

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF HUNTINGTON

Annual Congregational Meeting Part II

Sunday, June 7, 2009

12 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Previous Minutes
- III. Report from the Minister
- IV. Report from the President
- V. Annual Reports
- VI. Budget Proposal
- VII. Bylaws Change:
- VIII. Adjournment

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL PART I
MEETING MINUTES
April 5, 2009**

Board President, Marc Leopold, called the congregant attendees to the Annual Meeting (Part I) to order at 12:32pm.

It was established that a quorum of the Congregation was in attendance.

All other Board Members were present: Maria Nielsen, Vice-President; Joan Caly, Treasurer; Dorothy Burns, Secretary and Trustees Barbara Grey, Carol Lemke, Ken Buley-Neumar, Linda Paul-Elem, and Ben Testa, Past-President.

A motion to accept the Annual Meeting (Part II) Minutes as written and submitted, that expresses what transpired at the Part II meeting held June 1, 2008, was offered and passed unanimously.

The Annual Committee Reports that were submitted for review and comment, for the Annual Meeting (Part I), were accepted as written. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. The committee reports submitted were the Will Hendrie Book Stall, UU Reading Groups, Not Necessarily Seniors, Finance, Interweave, The Beacon, Adult Programs, Peacemaking Caucus, Investment, and Castle Care. The remaining Annual Committee Reports will be issued at the Annual Meeting, Part II, set for Sunday June 7, 2009.

The Nominating Committee convener Liza Burby presented its recommended slate for the Board of Trustees for the Fellowship Year 2009-2010, as well as its recommendations for open cluster coordinator and committee slots requiring Congregational approval. David Yens moved that all the recommendations be accepted. Steve Burby seconded the motion. The recommendations for the Board, the Cluster Coordinators, the Endowment Committee, the Committee on Congregational Ministry, and the Nominating Committee were accepted unanimously.

During discussion of the Nominating Committee recommendations, Zoe Taylor offered that she would be willing to continue as Sunday Morning Cluster Coordinator, making it her 3rd year.

The draft of the "Renewed Affiliated Community Ministry Covenant" was reviewed and commented upon.

Much discussion centered on the paragraph that deals with the number of services the Affiliated Community Minister "may" or "will" be involved with during a Fellowship Year. It was decided that the original draft word of "may" was a better choice, with the added caveat that the Board would have the discretion to enable additional services beyond the "two Sundays" commitment.

It was pointed out that other slight improvements in wording in the same paragraph were in order, namely, (1) an extra word "the" needs to be removed right before the words "in summer", (2) there needs to be a comma after the word "summer", and (3) the words "providing a", should be replaced by "providing any" within the last sentence of the paragraph.

One other minor word change was noticed -- the last paragraph, "XV" of the draft -- the word should be "settled" Parish Minister, not "settle".

In addition, the paragraphs are incorrectly numbered after the "V" paragraph.

Once marked up, Marc Leopold read the final wording of the changed sections of the Renewed Affiliated Community Ministry Covenant draft document. He then asked that a motion be offered to approve of the document in its amended version. Susan Peters moved the document be accepted as amended. Frank Sappell seconded. The motion passed, with all but two voting members voting in favor, none opposed, and two abstentions.

New Business:

Dave Martin asked the Board to address the status of improving the audio capabilities within the confines of the Main Hall, a request by various congregants for a number of years. David Yens offered to answer the question, being that he is involved with audio for Sunday services. A company was approached to come up with a solution. The result of their analysis was "not very good." To date, no other company has been found that can do what needs to be done for a small amount of dollars. Another company, referred to the Fellowship by congregants, has indicated that a rough-order-of-magnitude to do what is necessary is \$10,000, plus travel expenses of \$500/hour. It was indicated that this is "just too much." The audio committee is still pursuing a solution.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Testa, Ex-President

MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT Rev. Paul Ratzlaff

As I reflect on the year past, I notice how the “**great collapse**” has affected us all. The officers and board, along with your professional staff, have been taken over by the implications of the economic downturn. While we held a Board retreat to set goals for the year last summer, those goals were overwhelmed by concerns for the budget. As we adapted to the changing environment, we held a number of small group conversations as a way of reconnecting and learning about the effects. From those conversations, we have established a number of ways to care for one another. (Also the situation has released some creativity regarding additional fun(d)raising.) I’m proud of the flexibility of our leadership and Board. I have faith that together we will overcome this adversity.

I honor the ministry that Jennifer Sappell has provided for **newcomers and new members**. She’s provided an enduring hospitality and welcome to visitors that’s crucial to the ongoing health of the Fellowship. When several key families moved away (the Taylors and the Slawsons), UUFH lost its key welcoming presence. While we tried unsuccessfully part-time, hired membership coordinators, and we continued under Royal Forest’s leadership, Jennifer has more fully restored the membership effort. We still face a challenge of “institutionalizing” this, so that the membership effort is not so dependent on individuals. I trust that we will continue to be a hospitable community with many “open doors” that welcome in visitors.

This has been a year to dig in deep to anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism. While this has been a long-term commitment of the Fellowship (in particular, The Journey to Wholeness,) this year we have deepened our work through the **JUUST Change** consultant, Paula Cole Jones. We had a delightful celebration of the election of the first African American as President of the U.S.A., Barack Obama. To do this with the NAACP was a festive occasion. We continue to explore ways to work collaboratively with the NAACP. I’m confident that our incremental efforts will result in “healing our world” in the long run.

We have reinvigorated the **Beyond Our Walls (BOW)** Committee. With the Congregation’s generous response last fall, we have refunded BOW. Board appointments have revitalized the BOW process. I trust that it will continue our mission of reaching beyond our walls to help members “heal the world.”

I’m encouraged by the response of a number of Fellowship members to accompany me to the “**Equality and Justice Day in Albany**.” The work of this Congregation in truly being a Welcoming Congregation continues to ripple forward.

An ongoing theme of my ministry has been to help the Fellowship expand its tolerance of **different religious language**. With the Committee on Congregational Ministry, we have created an opportunity for a small group of Fellowship members to converse with each other, hearing each other’s stories of

formation. To me, this is critical because I value having people speak to each other across differences, rather than “through me.” As with any change, it’s critical to build on the individual relationships that exist.

This has been a year of attending to **organizational strengthening** in several ways.

1. We hired a very part-time person to help with our data-base, Power Church. In a congregation this size, this is a critical function as a way of tracking the hundreds of adults and children who are part of our community. Thanks to Jennifer Sappell our congregation has been awarded a “Growth Grant” from the District that will enable us to continue this work, even with an austerity budget.
2. Policies have been collected into a book. They still need to be revised and brought up to date by a knowledgeable group of Fellowship leaders. (Hopefully that will be accomplished over the coming summer.)
3. We have an ongoing project to create ministry descriptions for every volunteer position at UUFH. With the Cluster Coordinators, we have begun that process.
4. I continue to be an active member of the Long Island Leadership Institute (LiLi), along with lay leader, Reba Siniscalchi. After a successful first year, our second year did not meet, for failure of registration. We decided this year to encourage registrations in the spring for next year’s program. As a result we have good momentum going into the second round of LiLi. This cooperative program helps us develop potential leaders.

Last spring our congregation decided that Rev. Will Feinberg should become an **Affiliated Community Minister**. Since this is a new relationship, it has required an ongoing discussion as to implementation of this new relationship.

I have served this year as chair of the Steering Committee of **MICAH** (Mobilized Interfaith Coalition Against Hunger – on Long Island.) (This is under the structure of the LI Council of Churches) This has involved both guiding the organization in implementation of its three goals, affordable housing, hunger, and health access, as well as finding funding for the ongoing effort.

Professionally, I continue to foster my growing edges in a number of ways.

1. I completed the Intensive Study and Practice Program at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. The program focused on four extended weekends, with a commitment to study and meditate during the four quarters. While it’s hard to tell all of the results, the program deepened my understanding of Buddhist teaching, and furthered my commitment to ongoing practice.

2. Also this year, I facilitated an ongoing opportunity for UU colleagues to practice nonviolent communication. By giving ministers an environment in which they could share their hopes and fears, I have helped support my colleagues in UU ministry.
3. I value the focus of the Huntington Clergy on deepening our understanding of “integral family systems” approach to leadership. Under the guidance of Rev. Bruce Anspach we have regularly reflected on how we lead, and group dynamics.

I have noted some of the outstanding events of the past year. In addition I have provided worship on Sundays, rites of passage, educational opportunities, worked closely with Carolyn and the RE Committee, and spent lots of time in administration.

Looking to the Future

As I consider the future, I’m aware of several challenges that this congregation faces. Obviously, the financial challenge is most pressing. But I do trust that recovery will come. Perhaps that will be the time to take on the capitol projects (as formulated in the “Master Plan”) that have been deferred. In addition, I believe that this congregation is facing an important generational hand-off. Thankfully, many long-time members have given so much to leadership. But, it is now time to encourage a process of handing-on leadership. In many ways, we are already doing that. Creating the Long Island Leadership Institute (LiLi) and insuring broad participation by younger UUFH members is critical. Developing ministry descriptions and encouraging “succession” planning is critical. It’s important, I believe, for the long term health of the Fellowship to broaden the participation in the financial area. Fortunately this congregation has moved beyond dependence on one person, but there are still more ways to involve the next generation.

We have wonderful staff. I’m delighted to work in collaboration with them. And I’m grateful to serve as your minister, and look forward to more years of service. This is a vital, engaged congregation. I am privileged to be a part of such a dynamic UU congregation.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Marc Leopold, President

Much of the current year, especially the latter three-quarters, has been characterized as the Great Collapse. It has focused your board of trustees on reducing expenses in the current fiscal year, on the pledge campaign and on developing an austere, yet effective budget for the upcoming year. We have endeavored to ensure that all interested members had an opportunity to study and reflect on what that means prior to the annual meeting. However, there were other things that occupied the board's attention during the year.

The generosity of our neighbor congregation at Shelter Rock enabled the board to hold its annual retreat there during August. As president of the board, I focused on what I had learned attending the UUA's General Assembly (GA) in June on governance. I prepared several sessions for the retreat that examined how, as our congregation grows from pastoral size (up to 150 average Sunday service attendees) to what is called "program" size (above 150), we need to adapt and change. I looked particularly at how we transition from a "working board" (micromanaging) to a "shared ministry" model (delegating to committees, centers, and councils) and how we prioritize so that we make the best use of trustees' limited time. We also had the opportunity to think about the vision and mission that drives the board's policy decisions.

A key issue was: how can the Board of Trustees delegate more activities/issues to the Cluster Coordinating Council (CCC) or to specially constituted task forces so as to be able to concentrate on its primary responsibilities – fiduciary control, strategy and policy setting? This is a transitional process, moving away from "firefighting," and dealing with urgent but less important issues that detract from time available to devote to the primary responsibilities. This transition also requires a tighter focus on vision and mission so that resources are directed where they will have the most desired effects.

To do this meant that we needed to express our vision and mission in tightly-worded statements. At the retreat we came up with preliminary versions and then obtained inputs from the CCC that represented a wider cross section of our Fellowship. The board initiated a congregation-wide exploration of updating our vision and mission statements. As part of this process, the word "peace" was added to our congregation's mission statement. We also produced brief expressions of our vision and mission suitable to be used on "wallet cards." These appeared in the October 6th edition of the Beacon.

Vision: We aim to increase the diversity of our congregation and ideas through religious exploration, inspirational worship services and social justice to create a vibrant religious community for all – a spiritual home, a welcoming hearth and a caring congregation that strives to help heal our world.

Mission: We, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington, are a welcoming religious community that promotes spiritual and intellectual growth, ethical and sustainable living, social justice and peace.

The process of structural change had been started the prior year. One difficult issue has been and continues to be recruitment for volunteer positions. In our congregation we have widely different demographics with generational differences in life-styles and economics as they relate to our members' abilities to find the time to volunteer. (This is one reason for detailed Ministry Descriptions.) We did recruit for a number of such positions, the most recent being restructuring the Personnel Committee – today it is fully staffed and we have a chair. A positive has been the leadership training opportunities available, such as the Long Island Leadership Institute (that was founded in part by one of our members, Reba Siniscalchi). Also, during this year the board continued discussing succession planning.

Last year we developed and initiated a structure that would aid in recruitment: having job descriptions (Ministry Descriptions) so that when someone is asked to take on a position there is an accurate and detailed depiction of what is expected, what life experiences or training are appropriate, who will be available to assist/support, where training is available if needed, what really is the time commitment, how long is the commitment, etc. (These will be available on our web site in the near future.) This year the board prepared Ministry Descriptions for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary as well as Trustee. There are also a number of ministry descriptions prepared by committees and clusters. To encourage and honor volunteers, the board initiated a monthly cluster-honoring ceremony to show our volunteers how much they are appreciated.

Returning to the Fellowship's finances, the board followed up on our last Spring's UUA assessment consultant's recommendation. At GA in June your president and minister attended a workshop on the UUA's Forward Through the Ages (FORTH) approach. In August the board formed a task force to evaluate the FORTH program as it might be implemented at the Fellowship. That task force is composed of Ben Testa (Board Liaison and Chair), Bill Hecker and Reba Siniscalchi. (Note: This is one of the ways the board is now delegating so it can focus on the larger picture – having task forces (i.e., short-term study groups assigned a specific area of inquiry).) The task force reported that FORTH was indeed applicable to UUFH, but that the five year implementation period envisioned by the UUA was too short for us, even though we were already doing some of the things that would be accomplished in the later years of the program. To get the word out, the board also continued running small group meetings to make the results of the assessment consultant's work known to all those members who were interested and there was a *Beacon* article. For those of our readers who missed the meetings or the article, very briefly it is a wider view of stewardship that integrates finance and membership. It uses Appreciative Inquiry techniques in most of its activities. It uses very focused "asks" during the

annual budget drive (pledge canvass). (There is much material available at www.uua.org.) A key point of FORTH is that congregational membership requires us all to give of our Time, Talent, and Treasure.

As the Fellowship year progressed the nation's economy worsened; we have been increasingly affected. Your board's responses have included:

- Close cooperation with the budget committee; pledge follow-ups (FY 2008-2009); board members were table captains at Souper Sunday;
- Devoting a Spiritual Directions meeting of the board to our deep feelings and early life experience with giving to religious organizations. Reflecting our varied paths to UU-ism we also learned from each other that there was a wide sense of what was appropriate to donate and that the UU model is quite different from what we experienced growing up. This helps us to better understand perhaps unconscious attitudes among our members as we develop our own religious approach to supporting the Fellowship.
- Integration of our children and youth into our shared financial-responsibility awareness.
- Conversations with many small groups regarding how we as a congregation are helping one another during this economic downturn; creation of a resource/referral center for our members and friends and communicating its availability via inserts in our Order of Service and in the Mid Week News;
- Encouraging formation of a support group for those of us who are seeking employment;
- Exploration of additional fundraising activities to supplement the annual pledge drive, services auction and Last Licks coffee house;
- Working with the budget committee on enumeration and consideration of cost saving steps in preparation of the 2009-2010 budget plan; and
- Holding a budget forum for interested members well in advance of the annual meeting to explain how we are crafting the budget and soliciting input at this stage of development.

For several years the board has been concerned about the essentially static size of our congregation. The outflow of members due to moves, deaths and other priorities has essentially been matched by new members. Your present board thinks we can do better than just maintain our size: we have a mission and vision that should lead to growth, but it will take real work to make that a reality. We were able to use a small reserve to hire a database manager to take on the responsibility for visitor and new prospect data entry and reports. We plan, in the upcoming year, to utilize a grant (for which we were eligible because of our significant contribution to the UUA's Association Sunday fund) to expand the capability of our database software to be able to capture and report on additional data that will help us in finding leadership candidates, to follow up on new prospects, and to track newcomer integration within congregational life. We are also looking to use what has been learned from this deeper analysis what more we can put into our web site to make the Fellowship more attractive to seekers of a religious/spiritual home. (In interviewing visitors we find that most prospects had looked on the web before coming to the Fellowship.)

As part of our fiduciary responsibility that extends beyond the realm of finance, the Board is working on a policy for dealing with an H1N1 influenza epidemic, should there be an outbreak in our membership.

Social justice is part of who we are as UUs. The Board, in conjunction with the Social Justice Council, is still searching for a project that will appeal to our whole Congregation, that offers a variety of opportunities for intergenerational participation, as well as varying levels of commitment. Related to this has been the Board's support for the JUUST Change Consultancy (a paid service obtained from UUA) and our Journey Towards Wholeness (JTW) committee.

When last year's budget was passed, the amount allocated to Beyond Our Walls (BOW) was significantly reduced from prior years. (Even last fiscal year's canvass results were influenced by the deteriorating economic situation.) This reduction was made reluctantly, but was solely a result of having too little income. The members of the BOW committee who had given so much of their enthusiasm and time to this cause were understandably frustrated. The Board took on the task of strengthening BOW and has kept in close contact with the committee. Recently BOW held an after-services program soliciting proposals and offering to assist members in creating funding proposals. To help get BOW's funding back on track, a special appeal was made from the pulpit that provided a substantial amount to add to already substantial unspent BOW funds. BOW does have reserve funds that can be used to fund selected proposals. There is now a BOW "page" on our web site that has links to download grant proposal forms together with an explanation of this approach to outreach philanthropy.

Lest it appear that we were almost totally concerned with meeting the challenge of the Great Collapse, we note that one of the board's Spiritual Directions meetings was devoted to religious language. The board is a microcosm of the larger Congregation, so that our discussion helped us to all understand how certain words resonate (positively or negatively) within our diverse Congregation. We look forward to looking for ways to establish greater openness to varied language.

All-in-all an eventful year with many challenges. We are grateful for the confidence and support given us by our fellow congregants.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

Dorothy Burns, Natalie Frevert, Judie Gardner, Ginny Kushnick, Carol Lemke, Marty Lipnick, Sylvia Lipnick, Kathryn Johnson, Millie Novak, Susan Peters, Ann Scolnick, Marsha Thompson, Zoe Taylor

We added some new names to the roster of Office Volunteers this year, giving us full coverage, Monday through Friday. They are invaluable in helping to keep the office running smoothly, especially when our Administrator, Judie Spero is on vacation or leave. The volunteers help with the phones and the mail, and with assorted other office tasks. By their presence we are able to provide a friendly, welcoming image to visitors and callers.

We also have a Collating Crew upon whom we can call during the year when a publication needs to be mailed. These include the Directory, the Services Auction Booklet and the Adult Program booklet. Some of the regulars are Sylvia and Marty Lipnick, Jack deMasi, John and Doris Kamena, Bill Hecker, Joan Caly and Judie Gardner.

Thanks to each of these wonderful helpers. A line in one of our favorite hymns reads: "As you give, you get." This is certainly true for these volunteers. We give of our time, but we get so much in (small f) fellowship!

Ginny Kushnick, coordinator

MAP

MAP, after having clarified its role as a marketing and promotion resource for the Fellowship, created a Publicity sub-committee which would do the actual work of promotion, including press contact, writing releases, placing ads, creating brochures, overseeing production, etc. During the course of the past year, a number of press releases were sent out to promote events like Last Licks Coffeehouse, which resulted in numerous newspaper listings. More needs to be done and the Committee is currently in need of a chair.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Larry Chorowski resigned as Chair of the Committee, which is currently looking for a replacement. The Committee, especially Sylvia Lipnick, has done most of the website maintenance.

CAROLYN FREUD, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION
Annual Report 2009

In October of 2008 I attended a weekend Labyrinth Workshop and Facilitator Training session. I now facilitate Labyrinth walks on our UUFH indoor canvas labyrinth. This has been personally meaningful to me, expanding my own practice of walking meditation to sharing the experience with others.

Our Lifespan Religious Exploration program has continued to offer a variety of opportunities for Faith Development. David Sussman has provided guidance as the RE Cluster Coordinator. Susan Kenler and the Adult Program Committee have worked this year organizing and expanding our Adult Programs. New programs have been offered this year for adults and the planning continues to offer a variety of experiences for Lifespan Religious Exploration. Reverend Paul has supported our RE Program for all ages with his interest and involvement.

During the 2008-2009 year the Religious Education Program continued the weekly sharing of *How were you a UU this week?* This year Social Action Sunday Projects continued, combining all ages in the effort. The RE Committee continued with the goal for the UUFH RE Program to strengthen UU Identity. The 2008-2009 themes have been UU Identity with an emphasis on the Seven Principles. Members of the REC created UUFH curricula written specifically to match the standards and goals developed by the RE Committee, as well as collecting lessons from a variety of UUA curricula for the year. Our program continues to attract new families. The total number of registered children and youth is 128 this year.

The members of the Committee attend RE meetings, teach RE Classes, plan and run activities, and represent Religious Education in the Congregation. This year's team of dedicated volunteers is: Joanne Polichetti and Amy Edel-Vaughn as co-chairs, Mary Sussman, Michael Goldsmith, Grace Dwyer, Debbie Cohen, Karen Mallow-Rizzo, Anne Kopstein, with Laura Liepa and Terry Donaldson serving in the beginning of the year. The core of our Religious Education Program is the teachers who volunteer weekly in their session to teach our children and youth our Unitarian Universalist Principles with traditions, stories, songs, games, music and crafts. It is through their dedication and commitment year after year that we maintain the quality of our RE Program. Nancy Hume supports the RE Program with yoga, meditation and movement. The Religious Education Committee continued to sponsor Intergenerational Activities this year.

In addition to my Master's Degree, I continue my studies in Religious Education as part of Lifespan Religious Exploration. I am a member of the LIAC RE Committee, as well as LREDA. I continue with my own religious education as I continue working toward the next level of Religious Education credentialing.

In faith, Carolyn Freud, Director of Religious Exploration

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Religious Education Committee (REC) of the UUFH consists of eight members who work along with the Director of Religious Exploration, Carolyn Freud, our Minister, our Cluster Coordinator, David Sussman and the RE assistant, Carol Ziegler. The REC is directed to “plan, implement and supervise the Fellowship Education Program for the children and youth to build UU identity and commitment to social justice.

Continuing REC members for 2008 – 2009 were co-chairs Joanne Polichetti and Amy Edel-Vaughn, Mary Sussman, Michael Goldsmith, Grace Dwyer and Laura Liepa. Joining the REC in 2008-2009 for three-year terms were Anne Kopstein, Karen Mallow-Rizzo, Terry Donaldson and Debbie Cohen. All served on the RE Committee previously. Laura Liepa left the Committee in November 2008 for personal reasons (she was in the second year of her term). Terry Donaldson also resigned from the Committee. Nancy Hume continues to serve as an unofficial member of our Committee.

This has been another active and productive year for the REC, with many responsibilities and challenges met, and numerous activities and events coordinated. The following are some of the highlights:

- Our RE program served 128 registered children and youth with year-round classes for pre-school through high school.
- The development and implementation of two new curricula: Star Trek for fourth and fifth grade students (written and facilitated by Michael Goldsmith, Lorraine Bondi-Goldsmith and Sharon Garfinkle), The Simpsons/Twilight Zone for middle school (compiled/written by Joanne Polichetti and Lee Kurfist); and 30 Days (based on a series of documentaries around social justice issues) for high school youth (written by Amy Edel-Vaughn).
- Participation in the UUA pilot of two Tapestry of Faith curricula – one for middle school, and one for kindergarten/first grade. Both curricula were successful.
- All grades continued our focus on the UU principles and “How do you UU?”
- We continued our social justice projects, including clothing donations for FECS, creating quilt squares representing our children’s wishes for President Obama, and Smile in a Bag (creating activity bags for hospitalized children at Winthrop and Schneider’s Children’s Hospital). Our children also created UU “care packages” for UUFH college students. The children and youth baked cookies, drew pictures, made a chalice and wrote notes to each student.

- As part of their curriculum, kindergarten and first grade classes raised funds for Heifer International, and second and third graders offered a “cans for cookies” food drive for the food pantry in Northport.
- The children and youth also participated in their first photography project, yielding posters created by Ken Farrell, Alex Wolff, Jim Thomas and Rick Kopstein. Mary Sussman led the project with Ken. Posters were sold as a Fellowship fundraiser.
- Children and youth also participated in “Keep the Home Fires” burning fundraisers. Second and third graders sold baked goods at the Intergenerational Talent Show. The fourth and fifth grade class set up a trivia game booth. Middle schooler children sold vegan sandwiches and baked goods.
- Six second and third grade children participated in our Growing UUp program. The children strengthened their UU identity and sense of self through six programs, conducted after RE. The children were recognized in a service by lighting the chalice and sharing their personal symbols. Mary Sussman and Tracy Bloom facilitated the sessions with the assistance of Nancy Hume, Joanne Polichetti, Carolyn Freud and Reverend Paul. The children chose Little Shelter as their social justice project. They hosted a bake sale and lemonade stand, and asked for pet-supply donations from the Fellowship.
- REC committee members Michael Goldsmith, Terry Donaldson and Mary Sussman hosted our UU Sources Supper, to educate RE teachers about the origins and history of Unitarian Universalism. The event was well attended.
- Two REC-sponsored teacher training/orientation sessions occurred.
- REC supported LIAC-sponsored youth activities, including an anti-racism discussion hosted by the Reverend Gordon Bailey at Harlem Hospital, Youth Conference and Sophia Fahs camp. In 2008, more than 40% of Sophia Fahs campers and half of the staff hailed from UUFH.
- Three youth will complete Coming of Age. Three youth participated in OWL (Our Whole Lives).
- The Illuminations Column in the Beacon, written by Amy Edel-Vaughn, highlighted the activities of the children and youth, class activities and helped keep the Congregation up to date with the direction and goals of the REC.

- We continued our tradition of the UUFH Halloween party with over 100 children and adults in attendance. This continues to be a favorite event and a highlight of the REC calendar.
- Christmas Eve Family Service – REC provided coordination of youth involvement with the Nativity Pageant, Intergenerational Orchestra and Movement choir, directed by Amy Edel-Vaughn.
- Three performances of the Intergenerational Choir occurred, led by Grace Dwyer and Ramona Machson.
- The Intergenerational Talent Show was a great success this year, with participation from children, youth and adults. The second and third graders sold refreshments as a Fellowship fundraiser.
- We had a RE Gallery display in March showcasing intergenerational activities and youth artwork, also the first gallery show by a Fellowship youth, Emily Silver, in May.
- Our teacher recognition breakfast will be held on Sunday, May 31.
- Our summer curriculum will be “Web of Life: Science Experiment Fun!” Amy and Ben Vaughn will be our summer teachers.

This has been another positive and rewarding year for the REC. The Committee works very well together and we have developed effective channels to communicate with each other on a regular basis. Our Committee members champion and assist at our events throughout the year with tremendous spirit and energy. All Committee members share their creativity and inspirations.

Leaving the Committee at the end of the 2007-2008 term are Joanne Polichetti, Amy Edel-Vaughn, Michael Goldsmith and Mary Sussman. New members for 2009-2010 are Michael Amendola, Catherine Halpern, Sharon Garfinkel and Adele Pellicane. The Committee co-chairs for the upcoming year will be Grace Dwyer and Catherine Halpern.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Edel-Vaughn, Joanne Polichetti, Co-Chairs

LAST LICKS CAFÉ

In the 2008-2009 Fellowship year, Last Licks presented nine concerts. We also presented two theatre performances in conjunction with the Huntington Repertory Theatre Company. This was a challenging year for Last Licks. We struggled to build audiences for our shows, and we lost our founding sound engineer, Daniel Sandoval when he moved out of the area. Fortunately, we still made some money for the Fellowship this year, and presented some amazingly talented musicians. We are proud to have given them a place to share their art, and for our fans, a venue to enjoy them in.

Here is what some of our recent performers have been up to: Josh Charles recently appeared on Good Morning America, Jacqueline Schwab recently performed on the David Letterman show, Peggy Seeger was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Folk Music album, and Cheryl Wheeler has released her latest album, *Pointing At The Sun*, which features a guest performance from her late cat, Penrod, on *My Cat's Birthday*.

Thanks to all our volunteers for making the series happen, and to the Board, Reverend Paul and the Congregation for their ongoing support. Come on out and experience some great entertainment while supporting the Fellowship as well.

Submitted in Fellowship.

Gerald Moss
Co-Producer, Last Licks Cafe Coffeehouse

COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY

The COCM, composed of Lorraine Austin, Louise Curtis, Johanna Leopold, Anita Nygren, Ann Scolnick and Jim Thomas met monthly with Reverend Paul Ratzlaff to discuss timely concerns within our Fellowship. This year we concentrated on member's individual life journeys and how we could integrate, and accept, all congregants' religious and spiritual needs. We sponsored two meetings with a small number of members, listening to each other's religious life stories.

We have asked for feedback from members and written articles and updates for the Beacon.

We also spent time preparing and discussing our annual observation of Reverend Paul and his self-evaluation of how things were going at the UUFH, before presenting this to the Board. We discussed how we gather information for this evaluation.

Ann and Jim will rotate off the committee and Katherine Hoak and Peggy Koulias will start their three-year term in September.

Ann Scolnick, Facilitator, COCM

PROPOSED ADDITION AND AMENDMENTS TO UUFH BYLAWS

New Bylaw – Article VIII, Section 8.2, #11

Beyond Our Walls Committee (BOW). The BOW Committee shall use its financial resources to support UUFH members in working toward social justice and social service in the larger community.

- The Committee shall consist of six members who shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees for staggered three-year terms.
- The Committee shall accept and evaluate written proposals from congregants for events/projects which will further the BOW mission. They will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- The BOW Committee will accept, review and approve requests for the Split-Plate Recipient for each month.
- The Committee shall make a report to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- The Committee shall publicize, promote, foster and develop ideas within the Congregation to further their work.

Rationale – The BOW Committee was formed in 2002. Since that time it has supported numerous projects through monetary grants and split-plate contributions to organizations working in our local and larger community. It is time for them to become part of our UUFH structure through inclusion in our Bylaws.

The Board of Trustees recommends that the Congregation pass this new Bylaw.

Proposed new wording of Article II, Section 2.2

Each Member shall provide financial support to the Fellowship with an annual paid pledge. The minimum level of annual financial support shall be determined each year by the Board of Trustees. Cases of financial hardship shall receive individual consideration.

(Existing: “Each Member shall provide financial support to the Fellowship with an annual paid pledge or a recorded contribution.”) Note: 08-09 minimum pledge is \$175.

Rationale – We propose leaving off the last four words of the existing first sentence, “or a recorded contribution.” We would like all Members to care enough about the Fellowship to make a financial commitment in the form of a pledge. We need pledges to be able to plan financially and develop a realistic budget for the Fellowship.

The Board of Trustees recommends that the Congregation pass this amendment to the Bylaws.

Proposed new wording of Article IX, 9.4.3 Borrowing from the Endowment

The Congregation may borrow from the Principal of the Fund, under serious financial circumstances or for capital improvements, provided such borrowing is secured and made subject to reasonable rates of interest and terms of repayment. Such loan must be approved at a duly-called Congregational meeting by a two-thirds vote of those Members of the Congregation present. The call to the meeting shall be mailed at least fourteen days in advance of the meeting.

(Existing: “The Congregation may borrow from the Principal of the Fund for capital improvements, provided such borrowing is secured and made subject to reasonable rates of interest and terms of repayment. Such loan must be approved at a duly called congregational meeting by a two-thirds vote of those Members of the Congregation, not just those Members in attendance and/or voting. The call to the meeting shall be mailed at least fourteen days in advance of the meeting.”)

Rationale – Present Bylaws state that we can only borrow from the Endowment Fund for capital improvements and, that both borrowing and using principal require the same process: two-thirds of all members saying yes. We feel borrowing should not require the same very difficult process we presently require. We don’t anticipate needing to borrow any Endowment money in the future, but it may be needed in three, five or ten years. We would like to have a process in place. We should not wait until we have “serious financial circumstances.” It is better and safer to think the process through now.

The Board of Trustees recommends that the Congregation pass this amendment to the Bylaws.

Additional Annual Reports:

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE TO THE UUFH BOARD

Due to the economy this year no endowment funds were available for distribution. However, it is noteworthy that funds distributed last year have been put to good use. Visible examples are:

- (a) Construction of a wooden eave placed over the Religious Education exterior door to the cottage.
- (b) Construction of a concrete sidewalk connecting the RE exterior door to the cottage and a second sidewalk from the RE door to the parking lot.
- (c) Installation of an awning over the Family Room entrance door.

These projects exemplify the ways in which Endowment funds have been used to improve UUFH programs and facilities.

The Committee has initiated publicity to encourage members and friends to use endowments as a means of providing long-term support to the Fellowship. Forms for making contributions to the Endowment Fund are available at the entrance to the building, and I (with the valuable assistance of Bill Hecker) made a presentation on endowment methods to the Not Necessarily Seniors group in May. This turned out to be a very useful way of sharing information and might become an annual affair.

Respectfully submitted,
David P. Yens, Chairman

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE SOUND COMMITTEE TO THE UUFH BOARD

The normal activities of the Sound Committee continued this year which included handling all sound requirements during Sunday services, creation of CDs of all services from September through June that are distributed by the Bookstall, and video recording of selected services based upon perceived interest; Harvey Balopole has maintained a library of these videotapes and makes copies upon request.

As a result of a poll of member preference for audio tapes or CDs, only CDs have been provided through the Will Hendrie Bookstall and to RE, starting in the Fall of 2008. Response has been good; no one has requested tapes. Personal copies of CDs are created for a \$5 donation to the sound/audio fund.

The quality of sound in the Main Hall continues to be a concern. In addition to the speakers mounted on the sides halfway back in the Main Hall, new high-quality speakers were placed behind the baffles flanking the stage.

The additional equipment needed to provide additional inputs for the multiple microphones has been installed and we hope to connect microphones during the summer to permit the use of additional wireless mics to handle complex audio needs.

Respectfully submitted

BEYOND OUR WALLS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

BOW Membership

During the past UUFH year, Linda Schiess and Dove Thomas have been BOW's co-chairs. The membership of the Committee, in addition to the leaders named above, include Ken Farrell, Pamela Johnston, Zoe Taylor and Judy Greene. Judy was a member of the original BOW Committee, and has attended BOW meetings as an ex officio member for the past several years to offer historical perspective. With the Board's appointment, this year, Judy has again become a voting member.

Activities

Until January 27, 2009, the BOW Committee had not met in person since September 2008, but had continued to determine Split Plate charities of the month via e-mail correspondence. BOW plans to hold regular monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month.

BOW Sunday Service

In September 2008, Rev. Paul led a Sunday service in conjunction with the BOW Committee that included previous BOW grant recipients. An appeal for monetary contributions was made to the congregation to support future BOW projects and to add to the amount in the Fellowship's 2008-09 budget for planned philanthropy (\$3600, which is 1% of the previous year's expected pledge income). Congregants pledged \$7706 and \$7606 has been received so far. An additional \$3580 was in reserve from previous undistributed BOW funds. Therefore, there was \$14,886 available to support BOW grants in 2008-09.

Website

There is now a webpage on the UUFH website for BOW under "Faith In Action." Recently, descriptive content has been added to the page and the Committee has asked previously BOW-funded projects (e.g. Huntington Interfaith Housing Initiative [HiHi, Housing Help, etc.) to provide summaries of these projects for the website. BOW has also asked for any relevant photos of BOW events for use on the website. This year's application for proposals seeking BOW funding and applications for the Charity of the Month are now available on the UUFH website.

BOW Proposal Applications

Two of this spring's BOW grant proposals were approved by the committee: HiHi for \$3,000 and the Alemu Woldehanna Library Project for \$2,500. These must now be presented to the Board of Trustees for final approval. One other proposal was rejected by the committee for lack of information. Two others were asked to either rewrite their application or apply instead for Split Plate consideration.

The committee has decided to accept applications again in the fall, but with the stipulation that persons submitting applications must attend our workshop prior to submission. This, we hope, should alleviate the problem of applications either being too vague or not meeting the criteria needed for a grant. We are also asking that persons receiving grants submit a follow-up report on what the funds have accomplished.

Workshop and Publicity

To help brainstorm BOW project ideas, facilitate the development of projects, and provide some practical information about how the BOW proposal process works, members of the Committee and some previous BOW award recipients held a Workshop on Sunday, February 22. Judy Greene led the workshop.

Previously, Rev. Paul, as part of his Sunday Service welcome on February 2, encouraged anyone interested in seeking some advice or information to attend the February Workshop. Announcements about the Workshop were published in the Orders of Service, the Mid-Week News and Beacons. In addition, an “e-mail blast” was sent to the congregation to encourage attendance, and members who submitted Split Plate applications in the past two years were encouraged to take part. To facilitate learning about the BOW proposal application process, previous grant recipients were at the workshop to mentor new BOW fund seekers.

Split Plate Charities of the Month and the Amounts Raised for Their Causes

The Split Plate Charity for the months of July and August was Housing Help – (\$798).

In September, the Split Plate collection went to the Herstory Writers Group – (\$985).

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and our Split Plate Charity of the Month was V.I.B.S. (Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk) – (\$713.50).

In November, our Split Plate went to Project Real, a non-profit residential program created in the 1990s by the Long Island Council of Churches – (\$631).

The Charity of the Month for December was the Huntington Food Council, a volunteer-run food pantry based in Huntington Station – (\$1,634.50).

The Split Plate Charity of the month for February (Black History Month) was the NAACP Huntington Branch. Rev. Spicer, pastor of Bethel AME Church, spoke on behalf of the NAACP’s program to reduce educational disparities among people of color on Long Island – (\$1,117.61)

For March, there were three Split Plate Charities of the Month. According to BOW policy, a Unitarian Universalist charity may be designated for one Sunday of a month's Split Plate collection. On March 1 only, Split Plate donations went to UU-UNO, introduced by Dick Kopp - (\$425). On March 8 only, the Split Plate donations went to the Long Island Area Council's Scholarship Fund to support Sophia Fahs Religious Education Camp scholarships - (\$298.50). Joanne Polichetti, who is a member of the Fahs Camp leadership team, spoke on its behalf. The Long Island Chapter of the Brain Injury Association of New York was the charity for the other three Sundays in March - (\$582.50).

Newsday's Kids Campaign was the Split Plate Charity of the Month for April. (\$826.50)

The Split Plate Charity for May, Be-Emnet AIDS Orphaned Children & Youth Fostering Centre, was introduced to the congregation by Helen Boxwill. (May and June figures are not yet available.)

The June Split Plate Charity is The Empire State Pride Agenda, New York's statewide gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights and advocacy organization.

The Future

There are several committee members rotating off BOW, and we look forward to the Board appointing their replacements.

At times, there have been several applications per month from members recommending various organizations as Split Plate charity of the month. At others, there is none, or only one. Now that the application is available online, BOW hopes that there will be an increase in the number of applications submitted.

BOW recognizes a weakness in its process to monitor the successes/shortcomings/ failures of its funded projects, and will work to develop a new follow-up and feedback form for BOW funds recipients.

BOW would like to have more frequent and open communication with the Board of Trustees and minister to promote better and more communication about BOW's work. Perhaps BOW can be scheduled to meet with the BOT once a year at one of the Board's Spiritual Directions meeting.

Funds not used this past Spring will be carried over to the Fall when applications will be accepted again after a workshop.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Schiess, Dove Thomas, Ken Farrell,
Judy Greene, Pamela Johnston, Zoe Taylor

SERVICES AUCTION 2008

“Star Bright,” this past year’s Services Auction, was held on November 15, 2008. As always, it was a group effort, with much help from many people, and we all worked together to make the event lots of fun, and very productive, netting a total of about \$29,000. Although this was a smaller amount than had been predicted in our UUFH budget, we were very pleased at the turnout and outcome, in light of the current economy.

Dinner, desserts, entertainment and children’s activities were highlights of the evening. We had many auction offerings from Fellowship members: parties, excursions, instruction, food, goods and services, as well as wonderful committee baskets and kids’ items to raffle off. Community merchants contributed generously too, with coupons and items for auction. Even a member of our staff contributed. The participation of so many people was crucial to such a successful fundraiser, and the offerings are providing fun and social events throughout the year. This is a true community-building effort by and for the Fellowship. Many thanks to all!

Joan Caly, Ginny Kushnick, Sylvia Lipnick and Susan Peters, Co-Chairs

Sunday Program Committee Report

Members: Janet Lupardo (Chair) (*1 more year)
Carlene Tockman (Co-Chair) (1 more year)
Carter Bancroft (2 more years)
Rich Giacoma (2 more years)
Marty Lipnick (last year)
Jeff Schiff (2 more years)
Ed Vigneau (2 more years)
Frances Whittelsey (2 more years)
Cathi Zillman (last year)

* Although technically invited to join the committee during the Summer of 2006, I had surgery that summer, and so did not come on Board until late spring of 2007. I'd be happy to stay another year.

Our committee has not chosen a co-chair for next year, but will at our SPC meeting on June 8, 2009.

We have several promising, but unconfirmed additions to our committee for this year. (The Board had agreed that they would be a benefit last year, but both individuals said that they could not commit until this year. We're hoping that this is their time!)

SPC has been very pleased with and proud of our offerings this year!! We were able to secure wonderful speakers, thanks to the initiative and follow-through of our members, and a budget that allowed us to do so.

We have purposely taken on very controversial subjects, following Paul's urging for all Fellowship members to move outside their comfort zones. We have received very positive feedback. On the few occasions when we have received negative feedback, we take it very seriously, discussing the feedback in depth at the meeting following the contact. We hope that anyone who has offered any opinion has felt that we responded to them in a manner consistent with this practice. We are trying to give responses that mirror the complexity of tough issues, while acknowledging personal feelings. We plan to follow up with deeper looks into the Ethical Eating subject, as well as that of Mental Health.

SPC moves into the June 8 meeting with many summer services ahead. As always, we welcome suggestions, and encourage all to forward ideas for topics and/or speakers to us.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Lupardo

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Despite several new initiatives and over 40 volunteers assisting, the UUFH membership roster has remained fairly constant (262 Members and 79 Friends). The Committee's goals are not only to increase membership, but to strengthen and reinforce relationships between visitors, friends, members and others within our community. Membership programs and activities were all intended to be "community builders," and included traditional and new programs:

- Sunday morning welcomes by greeters, RE liaison and hosts
- Two new member weekends, including newcomer participants
- Three orientation programs
- Two Newcomer breakfasts
- Three evenings of potluck dinners in multiple members' homes
- Three fundraisers of plant material
- Visitor cultivation through phone calls and note cards
- Reconnections phone calls to missing members and friends
- Database development for relationship/management purposes
- Expanded newcomer social opportunities through special Goods and Services Auction party invitations

The Committee's current objective is to make membership concerns a congregation-wide concern. All Fellowship members – members, friends and staff – are ambassadors who represent the UUFH and the welcoming, supportive community we strive to be.