



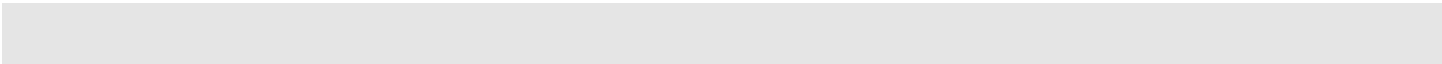
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ANNUAL REPORT

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota

April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009



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Annual Report for Church Year 2008-2009

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota

3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34232-1614

Tel: 941-371-4974; FAX 941-377-4897; email: uusara@gte.net

Web site: uusarasota.com

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Minister:	Roger C. Peltier	993-2903
Student Minister:	Brock Leach	312-9774
Church President:	Gail Colella	924-2848
Religious Exploration:	Ginny Griesé	907-2143
Pianist:	Jan Dorsett	929-0149
Pianist/Soloist	David Katz	355-6319
Choir Director:	Paul Lewis	379-9854
Office Administrator:	Sandy Theiss	371-4974
CONTACT Staff:	Gail Colella	924-2848
	Jane Grundy	377-2229
	George Milburn	927-2555
	Katherine Isabelle	371-4974
Custodian:		

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President:	Gail Colella	924-2848
Vice President:	Rick Sandler	412-0906
Treasurer:	Barbara DeMaio	371-8118
Secretary:	Muriel Redifer	926-4138
Trustees:	Jim Craig	751-5194
	Joanne Curtis	929-0578
	Dana Keller	377-9815
	Louise King	379-0849
	Pat Liebert	379-0317
	Sue Moreland	362-9497

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: ENDOWMENT FUND, INC.

President:	Charles Peirce	379-3463
Vice President:	Jim Craig	751-5194
Treasurer:	Jim Keeney	928-3378
Secretary:	Tam Milton	923-0329

Members:

**Barbara DeMaio
Marie Millett**

**371-8118
351-6281**

Purpose of Annual Report

The purpose of this non-profit Corporate Annual Report is to report the activities and accomplishments of the Board of Trustees, Staff, Committees and activities of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota for the fiscal year 2008-2009. The purposes and accomplishments are provided as reported by the appropriate responsible parties.

HISTORY

Founded in February 1952 as a Fellowship, the first meetings of this congregation were held in the “Garden House” of Phyllis and Irving Vendig. Original signers of the Fellowship Membership Book were: Yvonne and Alfred W. Birks, Charlotte D. Cahoon, Louise and Richard Floeth, Ella Kaubler, Selma Lee, Alice P. Leighton, John and Ruth B. Logan, Gertrude S. Martin, Adella L. and Albert R. Miller, Dolores and Stephen W. Steinecke, Dorothy B. Stone, Howard L. and Ruth C. Trueblood, Mrs. Mable R. Undine, Irving and Phyllis Vendig. Moving, as it grew in size, to the building at the corner of First Street and Coconut (then the Women’s Club), the Fellowship expanded its program to include Religious Education for children and a monthly discussion group.

The Fellowship became incorporated in 1960 as the Unitarian Church of Sarasota. In 1962 it moved to its present location and its own building. Land for the building had been donated by Dr. Paul Rosenbaum and funds for the building came (with the impetus of a gift from the estate of Stephen W. Steinecke) from contributions by members and friends.

The name of the church was changed in 1981 to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota to reflect the change within our denomination. Major renovations and additions to the church buildings were completed in the fall of 1984.

In 1990, with funds from the Ruth Oleskey and Elizabeth Hager Memorials and donations from members and friends, a courtyard beautification was completed with brick pavers, plantings and new benches. A new extensive sound system was installed in 1992 in the Sanctuary, donated by the Phillip Gelb Memorial.

In recent years there have been significant additions to our buildings and grounds. Beginning in 1998 the Memorial Garden has undergone significant renovation, and in 2000 the South Wing was built and dedicated. In 2002, we

replaced all the old chairs in the Sanctuary with new cranberry colored chairs and in 2003 and 2004; all air conditioners in the Sanctuary were replaced.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2002. And under the leadership of both ministers and laypersons, our church has continued to maintain itself as an institution of liberal religion in our community.

MINISTERS

The Reverend M. McKarl Nielsen	1956-1964
The Reverend Khoren Arisian	1964-1966
The Reverend Todd Taylor	1967-1970
The Reverend Thomas J. Savage	1971-1980
The Reverend Sidney J. Peterman (Interim)	1980-1981
The Reverend Richard A. Kellaway	1981-1986
The Reverend Eileen B. Karpeles (Interim)	1986-1987
The Reverend Richard E. Benner	1987-1998
The Reverend Dr. Janet E. Newman (Interim)	1998-1999
The Reverend W. Donald Beaudreault	1999-2006
The Reverend Dr. Janet E. Newman (Interim)	2006-2006
The Reverend Don Vaughn-Foerster (Interim)	2006-2007
The Reverend Roger C. Peltier	2007-

PRESIDENTS

Stephen W. Steinecke	1952-1957
Harry Karnaghan	1957-1959
Robert Lexow	1959-1960
Ewin R. Spotswood	1960-1962
Robert Watt	1962-1963
Donald Johns	1963-1964
Dr. Preston Knapp	1964-1965
Irving Vendig	1965-1966
William Boylston	1966-1967
Waldo Profitt	1967-1969
Dr. John B. Logan	1969-1970
Frederick Derr	1970-1971
Laura Rendina	1971-1972
Joseph Lehman	1972-1973
Kenneth Happy	1973-1975
James Chambliss	1975-1976
Desmond O'Hara	1976-1978
James Chambliss	1978-1979
Stuart Richardson	1979-1980
Kenneth Happy	1980-1982
David Eicher	1982-1984
Joan O'Hara	1984-1986

Stephen Ellis	1986-1988
John Wynne	1988-1989
Marie Millett	1989-1990
Joseph Colella	1990-1991
John Wynne	1991-1992
Ellen Betz	1992
Mary Anne Bowie	1992-1994
Richard Swerling	1994-1995
Frank J. Dunn	1995-1999
Sara Anderson	1999-2000
Richard Happy	2000-2002
Shirley Foss	2002-2003
Ruth Sheridan	2003-2004
Jill DeLano	2004-2005
Jim Raudabaugh	2005-2007
Gail Colella	2007-

COMMITTEES AND CHAIRPERSONS

Archive	Jim Raudabaugh, 923-9766
Artisans	Nancy Sciore, 922-0243
Arts Council	Judi Hennard, 373-0530
Audio	Gail Perr Czina & Richard Czina, 378-2671
Bed & Breakfast	Logan Nicholson & Ron Brown, 922-0883
Book Table	Valerie Kerwin, 923-6716
Bridge for Fun	Gary Barnes, 925-7611 & Mira Frederick, 921-6594
Buildings & Grounds	Jill DeLano, 377-3484
Caring	Dee Widder, 377-9028
Choir	Paul Lewis, 379-9854
Committee on Shared Ministry	Jim Raudabaugh, 923-9799 & Nancy Thomas, 355-8069
Communications Outreach Committee	Lucille Wallace, 955-5266 & Rich Sandler, 412-0906
Contact Staff	Gail Colella, 924-2848; Jane Grundy, 377-2229 & George Milburn, 927-2555
Denominational Affairs	Rick Sandler, 412-0906
Elves	Marie Millett, 351-6281
Emerson Memorial Garden	Diane Happy, 316-6499
Film Discussion	Louise King, 379-0849
Finance	Richard Happy, 316-6499
Forum	John Stinespring, 922-8141
French Conversation	Eva Frank, 925-4643
Fund Raising:	
Service Auction	Shirley Foss, 377-6182 & Marie Keeney, 350-9868
Flea Market	Ron Brown, 922-0883
Get-Together Suppers	Jeanie Craig, 751-5194 & Joanne Curtis, 929-0578
Interweave	Ron Brown, 922-0883

L.E.A.P.	Catherine Dente, 921-1598
Library	Valerie Kerwin, 923-6716
Membership Development	Joanne Curtis, 929-0578; Jeanie Craig, 751-5194 & Mira Frederick, 921-6594
Memorial Services	Diane Happy, 316-6499 & Dee Widder, 377-9028
Music	Don DeMaio, 371-8118; Diane Nichols, 492-4870
Nominating	Lea Hall, 928-0745
Program Council	Bill Orcutt, 351-6769
Religious Exploration	Mary Lou Keller, 377-9815
Second Sunday Potlucks	Tom & Kathy Cook, 923-1909
Social Concerns	Julie Leach, 312-9774 & Susan Hallock, 918-1342
Stewardship	Jeanie Craig, 751-5194
Sunday Celebrations	Klaus Obermeit, 780-7763
Sunday Service Arrangements	Louise King, 379-0849
Tribute Fund	Esther Martin, 923-2177
UU Service Committee	Sue Sherman, 922-5090
Volunteer Coordinator	June Brasgalla, 379-6071 & Kathy Cook, 923-1909

MINISTER'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

Of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota
19 March 2009

During each of my five years in seminary, I was most appreciative of how every year would end with an annual assessment of our progress. Particularly, I liked the format of this annual check in because it first listed the “congratulations,” or those things for which we have made notable progress, followed by the “challenges,” or those things for which we might want to invest more energy. Not only did I find this affirming in my work, but I liked its shared quality: congratulations and challenges are, by their nature, extended *between* parties. Thus, it feels right to use this format as we conclude another year of ministry together.

Let me first begin by offering my sincere and heartfelt gratitude for all that we have done and might do: this is a mighty congregation with a mighty ministry! Let me also say how proud I am that our congratulations far outweigh any of the challenges we might face. This is a testament to your caring and your commitment.

Congratulations:

Our stewardship drive for this year is by far one of the most impressive things I've seen in parish ministry. During hard economic times—times when other churches are scrambling to

make up the gaps in their pledge numbers—we have pledged over our budget goal. If that were not impressive enough, we have pledged just a few dollars short of last year’s numbers even as many of our investments took up to a forty percent hit!

I cannot thank Jeannie Craig and Sue Moreland enough for all of their hard work for which we all stand to benefit from it. In fact, conducting the “stewardship parties” these women got right to work making sure your suggestions were heard and forwarded to the appropriate committees for consideration.

Our music program is another area in which we have made significant improvement. Because of your generosity we were able to hire a section leader/soloist. The results have been great. The choir is more confident and they have a strong sound. As well, because the soloist is also our second pianist, Jan has been able to enjoy some time off to be with her family.

More telling though is that the choir is slowly growing both in repertoire and in numbers. This is a good sign. And with the recent teaming between Diane Nichols and Don DeMaio to book guest musicians, there is a renewed energy and interest in offering some diverse and exceptional music.

Though church governance isn’t quite as sexy as parties and music, it is important and necessary work—especially as we continue to understand ourselves as a “program sized” church versus other models. The board, under the leadership of Gail Colella, has done an outstanding job these past two years in getting some great organizational work done: We now have an updated policy manual. We have committee charters. And we have a roles and responsibilities “matrix.”

This will be especially helpful in the future when we wonder, as we’re wont to do, “Who’s job is that?” One look at the matrix tells all. And when more clarity is needed, the excellently edited policy manual (thank you Catherine Dente!) has the details. This is an excellent start on some of the most difficult transitional work UU churches face. I commend all on the board for their work on this part of our congregational life.

Challenges

Though adequate staffing has been talked about among the leadership this year, this is really only the beginning of a larger conversation. What are our staffing needs? Well, experienced church consultants suggest one full-time program staff person (not including administration) for about every 125 people. This means, ideally, we would be best served by adding two professional positions. This could be an assistant minister or an intern or a chaplain or a religious educator.

The right amount of additional staff and which combination, if at all, will require further study on the part of the leadership. It would also someday require a financial commitment, too. The challenge right now, as I see it, is to stay in the conversation. We should not shy away from dreaming just because these are difficult economic times. In fact, if this year is any indication, this congregation is in strong support of its people and its programs.

Church governance is another area for which I would encourage us to keep a healthy conversation going. I have congratulated the board for their hard work in this area, but the board does not work alone.

In the area of communication and shared leadership, for example, the board needs your help. Is yours the kind of group or committee that keeps in touch with the board, letting them know what your wants and needs are? Is yours a group open to new members?

Unless we can answer yes to these kinds of questions, we're likely to have communication problems. That's why I'm especially grateful to Don DeMaio and Rick Sandler for getting our website contract together. Now we have a Members Area on the site where you can both keep informed and keep others informed about all the wonderful work we do together.

I hope my sharing these thoughts will inspire much conversation: in appreciation for what is going good and in earnest for the work yet to be done. I have every confidence that this year's challenges will become next year's congratulations. Because I have faith in us. Now and always.

With my gratitude for all that we mean to one another and to the wider world, I remain.

Yours,
The Reverend Roger C. Peltier

STUDENT MINISTER'S REPORT

It's been a real privilege to serve UUCS as student minister this past year. Through the skillful supervision of Rev. Roger and the loving support of the congregation, I've been blessed with a wonderful series of learning opportunities. I've been able to preach four times at our church with three more preaching dates scheduled for this spring. I've also been invited to preach at four other UU congregations up and down the west coast of Florida. I've become an active participant in the Gulfcoast Affirming Interfaith Network (GAIN), our local alliance of progressive congregations, and have been able to participate in two community interfaith services. In addition, I've preached at two other GAIN member congregations. I've been able to support the great work of the Caring committee by providing a little pastoral care, and had the opportunity to facilitate a series of board workshops focused on improving church governance. I've become more involved with denominational affairs—attending GA, serving on the planning committee to host the Florida District Assembly at our church, co-presenting a workshop on Ethical Eating, and helping Meadville Lombard garner support for its mission to reinvent education for the next generation of UU ministers. Most exciting to me, though, is that we've been able to launch our Shoulder-to-Shoulder Interfaith House project with Habitat for Humanity. With the energetic support of the Social Justice committee and the whole congregation, we've invited a number of other GAIN-member congregations to join us; we've signed up 125 members of our own members as volunteers; and we have raised over \$88,000 so far, including a \$14,000 grant we secured from the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program. Our house is on track to be completed in May, and we'll celebrate together at the homeowner dedication as we hand over the keys to Ms. Latoya Robinson and her two-year-old daughter. Ms. Robinson is a lifelong resident of Orange Avenue public housing where she has been living with her mother.

Thanks to your generosity of spirit, I'm getting exactly the experiences I need to become the kind of flexible and multi-functional minister that our denomination demands. I will end my official student ministry at UUCS at the end of June. Then, starting in September I will begin a year-long internship as a full-time Resident Chaplain at Tampa General Hospital, under the supervision of Rev. Sara Zimmerman of the UU Church of Tampa and Rev. Dr. Bill Baugh, director of Pastoral Care at TGH. Under UUA credentialing rules, my internship must take place somewhere other than my home church, but in approving my internship plan both the UUA Ministerial Credentialing Department and Meadville Lombard took special note of the quality and breadth of the student ministry experience I've had at UUCS. They recognized

what I already know-- this has been a hugely formative experience that has taught me much about what it means to do ministry in a vital and caring church. I'm deeply grateful to all of you for making that possible.

In Faith and Love, Brock Leach

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Rev. Roger Peltier closed out his first full year as our minister in June and was happily welcomed back in September to start his second year.

We've had an exciting, busy and successful year. The board has continued work on church governance and board members have put in many extra hours to that end. All board meetings are open to all members and friends who wish to attend as observers.

Work continues on the Program Council as we move from a pastoral church to a program church. Part of this process involved having each committee write a charter, putting forth what that particular committee is called to do. This helps explain to newcomers and veterans alike exactly how and to what purpose each committee functions. The Program Council has eight cluster chairs who will meet monthly. Each committee should take any problem or question to their cluster chairperson, who will bring it to the Program Council. Our thanks go to Bill Orcutt for spearheading this most important job.

Our fund-raising activities all were great triumphs this year. Ron Brown chaired a very well attended and successful Flea Market with the help of many volunteers in the congregation. The Artisans, headed by Nancy Sciore, shared the South Wing with the Flea Market for their annual sale on the same day. In January, Marie Keeney and Shirley Foss, with the help of Louise King and their committee of hard-working volunteers, staged our Serendipity Silent Auction, which was our biggest fund-raising effort yet – and again this year, it broke all records! Thanks to all who contributed good and services and worked so hard on all these events!

We've also hosted many special events over the past year. Thanks to Rick Sandler, world-renowned jazz pianist Dick Hyman gave a very successful concert here in May. On Mother's Day, we had our annual Standing Women for Peace in front of the church. We welcomed the UU troubadour, Jim Scott, back for a concert during the summer. And, at our Gala Celebration at the close of the Stewardship Drive, Rev. Meg Barnhouse entertained us with her songs and humor. She also graced our pulpit the following Sunday. We send many thanks to Jeanie Craig and Sue Moreland for spearheading the Stewardship Drive and thanks to all those who made the Gala Celebration such a success. To close out our last month of the fiscal year, we hosted Rev. Dr. William F. Schulz, former UUA president and former director of Amnesty International USA, who was our Rose Frank lecturer on March 1. He was also our guest minister in the pulpit the same day. Through the year, Klaus Obermeit and the Celebrations Committee filled our pulpit with many interesting speakers over the summer and the Sunday when Rev. Roger Peltier was not in the pulpit.

I would like to thank our amazing staff. First, thanks to our incredible office administrator, Sandy Theiss, who continues to be tireless in her efforts and who is always efficient and affable. The wonderful Ginny Griesè leads our growing Religious Exploration program. Musically, we are fortunate to have Choir Director Paul Lewis leading our ever-expanding choir; Jan Dorsett as our fabulous pianist, and David Katz, our wonderful baritone soloist, who plays piano when Jan has a Sunday off and also sings with the choir. Our church has been blessed by the continuing help of our excellent custodian, Katherine Isabelle. Thanks to you all for making our lives easier, richer and more enjoyable.

As we close out this church year, we look forward to continued progress toward becoming a program church and continuing to grow in love and understanding in our church and in the community. Thank you to each one of you for your caring and your dedication to the workings of this wonderful church.

Gail Colella, President

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009

From every indication we will end our fiscal year 2008-2009 about even, or perhaps a little ahead. Faithful pledge payments and a very successful Serendipity Auction have kept our income at the level we needed it to be to match our expenses. These two sources of income made up for the slight loss we had in dividend and interest income because of the deteriorating economy in 2008.

If Mr. Market wasn't kind to us last year at least Mother Nature was. We had no major damage to our buildings and grounds as the hurricane season came and went without incident. We did have a pole blown down in a windstorm last spring and some of our flat roofs developed leaks but we were able to have these repaired at minimal cost. And what a lovely surprise we received in our new kitchen, which was obtained at no cost to the church because Diane Happy applied for and was given a grant for the renovation.

The amount we collect for our special collections continues to astound. In 2008 we collected a total of \$26,689.33 which was directed to 12 different organizations: Living Tradition Fund, Sarasota Manatee Association for Riding Therapy, Genesis, Habitat Interfaith House, All Faiths Food Bank, Myanmar Cyclone Relief, YMCA Youth Shelter, Special Collection for UU Knoxville, Tennessee congregation, The Peace Education and Action Center, Sarasota / Manatee Farmworker's Support, Family Promise, and Shoulder to Shoulder Habitat Interfaith House. In November, our collection went as usual to Guest at Your Table. The generosity of our congregation is really quite something.

My first year as Treasurer was one filled with learning, along with a deep and grateful appreciation for the people who lead this church, and who helped me throughout. I was especially fortunate to have Dick Happy, as chair of Finance, and Diane Happy as ex-Treasurer, whose combined experience and knowledge of the church is beyond measure. And for the services of our office administrator Sandy Thiess, whose skill and grace keeps us glued and on track, I can't say enough. To you the congregation, my thanks for the continued and faithful financial support you provide, keeping UUCS in sound financial health, and for placing your trust in me to serve as your Treasurer.

Barbara DeMaio, Treasurer

UUCS ENDOWMENT BOARD

The UUCS Endowment Fund is a separate corporation from the Church, but its membership is the same as that of the Church. The affairs of the Fund are conducted by the Endowment Board. There are five elected members of the Board. For the past year they have been Jim Craig (vice president), Jim Keeney (treasurer), Marie Millett, Tam Milton (secretary), and Charles Peirce (president). The sixth voting member is the Treasurer of the Church (Barbara DeMaio). The minister and the president of the congregation are ex-officio members of the Board.

The duties of the Board include promoting and maintaining the Endowment Fund. The past fiscal year of the Fund, ending on December 31, 2008 was a difficult one as shown in the accompanying Treasurer's Report. The Fund is virtually totally invested in the UUA Common

Endowment Fund. The diversification of that fund resulted in a moderated investment decline of approximately 22.5%. Cash contributions to the Fund were also the lowest in several years. During the past year the Board devoted considerable time to the analysis of investment results and to the prudent investment of the funds in our custody.

The Board is indebted to Marie Millett, who has completed the maximum allowed three terms including service as Secretary and President. We also thank each of you who have contributed to the Fund and hope you will consider it when making contributions or doing estate planning.

We welcome your questions about the ways in which you may contribute to the Fund. The Endowment Fund helps insure that there will always be a Unitarian Universalist Church in Sarasota.

Charles Peirce, President

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our objective is to increase church membership and encourage new members to become active in the life of the church. The committee serves as the front line of our congregation for visitors and potential new members. We greet them before Sunday services at the Welcome Center, provide nametags and offer a chance to give and obtain information. Newcomers are offered further opportunities to learn more about our church after the Sunday service at a special table in the courtyard.

“Discovering UU,” an orientation for new and prospective members, is a joint effort of the committee and the minister held twice each year. This is a get-acquainted session at which the minister provides information on our UU history and principles, and committee chairs and board members tell about our many church activities. The bi-annual New Member

Recognition Sunday Service introduces new members to the congregation. Biographical information and interest data enable our volunteer coordinator and the committee chairs to integrate and involve them quickly in the vital life of the church community.

The committee continues to provide census information for the church and for the national organization. Monthly meetings are held to discuss the needs of visitors and new members. All members of the church are welcome to join the committee.

CHOIR

If you've ever thought, "Hey, I'd like to try singing in the choir," this is your big chance. Just show up at Thursday night rehearsal and give it a go. There are no tryouts, like in choirs where people are actually expected to be able to read music. All voices are welcome, and tenors are especially welcome. The choir practices every Thursday night from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, and we sing at the 10:30 am church service two Sundays a month. We take July and August off. We have an accomplished accompanist (Jan Dorsett), and we have a good time singing. For more information, call Paul Lewis at 379-9854.

Paul Lewis, Choir Director

CONTACT NEWSLETTER AND OUR WEBSITE

Contact continues to be a monthly publication. This year, in order to save on mailing costs, we have decided to discontinue sending *Contact* through the mail. Those of you without a computer and the Internet and who cannot get to church will continue to have your copies mailed to you. Everyone else is asked to pick up their copy at church. They should be available the third Sunday of each month. We continue to be an incredibly busy church, so we ask that contributors keep their items as short as possible so everyone's news can be included. This is a busy church and there are many committees and groups who want to get their messages out.

You may read the current edition of *Contact* on line as well as a year of back issues. Our website is www.uusarasota.org.

Gail Colella, Jane Grundy and George Milburn, *Contact* Editors

ARCHIVE

Richard Happy and Jim Raudabaugh continue to collect material for the church history begun by Furman Arthur. We add documents to the church archive files and welcome items about members of our church and church related events.

ARTISANS

The Artisans are a small but enthusiastic group who meet every Wednesday during the year creating articles to sell at the Holiday Fair. This year the fair was held on Saturday, November 22, 2008. We also created the decorations and centerpieces for the Celebrations Dinner on February 21, 2009.

Members of the Artisans who contribute their time and talents are Gail Collela, Audrey Grover, Jane Grundy, Diane Happy, Esther Martin, Terry Murphy, Nancy van Roekens, Phyllis Stevens and Phyllis Wynne.

We are always looking for new members; so if you are so inclined, please join us in the Jefferson room on Wednesday mornings.

Nancy Sciore, Chair

ARTS COUNCIL

All Church members interested in any of the arts are welcome to join the Arts Council. We meet the first Saturday of every month in the Church Gallery. The mission of the UU Arts Council is to provide opportunities for artistic expression and appreciation within the church and to work within the following guidelines:

*organize and manage exhibits in the South Wing and Jefferson Room, giving scheduling preference to member artist;

*initiate, stimulate, and promote events involving the arts as part of programming for children and adults;

*facilitate and encourage the inclusion of artistic expression as part of church programming;

*review proposed gifts of art works and their location, making recommendations to the Board of Trustees

*and consult on matters of general beautification of the Church buildings and grounds as stated in the Church by-laws.

This year Council increased the number of sponsored gallery exhibits to every month January through April to take advantage of the increased Church attendance. A percentage of the artist commission is given to the Church. Artists interested in being considered for an exhibit should contact the Exhibits Coordinator for an application to be juried. **Judi Hennard** (373.0530) continues to serve as Chair. **Philip Winsor** (358-1417) is Recording Secretary, pro tem; **Cathy Cyrus** (359.9511) is Exhibits Coordinator; **Arline Leven** (342.9853) is Assistant Exhibits Coordinator and **Kathy Cook** (923.1909) is Reception Coordinator.

AUDIO

1. Our primary function is to set up and operate the sound system for Sunday morning services, memorial services and other church functions as needed.

2. Church services are recorded on CD's with backup on audiocassettes, which are then available to members. Louise King makes copies of CD's for individuals to purchase/rent for \$5.00. Memorial services are recorded and given to the family.
3. Individuals who operated the sound system this year include: David Jemison, Richard Czina, Klaus Obermeit, George Gannett, Zac Keller, and Gail Perr Czina. The committee would like to train additional volunteers to help with the system. In addition, numerous others have helped with handling the roving wireless hand mikes.
4. A portable amplifier with two wireless microphones is available for enhancement at the Sunday morning Forums, committee meetings and for other similar events.
5. Assisted hearing devices are available for individuals with hearing problems. There are currently 14 units available. Eight to ten have been used during any given service.
6. The podium microphone diaphragm was changed to improve feedback suppression.
7. The sound booth has been brought up to wiring code.
8. Rear speakers shelves were constructed and installed. The rear speakers were relocated to them, greatly improving sound in the rear half of the Sanctuary.
9. A remote volume control box and cords were constructed and installed to allow the rear sound amplifiers to be moved to above the sound booth eliminating fan noise and heat in the booth.
10. Continue to replace old wiring.
11. Possible design for sound absorption panels and updated lighting and projection systems were presented.
12. Major expenses for sound systems have been moved from a line item in the church budget to discretionary fund.

Gail Perr Czina Sound co-coordinator

BED AND BREAKFAST

This year 2008-2009, we have advertised in UU World, fall, winter and spring issues and their website at a cost of \$375. Another ad was placed in UU're Home book and website for \$37. With more advertising we have had many more inquiries. We provide a maximum one-week stay for our guests, most inquire come December - March. For the fiscal year to date we have taken in \$2,035 (as of 3/20/09). New volunteer hosts are always welcome.

Logan Nicholson and Ron Brown, Co-Chairs

BRIDGE FOR FUN

Bridge is held at the church in the Jefferson Room twice a month—the first and third Thursdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. We play four hands and then change partners and tables. We usually have 2 to 4 tables, play four rounds, and finish before 10 p.m. There is a charge of \$1.00 for the evening. Players sign up for the next game or phone Mira or Gary to register to

play. All who sign up are expected to appear on the appointed night or call one of us in sufficient time for a replacement to be found.

Mira Frederick 921-6594 or Gary Barnes 925-7611

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

BUILDINGS

There is never an uneventful year in the life of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. Our main problems this year had to do with our roofs, our electrical systems, and the flooring in the minister's office.

Our roofing concerns surfaced from leaks in the South Wing and in the walkway near the kitchen. Degenerating scuppers caused the South Wing leaks. Replacing the scuppers cost about \$2500. The walkway leaks were patched. At some point in the near future we are going to have to replace both roofs. We have put some money aside, but not nearly enough.

The electrical expense came as a result of a visit by the fire marshal. He was concerned about some of the electrical circuits in the Sanctuary and fixing those to his satisfaction cost another \$2500.

The carpeting in the minister's office was ten years old and had to be replaced. Years of leaks and heavy use had taken its toll and it had become positively disreputable! We replaced the carpeting with wooden flooring. It both looks nice and is practical.

The costs for these three areas were shared by both the operating budget and from the general contingency fund.

Special thanks from Buildings and Grounds go to Church member Judi Hennard who refurbished our stained glass windows in our Sanctuary. Her hard work saved the church thousands of dollars.

We have asked for a slight increase in our budget for the coming year, anticipating the replacement of the toilets in the men's bathroom as well as unanticipated problems with our aging physical structures.

Jill Delano, Chair

GROUNDS

"Maintenance" was the watchword for the volunteer grounds crew this year. Most of our efforts were put into maintaining and improving existing plants and existing gardens by trimming, shaping and mulching. We filled up the debris bins so quickly that our landscapers from Devine Design thought we must have dozens of volunteers out clipping and pruning. Alas, were it only so!

We did have a major project or two: we removed the scraggly hibiscus that were lining the south facing wall of the South Wing and replaced them with Variegated Abricola. The new plantings provide a cleaner look and are easier to take care of. We have also enhanced the butterfly garden in the north end of the Sanctuary.

Saving trees is important to the grounds committee so we have roped off a second tree – located in the grassy parking area to the south of the South Wing. Roping off the area surrounding two of our trees does reduce our parking by several spaces (and parking is important, particularly during "the season"), but in this case we chose "form over function".

We have faced two major threats from Mother Nature this year: drought and frost. The Sarasota drought is in its third year (last year's rain deficit was 20 inches), stressing both plants and our gardeners. As noted in last year's report, we are trying to be good citizens by using drought resistant plants, collecting what rainfall there is in rain barrels and cisterns (we added another cistern this year), and watering only sparingly and mostly by hand. To add to our woes, we had two separate periods of frost this year. Most plants survived, but we lost almost all our "Moses in the Cradle" ground plants. Of the two afflictions, the biggest challenge we face is the drought.

We are indebted to our custodian Katherine Isabelle, and our loyal volunteers (George Gannett, Dick Happy, Jack Sims and Pat Sindlinger) who have worked so hard to keep our grounds in such good shape.

Diane Happy, Grounds Chair

CARING

The Caring Committee provides short-term care to those who need help with rides to doctors and church, who wish visitors, meals and companion. In concert with the minister's approval, we activate email and telephone tree notifications when necessary. We also send cards and make phone calls to those who are infirmed. During Milestones on Sunday, the chair informs the Congregation of member situations. Holiday cards are sent to those who cannot get to church. In the fall we held an afternoon tea for our senior women as a way of keeping them in touch with Rev. Roger. About 30 women attended the festivities. We also held a seminar on "Dying a Natural Death" with Rev. Francesca Hughes. Members of the Caring Committee are: Nan Billings, Gail Czina, Joan Pabian, Sue Sherman, Anne Balekdjian, Lisa Kramer, Doris O'Hara, Joyce Schneider, Phyllis Stevens, Dee Widder, chair and Brock Leach, student minister. Thank you to Rev. Roger Peltier for his counsel.

Dee Widder, Chair

COMMITTEE COUNCIL

The Committee Council consists of representatives from every UUUCS standing committee. Its most important function is to facilitate inter-committee communication. Representatives have an opportunity to share their committee activity with others, to discuss mutual problems, and to look for solutions to those problems. In the past year, the Committee Council met in May, September and January. At those meetings, the council helps to establish the calendar of events, and schedule facilities utilization for succeeding months.

Bill Orcutt, Vice President

COMMITTEE ON SHARED MINISTRY (COSM)

The Committee on Shared Ministry grew from the Committee on Ministry because COSM more accurately describes our purpose. The basic premise underlying the COSM is that all of us - members, friends, and ministers - are responsible for "ministering to each other". It means helping and supporting each other and working together as a congregation on the things we collectively think are important and that enable this church community to function. Members of the COSM are charged with taking our pulse and encouraging all to make changes or to develop new ideas, programs, or activities when a need or desire becomes evident. COSM

members have no role in governance or setting policies but are to help find ways to work together collectively.

In our charter we list our specific duties as:

- (1) Evaluate the total ministry of the church, i.e., clergy, lay-leadership, volunteers, staff, members, friends, and children.
- (2) Facilitate pathways to build partnerships within the ministries of the church and achieve positive solutions to broaden the ministries.
- (3) Coordinate periodic assessments of the shared ministry through open dialogue, “cottage” meetings, surveys, etc., to assure that the shared ministry is as effective as possible.
- (4) Recommend and actively support changes and additions to the total ministry based on results achieved from periodic assessments.

Jim Raudabaugh and Nancy Thomas, Co-Chairs

COMMUNICATION OUTREACH

The purpose of the Communication Outreach Committee is to provide consistent marketing, advertising, and public relations support for the church in all its outreach efforts to the public. This includes the following: press releases, newspaper and magazine advertisements, information about the Sunday service, keeping our church website up-to-date, publicizing special events, etc.

This year, the Committee promoted a special event at E-fest, the largest environmentally friendly event in Sarasota County. We had a booth at the event where we handed out church material. This resulted in increased awareness and visits to the church. We also promoted the Bill Schulz presentation.

Lucille Wallace and Rick Sandler, Co-Chairs

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

The purpose of the Denominational Affairs Committee is to increase awareness of Unitarian Universalism through cooperation with the Southwest Cluster, with the Florida District, and with national affiliates. Southwest Cluster churches include: Bradenton (Manatee Fellowship), Fort Myers, Naples, Port Charlotte, Venice, and Sarasota. UUCS’s representatives to the Cluster are: Rick Sandler, Lura Bradberry, Ruth Sheridan, and Nan Billings.

The SW Cluster holds two meetings each year, one in the Fall, and one in the Spring.

The Florida District Annual meeting will be held March 20-22; we are the host church for this event.

The Denominational Affairs Committee is also responsible for notifying UUCS members about the General Assembly and encouraging members to attend and to represent our church as delegates at the convention. This year, GA will be held in Salt Lake City from June 23-28.

Rick Sandler, Chair

ELVES FOR CONTACT

This past year we have continued to mail "Contact" by first class mail monthly. Thanks to the following people for their help in folding, labeling, and stamping the newsletter. These

include Sally Nelson, Ruth Sheridan, Gene Elliot, Joan Fletcher, Louise King, Becky Milburn, Nancy Garst, Boris Pundick, Dorothy Conlon, Herb and Audrey Grover, Peggy Caywood, Marlene Blood, Alma Manley, Laurel Peterman, Bob Meredith, Joan Osmer, and Nancy Garst.

Beginning with this next month our monthly mailing will be reduced to decrease our environmental imprint and budget item. Members will receive their newsletter on line, pick up a printed copy at church or if neither of those options are feasible, receive it by first class mail.

Thanks to Gail Colella, Jane Grundy, and George Milburn who prepare the copy and to Sandy Theiss who has the printed copies ready for us on the Tuesday following the Thursday deadline.

Marie Millett, Chair

EMERSON LIBRARY and BOOKTABLE

The **Emerson Library** is a wonderful resource for all types of non-fiction reading. The library committee keeps it up to date with donations and purchases. Members of the committee review all donations; maintain order in the library, and track circulation for future acquisitions. The Library committee also collects, displays, and sells books at our annual church Rummage Sale.

The after-church **Booktable** is a service of our Emerson Library Committee. Most of the books for sale have been ordered from the UUA Bookstore, but some selections are suggested by members and are ordered separately. The library also has many donated books that for various reasons we cannot use, and some of those are included for sale on Sundays. The sale of these donations helps to fund the library acquisitions and the Booktable selections. The Booktable is open on the first Sunday of each month and sometimes on additional Sundays.

Valerie Kerwin, Chair

EMERSON MEMORIAL GARDEN

There have been no major changes to the Memorial Garden this year. The volunteer gardening crew and custodian Katherine Isabelle have been active in keeping the garden in good shape by watering, weeding, mulching and planting. The Memorial Garden Restricted Fund (to maintain the garden in perpetuity) now stands at approximately \$21,000.

We had 4 internments in the garden this year and the appropriate plaques have been placed on the outside wall of the Sanctuary.

As usual I am grateful to Katherine and the group of volunteers (George Gannett, Dick Happy, Isabel and Joanne Oake, Pat Sindlinger, and Jack Sims) who work year round to keep the Garden in such good shape.

Diane Happy, Chair

FILM DISCUSSION GROUP

The Film Group met very few times this year due to lack of interest and lack of interesting films. Normally we would meet on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 pm but, as interest has dwindled, we feel that this group should be discontinued.

Louise King, Chair

FORUM

The Forum meets weekly from 9:30 am to 10:15 am on Sunday. The Forum Committee chooses topics and welcomes suggestions from the congregation. Each week a topic is presented by a Committee member or a guest in 15 minutes, leaving 30 minutes for discussion by attendees. Spiritual, social, psychological, political and fun topics are presented. Attendance typically ranges between 30 and 60.

John Stinespring, Chair

FREE THINKERS

The First Friday Freethinkers were organized in February of 2008. The essence of Freethinking is: 1. No party line. 2. No absolutes 3. No censorship 4. No sacred books and 5. No sacred names. Some of the topics discussed at our monthly meetings include: the Humanist Manifestos, Influence of the media, Politics in the pulpit, Spirituality, Humanism, and the History of Unbelief. Attendance has increased to as many as fifty over the course of the year. A Special Program was presented on March 8, 2009 in the Sanctuary in which sixty persons attended. The program was entitled, "Leaving the Pulpit, the Confessional and the Habit" in which Richard Dewey (an ex-Lutheran minister, Jack O'Sullivan (an ex-Roman Catholic Priest), and Catherine Dente (an ex-Sister of Mercy) participated in the panel discussion moderated by Tom Dente. We plan to present a varied and exciting program for the coming year. Any questions, phone Tom Dente, 921-1598.

Tom Dente, Chair

FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP

The French Conversation Group meets every Monday from 7 pm to 8:30 pm. The group is made up of people who have studied the language and who want to improve their fluency and verbal skills in order to communicate in French speaking countries. Attendance varies from 5 to 10-12 each Monday. The conversations are varied, from personal experiences to broader topics. We also read from selected texts, which are then translated and discussed. Occasionally, the group has gone to see French films and discussed them in class. Future experiences might be a meal at a French restaurant or going to an art exhibition and discussing the works.

Eva Frank, Chair

FUND RAISING:

SERVICE AUCTION

THANKS TO YOU FOR SERENDIPITY AUCTION SUCCESS

The Serendipity Auction was a big success due to the involvement of all of you. We think we have made over \$21,600 which is above our goal. We want to thank the generous donors of the many great items allowing us to have something to sell. Thanks to the bidders who so generously bid on the many opportunities. Many members help to make the event a success...the refreshment team, the table supervisors, the assemblers of the booklet, the collectors of the money for the bids, the ticket sellers...if I were to list all the individuals who gave of their time and talents individually it would consume the report. There were over 50 volunteers who helped make this a financial success for our operating budget of the church.

We must list Louise King who had successfully chaired this event in past years and who helped us with details and pitched in and printed the bid sheets, bought balloons, organized the bidding in the two areas and was totally supportive in every way. Marie Keeney designed a computer system to do the individual bids and offerings and figured out the financial bills and then gave days of her time to single handedly print out all the receipts.

This event is a marvelous method to learn about our fellow members by bidding to enjoy fantastic brunches, marvelous dinners, exciting excursions, consultations with experts on computers and to raise our awareness of the many talents in our congregation. Start now to think creatively of how you can support this event by volunteering to be on the committee, assist on the auction day, plan a fun party or by saving to bid next year.
THANKS TO YOU ALL.

Shirley Foss and Marie Keeney Co-chairs

FLEA MARKET SALE

Our congregation had a successful Flea Market and Craft Fair on Saturday, November 22, 2008 netting more than \$6,600. Altogether we had about a fifty volunteers, many of whom are new members and old friends. In addition to the pleasure of knowing we were helping raise funds for the church, volunteers enjoyed getting to know each other better. The three days prior to the sale were spent sorting and pricing goods donated by our generous members and friends. We were very pleased with the quality and quantity of the donations. By late Friday, we were ready for the Presale for Volunteers and a lovely Wine and Cheese Reception chaired by Jeanie Craig and with delicious refreshments provided by many volunteers.

The Sanctuary was filled with attractively displayed kitchen and other household items, holiday decorations, office items, children's games and toys, sports equipment, hardware and tools. Furniture was in the Jefferson room, books were in the Committee Room and out into the courtyard, and the South Wing had been turned into a charming boutique and fine art area. Crafts were located both inside and out. Our church bakers supplied us with delicious goodies for a sale table. We had an excellent turnout, and everyone enjoyed socializing and shopping during the evening.

The next morning we opened to the public at 8:30 am and lasted until 12:30 pm. Our resident clown, Marie Millett, a bright sign and balloons helped attract potential shoppers from the road. She also entertained shoppers during the morning. We had a steady stream of buyers who appreciated the opportunity to purchase quality merchandise at modest prices. Our volunteers helped them locate and select their goods, and the cashiers, stationed in the Sanctuary, courtyard, and South Wing did a fine job. Barbara DeMaio made sure our money was properly accounted for and secured. Don DeMaio & Jill DeLano staffed the food table of hot dogs and beverages, Janis Williams took charge of the baked goods, and Tom Cook made coffee. Phyllis Stevens & June Brasgalla sold 50/50 raffle tickets. Valerie Kerwin and Ruth Agnew arranged and organized hundreds of books and Terry Murphy, Sue Moreland and others volunteers created an artistically displayed boutique, and the Crafters provided a variety

of beautiful and creative crafts. In addition to the area chairs who worked long hours, others--Harlene Henderson, Jennie Berg, and Carol Brown worked an extraordinary number of hours. And a final thanks also to Joanne Curtis whose help was greatly appreciated, Katherine Isabelle and all those who helped clean the Sanctuary and ready it for a morning's Sunday Service, and for all the cashiers and others who weren't mentioned by name, but without whose effort the Market would not have been a success.

Ron Brown, Chair

GET TOGETHER SUPPERS

Get-Together Dinners continue to be a popular way for new and prospective congregation members, as well as longer-term members, to meet and become better acquainted. Dinner parties of from six to ten are held in homes the fourth Saturday evening of each month. Over seventy people regularly participate in these shared dinners. Louise King and Dee Widder were in charge of Get-Together arrangements until January when Jeanie Craig and Joanne Curtis took over that responsibility.

Signup forms for the dinners are available in the courtyard on Sundays or forms can be downloaded from the church website. Even easier, signup can now be done directly on the church website. There is a policy that guests who cancel must find their own replacements. That has worked well most of the time, but those who are uncertain about their plans are encouraged to put themselves on the Wait List rather than sign up for a dinner and then cancel. Most people who place themselves on a Wait List do get an invitation to a dinner.

An ongoing problem has been to find enough people who are able to give rides to those who cannot drive so that we don't put the same people together repeatedly. A possible solution to this is for a person who needs a ride to ask a friend who drives to sign up for a specific month with him/her as a duo. We hope to have even more people participate in these interesting and sociable evenings.

Jeannie Craig and Joanne Curtis, Co-chairs

INTERWEAVE

Interweave Sarasota is part of a nationwide group of straight and gay people who celebrate diversity and campaign to foster understanding and to bring a halt to hate crimes and prejudice. We continue to explore diverse issues, and extend our efforts beyond just GLBT issues toward consciously becoming inclusive and welcoming of all diversity.

We meet the third Sundays of each month for a Potluck, and this year started a guest speaker program. Also we host a once-a-month movie night to see and discuss movies, which include an element of diversity. During the past year we participated in a world AIDS Day Remembrance service at the church, helped sponsor a GAIN interfaith service, participated in Sarasota PrideFest at the Van Wezel, and participated in construction of the Shoulder-to-Shoulder Habitat for Humanity home.

Ron Brown, Chair

L.E.A.P. (Life Enrichment Adult Programs)

Early 2008 saw the conclusion of the popular LEAP/Small Group course called "The Meaning of Life: A Study of Existentialism," facilitated by **Klaus Obermeit**. **Chris and Dick Dungan**

conducted their popular lunchtime discussion group called "Chew and View," primed by viewing old segments of Northern Exposure. **Carolyn Logan** offered "The Art of French," employing her innovative approach for learning a foreign language. **Isabel Oake** conducted a six-week workshop on liturgical dance called "Let It Be a Dance." **Rev Francesca Hughes** led the study of "The Spirituality of World Religions."

In the fall of 2008, LEAP sponsored these courses: "A Holy Curiosity" taught by **Rev Roger Peltier**. **Nancy Thomas** repeated the excellent "Islam" video lecture series taught by Professor John Esposito. **Dorothy Conlon** taught a course called "Gentle Yoga for All Ages." **Jim Craig** led discussions on "The Historical Jesus," a Teaching Company video course with Professor Bart Ehrman. LEAP also experimented with a Sunday afternoon lecture series called "From Jesus to Constantine." Discussion leaders were **Mark Anderson, Jim Raudabaugh, Klaus Obermeit, Sara Anderson, and Dom Martia**. The number of attendees varied from week to week, but participants found the videos and discussions very worthwhile.

Anyone in the congregation who would like to give a short course is warmly invited to contact Catherine Dente at 921-1598. She will assist you with logistics and publicize the courses.
Catherine Dente, Chair

MEMORIAL SERVICES

We support the minister by coordinating the music, flowers, setup of the Sanctuary or Memorial Garden, simple refreshments, guest book, sound technicians, ushers and other volunteers who assist as needed. We also visit the family at the minister's request. We have participated in 7 memorial services this year.

Diane Happy and Dee Widder, Co-Chairs

MUSIC

First, a warm and heartfelt "thank you" to the dedicated people on this year's music committee: Sara Anderson, Ellen Cone, Gail Perr Czina, Don DeMaio, Jan Dorsett, Harriet Frink, Bernie Leigh, Paul Lewis, Esther Martin, Klaus Obermeit, Nancy Sciore, Pat Sindlinger, and ex-officio, Rev. Roger Peltier. If I've forgotten anyone, it's unintentional, and Thank You, too! A special "thank you" is in order for Marie Millett, our music librarian--we and I appreciate all the work you do to keep our choir music organized and in the folders!

The Music Committee meets every four to six weeks, October to May, Thursdays at 6:45 p.m. If you are interested in supporting our ever-expanding music ministry, please join our committee or attend a meeting (and stay for our weekly 7:30 choir practice, too. No audition required! Tenors especially welcome!).

We have had yet another fun and productive year in the choir, under the capable and good-natured direction of Paul Lewis. The choir sings at services twice a month and on major holidays, September through June, and prepares a variety of entertaining, challenging, and thought-provoking selections for our performances. We continue to enjoy and appreciate Dr. David Katz as our tenor soloist and as a staff pianist. A heartfelt "Brava!" to pianist Jan Dorsett for honoring us with her time and talent, and for all her efforts on our behalf. This year's guest musicians included our own UU Chamber Trio (Diane Nichols, clarinet; John Stinespring, bassoon; and Jan Dorsett, piano); Nancy Paxcia-Bibbins, who also performed with her colleague, Charlotte Trautwein on recorder; Mindy Simmons; Lisa Egan; Ishmael Katz; and Thomas Koch. Members of the Diversity Choir joined our choir for the Christmas Eve service; both Mindy Simmons and Elaine Silver enhanced our December holiday services and events; and the Lift Every Voice Children's Chorus from Newtown joined us for Martin Luther King Sunday. For the fifth consecutive year, the UU Choir and the Congregation for

Humanistic Judaism "Humanaires" joined together to sing at the CHJ service February 7 and at our special Music Sunday service, February 8. Although our music committee worked diligently to host the Singers Of United Lands on March 29, unfortunately we did not have sufficient commitment to do the project justice, and had to opt out of our agreement with them. However, our UU Recorder Ensemble, which rehearses every Thursday morning under the direction of Nancy Paxcia-Bibbins, has graciously agreed to step in to provide our service music that day.

Thanks to our Board of Trustees, to Roger, and especially to you, the congregation, for supporting our many efforts! We realize these are trying times, which makes us ever more grateful for your support in affirming the importance of music in worship and in congregational life.

As a very important footnote, Don DeMaio has stepped up to be the co-chairperson of the Music Committee, and has been doing a wonderful job lining up guest musicians for the Spring season. The upcoming fiscal year will be my last in a leadership role on the Music Committee. It will be my fourth year and it's "time for change." I have and continue to appreciate your feedback and encouragement!

Respectfully submitted, Diane Nichols, Co-Chair

NOMINATING

Slate of candidates (prepared by the Nominating Committee) of officers and members for the Board of Trustees to be voted on by members of the congregation:

President	Rick Sandler
Vice President	Jim Craig
Treasurer	Barbara DeMaio
Secretary	Dee Widder

Members at Large

Joanne Curtis	(2009-2011)
Cathy Cyrus	(2009-2011)
Dana Keller	(2008-2010) 2 nd year of a two-year term
Pat Liebert	(2009-2010) completing L. Nicholson term
Sue Moreland	(2008-2010) 2 nd year of a two-year term
Muriel Redifer	(2009-2011)

Nominating Committee:

Gail Colella
Catherine Dente
Roy Ingham
Marie Keeney
Mary Lou Keller
Louise King
Paul Lewis

PROGRAM COUNCIL

The Committee Council has forty chair / co-chair members. At this level of complexity, the Board of Trustees needs a Program Council to help organize committee activity. This enables the Board to concentrate on policy-making and congregation-wide matters. The members of the Program Council are designated representatives from each of seven committee clusters.

(Communication, Facilities, Finance, Congregational Life, Lifespan Education, Spiritual Life, and Social Justice) Our Program Council has the following specific duties:

- Maintain contact with committee chairs.
- Facilitate information flow between the various committees and the Board of Trustees
- Assist planning and coordination of inter-committee activity.
- Help committees prepare actionable proposals for Board approval.
- Promote program development in coordination with the Committee Council, the Long Range Planning/Governance Committee, and the Visioning Task Force.
- Assist individual committees with the drafting of their charter.

Bill Orcutt, Vice President

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

This year our Religious Exploration Program has continued to focus on Unitarian Universalist principles with an emphasis on social justice. The following is a list of some of the ways we have accomplished this:

1. Building (with the help of the congregation) our annual “R.E. Cereal Mountain” to be donated to the All Faiths Food Bank.
2. During the month of February our teens, their families as well as some of our teachers donated their time to Promise House of Sarasota.
3. In the spring the students and their families will be helping out at Habitat for Humanity.

The Religious Exploration Program continues to reach out to students and their families to encourage them to come together socially outside of our typical Sunday mornings. Beach get together, game nights and a picnic in the park are some of the ways we have accomplished this.

All of our students have become more visible in Sunday services. Our teens are now attending 10:30 am services on every first Sunday of each month. This is an important step to help prepare them to become fully involved members of the congregation as adults. Our younger children join the congregation towards the end of the service every third Sunday. Afterwards they join their families to attend Rev. Roger’s Family Chapel, which has become an important way for our families to connect with our minister.

I am also happy to report that the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota hosted the R.E. Visioning conference in the fall. This was a wonderful opportunity for training, and sharing ideas and concerns amongst religious educators.

Ginny Griesé, RE Director

SECOND SUNDAY POTLUCKS

The potluck luncheon is held on the second Sunday of each month after the church service. Volunteers are always encouraged to help with serving and clean up.

Tom Cook, Chair

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Social Justice Committee contributed volunteer hours and fundraising to the following organizations and projects this year:

Fundraising:

Share-the-Plate Collection Program – The Board of Trustees has asked the Social Justice Committee to plan one collection each month to go to a charitable cause, which the committee chooses with input from the congregation also considered when choosing recipients. Funds raised are primarily for local use to better our immediate community. This year collections have gone to All Faiths Food Bank, Doctors Without Borders (Myanmar cyclone relief), The YMCA Teen Shelter, The Knoxville Church Fund (to support the congregation with the aftermath of a shooting), Sarasota/Manatee Farmworkers Supporters, the Peace and Education Center, Genesis Health Services, the Family Promise Program, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (Annual Fund drive and special collection for Gaza programs), the Lift Every Voice and Sing Choir of Newtown and Habitat for Humanity (our Interfaith Shoulder-to-Shoulder project). This fiscal year we raised over \$18,733 from our share-the-plate collections to support these worthy programs.

Hands-on-Service:

All Faiths Food Bank – We collected food throughout the year each Sunday for the All Faiths Food Bank, and had several special Sunday food collections where we filled extra barrels for the food bank. The RE children collected a tower of cereal boxes in the spring to donate to All Faiths Food Bank.

Farmworkers Supporters – We raised funds for the Farmworkers Supporter's. We advocated for farmworkers' issues.

Family Promise Program – This was a new initiative for us this year. The Family Promise Program is an interfaith network of churches who work together to house and support homeless families within churches, or at a separate house for this purpose (Promise House). We staffed 2+ weeks in the program so far with 20+ volunteers who hosted at the Promise House, assisting 4 separate families. As an official hosting congregation we are committed to housing families 4 times a year. We also have church members who serve as administrative volunteers. We are continuing this program into next year.

Genesis Health Center – We continued our relationship with this volunteer health services center, which serves the working poor and uninsured population of the Newtown area. We provided office, medical and counseling volunteers from our church membership and some financial support.

Green Sanctuary Activities - We continued activities and programs supporting our designation as a Green Sanctuary Congregation. Among our activities this year was the sale of non-leaching water bottles, participation in an Earth Day service and the continuation of our printer-recycling program. The goals of the Green Sanctuary program are to: build awareness of environmental issues, encourage lifestyle change, motivate community action on environmental issues, build a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness, promote awareness of and work to heal environmental injustices.

Habitat For Humanity – This year we have created an interfaith service project, Shoulder-to-Shoulder, to raise the funds (\$100,000) and provide the volunteer labor to build an affordable, eco-sensitive, home for a local working family. This project has been co-sponsored with the Gulfcoast Affirming Interfaith Network (GAIN). The church applied for and received a matching grant of \$14,000 from the UU Fund for Social Responsibility for this project. A special Sunday service was held to encourage the congregation to become involved in this project. Over 125 members pledged to be part of the Shoulder-to-Shoulder project. We continue to supply refreshments to Habitat for Humanity workgroups one Saturday each month, and have added many building workdays in which the congregation participated at the building sites. Members of the congregation are also involved with providing administrative help and volunteering at the Home Improvement Store.

Martin Luther King Commemorative Breakfast - In January, about 15 UUCS members attended the MLK celebration breakfast. The Social Concerns Committee organized our participation and publicized the event at the church. We supported this financially by purchasing a sponsor table. The funds go towards college scholarships for African-American youth.

Planned Parenthood - Church members continue to volunteer in the clinic, and provide mailing and other office support for the local Planned Parenthood affiliate. Church members participated in support rallies and advocacy. We purchased an ad in their annual program brochure.

Programs for children and youth - We worked with **Children First** (our local HeadStart program) as volunteers and Board members; we supported **ALSO** – which supports gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth; we continued to collect clothing and supplies for the families involved in **HIPPY** (Home Instruction for Program for Preschool Youngsters). Two of our church members participate actively with HIPPY, and we continued our annual donation to HIPPY. We have begun volunteering in the **YMCA Reads** program.

Public Housing Advocacy and Support – We continued to provide funds for direct assistance to public housing residents in the form of FPL credits (in fact becoming an official assist agency of FPL), continued to support the residents' association, and provide on-going advocacy on their issues. Members of our congregation are also working with the Sarasota Housing Authority committee for resident services. With volunteers from our congregations and a donation we helped to sponsor a Presidential Inauguration Party for the residents of public housing.

Serving the Homeless – We continued to coordinate volunteers from our church to serve food at the Salvation Army Community Services facility; serving dinner and lunch one day a week. We have begun a relationship with Family Promise (see above remarks), another group which helps newly homeless families and found several volunteers in our congregation to work with them.

Education and Advocacy - In general, our committee offered church members many opportunities to participate through petitions, letter writing campaigns, and peaceful gatherings to voice their concerns on current global and local issues of social justice. Most opportunities related to our community partners, and UUA/UUSC identified issues.

Interweave and BGLT issues - We worked with Interweave, publicized their events and held joint events. We are working together against a discriminatory amendment meant to prevent civil partnerships and same-sex marriage, which was on the November ballot. We also worked together to host the Sarasota area World AIDS Day Memorial Service which was held at our church. We have advocated and encouraged the congregation to advocate on national policies affecting BGLT persons.

Social Justice Films and Guest Speakers - We assisted with the Rose Frank Lecture, which brought Reverend William Schulz, UU minister and former Executive Director of Amnesty International, to our congregation for several events. We hosted a class featuring the work of Father John Dear, an internationally known Peace Activist. We assisted with the Florida District Conference, which had a social justice theme, and featured Dr. Charlie Clements, Executive Director of the UUSC.

Southwest Florida Peace and Justice Coalition (SWFPJC) - Social Justice Committee cosponsored with SWPJC and publicized these events to church members. Including peace education workshops, films and rallies. Our church hosted the annual Peace Day events on January 1st, and participated in Women Standing, a global Peace demonstration-taking place on Mother's Day.

UUSC and UUA sponsored issues – We participated in several UUA/UUSC advocacy issues: Darfur, STOP campaign, Gaza fund, civil rights issues and global warming issues. Also, we continue to promote the Guest At Your Table program for UUSC (raising about \$3600). We sell Equal Exchange Coffee, which is a UUSC sponsored project. In cooperation with our minister, we held a spring 2008, “Justice Sunday” church service, as recommended by the UUSC.

Social Justice Advocacy Table – Each Sunday a table is set up and staffed by committee members to provide the congregation with information on volunteer opportunities, locally sponsored programs of interest, and advocacy opportunities.

Julie Leach and Susan Hallock, Co-Chairs

SOCRATES CAFÉ

Socrates Café, for people who like to discuss ideas, meets on the first and third Tuesdays from 10 to 11:30 A.M. Participants choose a question for discussion at the meeting... A different Moderator at each meeting coordinates the discussion. The group follows guidelines of a national organization outlined at www.philosopher.org. Attendance typically ranges between 8 and 15.

Jim Chastain, Chair

STEWARDSHIP

This year we emphasized the church's need for time and energy as well as money from its members and friends, asking everyone to become more deeply involved in the life of the church and in its care.

In November we started our campaign by inviting every member and friend to attend a "Get Together" in the home of one of the members. Twelve homes hosted sessions. Almost 175 members and friends attended. Six presenters led discussions of what the church needs from each of us and how the church can better meet the needs of the congregation. Many positive suggestions came from these meetings. Some have already been implemented and others are being considered and may lead to future changes.

On December 1 we mailed to every member and friend a letter reiterating the needs of the church and the goals of the campaign, enclosing a pledge card and a return envelope. We followed up with weekly e-mail reminders to those we had not heard from. And to encourage a successful stewardship effort we planned a dinner for February 21 to celebrate.

The dinner was truly a "Celebration Gala." June Braggalla, Bernie Leigh, Diane Happy, and Esther Martin planned and orchestrated the evening. The Artisans nicely decorated our Sanctuary in a country theme. A large group of volunteers helped with transitioning the Sanctuary into a banquet hall and in serving the meal. And Esther Martin cleverly exceeded. Rev. Meg Barnhouse entertained our full house with a collection of her short stories and music. It was a terrific evening. The next morning Meg finished it all off with a rousing sermon for our Sunday service.

As of 3/15/09 we have received pledges of \$239,474 for the 2009-10 fiscal year, only \$4,217 less than the 2008-2009 pledges. In the challenges presented by the current economy, our congregation has responded well with their pledges and with renewed enthusiasm for giving their time and talents to enrich our shared experiences. I am proud of them.

Jeanie Craig, Co-Chair

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

Significant changes have come about in the Sunday Celebrations Committee during the past year.

The most apparent change at this point will be the name change. By adding "Sunday" to the name, we made it obvious we don't do weddings or other celebrations. We wrote a charter for the committee, detailing the functions. The core function remains the same -- producing the Sunday worship service when our settled minister IS NOT in the pulpit. We have taken on the additional function of consulting with the minister about past and future services when he IS in the pulpit. As a result, we have gone to monthly meetings. In this way, we have been able to pay closer attention to various aspects of quality worship.

As we planned the summer program, we hit budgetary restraints. In evaluating our mission, it became clear that we were under-funded to do our job well. Spearheaded by Jim Chastain, we requested and received tentative approval for an extra \$1000. With 22 Sundays to program, the total budget of \$3,400 for the 09-10 fiscal year provides \$155 per Sunday. This is still substantially below the UUA standard honorarium for ministers, but it is much closer than before. By judiciously using a variety of speakers, we should be able to put together a compelling program in the coming fiscal year. Our expenditures for the current budget year are within budgetary limits.

Accomplishments: The Celebrations Committee brought speakers from near and far to fill this year's schedule with a variety of subjects reflecting the diversity of the congregation.

Our program for the summer, when we are the busiest, had a suggested theme of "The Prophetic Voice." We heard from Unitarian Universalist ministers Rev. Francesca Hughes, Rev. Kathleen Korb, Rev. Susanne Nazian, Rev. Dr. E. Bonnie Devlin and our student

minister, Brock Leach. Rev. Karen Wolfson spoke about New Thought, and John S. Hatcher, Ph.D. about the Bahá'í Religion. We also heard from Barbara Walker of the UU Congregation of Venice and our own lay members, Jody Lynn McBrien and Dominic Martia.

Outside the summer program, the committee engaged UU ministers Rev. Richard Kellaway, Rev. Meg Barnhouse and Rev. Roger Greeley (scheduled to speak March 29). Other speakers were Brock Leach, Rev. Michael Dowd, psychologist Dr. Jeffrey Rubin, Connie Goodbread from the Florida District office, Samar Jarrah speaking about the Arab-Israeli conflict, and our own lay members, Mary Lou Keller, Lea Hall, Rick Sandler, Bob Einsweiler, and Henny McDowell.

The Communications Outreach Committee has noticed that advertising special events is more effective than general advertising about our beliefs. This year, thousands of local people were exposed to advertisements announcing our members' freedom of belief, Michael Dowd's message of "Thank God for Evolution," and Rev. Meg Barnhouse, singer/songwriter and humorist. Local print media give more space to announcements about visiting speakers than to regular Sunday services. Thus, the Sunday Celebrations Committee helped put some faces, names and ideas of Unitarian Universalism in public view. (Meg Barnhouse's appearance was a gift by an anonymous donor to the church and the Sunday Celebrations Committee.)

Another highlight this past year was the contemporary service, which was held January 11 by Michael Dowd. This followed on the heels of a contemporary service done by Rev. Peltier on December 21. Both were held from 9 to 10 am. Both were distinctively different in style, yet similar in substance, to the regular 10:30 am service. A proposal is currently before the Board for a pilot program of nine monthly contemporary services starting in September. The experience gained from the two contemporary services already done makes it much easier to consider how regular contemporary services might affect the church as a whole.

Membership: current members are Ellen Cone, Dorothy Conlon, Mary Lou Keller, Dominic Martia, Klaus Obermeit, Bill Orcutt, and Sue Sherman. During the year, the committee lost Jim Chastain and gained Jim Craig.

A committee is only as good as the dedication, intelligence and energy of its members. By those criteria the Celebrations Committee deserves the highest rating. All its members are to be congratulated and thanked.

Klaus Obermeit, Chair

SUNDAY SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

Everyone seems to enjoy being an usher or a greeter. Sunday Services look after giving you your programs, assisting you to your seat if needs be and collecting the offering. We try to make a special welcome for new people and always have a smile for our old friends.

Louise King, Chair

TRIBUTE FUND

The Tribute Fund was established as a supplementary fund-raising concept and a way to express our appreciation for members of our church for various actions: in memory of...in honor of...with thanks for...etc. Tributes are published in Contact and credited to one of two accounts, operating or endowment; or occasionally we get a request to put the gift to another special fund, such as the Gardens or the Music Fund. This is my second year as Chair

of Tributes, and it is a pleasure to see the expressions of love and caring which have been expressed, and which help our Church so much. During the current year the Tribute Fund has raised \$1,460.

Esther Martin, Chair

UU SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Guest at Your Table (November through December) Campaign is our major effort to promote membership and raise funds for the UUSC. This year the Rev. Peltier devoted a sermon to this effort. We also raised a tent for the Darfur refugees, which the R. E. children and their teachers "decorated" with messages. The tent was symbolic of the work done by the UUSC and which GAYT supports.

The church participates in the UUSC's Fair Trade Coffee, Tea and Chocolate sales, both by selling the merchandise and by using Fair Trade Coffee during coffee hour.

135 out of 315 congregants are members of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee as of June of 2008, reflecting a percentage of 42.9%. This church continues to make a budgeted gift of \$1.00 per member. We will be receiving the Creating Justice and the James Luther Adams awards in March 2009. The Guest at Your Table campaign - November through December of 2008, netted \$3,555.00 for the UUSC. In addition, one plate collection was given to the UUSC in accordance with our practice of giving one monthly plate collection to a social justice endeavor.

Sue Sherman, Chair

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The Volunteer Coordinator works with the Membership committee, President, and committee chairs to promote and encourage the participation of both new members and long time members in the work of the church. Involvement in our church provides an opportunity to connect with others both spiritually and socially.

During the past church year several committees have added members and committees have changed chair positions. Rotating the task of Chair creates a healthy committee environment.

We seek to be a friendly, welcoming congregation and to provide an opportunity to grow and learn from each other.

June Brasgalla and Kathy Cook, Volunteer Coordinators