With this issue, your North America Newsletter is being distributed only by electronic copy. Due to rising costs of postage and our limited budget, there will be a $5/issue fee to receive the newsletter in hard copy format. To subscribe to the newsletter by mail, send a check to URI in North America, 900 Thompson Road, Saluda, NC 28773. Thanks for understanding the need for this change in policy and practice. ……………… The NA Communications Team

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Sandy Westin Named North America’s New Regional Coordinator

We are delighted to announce that on December 18, the San Francisco office offered the permanent position of North America Regional Coordinator to Sandy Westin, previously our able Technology and Communications Coordinator. Sandy has been filling the vacancy of that position created when Margi Ness, our previous RC, resigned effective June 30, 2009. Sandy is the fourth Coordinator our region has had, and joins the ranks of seven other RC’s around the globe. All Coordinators serve as contract employees to URI and report directly to the Rev. Canon Charles Gibbs as Executive Director of the United Religions Initiative. Read the full article here.

Introducing Roger Eaton – North America’s New Technology and Communications Coordinator

With Sandy Westin moving to Regional Coordinator, a new face has been added to the North America regional staff. We are delighted to introduce Roger Eaton who will be serving as our Technology and Communications Coordinator. Recently relocated from Los Angeles to San Francisco, Roger is an active member of both the Unity-and-Diversity CC and the Raoul Wallenburg Institute of Ethics CC. He will be working with Sandy and the members of our Communications Committee in designing and maintaining our website at www.uri.org/na, as well as helping to put out our quarterly newsletters and other communications with our Ccs and Affiliates. Welcome aboard, Roger!

New Sections on the North America Website Coming Up

We have some new and exciting sections being added to our North America website. Some are already in place; others are still on the workbench. Here are some thoughts from Roger Eaton on where we may be going. Read all about it.
Meet the Three Interfaith Amigos!

If you haven’t come across it before, be sure to check out this YouTube video (once you get past the leading ad). This is just one of the many emerging ways in which the “People of the Book” are collaborating to bring messages of peace. For other examples, check out the new “Peace Library” section under the Resources tab on our website. You might find the seeds for program and shared study ideas for your CC there. If you have further ideas for resources, we might include them here. Send them in!

Regional Assembly 2011 Has a Location Change

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our potential hosts in Vancouver, BC, Canada, have reluctantly withdrawn their offer to host our next Regional Assembly in that city. Other locations being considered include Seattle and the Bay Area, with the following factors being taken into consideration:

a) A major airport nearby
b) Substantial local URI support available
c) Several appropriate meeting and housing venues to choose from

The Regional Assembly Design Team, anchored by Margie Coles of Seattle would like to hear from anyone who has a suggestion or comment they should consider in choosing an appropriate location.

News from Our CCs

Maybe it was the Holiday Season or maybe our CCs are busy as bees all year round, but we sure received an abundance of reports on exciting programs from across our region. To save space in the newsletter, we’ve stored these on our website in the CCs Connect section under “News From Our CCs”. This quarter you can check out articles from the Unity-and-Diversity, SARAH, Kashi, and Unity Made Visible CCs. These not only make good reading, but can also offer program ideas for your own CC. Have some news to share yourself? Send it in!

The First URI Photo Contest is Underway

We all have seen them – those moments of URI-in-action when living the Principles can be found not just in words on paper, but can be captured in a photograph. Barbara Hartford of our San Francisco office invites you to enter the first-ever global “Heart and Soul Photo Contest”. Here are the complete guidelines. Entries are being accepted only January 7 through February 7, so get going, you shutterbugs!

Interim Leadership Council (ILC) Holds Its First Retreat

Your ILC held an incredible in-person meeting November 13-15 last Fall. This was the first of what is expected to be a semi-annual event to supplement our monthly conference calls. This Fall’s Leadership Retreat was held in the home of Anne Roth, long-time member and supporter of URI, north of Denver. Anne and her husband Bill served as great hosts for our gathering of 11 creative souls. We were joined by Sally Mahe, Director of Regional Development in the San Francisco office. In less than 20 hours of meeting together, we got so much done it was almost a miracle. Read all about the results of our weekend together.
Global Trustee Election Nears Completion

With only two weeks left in the window for selection of our new Global Trustee, suspense is building to see which of our two capable candidates will be selected. If your CC hasn’t gotten its Proxy Ballot in yet to Mark Mancao of our San Francisco office, please check with the person who serves as Primary Contact for your group. S/he will have all the information needed. If you need help, you can contact Mark at mmancao@uri.org. The election closes February 4, 2010.

Cooperation Circle Campfires Get Underway!

Some of the best memories of summer come from those evenings when friends and family were gathered around a cozy fire in the gathering dusk. Stories were told, marshmallows were roasted, and relationships were cemented that might last a lifetime. Although our region may spread across four time zones, thanks to modern technology we can now share in such gatherings without leaving home. Our new Regional Coordinator, Sandy Westin, will be hosting a monthly “virtual campfire” around specific topics such as “How can we grow new leadership?” and “How do we get past ‘preaching to the choir’ in our community?” If you have ideas and experience to share, or just wish to find ways to strengthen your own CC, sign up to be on a call. No travel is required, and we promise there will be no mosquitoes or smoke to deal with. Sandy will bring the technology – you’re in charge of the marshmallows! These will be happening on the last Sunday of every month, so the first one is coming up on January 31st. Read more about it here.

Errata: Re CC Founder Elizabeth Stewart Passes

Our apologies for the error in our last newsletter which stated “Elizabeth Stewart, co-founder with Roger Eaton of the Unity-and-Diversity World Council in Los Angeles, passed away on Monday, October 5th.” The Unity-and-Diversity CC was formed by Rev Leland Stewart and his wife, Elizabeth.