



# The PSWD Network

Newsletter of the Pacific Southwest District of the UUA

Issue 135

Summer 2011



## REjoice

RE News for the PSWD

Were you at District Assembly 2011? If not, why not?

It was a lovely affair. We were pampered by the host congregation, Neighborhood Church in Pasadena (chocolate-covered strawberries were served at lunch!). Camp de Benneville Pines created a beautiful display of congregational tapestries on the lawn. The District Assembly planning team put together a program of compelling workshops and speakers. Thank you, all!

Rev. Peter Morales, President of the UUA, challenged us on Friday night with his keynote address. He said the next 50 years of Unitarian Universalism calls on us to Get Religion, Grow Leaders, and Go Beyond (ok, he said Cross Borders, but I like alliteration, and I thank the Rev. Carolyn Price for that alternative language). How is the Pacific Southwest District doing in these categories?

Get Religion: Can I hear a "Hallelujah" from someone? Peter is telling us we've got to feel Unitarian Universalism in our hearts and souls! I was feeling it at District Assembly – through the eloquent preaching by three of our ministers on Saturday morning, in Rev. Rick Hoyt's passionate pitch for the Waterworks campaign during the opening celebration Friday night. I see your 8th graders getting religion in the Coming of Age faith statements some of you share with me. In the coming year, we look forward to hosting a workshop on dynamic worship and an adult faith development facilitator training, so we can Get Religion even more.

Grow Leaders: I feel so fortunate that a significant portion of my job is directing the eight PSWD camps at de Benneville Pines. We are in the busi-

ness of growing UU leaders! Ken and I offer various leadership workshops throughout the year. I am proud to be on the steering committee of a new program, Spiritual Activist Leadership Training for young adults (ages 18-35), run by UU Legislative Ministry, CA.

Go Beyond (Cross Borders): With GA 2012 in Phoenix (aka Justice GA) we are pushing ourselves to go beyond. This past year PSWD sponsored a Human Rights on the Border trip, where we literally crossed the border into Mexico and began exploring how border policies affect families and the environment. I also want to encourage us to ponder where in our lives we hesitate to "go beyond." Not just in relation to immigration or even social justice issues. But where in our lives do we stick with what is comfortable? What borders do we erect that close us off from people of different ages, or interests, or socio-economic status?

I'm proud to work with the GREATEST district in the whole UUA. We have a lot to do in order to be the change we want to be in the world. So let's continue our good work together!

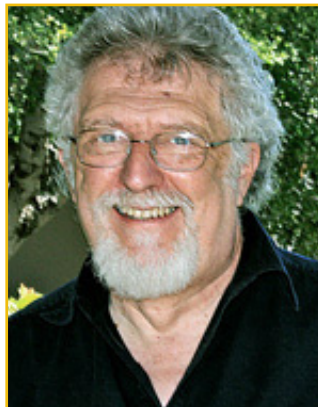
With peace and hope and hallelujahs,  
Pastor Tera Little

## Help Needed at GA

If you plan to attend GA in Charlotte this month, your help of just an hour or two is needed at the Phoenix booth in the Exhibit Hall. We will be telling people about the 2012 Justice Assembly and need one or two people in the booth whenever the Hall is open. Please contact Carolyn Saunders, the PSWD Coordinator for GA 2012, at [c\\_saunders1@msn.com](mailto:c_saunders1@msn.com) or 520-906-9058. Your help will be greatly appreciated!



# Ken's Corral



Many folks have said it, so it must be true: it was a great District Assembly! Our hosts at Neighborhood Church were wonderful and a record number of people from our congregations attended. Thank you to all who helped and attended our District Assembly.

I want to suggest that you place our next District Assembly on your calendar now – it will be April 27-28 at 1st Church Los Angeles. We are working with the Baptist Church across the street to provide plenty of parking and additional accessible workshop space. This DA will be a culmination of this next year's work on looking to the June 2012 General Assembly in Phoenix, our first Justice General Assembly. Over the summer we will create a page on our Pacific Southwest District Web Site where you can go for up-to-date information on GA 2012. We will also expand resources on the page we already have for immigration issues.

I look forward to seeing many of you at this year's General Assembly in Charlotte. We will once again have a Regional Ingathering with those from the other three Districts in the Pacific Western Region. I will also be participating in a workshop that is a reflection on the events around July 29 last year in Phoenix. For those who are interested there will be a number of workshops and events looking forward to our Justice GA 2012.

I look forward to this next year. It will be an exciting one with a number of congregations in various stages of transition, mixed with our work of moving toward DA and GA 2012. I plan to take 5 weeks in July and August as some of the sabbatical I have been owed. So you might actually hear less from me than usual this summer. I hope you all have a great summer.

Ken

# Immigration as a Moral Issue

For 6 weeks earlier this Spring 2011, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Conejo Valley in Newbury Park [www.cvuuf.org](http://www.cvuuf.org) offered a lay-led curriculum using the UUA's Congregational Study/Action Issue Guide on *Immigration as a Moral Issue*: <http://www.uua.org/justice/issuesprocess/currentissues/immigration/studyguide/index.shtml>.

CVUUF member Barbara Leighton organized the project, with Theadora Davitt-Cornyn assisting. Eight CVUUF members joined us for the entire program, and then three of us, Barbara, Liza Diniakos and I spoke from the pulpit on Sunday, 22 May 2011. Each of us told of our experience from a different perspective:

Barbara Leighton spoke in terms of her Unitarian Universalist values, and how, after connecting with Ventura County CLUE (Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice) she began to see immigration issues reflected in UU values, when this curriculum became available.

Liza Diniakos (Willie Lubka) with their two teens actually attended our UUA's Standing on the Side of Love civil disobedience event around the issue of SB1070 on 29 July 2010 in Phoenix, Arizona. They did not participate, yet were very present. Liza told us the profound effects they felt in witnessing our UUA social justice actions.

I spoke of my own support of the New Sanctuary Movement family we have been attending to with the United Church of Christ in Simi Valley for nearly 4 years. For me, this holy work is the direct result of my own theology, in particular, UU Principles 1, 2, and 7. It was a joy and a blessing to have Liliana, spouse Gerardo, and their now four children with us: Jerry is 11, Susy nearly 9, Pablito is 4, and Jesusito will be 10 months shortly! The CVUUF had a very happy Sunday morning celebrating with the New Sanctuary Movement family!

--Theadora Davitt-Cornyn



# Thoughts from the President

As I contemplate commencing the last of my four years as your District President, I am mindful of the new path on our journey together. When I was first elected to the PSWD Board nine years ago, the Board was embarking on a new role in the governance of district resources. Our District Board, by tradition responsible for leading and developing programs, was trying on new garments. Policy Governance, where a board is responsible for setting and articulating the vision of its sources of authority and accountability (and determining exactly what and who those sources were), became the focus of your Board's attention.



The Board adopted many tactics and means for fitting into those new clothes. Many of our annual retreats included working with outside consultants, many of them UUs, who guided us into Policy Governance. We wrestled with putting a model developed primarily for non-profit enterprises into one that would serve our Unitarian Universalist principles and our congregational polity. We also used our face-to-face meetings and gatherings of the beloved community at District Assembly to understand the collective vision of our moral owners, our sources of authority and accountability.

In the last few years, since being elected President, I have witnessed the pendulum start its swing in the other direction. I do not think this is because Policy Governance was a failure, but with our UUA Board adopting Policy Governance, it became evident to me that having 19 district Boards, each engaged in creating and monitoring an overarching vision, was a redundant effort. While the specific goals and objectives that incarnate our shared vision may vary from one part of the country to another, the vision itself, grounded in our UU values and hundreds of years of tradition (our present Association may have been born 50 years ago, but Unitarians and Universalists go back much further), cries out for a single unified

vision. Your District Board believes our UUA Board has given us that with our Association's current Ends and we have formally adopted them as ours.

Now, the new work begins. Your PSWD Board has entered into a covenant with the UUA Director of Congregational Life and the PSWD Executive Team. There are many of the elements you would expect in a religious covenant, but I believe the most substantive in signaling a change is "to work with the ET to develop specific goals and objectives for this District that are aligned with UUA Global Ends." In the coming year, I believe our specific goals and objectives will focus on preparing our congregations for the 2012 Justice GA in Phoenix, Arizona. I hope you will join me in making my last year as your President a memorable one as we undertake this important and seminal task.

living my faith,  
Michael Sallwasser

## Chalice Lighters Making a Difference

The Chalice Lighters program continues to flourish in the Pacific Southwest District, as evidenced by the response to the most recent call. Contributions from 549 Chalice Lighters across the PSWD enabled us to present a check for \$16,000 to the West Valley UU Church of Glendale, AZ at this year's District Assembly.



Chalice Lighters is such an easy way to support growth in our congregations. All it takes is a commitment to contribute \$20 or more three times a year--check out Chalice Lighters online at <http://www.pswduua.org/pages/chalice-lighters.php> and sign up to help support growth in the Pacific Southwest District--one congregation at a time.

# District Assembly a Big Success!

A wonderful party and spirited business meeting occurred at Neighborhood Church in Pasadena May 20th and 21st. We experienced heartfelt worship, engaging workshops, interesting vendor offerings and those beautiful and inspiring banners of our churches courtesy of deBenneville Pines! A record 394 participants attended our 50th Anniversary District Assembly.

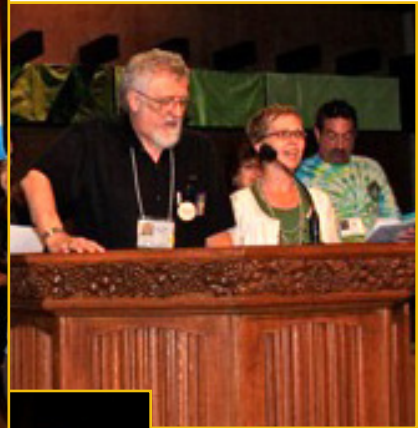
We were greeted by perfect weather, a fiesta atmosphere and dinner party, and keynote address by our own UUA president, the Rev. Peter Morales. Saturday brought us a full house for morning worship, blueberry coffee cake!, many and varied workshops that attendees may have had to squeeze a bit to fit, but high caliber speakers and interesting topics. Lunch was superb and our lively business meeting with a video appearance by Dakota the wonder dog was capped off with the announcement of District Assembly 2012, our Justice DA, being held at First Church Los Angeles. Rev. Rick Hoyt tells us we are in for an urban gritty experience-- I for one am excited!

This DA 2011 could not have run smoothly without the talents and time put in by our local co-chairs, Grady Goddard and James Coomes. They and their 125 volunteers made the days run smoothly and effortlessly for those attending. My thanks also extends to the Ministry of Neighborhood Church as well for the open welcome they provided. Last but not least I must thank our leadership team, Rev. Ken Brown, Tera Little and Mary Nelson for their guidance and assistance in making this event happen.

--Michelle Melancon, DA Coordinator



Jim Merrill carrying banner of UU Church of Ventura



Rev. Ken Brown & Tera Little



Rev. Susan Manker-Seale and Rev. Ray Manker



Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President



Grady Goddard & James Coomes, Local Co-Chairs

# From Your Annual Program Fund Representative



Thanks to all of our congregations, we are now one of the top giving districts in the UUA. Every congregation has made some kind of contribution to the UUA, many of us are fair share congregations. Please remember that in order to receive your fair share ribbon at General Assembly, all your contributions must be received by the UUA by the first week in June. The sooner you send in your last contribution the more likely you are not to be disappointed when your delegation comes up to get their fair share ribbons.

Please remember that we do not belong to these larger associations by obligation but rather by covenant. We covenant to affirm and promote the principles of our Association as free churches. Part of that affirmation and promotion is our congregations' financial support.

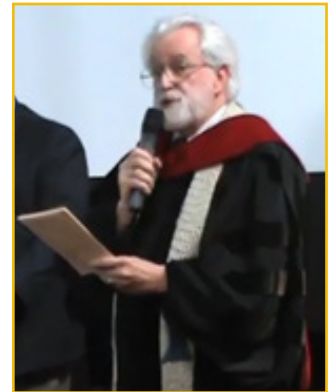
Yours in generosity and faith,

Rev. John Morehouse  
PSWD Annual Program Fund Representative



# The Rev. Dr. Jay Atkinson Retires

On Sunday afternoon, June 5, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Studio City held a Celebration of the Ministerial Career of The Reverend Jay Atkinson on the occasion of his retirement from full-time parish ministry. Joined by over two dozen ministers from PSWD and across the denomination, there was much reminiscing and much appreciation from those who have known him throughout his ministerial career. Music was also a highlight of the celebration, featuring piano works by Rachmaninoff, Grieg, Schumann and a rousing rendition of Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" performed by Oberlin piano student Cooper Labinger as well as vocal arias by mezzo-soprano Leslie Schipa and an anthem by the UUSCS choir.



In recognition of his thirty-two years of ministry, the last twelve in Studio City, the UUCSC congregation honored Jay with the designation of Minister Emeritus. His final Sunday in the pulpit in Studio City will be June 12. Following a trip to General Assembly, Jay and his wife, Ariel Summerlin, will be relocating to the Bay Area of Northern California.

## The PSWD NetwUUDrk

Published by the Pacific Southwest District  
of the Unitarian Universalist Association  
2052 Norma St., Oxnard, CA 93036-2711  
Phone: 805-485-1780 E-mail: [pswd@aol.com](mailto:pswd@aol.com)

PSWD President: Michael Sallwasser  
[Michael.sallwasser@ngc.com](mailto:Michael.sallwasser@ngc.com)

Editor: Mary Nelson  
E-mail: [pswd@aol.com](mailto:pswd@aol.com)

### DEADLINES:

Fall issue - September 5  
Winter issue - November 5  
Spring issue - February 5  
Summer issue - May 5

The NetwUUDrk on the Web: [www.pswduua.org](http://www.pswduua.org)  
to view current or archival issues.

# UUA Trustee Report

Some of the main questions I hear about are changes being proposed by the Board to reduce the size of the Board and how the Board is elected. Here is a response to some frequently asked questions on the issue. Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions.

## Restructuring UUA Governance Questions and Answers

### Why are changes being proposed to how the UUA Board and Nominating Committee are elected?

Our congregations and multiple task forces have told us that our governance is too complex, and needs to be more representative. Our current system produces a Board of 26 members that is too large to be effective. It provides geographical diversity, and balances representation for ministers, lay people, and genders; but it provides minimal representation for young adults, youth, people of color, and other historically marginalized voices. Separate District elections tend to result in Trustees who are, by and large, rather similar to each other in class, age, and ethnicity.

### What changes are proposed?

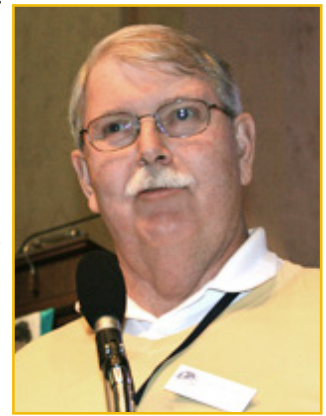
The UUA Board will be reduced from 26 persons to 14, including the Moderator, Financial Advisor, and 11 at-large Trustees. The President will continue to be a Board member without voting privileges. All Trustees will be elected by the General Assembly. Trustees will be elected for up to two three-year terms (instead of two four-year terms).

Nominating Committee members will be elected by the General Assembly for up to two three-year terms (instead of one six-year term). Also, the Nominating Committee is given a specific charge for diversities to be considered in nominating Trustees: "especially in regard to historically marginalized communities, but also balancing amongst size of congregation, lay and ordained, geography, age (including youth and young adults), and gender, among others."

### What are the benefits of the proposed changes?

A smaller Board will be more effective and nimble, able to make decisions and respond quickly to changes. More diversity will enhance our cultural competency, make us more accountable to historically marginalized voices, expand access to leadership opportunities, and increase our connections

to the growing edges of our movement. We will have a Board that can support moral, spiritual, and numerical growth. Shorter terms will enable us to frequently balance and rebalance a smaller Board, with more people moving into and through leadership positions.



The changes to the Nominating Committee will make it possible to create an effective Board team with the right balance of skills, geography, church size, identities, and experience. Nominations by petition will provide an alternative path for proposing candidates.

### When will the proposed changes take effect?

If the proposed Bylaws changes pass, the changes will take effect at the close of General Assembly in 2013.

### How will the transition to a smaller Board be handled?

All Trustees' terms will expire at the end of General Assembly in 2013. By the prior October, the Board will select four current Trustees who will continue by serving two-year terms beginning in 2013. For GA 2013, the Nominating Committee will propose four Trustee candidates to serve one-year terms, and three candidates to serve three-year terms. This approach will enable the Board to transition to the smaller size immediately following GA 2013.

### How can we be sure our (regional) interests will be represented?

As is true for our current Board, our new Board will be responsible to our Association as a whole, not to regional interests. However, the Board and Nominating Committee will work to ensure that there is a balance of geographical identities on the Board, as well as seeking balance in other areas. All Board members will be accountable to all regions (again, this is not a change).

### If we don't have a District Trustee to report to us, how will we know what's going on?

Connecting with congregations throughout our Association is an essential part of the Board's work. Last year Board members contacted about 100 congregations to talk about the relationship between the Board and congregations. In the coming year, the Board and Staff will connect with an even larger number of congregations through the

“Gathered Here” project, using appreciative inquiry to focus on congregational vision.

Our new Communications Working Group will work to engage the greater Association in new ways through social media, written communications, and face-to-face interactions. Consider inviting a Trustee to your District Annual Meeting or to other District meetings.

The UUA Board will continue to work closely with District leadership through the District President’s Association (DPA), especially in nourishing our connections to congregations and in fostering leadership development.

**How will leaders from our region find their way to national leadership?**

Board and Staff can improve the preparation and opportunities for national leadership through improving our leadership development programs. There are many opportunities for involvement in the work of our Association; Districts and regions can support engagement of our members at all levels of our Association.

**How can a much smaller board handle all the work of the current Board?**

It will not. The Board’s current workload includes responsibility for staffing, liaising with, or serving on many of our Association’s committees, serving on Board committees and working groups, trying to have meaningful discussions in groups of 26, hearing 25 people say “I agree with Joan,” and being deeply involved in operational concerns.

Going forward, we will need to be more clearly focused on governance: our vision for the future, our connections with our member congregations, and our delegation of authority to UUA Staff and committees (with appropriate oversight).

The Board has already begun planning the transition to a smaller Board, and that work will continue throughout the next two years.

**How will congregations get to know at-large candidates and what they stand for?**

The evolution of information technology, including widespread use of social media, greatly increases opportunities for easy access to candidates and information about the candidates.

The Election Committee will work with the Board and appropriate UUA Staff to ensure that GA del-

egates have ample access to information about all candidates.

**Will entrusting everything to the nominating committee disenfranchise congregations?**

Congregations will elect Trustees and members of the Nominating Committee through their GA delegates.

Work remains to be done to implement the recommendations of the Fifth Principle Task Force, to ensure that the delegates sent to General Assembly truly represent our congregations, and are not limited to those who have the time and financial resources to attend GA.

**What does our current Board look like?**



**What would the new Board look like?**

Our Board’s governance policies call us to govern on behalf of Our Sources of Authority and Accountability:

- 1) Our member congregations
- 2) Current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists
- 3) The heritage, traditions, and ideals of Unitarian Universalism
- 4) The vision of Beloved Community
- 5) The Spirit of life, love, and the holy

**What do you think that would look like?**

*FAQs courtesy of NY Metro District Trustee, John Hawkins, a member of the Board Working Group on Linkage*

In faith and trust,

Tom Loughrey  
Your UUA Trustee from the PSWD

# UU Church of Long Beach calls new Parish Minister

The UU Church of Long Beach is delighted to announce that the Reverend Mitra Rahnema has accepted our call to serve as our settled parish minister. Rev. Rahnema is familiar to many in the PSWD



from her time as Interim Minister at Tapestry and from her work at the denominational level in DRUUM.

Currently, Rev. Rahnema is finishing her two year service as Interim Minister to the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church in Michigan. She will begin her ministry in Long Beach on Aug. 15 and

her first Sunday in the pulpit will be on Sep. 11.

The congregation and Rev. Rahnema enjoyed a very full candidating week ending with two well-attended services. Over half of the members participated in at least one of the week's activities. Then, after services on Sunday, May 15, 139 members as well as many friends gathered at a special congregational meeting to vote on whether to call Rev. Rahnema. The resultant 95.7% approval vote was a clear indication of the positive interactions and reactions the congregation had experienced in the worship services, committee meetings, focus groups, and inter-generational parties during the week.

The youth of the church proudly participated in a separate vote that, while it was not "official", was counted by the same tellers and the results, 100% approval, were announced in the congregational meeting.

We eagerly anticipate Rev. Rahnema's arrival in Long Beach and are looking forward to growth in many areas: worship services, membership, leadership, social justice, life-span religious education, and pastoral care, to name just a few.

Jan Goodwin,  
Chair, Ministerial Search Committee

# Teen Service at SUUS

The Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society (SUUS) holds it's annual Blessing of the Animals service in the spring. On Sunday, May 15th, 2011 once again people and their pets attended this outdoor service. This service is traditionally led by the youth, with some minor help from a couple of adult lay-leaders who do the mundane tasks, such as coordinating with the office administrator for the order of service and setting up the chairs for the outdoor service.

This year's 15-year-old moderator was very involved in the process of planning the service and making sure all ran smoothly. On the morning of the service she confidently stepped up to the mike and welcomed everyone. Meanwhile, in our sound booth another 15-year-old youth was using his technical skills to make sure that the service was heard by all. Another teen did the responsive reading; and yet another led the morning meditation.

An 11-year-old girl did the chalice lighting and a very articulate 11-year-old boy introduced our special guest from East Valley Animal Care & Control. Each year the congregation adopts the local animal shelter and donates needed items for the animals as well as financially sponsoring particular animals at the shelter. The children & youth take field trips a few times a year to pick out dogs, cats & rabbits that could use a little help in finding their forever homes. Once again the children & youth of the congregation received a certificate of appreciation from the East Valley Animal Care Center. While SUUS currently has a small group of children & youth, this service showed everyone just how amazing and talented they are.

-- Louise Klatt, ADR for SUUS





The Unitarian Universalist Community of Cambria (UCC) has donated \$2,500 to the Cambria Head Start program for the Raising a Reader Program -- a nationally recognized early childhood literacy Program that promotes early literacy and school readiness for children 0-5 from low income families in Cambria. UCC members will volunteer at Head Start and read to enrolled children. Making the award are (L-R) Margaret Randall, Judy Butler, and Pat Harris-Lakin.



## PSWD DISTRICT CALENDAR

Send additions/changes to [PSWD@aol.com](mailto:PSWD@aol.com)

### JUNE 2011

- 22-26 General Assembly 2011  
Charlotte, NC
- 29-July 3 UULM, CA Water Justice Road Trip for  
Young Adults

### JULY 2011

- 11-16 Summer Camp, grades 4-8  
Counselor in Training for Youth  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA
- 17-23 Summer Camp, grades 9-12  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA
- 24-30 Family Camp  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA

### AUGUST 2011

- 21-26 PSWIRL, adult camp  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA

### SEPTEMBER 2011

- 2-5 Young Adult Camp  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA
- 16-18 K-1/4-6 OWL Training  
Valley UU Congregation, Chandler, AZ

- 23-25 Jr./Sr. High OWL Training  
UU Church of Long Beach, CA
- 25 Ordination of Tera Little  
First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, CA

### OCTOBER 2011

- 14-16 PSWD Board retreat

### NOVEMBER 2011

- 13 Installation of the Rev. Lora Brandis  
UU Fellowship of the Conejo Valley,  
Thousand Oaks, CA
- 18-20 UULM Leadership Summit,  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA

### DECEMBER 2011

- 2-4 Coming of Age Retreat  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA
- 27-Jan 1 Sr High Winter Camp  
Camp de Benneville Pines, CA

### MARCH 2012

- 15-18 "Human Rights on the Border"  
Tucson, AZ and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico