

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica**



**2005 - 2006**

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## **Leadership**

### **Board of Directors**

President	Carol Kerr
Vice President	Charles Haskell
Vice President	Ron Crane
Secretary	Melinda Ewen 7-1-05 to 10-31-05
Acting Secretary	Carol Agate 11-1-05 to 6-30-06
Treasurer	Carol Agate 7-1-05 to 10-31-05
Acting Treasurer	Warren Mathews 11-1-05 to 6-30-06
Past President	Jerry Gates
Member at Large	Rebecca Crawford
Member at Large	Warren Mathews
Member at Large	Marvin Pulliam
Member at Large	Daniel Teplitz
Member at Large	Peter Van Den Beemt
Member at Large	Patricia Wright

### **Staff**

Minister	Rev. Judith Meyer
Minister Emeritus	Rev. Ernie Pipes
Affiliate Minister	Rev. Silvio Nardoni
Sabbatical Minister	Rev. Jim Grant
Director of Religious Education	Catherine Farmer
Administrator	Marie Kashmer-Stiebing (until 10-31-05)
Administrator	Melinda Ewen (beginning 11-1-05)
Office Assistant	Charles Craig
Director of Music	Steve Wight
Organist – Pianist	Louis Durra
Weekday Sexton	Kevin Roller
Weekend Sexton	Mark Dwyer

## **Membership**

To become a member of the Church a person shall:

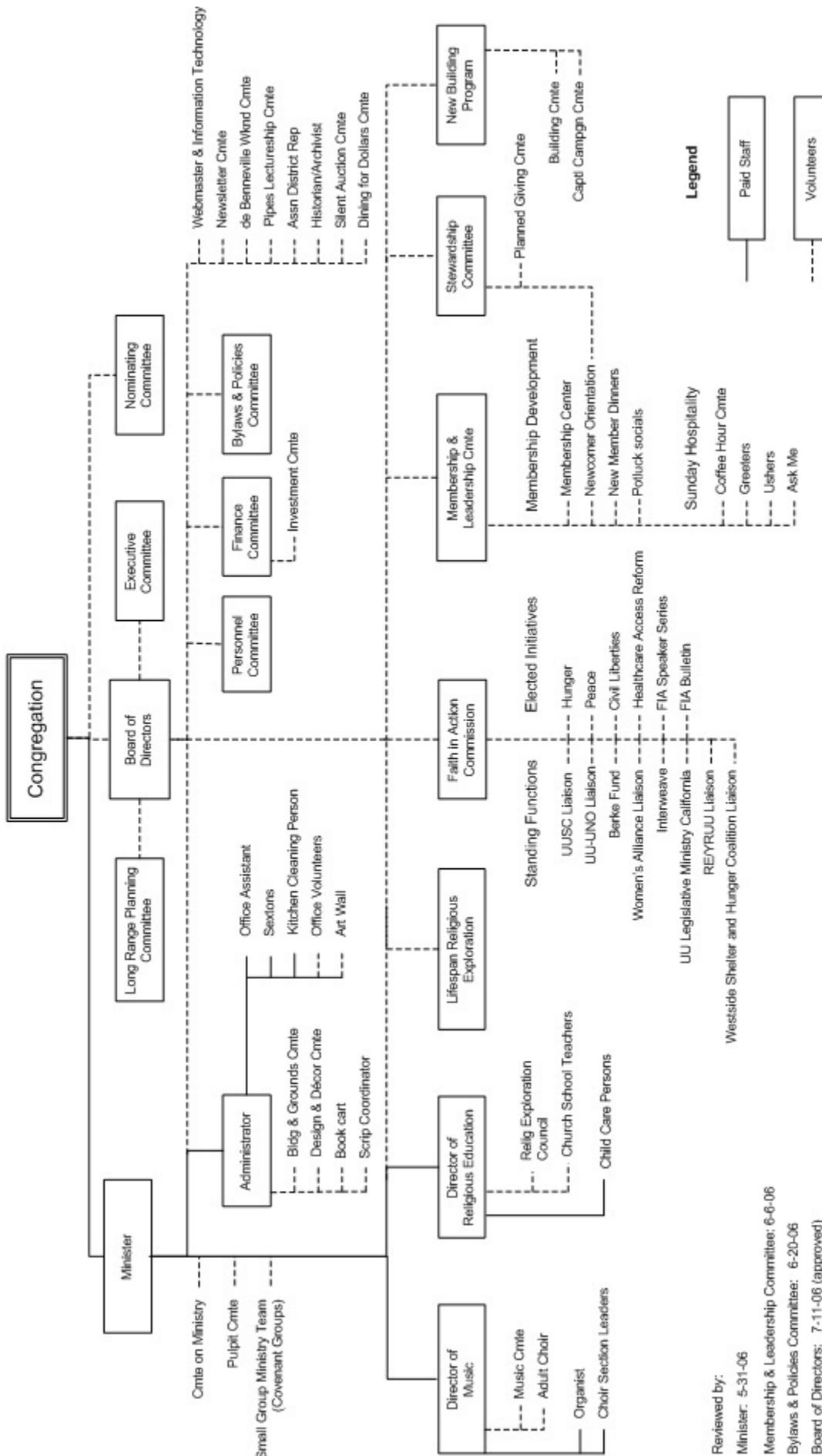
1. Sign a statement of intent to participate as a member in the community life of the Church.
2. Reside within the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) of the Unitarian Universalist Association.
3. Be at least 16 years of age or have successfully completed the Church's Coming of Age Program.
4. Make a financial contribution of record, or a pledge to do so, to the Church.

Anyone who has been a member of the Church for 40 days is eligible to vote at church business meetings. Written resignation, failure to make a financial contribution, or moving away from the PSWD area, causes membership to be terminated.

### **Unitarian Universalist Association affiliation**

This church is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), a voluntary association of autonomous, self governing local churches and fellowships, and of the PSWD of that association. Information and contact with UUA offices and resources can be obtained at [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org).

# UUCCSM Organization Chart



Reviewed by:  
 Minister: 5-31-06  
 Membership & Leadership Committee: 6-6-06  
 Bylaws & Policies Committee: 6-20-06  
 Board of Directors: 7-11-06 (approved)

## ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS

### Report from the Minister: The Rev. Judith Meyer As delivered at the Annual Meeting: May 21, 2006

I started the church year with a four month sabbatical and rejoined you the first Sunday in January happy to be back, grateful for the generous gift of time off, and not sure what I would find. The resignation of our church administrator, Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, took place while I was away and Melinda Ewen, a Board member, had stepped into the gap on a part-time, interim basis. Chuck Craig, a temporary employee, filled in when he could, and Carol Kerr, our president, was overseeing church operations from her desk in Century City. Warren Mathews postponed his retirement as church finance volunteer, Charles and Christine Haskell came in several mornings a week, and this crew – this capable and committed group of people – held everything together magnificently. What could have been chaos actually yielded great improvement in office efficiency and even better, we now have Melinda and Chuck as permanent staff.

Transitions can be difficult but a church is a dynamic organization, always changing, and our challenge is to learn how to benefit from change, not resist it. That we have done so well is a reflection of the quality of our leadership, especially the leadership of our president, Carol Kerr. Carol has given us three great years. I've lost track of how many times we've thanked our lucky stars that Carol has been our president during this particular stretch of church history. Now it's time to thank her. Carol is an outstanding leader and a dedicated Unitarian Universalist with a heart of gold; offering her legal skills, business savvy, and brilliant mind for the great benefit of this church. I am grateful to Carol for her support of the ministry, for the true joy I've had in working with her, and for the confidence I have gained from her example and encouragement.

Many others have stepped up to the challenges of church life this year – our Stewardship Committee, led by Jacki Weber, made the case for increasing our pledges and you agreed; Leslie Reuter pulled together a highly profitable service auction; our Dining for Dollars crew once again exceeded expectations; people said "yes" when asked to train as facilitators for Small Group Ministry or teach in our religious education program or light the chalice; a high energy Membership and Leadership Committee has taken off; and soon, a Lifespan RE program for adults will offer new opportunities for learning and spiritual growth. A lot is happening here. Soon you'll hear more about our building program. Suffice it to say that I am proud of all you have done and look forward to the year ahead.

Our staff is at peak performance level. Catherine Farmer, Steve Wight, and Louis Durra continue to make inspired contributions to worship and religious education; Melinda Ewen and Chuck Craig bring new and needed skills to church administration; sextons Kevin Roller and Mark Dwyer work efficiently and cheerfully behind the scenes.

Our staff is a team; we like and respect each other; we appreciate each other's work; all is well.

The Committee on Ministry took on the task this year of evaluating how the sabbatical arrangements worked for the congregation. Judy Federick, Anne Gustafson, and Shawn Kerr interviewed church members, staff, and ministers, and produced a very insightful report. Jim Grant, sabbatical minister, deserves much of the credit for the good coverage during my absence; my thanks also goes to Ernie Pipes, who is always on stand by for those times when he is needed. And we do need him. Ernie continues to perform weddings, memorials, and the occasional sermon, whenever we ask. The celebration of Ernie's and Maggie's fifty years with our congregation was the highlight of the year.

My professional commitments remain as follows: to mentor Kathleen Owens, assistant minister at Neighborhood Church in Pasadena; to serve on the Fund for Unitarian Universalism, a grant-making panel; and this year, to preach at the Service of the Living Tradition at the UUA General Assembly in St. Louis. My book, Leaving Room for Hope, edited and published by Felicity Nussbaum, will soon be available for sale to benefit the church building program.

This year I performed more child dedications (6) than weddings and memorials combined (4)! We are all heartened to witness the commitment of our young families to raise their children in this faith that has nurtured us. To celebrate these rites of passage, including the Coming of Age service we enjoyed this morning, gives me hope for the future.

Each annual meeting we take note of the passage of time and the passing of members and friends of our church. I read now the names of those who have died in the past year. With each name is a lifetime of remembrances and gratitude for the time they were among us.

*Freddy Anderson*

*Ruth Bogok*

*Mary Elizabeth Gall*

*Elizabeth Maxwell*

*Charles Schwartz*

May the spirit of these companions live on in us, as we carry forward our common commitment to a Unitarian Universalist way of life, faithful to the words of our covenant: love is the doctrine of this church. So be it.

**Report of the President, Carol Kerr  
As delivered at the Annual Meeting: May 21, 2006**

Annual meetings are always a good time to reflect on the prior year and to look ahead with new ambitions. This has been another remarkable year for our community and I am pleased to offer this President's Report.

Let me start by saying that, despite what is happening in Washington, D. C., what has been unfolding around the world, and what we are seeing at the gas pumps, there is Good News here at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica.

Good News, indeed! We are a thriving, active, growing, committed, caring, diverse and some would even say, rather good looking church community. We have worked together these past few years to strengthen our financial base, enhance our programs, make progress on our exciting expansion project, and much more.

We have also welcomed many new members into our midst, due in part to the better job we are doing of being open and welcoming to visitors who walk through our doors. I extend a special welcome today to our new members who may be experiencing our democratic process for the first time. We are glad you are here.

As I look to the future, I see exciting prospects for this church community and not just for our building program, which will be a significant part of our lives for the rest of this year, and beyond. We have so many talented people here from so many walks of life. We are truly blessed with this assortment and range of interests and passions. Plus, we all get along! With this kind of harmonious talent, I think about the deeds we might accomplish by focusing our energies and attention on a few important goals. With the creation of new building spaces to better let us do our programs and carry out our work, I think that will be our future. And I look forward to immensely.

Regarding our building program: I have spoken about this a fair amount over the past three years. As we consider today whether to actually begin construction (let me say that again – it sounds so good: BEGIN CONSTRUCTION), we will need the enthusiasm, energy and support of the entire congregation if we are to successfully build our new church structures. There is no other way. I do believe that total church involvement will ultimately make us that much stronger as a congregation. This is the really good news; this is what is exciting to me. We should welcome this opportunity. We should embrace the construction dust that is sure to settle on us this year.

Regarding our bank accounts: We had serious discussions last March about the state of our finances. We planned, as a community, for changing our financial outcomes and we demanded a balanced budget. The stewardship committee did a remarkable job of taking that planning and turning it into serious financial results. Our additional fundraisers were fun AND PROFITABLE. The Treasurer's report on our fiscal year speaks for itself – we are in very good shape.

But I would also like us to think about what is possible financially. I hope you were all able to experience the perspective offered by Jim Henrickson in April when he came for a weekend to conduct a workshop and to offer a sermon on Sunday. I was captivated by his idea of a vision budget. Let's be clear: He does not suggest fiscal irresponsibility or debt. He does not suggest spending our savings down to the very last penny. I don't either. One of the many things Warren Mathews and I have always agreed on is fiscal conservatism.

However, I think it is true that you don't pledge money to watch our savings account get bigger. You pledge money so we can actually DO SOMETHING programmatically that will enrich all of us.

So here is the vision budget idea that we should consider: if we have \$118,00 in "unrestricted savings" – that is savings that isn't needed for our various reserves – and we set aside 50% of that as an additional "cushion" against unknown, bad events, that leaves \$59,000 that could be used to seed a new program for a couple of years until that program generates enough membership and enthusiasm to drive its own support into the operating budget OR it is abandoned because it isn't really achieving our objectives. If we had \$20,000 a year for 3 years to start something programmatically, what would it be? DREAM BIG – what would we like to have in this wonderful place that we don't have today? DREAM CRAZY – this isn't about light bulbs or new carpet or roof repair. I am hopeful that the Long Range Planning Committee and the Board will find a way this next year to draw out ideas for a new program from all of you and then fund that vision out of our savings as part of a vision budget.

I do want to thank a few people, quickly – over and above what Judith has already said about our talented staff. I am deeply indebted to our new office team of Melinda Ewen, our new Administrator, Chuck Craig, our office assistant, and our always reliable office volunteers. They have been very supportive of me in my role as president and their jobs are almost as hard as mine! (Just kidding.) I also want to acknowledge, however, the extraordinary service provided by Marie Kashmer Stiebing over many years. It was with great regret that I accepted her resignation in October, and I am very grateful to her for her energy and commitment to our community.

I want to thank the board for their many contributions this past year. We have had a lot on our plate, as always. I felt supported and fortunate to have such good resources. Thank you all. I would especially like to acknowledge some departing board members: Carol Agate, Daniel Teplitz, and Jerry Gates. They have served us exceptionally well and offered their leadership, passion, vision and commitment.

We have an exceptional minister in Judith Meyer who continues to inspire us weekly. She even inspires us when she is not here! Miraculously, we survived her 4 month sabbatical with grace and energy – thanks to the talents of Jim Grant. But let's not make it sound too easy. We don't want to let her think she can actually take another one!

In thinking about the last 3 years, I was struck by the fact

that the church has been uniquely served by its presidents since our family became members in 1999. Each had a certain skill set that seemed to match very well with the church's particular focus at the time. With Jim Cadwell, it was a marketing background that helped our church present itself to the community and also launch our capital campaign. With Jerry Gates, it was his administrative skills and fund raising energy that helped navigate the many building planning and capital campaign challenges we faced.

For myself, a lawyer, I seemed to be the right person at the right time to handle the myriad of legal issues we faced in acquiring the property next door, selling the one on 17<sup>th</sup> street, going to planning commission hearings, working through personnel changes, etc.

I am a little concerned now however with the odd possibility that our church will develop a strong need for a president with oncology skills. This is a situation I am not sure I can envision. Still, Charles is a very able diagnostician and administrator, with many ideas and great energy, who I know will offer us his very best. Plus, he's retired! So I wish our new president all the best and tell him that he has my full support, and that the job is really a piece of cake, don't worry about a thing. I'll be around... Thank you.

**Report of the Incoming President, Charles Haskell, M.D.  
As delivered at the Annual Meeting: May 21, 2006**

*My vision for the future*

All of us are both individuals and members of groups. Likewise, our church is an individual institution existing within a larger community. Over the coming year I expect to refer frequently to the concept of "communal ownership" as a model for thinking about our religious home. Owning something is different from just using or borrowing or visiting something. For one thing, it confers both rights and responsibilities. Respecting the rights and responsibilities of ownership is especially important when ownership is communal.

I'd like to illustrate what I mean by communal ownership and how the concept can lead to change with examples from our own church community.

Communal ownership means that you feel totally at home when you come to this church. Our church has more than 450 members plus a large number of people identified as friends of the church. Nothing is more welcoming than being known by name. So, please wear your name tag.

Communal ownership means that every member feels welcome. We have two committees that are particularly concerned with welcoming new members and guests. The first is Interweave, our group for bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people and their supporters. This group led us in several years of study to become a UUA-recognized

Welcoming Congregation. This means we do more than merely tolerate or accept BGLT people—we welcome them. The second committee is our new Membership and Leadership Committee, co-chaired by Laurel Bleak and Marsha Smith. Laurel and Marsha have wonderful plans for helping us be a more friendly church and I look forward to working with them to make this a reality. This committee sponsored an intergenerational potluck last night in Forbes Hall that was great fun and very community building. Communal ownership is for all of our members—irrespective of age, race, gender identification, social class, income, or ability level.

Communal ownership calls for us to be generous with both our money and time in supporting the church. Thanks to Jacki Weber and the Stewardship Committee, we're well on our way to having the money we need to operate the church appropriately. This work needs to continue. However, there is room to improve our level of generosity in donating time to the church. Thanks to our Administrator Melinda Ewen's skill as a team leader, we are expanding opportunities for church members to donate their time. For example, Melinda has established a new Buildings and Grounds Committee, which could use volunteer help in maintaining our facility. She has helped us expand volunteer opportunities in the church office. And we are in the process of updating a comprehensive publication that summarizes ways in which members can participate and contribute to the communal life of this church. You can expect to see this revised publication some time this summer. It is through giving of our time and treasure that we begin to feel real ownership of our church home.

Communal ownership calls for us to be as open and transparent as possible in managing church resources. We've already taken steps to make the policies of the church more accessible by placing them in the About Us section of our church's web site. One of these policies is particularly relevant to the issue of communal ownership. It is our policy on openness of committees. This policy calls for all committees to be open to church members and for them to post their regular, standing meetings on the church calendar. Occasionally, committees may need to meet at an unusual time or go into executive session to deal with sensitive issues, such as litigation or confidential personnel matters. However, that does not change our desire to have all committees fundamentally open and transparent about their work. Such openness is essential if we are to feel real communal ownership when we walk through the doors of our sanctuary.

Communal ownership calls for us to take care of our children and youth. Hillary Clinton got it right when she said it "takes a village" to raise a child. And, for me, this means we have got to get going on building appropriate educational space for our children. It is not enough to have devoted parents and the enlightened leadership of Catherine Farmer—we need proper RE space, which will only happen when we build our new RE facility.

Communal ownership requires that we take care of our

church home. While we are planning our dream facility, we must not ignore or neglect our current church building. For example, we have a leaky roof that needs to be fixed and disabled people don't have easy access to our chancel. These are examples of problems we should fix now—not just some time in the future when we remodel our sanctuary.

Communal ownership calls for us to contribute to our greater community. We cannot be community isolationists. One way we are doing this is by working with the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition. Another way is through donations to local charities through our generous congregation program. I am delighted that our new budget calls for increasing the percentage of each Sunday's collection plate for our generous congregation program from 15% to 25%. Another way for us to contribute to the greater community is to begin thinking about how we'll use our new buildings during the week. We will be spending a large amount of money on our church for our own needs, but we have an opportunity to help our community as well. Wouldn't it be wonderful having our facilities used during the week, as well as on Sundays? One example of how we might do this would be to expand our involvement in supporting 12-step programs. We currently have about 12 such programs. What if we could double this capacity, thereby helping people help themselves overcome the ravages of drugs, alcohol, tobacco abuse, over-eating, and the like.

Communal ownership requires that we be good neighbors. Earlier today we discussed a new design strategy for our building project that includes more on site parking. I fervently believe that assuring adequate parking is vital to our long-term viability as a church and I'm pleased we have a plan for dealing with the issue.

As your new president, I'll do my best to help make our church home a welcoming, attractive, accessible, open, generous and community-minded institution. We'll break ground and actually start building our dream facility and we'll deal realistically with the issue of assuring access to parking. And, in the spirit of Carol Kerr's report, we'll begin getting congregational input about possible new programs for next year's values-based budgeting. I look forward to doing this together with you, my fellow communal owners of this church.

### **Minutes of the May 21, 2006 Annual Meeting Submitted by Carol Agate, Acting Secretary**

Note: attachments were made available to all attending.

Call to order and determination of quorum by President Carol Kerr at 12:36 p.m.

Ron Crane was appointed Inspector of Elections. John Fels was appointed Timekeeper. Jacki Pollack and Rebecca Crawford were appointed ballot counters.

MOTION: To adopt the rules of the meeting. (Passed unanimously.)

MOTION: To approve the minutes of May 15, 2005. (Moved by Carol Agate, seconded by Warren Mathews; passed unanimously.)

MOTION: To elect the nominees for the Board of Directors and Nominating Committee by acclamation. (Passed with one abstention and one vote in opposition.)

The Minister's report was presented by the Reverend Judith Meyer.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Acting Treasurer Warren Mathews.

The Finance Committee Report and the Proposed Budget for the fiscal year 2006-07 was presented on behalf of the Finance Committee by Warren Mathews.

MOTION: That the proposed budget be adopted. (Moved by Warren Mathews, seconded by Charles Haskell; passed unanimously.)

The President's report was presented by Carol Kerr. The Capital Campaign report was presented by Ron Crane. The Building program report was presented by Alison Kendall, Architect Ralph Mechur explained the plans.

MOTION: RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors is authorized to proceed with planning for an alternative design strategy for the development of UUCCSM's properties at 18th and Arizona that would avoid the need for a parking variance and to prepare and submit an application for a conditional use permit (or for a modification to the existing conditional use permit, as appropriate) for such alternative design strategy. (Moved by Joan Reighley and seconded by Ofelia Lachtman.)

AMENDMENT: Kathy Cook moved to amend the motion. After discussion she withdrew her motion and substituted the following addition to the original motion: . . . provided prior to submitting the application the Building Committee prepare a mailing with the plans and information about the plans, and hold an informational meeting for the congregation prior to submission of the application to the Planning Commission. (The revision was seconded by Carol Agate, and accepted by the makers of the original motion. The motion with its amendment was passed with one vote in opposition.)

MOTION: WHEREAS, the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica has obtained the necessary conditional use permit and variance to proceed with the development and expansion of its properties at 18th and Arizona; and WHEREAS, such development project will be undertaken in several phases, as design and financial resources permit; and WHEREAS, the first phase of construction associated with such development involves the relocation of the existing house on the property at 1248 Eighteenth Street and the renovation of such house (hereinafter, "Phase I of Construction").

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that UCCSM proceed as promptly as possible with Phase I of Construction, and that the President, Past-President and Secretary, and each of them, are hereby authorized to execute, deliver and perform, in the name and on behalf of the Church, such agreements, contracts, or instruments between the Church and architects, engineers, construction companies, general contractors and/or subcontractors as they deem reasonably necessary and appropriate to commence and complete Phase I of Construction. (The motion was made by Pat Gomez and seconded by Peter van den Beemt; passed with three votes in opposition.)

The elected officers, board members, and members of the nominating committee were installed. New president's remarks were delivered by Charles Haskell.

New business. Carol Agate moved that the discussion scheduled by the board be postponed. (Passed unanimously). The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

## YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT

### Treasurer's Report Submitted by Warren Mathews, Acting Treasurer

#### Financial Results for 2005-06 Fiscal Year

This has been a phenomenal year for the church financially. When we started to develop the budget back in February 2005, we found ourselves facing a potential deficit of around \$35,000. A special Board retreat was held to look for ways to pare that down, followed by a town meeting on the on the same subject. Leslie Reuter volunteered to raise \$5,000; the Haskells volunteered to contribute significant assistance in the office so the second paid office position could be eliminated; a mid-year increase in so-called continuing pledges was instituted; and several significant (but non-critical) reductions in expenses were proposed. As a result, the congregation adopted a balanced budget, but with some uncertainty as to whether the pledge income it assumed could in fact be realized.

But nobody could have predicted what came next. Under the leadership of Jacki Weber and her Stewardship Committee, the congregation responded phenomenally to the fall pledge drive, with pledge payments \$35,000 more than budgeted! In addition, Dining for Dollars yielded a record \$26,500, Leslie Reuter's auction yielded \$5,300, Carol Agate's donated art sale yielded \$1,800, the Men's Group's yard sale yielded \$2,600, and our total expenses were \$4,600 under budget!

The net result was (1) a \$26,600 surplus for the year (remember that originally feared \$35,000 deficit?) without taking any of the budgeted \$17,700 of investment earnings into income, plus (2) an additional \$23,000 contribution to

our savings from investment earnings (up because of increased interest rates), and (3) yet another \$10,700 from other sources. Life can be beautiful!

#### Strengthening the Church's Financial Management Structure

For many years, the church office has handled the processing of pledge payments and other receipts, has written all of the checks, and has done the associated bookkeeping. But there has been no officially clear center of responsibility for finance administration (accounting, as contrasted with bookkeeping, and dealing with the banks and other financial institutions). We've had a term-limited Finance Committee and an elected Treasurer, but there could be no assurance that either of those, nor the office staff, would have the capability to provide competent day-to-day finance administration. This has failed to be an evident problem only because Warren Mathews has chosen to fill that role for the last four decades, but dependence solely on him as a volunteer individual cannot continue to be a healthy position for the church.

With the advent of Melinda Ewen as the church's Administrator, however, we now can, and are proceeding to, resolve this matter in a fundamental way. With an MBA and many years in both non-profit and for-profit management, Melinda has both the professional training and the practical experience to provide finance and personnel administration, as well as general administration, as part of the Administrator's job description. The Finance Committee will continue to be responsible for finance policy, including developing the annual budget and considering requests for budget deviations, but not for the mechanical details of implementing that policy. And the Treasurer's prime responsibility will be to monitor performance against the budget, to advise the Board on finance matters, and to report periodically to the Board and the congregation on the significance of the church's financial position.

#### Fiscal Year Finance Reports

Two charts displaying the church's financial performance during, and condition at the end of, fiscal year 2005-06 are presented on the following three pages. The first chart compares the actuals for the year with the congregation-approved budget, as summarized in paragraphs above, and also shows the 2006-07 budget that was approved by the congregation at the 2006 Annual Meeting.

The second chart is a current-accounts balance sheet, displaying all of the church's non-fixed assets and liabilities and the variety of funds and reserves that make up the net of our assets minus our liabilities. In this chart, the sum of the Unrestricted Reserve (near the bottom of page 12) and the Year-to-Date Surplus (top line of page 12), which amounts to \$119,102.17, represents our disposable savings going into the new fiscal year.

**Fiscal Year 2005-06 Operating Statement and 2006-07 Budget**

	<b>2005-06 Budget</b>	<b>2005-06 Actuals</b>	<b>Major Dif- ferences</b>	<b>2006-07 Budget</b>
<b>OPERATING INCOME</b>				
Pledge Receipts	351,000	386,104	35,000	393,000
Other Contributions	30,833	27,361	(3,500)	27,240
Program Income	30,500	40,953	10,400	31,400
Church-Unrelated Income	47,364	27,164	(20,200)	57,600
<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>459,697</b>	<b>481,582</b>		<b>509,240</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>				
Minister	112,845	112,952		121,407
Director of Religious Education	54,269	55,534		56,939
Music Director	18,120	18,120		20,568
Organist	15,984	15,984		16,560
Administrator	48,452	45,338	(3,100)	53,910
Office Assistant	25,075	29,143	4,000	34,594
Weekday Sexton	12,939	13,031		15,485
RE Department Employees	6,200	3,312	(2,900)	6,800
Music Department Employees	8,800	8,800		7,550
Administrative Employees	6,760	7,191		8,400
Payroll Expenses	17,724	16,890		20,187
<b>PERSONNEL EXPENSES</b>	<b>327,168</b>	<b>326,295</b>		<b>362,400</b>
Ministry	8,350	8,050		8,500
Children & Youth RE	5,450	5,273		7,100
Adult Religious Education	950	421		1,700
Music	5,600	5,965		7,200
All-Church	2,100	5,606	3,500	2,500
Membrship,/ Organizational Dev.	2,900	4,581	1,700	3,100
<b>PROGRAM SUPPORT EXPNSE</b>	<b>25,350</b>	<b>29,896</b>		<b>30,100</b>
Denomination Affairs	31,576	31,124		31,840
Faith In Action	1,020	930		920
<b>DENOM &amp; FAITH IN ACTION</b>	<b>32,596</b>	<b>32,054</b>		<b>32,760</b>
Church Office	24,153	23,426		25,220
Finance Administration	210	196		210
Personnel Administration	530	169		600
<b>CHURCH OFFICE &amp; ADMIN</b>	<b>24,893</b>	<b>23,791</b>		<b>26,030</b>

**Fiscal Year 2005-06 Operating Statement and 2006-07 Budget continued**

	<b>2005-06 Budget</b>	<b>2005-06 Actuals</b>	<b>Major Differences</b>	<b>2006-07 Budget</b>
FACILITY OPERATION	31,132	35,321	4,200	39,950
Equipment & Furniture	500	3,557		900
Facility Maintenance	12,940	3,975		12,000
Facility Upgrading & Rental	5,000	53		5,100
NEW EQPT & FACIL UPKEEP	18,440	7,585	(10,900)	18,000
<hr/>				
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>459,579</b>	<b>454,942</b>		<b>509,240</b>
<b>SURPLUS FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>26,640</b>	25,200	<b>0</b>
<b>INVSTMENT EARNINGS TO SAVINGS</b>		<b>23,048</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>BEQUESTS &amp; PRIOR YEAR ADJSTS</b>		<b>10,673</b>		
<b>TOTAL INCREASE IN SAVINGS</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>60,361</b>		<b>380</b>

**Current Accounts Balance Sheet June 30, 2006**

**CURRENT ASSETS**

Cash			
Checking & Cash Management Accounts	37,839.48		
Liquid Investments	2,088,458.87	2,126,298.35	
Receivables		38,698.59	
Deferred Charges		3,698.02	
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>			<b>2,168,694.96</b>

**CURRENT LIABILITIES & AGENCY FUNDS**

**CURRENT LIABILITIES**

Payables	8,081.93		
Deferred Credits	513.00	8,594.93	
<b>AGENCY FUNDS</b>			
Standing Agency Funds		2,715.53	
New Building Project Fund		1,529,868.02	
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES &amp; AGENCY FUNDS</b>			<b>1,541,178.48</b>

**(Current Accounts Balance Sheet continued on next page)**

**Current Accounts Balance Sheet June 30, 2006 continued**

**CURRENT NET WORTH**

OPERATING FUND (YTD Surplus)		<u>26,640.23</u>
<b>DEDICATED FUNDS</b>		
Ministry Funds	Minister Discretionary Fund	1,427.58
	Sabbatical Church Expenses Fund	2,900.00
		4,327.58
Children & Youth RE	RE Department Fund	197.82
	RE Equipment Fund	175.00
	RE Youth Activities Fund	679.87
		1,052.69
Music Funds	Music Department Fund	379.74
	Organ Fund	350.00
		729.74
Faith in Action Funds	Faith In Action Commission Fund	774.02
	FIA Speaker Series Fund	88.15
	Interweave Fund	501.33
	Interweave Common Ground Fund	25.00
	Robert Berke Fund	90.86
	Step Up on Second Fund	1,325.03
	Guest at Your Table Fund	179.59
	Westside Food Bank Fund	106.00
	Eagan UUUNO Scholarship Fund	330.00
	OPCC Building Program Fund	1,389.32
		4,809.30
All-Church Funds	de Benneville Pines Wkend Fund	2,515.77
Administration Funds	Book Cart Fund	(876.93)
	Lending Library Fund	114.77
	Unemployment Compensation Fund	381.00
	Marcus Fountain Maintenance Fund	200.00
		(181.16)
Clearing Accounts	Art Wall Clearing - Church	0.00
	Art Wall Clearing - Artists	(192.00)
		<u>(192.00)</u>
	Total Dedicated Funds	13,061.92
<b>RESERVES</b>		
	Unrestricted Reserve	92,461.94
	Operating Cushion	40,000.00
	Reserve for Major Emergencies	204,000.00
	Minister Equity-Sharing Reserve	199,527.92
		<u>535,989.86</u>
<b>ENDOWMENTS</b>		
	Pipes Lecture Endowment Fund	26,165.00
	Pipes Lecture Operations Fund	9,907.41
	Will Wright Pulpit Endowment Fund	15,752.06
		<u>51,824.47</u>
	TOTAL CURRENT NET WORTH	627,516.48
Total Current Liabilities & Net Worth		2,168,694.96

## MINISTRY

### Report of the Committee on Ministry Submitted by Anne Gustafson, 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 members for the year of 2005-6 are: Anne Gustafson, Judy Federick, and Shawn Kerr. 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, since our minister was on sabbatical for most of the time in question, the committee did not meet regularly. Also, instead of evaluating Judith's performance, we evaluated the functioning of the church's ministry during her four-month sabbatical. We did this by interviewing 19 church members. The report was completed and presented to the board in May. Overall, the sabbatical ministry system received positive feedback.

### Report of the Pulpit Committee Submitted by 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, 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. This year, we had the additional task of providing support to the Sunday program while Judith was on sabbatical between September to December 2005.

*September to December 2005.* While Judith was on sabbatical, Rev. Jim Grant served as sabbatical minister. The pulpit committee assisted Rev. Grant to the extent needed to continue Sunday services in the same manner. Additionally the pulpit committee had the responsibility of finding church members to light the chalice (something that Judith usually does).

*January through July.* For the one Sunday a month 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.

*Summer.* We are fortunate to already have guest speakers lined up for the summer, including Rev. Grant who was with us in the fall and Susan Conrad who was a Faith in Action intern with our church several years back. Unfortunately Rev. Nardoni, who has filled the pulpit in August in other summers, will not be able to do so this coming summer.

*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.

Committee members include Vilma Ortiz, Sue Bickford, Kathy Cook and Tom Hamilton. Catherine Farmer joined us at least once to discuss ways of integrating the children's and adult's Sunday worship.

### Report of Covenant Groups (Small Group Ministry) Submitted by Carol-jean Teuffel & Marv Pulliam: Co-chairs

#### Facilitator Training

PSWD Small Group Ministry (SGM) Workshop: On October 29, 2005, UUSM hosted a district all-day workshop attended by 75 people from Arizona, Santa Barbara, San Diego, and other congregations in the PSWD. Rev. M'Ellen Kennedy traveled from Vermont to lead the discussion. Several breakout periods were used for practicing the small group concepts and techniques.

Covenant Groups as of October 2005: Each of the five groups was committed to and completed a service project for the church, the community, or both.

*Sunday Group* — Group members included Nancy Babbitt, Sanna Egan (facilitator), Shirlee Frank, Tom Foretich, Peter Hermann, Josephine La Rosa, Gerrie Lambson (facilitator), Marilyn White Redmond, Charlotte Stone, and Carol-jean Teuffel. A service project we enjoyed was Greeting and Welcoming folks at coffee-time on an ongoing basis. Also, we provided labeled recycling bins for kitchen, hall and offices.

*Saturday Group 1* — The members were Tom Ahern, Jean Allgeyer, Lynn Armondo, Kim Baldridge, Beverly D'Angelo, Anne Gustafson (facilitator), Carol Lim (facilitator), Freya

Sandler, and Brandon Young. We put in a workday at the church for our project. We polished pews, painted doors and windowsills in the office and play area. For our community project we prepared and served dinner at Step Up on Second.

*Saturday Group II* — A second Saturday group included Andrea Davis, Keith Greenhouse, Dave Hedin, Debi Hermann, Marv Pulliam (facilitator), Bill Ungar, Jacki Weber and Serena Shames. The community project was to repair and paint four rooms at the Lange Foundation, a pet rescue center in West Los Angeles.

*Wednesday Group 1* — The group members were Carol Agate (facilitator), Jan Dunn, Fran German, Paulette Katz, Cindy Kelly, Shaee Khatapoush, Ilse Kleinman, Carol-jean Teuffel (facilitator), Linda van Ligten, Margot Page and Kim Baldrige. We created a five-station art project for our youth for a three-Sunday project. Painting, clay, collage and a banner reflecting beauty and positive feelings were enjoyed by our youth.

*Wednesday Group II* — Another group included Nedra Bickel and Marv Pulliam (facilitators), Rich Cook, Bill Damerell, Angela Grillo, Joyce Martino, Betty Mill, Diane Montieth, and Rhonda Peacock. For a church project, the group members acted as greeters at church on Sunday mornings. The community project was food sorting at Westside foodbank.

#### Covenant Group Implementation Team

Our efforts this year so far have produced updates for an introductory brochure, an evaluation questionnaire, and the SGM Policy Manual; all were published by June of 2006. We believe that several future groups to be offered will be popular which will be focused on UUA curricula; i.e., Building Your Own Theology and specific OWL segments. There is a valuable reference asset ([www.thesmallgroupministry.net](http://www.thesmallgroupministry.net)) available to all UU churches. Our facilitators will add their sessions to this database, which can then be used by new and well-established programs as well.

#### *Pot Luck Dinner*

The Covenant Group Implementation Team hosted a well-attended dinner at UUSM in May of this year to celebrate each other and our Small Group Ministry success.

*Facilitators for fall of 2006* are Carol Agate, Nedra Bickel, Sanna Egan, Anne Gustafson, Carol Lim, Leslie Reuter, and Carol-jean Teuffel.

## RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

### Report of the Director of Religious Education, Catherine Farmer

We have a Religious Exploration program to be proud of here at UUCSSM. It's been a good, if busy, year, and I

am very grateful for the dedication of the more than 70 members of this congregation who have volunteered in our program. The RE Council and I are now in the midst of planning for the fall, and are very excited about what's to come – there are lots of great 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 the RE Council was chaired by Janet Goodwin. Members of the Council during the year included Chris Brown, Amelia Harati, Karen Patch, Beth Rendeiro, Linda Van Ligten, and Board liaison Daniel Teplitz.

Way Cool Sunday School - Year Four: This year was our fourth year working with 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. This year, we tweaked our structure and tried out a new way of incorporating Social Justice and the Arts into our programs, with month-long "Intensives" in January and May. Our focus for the first half of the year, across the elements of our program, was the Fourth UU Principle, The Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning, and for the second half of the year, the Fifth UU Principle, The Right of Conscience and Use of the Democratic Process.

In addition to the Way Cool Worship Sundays, this also included involvement in the sanctuary, at least once per month, preparing and sharing stories and celebrations such as introducing Guest At Your Table, co-producing the "Legend of Befana" pageant in December (along with Susan Jain and Greg Poirier), the story on Earth Day Sunday, leading the upcoming Bridging Ceremony recognizing our graduating high school seniors as well as the RE Sunday service, etc.

Classroom: The second, third and fourth Sundays of the month are Classroom Sundays for all ages. At each service, we offer a preschool class, elementary classes, a 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> (Neighboring Faiths) class and a senior high program for 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. Our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Coming of Age program meets during the 9:00 service. Our preschool, Neighboring Faiths, 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. We have also had to change the groupings for some of our elementary level classes this spring, as well as the distribution of enrollment in different grade levels made

for very small classes with one or two children. Thus the 11:00 preschool class has often joined the K-2<sup>nd</sup> class, and the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class at 9:00 has been invited to join the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade class for the spring program.

*Social Justice:* This year, the RE program spent the month of January doing a different project each week, all organized around our central theme for the month, homelessness. Our congregation has a long history of supporting community organizations, such as the Westside Food Bank, that are providing support and resources for those who are homeless or in danger of becoming so, and we were very pleased to partner with OPCC, a network of shelters and services for low-income and homeless people in Santa Monica, for this month's activities. Special thanks for the month goes to Michele Prichard-Lane, coordinator extraordinaire!

*Arts:* As of this report, we are spending the month of May in our second "Intensive" of the year – Arts Month! Children are invited to explore their spirituality through the arts in a variety of different ways, with lots of options to choose from each week. From May 7<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, kids in our elementary classes will come together in the blue house to make wonderful art together, with the help of UUCSM's Wednesday Night Covenant Group and Judy Schonebaum, our Children's Choir director. Kids will be invited to work with clay, create a canvas banner, make a wonderful collage, explore painting, or make a joyful noise together through song and rhythm. Then, on May 28<sup>th</sup>, we'll all work together on a very special surprise project to be unveiled at our RE Sunday service in June.

*Coming of Age:* This year's COA program is humming right along, with eleven 8<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup>. The program's success is due to the dedication of our COA leaders, Karl Lisovsky, Cindee Hallinan and Jennifer Westbay, and the support of the eleven church members who signed on to serve as mentors to each of the youth.

*Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU):* This year, for the first time ever, we have offered Senior High programming at 9:00 and 11:00! Our 9:00 program is still finding its feet, but we expect that it will grow as this year's crop of COA'ers graduate into high school and join the ranks. Over the past couple of years we have seen the size of our program more than double, and with the addition of this year's COA youth, our senior high population will approach 40 next year. With the huge increase in size has come some growing pains, but the group has continued to be a very positive place for many of our teens, thanks to the leadership of the youth themselves as well as that of our YRUU advisors. We are committed to providing a space for high schoolers at both of our Sunday services, and have been able to do so this year through the extraordinary dedication of our youth advisors Chris Brown, Liza Cranis, Bob Dietz, Emmy Labourne and Amy Giles. A high point of the

year was our Youth Sunday service on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, planned and led by the YRUU group after weeks of planning and practicing.

*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. 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. The highlight of this year was a well-attended outing to visit the youth group at the UU church in Las Vegas over a long weekend in February.

*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 spring, we offered 5<sup>th</sup>&6<sup>th</sup> Grade OWL, taught by Beth Rendeiro, Kathy Cook, Linda Van Ligten and Robert Simon, and Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade OWL, taught by Beth Rendeiro, Francois Bar, Linda Van Ligten and Robert Simon. Next year, we will offer the Jr. High and Sr. High OWL classes.

#### 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: Planning Commission and City Council meetings re: our building plans, RE Teacher Training, Ingathering Sunday, UNICEF Carnival, Pilgrim's Feast, Guest at Your Table fundraiser for UUSC, Cookie Bake, Winter Holiday Pageant intergenerational service, Christmas Eve services, Secret Pals, Lifespan RE Visioning Meetings, Youth Sunday, Young Adult Social, Easter Sunday, Articulating Y(our) Faith class for Young Adults, Newcomer Orientations, Coming of Age Sunday (upcoming), Bridging 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 Directors 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 with RE Council, Membership & Leadership Committee, and Board of Trustees; Weekly staff meeting with Minister; Subcommittee and other meetings ranging from 1-6 times/group included Adult RE planning, YRUU, Teaching Teams, Our Whole Lives, Winter Holiday Pageant, RE Social Justice, RE Arts, RE Worship, etc. Meetings with many church committees including Personnel, Building, Pulpit, Parent Support Group, etc.

*Maintenance and Administration:* Included registering and tracking enrollment and attendance of children and youth, managing the RE budget, coordinating supplies for Sundays, researching and making equipment purchases for the program, etc.

*Research and Planning:* Included research both online (through REACH and LREDA resource/idea sharing discussion groups) and off line. 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, Teacher Training, 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 and our faith at various conferences and denominational affairs. Activities this past year included:

- Entry into the UUA's RE Credentialing Program, at the Credentialed Religious Educator level, with expected completion date of 10/2007. This program includes a monthly phone meeting with Credentialing mentor Patti Withers, DRE.
- Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) PSWD Chapter Secretary
- UUA's Campus Ministry Advisory Committee
- Senior High Camp at DeBenneville (adult advisor)
- Hosted UUA's Western Regional Campus Ministry Training
- LREDA Fall Conference
- UU Ministers Association / LREDA Retreat
- UUA's Midsize Church Conference
- Facilitated RE Teacher Seminar at Chalice UU in Escondido,
- PSWD LREDA Professional Days
- DRE Cluster meetings

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 third 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 am eager to see what the next year will bring us, as our building plans come ever closer to fruition and as our congregation continues to improve its service to its members, particularly through the new Membership & Leadership and Adult RE Committees. It has been a joy to work with all of you; I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your DRE, and look forward to what we will accomplish together for many years to come!

### **Religious Exploration Council Submitted by Janet Goodwin, Chair**

#### Recognition of the volunteers in RE Council

Currently the council consists of Catherine Farmer and seven volunteers: Chris Brown Amelia Harati Karen Patch, Beth Rendeiro, Daniel Teplitz, Linda Van Ligten, and Janet Goodwin. We see the role of the council as the 'big picture' group that helps Catherine to envision and create a strong, vibrant RE program for our youth. We meet monthly to generate ideas, solve problems and help to make this shared vision a reality.

#### Accomplishments of the past year:

- Modification of the Way Cool Sunday School format: We now have 3 classroom Sundays and 1 children's worship Sunday for most months. The month of January, coordinated and led by Michele Prichard, was devoted to Social Justice, focusing on the theme of homelessness. The upcoming month of May will focus on the arts and will be coordinated by a covenant group.
- Addition of a 9 am YRUU class: This year we have been experimenting with the addition of a second senior high youth class at 9 am. We are still exploring ways to meet the needs of all our senior high kids.
- Teacher orientation in September: We hosted a one-day training for new and returning RE teachers.
- "RE Socials": The council hosted some get-togethers between services in the garden off of Forbes. These events help us bring teachers and parents together and to give teachers a chance to share ideas and to socialize.
- RE Star: To acknowledge the commitment and dedication of our volunteers, we have instituted a monthly column in the newsletter devoted to honoring one member of this valuable team.
- Assistance with holiday events: Unicef Carnival on Halloween, Winter pageant, Easter Sunday egg hunt.
- Mid-year check-in in February: Lizzie & John Murray hosted a lovely event at their home to give teachers a chance to share ideas, discuss issues, and prepare for the upcoming spring classes on the 5<sup>th</sup> principle.
- Return to Secret Pal event: As part of the goal of creating more intergenerational contact, Alyssa Wood,

with assistance from Chris Brown, planned and led the Secret Pal exchange of clues culminating in a fun and exuberant dance in Forbes Hall near St. Patrick's Day.

- Visioning meeting: In an effort to stay in touch with RE families, the council held a "visioning meeting" with all interested families on March 19, after both services. We hope this will assist the council in maintaining a shared vision of what it means to educate our children about what it means to be a UU. Since RE is volunteer led and organized, we need to be aware of the areas we need to focus our efforts, balancing the resources that we have.
- Our Whole Lives (OWL): The Our Whole Lives sexuality education curriculum continues to be a vital part of our program with this year's programming for K/1 and 5/6 grade levels.
- Summer planning: This summer we have an exciting program planned with separate classes for pre-schoolers and older kids. Share your energy with our kids by volunteering for one Sunday at Camp .

#### Goals for the coming year

- Increase in intergenerational focus: Catherine & Judith are planning 2 intergenerational worship service for next year. With the return of secret pals and the opportunity for adults to join the RE program on a one-time basis during the Social Justice & Arts months, the council hopes to strengthen the ties between the adults & children of our congregation.
- Growth and outreach: The council would like to see an increase in size and representation, bringing on board at least 2 more people. Ideally, we would like the council to have a balance of men/women, newer/older members, and to bring on some members with younger children onto the council so their viewpoints are represented as well.

We have exciting new ideas for summer and the coming year. We plan to recruit volunteers for this summer and next year during the next few weeks. We are recruiting classroom teaching teams as well as single or short-term assistance with social action and arts projects. Come share your talent and enthusiasm with our young people!

### **MUSIC PROGRAM**

#### **Report of the Director of Music, Steve Wight**

The 2005-06 season was an exciting one for the choir, which has grown almost to overflowing on the chancel. Our ambitious and heartfelt Dining for Dollars event, *Let There Be Peace on Earth: Songs of Social Conscience* was very well attended and warmly received. The choir's contributions to Christmas Eve, to various other special events throughout the year, and to Sunday services, have been exceptional. Annual reports traditionally contain appreciation of volunteers throughout the church

community, and it is worth noting that, with the exception of our two paid section leaders, the choir is an all-volunteer group. As such, it is surely one of the groups with highest membership, longest ongoing commitment, and greatest impact on church life. They are a remarkable, hardworking group who are always willing to go the extra mile to achieve the best musical results.

Other volunteers deserve special mention as well. Peter Van Den Beemt has over the last several years spearheaded a drive which has resulted in the establishment of a fine jazz series featuring Louis Durra's group, a very well-attended music appreciation series (*Stevenings*), Church Talent Sundays, the Forbes Hall Music Table, and various occasional music programs (such as the young Romanian pianists who gave a recital this season). Peter has done all this with virtually no increase in music department expenses.

Bronwen Jones is another individual who deserves special thanks. She has sung in the choir, composed and arranged music, appeared as clarinet soloist, helped organize Church Talent Sundays, and has agreed to co-chair the Music Committee.

Peter has noted the various members of the Music Committee in his annual report, so I won't repeat them here, but I extend to each of them my deepest thanks for their hard work and great contribution to the life of the church.

The upcoming year promises to be an exciting one. We are working to put together a special evening choir concert for the fall which will be unlike any event we've presented before. In addition, several new Sunday morning soloists are slated to appear. The *Louis Durra Trio* and *Stevenings* series will continue; and, as always, we will work to present a music program that embodies the progressive, inclusive, humanist, diverse nature of Unitarian Universalism.

#### **Report of the Music Committee Submitted by Peter Van Den Beemt, Chair**

The Music Committee has had another busy year. We put on four very successful Stevenings. "Stevenings" are evenings with Steve Wight in which he cogently and cleverly explores different aspects of music. Katie Malich organized a beautifully done wine and hors d'oeuvre Dining for Dollars event to precede the last Stevening. We put on three very successful Louis Durra Trio concerts, and will present one more in June. We arranged two Church Talent Sundays, which are services where the music is provided by the quality amateur talent within our congregation. A third is planned for June. We fielded a Music Table in Forbes Hall after the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and when there was one, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month, providing information about the music program, and making choir CDs and Louis Durra CDs available for purchase.

Next year, we hope to get more of the congregation involved with the Music Committee. We'd like to continue with the Stevenings, Louis Durra Trio concerts, and the music table,

and we'd like to expand the Church Talent Sundays.

We've had some dedicated volunteers to make all this happen. Bronwen Jones has stepped up to become co-chair, to my great relief. Dayla McDonald has done a beautiful job with our posters and Order of Service inserts. Melissa Parkerton has effectively and efficiently organized the receptions that have followed each event, helped by Judy Schonebaum, Diana Spears, Tracy James, Ilse Kleinman, Natalie Kahn, and Sarah Waldstein. Monica Mason has helped generously with publicity, to which Diana Spears has also contributed. Joe Engleman has been our door watcher/money collector. Liz Fuller oversees our music pages at the uusm.org website. Thank you, all!

We invite all lovers of music, regardless of abilities or knowledge, to join us!

## **FAITH IN ACTION**

### **Report of the Faith in Action Commission Submitted by 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 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 FIA Commission with specific liaison responsibilities include the following: Charles & Christine Haskell (Co-chairs of the Peace & Civil Liberties Committee); Judy Federick (Interweave); Cathie Gentile (UU Legislative Ministry California); Eleanor Eagan (UU-United Nations Office Envoy); Phyllis Gabriel (UUSC liaison); Lyn Armondo (Women's Alliance); Janet Goodwin (meals at Turning Point and Step Up on 2<sup>nd</sup>); Marge Zifferblatt (Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition liaison); and, Jesse Figueroa (YRUU). Members at large include: Patrick D. McGuire and 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. Faith in Action activities are presented in a newsletter column (Charles Haskell) and in a periodical

entitled the Faith in Action Bulletin. The Commission sponsors lectures, panel discussions, and other public programs in support of its work (FIA Speaker Series). The Commission is responsible for the November gallery wall .

Based on the annual issues election of September 2005 and an all-church town hall meeting in February 2006, the following program areas have dominated our attention for the year: hunger and homelessness, peace, civil liberties, marriage rights for BGLT couples, healthcare access reform, 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. Paula Bernstein has coordinated two food sorts at the Westside Food Bank, both of which were highly successful. Janet Goodwin and Lyn Armondo have 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 (9<sup>th</sup> annual Success Breakfast).

#### Faith in Action Speaker Series

The selection of speakers was guided this year by the Faith in Action Commission and the Peace & Civil Liberties Committee. The following lectures were given :

- November 2006. Susan Lerner: Clean Money campaign (campaign finance reform legislation)
- January 2006. George Savage: Healthcare access reform
- May 2006. Jihad Turk (the Sunni perspective): Islam in America and the Middle East Today

### **Report of Interweave Submitted by Judy Federick, Chair**

Interweave, the UU affiliate group for bisexuals, gays, lesbians and transgenders (BGLTs), and their friends and allies, is in its sixth year at UUCSM. Our issues for study and action this year continue to be marriage equality and outreach to at-risk GBLT youth.

Our activities in the past year included the following: In conjunction with members of several other UU churches we had invited to join us, we marched for the first time in the Christopher Street Gay Pride Parade on Sunday, June 12, 2006 in West Hollywood. Wearing t-shirts proudly proclaiming "Unitarian Universalists -- 1st Religion to

Support Marriage Equality" and carrying our marriage equality banner, we happily acknowledged the cheers of the warm crowd.

We marched in the Parade again this year. As special recognition of Rev. Ernie Pipes and Maggie Pipes, they were be our unit's "Honored Supporters of Marriage Equality". They rode in an open convertible as we walked before, beside, and behind them proudly wearing our distinctive UUCCSM shirts!

As part of our outreach to at-risk GBLT youth, we made the decision to "adopt" the homeless youth program of Common Ground West, a local HIV/AIDS organization. We feel the agency's Homeless Youth Peer Education Program (or "H.Y.P.E.") really fits us as a church --the program is local, specific to at-risk youth, and has an explicit, understandable "needs" list.

During the month of February, to introduce our "adoption" to both our church and to Common Ground Westside itself, we asked our church community for donations of the types of clothing and hygiene supplies listed as needed on the agency's website. Members of the congregation responded overwhelmingly. The church further demonstrated its enthusiasm by designating Common Ground Westside as the beneficiary of the Generous Congregation collection for February 19. At our meeting with the agency's CEO, we discussed ways we could further assist the youth program --for example, targeting a different item for collection each month as a draw to bring youth into the agency for other services.

In appreciation, we presented the Rev. Silvio Nardoni with a plaque during the March 26 service, saluting him "For his work on the Interfaith Amicus Brief presented January 9, 2006, to the California Court of Appeal in Support of Marriage Equality.

Our fifth Annual All-Church Interweave Picnic was held Aug. 21 in celebration of the final stages of the 2005 Capital Campaign, with proceeds going to it. We plan to make Common Ground Westside's Homeless Youth Peer Education Program the beneficiary of the proceeds of this year's picnic.

On Oct. 9, we once again hosted the Coming Out Day Service, Our guest, Judy Chiasson, presented the sermon *Speaking Our Truth, Sharing Ourselves*.

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.

**Peace & Civil Liberties Committee  
Charles & Christine Haskell, co-chairs**

The committee meets the first Wednesday of each month in Forbes Hall from 6:30-8:00 PM. Meetings are devoted to

a discussion of one or more peace-related topics and the coordination and planning of programs. Activities for the year included the following:

- June 2005. Viewing and discussion of the UCLA Book Fair panel discussion entitled "the Media and Peace."
- September 2005. Discussion of UUA Action of Immediate Witness #1 (U.S.-sponsored torture must end) and the UUSC STOP Torture campaign.
- September, 2005. Participation in the L.A. Peace March (led by S. J. Guidotti).
- October 2005. Discussion of VA volunteer opportunities with Sadie Stewart ("Support the Troops").
- January 2006. Viewing of documentary video entitled "Camp Casey" by Peter Dundar & Sally Marr.
- January 2006. Discussion of "What does it take to be a conscientious objector?" led by Rev. Ernie Pipes, minister emeritus.
- March 19-20, 2006. Overnight lodging at the church and breakfast for Latino peace marchers Pablo Paredes, Fernando Lupe, Anabelle Valencia and others.

**Report of the UU Legislative Ministry Program  
Submitted by Cathie Gentile, Chair**

September 2005 - FIA Issues Election: the UU Legislative Ministry's (UULM) three priority issues are voted as action issues. They are: health care for all, marriage equality and water rights.

November 2005 - FIA Commissioner Cathie Gentile on behalf of the congregation submitted a signed statement to the UULM listing the UUCCSM as a supporter in the Religious Amicus Brief in the California Marriage Case. The Amicus Brief was written by UULM Board Member Rev. Silvio Nardoni.

January 2006 - UULM presented an Empowering Justice workshop at Neighborhood Church in Pasadena. FIA members Ron Crane, Cathie Gentile and Marge Zifferblat attend. Ron attended sessions on marriage equality; Cathie and Marge attend sessions on the California Health Insurance Reliability Act. The following Sunday, George Savage, from Health Care for All - California, spoke to members of the congregation in support of the same bill, SB 840, authored by Senator Sheila Kuehl.

Future activities: an effort to educate as many members of the congregation as possible regarding the Health Care for All bill which will take at least one to two years to pass the California State Senate and Assembly. Also, to educate the congregation regarding a pending federal marriage amendment to the Constitution essentially prohibiting same sex marriage. The UUSC has also

stated its support to fight this effort.

### **Report of the UU United Nations Program Submitted by Eleanor Eagan, Envoy**

The highlight of the past year has been sending two high school boys, John-Michael Lisovsky and Adam Leene, and an adult advisor, Liza Cranis, to the Annual Spring Intergenerational Seminar held in our New York office located at 777 UN Plaza, directly across from the UN. The focus of this year's seminar was People, Poverty, Hunger. Activities were held in several venues including the UN, All Souls Church and Community Church. All of our representatives were very active; all regarded it as a life-changing experience.

Two members of our congregation, Harvey and Sheila Bjornlie, attended the local Water Forum PrepCom in February hosted by the Friends of the United Nations and the Department of Water and Power. The Water Forum held in March in Mexico City was the first Water Forum to be held on this continent.

The Rev. Jim Grant celebrated UN Sunday on October 23 and International Human Rights Day on December 11 with appropriate story telling by Betty Grant each day. Twenty-five copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and many other international documents, with side-by-side translation in Spanish, were presented to the R. E. Department Library, a gift of the Friends of the United Nations.

A first this year was providing modest seed money to encourage an affiliated group of the UUA, the Women's Alliance, to provide assistance to an appropriate women's group in a developing country. The donation this year will be to FINCA, which operates primarily but not solely in Latin America and the Caribbean, and which helps women to help themselves by starting their own small businesses.

Plans are under way at long last to create a new local committee to expand the work of the UU/UNO.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Report of the Administrator, Melinda Ewen**

Marie Kashmer-Stiebing began serving our congregation faithfully and well as Church Administrator in 1999. In October 2005 she resigned her position. Because I was Secretary of the Board of Directors, I had been rather closely acquainted with our church office operations. Earlier that summer I had resigned my own position as Executive Director of a small non-profit agency, and was working part time at two small managerial positions. When Marie resigned, I wrote a proposal offering my services as a temporary and part time Administrator while a Search Committee could conduct a formal search.

In November and December I received excellent support from church leadership and our interim minister, Rev. Jim Grant. We made it through the holidays with only minor crises framed by mostly laughter and only occasionally salted with tears. The major challenge was the hiring of an office assistant, during which time I gained tremendous appreciation for the skills and caring of our President Carol Kerr and Personnel Committee member Kim Miller. An excellent temporary placement, Chuck Craig, (who later came on board with us as an employee) filled in two and consulted with me while I commuted to my other two jobs. The Administration Committee provided much appreciated support during these early months. In January I was pleased to begin work with our regular minister, Rev. Judith Meyer.

Our office volunteers pulled together to allow our office operations to continue unimpeded. Weekly stints by the cheery and capable included Warren Mathews, Charles and Christine Haskell, John Fels, Anne MacQueen's Friday Group, and a cadre of Sunday Office Volunteers. I am pleased to report that they all remained on duty, even after I was selected to be the permanent full-time Administrator. Together we work hard to make Sundays, rentals, and meetings run smoothly.

Goals for next year include transferring administration of the financial aspects of the church, so capably done for decades by Warren Mathews, to the Administrator. We also hope to upgrade technological applications, to implement recommendations by our Webmaster, and utilize more effective and efficient communications and record keeping. These upgrades will be combined with a newly reactivated Building and Grounds Committee, our two capable sextons, and a New Building Project that continues to progress. Our future, we believe, is bright.

## **Report of the Office Assistant, Chuck Craig**

I think the single most important function of the Office Assistant is to support the Church Administrator in developing and maintaining routines and procedures that support the overall function of the office and the varied needs of the congregation.

In the year that I've been here it's been particularly gratifying to work first with Warren and Marie, Louis, Steve, Catherine, Mark, Kevin, Christine, Charles and Rev. Meyer; and especially to participate in the impressive and exciting organizational evolution that Melinda has embarked upon. Whether generating the Directory in house or implementing new security software or helping someone plan a wedding reception, the church office more than ever feels like a responsive and responsible contributor.

One of the greatest aspects of this job is working with and to be inspired by the crews of volunteers that weekly lends their talents and support. I can't imagine coming to work without the interaction with John Fels, Anne MacQueen, Ellen Boag, Michael Young (and Tabatha), Helene, Helen and, of course, Peggy Butler and Beverly Alison. You have all shown me what a welcoming congregation this is.

## **Report of the Administration Committee**

### **Submitted by Melanie Sharp, Chair**

The administration committee has as its main purpose to help the Church Administrator solve problems and deal with issues related to the running of the office and the church. The problems usually include building maintenance, computers and personnel, and this past year was no exception. The previous chair, Greg Wood, as well as the previous members, Patrick Meighan and John Schroeder, worked hard to solve the myriad issues that came up for Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, our previous Administrator.

Late last year, I was invited to join the committee, at which time John was released from committee service. Within a short period of time, Marie announced her resignation and I found myself on the search committee for a new Church Administrator. And just recently, we added two new members, Kim Miller, and Lynn Strother, to the committee, which allowed the release of Greg and Patrick.

I would like to thank Greg, Patrick and John for their excellent service on the Administration committee, and wish them well wherever their volunteer paths take them.

The period of transition after Marie left and while Melinda was the interim Church Administration brought its own challenges, some of which are being resolved now that Melinda has accepted the position permanently. There have also been continuing issues related to the several turnovers in Office Assistant, but Melinda is dealing with those issues well, and the committee is assisting. I am delighted that Melinda is now on board, and we all

look forward to working with her in our new capacities.

## **Report of the Building and Grounds Committee Submitted by S. J. Guidotti, Chair**

Building and Grounds is a service oriented group whose charge is to prevent the church building from falling in on our heads or the grounds from swallowing us whole never to be seen again. While this task entails meeting to decide when to call in professional plumbers, carpenters, or gardeners; it also includes hammer swinging and tool belt wearing of our own.

Recent projects have included roof repair, resurrection of the fountain (now if only the homeless would stop bathing in it) and a railing to protect the choir.

Membership includes S. J. Guidotti, Karl Lisovsky, David Olson, Marv Pulliam, and Ren Renshaw

## **Report of the Finance Committee Submitted by Ofelia Lachtman, Chair**

The roles of the Finance Committee are:

1. To oversee the financial aspects of the church's operations.
2. To develop the annual operating budget.
3. To provide information and recommendations to the Board concerning financial matters.

Relative to Item 1, the actual "doing" functions lie primarily with (1) the church office (makes bank deposits, writes checks, and keeps accounting records), (2) the Treasurer (oversees performance vs. budget and reports financial condition to the Board and the congregation), and (3) the Investment Subcommittee (manages the church's investments). The Finance Committee itself takes action on major budget deviation requests and develops finance policies and procedures as needed.

This year, the church office functions were disrupted for several months in the wake of the resignations of Marie Kashmer-Stiebing and Steven Andrews, but are largely back on track with Melinda Ewen assuming the Administrator position full-time and Chuck Craig accepting the position of Office Assistant. Warren Mathews provided continuity during the period of disruption.

Development of the 2006-07 budget was greatly facilitated by the phenomenally successful fall pledge drive and substantial increases in the rate of earnings on the church's investments, allowing us to develop a comfortably balanced budget while meeting all of the requests of the program departments and also making significant upward adjustments in the salaries of the Minister and other staff members as warranted.

Although this has been a relatively unpressured year for the committee, we anticipate an increasing need for our deliberations and services as the new building construction gets underway and begins to impact the church operations financially as well as functionally.

Current members of the Finance Committee are Ofelia Lachtman, chair; Anita and George Brenner, Steven De Paul, Warren Mathews and Sheldon Stone, standing members; Carol Agate, Ron Crane, Ed Field and Jacki Weber, ex-officio members; and Melinda Ewen, regular staff attendee.

#### **Report of the Investment Committee Submitted by Ed Field, Chair**

The investment committee is a subset of the finance committee. Though the Church has substantial financial assets, most of those assets are earmarked to pay for anticipated construction under the building program. For that reason, the vast majority of our assets are invested in short-term, risk-free cash equivalents, such as CDs. Because short-term interest rates have increased markedly of late, the earnings on those investments have increased substantially over the past year.

#### **Report of the Office Volunteers Submitted by Anne MacQueen, Chair**

As coordinator of Office Volunteers I call on folks to join office work crews. Every Friday afternoon Ellen Boag, Helen Brown, Michael Young and I collate the Sunday Order of Service. Peggy Butler and Serena Shames sometimes join us. Irene Holland and Gist Lavoie were new members earlier in the year. People who have worked on other crews for the Newsletter and other mailings include Bill Anderson, Lyn Armando, Sylvia Berke, Carolyn Berry, Sheila Bjornlie, Ellen Boag, Otto Cahn, Mary Cole, June Jameson, Jean Maucieri, Maggie Pipes, John Raiford, Joan Reighley, Jean Rutowski and Grace Weaver. It's fun. Let me know if you'd like to be on-call.

#### **Report of the Personnel Committee Submitted by John Fels, Co-Chair**

This has been a very busy year for the Personnel Committee. There were many changes in staff and on our committee. We had, not necessarily in order, the Church Administrator resign; several changes in the office assistant; Rev. Judith Meyer on four month sabbatical; an Interim Minister; the hiring of a new Church Administrator and a new sexton.

Our Committee also had changes. John Schroeder, who has served as chairman for the past two years, resigned.

John's position has been replaced by co-chairs Shawn Kerr and John Fels. Also serving on the Committee are Kim Miller, Pat Parkerton and Jerry Gates. Melinda Ewen and Rev. Judith Meyer are ex-officio members of the committee.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **Report of the Banner Committee (Religious Symbols) Submitted by Dan March, Chair**

This ad-hoc Committee met twice this spring. Committee members were Cicely Gilman, Joyce Holman, Carol Ring, Melissa Weaver, Valerie March and Dan March. Our task included two items: locating a place to hang the banner designed by Cicely Gilman, made together with Joyce Holman and commissioned by the Design and Décor Committee some time ago and making a recommendation to the Board concerning interim disposition of the present banners in the sanctuary.

The committee surveyed the more public areas of the church building including the main entrance foyer, the sanctuary, Forbes Hall and the Arizona entrance. The main entry, while certainly a place of honor, did not provide adequate space to hang and view the banner unless other items were relocated – something this committee did not want to consider. Areas of the sanctuary not adjacent to the other banners were considered, but particularly because the committee also plans to hang a paper mock-up of a proposed pagan/earth-centered banner there in the near future, the sanctuary was ruled out. Forbes Hall did not seem to have any immediately available space. The Arizona entrance provided the most accommodating space, so Cicely's banner was placed in this location.

Regarding the disposition of the current banners, two decisions were taken by the committee: 1) to create a full-scale, color-correct paper mock-up banner that, with Board approval, could be hung in the sanctuary for the purpose of engaging commentary. The committee envisions an explanatory pamphlet to be made available at the same time the mock-up is hung. Both because we discussed in our first meeting a banner design candidate that was generally well-liked and because of its ease of fabrication, we anticipate, that a mock-up could be ready, early in the new church year. 2) To clean, as well as possible, the currently hanging banners. A subcommittee consisting of Joyce Holman (who has already washed one banner) and Melissa Weaver has undertaken this task.

Up-coming agenda items include re-ordering the current banners to emphasize the UU banner, finalizing a design for the mock-up pagan banner and beginning its construction.

**Report of the Book Cart Committee  
Submitted by Max "Joffe" Johnson, Chair**

The UU Book Cart program is a service-based outgrowth of the Religious Education department, whose mission is to provide course-books for Adult RE courses, as well as other books on a wide variety of topics--including World Religions, psychology of religion, Progressive Biblical and Theological Studies, sociology of religion, the Science and Theology Dialogue, philosophy of religion, Spiritual Practice, Spiritual Biography, and, of course, Unitarian Universalism --all geared toward helping Religious Progressives of all ages to become better informed, more well-rounded, and better able to articulate to non-UUs exactly what they believe and (perhaps most importantly) *why* they believe it.

The Book Cart program has unfortunately fallen under hard times of late, due to a variety of reasons, including perhaps the current dearth of Adult RE courses, shortages in available volunteers, and an apparent congregational lack of interest in the cart service. There are plans in the works for a major restructuring of the program in the coming months, perhaps moving from a 'browsing inventory' model to more of an 'orders on demand' model.

We would, however, very much like to thank those volunteers who have stuck with the carts' many ups and downs over the year, including: Marguerite Spears, Pat and Amy Meighan, Jane Machnik, Fran Hotchkiss, Nancy Babbitt, Joan Reighley, Phil Bonacich, and Jeff Greenman; occasional substitute volunteers Kathy Cook and Carol Agate; and the Bookcart manager and buyer, Max "Joffe" Johnson.

**Report of the Bylaws and Policies Committee  
Submitted by Charles Haskell, Chair**

The Board established this committee in 2003 to (1) review and study the Bylaws of the Church and its policies and procedures and (2) to make recommendations to the Board from time to time for revisions to the Bylaws and to the policies and procedures of the Church for adoption by the Board and the congregation.

Members of the committee include Carol Agate, John Agnew, Kathy Cook, Melinda Ewen, John Fels, and Charles Haskell (chair). For the coming church year, Kim Miller will replace John Fels as a member of the committee. The BPC meets the third Tuesday of each month in the Blue Cottage from 6:30-8:00 PM. BPC recommendations for action by the Board of Directors are reached by consensus and recorded in minutes prepared by the chair. All meetings are open to members of the congregation. Our work product is on file in the church office in a comprehensive manual and on the church's web site: <http://www.uusm.org>.

**Report of the Capital Campaign Committee  
Submitted by Ron Crane, Co-Chair**

The Capital Campaign began 2006 with the second phase of the campaign. The goal of phase two was to raise an additional one million dollars. As of this report we are near our goal with pledges near \$900,000. This will bring the combined campaign pledges to near \$2,400,000.

Gratitude is due to members of each capital campaign and to every member of the congregation who has so generously supported the building of our church.

In September of 2005 the Capital Campaign Steering Committee stopped the actual canvassing of members in order to allow the Stewardship Campaign to take place. A second reason for the pause at that time was to await the outcome of the work with the City of Santa Monica to resolve design and planning problems.

In review of the Building Committee report available in this Annual Report you will find that we now have a strong possibility of beginning our building.

With congregational approval of the design and phasing and the concomitant estimate of total building costs, the Capital Campaign will get back to work on raising the necessary funds to realize our long held dream.

Thank you all for what you have done to make our long journey into building a reality.

Ron Crane, Ofelia Lachtman, Carol Kerr, Carol Agate and Rev. Judith Meyer, Capital Campaign Steering Committee

**Report of the Coffee Hour Group  
Submitted by Ellen Boag, Coordinator**

The Coffee Hour (which has been referred to as the "UU sacrament") takes place twice every Sunday, after the nine o'clock service and again after the eleven. The cookies are contributions from anyone who is kind enough to bring them. We are grateful to the folk who volunteer to serve as hosts once a month. Many thanks to the following: Nels Hansen, Robert Kory, Dan Nannini, Sheila Bjornlie, Nancy Babbitt. These people make the brew and pour after the first service. Melanie Sharp, Lindsay Pinkham, Carl Hoppe, Leah Moore, Pam Teplitz, Patrick Meighan and Amy Thiel will greet you after the eleven. We regret that Paulette Katz had to resign due to illness in her family and hope she can return.

**Report of the Dining for Dollars Committee  
Submitted by Helen Burns, Chair**

The Dining for Dollars Committee's function is to raise funds for the church coffers. As the principal fund-raiser we have

generated about \$25,000 a year through a silent auction of culinary and other offers from members and friends of the congregation. A major by-product of this activity is the sense of community generated by gathering with other members, principally in private homes.

A major change this year was the computerization of vast portions of the auction procedure, spearheaded by computer whiz Pat Gomez, to whom we are most indebted. Next year we will miss the presence of solicitor and artist Shirlee Frank who has moved out of town. This is an extremely hard working group consisting of Helen Burns, Sue Moore, Shirlee Frank and Sandra Trutt.

### **Report about the Gallery Wall Submitted by Melinda Ewen**

The Gallery Wall (to be re-named The Art Wall in 2006-2007) is a juried display space for 2-dimensional original art, created by local artists. One artist is featured each month. In November the space is used by the Faith in Action Commission to showcase their work, and in December "Our Own Artists" have a group show. For the first time in January a very successful "art sale" was held by Carol Agate, selling pieces from members' private collections that were donated to the church for the benefit of our New Building Program.

For many years Shirlee Frank, along with a generous, anonymous art colleague, headed the Gallery Wall selection. When Shirlee announced in the spring of 2006 that she was leaving Southern California to relocate to Atlanta the future status of the art display space in Forbes Hall was uncertain. At the suggestion of Carol Agate, discussion about alternative uses for the space was held by the Board of Directors and invited from all congregation members. After a few weeks it became apparent that the will of the congregation was that the art display should be continued much as it had under Shirlee's direction. The charge was then given to the Administrator, Melinda Ewen to carry out the task.

Betty Mill agreed in the early spring to assist Melinda by coordinating mailings to and communications with the remaining selected 2006 artists. In the early summer Betty was joined by Carol Ring and Nels Hanson to form a "committee" to work with Shirlee's art colleague to make plans for the 2007 season. A feature of the 2007 season will be a call-out to church members in August to submit their resume and work samples for selection consideration by the committee. Selections are generally made in the fall for the next calendar year.

Artists who displayed work in 2006 included: Matt Elson, Shaee Khatapoush, Fumi Arakaki, Ann Marie Ferreira, Milly St. Charles, Loraine Stern, Carol Ring, Gilbert Johnquest, and Lynn Mikami.

### **Report of the Historian / Archivist Submitted By Rob Briner**

Having taken over this responsibility from long-time historian/archivist Milt Holmen in 2003, there are now over 6,500 indexed documents in the church archives (including but not limited to monthly newsletters, weekly Orders of Service, and Minutes and other documents related to board meetings and annual meetings). In 2005, the voluminous papers of past president Jim Cadwell were incorporated. The archives provided the basis for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Santa Monica ministry of Ernest Pipes, celebrated in March 2006, and will provide the basis for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ray and Betty Goodman bell in June 2006, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organ in September 2006 (constructed by Abbott and Seiker; coordinated by Dean Voegtlen), and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the William and Marjorie Anderson Courtyard in 2007. Pending construction of new office and storage space and sanctuary expansion, the archives are currently stored off-site but should return to appropriate storage on-site in 2007 or 2008.

### **Report of the Lending Library Submitted by Sandra Trutt, Chair**

Committee Members: Nedra Bickel, Caroline Falk, Ilse Kelinman, Sandra Trutt.

Three meetings were held this year to select books from our members' donations and to cull books from our collection which were not checked out for two years. About 60 books were added to our shelves, 41 books were withdrawn.

Book donations were received from Cory Fryling, Webster Cotton, Frank Dorrel, Joan Reighley, Lee & Dean Voegtlen, Deirdre Beckett, John Fels, Myra Wald and Rob Briner. Other books were simply set out on the shelves with no names attached.

Several boxes of books were offered for sale, taking in \$37.50. Unsold books were donated to Sunset Hall, YMCA, Santa Monica Library, and Goodwill Industries.

Congregants are using the library. Members with a book out over 4 to 6 months receive a reminder telephone call.

### **Report of the Long Range Planning Committee Submitted by Patricia Wright, Chair**

The impetus for Long Range Planning (LRP) came out of the 2004 Board retreat, which was facilitated by our interim minister, Jim Grant. Rev. Grant proposed that we undertake long range planning and I and Board President, Carol Kerr, took the charge. The committee was intentionally meant to be of short duration and would address the general question of where we would want to be in 5-10 years and how we would get there.

We started by examining where we are, by identifying goals, and by exploring what it would take to implement those goals. Those goals included: 1) Higher expectation of membership, 2) More effective leadership and management, 3) More effective involvement, and, 4) More resources.

In discussing our goals, we always returned to the issue that membership and leadership are foundational. We explored a systems model for membership and leadership development, and the assumptions and realities that underlie it. We concluded that the most significant contribution that LRP could make at this point would be to create a Membership and Leadership Committee, and that LRP would be the startup.

The work of the committee culminated in a presentation at the 2005 Board retreat, at which the recommendations were enthusiastically endorsed.

We quickly realized that LRP not only needed to be the M&L startup but it needed to be the M&L. Marsha Smith and Laurel Bleak agreed to be co-chairs.

In parallel, there would be a return to long range planning.

Many people contributed to LRP one way or another over time and we are grateful for the participation of Phil Bonacich, Edna Bonacich, Laurel Bleak, Kathy Cook, Ron Crane, Rebecca Crawford, Luann Darling, Catherine Farmer, Jerry Gates, Charles Haskell, Carol Kerr, Audrey Lyness, Judith Meyer, Greg Poirier, and Marsha Smith.

### **Report of the Membership and Leadership Committee Submitted by Laurel Bleak & Marsha Smith, Co-Chairs**

The role of the Membership and Leadership (M&L) Committee is to support existing programs and develop and launch new programs that sustain and enhance the welcoming, membership and leadership systems of the church and to sustain a church culture in which all members can participate fully and productively.

#### Past Year Accomplishments:

- Developed and formalized the role and responsibilities of the Membership and Leadership (M&L) Committee.
- Met with various individuals and groups to obtain feedback on existing programs and input on changes to the Church Welcoming System and its programs.
- Created a mapping system for the Church Welcoming System to use as a guide for sustaining, enhancing, or developing new programs for visitors and new members.
- Encouraged the minister's "say hello to your neighbor, or the person behind you" message at each service.

- Developed quarterly new-old member church potluck socials.
- Recruited new co-chairs with term limits for Greeter program.
- Participated in updating the information for publishing the new church directory.

#### 2006-2007 Objectives:

- Expand committee with new members.
- Better utilize the "Interests and Skills" survey to find and place volunteers in appropriate activities.
- Develop a new photo directory.
- Update and keep current and develop a new format for the "Getting Involved" directory for church committees and activities and volunteer opportunities.
- Provide recommendations to enhance the web site for visitors.
- Support the development of training program for the Church Welcoming System (includes Greeters, Ushers, Coffee, and Ask me).
- Create Visitor Welcome Folders/Bags that includes content that is more focused on the Santa Monica church, its people and activities.
- Develop volunteer positions for follow-up phone calls to visitors, new members, and exiting members.

### **Report of the New Building Program Submitted by Alison Kendall, Chair**

The New Building Committee had a busy year ushering our application for a Conditional Use Permit and Variance through the City of Santa Monica. After unanimous approval by the Planning Commission in July 2005, an appeal was filed by a neighbor, which resulted in City Council action December 13, 2005 to deny the appeal but add a new condition requiring the church to lease 12 nearby parking spaces whenever the church is in operation. The Building Committee and Board spent some time exploring the implications of this new condition, and decided to recommend proceeding with Phase 1 while applying for a revised CUP application which would provide required parking on site, and not require a variance. This recommendation was approved by the Congregation on May 21. The Committee submitted construction drawings for Phase 1 to the City in early June and hopefully will begin relocation of the house and its renovation by the end of summer. A congregational town hall meeting to review the revised design will be held Sunday July 30 at 11:15.

Members included: Alison Kendall, Chair, Carol Agate,

David Denton, Mel Horan, Rod Lane, Keith Ludowitz, David Olson, Steve Paddock, Greg Wood. Carol Kerr is new Chair for the 2006-07 church year.

### **Report of the Newsletter Committee Submitted by Carol Agate, Chair**

The newsletter keeps adding new staff members and is spreading out the responsibilities. Jobs are broken down into a number of segments and the design is rotated among three designers, doing alternating months.

The designers are Dayla McDonald, Carol Ring, and Pam Teplitz. Editors and proofreaders are Carol Agate, Paula Bernstein, Laura Eklund, Liz Fuller, Joyce Holmen, Gerrie Lambson, Anne MacQueen, Carol-jean Teuffel, and Jennifer Westbay. Reporting on congregational events is most often by Nels Hanson, interviews are by Paula Bernstein, and articles on church history are written by the church's archivist, Rob Briner.

Charles Haskell instituted a new feature of including photographs of new members. He takes all the pictures of the new people, and also provides coverage of many church events.

New member Laura Eklund has taken over responsibility for the calendar. It is surprising how complex it can be to keep straight who is meeting and when.

The printing is now being done in house with the same quality and a lower cost than when we were farming it out. It also shortens the turn-around time by a couple of days.

After a few years of first-class mailings we are trying bulk mail again, with a mailing crew under the supervision of Anne MacQueen. We seek feedback from anyone whose newsletter is arriving after the first of the month. However, with 265 people subscribing on line, the timing has become less important to many in the church. Not only do the subscribers see the newsletter early, but they also see it in full color.

The online posting is by our webmaster, Liz Fuller, who sends subscribers' notices with the link that allows them to see the full newsletter. That enables us to make it available on line without giving the whole world our personal information. Liz then adds to the web site for public access the parts of the newsletter that would be of interest to people exploring our site.

Please welcome Dayla McDonald as the new chair of the editorial team. Dayla has been working on the newsletter for the past few years. She has been nominated as the new board secretary; as a church officer she will have the perspective of being able to judge the stories to use. As a designer she has the talent to lay out the publication, and as an editor she has the writing skills and knowledge of usage to coordinate the

entire job.

It has been a wonderful seven years. Thanks everyone for your enthusiastic acceptance of the newsletter, and thanks to the talented team that has worked so well together on this publication.

### **Report of the Nominating Committee Submitted by Kathy Cook, Chair**

The Nominating Committee (NC) consists of six members elected by the congregation. The role of the NC is to nominate church members to stand for election to the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee. This year the NC consisted of Kathy Cook, (chair) John Fels, SJ Guidotti, Audrey Lyness, Victor Paddock and Linda Van Lighten. In January-March, the NC developed the slate that is submitted for consideration for election at the annual meeting on May 21. In order to gain a better understanding of Board processes, the NC members have attended Board meetings as observers. Board members were also asked to complete a confidential survey with questions related to areas of strength and weakness, representation of a diverse congregation and to offer recommendations for filling vacant positions. Input was also solicited from the congregation via announcements in the order of service and the newsletter. Feedback was used in the deliberation process to develop the slate.

### **Report of the Stewardship Committee Submitted by Jacki Weber, Chair**

One of the components of healthy churches is that virtually all of their members annually reconsider their individual commitments to the church via a pledge drive. Another component is the encouragement of the idea of "five years, five percent" – that once you've been at the church for five years, 5% is a healthy amount to be giving to support a congregation that helps you become the best person you can be and that demonstrates a commitment to help in the transformation of the community at large to be more just, compassionate, environmentally aware, etc.

2005 was about expressing our congregational health in these ways. We doubled pledge drive participation between our Fall '04 and Fall '05 drives, and have changed our pledge materials to reflect our encouragement of the "five years, five percent" principle.

We increased participation through: 1) asking every church member to fill out a pledge form for 2006; 2) putting together a fantastic Commitment Sunday with brunch and an inspiring sermon; 3) tabling for six weeks and acknowledging those who went through the process; 4) reporting regularly our progress to the congregation; and 5) sending out round-up letters giving people "one last opportunity" to participate in the drive.

This year we continue that work. We are also focusing on the idea that the budget is more than “how we pay the bills,” it is how we express our desire to be in community with each other. We look forward to conversations about how we can become more supportive of each other, more effective in our social justice work, etc, along with a three-year plan to increase programs.

The book *Financial Management in the Church* is currently informing our work.

The committee is officially comprised of Jacki Weber (chair), Phil Bonacich, Ron Crane, Sanjeev Jain, Ofelia Lachtman, Charlene Langland and Pat Wright. We meet regularly as a committee, and seek dialogue with all members of the congregation.

### **Report of the Telephone Outreach Program Submitted by Anita Brenner, Chair**

In January 2005, I approached Judith with the idea of offering a telephone outreach program to people who might benefit from hearing from a fellow UU on a regular basis. We agreed on the concept, and Michael Eselun joined as co-facilitator/trainer.

The program’s goal was to enhance connection to the church community for those who were living alone, or who might be socially isolated or frail. There were specific boundaries and limits to the program—that is, the volunteer outreach was to be limited to brief weekly telephone calls. We would have an initial three-hour training session to provide an overview of the program’s goals and boundaries and the use of active listening techniques. Following that, there would be regular follow-up sessions to monitor the program’s progress and provide support and guidance to the volunteers.

Judith identified those members of our congregation whom she thought would appreciate receiving calls. I then called everyone on her list to explain the program and to see who was interested in being called. Judith announced the program from the pulpit and we wrote articles for the newsletter to help recruit volunteers. On April 2, 2005, we held our training session with the volunteers and assigned people to their “buddies.”

During the year there was some attrition from our original 13 volunteers, but a dedicated core remained committed. Additional articles were written for the church newsletter (in May and December, 2005), updating the congregation and putting out calls for both volunteers and for those who might want to receive calls. There was no response.

As we neared our first anniversary, therefore, we decided that it was time for an evaluation. We met with the volunteers in March 2006 and our mutual decision was to discontinue the program since there seems to be no need for it at this time. The volunteers, however, will continue with their contacts on their own. Meanwhile, should there

be a need for this kind of program in the future, the structure is in place.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to Michael and to the dedicated volunteers whose observations, suggestions, and commitment made this a terrific experience. Coming together for this purpose helped our own feelings of being better connected to our fellow UUs. So, to Nedra Bickel, Shirlee Frank, Ed Hession, Richard Mathias, Marv Pulliam, Ren Renshaw, and Lee Voegtlen--many thanks!

### **Report of the Webmaster Submitted Elizabeth Fuller**

In 2005 and the first part of 2006, the website continued adding depth by including chalice lighting texts, our latest bylaws, annual reports, an organization chart and the texts of more than 40 Management Policies. We also did a little reorganizing to create top-level sections for Faith in Action and Covenant Groups (increasing their profiles and making them easier to find), and we wrote a new set of Website Policies.

In the coming year, if all goes well, we'll be adding to our technical sophistication and "gee whiz" factors with news feeds from the UUA and UU World, a site search tool, an easier-to-use calendar, and - yes, they're coming! - podcasts of Judith's sermons."

## **ACTIVITY AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

### **Report of Books 'R Us Submitted by Phil Bonacich**

In the past year the Books 'R Us group has read and discussed twelve books ranging from classic classics (Don Quixote and Death in Venice) to contemporary classics (John Banville's Mann-Booker Prize winner "The Sea" and Phil Roth's "The Plot Against America"). Our goal is to continue reading classy books.

### **Report of the Caregivers Support Group Submitted by Joyce Holmen**

Being responsible for providing care for a chronically ill family member or friend can be alternately rewarding, frustrating, isolating, and overwhelming. It's good to discuss what happening with others who are in the same boat. The Caregivers' Support Group can help you deal with day-to-day problems and questions while maintaining your own life.

A support group can provide a little boost to help you get through tough times and give a cheery "hooray" when you've coped with another crisis. Our small group has been meeting for five and a half years, with people coming and going as their needs change. Members encourage each

other to mind their own health and well being while doing a zillion necessary tasks, usually for others.

Do you provide just about round-the-clock care for someone every day? Or do you monitor things as a long-distance caregiver? Or are you unsure if you even could be called a caregiver? Questions and newcomers are always welcome. Members of the group have shared their experiences and expertise in taking care of loved ones with various situations including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, depression, heart problems, and other chronic conditions.

Our goal for the coming year is to keep being available for caregivers in our church community who are in need. We invite you to contact us even if you can't attend meetings, which are on the third Tuesday of the month, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in Forbes Hall. For information, please email Joyce Holmen, [mort4@earthlink.net](mailto:mort4@earthlink.net), call Helen Brown, 310-450-3087, in the evening, or look for one of us on Sunday.

#### **Report of the Couples Club Submitted by Jean Rutowski**

The Couples Club does not have much to report due to the decline in attendance and the difficulty in obtaining hosts and hostesses for one of the quarterly meetings that the Couples Club usually has. As far as recognizing volunteers who have worked with me I can only give recognition to the three couples who have opened their homes to the group and they are Elizabeth and Len Adler, Francine and Stewart Moore, and Sheila and Harvey Bjornlie. Since I will be moving out of town in the next few months I have already given notice to the office that I will not longer be able to act as organizer of the group. Because of the difficulty in finding places in which the group can meet and the drop in attendance when it does meet the outlook for the coming year for the Couples Club is very not very good unless it can be rejuvenated.

#### **Report of CUUPS: The Covenant of UU Pagans Submitted by Dan March**

Although CUUPS does not meet on a regular basis, it never seems to be far from many people's consciousness. We did do a couple of rituals this year and look forward to more in the coming year. Samhain (Halloween) was a particular success, held at Dan & Valerie March's house complete with bonfire, feast and costumes. Several people calling the church inquiring as to CUUPS or pagan activities were referred to Dan. Dan presents "the pagan point of view" a few times a year to various RE groups. Particular thanks go to Cicely Gilman for her work on a Pagan/Earth-Centered banner which will likely find a home in the new building. Thanks too, to Julia Jonathan for leading

drumming and journey visualization sessions. Also deserving of thanks are SJ & Melinda for helping to organize TAG participation in several CUUPS rituals. We aspire to an interest level in the church which would make regular rituals expected and well-attended events. We also seek to de-mystify and de-demonize everyone's understanding of paganism.

#### **Report of the deBenneville Pines Weekend Submitted by Sharon Voigt Damerell and Marv Pulliam**

We had another successful retreat weekend at deBenneville Pines. Attendance was around 98 (more than enough to break even), and the weekend went smoothly. Many workshops were offered, including folk singing, sudoku techniques, hiking, many kinds of crafts, yoga, writing, and the old favorites like tie-dye, water rocket launch, and dam building at the stream. The talent show Saturday night was a highlight, and this year it was followed by a "haunted hike"—a flashlight walk with scary stories for the kids. S'mores in the lodge rounded out each evening. The food was plentiful and good, the camp was in great shape, and the resident staff was friendly and helpful.

Many thanks to volunteer workshop leaders Joyce Holman, Bob Dietz, Ellen Levy, John Michael Lisovsky, Jessie Dietz, Karl Lisovsky, Jacki Weber, Kyle Bergersen, Greg Coleman, Greg Wood, Janet Goodwin's cousin Emmy, and countless others who gladly stepped in to assist when needed.

Goals for the next church year include continuing the development of interesting and varied workshops for the weekend, as volunteer leaders emerge, and keeping attendance at least at the current level. We hope to be able to arrange for Rev. Judith Meyer to attend next year, for an even greater level of community and fellowship.

#### **Report of the Ernie Pipes Lecture Series Submitted by Rob Briner and Len Adler**

On Saturday, January 28, 2006, Governor Michael Dukakis was the 15th annual speaker of the Ernest D. Pipes, Jr. Lecture Series. Addressing a full sanctuary, Mr. Dukakis -- as a visiting professor at the UCLA School of Public Policy -- spoke on "The Health Care Crisis: 45 Million Uninsured And Counting". Chaired by past-president Leonard Adler, the committee currently includes Elizabeth Adler, Nedra Bickel, Rob Briner, Patrick McGuire, Marguerite Spears, and past committee chair Ray Goodman. Anyone interested in participating may contact Len Adler. The next speaker -- as yet undetermined -- will be scheduled sometime in 2007."

#### **Report of the Gardening Group Submitted by Fran Hotchkiss**

There has been a hiatus of gardening. Due to the acquisition of the next door property, all plans for the garden have been put on hold until after construction. A new

member is interested in the garden, Grace Phillips. Grace, in addition to being a wife and mother, designs gardens. Howard Westley, a long time gardener adds his valuable knowledge whenever there is a question. Our thanks go to Sue Stoyanoff who tends the plants in the atrium. Sue has faithfully watered the plants every week for at least ten years. Fran Hotchkiss added some new plants to the atrium and John Fels helped with the pruning and arranging. The Koelreuteria tree in the front patio was trimmed in the fall and the Oleander cut back. Some time in the future the Oleander will have to be removed as it grows too large and obstructs the sidewalk.

### **Report of The Men's Group Submitted by Phil Bonacich**

The goals of the Men's Group are to provide a forum in which men can discuss issues that concern them, to provide services to the church, and to have fun. Our biggest activity was to organize a fund-raising "Garage sale" in September. We also met to watch football and basketball games.

### **Report of the Parenting Support Group Submitted by Judith Martin Straw**

The UU Parents Support Group has decided to stop meeting, owing to a lack of participation. Several meetings were attended by only two families, and when the meeting time was changed to make it easier for people to come, attendance dropped to zero. We all understand how busy life is with small children. For most of us, the Parents' Group had been supplanted by other support groups (schools, scouting, sports), and so the need we were offering to meet had already been met.

### **Report about the Pilgrims' Feast Submitted by Melinda Ewen**

Saturday evening, November 19 marked the third time that our congregation celebrated Thanksgiving by using a scripted ritual that has been used in our denomination for decades. The original draft of this service was written in 1965 by Rev. John F. Hayward to be used at a community meal at First Unitarian Church of Chicago. Since then, it has undergone revisions by several ministers and congregation members to incorporate current sensibilities.

Those who have participated in Passover services will recognize the pattern of this Harvest Feast. Passover celebrates the escape from slavery and the building of a new life and culture in a promised land. Similarly, our American Thanksgiving celebrates "exodus" from tyranny in which pilgrims accepted the risks of the sea and all the dangers of an unfamiliar continent. For generations,

Americans have celebrated the event with a festive meal. Our UU Harvest Feast celebrates the various and diverse experiences of escape from bondage and emergence into new hope.

The meaning of the symbolic salt water, bitter herbs and maize on your table was made clear during the service. Glasses of wine or juice were sipped after the words of blessing were spoken. This service, which deals with serious matters, is essentially a festival of rejoicing and the giving of thanks. By plan, it is seasoned with laughter and lightheartedness.

Seating in the sanctuary is limited to 140 persons. Reservations were full on the first day they were offered after services. Those attending brought an assigned dish for the meal and participated in the event by doing a setup, performance or cleanup task. Many people worked hard to make this intergenerational event happen. An offering was taken for the benefit of a charity in our community.

### **Report of the Poetry Group Submitted by Jeff Greenman**

The Poetry Group, which came into existence in Fall of 2000, has capped off a full and rewarding year. Our membership stands at roughly 8 to 10 people (with some variation), most, fairly long term members. We meet 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays of each month (save August) and all attendees participate in reading the poets featured. This year our meetings featured several of the most influential poets of the 20th Century, including the relatively recently departed Allen Ginsburg, and the very recently, late Robert Creeley. We also heard from the funny and exuberant Kenneth Koch, of the New York School, and mused over Shirlee Frank's presentation of Haiku and her intriguingly varied survey of American women poets. Recent phenoms, whose work was aired at our meetings, included Sharon Olds and (former U.S. Poet laureate and conspicuously successful) Billie Collins. We rounded out in April with Diana Spears' fine sampling of work from three estimable Black Woman poets: Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Wanda Coleman. In between, we also heard from Patricia Hampl's broad and engaging anthology of spiritual poetry: "Burning Bright."

In a big pair of firsts, we welcomed our first published UU poet (Ann Alexander, a frequent contributor at the Onion) and the first published poet we've ever invited specifically to read to the group. We hope to perhaps build on this concept in the future. We're also considering events, or other means, to do more poetic outreach to the congregation as a whole.

Sadly, we are losing one of our founding -and most enthusiastic members- in Shirlee Frank, who will be moving East to dwell closer to her family. Shirlee, our most consistent meeting host for the last 6 years, regularly fed our minds -with her insight into the poets we read, our stomachs -with her delicious spreads of cheese, nuts and cider, and our eyes and souls with her dynamic and omnipresent art

(her own unmatched etchings, pottery and ceramics). We have no idea how lucky we were to have those many evenings at Shirlee's apartment on Pacific. Our warmest thanks to her, and best wishes for her new life out East. Thanks also to our dedicated, regular members: Arvid Knudsen, Arvid's friend Robert, Diana Spears, Julie Gilliam (a regular host), George Serruta, Pat and Chris Shinaberger (kind hosts and friends), and other regulars: Jane Matchnik, Carolyn Berry, and Nels Hansen.

### **Report of the Science Non-fiction Reading Group Submitted by Rebecca Crawford**

The Science Non-Fiction Book Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month to discuss a book from current popular science literature. In addition, the group has expanded somewhat into history, with an emphasis on science or scientists. Some of the recent books we have discussed are the following: Freakonomics by Levitt and Dubner; Franklin by Walter Isaacson; Honey, Mud, Maggots and Other Medical Marvels by Root-Bernstein; and Blink by Malcolm Gladwell. We meet in the home of Rebecca Crawford at 7:00 pm for dessert, with the discussion starting at 7:30. All are welcome, but we have the expectation that people will have read the book before coming.

### **Report of TAG: The Adventure Group Submitted by S. J. Guidotti**

In the last year, TAG or The Adventure Group has organized numerous gatherings and events ranging from a Summer Solstice Party in the yard at the blue house to a campout at Sycamore Canyon. We've had outings for Ethiopian food and hikes where casualties have been held to a bare minimum.

TAG is open to both singles and couples and our age policy continues to mirror that of the US Army—don't ask don't tell but with the caveat that if you think you're too old you probably are and if you think you're too young you should probably play a video game instead.

Join us for our next harebrained scheme or better yet think of one yourself and then contact TAG to enlist fellow conspirators.

### **Report of the Women's Alliance Submitted by Joyce Holmen**

In 1927 our church and our Women's Alliance were founded. For nearly eight decades, the Alliance, as an affiliated organization, has provided ordinary and extraordinary opportunities for leadership training, interesting programs, fundraising, worship, good food, community outreach, personal growth, and getting to

know some amazing women. Acknowledging the many gifts received from our Unitarian and Universalist foremothers, we tend the flame that they tended for us.

In 2006 we have 17 members. The Alliance meets quarterly for a Sunday lunch and sharing circle to talk about (just to put it alphabetically) books, dreams, emotions, family, feminism, friends, gardens, history, love, memories, mentors, music, peace work, spirituality, and more. Some recent topics:

- Decision-making: how do we handle a zillion responsibilities, including jobs, volunteering, families, and homes?
- Flaming chalice history: courageous efforts by the late Rev. Waitstill Sharp and Martha Sharp Cogan to rescue Jews during the Holocaust
- A tour of the Getty Center in Brentwood -- with thanks to Rob Briner
- Providing dinners for Step Up On Second (in connection with Faith In Action), offering lunch for Dining for Dollars bidders, and helping Interweave each year with the summer picnic.

Program details are in the church newsletter, and non-members are always welcome. Upcoming: a long-awaited return to the Getty Villa in Malibu. We maintain membership in the UU Women's Federation, which awards grants to explore feminist theology and for outreach projects in the U.S. and abroad; to find out more visit [www.uuwf.org](http://www.uuwf.org).

### **Report of the Zen Meditation Group Submitted by Bernie Silvers**

I am proud of the fact that so many different members have attended at one time or other the Zen Meditation class. They have benefited by my teaching them different meditation methods which they can take home and use. Meditation has helped them reduce stress, anxiety and worry. We have also provided insights into the wisdom of Unitarians, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and Sufis. The class has also provided insights of the wisdom's of these religions to be do more effective parenting.

I want to thank Brandon Young who has helped me greatly in many different ways.

My goal for the next year is to expand the class. We also intend to take on new topics showing how profound religious insights can help in relationships, sex and dealing with difficult situations that at one time or other we all face.

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Love is the doctrine of this church.

The quest of truth is its sacrament,

And service is its prayer.

To dwell together in peace;

To seek knowledge in freedom;

To serve humankind in fellowship;

Thus do we covenant with each other.