

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF GROUP
REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
APRIL 2007

OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC WITNESS

The IPW office has had a busy first quarter. John Hurley (Director of Communications) participated in an environmental justice summit with other key UUA staff and leaders from the broader UU community. John and Janet Hayes (Information Officer) joined the Public Witness team for a two-day retreat in January to develop strategic goals for the next few years. John is tasked with developing a plan to build capacity, and Janet will be taking the lead on planning for Environmental Justice issues. John and Janet have been working with an interdepartmental marketing team to develop new outreach materials.

Janet also represented the communications staff at a two-day Gulf Coast planning session, and she represented the IPW office when UUA staffers met with the UUSC to explore how both organizations can work together to coordinate upcoming public witness opportunities. Her daily work focuses on reaching out to the media, coordinating local support for Bill Sinkford's congregational visits, and handling requests for public relations help from churches. Some of Janet's recent projects include communications for MLK, Jr. Day, Iraq witness, Darfur, and Sexuality Education Advocacy Training (SEAT).

In January the IPW office welcomed a new staffer, Bernie Smith, who was hired to fill the newly created position of Public Witness Specialist. Bernie's first set of projects include media outreach and planning for public witness events, including the 4th anniversary of the Iraq War and SEAT in Washington, DC. He has also contributed writing and editing to articles on UUA.org. Bernie has started the migration of the UUA's electronic pressroom, a database with about 1000 news articles about UU activities around the country.

Erika Nonken (Information Assistant) is putting the finishing touches on the Visitors' section of the new UUA website. This section will be available on the new UUA site at its April 2nd launch. Erika has catalogued most of the materials in the Greeley Library at 25 Beacon St. She has created a searchable database of the 1800+ items and she has begun cataloguing and converting some of the UUA's diverse audio/visual materials. Now that spring is here, Erika has started leading tours of the UUA for visiting youth groups from congregations across the country.

PERIODICALS

UU World is introducing "Congregational Announcements," a new advertising

opportunity in the magazine's News section, in the Fall 2007 issue. Congregations can place notices of up to 50 words in the "Congregational Announcements" section celebrating milestones, honoring members and leaders, and sharing important news. A preliminary notice about this new advertising opportunity was sent out in the April Congregational Mailing; pricing information and a submission form will be distributed in the May Congregational Mailing.

The Spring 2007 issue of *UU World* went in the mail February 15 with feature stories about ethical eating, anxious parents, and a theology of gratitude. The Summer issue will mail May 15 with a cover story about Unitarian Universalist Buddhists; a 3-page Elections section will profile candidates running for UUA positions at the General Assembly.

We are pleased to announce that *uuworld.org* will be introducing its first online columnists later this spring. The Rev. Meg Barnhouse, known for her witty stories and songs and "Radio Bubba" commentaries, and Doug Muder, a regular contributor of thoughtful essays and reviews to *UU World* and the author of an upcoming Skinner House introduction to Unitarian Universalism, will write online-only columns for the magazine. Our columnists' distinctive voices and passion for liberal religion will draw new and expanded audiences to the magazine and to Unitarian Universalism.

The Periodicals staff is also:

- Migrating articles from the *InterConnections* archives into the UUA's new content-management system. *InterConnections* content will serve as the core of the new UUA.org's "Leaders Library" section.
- Exploring ways to provide advertising opportunities on *uuworld.org* and its weekly email newsletter.
- Offering workshops at the General Assembly for the first time in a number of years. Managing editor Kenneth Sutton will moderate a panel of *UU World* contributors, including Meg Barnhouse and Doug Muder, on the tradition of UU spiritual writing; *InterConnections* editor Don Skinner will present a workshop on exemplary stories of congregational leadership; and executive editor Chris Walton is co-leading two workshops about online communication, including a Program Committee-sponsored workshop on UU blogs. Business manager Scott Ullrich will be hosting a booth in the exhibit hall to meet advertisers and subscribers.

PUBLICATIONS

UUA Bookstore Sales

UUA Bookstore sales were \$1,280,977 for the 12 months ending February 2007, down 11% from the same period one year ago. This decrease is due primarily to the gradual flattening off of sales for our new hymnbook, *Singing the Journey*.

New Titles from the UUA

Beyond Fundraising: The Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship, Wayne Clark
UUA (March 2007) \$18.00

In Praise of Animals: A Treasury of Poems, Quotations and Readings, collected by Ed
Searl (April 2007) Skinner House, \$14.00

Amethyst Beach: Meditations, Barbara Merritt (May 2007) Skinner House, \$8.00

*Crisis and Change: My Years as President of the Unitarian Universalist Association,
1969-1977*, Robert Nelson West (May 2007) Skinner House, \$18.00

Our Seven Principles in Word and Worship, Ellen Brandenburg, Editor (June 2007)
Skinner House, \$12.00

Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher, Lynn Tuttle Gunney (June 2007)
Skinner House, \$12.00

How to Bury a Goldfish and Other Ceremonies and Celebrations for Everyday Life,
Virginia Lang and Louise Nayer (July 2007) Skinner House, \$15.00

Stories in Faith: Exploring Our UU Principles and Sources through Wisdom Tales, Gail
Forsyth-Vail (August 2007) Lifespan Faith Development, \$15.00

Staff News

In March, our Marketing Coordinator Ari McCarthy resigned to start a new career in freelance publicity. Ari was responsible for book cover copy, catalogs and other book marketing activities. We will miss her!

Skinner House Sales

In the 12 months ending February 2007, Skinner House sales were \$294,593, down 4% from the same period one year ago. The decrease is due primarily to the fact that our trade sales have fallen off a bit.

New Books in the UUA Bookstore

Kids Like Me: Voices of the Immigrant Experience, by Judith M. Blohm and Terri Lapinsky. 26 personal narratives celebrate the experience of young immigrants making a home in a new community. Provides discussion questions, self-directed activities and research ideas for teachers and other mentors. (Intercultural Press) \$22.95

Cultural Intelligence: A Guide to Working with People from Other Cultures, by Brooks Peterson. Easy to read, hands-on guide to overcoming cross-cultural differences in the workplace. Uses dozens of engaging stories, case examples and contemporary cartoons to sharpen readers' cultural intelligence and improve communication in any organization with a mix of cultural perspectives. (Intercultural Press) \$21.95

The Hispanic Condition: The Power of a People, by Ilan Stavans. Explores the cultural differences and similarities among the five major Hispanic groups: Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Central and South Americans, and Spaniards. Combining historical, literary and political references with personal experience, Stavans discusses the divisions within a common heritage; customs of music, love, sex, marriage, and religious belief; the role of the intellectual in society; ideological struggle; and the hopeful visions of the future at the core of a civilization rooted in the trauma of the past. (HarperCollins) \$14.00

Faith Matters: Teenagers, Religion and Sexuality by Steve Clapp, Kristen Leverton Helbert, and Angela Zizak. Readable summary of a survey of more than 4,000 teenagers from Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish communities. See what they have to say about sexuality and their faith communities. (LifeQuest Publications) \$16.00

Why Buffalo Dance: Animal and Wilderness Meditations through the Seasons, by Susan Chernak McElroy. Meditations and teaching tales based on animals and the natural world. Arranged by season, the selections describe nature's evocative moments -- magpies hiding prized baubles in their nests, badgers emerging from their dens and buffalo dancing on picnic tables. (New World Library). \$16.00