing and presenting plans for RE Council/Committee structure, RE recruitment, summer RE program, and next year's RE program beginning in the fall.

District/Denominational Activities and Professional Growth: As DRE, I make a commitment to continuing professional growth and development and to represent our church at various conferences and denominational affairs. Activities this past year included:

- Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) PSWD Chapter Membership Chair (03-04); Secretary (04-05) (3 meetings/year)
- UU Association's Campus Ministry Advisory Committee (CMAC), LREDA Representative (1 meeting/year – 2/27-3/1)
- Incoming senior "Peer Partner" to two DRE's new to their congregations or to LREDA. Includes periodic meetings as well as regular contact by email and phone. This is a mentoring program offered by PSWD LREDA to pair new DRE's with more experienced religious educators in the district to provide support and advice.
- Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) Assembly (4/23-/25)
- LREDA Professional Days (4/21-4/22)
- Larger Church Conference (3/5-3/6)
- LREDA Fall Conference (10/10-10/13)
- UU Ministers Association/LREDA Retreat (1/26-1/29)
- DRE Cluster meetings (bi-monthly)

The Religious Exploration Program is strong, growing and exciting, thanks to many dedicated volunteers who seek to model and pass on our UU principles and values to our children and youth. In my first year as your Director of Religious Education, I have been very impressed by this congregation's commitment to its educational ministry as well as by the level of energy and excitement around growth and change. I thank you for the opportunity to work with you as your DRE, and look forward to what we will accomplish together for many years to come!

COMMITTEES & COUNCILS

Committees and Councils are the groups that do the work of our church on a long-term basis. They tend to have regularly-scheduled meetings, require an ongoing commitment from volunteers, and attend to things like establishing policies and procedures, planning and coordinating major events, and keeping the church's many administrative functions running smoothly. Explore membership in one of these groups if you are already a church member and would like to gain a deeper understanding of and make a deeper commitment to the inner workings of our congregation.

Administration

Contact: John Schroeder

This year the Administration Committee has concluded its third year of work after being re-established at the request of UCCSM Church Administrator, Marie Kashmer-Stiebing. The Committee is charged with the responsibility “to act as liaison and facilitate effective working relationships within the Church so as to strengthen the quality of church administration.”

The Committee continues to meet on the Third Wednesday of each month throughout the year. The Committee is presently comprised of Greg Wood, John Schroeder, and Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, serving in an ex-officio capacity. In compliance with Church by-laws, two members, Fran Hotchkiss and Francine Moore, rotated off the Committee this year at the conclusion of their 3-year term. Additionally, and also in compliance with Church by-laws, John will step down as Chairperson of the Committee and rotate that roll to another Committee member.

This year has seen the implementation of new staffing after last year’s major review of all of the Administrative functions and Staff of UCCSM. New job descriptions were written by the Committee and approved by the Personnel Committee and the Board. A new part-time Administrative Assistant was hired for the Church Office and Staff are being cross-trained and re-organized to better streamline workloads and increase efficiencies. Additionally, the Administrative Offices were painted and reconfigured, with the new Administrative Assistant moving into the front office.

Due to increased security concerns, an extensive network of cameras and monitors were installed throughout the church to help the Staff monitor activity on the campus.

Issues that the Committee plans to help the Administrator address in the coming months include the purchase of new computers; the purchase of a new digital copier; and the creation of a new Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee for oversight of Building & Grounds.

The Committee is comprised of: Greg Wood (term: December 2001 – January 2005), and John Schroeder (term: December 2001 – January 2005). Service as Members on the Committee is by staggered terms and as Members rotate off the Committee new volunteers will be sought to fill those vacancies.

Adult Religious Growth and Learning (ARGL) Committee

Jane Machnik, chair

The mission of the Adult Religious Growth and Learning (ARGL) Committee is to develop and present classes and workshops that support members and friends in their spiritual journey, their search for community, and their interest in a deeper understanding of our Unitarian Universalist principles and traditions.

The Adult Religious Growth and Learning committee offered 15 classes and 4 one-day workshops in the fiscal year 2003-2004. Fall 2003 classes: Voluntary Simplicity; Build Your Own Theology Part 1; Distributive Justice; Illuminating Your Life, Part 1; Native Spirituality; Understanding Islam. Fall 2003 one-day workshops: Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Adults. Ongoing: Newcomers' Orientation, Book Cart, Zen Meditation. Spring 2004 classes: Biblical Interpretation for Religious Liberals; Cakes for the Queen of Heaven; Voluntary Simplicity; Approaching Buddhism; Small Group Ministry Learning Group; Remembered Lives, Shared Wisdom; UU History; Deep Ecology; UUCCSM Community Drum Circle; Build Your Own Theology Part 2. Spring 2004 one-day workshops: Updating My Relationship With God; Living With Dying; Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Adults. Ongoing: Newcomers' Orientation, Book Cart, Zen Meditation, Community Dialogues With the Minister.

The ARGL committee has 8 members: Jean Allgeyer, Max Johnson, Ilse Kleinman, Jane Machnik, Marv Pulliam, and Ren Renshaw continue to serve. New members were Joan Reighley and Jennifer Westbay. Rotating out: Bernie Silvers.

We welcome new committee members, class leaders and facilitators.

Bienvenidos

Contact: Ofelia Lachtman

Bienvenidos spent several early meetings of the program year 2003-2004 in defining itself. What was it that made it a council and not a committee? The answer was that we were a group of "welcoming" committees that functioned individually, but that required the "umbrella" structure of a council to help and strengthen one another.

During these discussions it was agreed to have only one New Member Supper in the fall of each year. However, the possibility of a Spring Tea for New Members is still under discussion.

The Bienvenidos Council is made up of (1) Greeters, headed by Arvid Knudsen, (2) Ushers, headed by Patrick McGuire, (3) Our Own Brochures, headed by Ofelia Lachtman, (4) Coffee Service, headed by Ellen Boag, (5) Ask Me Station, headed by Cathy Cook, (6) Membership Center, headed by Richard Boothe, (7) Newcomer Orientation, headed by Judith Meyer, assisted by Ofelia Lachtman, (8) Courtyard

Connections, headed by Julie Nyquist, (9) New Member Suppers, headed by Helen Burns, assisted by Shirlee Frank, (10) Without Portfolio, Laurel Bleak, John Fels.

For the early meetings, Ofelia Lachtman acted as convenor, since we had no chairperson, but as of the March meeting, John Fels agreed to chair Bienvenidos. John's special interest is Membership Development.

Building (Expansion & Renovations)

Contact: Barbara Kernochan

With the recent purchase of the adjacent lot and bungalow on 18th Street, the Building Committee's work is impacted on a fundamental level. Since our hard-won conditional use permit and parking variance apply to the 17th Street project, we will need to reapply with whatever program we eventually decide upon for our new property. A few very basic decisions will have to be taken by the congregation regarding the possible sale of 17th Street and the future of the bungalow. While our former plan was severely limited by a narrow lot, the acquisition of contiguous property allows us to look at many possible design directions. Our work in the coming year will be to help determine a new, unified building design, remaining cognizant of our program needs, cost considerations, city process, and congregational will. We hope to sustain the momentum of this work with the ongoing help of our architect and many seasoned members of the Building Committee, as well as the fresh energy and perspective of some newer members.

Building Committee members:

Carol Agate, Bill Anderson, Wally Boag, David Denton, Mel Horan, Alison Kendall, Barbara Kernochan, Rod Lane, Keith Ludowitz, Steve Paddock, Greg Wood

Building and Grounds

Contact: TBA

Oversees church maintenance and improvements. Plans work days and special projects.

Camp De Benneville Pines Weekend

Contacts: Marv Pulliam, Sharon Damerell

This year we have our weekend retreat on June 18-20. We will offer perennial favorites such as dam building, hikes, swimming and sing-alongs. In addition we will have special activities for teens, pre-teens and infants. Baby sitters will be on hand. With yoga, aerobics, and workshops for adults, there will be plenty to do- or the option to just vegetate for the weekend. The full program will be finalized and made available during

May.

Sign-ups are at 97 as of April 27th, and we expect to be at capacity as we near the dates. So register soon and bring Dad along for a wonderful Father's Day trip!

Capital Campaign

Contact: Jim Cadwell

Charged with funding the building and renovation project. Needs people who enjoy raising money, don't mind asking for it, and have ideas for how to get it. "Bean counters" welcome, too!

Circle Suppers

Contact: TBA

Plans each round of Circle Supper events; recruits hosts and signs up guests.

Denominational Affairs

Contact: Carol Agate

Connects our congregation with the wider UU movement across North America.

Design and Decor

Contact: Ellen Boag

Assures the overall beauty of the buildings; oversees interior design and decorating.

Dining for Dollars

Contact: Helen Burns

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 fund raiser of the church and the February 2004 bidding generated over \$22,400.00. There were approximately 70 offers including boat rides, a ping pong tournament, picnics and hikes, a choir festival of Gilbert and Sullivan music, a pancake breakfast, a wine tasting festival, a Renaissance feast, and dinner's and brunches of many ethnic origins á la Indonesian, Greek, French, Spanish, Japanese, Cajon, Mexican, Italian,

German, Persian, Chinese, Indian, Kosher, Thai, and many other creative repasts from our imaginative members.

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

Ernie Pipes Lecture Series

Contact: Ray Goodman

Plans and presents annual speakers in ongoing lecture series.

Faith in Action Commission

Contact: Charles Haskell

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 ministry 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 quarterly. Members of the Executive Committee of the FIA Commission are as follows: Charles Haskell, Cathie Gentile, S. J. Guidotti, and Ron Crane. Members of the FIA Commission with specific liaison responsibilities include the following: S.J. Guidotti (Chair of the Peace & Civil Liberties Committee); Ron Crane (Interweave and UUCSSM Board of Directors); Cathie Gentile (Economic Justice and RE); Eleanor Eagan (UU-United Nations Office liaison); Rachel Donaldson and Simon Huss (UUSC liaison); Lyn Armondo (Women's Alliance and Step Up on 2nd meals); Patrick Barbush (Criminal Justice Reform Study Group). Members at large include: Christine Haskell; Patrick D. McGuire; Marguerite Spears; and Mar Preston. 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. Faith in Action activities are presented in a monthly newsletter column (Charles Haskell) and in a quarterly publication entitled the

Faith in Action Bulletin. The Commission sponsors lectures, panel discussions, and other public programs in support of its work (FIA Speaker Series).

Based on the annual issues election of September 2003 and an all-church meeting in February 2004, the following program areas have dominated our attention for the year: peace, civil liberties, hunger, economic justice, marriage rights for BGLT couples, and reform of the criminal justice system, and our generous congregation program. Further information on Faith in Action activities appears below, as provided by programmatic leaders.

Hunger and Related Programs

Four activities have dominated our commitment to hunger and related issues. Paul Bernstein has coordinated two food sorts at the Westside Food Bank, both of which were highly successful. Lyn Armondo has coordinated monthly dinners at Step Up on Second. This program has involved more than 50 of our church members and friends. Janet Goodwin has coordinated meals at Turning Point. Charles Haskell, Beverly Allison, and Marge Zifferblatt have worked closely with the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition. This has included participation in two committees of the coalition, one of which produced a highly successful celebration of formerly homeless people who had been helped by social service agencies and faith-based organizations on the Westside (8th annual Success Breakfast).

Peace & Civil Liberties Committee as per S. J. Guidotti, Chair

Economic Justice Initiative

CLUE Executive Director, the Rev. Alexia Salvatierra presented the idea for the David and Goliath Project at the FIA Annual Issues election in 9/03. At the election, Econ. Justice was voted as an initiative to work on for the 2003-2004 church year. Rev. Salvatierra appeared before the Board last Fall to seek UUCCSM's support for a grant to the Fund for UU Social Responsibility. The grant (\$12,000) was awarded to our church to hire two FIA interns for the UU worker Sanctuary Project with a challenge grant of \$4,000 to come from participating UU churches in the area. The interns, UU church member Mar Preston and SMART volunteer Edith Mendez were hired in February. Mar has made contact with eight Southern California Unitarian Universalist church from Palos Verdes to the Valley. We are asking congregations to collect food basics and participate in offerings of postcards, delegations, public actions and customer advocacy.

The plan for each church is to have Rev. Salvatierra deliver a pulpit message to the congregations on the David & Goliath project to generate interest and participation in collecting supplies for a worker Hardship Fund. Edith has been focusing on the youth in the congregations. In March, our congregation donated food, diapers and money to the

Hungry for Justice fund which is being set up in the event of a future labor action. In April, Maria Elena Durazo, president of Local 11 Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, spoke to a gathering at church to rally community support for what may turn into a strike if current contract negotiations fail. We will know more about that outcome as events in the summer unfold.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

As per Rachel Donaldson and Simon Huss, liaison members

Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office

As per Eleanor Eagan, Envoy

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 fourth year at UCCSM.

Our two issues for study and action this year were marriage equality and outreach to at-risk BGLT youth.

Our activities in the past year included the following:

For the first time, our church had a booth at the Christopher Street Gay Pride Festival on June 22 in West Hollywood. About 10 volunteers (general church members and Interweave members) staffed the booth and handed out hundreds of pieces of UU literature.

Our Third Annual All-Church Interweave Picnic was held Aug. 24, with proceeds going to Common Ground: The Westside HIV Community Center.

On Oct. 12, we once again hosted the Coming Out Day Service, with guest presenter Michael Eselun addressing “Coming Out: It’s Everybody’s Business.” Proceeds from the charitable portion of the offering that day were donated to the Santa Monica High School Gay/Straight Alliance (SAMOHI GSA). Interweave members will be visiting the SAMOHI GSA at one of their weekly meetings this school year.

In our continuing efforts to work in concert with our Religious Education program to consciously provide age-appropriate educational and sensitivity programming to our youth regarding bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender issues, Interweave helped pay for the Fringe Benefits Theatre Company to present a program during the Jan. 25 Social Justice Sunday. Fringe Benefits used theatre, play development, movement, improvisation, and discussion to explore the themes of same-sex parent families, the general diversity of families, and that love makes a family.

We continued our contact with the California Coalition for Marriage Equality, and, in concert with the Welcoming Congregation program, conducted a forum Feb. 15, entitled “Integration or Segregation? ‘Marriage’ or ‘Civil Union’? Why It Matters: The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage.”

We are working on a Welcoming Congregation banner for inside our church, as well as the possibility of a banner for outside of our church proclaiming our church’s support for civil marriage rights for same-sex couples.

We also plan to host a Welcoming Congregation forum on how we can be more welcoming to people with mental health disabilities.

And finally, Interweave is sponsoring and our church is hosting the Sexually Alternative/Accepting Teenage UU Respecting Diversity Among Youth, or SATUURDAY, conference June 30 to July 4. The goal of SATUURDAY is to create a safe space for queer youth in YRUU.

We thank our church members, board, and attendees for their ongoing personal and political support for us in our fight to be recognized as fully human and fully deserving of equal rights and respect.

Finance

Contact: Warren Mathews

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.

This year saw two extraordinary events with huge financial impact: receipt of a half-million-dollar bequest from Earl Morgan’s estate, and the purchase (for \$1.26 million) of the long-sought property adjacent to ours on 18th Street. Relative to the bequest, we were called upon to consider carefully all elements of the church’s finances and make a recommendation about deployment of the bequest funds (we recommended application of the entire amount to the new building project). We also reactivated our Investment Subcommittee, with Ed Field as Chair and George Brenner and Marv Pulliam as members. Relative to the adjacent property, we were called upon to define the resources that the church could responsibly draw on in making its purchase offer.

Preparation of a budget for 2004-05 was relatively straightforward. The RE, Music and Administration Departments did not request appreciable increases, and the salary increases recommended by the Personnel Committee were at the same very modest level as last year. Nevertheless, the resulting budget showed a substantial deficit (\$17,200) because (1) the new DRE and office assistant, who were on board for only a portion of 2003-04, would now be on the payroll for the full year, and (2) our investment earnings

will be greatly reduced because of use of the invested funds to purchase the adjacent property. After extended discussion, the Board of Directors concluded that we should attack that deficit by developing a tangible strategy to increase our income (primarily from pledges) rather than by making drastic cuts in our programming.

In addition to the immediate-action items summarized above, the committee developed or updated several policy documents concerning the church's financial operations:

Structure of the Church's Financial Resources
Policy on Use of the Church's Financial Resources
Procedures for Conducting the Church's Finance Operations
Resolution re Establishment of Checking Accounts
Resolution re Establishment of Investment accounts

The standing members of the committee this year were Carol Agate, Anita and George Brenner, Jane Donahue, Michelle Levesque, and Warren Mathews, Chair. Late in the year, Michelle Levesque moved to the east coast and Anne Cadwell joined the committee. Ex officio members are Ed Field (Investment Subcommittee Chair) and Jacki Weber (Stewardship Committee Chair). Regular staff attendee is Marie Kashmer-Stiebing (Church Administrator).

Gallery Wall

Contact: Shirlee Frank

Arranges monthly art show for the Gallery Wall in Forbes Hall, along with a reception for the featured artist.

Investment

Contact: Warren Mathews

Manages the investment of our endowment and reserve funds, to grow our savings. Requires financial know-how.

Long-Term Planning

Contact: TBA

Ad-hoc task group appointed by the church President. (Not currently seeking new members.)

Ministry

Contact: Audrey Lyness

Works with the minister to assure a quality ministry for our congregation; acts as a liaison between the congregation and the minister. Committee members are appointed by the minister and the church Board.

Music

Contact: Silvio Nardoni

Gavy Follmer Deal, Chair, Peter VanDenBeemt, co-chair

The primary purpose of the Music Committee is to support the work of the Music Director in overseeing the many aspects of the church music program. One of the most important aspects of this is the volunteer Choir, which performs at Sunday services three Sundays a month.

We are fortunate in having an outstanding Choir Director, Steve Wight, who in addition to directing the choir, arranges most of the music the Choir sings. We also have an outstanding Pianist/Organist, Louis Durra, who livens up the hymns with original variations. Our very successful children's choir is directed by Judy Schoenbaum.

The Music Committee lent support to the Choir performance of the Vivaldi "Gloria" which was presented as part of the regular church service in October, arranging for a printed program. We also supported the concert performance of the Russian Quartet with Dean Voegtlen as guest clarinetist.

The Music Committee was instrumental in arranging the Dining for Dollars fundraising event, which this year featured music from Gilbert and Sullivan operettas with a high tea, planned by professional chef Maria Simpson. The highlight of the evening was the performance of Richard Shelton of Opera a la Carte.

Members of the Music Committee include: Sharon Voigt Dammerell, Wally Giffen, Esther Kalver, Ilsa Kleinman, Dayla McDonald, Carol Pateman, Lynn Rossiter, Judy Schoenbaum, and Diana Spears.

New Member Dinners

Contact: Helen Burns

Organizes quarterly social programs for new members.

New Members' Evening with the Minister

Contact: Laurel Bleak

Hosts an evening program where new members can share experiences of Unitarian Universalism and our church.

Newcomer Orientation

Contacts: Judith Meyer, Ofelia Lachtman

Sponsors a monthly orientation that provides information on UU history and philosophy and governance of our denomination and congregation.

Nominating

Contact: Sue Bickford

Nominates people to serve on the church Board and nominating committee. Includes leadership development activities. Committee members are elected by the congregation.

Personnel

Contact: Pat Parkerton

John Eger has joined Greg Coleman, John Fels, Pat Parkerton, Karen Raiford, John Schroeder, and Dean Voegtlen on the Personnel Committee. Warren Mathews, after many years of leadership and support has resigned to focus on other Church needs. The Committee's monthly meetings have been attended regularly by both Rev. Meyer and Administrator Kashmer-Stiebing and occasionally by Directors Farmer and Wight facilitating our charge to assure the church of sound personnel practices.

All 14 positions now have a job description. We provided support in the transition to a new RE Director, Nursery Worker, Children's Choir Director, and Administrative Assistant. We discussed the annual performance reviews and made our recommendation to the Board for annual salary increases maintaining our status as a "fair-share congregation." The safety procedure for staff background checks has been implemented and the disability policy clarified.

Pilgrims Feast

Contact: TBA

Organizes annual Thanksgiving potluck dinner for the congregation, held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Planned Giving

Contact: Ron Crane

Promotes to church members the advantages of participating in the planned giving program established by the UUA.

Pledge Drive

Contacts: George Brenner, Jacki Weber

Directs the annual church pledge drive.

Pulpit

Contact: Vilma Ortiz

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, Rev. 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 Judith 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. This year, we also benefited from our intern minister, Rev. Stefanie Etzbach-Dale, who served in the pulpit several Sundays.

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. Rev. Nardoni will again be available to take the pulpit for part of August this year, as he has for the last few years. We are fortunate to have other speakers already lined up for the rest of the summer.

Committee members include Vilma Ortiz, Sue Bickford, Kathy Cook and Phil Bonacich. Alison Chipman is our Board liaison.

Religious Education Council

Contact: Wendy Salz Johnston

Coalition of our five Religious Education committees (Social Justice, Curriculum, Worship, Youth Activities and FUUN Events), which oversees the church's religious education programs for children and youth. (Volunteers needed for all five committees.)

Sharing the Caring

Contact: Peggy Kharraz

Provides a structure within our church community to focus and express concern for members in need. Types of help provided include cards, phone calls, hospital visits, rides to church services or medical appointments, picking up groceries.

UU Service Committee (UUSC) Liaison

Contacts: Simon Huss, Rachael Donaldson

Under the auspices of the Faith in Action Commission, connects us with the program and activities of the UUSC worldwide.

UU UNO Liaison

Contact: Eleanor Eagan

Under the auspices of the Faith in Action Commission, supports and advocates for the United Nations, through affiliation with the UUA's UU-UNO office.

TASK-ORIENTED VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Task-Oriented Volunteer Opportunities are the kinds of pitching-in-to-get-the-work-done jobs for which you can sign up once or as many times as you like, without committing to long-term membership or leadership on an ongoing committee or council. Instead, you can simply lend a hand with specific administrative chores, or at various kinds of special events or activities (often during Sunday coffee hours)...which is a great way to get involved, meet new friends and find a niche in our congregation.

Adult Religious Growth and Learning

Contact: Jane Machnik

Facilitate, lead or teach classes or workshops designed to support members and friends in their spiritual journey, their search for understanding, and their knowledge of our Unitarian Universalist traditions.

"Ask Me"

Contact: Melinda Ewen

Available during Sunday coffee hours, to help newcomers learn more about our church. Volunteers should be long-term UUs and enjoy talking to people.

Audio Taping Services & Special Events

Contact: Phil Bennett

Tape services and prepare tapes for sale at church Book Cart.

Book Cart

Contact: Max Joffe

Present and sell books and CDs on Unitarian-Universalism, religious freedom and philosophy from the book cart in Forbes Hall, after Sunday services.

Bulletin Boards & Literature Management

Contact: Marie Kashmer-Stiebing

Assist church administrator with organizing, posting and coordinating contents of church bulletin boards.

Child Care

Contacts: Director of Religious Education, Church Administrator

Provide care for infants and toddlers on Sunday mornings and at selected church events.

Choir

Contact: Steve Wight

Sings at 11:00 worship service, rehearses Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings; off first Sunday of each month and two months of summer.

Church Directory

Contact: Marie Kashmer-Stiebing

Help church administrator update, publish and/or distribute church membership directory.

Circle Supper Hosts

Contact: TBA

Provide space in your home for a potluck dinner in which 6-10 members of the congregation gather to meet and get to know each other in a relaxed, informal environment. Circle Suppers are held several times a year. Hosts may volunteer once or several times.

Coffee Hosts

Contact: Ellen Boag

We have some new faces serving coffee. Nels Hanson, Jennifer Westbay, Carl Hoppe, Lindsay Pinkham, Leah Moore. Nancy Babbitt, Patrick and Amy Meighan are there when

the month has five Sundays. Still in there greeting and pouring coffee, preparing the table and cleaning up, are Robert Kory assisted by sons, Kevin and Ryan, Dan Nannini, Wally Boag, Lily Wilson, Sandra Trutt, Pam Teplitz, Alison Chipman, and Gerrie Lambson.

Without these wonderful volunteers, who commit to serving once a month, there would be no coffee, no cookies and no lively sounds in Forbes after the services.

Courtyard Connections

Contact Julie Nyquist

Help to cook, set up, serve and clean up after our occasional themed lunches after church.

Dining for Dollars Hosts

Contact: Helen Burns

Host, prepare and serve a themed meal for our major fundraising event of the year. Once a year we auction off places at about 50 such meals to the highest bidders among the congregation. Past events have included ethnic meals, sailboat brunches and murder-mystery dinners.

Enrollment Team

Contacts: Richard Boothe (scheduling), John Fels (general)

Help enroll new members for the church.

Greeters

Contact: Arvid Knudsen

Once a month, provide a warm welcome to all who attend Sunday services, with special attention to visitors.

Newsletter

Contact: Carol Agate

The past year has seen a dramatic increase in the size of the newsletter staff. Thanks to the congregation survey, directed by Kathy Cook, we receive regular lists of people who are interested in working on the newsletter. We can never have too many proofreaders, and we hope as the staff grows, the number of errors drops. Our unsung proofreader is Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, who has made it part of her job to review the final version for errors.

We have gone from two graphic designers to three with the addition of Dayla McDonald. She rotates issues with Pam Teplitz and Carol Ring.

We have added a number of human interest articles, with special focus on our history. These are provided by Rob Briner, the church's new archivist, and Nels Hanson. Paula Bernstein continues to work on the production as well as doing interviews.

We're also using more photos than in the past, thanks to our staff photographer, Charles Haskell.

We continue sending the paper by first class mail and there are no more complaints about late deliveries. There are 261 subscribers to the email list, and these people receive the newsletter a week early — and in color. They get the weekly order of service announcements as well.

Liz Fuller continues to post the full newsletter on the website, using a code for each issue so only our own subscribers can access it. (It is not available to the public.) She also posts most of the articles in the public areas of the website.

There is always room for more people to participate in the newsletter, so please join us.

Office

Contact: Anne MacQueen

Be on call to help collate, fold and stamp materials (including monthly newsletter) for mailing to church members. Weekdays, on occasion.

Pilgrims Feast

Contact: TBA

Help to organize, publicize, set up and clean up after our annual turkey potluck dinner, held the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Religious Education

Contact: Wendy Salz Johnston

Work with children on Sunday mornings, in our Way Cool Sunday School program.

Scrip Sellers

Contact: Anne MacQueen

Staff a table on Sunday mornings to sell supermarket scrip that can be used in local grocery stores as a church fundraiser.

Sound & Lights

Contacts: Warren Mathews, Jim Cadwell

Operate sanctuary lighting and sound systems for various church events.

Ushers

Contact: Pat McGuire

Greet and help seat attendees at Sunday services, count heads for attendance, hand out Orders of Service, and collect offerings. One Sunday a month.

Website

Contact: Liz Fuller

Provide backup service for church webmaster; may be responsible for regular maintenance of one or more pages on church website. (Requires solid HTML skills.)

ACTIVITIES & SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Activities and Special Interest Groups are more social than work oriented, and bring together people who share specific interests. These groups and occasions offer fellowship, support, intellectual stimulation, community involvement and/or just plain fun. Some meet or occur regularly, and some just now and then...but all of them can

provide a great way to get to know new people, learn new things, and indulge your personal passions.

Books R' Us

Contacts: Phil & Edna Bonacich

Books R' us is a monthly fiction discussion group that meets at 7:30 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 twelve to fifteen people at each meeting. The only rule is to have read the book before coming. Light refreshments are served.

Camp De Benneville Pines Weekend

Contacts: Marv Pulliam, Sharon Damerell

Members and friends gather at the UU camp in the San Bernadino mountains, on the third weekend after Memorial Day each year, for hot tubbing, swimming, hiking, children's activities, dam building, arts and crafts, discussion groups, lazing around, or whatever else people want to do.

Caregivers' Support Group

Contacts: Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, Nancy Miller

Providing care for a chronically ill family member or friend can be rewarding, frustrating, isolating, and overwhelming. The Caregivers' Support Group can help you problem-solve, suggest resources and books, and also encourage you to mind your own health and well being while you do so very much else that is necessary. As one friend sagely put it, "If you're a caregiver for someone with dementia, you have to get up in the morning and your life has purpose and meaning. Every day that you can help that person be healthy and happy is a success."

A support group can be a small thing that helps you get through the toughest times. Some of us provide round-the-clock, daily care and others do long-distance caregiving. Between us we have experience in taking care of loved ones with conditions including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, depression, heart problems, and more. Our small group has been meeting for three and a half years, and newcomers are always welcome.

You'll find us on the third Tuesday of the month, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., upstairs in Room 6. For information, please contact our founder and leader, Nancy Miller

Circle Suppers

Contact: TBA

Sign up to be a guest at one of these periodic, informal potluck dinners, held in members' homes as a way for church members to get to know each other in small groups of 6-10 people.

Couples' Club

Contacts: TBA

A monthly social gathering of couples, usually in members' homes, for good food and conversation. New couples are especially welcome.

Courtyard Connections

Contact: Julie Nyquist

Join other members and friends for themed lunches after church, held several times a year. Past events include "Potatoes on the Patio," "Pizza on the Patio," "Kabobs in the Courtyard," and "Cowboy Cookout."

Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPs)

Contact: Dan March

A spirituality group focusing on the natural rhythm of seasons, nature and humanity.

Dances of Universal Peace

Contact: Melinda Ewen

Meets on the fourth Friday of every month to enjoy simple circle dances, performed in groups and set to live music, that celebrate and foster the spirit of peace. All ages (from kids to seniors) welcome. Suggested donation \$10.

Dining for Dollars

Contact: Helen Burns

Bid on and attend one (or more) of approximately 50 themed meals, hosted by other members of the congregation in our biggest fundraiser of the year. Past events have included ethnic meals, sailboat brunches and murder-mystery dinners. Bidding for the next round of Dining for Dollars events takes place in February.

Ethics Study Group

Contact: Charles Haskell

Organization within the Faith in Action program, which discusses and presents discussion events on a wide range of ethics-related topics.

FUUsion

Contact: Andy Bistline

Dedicated to fun and fellowship for people ages 21 to 35.

Gardening Group

Contact: Fran Hotchkiss

During the past year Howard Westley has been our mainstay along with Nedra Bickel. They have pruned where necessary and Howard continues to add to the compost in the 17th street property. Fran saw that the Begonias were replaced with fresh new ones and the roses pruned in January and fertilized, and a new Bamboo Palm was added to the atrium in the sanctuary. The small area off Forbes Hall was replanted with Coprosma and one Pittosporum tobira. The Gardening Group would love to have more assistants to work with Howard Westley as needed.

Hiking

Contact: Richard Boothe

Group selects a variety of Saturday morning hikes to enjoy nature. Meets alternate months. Gather in front of the church at 9 a.m. Usually includes lunch at a local restaurant after the hike. Bring your sun hat, sunglasses, water bottle, tennis or hiking

shoes, and money for parking and lunch. These hikes are socially paced, suitable for anyone who can walk six blocks up hill. Rain cancels.

Hunger Task Force

Contact: Cathy Gentile

Task force of the Faith in Action Commission, which plans and participates in activities relating to easing and/or eliminating hunger in our midst.

Interweave

Contact: Ron Crane

Group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender concerns. Includes a support group, an e-mail list for group members, and business meetings on the third Sunday of the month, after church service. Our next meeting will be on April 18 . All are welcome. See our Interweave page for more information.

Men's Group

Contact: Achim Jung

Meets every other Thursday, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., to focus on what makes men alike as a group, and what sets them apart as individuals. This month we meet on April 1, 15 and 29.

Over-50 Lunch Bunch

Contact: Gaye Follmer Deal

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. Following a Memoirs theme, we had "do-it-yourself" programs where each person talked for five to ten minutes. People of all ages are cordially invited. For further information, call Gaye Follmer Deal.

Parenting Support Group
Contact: Judith Martin Straw

If you're the parent of a small Unitarian (age 5 or under) or are about to become one, join us for a monthly potluck and discussion. Topics include day care, clothing and toy swaps, best bedtime books, etc. Child care is available on site for a small fee, so bring the little ones and some easy finger food.

Peace Task Force
Contact: S. J. Guidotti

Task force of the Faith in Action Commission, which plans and participates in activities relating to the opposition of unilateral war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and controlling weapons of mass destruction.

Picnics in Palisades Park
Contacts: Serena Shames or Nedra Bickel

Informal summer suppers providing a sociable, peaceful and pleasant community good time. Join us every Monday each August, at 5:30 p.m. We meet at the Palisades Park picnic area north of Montana. There are cool breezes from the ocean, so bring your sweater. You will know our table by the red tablecloth. Bring your own supper. (Many folks just pick up a salad on the way home from work before they join us.) There is parking on Ocean Avenue.

Pilgrims Feast
Contact: TBA

Attend our annual potluck dinner featuring turkey and all the trimmings, held every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Poetry Group
Contact: Jeff Greenman

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. We are comprised of church and non-church 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, roughly, from eight to fourteen people, with a core group of eight to ten present for most meetings (four or five men and four or five women).

We've recently welcomed several new members to the group --including new church members Patrick Barbush and George Serruta. Julie Gilliam has also joined us of late. Returning regulars include Shirlee Frank, Diana Spears, Pat and Chris Shinaberger, Nels Hanson, Jane Machnik, Jeff Greenman, Arvid Knudsen, Diane Keller (an original member who --happily for all of us-- returned recently to present the inspired and inspiring work of Mary Oliver), and Jack Behr, whom we look forward to visiting in May for a special evening of poetry at the Sunset Hall Library.

The past year has been typically interesting in its scope, exploring a variety of non-English poets, and some new themes, as well as some of the foundational American Masters. The group members have brought a tremendous variety of experience, perspective, and literacy to the works of (among others): Andrei Voznesensky (Russian), Lawrence Ferlinghetti (co-founder of City Lights Bookstore, which celebrated its 50th Anniversary this past year), Alfonsina Storni (fine, late-19th to early 20th Century, Argentine poet --introduced to us all by Arvid Knudsen), Robert Frost, Jacque Prèvert (courtesy of George Serruta), Walt Whitman and Leaves of Grass, and a fascinating presentation, by Patrick Barbush and Jeff Greenman of the Poetry of the Incarcerated (Patrick, featuring the writings of --and his thoughts and perspectives about-- the incarcerated youth he works with daily, Jeff featuring works of adult U.S. prisoners from the fine 1984 collection "The Light From Another Country.")... All in all, it was a fine year. We expect another fine one to come.

Science Non-Fiction Book Discussion Group

Contact: Rebecca Crawford

The group meets evenings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month to discuss a book of the popular science literature. Examples of recent books are "Linked: The New Science of Networks", "Isaac Newton", and "Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Caused It". Everyone is cordially invited. For further information, call Rebecca Crawford.

The Adventure Group (TAG)

Contact: S. J. Guidotti

In the preceding year, The Adventure Group has not changed its name, a new record. What has also remained the same are our many activities and adventures. There have been numerous hikes in the Santa Monica Mountains, camping trips to Big Sur, Anson-Berago, Santa Rosa Island, DeBenniville, and LaJolla Canyon. Other group activities have included restaurant trips, musical outings to House of Blues and other venues, and our yearly Dodger game.

Our monthly Forbes gatherings have been discarded in favor of more irregularly scheduled and diverse events including a coming July 4th weekend trip to Santa Cruz Island and a June Skydiving for Birthdays Celebration. (No, we are not doing it to emulate George H. W. Bush.)

While FUUSION is limited to ages 18 to 35, TAG continues to borrow the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy only in our case adapted to age.

As for keeping in touch and discussing proposals and events, we have a very active Yahoo Groups list serve, open to TAG members and interested parties except for that born again Christian who accidentally got on and harangued us for a day and a half with messages that still make no sense.

Peace & Civil Liberties Committee

Contact: S. J. Guidotti

In the fall of 2003 the Peace Committee voted to expand its purview to include civil liberties. This change has been reflected in the speaker program that the committee has sponsored on Fri. nights and Sun. afternoons with many of the speakers lecturing on this vital and threatened area.

In addition to the speaker series, the committee has continued to publicize and promote anti-war vigils and demonstrations, as well as screenings of political videos by Saul Landau and UNPRECEDENTED, an expose of how the 2000 election was stolen.

Our meetings take place on the first Wednesday of every month and are held in Room A of the 17th St. facility.

Women's Alliance

Contacts: Joyce Holmen, Sue Moore

The Women's Alliance was founded in 1927, the same year as our congregation. As an affiliated organization of the church, we have furthered "the living tradition" of our faith for over seven decades 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, a nice mix of our congregation's long-timers and relative newcomers. We circle together to share from the heart, gathering quarterly on Sundays in the Sanctuary for a sack lunch and a program. Programs this year included, "Travel Broadens the Mind," "Best Girlfriends," and "Words of Wisdom."

Dues are still only \$20 each, with the money going to maintain membership in the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF) and the UUWF-Pacific Southwest District (UUWF-PSWD). The continental UUWF has 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 Camp de Benneville Pines. Some Alliance members also participate in a February retreat with noted UU songwriter Carolyn McDade.

Last October we hosted the district UUWF when the guest speaker was Kierstin Homblette, the new UUWF Clara Barton Intern at the UUA Faith in Action Office in Washington, DC. In February Lyn Armondo, Katie Malich, and GERALYN Lambson organized the sale of bagels to Dining for Dollars bidders, raising over \$130 to give the church; we expect to offer lunch again soon. We're looking forward to helping again with Interweave's annual summer picnic, and some of us have also contributed to dinners for Step Up On Second.

Our next meetings will be July 11 and October 17; see the church newsletter or website for details. We'd like to get to know you.

Women's Support Group **Contact: Cynthia Cottam**

Discussion group where women can share various concerns about their lives. Potential new members must be willing to participate on a long-term basis. We meet every six weeks.

Zen Meditation **Contact: Bernard Silvers**

Instruction on meditation is provided in this ongoing gathering. Beginners and questions are welcome. The class is informal, and meditation is done sitting on chairs. Meetings begin with readings or handouts, then a short discussion (from a religious perspective) of

issues such as "anger." Buddhist and other forms of meditation are demonstrated.
(NOTE: To reach the contact person for any of these groups, see your church directory or contact the church office at office@uusm.org.