

**UNITED STATES  
SENATE YOUTH  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

*Annual Letter – November 27, 2013*

**An Evening to Remember**

On Friday, March 8, 2013, the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association gathered at the Josephine Butler Parks Center for its Fifteenth Annual Alumni Dinner and Reception, which featured the presentation of the fourth Rosalie Wynn Hearst Distinguished Public Service Award to Emmy-winning CBS News producer Mary Walsh. In a speech that was at times very emotional, Ms. Walsh discussed her journalistic career and the complicated ethical issues that can arise when covering a story.



*Left, Pictured Left–Right: Michael Sundermeyer, Monike Silva Santana, Rawle Andrews Jr., Rachel Lowe, Mary Walsh, Elaine Sedenberg, David Zavadsky, Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz, Chad Robinson, and John Blakley at the Fifteenth Annual Alumni Reception and Dinner. Above: Mary Walsh addresses the alumni. Photos by Don Tanguilig.*

*Right: Alumni from several decades engage in pre-dinner discussion at the Fifteenth Annual Alumni Reception and Dinner, held at the Josephine Butler Parks Center in Washington, D.C. Photo by Don Tanguilig.*



## Mary Walsh Honored with Rosalie Wynn Hearst Distinguished Public Service Award

Elaine Sedenberg (TX-2006), Secretary



A graduate of the University of Texas where she was editor of the *Daily Texan*, Mary E. Walsh began her career as a journalist at the *Rome Daily American* in Italy in 1977. Ms. Walsh moved to CBS News in 1979 as assistant to the Political Director in

Washington, D.C. She covered Geraldine Ferraro's vice presidential campaign in 1984 and Vice President George H.W. Bush's presidential campaign in 1988.

As CBS News producer in Tokyo from 1989 to 1993, Ms. Walsh was responsible for news coverage in all parts of Asia—with focus on China, Korea, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Japan. She was based in New York in 1987-89 and Atlanta in 1985-87. Highlights from those years include covering the explosion of space shuttle Challenger, the bombing of Pan Am 103, and countless hurricanes.

Ms. Walsh is currently the national security producer for CBS News. Her work includes producing stories for the *CBS Evening News*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, and *60 Minutes*. She has been assigned to the Pentagon since 1993 and has covered the American military throughout the United States and in many parts of the world, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Turkey, Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Germany, the Philippines, and Korea.

She has received two Alfred I. DuPont awards from Columbia University, three Emmy awards, an Overseas Press Club Award, the Joan Shorenstein Barone Award for Excellence in Journalism, a Wilber Award from the Religious Communicators Council, and the University of Texas School of Communication 2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

At the annual alumni dinner on March 8, 2013, Ms. Walsh accepted the Rosalie Wynn Hearst Distinguished Public Service Award for her commitment to serving the public by presenting fair and unbiased news. She was honored particularly for her commitment to covering the stories of American military personnel through her assignment at the Pentagon since 1993. In her acceptance speech, Ms. Walsh spoke about the challenges of covering disasters and war, and how journalists (and all leaders) must rely on their training and ethics to make decisions in times of crisis in order to report these complicated narratives. She spoke about the challenges facing contemporary media and how the next generation of journalists will have to rise up and navigate a rapidly changing media climate.

## Alumni Association Selects 2014 Award Recipients

The United States Senate Youth Alumni Association is proud to announce its 2014 selections for the Rosalie Wynn Hearst Distinguished Public Service Award and the James T. Molloy Alumni Service Award.

Accepting the fifth Rosalie Wynn Hearst Distinguished Public Service Award will be former New Mexico Governor **Bill Richardson**. Nominated by **Michael Gonzales (NM-1973)**, Governor Richardson has had a long and distinguished career in public service, including service in the U.S. House of Representatives, as the Secretary of Energy for President Clinton, and as Governor of New Mexico for two terms. Governor Richardson was also a candidate for the Democratic nomination for President in 2008.

Accepting the second James T. Molloy Alumni Service Award is **Reverend Harry Knox (GA-1979)**. Nominated by **Tom Lee (TN-1979)**, Reverend Knox was appointed by President Obama in 2009 to the President's Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He was the founding director of the Human Rights Campaign's Religion and Faith Program, has served as Interim Executive Director of Integrity USA, the voice of LGBT Episcopalians and their allies, and he currently serves as President and CEO of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Both Governor Richardson and Reverend Knox are scheduled to speak at the Sixteenth Annual Alumni Dinner and Reception, to be held at Top of the Town in Arlington, VA, on March 7, 2014.

The Rosalie Wynn Hearst Distinguished Public Service Award recognizes individuals who have made a positive, substantive impact on public discourse in the United States. Award recipients are selected for showing an ability to work for the greater good of the nation, and for earning the respect of those with differing viewpoints.

The James T. Molloy Alumni Service Award, named for the Alumni Association's founding Executive Director, recognizes substantial contributions by alumni in all fields and exemplary service to the Alumni Association and the Senate Youth Program.

## Early Bird Registration Open!

Interested in attending the Sixteenth Annual Alumni Dinner and Reception on March 7, 2014? A limited number of Early Bird tickets are available for purchase at the reduced rate of \$50.00 per person prior to the December 31 cutoff. Please use our secure registration page to obtain your tickets:

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/ussyaa/event/41954/>

After December 31, registration is available for young alumni (2008-2013) at the rate of \$50.00 and regular alumni (2007 and earlier) at the rate of \$75.00.

## President's Report

Rachel Lowe (OR-2000), President

The year 2013 has proved to be a great one for the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association (USSYAA). Our largest event, the Annual Alumni Dinner, was attended by 60 people and featured Mary Walsh, a highly respected and awarded journalist, as the fourth recipient of the Rosalie Wynn Hearst Distinguished Public Service Award. Ms. Walsh's remarks highlighted her work with the military and brought several audience members to tears. The USSYAA was proud to honor someone who has had an impact on public service through media and encourages others to do the same.

This year also marked our first alumni gathering outside of the Northeast corridor. Several alumni gathered in The Berghoff in beautiful downtown Chicago! This laid-back event provided a great template which we hope to utilize for several more gatherings throughout the United States in the coming years. Our hope is to enable alumni throughout the country to host gatherings in their area with help from the USSYAA. If you would like to host a gathering in your area, please contact me at [president@ussyaa.org](mailto:president@ussyaa.org).

This year also marked the second year of our Alumni Day of Service. Next year, we hope to focus on gathering some larger groups for collaborative projects in areas with a high population of alumni, such as Washington DC, Boston, and New York City. If you are interested in helping us put together an event for your city next year, please contact our Alumni Programs Director at [program\\_director@ussyaa.org](mailto:program_director@ussyaa.org).

This year, we also received an unprecedented number of applications for the Rosalie Wynn Hearst and George Randolph Hearst, Sr. Scholarship in the amount to \$5,000.00. Thank you to all who applied! Our scholarship selection committee is hard at work selecting the 2013 recipient. If you missed this year's deadline, please be sure to apply next year.

Next year, 2014, is shaping up to be even better! The USSYAA annual events committee, headed this year by **Bryce Carson (OH-2009)**, is hard at work planning next year's alumni weekend, which will take place on March 7 and 8, 2014. Dinner will take place at Top of the Town in Rosslyn, VA, and will highlight two incredible speakers. We will also be hosting a family tour on Saturday morning and the alumni mentoring tables for the new delegates arriving on Saturday. Additionally, we'll be adding a new format for the annual meeting this year. The board will have its final meeting to wrap up the year earlier in the week so the annual meeting can be left to field new ideas and questions from the membership. Details on all these events will be posted on the website as they become available.

Registration for all the alumni weekend events is already open. Be sure to sign up before December 31, 2013 to take

advantage of the early bird dinner rate! (Please note that there are only 50 early bird tickets available).

Overall, my term as president of the USSYAA has been both rewarding and challenging. I am excited to see what the future holds for this organization and I hope you are too! We can only move forward with the help of excited, passionate members like you!

Finally, I'd like to say a special thank you to all of our board and committee members who have worked so hard to make these opportunities for our alumni possible. None of this would be possible without you!

## Meet the Board

The current members of the USSYAA Board of Directors are:

President	Rachel Lowe (OR-2000)
President-Elect	Chad Robinson (DE-2001)
Vice-President	Marc Langston (KS-2004)
Secretary	Elaine Sedenberg (TX-2006)
Treasurer	John Selmon Blakley, Sr. (MI-1976)
Liaison Officer	Rawle Andrews (TX-1983)
Parliamentarian	Michael Gonzales (NM-1973)
Communications Director	David Zavadsky (WI-1990)
Technology Director	Vacant
Alumni Programs Director	Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz (MA-1985)
Central Regional Director	James Brown (CO-2008)
Eastern Regional Director	Nathan Tauger (WV-2010)
Northern Regional Director	Andrew Bradley (IN-1996)
Southern Regional Director	Monike Santana (ME-2008)
Western Regional Director	Fernando Saldivar (CA-1994)
Executive Director	Michael Sundermeyer (MO-1969)
Deputy Executive Director	John Spisak

Leaving the board mid-term was Technology Director **Dan Brown (MS-1987)**. Despite his departure from the day-to-day business of the Board, Dan continues to be active in managing the USSYAA's presence at [ussyaa.org](http://ussyaa.org).

## Alumni Board Elections

At its annual meeting on Saturday, March 8, 2014, the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association will elect a new Board of Directors. As an all-volunteer board without paid staff, board members do much more than simply direct—they execute plans, actively manage the organization's resources, and often devote significant time to making sure scholarships, events, relationships, finances, and communications all work together for the benefit of the alumni of the U.S. Senate Youth Program.

If you are interested in rolling up your sleeves and serving on the 2014-2016 Board, please send your information or questions to Nominating Committee chair **David Zavadsky (WI-1990)** at [communications\\_director@ussyaa.org](mailto:communications_director@ussyaa.org).

## Windy City Wrap-Up

In a first for the Alumni Association, a gathering of alumni was held away from the East Coast! Organized by Northern Regional Director **Andrew Bradley (IN-1996)**, a group of alumni based in the Upper Midwest met at the historic Berghoff Restaurant on Monday, June 17, 2013, to enjoy appetizers and reminisce about their time in the Senate Youth Program.

Other alumni attending the gathering included **Dan Dornbrook (WI-1976)**, **William Fernandez (IL-2011)**, **Andrew Schwarm (IL-2003)**, **Ryan Shafer (OH-2001)**, **Kelli Walton (MI-1977)**, **David Zavadsky (WI-1990)**, and **Vitas Zukowski (AZ-2010)**.



*Andrew Bradley (IN-1996) and Will Fernandez (IL-2011) engage in discussion at the Berghoff in downtown Chicago.*

## Treasurer's Report

*John Selmon Blakley, Sr. (MI-1976), Treasurer*

On a cash basis for the period of January 1, 2013, through October 31, 2013, the USSYAA had expenses of \$27,171, consisting of scholarships, the Washington event dinner, regional events and various operating and administrative costs.

The assets of the USSYAA are held at Fidelity Investments and are invested in a portfolio consisting mainly of mutual funds. The year-to-date rate of return is 14.56% and includes dividends/interest, realized and unrealized capital gains/losses.

The USSYAA's Finance Committee continues to manage its investments with the goals of supporting the organization's mission. Contributions from members are a critical part of the alumni's goal of increasing scholarships and programs to ensure future success.

## Alumni Programs Report

*Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz (MA-1985),  
Alumni Programs Director*

It is with great pleasure that the Committee of Alumni Programs announces the award of not just one, but three United States Senate Youth Program Alumni scholarships for 2013. We received an amazing breadth and depth of applications, and the scholarship selection committee was impressed with the future of our program alumni. The committee, made up of **Mr. Rawle Andrews, Jr. (TX-1983)**, **Dr. Gregory Johnson, M.D. (KY-1985)**, and **B. Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz, Ph.D. (MA-1985)**, was highly impressed with the quality and quantity of the applicants, and was unanimous in its selections.

**Christopher Whaley (MT-2004)**, a graduate student at University of California, Berkeley, received the Rosalie Wynn Hearst and George Randolph Hearst, Sr., Scholarship in the amount of \$5,000. Mr. Whaley is completing a Ph.D. in Health Services and Policy. His research focuses on combining statistical methods of analyzing health outcomes and health insurance design. The committee felt that considering the association's emphasis on public service, combined with the relevance and promise of Mr. Whaley's work in the area of public health, that he represented the best combination of academic achievement and a future role in public policy development at the national level.

After special approval from the Board of Directors, the committee also awarded two \$2,500 scholarships to two candidates it found highly meritorious. **Mark Norsworthy (DD-2005)** and **Katie Jo Baumgardner (KS-2006)** both received scholarships. Mr. Norsworthy is getting a Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Sciences from University of Michigan, focusing on nuclear measurements, with a focus on nonproliferation and security issues. Ms. Baumgardner is a law student at Notre Dame University, with an interest in public interest law, and a goal of working on developing programs to help combat recidivism among criminal offenders in Kansas.

We are proud to support our alumni in furthering their interest in public service, and are amazed at the diverse interests they have displayed in their graduate work. We look forward to supporting other alumni in their future career development in the following years.

## Stay In Touch!

Have you recently moved or changed your primary e-mail address? Please take a moment to log in to the Alumni Area of [ussyaa.org](http://ussyaa.org) to update your e-mail and/or postal contact information. Not sure which e-mail address to use for logging in? Please send an e-mail to [technology\\_director@ussyaa.org](mailto:technology_director@ussyaa.org), and we can set you up.

## Alumni News

### *Class of 1975*

**Greg Kee (NH-1975)** has lived in Weston, MA, for the last 20 years. Following a long career in technology marketing, he became a high school math teacher five years ago and teaches at Gann Academy in Waltham, MA. Greg notes that in 1975 there was only one Senator for him and fellow delegate Bronwyn Hall to visit with, as a long-running election results dispute prevented John Durkin from being seated until several months after that year's U.S. Senate Youth Program.

### *Class of 1979*

Reverend **Harry Knox (GA-1979)** is now President and CEO of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, the nation's leading voice of people of faith for reproductive justice. More information about the organization is available on their website at [www.rcrc.org](http://www.rcrc.org).

### *Class of 1985*

**Steven Rice (WY-1985)** is currently studying Turkish in preparation for his next diplomatic assignment. In summer 2014, Steve will take up new duties as Political-Military Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey.

### *Class of 1990*

**Peter Wolanin (DC-1990)** earned his Ph.D. in physics, and did research in biophysics and cellular signal transduction before shifting to software engineering. He works for Acquia, a start-up that provides support for Drupal, and has contributed code to the Drupal project and helps organize and speak at meetups and conferences. Drupal is free software (GPL) that runs an increasing number of websites including government ([whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov), [energy.gov](http://energy.gov), [dhs.gov](http://dhs.gov)), news ([economist.com](http://economist.com), [motherjones.com](http://motherjones.com)), education ([harvard.edu](http://harvard.edu), [nypl.org](http://nypl.org)), and more ([ladygaga.com](http://ladygaga.com), [audubon.org](http://audubon.org), [louvre.fr](http://louvre.fr)). He is currently living in Princeton, NJ, where he is the chair of the municipal Democratic party and involved in state and local campaigns and get-out-the-vote efforts.

### *Class of 1991*

**Josh Friedman (MA-1991)** writes that he and his wife Ursula have just welcomed their second child, Mathilde, on October 30. She joins older brother Felix, who turns 2 on December 26. Josh and his family are currently living in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, where he is the Country Director for the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). DRC works with the refugee population in Tajikistan, which is primarily from neighboring Afghanistan, to provide them livelihoods and legal protection assistance.

### *Class of 1994*

**Robert Pipkin (CA-1994)** recently received a promotion to Lieutenant Commander in the US Navy. In January, he will begin a new assignment with the Commander, Strike Force Training Pacific, in San Diego.

### *Class of 1996*

**Jennifer (Seamon) Bellot (MI-1996)** was recently promoted to Associate Professor of Graduate Programs at the Jefferson School of Nursing, Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. And, just to keep things exciting, the Bellots were blessed with an infant in their house! Reports Jen, "Isabella came to us when she was 10 days old and we are in the process of adoption. Our two older boys, Sage (age 7) and Lior (age 4) are over the moon, as are we."

### *Class of 1998*

**Gordon Hendry (IN-1998)** recently was appointed to the Indiana State Board of Education by Governor Mike Pence. He is one of ten gubernatorial appointees and the only "at-large" appointee to the bipartisan board. The SBOE oversees state K-12 education policymaking in Indiana. This includes the distribution of state education funds to local schools—over 50% of Indiana's budget—creating and implementing accountability measures for schools and teachers, accrediting public and non public schools, and making recommendations to the governor and general assembly concerning the educational needs of the state.

### *Class of 1999*

**Virginia Suveiu (CA-1999)** is an instructor of contract law for UC Irvine Extension's Contract Management program.

For a little over a year and a half, **Jacques Guyette (NH-1999)** has been working in a research lab at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA, as a postdoctoral research fellow with Dr. Harald Ott of Harvard Medical School. His area of focus has been whole-organ regeneration using a technique called perfusion decellularization, in which an organ's cells are completely removed, leaving behind an extracellular matrix that can be re-seeded with organ-specific cell types and then cultured in bioreactors to create functional organs. In the past year, he has successfully bioengineered and transplanted a functional rat kidney. More information on this accomplishment can be found at <http://www.nature.com/nmj/journal/v19/n5/full/nm.3154.html>.

### *Class of 2000*

**Mitchel T. Keller (ND 2000)** has ended the nomadic phase of his life by accepting a position as a tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Mathematics at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, VA. Although it's a bit of a drive to the District, he hopes his new location will allow him to be more engaged in USSYAA and Association of Marshall Scholars events.

### *Class of 2001*

**Matthew Petty (ND-2001)** was recently appointed the Executive Director of Physicians for a National Health Program. In this role, he is responsible for mobilizing PNHP's membership in advocating for single-payer reform at the national and state levels, growing its membership and financial base, and enhancing its outreach programs, media work and ties with coalition partners. A full copy of the news release is available at <http://www.pnhp.org/news/2013/november/petty-appointed-executive-director-of-pnhp>.

### *Class of 2002*

**Spencer Scharff (AZ-2002)** recently left private practice and accepted a one-year clerkship with Judge Andrew Hurwitz, the newest member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He previously clerked for Judge Hurwitz's predecessor, Judge Mary Schroeder. Spencer, like many of us, is still working out what he wants to do next, and welcomes ideas from his fellow alumni!

### *Class of 2005*

**William Haun (CT-2005)** is a law clerk to Judge Claude M. Hilton on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Over the past year, Will has published a variety of articles on law and policy, including a white paper on EPA's authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants (cited in a U.S. Senate Committee report) and a law journal article with criminal law professor John S. Baker. He was also quoted in the New York Times, and received a John Marshall Fellowship from the Claremont Institute. He lives with his wife outside Washington, D.C., and is always interested in meeting up with fellow Senate Youth alums.

### *Class of 2006*

**Alex Stroman (SC-2006)** recently left his job as Executive Director of the South Carolina Republican Party. He now serves on State Treasurer Curtis Loftis's senior staff as Communications Director for the State Treasurer's Office.

This fall, **Elaine Sedenberg (TX-2006)** began her Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley, in the School of Information researching contemporary science and technology policy issues.

### *Class of 2007*

**Chelsea St. Onge-May (ME-2007)** finished her master's degree at The George Washington University in May. Just a few weeks later in July, she deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As a Petty Officer Second Class in the US Navy, she works on logistics related to facilitating the military commissions, or trials, of the detainees in GTMO.

### *Class of 2008*



**Kayla Kermode (MI-2008)** and Stephen Six, Jr., were married on October 5, 2013, at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Santa Barbara, CA. (See photo above.)

In October 2013, **Tonei Glavinic (AK-2008)** was inducted into Alpha Sigma Nu, the international honor society for Jesuit colleges and universities, and one of the highest honors awarded on a Jesuit campus. He was also selected as a Pride Foundation Scholar for the fourth time in May. Pride Foundation is a community foundation that supports LGBTQ and allied students and organizations in the Pacific Northwest.

**Stephen Stolzenberg (WV-2008)** graduated from Princeton University cum laude with a degree in German languages and literature. While at Princeton, he served as the student body Vice-President. He is now teaching English in Southern Thailand to 350 rambunctious Thai teenagers through the Princeton in Asia program.

**Zephanii Smith (CA 2008)** has completed her two-year term on the National Board of Directors for the NAACP and spent three semesters abroad studying in Jordan/Egypt, London, and Seoul. In May 2013, she graduated with a bachelor's degree from Claremont McKenna College. She is now back home in Stockton, California, working in Congressman Jerry McNerney's district office and taking classes toward a master's degree in Educational Administration and Leadership at the University of the Pacific. More information on Zephanii is available on the NAACP website at <http://www.naacp.org/pages/zephanii-smith>.

### *Class of 2009*

In the spring, **Adam Klein (CA-2009)** graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford University and now works as a Strategic Projects Associate Manager for InnVision Shelter Network. Adam describes InnVision as “an awesome non-profit that runs homeless shelters and helps people get back on their feet and self-sufficient again.”

**Seth Bostrom (SC-2009)** graduated with a bachelor’s degree in political science from the College of Charleston in May 2013. He is now spending a year in Munich, Germany, as one of 75 people chosen from around the country to participate in the 30th Congress–Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals. This is a U.S. State Department fellowship program jointly funded by the U.S. Congress and German Bundestag that provides an opportunity to live, study, and intern in Germany for a year.

### *Class of 2010*

After spending the summer in Washington, DC, interning for the Secretary of State’s speechwriting team at the State Department, **Josh Rubin (NY-2010)** is back at Yale University for his senior year. He will graduate in May 2014 with a B.A. in Global Affairs.

After working as a Lead Cook in Yellowstone National Park this past summer, **Gregory Savageau (MA-2010)** returned to Tulane University, where he was elected a Senator in the Undergraduate Student Government.

### *Class of 2011*

**Allen Lollis (SC-2011)** was elected to a two-year term as Third Vice Chairman of the South Carolina Republican Party at their biennial convention held in May. In this role, he will serve as a co-Chairman for the SCGOP Committee on Outreach, and as the party’s chief liaison to young people. With his election, Allen becomes one of the youngest statewide officers of either major party in the nation.

This past year **Kevin Saucedo Broach (MD-2011)** had the opportunity to work as a summer intern in the Capitol Hill office of his congresswoman, Donna F. Edwards of Maryland’s 4th District, as well as interning for the Terry McAuliffe campaign for the 2013 Virginia governor’s election. In addition, he finished his term as the Business Manager of the Virginia Gentlemen, the oldest a cappella group of the University of Virginia. This past spring he toured with the VGs in Southeast Asia as entertainment aboard the Crystal Symphony, visiting the cities of Singapore, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, and Hong Kong. The VGs were also invited to perform at the White House twice during the winter, once for the holiday season and then as part of the inaugural activities. This year is his third year at UVa and he’s currently pursuing a Government and History double major. Kevin greatly misses all of his friends from USSYP and loves meeting alums from across

the years, so if any USSYPers are ever in Charlottesville, please drop him a line at [kss5pj@virginia.edu](mailto:kss5pj@virginia.edu).

### *Class of 2012*

**Andrew Wilhelm (MD-2012)** was elected Senate Leader of the St. Mary’s College of Maryland Student Government Association Senate.

**Jeremy Allen (OK-2012)** was recently selected as a Ewing Fellow at the University of Oklahoma. The Cortez A.M. Ewing Public Service Fellowship is a competitive grant for undergraduate students of all fields of study to intern in Washington.

## **The Last Word...**

*David Zavadsky (WI-1990), Communications Director*

This year it’s been a privilege to work with a highly engaged communications committee composed of **Rachel Lowe (OR-2000)**, **Rustin Fakhari (IL-2008)**, **Pierre Joseph (MA-2010)**, and **Jamarr Brown (SC-2005)**. Our conference calls were very motivating, and the ideas that were generated will provide a blueprint for how future communications committees can more consistently engage the membership.

In the coming year, we have plans to make several improvements to our website at [ussyaa.org](http://ussyaa.org), with the goal of making information about the organization’s activities accessible in a more timely fashion. We’re also working on streamlining the registration process for our events. This year we’ve moved to an “omnibus” registration form for Washington Weekend that permits registering for both our annual dinner (a ticketed event) and our Saturday program (which remains free to all alumni), and we hope to make continual improvements as we hold more events in more places throughout the United States.

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognize our president, **Rachel Lowe (OR-2000)**, for the fantastic job she has done in building consensus among our board and working tirelessly so that the organization can do more and be more to its members. She has the advantage—and stress—of serving with two previous presidents on the board, but she has led with her own ideas and it has been an honor to help implement her agenda.

I wish all alumni a happy and prosperous New Year, and hope to see you in Washington in March!