

Report to the Board of Trustees
John Hurley, Director of Communications
April 2009

It will come as no surprise to the Board of Trustees that the staff Leadership Council has spent a tremendous amount of time over the past several months grappling with the effects of the global economic downturn on the budget of the Association. At this April meeting, you will be presented with a fiscal year 2010 budget that includes significant cuts in spending when compared to the budget for the previous fiscal year. How to achieve those cuts while continuing to fulfill our core mission has been a challenge, but a challenge that brought out the very best from the communications staff group.

I usually use this space to introduce the directors' reports that follow, but I first want to tell the Board how proud I am of the contributions of the entire communications staff in crafting the FY10 budget. In meeting after meeting, they have come forward with suggestions for changes in how we do business. They have identified ways to save money with little or no effect on services to our congregations. And they have, in some cases, accepted increased workloads in their areas so that we could achieve cost reductions in others. I am sure that other members of the Leadership Council have similar feelings about their staffs, but I did not want to miss the opportunity to share my feelings with you.

The economic troubles have pushed us to be more efficient in how we communicate. You will read below that we will no longer publish a hardcopy version of *InterConnections*, the quarterly newsletter for congregational leaders. Freed from the constraints of printing and mailing, *InterConnections* is being re-imagined to reach more people more often with information and resources that will be as "relentlessly useful" as they always have been. The monthly congregational mailing will cease to be a mailing and will now appear online each month renamed the congregational bulletin (and saving not only the cost of printing and mailing but also more than 165,000 pieces of paper each year). And the UUA *Directory* will also become an online-only resource.

Once the decisions were made to cease hardcopy publishing of these resources, the communications staff worked diligently to develop protocols for how our constituents could receive the material that formerly appeared in their postal mailboxes. This is often a harder task than it might seem, but we are reviewing and refining email lists to make this possible.

I suspect that these changes are only the beginning. Economic forecasts suggest that times will be hard for a while. But my experience over the past several months makes me confident that the communications staff group can meet whatever challenges lie ahead.

Office of Information and Public Witness
Janet Hayes, Public Relations Director
April 2009

The Office of Information and Public Witness continues to develop outreach resources for congregations, to publicize the UUA President's appearances, and promote the Association's initiatives, with a special emphasis on public witness work. A major focus for our staff this winter has been promoting OWL in the media and preparing for the Washington's Office's Sexuality Education Advocacy Training, held in late March each year. Public Relations Director Janet Hayes has been pitching media stories about the UUA's sexuality education work. In February a cover story featuring 7-9 OWL appeared in the *Boston Globe Magazine* and this summer a major feature highlighting the new Adult OWL curriculum will be published in *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

Public Witness Specialist Shelby Meyerhoff continues to develop new media tools for the UUA and to educate congregations about available resources. She has launched a new UUA podcast to distribute audio and video materials worldwide. She also has been working with UUA program staff and encouraging them to implement a range of new media tools to promote our faith – both nationally and within congregations.

New media communications are often cost-efficient and green, two major priorities for the UUA and its member congregations. The IPW office is trying to work with these values in mind and we're finding that the current economic crisis is helping us make some long-anticipated changes. Sabe Graham, the Public Information Assistant, manages the monthly [congregational bulletin](#), which has shifted from a dual online/print publication to online-only. This change is saving more than printing costs and trees; it's also reducing carbon emissions from the transportation needed to deliver heavy paper packets to more than 1,000 churches each month.

Office of Electronic Communication
Deborah Weiner, Director of Electronic Communication
April 2009

We are delighted to welcome Tim Griffin to the staff of the Office of Electronic Communication as our Online Communications Manager. Tim comes to the UUA from MIT, where he was Web Communication Manager for the MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics. While there, Tim worked on building departmental intranet and video archives, branding and marketing, building awareness of usability and universal accessibility standards for print and web communications for his group, and much more. Also at MIT, Tim served as Web Publishing and Development Consultant for the Information Services and Technology group, offering staff training and consulting services to the various MIT departments, labs, and centers, on a variety of web publishing issues. Tim was a member of the initial group that piloted the development of RSS feeds and is well versed in the theories and operation of different content management systems, making him a terrific match for our work here at the UUA. He was honored in 2002 with an

MIT “Infinite Mile Award” (the MIT equivalent of our “Above and Beyond Award”) for his outstanding web consulting client service.

Tim began his duties with us on February 23.

Our winter Google AdWord campaign, undertaken in partnership with our Office of Congregational Services and focusing on marriage equality, yielded very encouraging returns on several of the ads we ran. Not only did our ads – ones which delivered a message to folks seeking a gay-welcoming church – get a very high number of click-throughs, but seven percent of those who read our information on UUA.org continued on to find a congregation to attend. Another four to five percent of respondents ordered a free copy of the DVD “Voices of a Liberal Faith.” We’re continuing with these ads through the spring and in the next several weeks will add two new promotions, one focused on environmentalism and ‘green’ interests, tied to Earth Day, and one aimed toward those in interfaith partnerships (tied to the Easter and Passover holidays).

As you’re aware, a number of UUA items which were formerly printed will now be published only on the web. We’ve been working with content producers to find ways to both produce and promote their information and news, and to support the marketing of materials which might generate revenue for the Association in these challenging economic times.

Finally, although it’s not typical of the work of our office, I’ve been acting as UUA liaison for the preparation of an exciting new publication which will be produced some time this summer. A dedicated group of members from the First Unitarian Church of San Jose had a dream years ago: that the UUA would produce a Spanish language hymn resource for use in our congregations. The UUA, in cooperation with the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network, has used some of our capital campaign funds to work with those who held that dream, and soon, the dream will become real. “Las Voces del Camino” (translated: *Voices on the Journey*) is a hymn supplement of 75 songs, published in Spanish, with capsule English summaries of new pieces. About half of the songs have been published by the UUA before, the other half are new to our denomination. This publication has been edited by Ken Herman, Music Director of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego, with a Foreword by Bill Sinkford. We expect “Las Voces del Camino” to become a valued worship resource, along with “Singing the Journey” and “Singing the Living Tradition.” It has been a joy to work on this project.

My very best wishes extend to you and yours as we celebrate this time of renewal and hope, as warmth returns to the land and its people.

Periodicals Office
Chris Walton, Editor
April 2009

The Periodicals Office published the last print edition of *InterConnections* in March, and is now transforming the newsletter for congregational leaders into an online-only publication. (Eliminating printing and mailing costs will save the UUA \$27,000 a year.) We plan to introduce

a monthly email newsletter, monthly feature articles, and a weekly blog this summer at UUA.org/interconnections.

The most visible consequence of budget cuts at *UU World* will be the loss of the children's insert *uu&me!*, which has been produced by the Church of the Larger Fellowship for *UU World* since 2005. The final issue of *uu&me!* will appear in the Summer 2009 issue. The Periodicals and Lifespan Faith Development offices are currently discussing ways to provide children's content in the magazine at significantly lower costs.

To keep our travel costs down, *UU World* will not be sponsoring events or hosting a booth at the General Assembly this year. We are, however, sending reporters to cover GA.

UU World's special section on the 2009 elections will appear in the Summer 2009 issue, featuring candidate biographies and position statements; the proposed text of the new Article II appeared in the Spring issue.

Publications and UUA Bookstore

Patricia Frevert, Publishing Director

April 2009

Skinner House Books

Sales

For the 12 months ending in February 2009, Skinner House sales were \$301,142—down 4 percent from the same period a year ago.

New Titles

Be the Change: Poems, Prayers and Meditations for Peacemakers and Justice Seekers.

Inspiration for activists, with a foreword by Bill Schulz. Draws on the wisdom and stories of activist heroes, both celebrated and obscure. \$12.00 (March 2009)

Heart to Heart: Fourteen Gatherings for Reflection and Sharing, Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins. Inspiration and tips for small group meetings on a single topic, including forgiveness, loss, nature, money and friendship. \$14.00 (April 2009)

Earth Day: An Alphabet Book, Gary Kowalski. Celebrates the earth and all living things, from A to Z. Illustrated in full color by Rocco Baviera. Hardcover. Ages 4 and up. \$12 (April 2009)

With or Without Candlelight: UUA Meditation Manual, Victoria Safford, editor. Prose and poetry by a variety of UUs. \$8.00 (May 2009)

The Arc of the Universe Is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism and the Journey from Calgary, Leslie Takahashi Morris, Chip Roush and Leon Spencer. Explores how the UUA has evolved as an anti-racist, anti-oppressive multicultural institution in the 14 years that followed

the 1992 Calgary resolution. Interviews with more than 50 individuals help tell the story from multiple perspectives. \$24.00 (June 2009)

Las Voces del Camino (Voices on the Journey), Spanish songbook supplement to *Singing the Journey*, edited by Ken Herman. \$18.00 (pub date not yet set)

For more about these and other Skinner House titles, see the UUA Bookstore website: uuabookstore.org/.

Other UUA Publishing

New Titles

Seven Principles Activity Booklets: Pictures, Puzzles, Mazes and More, written and illustrated by Terry Stafford. Seven booklets, one for each Principle, with four activities in each. Activities include mazes, hidden pictures and puzzles and can be done individually or as a group. Booklets have some words, but are appropriate for pre-readers. Author and illustrator Terry Stafford has RE background. Enough for 10 children; ages 3 to 6. \$14.00 (May 2007)

Book Marketing News

- Mark Morrison-Reed, author of *In Between: Memoir of an Integration Baby*, was featured author on The Washington Post's religion blog, [On Faith](#)
- Mark Morrison-Reed profiled in Jan/Feb issue of *UU World*
- Mark Morrison-Reed featured in Spring 2009 *Universalist Herald*
- In February, Gail Collins-Ranadive, author of *Finding the Voice Inside*, and Patricia Montley, author of *In Nature's Honor* were featured speakers at the International Convocation of UU Women, held in Houston, Texas
- Skinner House Books now has a Facebook profile and "fan" page
- Skinner House Books has started an academic marketing push for certain titles, including *Writing the Sacred Journey* and *In Between*
- We are working directly with district staff, to help them feature Bookstore titles in their newsletters and at their conferences and special meetings

UUA Bookstore

Sales

UUA Bookstore sales were \$1,083,631 for the 12 months ending February 2009, down 10 percent from the same period a year ago. Our sales continue to be affected by the economic downturn.

Books from Other Publishers

The Unitarians: A Short History, Leonard Smith. Traces the history of the separate but related Unitarian (and Unitarian Universalist) denominations in Europe, Great Britain, and the United States, and touches on the newer groups that have arisen, or are in the process of emerging, elsewhere in the world. (Blackstone Editions) \$25.00

A Little Book on Forgiveness, Marilyn Sewell. The book is divided into two sections—the first discusses five principles to guide the reader through the process of forgiveness and the second explores forgiveness as a catalyst for spiritual growth. (Fuller Press) \$12.00

Finger-Pointing Essays: Toward a Unitarian Universalist Spirituality, Kenneth W. Collier. The author examines the core of Buddhism in a quest for a model to begin building a UU spiritual practice. Beginning with Buddhism's Three Jewels, he ends by proposing Three Unitarian Universalist Jewels. (Bandanna Books) \$19.95

UU University 2008: Ministry in the Borderlands, presented by Rev. Nick Carter. This DVD leads the viewer through five tracks emphasizing “interfaith border crossing skills”—the ability to communicate, work with, and care for people who think differently and pray differently. (UUA District Services) \$8.00

Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America, Gustav Niebuhr. Traces the roots of religious freedom in America and the setbacks and triumphs it has encountered along the way. Looks at Hindus and Quakers in Queens, Catholics and Jews in Baltimore, black Baptists and Catholics in Louisville, and Catholics and Buddhists in Los Angeles – to focus on the ways people build ties between groups. (Viking Press) \$25.95