

With imagination and optimism far out of proportion to the foundation's stretched finances, the 1980s represented one of Sunstone's most creative periods. Who are the incredible people who not only kept it going but helped it soar? How are things different today?

“IMMEDIATELY IRRESISTIBLE IDEAS” SUNSTONE AND PEGGY FLETCHER, 1980–86

By Lavina Fielding Anderson

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fifth article in a series chronicling the history of Sunstone's first twenty-five years and is part two of Anderson's coverage of the years 1978–1986. The first part, “Dreams, Dollars, and Dr. Pepper: Allen Roberts & Peggy Fletcher Years (1978–1980)” was published in SUNSTONE, February 2000.

PEGGY FLETCHER GREW UP IN NEW JERSEY IN A home welcoming to a generous form of Mormonism. A great-granddaughter of President Heber J. Grant and a granddaughter of both Wallace F. Bennett, long Utah's Senator, and Harvey Fletcher, the father of stereophonic sound, she easily mingled her family, personal, and religious identity. The family library included Lowell Bennion, Elder John A. Widtsoe, and Fletcher's *The Good Life* but nothing by President Joseph Fielding Smith or Elder Bruce R. McConkie. Her parents subscribed to *Dialogue*, and Peggy remembers reading its articles on the discovery of the Joseph Smith papyri and with her father talking over what it meant in the same dispassionate but engaged way that conversations on science and religion swirled unthreateningly through the house. “Our lives were bracketed by ward activities,” she recalls. “There was no real dissonance between reading the scriptures and reading *Dialogue*.”¹

When she met Scott Kenney at the University of Utah, Ted Eyring, dean of the chemistry department, was her bishop; Carlisle Hunsaker and Kent Dunford were on the Institute faculty. “All of these liberal types were in leadership positions,” she recalls, “but I never knew it was unusual.” Scott, a member of the Gospel Doctrine class she was teaching, impressed her with his quiet thoughtfulness and astuteness. So when in the summer of 1974 he told her he wanted to start a magazine, “I didn't stop to think. I instantly said ‘Sure!’ That's how I made

the biggest decision of my life until Mike Stack asked me to marry him. And that, too, was an immediately irresistible idea. I instantly said, ‘Sure!’”

Those who might conclude from these examples that the wide-eyed, waiflike Peggy was easily suggestible had not encountered the unyielding steel she brought to the task of keeping SUNSTONE alive for eight years, often by willpower alone.

NEW OFFICES, SAME ISSUES

“I've got every question you've got and more besides, and if I can hang in here, so can you.”

FOLLOWING THE 1980 demolition of the Hotel Newhouse, which had been Sunstone's home for the previous year, the office moved to Arrow Press Square (West Temple Street between First and Second South) for about a year. While there, Allen Roberts, Peggy's co-editor and co-publisher, reluctantly resigned due to Sunstone's financial straits and its inability to pay anything close to a salary that could support his young family. Peggy's own lifestyle was never anything but spartan. By the time she left the magazine in 1986, Sunstone was paying her a salary of \$5,000 a year. She drove a donated car, lived in a \$225-a-month apartment, and often wangled invitations to lunch so she didn't have to buy food.

Always looking for ways to reduce overhead, Peggy begged office space from her grandfather in the Bennett Paint building on Third South which had housed his business office and, for a year, until it moved, the paint store. For the next five and a half years, the rooms on the second floor were Sunstone's home, the place where twenty three issues of the magazine and almost the entire three-year run of the *Sunstone Review* were produced. It also served as a kind of informal social center for Mormon intellectuals looking for a place to hang out, a lively information exchange, and even a confessional of sorts as some staffers and visitors struggled to explore and express



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their faith in an environment more hospitable and supportive than their local wards.

Indeed, for many people then, as now, Sunstone was a lifeline, a tether to a Church that seemed to be steaming off in a strange direction, leaving them marooned and abandoned. The intellectual isolation that questioning believers felt in their wards was often suffocating. Peggy remembers giving top attention to spiritual crises, consequently spending “hours on the phone, so much time that the staff probably ended up doing my work for me more often than not.”

Sometimes people called with questions—questions that they could take to literally no one they knew. Sometimes they would announce they were leaving the Church. Sometimes they begged Peggy to tell them how they could stay in the Church. “I always told them how sad it was to think of leaving the Church,” she recalls. “I always pled with them not to go, that it would be like my sister or my brother leaving the family. I’d say, ‘We love you. We need you. I’ve got every question you’ve got and more besides, and if I can hang in here, so can you.’ They were desperate for answers, and they saw the editor of SUNSTONE as a source of sympathetic, authoritative answers.”

THE MAGAZINE ROLLS ON

Consistently high creativity and quality

YET EVEN AS Peggy and the staff dealt with these and other kinds of crises, they managed to produce one thoughtful and engaging magazine after another. SUNSTONE’s major emphases changed little during these years: history, theology, Book of Mormon studies, contemporary issues, personal essays, interviews, fiction, poetry, and reviews. Some regular columns were added to the editorial mix. Psychologist Marvin Rytting wrote of “Paradoxes and Perplexities.” Attorney Jay Bybee explored “Law of the Land.” Therapist Marybeth Raynes wrote a popular column, “Issues of Intimacy.” Paul M. Edwards, president of the RLDS Church’s Temple School, took on a variety of philosophical topics in his “The Noumenonist,” including a critique of the women’s movement. James N. Kimball wrote a well-read column of “J. Golden Nuggets,” irreverent anecdotes about his great-uncle.

Peggy’s broad-based theological interests led to greater emphasis on interesting articles from non-Mormon scholars, who were starting to pay greater attention to Mormon topics. Although some readers argued that SUNSTONE’S precious space should be conserved for examinations of Mormonism by its own scholars, Peggy published Edwin S. Gaustad’s analysis of history and theology, Catherine L. Albanese’s “Mormonism and the Male-Female God: An Exploration in Active Mysticism,” and Kenneth L. Woodward’s “The Use and Abuse of Religion,” followed by Laurence R. Iannaccone, an evangel-

SUNSTONE READERS, 1983

CERTAINLY Peggy and her staff had an intuitive sense of who Sunstone’s readers were, but a 1983 reader survey honed that sense. From 445 responses came this snapshot:

DEMOGRAPHICS. 78 percent of readers were between 25 and 50. Average age was 40. 63 percent were male.

INCOME. 70 percent earned more than \$25,000 per year; 44 percent earned over \$40,000 annually.

PROFESSION. 70 percent were working professionals (lawyers, doctors, engineers, educators).

EDUCATION. 91 percent were college graduates. 56 percent had graduate degrees. 78 percent participated in continuing education programs, special conferences, and workshops.

OWNERSHIP. 78 percent owned their own homes. 56 percent owned two or more cars.

TRAVEL. 73 percent took two or more vacations per year. 82 percent traveled out of state at least twice per year. 38 percent traveled out of state five or more times per year.

RECREATION. 36 percent went on camping or backpacking trips regularly. Readers indicated a strong interest in jogging and outdoor sports. They were less enthusiastic about genealogy and personal history.

REGULAR ENTERTAINMENT. 68 percent regularly went to movies; 57 percent to plays; 53 percent to operas, symphony, and ballet; 39 percent to art shows and galleries; 58 percent ate out six times or more times per month.

BUYING PATTERNS. 56 percent bought sixteen or more books a year (the high was two hundred), while 47 percent bought six or more music albums or tapes a year (the high was one hundred).

FAMILY STATUS. 76 percent were married; 60 percent had children under eighteen living at home.

MULTIPLE EXPOSURE. 87 percent of SUNSTONE readers kept their issues permanently; 75 percent referred to them after reading them once; 20 percent referred to them more than five times. Readers shared their copies on average with 2.6 other people.

READER comments from the survey ran across a wide spectrum:

- I’m still looking for a periodical which can stimulate thinking Mormons without tromping all over their spiritual sensitivities. You’re not it yet. Latest issues could have been published by Deseret Press. . . .

- Sometimes I worry about some of your intellectuals. Do they really have testimonies?

- Life without SUNSTONE would be bleak indeed out here on the farm while waiting for Pops to get his Ph.D. and living in a struggling branch currently going through a “zeal without knowledge” spasm.



ical Protestant minister, who argued that Paul's injunctions for women to keep silence in church were misinterpreted, that he was responding to a query about this practice sent to him in a letter and was actually denouncing it as a kind of Pharisaic legalism inconsistent with the gospel of Christ. Still, there was no neglect of Mormon theology by Mormons. Mormon philosopher Kent Robson warned that Mormonism might be veering too much toward Protestant theology, and Keith E. Norman argued that "we are scarcely aware of the strengths of our unique theology."²

Book of Mormon studies continued to explore environmental questions, historicity, channeled writing, and such analytical approaches as wordprint studies.³ Abortion, aesthetics, and the apocalypse, pacifism, popular culture, fiction, social activism, correlation, folklore, and photo essays all found their places in SUNSTONE'S pages.

Feminism continued as a strong emphasis. Ida Smith pointed out: "There is a tendency for us to think of men as individuals—and women as roles. . . . Women tend to be put in pigeon holes the minute they take on a new relationship: wife, mother." Linda King Newell's landmark reconstruction of the practice and demise of Mormon women's blessing the sick was a dignified lament for a litany of losses. Sociologists and psychologists explored the generally positive but sometimes troubling "geography of Mormon sexuality," while Margaret M. Toscano opened a new chapter in the feminist dialogue with her essay: "The Missing Rib: The Forgotten Place of Queens and Priestesses in the Establishment of Zion," and Jerrie W. Hurd speculated that such scriptural images as "Wisdom" of Proverbs and the "Tree of Life" might actually refer to Mother in Heaven.⁴

Despite SUNSTONE'S deemphasis on heavily documented articles, strong history papers still appeared in its pages. Kenneth L. Cannon II examined the difficult process of disengaging from polygamy after 1890. Gary James Bergera recorded Carl A. Badger's "personal agony" as Reed Smoot's secretary during the humiliating hearings that, in his view, showed his church's leaders acting in bad faith. Mark S. Lee thoughtfully reexamined *Reynolds vs. United States* as an exercise in legislating morality. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher wrote a landmark examination of the exercise of spiritual gifts among Mormon women at Winter Quarters. Boyd Kirkland studied the evolution of the unusual Mormon doctrine that Jesus Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.⁵

In other notable articles and essays, Bruce L. Christensen simultaneously defended the need for Church public relations and raised troubling questions about its use. Gary Browning, Eugene England, and Howard Ball took strong and unpopular positions against the demonization of the Russians and against militarism in general. Louis Zucker reflected on living his life in Salt Lake City as a Jew. D. Jeff Burton caused a stir with his powerful identification and validation of the "closet doubter." Anthony A. Hutchinson unflinchingly examined what the humanness of Joseph Smith means in a context of faith.⁶

The amazing thing about this publishing record is its consistently high creativity and quality. Reading the magazine

alone makes it easy to overlook Sunstone's life-and-death financial struggles. Yet reading the financial record alone leads to the false assumption that the magazine was hastily scratched together out of easily available and comparatively shoddy material. Nothing could be further from the truth. At one point in 1985, the publication schedule was in such shambles that the editorial staff stopped putting dates on the masthead. Volume 10, no. 6 appeared with a June 1985 date. No. 7, dateless, arrived in my mailbox on 4 March 1986. No. 8 contains an announcement of Peggy's farewell party dated 30 April 1986.

A TEAM EFFORT

Leadership styles and life lessons

MUCH OF SUNSTONE'S success against great odds was due to Peggy's evolving leadership and the high caliber of Sunstone's core group of staff and volunteers. During Peggy's tenure, the mastheads of both SUNSTONE and the *Sunstone Review* were always outdated and contained a constantly shifting list of names and job titles that reflected Peggy's philosophy: "Most of those who worked with us were volunteers. They could have whatever title they thought would help them the most with their job."

Among the first to arrive was Susan Staker (then Oman), who came during the time Allen was still at Sunstone. Managing a young family, Susan had just finished helping Hal Cannon curate a very successful Utah folklore exhibit and write the catalog. She was looking for part-time work with flexible hours, and the opportunities at Sunstone were a good match. She started as part-time receptionist but soon became (whatever her masthead title may have been at any given moment) the "Guru of Editing."

To Peggy, "Susan was everything that I'm not. She was organized and disciplined. She met deadlines. She was the first person to impose editorial rules on the magazine. She was quick at editing. I was slow and agonizing. She was thorough and detailed, and just so smart. She never had a temper tantrum. She was always reliable. If she said she would be there, she was there."

Scott Dunn joined the Sunstone team in 1983, coming over after earning a linguistics degree from BYU and from working on the university's off-campus paper, the *Seventh East Press*. Very tall, thin, and bearded (when he let his hair grow out, as he did one year, he looked a lot like the way Jesus is portrayed), Scott shared with Susan the bulk of the editing duties. Peggy says of Scott: "He was a great writer, he could catch any error, and he really helped bring a professionalism to the magazine. It was he, along with Susan, who established Sunstone's first style guide." Besides his wonderful, droll wit and great sense of humor, Peggy's most vivid memory of Scott is "walking by, seeing him in his corner office, headphones on, listening to music, just happily editing away." Peggy, who was always more of Sunstone's "big picture" visionary, recalls she did very little actual editing during the years Scott and Susan worked together. "I can't say enough about how blessed we were to have them with us."

Another key player during much of Peggy's editorship was art designer Brian Bean. Susan praises him as "really great at design. He did wonderful things. He eventually had to find a more stable job, but SUNSTONE was good for him creatively." Brian was also an absolute rock of dependability at a time of great flux. "We were spoiled with Brian," Peggy admits.

Although what follows is by no means an exhaustive list, many others also made important contributions to the magazine. Ron Bitton and Nicole Hoffman were very talented writers, reviewers, and editors. Cecilia Warner was a terrific news editor, first with the *Review* and then with the magazine. Connie Disney and Marcelyn Ritchie played key roles in the magazine's "look" and layout, and Mike Stack was a staff photographer *par excellence*. Peggy also singles out Kerry Bate's role as a typesetter. "He was a fabulous typist. Fast. Accurate. He'd work nights and weekends, and we were always amazed at how much he could get done."

In addition to great magazine help, Sunstone was blessed to have many high caliber people working in the office and on the business end. Peggy considers her hiring of Martha Ball to be one of the best strokes of luck during her Sunstone tenure. "She was the right person at the right time. We needed her. She was very organized, very disciplined. She smoothed over the office chaos." Martha, who was married and had children, was about a half-generation older than most of the rest of the staff and functioned as something of a "mother figure" around the Bennett building offices. Peggy recalls another bonus from Martha's extra maturity: "She was connected. She knew everybody. I would bet half of the people who eventually formed our national advisory board were first suggested to us by Martha."

Michelle Macfarlane played several key roles during much of this period. She was very task-oriented and helped with everything from organizing symposiums, to raising funds as development director, to helping with the magazine. Peggy says of Michelle, "She was capable of doing anything and everything!"

Tom Miner, Renee Hepworth, Madlyn Tanner, Mary DeLamare-Schaefer, Rebecca Cornwall, Chris Allen, Charlotte Hamblin, and many others helped Sunstone stay afloat administratively. They raised funds, worked on subscriptions, prepared mailings. Husband-and-wife team Joe and Rebecca Harris came along just as the importance of computers and the potential value of database-driven processes were first being noticed and helped move Sunstone into the information age.

THE GURU OF EDITING



Susan Staker enjoys a hallway conversation during a Sunstone symposium

SUSAN Staker, now living in Seattle, Washington, where she is editorial director of instructional communications for Adobe Systems, "loves editing and loved editing for Sunstone." She recalls many happy, tender, and tense moments related to her time at Sunstone. A tender moment came when on assignment for the magazine she covered D. Michael Quinn's speech to BYU's student history association responding to Elder Boyd K. Packer's harsh 1981 address,

"The Mantle is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect," that decried the dangers of analytical history. Susan and Michael were old friends who had taken German and history together at BYU years earlier. Michael, who had carefully written his response in third person in an attempt to provide both some distance from a topic that was his life's passion and also to deal respectfully with a General Authority, choked up not far from the end and, overcome by emotion, asked Susan to finish reading it for him.

She also recalls something of an editing "test case" in an article about the Book of Mormon that had been submitted by San Francisco businessman George D. Smith (who later co-founded Signature Books). "When I finished editing it, it had gone from about thirty pages to nine," recalls Susan. "Then we had a dilemma. Peggy was working up to approach him for a donation, so she wanted him to like us, and I had just cut his article by two thirds. We went over the article carefully. I would have agreed if she'd said to pull back, but Peggy agreed with me that cutting was what it needed and that we had to deal with the article on its merits. I was terrified when I gave it back to George, but his reaction was 'Great!' On that basis, he later told Peggy, he decided Sunstone was a serious organization. It made me feel good about Peggy, and it certainly made me feel good about George."

Susan also remembers the moment when she decided she didn't want to edit anymore. "I was working with Jim Allen's response to a quirky little piece about Joseph Smith and something he'd reportedly said about men wearing Quaker hats on the moon. It was a serious response with a light-hearted twist, and he was very anxious about it, worried about explaining everything so no one would be offended. I was concerned with writing problems: trying to straighten out sentences and move interesting information out of the footnotes and into the text. I remember arguing at one point that writing was supposed to *present* information, not *conceal* it. It was then I realized this wasn't just about Jim. It was the whole environment that was making him and people like him afraid. Taking out an adjective or changing a sentence from the passive to the active voice was fraught with significance: What consequences could this have for his family? His employment? His callings? So many feelings were at stake. It was a relief when I started a graduate program and had to move on. Until then, I hadn't realized how hard editing SUNSTONE had been: so much work, so much intensity, so little money." (At the highest point, Susan was making \$7 an hour.)

Lorie Winder (Stromberg), an energetic, glamorous Californian, came aboard in 1979 through her connections with both Peggy and Allen. Lorie had been Peggy's roommate for the summer of 1976 in Berkeley. She had known Allen even longer as a member of his BYU ward. Lorie first volunteered but was then hired to mail the very successful Cal Grondahl cartoon books that Sunstone had published. Whatever Lorie's title might be at any given moment, Peggy relied on her commitment and enthusiasm. She tapped a "gigantic network" of volunteers and friends, but also never hesitated to jump in and do whatever task was next. "She can be very outspoken, but she had a ton more energy than I ever had," recalls Peggy. "She just breathed a lot of fun into everything."

In addition to its core of paid staff, Sunstone was graced with wonderful volunteers. John Sillito had been involved with Sunstone since at least 1975 when, as a member of the archival staff in the Church Historical Department, he had a conversation with Bill Slaughter about this "new magazine" and wondered if they could use a book review editor. It was a volunteer position he held through the incredible roller-coaster ride of the next decade. Susan Staker singled John out for praise: "Good sense, no bullshit, a real workhorse. He always had so much integrity and persistence."

Dennis Clark and Mark Thomas were also among Sunstone's most loyal volunteers, Dennis serving faithfully through most of Peggy's years as SUNSTONE's poetry editor, and Mark making himself available for any and all tasks. Many other volunteers were a bit less regular, "floaters," who would

come in for a few weeks or a few months, often drawn out of loneliness or because they were searching for something. They came and went. Peggy learned to enjoy them and their talents while they would match stride with Sunstone for a few paces or many; then she would let them go without regret.

"Sometimes it was emotionally draining being in the office," remembers Susan. "So many people came needing support. They'd volunteer, but it was sometimes hard to get them to work. They wanted to talk. After they processed their issues, they'd either move out of the Church or into another job. Maybe it always happens with largely volunteer organizations, but we saw people at a very vulnerable point in their personal development. I never figured out who would stay in the Church, who would leave, and why. And of course, I was right there processing my own issues at the same time. But I do know the Church is wrong to demonize Sunstone as damaging to people's faith. For everyone who left, five stayed. When people came to Sunstone, they were looking for reasons to stay attached, otherwise they would already have left. And they usually found reasons."

Lorie was also one of those for whom Sunstone was an important intellectual and spiritual home during a vulnerable period. "Sunstone functioned as a community," she recalls. "There were always a lot of people in the office, a lot of conversations going on. I basically worked for nothing—a couple of times I didn't even ask Peggy for my salary when I knew that she was under unusual financial stress—because it was a way to process my issues. I'd been committed intellectually and emotionally to the ERA, and the Church's stand really pulled

THE SUNSTONE DEBATING SOCIETY

IN May 1983, the Sunstone Foundation organized the Sunstone Debate Society, citing Joseph Smith's Nauvoo debating society. The first meeting of this short-lived enterprise was held 7 June, and featured a debate between Eugene England vs. Rev. George Nye, with Steve Christensen moderating, on the topic: "Resolved: Mormons Are Christians." Encouragingly, even after a mailing to more than 2,500 people plus other expenses, the evening generated a profit, from the suggested donation of \$5 per person, of \$909.

A questionnaire passed out at the event in an effort to measure interest in potential future topics offered twenty-one choices. Even after the passage of fifteen years, most would still generate lively discussions:

- The Book of Mormon is a book of ancient history.
- Women should hold the priesthood.
- God could not have used evolution to create humanity.
- A liberal Democrat cannot be a good Mormon.
- If a leader requires a wrongful act of his followers, the responsibility lies with the leader, not the follower.
 - Authority resides in the strength of the idea not in the power of the office.
 - Population is God's concern not ours.

- God is intimately involved in the lives of his children.
- The Church should take care of its own and has no responsibility for the world.
- There can be only one true church.
- Pacifism is the only fully Christian response to war.
- The Church has no reason to provide financial disclosure.
- Tithing should be graduated like income, in preparation for the United Order.
- A rich man cannot enter heaven.
- Age is not a factor in wisdom.
- Joseph Smith was not a Mormon.
- Even God cannot know the future.
- There will be physical procreation in the hereafter.
- Physical handicaps are God's way of testing the human spirit.
- When a person dies it is because God needed him/her.
- God is married.

This last topic was the subject of the final Sunstone Debate Society effort, a November 1984 give and take, with Paul and Margaret Toscano taking the affirmative and Rev. William F. Maxwell of St. Mark's and Rev. Anne Campbell, chaplain at Westminster College, taking the negative.



Peggy in her Sunstone office at the Bennett Building

For her birthday one year, longtime friend and supporter John Ashton brought Peggy a truckload of her favorite beverage, Sugar Free Dr. Pepper.

the rug out from under me. Those years at Sunstone were a vital time for me in sorting out my religion so that I could stay attached in a way that is neither codependent nor fearful.”

The exact number of those who worked for Sunstone at any given moment was a guess. Peggy somewhat optimistically told a reporter in August 1982 that the staff had ten full-time employees and fifteen volunteer writers, not counting authors.⁸

When asked to reflect on her own leadership style during her tenure, Peggy appraises herself candidly: “My strength, but also a real weakness for Sunstone, was that Sunstone and I were a package. To make it work, I was selling myself all the time. People had to like me to like Sunstone. I knew intuitively that it needed to be different, but in some ways, it never happened.” John Sillito saw this trait as positive: “How could you turn her down when she asked you to do something? Nobody could say they worked harder or sacrificed more than she did.”

Susan Staker appraised Peggy’s style as “very persuasive, charming, and strategic,” but not indirect. “I didn’t ever have to guess what she meant. She had the final say, but I was free within my area of expertise. If I thought there was a problem, we’d solve it on the spot.” An 11 August 1982 hand-written memo from Susan to Peggy shows not only the development of the Sunstone operation (it was publishing the *Review* and also sponsoring the annual symposium during this time), but also Susan’s skill at gentle prodding:

We used to talk about the magazine all of the time because that’s what Sunstone was. And I was involved in most aspects of what was going on. That has all been changing—inevitably and mostly for the better. I’m involved in narrower aspects of the overall operation and you have to balance more responsibilities and

more people. You’ve scheduled meetings for this and time for that. But ironically, the one thing we’ve never scheduled in is the magazine itself. So I find myself snatching for your time—and you’re often on the run, looking at the clock, preoccupied by something else. I’m not blaming you for that; I know you feel besieged from every point. But it can be disconcerting for me. I’m always having to feel out when I’m welcome, when I’m not. So the first thing I’m suggesting is that you and I schedule a regular editorial meeting that is as sacrosanct as the *Review* meeting. I know I’d still

have to snatch other time but at least I’d have a certain amount of time and attention I could depend on.

Susan’s other concerns were a clearer definition of her responsibility as editor and also clearer communication channels between *Review* and SUNSTONE decision-makers.⁷

Lorie talks about the challenge of balancing friendship with the employer/employee relationship. “If Peggy was dissatisfied with something I did, sometimes it was difficult for me to figure out what it was exactly.” She saw Peggy in operation as “seductive in a way—by that I mean that she was very curious, a great listener, with boundless enthusiasm. She could really key into someone’s interests and launch memorable, stimulating conversations that could go on for months. We were all committed, but for every single one of us, there were limits—practical limits, time, money, the rest of our lives—on our commitment. For Peggy, there were no limits.”

Someone Peggy should have never hired was designer Mike Rogan, successor to a longish list of designers that had last ended with Brian Bean. Rogan, who had previously been a designer for one of the Church magazines, came to Sunstone just as he was called to a ward bishopric. His marriage was beginning to crumble, and he was also undergoing a midlife crisis.

In retrospect, Peggy sees that Rogan’s “whole life had been holding back and holding in. The handwriting was on the wall, but I didn’t see it.” Rogan started wanting to work at his apartment or at night after everyone had left the office, because the office was chaotic. “Well, it was.” He began missing deadlines, “but our schedule was so erratic, how could I possibly hold anybody to that?” Gradually, Peggy and Susan realized they never knew when Rogan was coming in. And they never knew how to find him. This was a serious problem because every article was individually designed, the hand-labor of

doing paste-up from slix enormous, the process of making corrections complicated. (See sidebar on production, page 31.)

"I was so naive about drugs," Peggy sighs. "People told us Mike had a problem, but I just didn't get it. I thought I'd given him some really clear ultimatums, but what I'd probably done was timidly ask him, 'Oh, by the way, could you come to work more?' Then after a long string of problems, when I got him on the phone, I said, 'I just don't think this is going to work.' He couldn't believe I was firing him. He exploded, cursed me, called me names."

That was at the end of March 1985. On the night of 1–2 April, someone broke into the office, stole the computer and printer, worth about \$6,000, and all of the software and backup diskettes. "When I came to work the next day, all of the books were thrown off my bookshelves," recalls Peggy. "My chair was turned upside down with a screwdriver jammed through the seat." Rogan was the logical suspect, especially since there was no sign of a break-in. Some windows had been shattered, but from the inside. When the police asked to do lie-detector tests, one staff member refused, and Rogan had disappeared. No one was ever charged.

The insurance paid for a new computer; from the last print-out, the staff rekeyed the 7,000-names in their database and, with heroic efforts, got the spring 1985 issue out on time. Peggy sent out an emergency letter begging past contributors to give \$200–500 immediately to cover emergency costs. She also asked for more substantial donations to cover the \$30,000 required for the upcoming symposium.⁹

All in all, it was a bitter taste at the end of an exhausting decade of working with Sunstone. "I was terrified," Peggy admits. "This was violence aimed at me, and I realized that I'd been naive in a hundred different ways. Once I found a homeless man sleeping in my car. I thought nothing of working alone until three o'clock in the morning. I hitchhiked to work for years. It was so Mormon and so stupid to feel like someone was watching out for me. I'd never want my kids to do what I did."

MAKING IT WORK

Got a fund-raising idea? Let's try it!

IT GOES WITHOUT saying that keeping Sunstone alive financially during Peggy's tenure was a never-ending struggle. Aware of her own limitations as a business manager, Peggy several times recruited people for that role: her cousin Bruce Bennett, Tom Miner, and others. She'd bring them aboard, and they would stay for a while but then leave. Despite their best efforts, all became discouraged. Sunstone's budget was approximately \$200,000 a year by the mid-1980s, but it was impossible to manage the money successfully when there was simply not enough—not enough, on some occasions, to pay the staff and, more frequently, not enough to publish the magazine at regular intervals. John Sillito recalls, as one of his most poignant memories, going into Peggy's office just after she got off the phone with a creditor. "She was huddled in her army jacket to keep warm, holding her can of Dr. Pepper, and looking just devastated. I realized how lucky I was

just to be able to do Sunstone as a hobby, and do the part I loved best—the books—but not to have to carry any of that financial responsibility."

A national advisory board, Peggy hoped, would combine both moral and economic support. She organized this group in a blitz of letters and phone calls during March and April 1983. These individuals came on board knowing they were dreaming big and digging deep into their personal pockets.

Peggy's invitations to prospective board members were far-ranging and ambitious, a true cross-section of productive Mormons. Usually those who refused pled the press of already oppressive work schedules (and usually proved it by listing their current obligations). A few also cited the current Church climate as a reason it would be "unwise" to become a public Sunstone ally. Among those who regretfully declined, nearly always with warmest personal regards to Peggy herself, were Leonard Arrington, John W. Bennion, Stanford Cazier, Richard H. Cracroft, William E. Evenson, Deanne Francis, Carl S. Hawkins, Dean R. Lindsay, Meg Monk, Ron Miller, and Barnard and Cherry Silver.

A particularly heartwarming acceptance came from the late Elizabeth D. Gee, then in Morgantown, West Virginia, where her husband Gordon was president of West Virginia University: "I view Sunstone as an island of excellence in an ever-deepening quagmire of mediocrity, sentimentality, and distortion. I, for one, am glad you are not giving up."

In documents provided to advisory board members, the foundation projected income for the next seven months, to March 1984, as \$153,480. Of that estimated income, the greatest amount would come from magazine and *Review* renewals (\$53,480), followed by contributions (\$42,000) and book sales (\$34,000).¹⁰ The symposium and advertising were to bring in approximately equal amounts—\$12,000 each. Sunstone at that time owed \$40,416: \$17,814 in bills to various printers and the rest of it in loans (\$8,500 to the bank, and \$35,916 to individuals). Sunstone's projected expenditures for the same period came to \$152,273. It cost approximately \$1200 to print an issue of the *Review*, \$2500 for an issue of the magazine. Even though these projections showed a nicely balanced budget, Sunstone really had a \$30,000 deficit. Peggy asked advisory board members to contemplate at their leisure the following wish-list: \$58,230 for outstanding debts; \$20,000 to cover the "worst case cash flow"; \$42,000 to "make certain that we meet annual giving goals"; \$15,000 for a computer and typesetter; \$5,000 for a copy machine; and \$20,000 to make the *Review* self-supporting.¹¹ Between April and August 1983, the board raised \$8,700, close to its commitment to raise \$10,000 during the same time period.¹²

Sunstone Review, which had begun publishing with 1,200 subscriptions in 1981, stood at 2,000 subscriptions in 1982 and 2,800 in 1983.¹³ Peggy was reporting circulation figures that were considerably higher than subscription figures, based on the assumption that each copy reached more than one reader: 6,500 for the magazine in August 1982, and 20,000 for the *Review*.¹⁴ The next year, Peggy was reporting circulation figures of 7,000 and "more than 20,000."¹⁵

However, by 1 April 1983, it was clear that despite their best efforts, the *Review* was never going to be the financial boon the Sunstone leadership had all dreamed it would become, and Peggy proposed combining the *Review* with the magazine, reintegrating its news and reviews and publishing the magazine monthly. She hoped that if subscriptions could top 5,500, the magazine would break even—assuming \$100,000 in contributions, book sales, and advertising.¹⁶ The combined budget would be \$240,000 a year. The decision to recombine the *Review* and the magazine was finalized in April

1984, presented first as a “temporary” suspension of the *Review* for the summer despite fears (which proved correct) that suspension would mean death.¹⁷

Subscriptions for the reintegrated magazines climbed steadily: 2,900 in October 1984, 3,400 in February 1985, 4,000 two months later in April. So it was reasonable to project 4,800 for January 1985 and the magic number of 5,500 for August 1985.¹⁸

One piece of paper from September 1984 adds up “Pressing Debts” (\$25,086.74), “Non-Pressing Debt” (\$20,971.32), and

A MIRACLE EVERY TIME

BEFORE computers and desk-top publishing—before, in short, the last couple of years of Peggy’s term—producing SUNSTONE was a highly technical, labor-intensive, hands-on project. Articles were typed on electric typewriters, corrected in pencil and retyped. Typesetters were people, not machines, and while they preferred perfect copy, they could deal with a word inserted here or there.

The set type was lines of solid lead, stored carefully in forms at the typesetting establishment. The typesetter hand-inked these forms with a roller and pulled “galley,” sheets of newsprint about twelve inches wide and seventeen or eighteen inches long. Proofreading galleys was a painstaking job that required looking not only for mechanical weirdness, such as broken letters, or missing paragraph indentations, but also reading against copy and canny intelligence, since lines, paragraphs, and even whole pages could be missing, inverted, or garbled. Corrected proofs went back to the typesetter, sometimes more than once. Making changes (additions, deletions, more graceful prose) at this stage was strongly discouraged but happened anyway.

The final typesetting product was “slix,” beautiful columns of exquisitely black type on heavy coated (hence, “slick”) bright-white paper. The issue’s designer(s), who had already done thumb-nail sketches of how each page would look—where the illustrations would come, how the titles would be handled, what ornamental effects would be used, where the page numbers would come—would handle these slix with a combination of reverence and massacre.

Measuring the space available on the “dummy” (model page) to the eighth-inch, the designer would slice the type column with an Exacto knife, run it through a machine that laid ribbons of hot wax on the back, and then stick it down on the first of many “boards,” a heavy-weight posterboard with room for a double spread (two pages), the page margins outlined in nonreproducible blue ink. The wax made it possible to pick up a typeset piece and shift it to another location,



Production tools from a bygone era.

sometimes whittling a line off the bottom of one column and shifting it to the top of the next column or razoring out a word to squeeze a line “plus a bit more” into one column.

No corrections were supposed to be made at the board stage. Of course, there were. Sometimes the corrections would be two, three, or even four layers deep (for everything had to be on that board: photographs, borders, lines, and type). Having something “fall off the boards”—a page number, a running

head, a caption—was a perpetual nightmare.

Completed boards were then delivered to the press, where a cameramen “shot” the boards and then organized the negatives to produce “signatures,” groups of eight or sixteen pages.

Once the signatures were assembled in order, they came back to the editing team as a blueline, printed in blue ink on photographic paper, folded and stapled signature by signature. Each page had to be scrutinized, literally with a magnifying glass, looking for broken type, ink specks that meant a flaw on the negative, crooked or broken letters, and down-right errors. There weren’t supposed to be any mistakes, of course. Of course, there were. Back to the press the blueline would go. Sometimes a second blueline would be necessary.

The next step was printing. A call would come, very often in the middle of the night, “Press check!” The designated checker for that issue would sleepily drive out to west Salt Lake only to come fully awake at the intoxicating smell of ink and the thunderous roar of the web press, half a block long. Were the ink values correct? Was the paper taking the ink evenly? The cover, printed on a sheet-fed press, involved a separate press check. Were the color values true? Was the positioning as ordered?

A day later, the issue would be delivered, smelling deliciously of fresh ink, the page edges rustling crisply under a brushing thumb, the columns of type vividly authoritative and real in a way that no earlier stage quite was.

A new issue of SUNSTONE. Something had come into being that had not existed before. It was a miracle every time.

“Possible Write-offs” (\$20,000) for a not-so-grand total of \$66,058.06.¹⁹

One funding approach Sunstone tried early in the decade was applying for grants. The Utah Endowment for the Humanities awarded Sunstone a grant in 1981. Peggy recalls that it was for a pretty small amount, but the records showing what it supported and the amount have apparently not survived. Another application in 1983 was rejected; UEH was “a little hesitant to fund Mormon things.”²⁰ Michelle Macfarlane successfully steered through the hurdles a grant for “A Celebration for Mormon Arts” (the program cover featured a bunch of the famous Relief Society glass grapes) to receive a \$3,000 award from the Herbert I. and Elsa B. Michael Foundation of Salt Lake City, \$1,000 from a private donor, and \$500 from the Utah Endowment for the Humanities for the 1984 symposium.²¹

A good idea that fizzled was a luncheon for business people who were not part of the usual Sunstone circle. The idea had been successfully tested as a “fund-raising businessmen’s breakfast,” underwritten by Gary Sheets and Steve Christensen, on 24 May 1984, with Gary Smith speaking on the office of Church Patriarch, the topic of a book he was currently working on with Irene Bates. Those attending paid \$35 for the privilege.

This gathering was sufficiently successful that another was planned as a pre-symposium event in August 1984. Historian D. Michael Quinn delivered a lecture on “The Business World of the Mormon Hierarchy, or A Brief Tale of a Thousand Companies.” He organized it around an imaginary “Mormon Everyman in Salt Lake City in 1907 to 1932” and “the extent to which he could participate in Mormon hierarchy-directed businesses,” contrasted with “the business world of the present LDS General Authorities.” A hundred fifty-two attended—about half of them recruited in the last three days before the luncheon—and it took in \$1,340. Unfortunately costs topped \$1,600.

Sunstone spent considerable care planning an end-of-the-year 1984 fundraising campaign with thank-you letters from Peggy and Michelle Macfarlane to each of the eighty-four contributors. Contributions that year ranged from \$10 to \$1,000. Twelve gave the suggested amount of \$200, but the most money came in increments of \$100 (twenty-five), \$25 (nineteen), and \$50 (sixteen).²²

A more modest, but likewise successful, fund-raising effort was made in 1985, when journalist Robert Gottlieb, coauthor of *America’s Saints*, came to speak at a B.H. Roberts Society lecture in January. Although Sunstone had no official connection with the B.H. Roberts Society, it arranged an “after-the-lecture” discussion for a private list of invitees that promised “information not included in the book or in his . . . presentation.” Sunstone covered the costs of refreshments and invitations through donations, and the event raised more than \$600.²³

Until his murder by Mark Hofmann in 1986, Steve Christensen continued to contribute generously. He underwrote the entire cost of at least one symposium and helped on several others. He also wrote “Sunday School Supplement,” a column of

theological and historical enrichment to accompany whichever of the standard works was being studied in a given year.

Despite the constant financial restrictions, Peggy was a tiger when it came to anything that impinged on her vision of Sunstone. When one businessman on the advisory board seriously proposed declaring bankruptcy, stiffing the subscribers, and starting over, Peggy dropped him from the board. According to Peggy, he was “outraged and incredulous. ‘You can’t do that to me, just because you disagree with me,’ he complained. He was speaking Sunstone language but to him it meant something different. I said, ‘I’m perfectly willing to take criticism of my leadership or management style, but we have to be on the same page. If we don’t believe in the same vision for Sunstone, I can’t work with you.’”

Peggy didn’t back down, but fights like these were very hard on her. “I had to learn how to deal with wealthy people. A lot of them are used to having their way because of their wealth. And heaven knows, Sunstone needed the money. I was always pulled between wanting the best for Sunstone and yet resisting some of their pressures.”

Another indication of just how tough things were is revealed in staff minutes from January to June 1983 that gently break the news that there are no more janitorial services. The notes indicate that Sunstone staff are to be responsible for once-a-week cleaning. Donations of supplies and toilet paper are welcome. Overhead needs to drop immediately by one-third, and the biggest overhead is staff expenses. In a January memo, Peggy reminded employees to be “more punctual and reliable. . . . Impetuous, unexpected absences are inappropriate.” She suggested time limits of fifteen minutes on personal phone calls and “interoffice chatting.”²⁴

Still, even though it was a constant source of stress throughout Peggy’s entire tenure, grappling with obdurate financial realities did not dim Sunstone’s creative sparkle. An undated project list for 1984 ranges widely: Publish a compilation of “best” articles from the last ten years. Continue polling a random sampling of Mormons—perhaps 200 a month—to “identify trends” in LDS thought and culture. Develop a budget to pay freelance writers. Establish a writer-in-residence and an artist-in-residence program at the magazine. Increase the total number of pages.²⁵

“PEGGY SUNSTONE” GETS MARRIED

“I am entirely confident of Sunstone’s future without me.”

PEGGY WOULD PROBABLY still be running Sunstone today except for Mike Stack, a tall, easy-going photographer who started as a volunteer with the 1984 symposium, then later was hired to work in production and photography. Peggy and Mike began spending time together in such a low-key way that eight months passed before the staff realized they were dating.

“I really had come to peace with the idea that I would do Sunstone for the rest of my life, but Mike was the first person who didn’t love ‘Peggy Sunstone,’” she muses. “My being Ms. Sunstone wasn’t the thing about me that he liked best. There

were these other sides that I'd sort of forgotten. After he proposed and I accepted, he said, 'I can't be married to Sunstone. I want to be married to you. We have to leave—to get completely away for a while.' Something in me trusted him, even though I couldn't, at that point, imagine myself apart from Sunstone."

Peggy told the board to start looking for her successor. She and Mike married on 12 October 1985. The foundation's strategy for replacing Peggy was to divide her position into two: a publisher/public relations person and an editor. A letter sent to members of the National Advisory Board listed five criteria for the first position:

1. An educational background strong in . . . publishing, journalism, public relations or related fields.

2. Significant managerial experience, including publications, . . . people and financial systems.

3. Fund-raising and public relations experience—preferably with nonprofit organizations.

4. An understanding of and willingness to work with the LDS community in its numerous manifestations.

5. Ability and willingness to project an image and conduct consistent with the established values of the organization and its governing bodies.²⁶

Accompanying this letter was a nine-point job description that covered public relations functions, fund-raising, staff management, financial management (including producing items like the cartoon books and calendars), organizing the Sunstone

FROM ENGLISH LIT TO SUNSTONE TO FAMILY TO THE *TRIBUNE*

PEGGY'S journey to Sunstone was not at all predetermined. While studying English literature as an undergraduate at the University of Utah, Peggy developed an interest in the religious backgrounds of authors like John Milton, John Donne, and George Herbert. Following graduation, she went to Graduate Theological Union, in Berkeley, California, where she focused primarily on religious history. She lived very frugally—"it was great training for Sunstone"—and managed to eke out two years there.

But back in Utah, during a fellowship in Leonard J. Arrington's flourishing Church History Division, she realized she was home: "Mormonism was my heart of hearts, the core of my core. I knew it best and wanted the best for it. It was my language." Thus it made perfect sense for Peggy to take on Sunstone full time. "It was a chance to enact my fantasy of a giant Gospel Doctrine class where all of my friends would come for a conversation about the gospel that never ended. That stayed my vision. Yes, it—the magazine, the symposium, the office—was a place to deal with intellectual issues; but the social fabric kept it together long after the intellectual things grew stale. We didn't talk about community in the same way in the 1970s that we do now, but that's what Sunstone was."

Sunstone was her life for the next eight years. After Peggy and Mike married in October 1985, they left the following spring and went to Africa for a year of adventures. Then, they settled in New York, where Peggy edited the *Hastings Center Report*, a journal that deals primarily with questions of medical ethics, and Mike attended film school. Son Jamie and daughter Suzanne were born there. Then in 1991, while the family spent the summer in Salt Lake, Peggy was hired to write features for the *Salt Lake Tribune's* new religion section. As the family prepared to return to New York, the paper offered her a full-time position, which she still holds.

Peggy's and Mike's reintegration into the city was surprisingly easy, but also painful as the joyful birth of twins Karen and Camille 29 January 1992 was overshadowed by Camille's medical problems that eventually took her life just days be-



The Stack family on the deck of the *Statsraad Lehmkuhl* Oslo, Norway, August 2001.
(L to R: Mike, Karen, Peggy, Jamie, Suzanne).

The family tagged along as Peggy covered for the *Tribune* the first leg of *Sea Trek 2001*, a sesquicentennial re-enactment of the first seaward journeys of 19th-century Mormon immigrants from Scandinavia and Great Britain.

fore the twins' second birthday. During Camille's courageous struggle, Peggy wrote a moving and dignified series for the *Tribune*, "Camille's Song." Upon her passing, many Salt Lake City residents felt close to this beautiful and gallant child, and they, alongside family, friends, General Authorities, and ex-communicants, filled the chapel for her funeral.

The family now lives in a pleasant brick home on a quiet circle on the city's east bench. Mike has created a fantasy playground for the children in the generous backyard. Peggy just recently ended a four-year stint as her ward's Primary president, and she is the author of an unexpected best-seller, *A World of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), gorgeously illustrated by Kathleen Peterson. Now in its third printing, the book provides careful, short, and respectful summary-descriptions of the world's major religions.

Symposium, acting as staff liaison with the National Advisory Board and its executive committee, and perpetuating “values and goals for the organization consistent with the highest and best traditions of the organization’s past as well as moving the organization forward into areas of sound and appropriate growth and expansion.”²⁷

By February 1986, Peggy was writing to donors: “I will be leaving in the spring, but I am entirely confident of Sunstone’s future without me. Indeed, the success of Sunstone is due to the collective energies and ongoing support of people like you. Sunstone really belongs to you and our other readers, not to those of us who produce it. As long as you care about it, Sunstone will continue to exist.”²⁸

Ultimately, the board of trustees decided to hire Daniel Rector for the publisher/public relations position. Daniel, according to Peggy, was a dynamic young “IBM executive type,” who walked into the office “in a suit and everything” and wanted to talk about starting a theological school. Although the idea for a school dropped by the wayside, he did agree in April 1986 to accept the position and put the magazine and its finances on a more professional footing. And after months and months of hard lobbying, first by Peggy and then by Daniel, Elbert Peck, an urban planner in Virginia and Peggy’s first choice for the job all along, was persuaded to take over the editorship in October.

THE DEMONIZING OF SUNSTONE

Today’s attitude toward Sunstone is a far cry from the days when a senior apostle thanked “dear Peggy” for a gift subscription

ANYONE COMPARING THE 1980–86 years of Sunstone with what has happened since then can clearly see the creation and hardening of new boundaries, more explicit levels of official disapproval, shrinking support, greater fear, and forced choices for some between faith and understanding. It is a far cry from the climate in October 1983, when then-apostle Gordon B. Hinckley thanked “dear Peggy” for sending him a complimentary magazine subscription. It is a very far cry indeed from the climate on 12 April 1984, when the Sunstone Foundation executive committee eagerly approved Dallin H. Oaks’s name to be invited to speak at the Saturday night banquet. Oaks, former BYU president and former justice on Utah’s Supreme Court had been named as the Church’s newest apostle just the week before.²⁹ (Peggy issued the invitation. Oaks turned it down.) Today’s climate is also a very far cry from the time when as many as sixty BYU faculty participated in the Sunstone Symposium in any given year or when Church employees in various departments at the headquarters building were on the staff or involved in special projects. Such overlapping allegiances would be currently unthinkable.

“SOMETHING ALMOST SACRAMENTAL”

PATRICK McKenzie, a dentist in Issaquah, Washington, a member of the National Advisory Board and “a real sweet guy,” offered to pay for Peggy’s plane ticket if she’d fly up to speak to a group he had helped organize. Peggy said, “Sure.” On the day she left in November 1983, she had a terrible cold. The weather in the Northwest was raw and drizzly. She could tell it was not the best timing. She coughed through a feverish night in the McKenzies’ guestroom and staggered out to breakfast the next morning in her bathrobe, eyes and nose swollen, throat scratchy.

“As soon as we poured the orange juice and said the blessing,” she remembered, “he pulled out this list of questions that he’d been saving up. The very first one—I guess he thought we’d start with something easy—was about the historicity of the Book of Mormon.”

Their conversation continued for most of the day. She addressed one group Saturday evening, and her voice was nearly gone before a Sunday evening fireside in a large hall near the McKenzies’ home. “There must have been a hundred people there,” she recalls. “I couldn’t get through a whole sentence without coughing. After a few minutes, I stopped what I was trying to say and said, “I don’t think I’m going to make it. Does anyone have a cough drop?”

“And then something wonderful happened, something almost sacramental. People dug in their purses and their pockets, coming up with cough drops and lozenges and pastilles. They passed them down the row and up the aisle. I took this handful of cough drops—all shapes and sizes—and piled them on the podium in front of me. I talked and ate cough drops for the rest of the evening, and I didn’t cough again during the entire talk. Not even once.”

Thoughtfully appraising the situation in recent years, Lorie Winder Stromberg observes, “I don’t think Sunstone changed; I think the Church and what it was willing to tolerate changed. Then Sunstone changed in response. . . . A living intellectual tradition lies in the clash of ideas, the dynamic of differing opinions, and when half of the debate doesn’t show up, everyone suffers. It helps liberal intellectuals stay honest by having an informed conservative challenge them.” She remembers nostalgically the time where the “boundary between liberals and conservatives was much more fluid and friendlier.”

The demonizing of Sunstone that began in the early 1990s has, Peggy says, “broken my heart.” After the General Authorities issued their 1991 statement discouraging participation in symposia, Gene England asked her, “So how does it feel to have killed your baby?” He saw the newspaper stories Peggy had written about the 1991 symposium as the direct cause of the statement. Peggy wonders how much truth there may be in England’s analysis. Many of those who had kept SUNSTONE on their coffee tables with the *Ensign* and *Newsweek* now hide it or don’t subscribe. When Peggy gave a presentation on her recent best-selling book, *The World of Faith*, in a neighboring Relief Society, the woman who was to introduce her called ahead of time for biographical information and asked where she’d met Mike. When Peggy told her they had

worked together at Sunstone, there was a long pause. “Really!” commented the woman, then moved on. She didn’t mention Sunstone in the introduction, and Peggy “felt diminished. I’m not ashamed of my years at Sunstone. I’m proud of those years.”

She mourns: “It’s a different Church—a good Church—but a different Church than the one we grew up in. At the highest levels, it’s almost as if there is no faith left in our own doctrine and history. Somehow I’ve become the heretic by trying to protect the history and preserve the heritage. People think of Sunstoners as those who are somehow dismantling the faith or trying to push it in weird directions. It’s not true. Sunstoners are the ones who have the *most* faith in Mormonism, the ones who are *most* in love with Mormon ideas.”

Mark Thomas compares Sunstone to the United Order. “You go in with this idea that couldn’t possibly succeed, and reality mangles it, but something about the dream survives even the disillusionment. Sunstone is the hidden part of Mormonism. If Mormonism doesn’t like it, it doesn’t like itself.”



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NOTES

1. Unless otherwise noted, statements attributed to the following individuals come from interviews I conducted on the dates noted; notes in my possession: Peggy Fletcher Stack, 9 Jan. 1999; Allen Roberts, 6, 8 Jan. 1999; Lorie Winder Stromberg, 16, 17 Jan. 1999; John Sillito, 21 Jan. 1999; Susan Staker, 19 Jan. 1999; and Mark Thomas, 22, 25 Jan. 1999.

2. Edwin S. Gaustad, “History and Theology: The Mormon Connection” and James S. Clayton, “A Response,” *SUNSTONE* (Nov.–Dec. 1980): 44–50, 51–53; Catherine L. Albanese, “Mormonism and the Male-Female God: An Exploration in Active Mysticism,” *SUNSTONE* (Mar.–Apr. 1981): 52–59; Kenneth L. Woodward, “The Use and Abuse of Religion,” *SUNSTONE* (Mar.–Apr. 1982): 29–33; Laurence R. Iannaccone, “Let the Women Be Silent,” *SUNSTONE* (May–June 1982): 38–45; Kent Robson, “Omnis on the Horizon,” *SUNSTONE* (July–Aug. 1983): 20–23; Keith E. Norman, “Toward a Mormon Christology,” *SUNSTONE* (Apr. 1985): 18–25.

3. D. James Croft, “Book of Mormon Wordprints Reexamined,” and Wayne A. Larsen and Alvin C. Rencher, “Response,” in *SUNSTONE* (Mar.–Apr. 1981): 15–21, 22–26; Madison U. Sowell, “Defending the Keystone: The Comparative Method Reexamined” and George D. Smith, Jr., “Defending the Keystone: Book of Mormon Difficulties,” *SUNSTONE* (May–June 1981): 44–54; William D. Russell, “A Further Inquiry into the Historicity of the Book of Mormon,” *SUNSTONE* (Sept.–Oct. 1982): 20–27; Scott C. Dunn, “Spirit Writing: Another Look at the Book of Mormon,” *SUNSTONE* (June 1985): 16–26.

4. Ida Smith, “The Psychological Needs of Mormon Women,” *SUNSTONE* (Mar.–Apr. 1981): 59–66, quotation from 64; Linda King Newell, “A Gift Given, a Gift Taken: Washing, Anointing, and Blessing the Sick among Mormon Women,” *SUNSTONE* (Sept.–Oct. 1981): 16–25, with responses by D. Michael Quinn and Irene M. Bates, 26–29; Harold T. Christensen, “The Persistence of Chastity: A Built-in Resistance within Mormon Culture to Secular Trends,” Marvin and Ann Rytting, “Exhortations for Chastity: A Content Analysis of Church Literature,” and Marybeth Raynes, “A Wish List: Comments on Christensen and the Ryttings,” *SUNSTONE* (Mar.–Apr. 1982): 7–24; Margaret M. Toscano, “The Missing Rib: The Forgotten Place of Queens and Priestesses in the Establishment of Zion,” *SUNSTONE* (July 1985): 17–22; Jerrie W. Hurd, “The Unnamed Woman in Scripture,” *SUNSTONE* (July 1985): 23–26.

5. Kenneth L. Cannon II, “After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy, 1890–1906,” *SUNSTONE* (Jan.–Apr. 1983): 27–35; Gary James Bergera, “Secretary to the Senator: Carl A. Badger and the Smoot Hearings,” *SUNSTONE* (Jan.–Apr. 1983): 36–44; Mark S. Lee, “Legislating Morality: Reynolds vs. United States,”

SUNSTONE (Apr. 1985): 8–12; Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “Women at Winter Quarters,” *SUNSTONE* (July–Aug. 1983): 11–20; Boyd Kirkland, “Jehovah as the Father,” *SUNSTONE* (Autumn 1984): 36–44.

6. Gary L. Browning, “The Russian Chimera,” Eugene England, “Can Nations Love Their Enemies?” and Howard Ball, “The Nation State: Immorality and Violence,” *SUNSTONE* (Nov.–Dec. 1982): 18–24, 49–55, 57–58; Louis C. Zucker, “A Jew in Zion,” *SUNSTONE* (Sept.–Oct. 1981): 35–44; D. Jeff Burton, “The Phenomenon of the Closet Doubter,” *SUNSTONE* (Sept.–Oct. 1982): 34–35.

7. Susan [Staker], “Of All Things, A Memo,” to Peggy Fletcher, 11 Aug. 1982, in “Staff” folder, Sunstone Papers. The Sunstone Papers are housed in Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Those cited in this paper are at this time still uncatalogued.

8. Anne Watson, “Magazines: A Will to Survive,” *Deseret News*, 21 Aug. 1982, S–5.

9. Peggy Fletcher letter to contributors, 18 Apr. 1985, in “Letters to Individual Donors” folder, Sunstone Papers.

10. There may have been a certain amount of hopefulness in these figures. Peggy’s report to the advisory council for Jan.–July 1982 showed contributions supplied 47 percent of the revenue, followed by renewals at 35 percent. Pie charts available in “National Advisory Council” folder, Sunstone Papers.

11. Budgets attached to minutes of National Advisory Board meeting, 25 Aug. 1983; cover letter dated 14 Sept. 1983, in “National Advisory Council” folder.

12. Board members identified in the 1 Apr. 1983 minutes who had committed to raise \$1,000 apiece were Jack Zenger, Dick Circuit, Reed Hunter, George Smith, Molly Bennion, Joel Peterson, Leonard Romney, Bellamy Brown, J. Bonner Ritchie, and Dick Southwick. However, board members who attended the meeting on 25 Aug. 1983 were Alan Ackroyd, Molly Bennion, Gayle Chandler, Deanne Frances, Reed Hunter, Patrick McKenzie, Grant Osborn, Stuart Poelman, Jeanne Pugsley, Annette Rogers, Kathryn Romney, George Smith, Jan Stout, Don Stringham, Reed Stringham, Nola Wallace, and Dennis Youkstetter. The first executive committee, appointed that spring by Peggy, consisted of Jon Lear (chair), John Ashton, Ross Anderson, Jim Clark, Jerry Kindred, and Sterling Van Wagenen. Minutes, National Advisory Board, 25 Aug. 1983, in “National Advisory Council” folder.

13. Bar graph, “Subscriber Growth,” in “National Advisory Council” folder.

14. Watson.

15. “Editor Rocks Mormon Boat with Liberal Publications,” undated clipping from *Arizona Republic* attached to National Advisory Board minutes, 25 Aug. 1983, in “National Advisory Council” folder.

16. “Exhibit 2,” attached to Agenda, 1 Apr. 1983, in “National Advisory Council” folder.

17. “Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting,” 12 Apr. 1984, in “Executive Committee” folder, Sunstone Papers. The story of the rise and fall of the *Sunstone Review* is documented in John R. Sillito, “A ‘Most Outrageously Ambitious Project’: *The Sunstone Review*, 1981–1984,” *SUNSTONE* (Apr. 2002), 46–55.

18. “Figure 3: Subscriptions,” in “Subscriptions” folder, Sunstone Papers.

19. “Debt Record” 27 Sept. 1984, typescript in “Financial Records” folder, Sunstone Papers.

20. Handwritten unsigned memo on scratch pad, “Utah Endowment for the Humanities” folder, Sunstone Papers.

21. “Utah Arts Council, Evaluation Report Form Due 31 Dec. 1984,” in “Grants” folder, Sunstone Papers. At the same time, UEH turned down a proposal to publish a special issue of the magazine on the arts. Handwritten notes on the cover of the rejection letter report: “Panelists split because of ‘Mormon only’ issue—state/theological problem. ‘Afraid’ to take it on. Emphasis ‘Mormon culture.’” Ruth R. Draper, letter to Peggy Fletcher, 15 Dec. 1983, in “Grants” folder.

22. See “1984 End of the Year Giving” folder, Sunstone Papers. Forty of the contributors were from Utah, nineteen from California, ten from the East and Midwest, and the rest from the West and Northwest.

23. See “Gottlieb Fundraiser” folder, Sunstone Papers.

24. “Notes from Staff Meeting,” 12 Jan., 26 Jan., 17 June 1983, in “Minutes” folder, Sunstone Papers.

25. “Sunstone Projects Needing Funding 1984,” in “Financial Records” folder.

26. “Job Posting—Statement of Qualifications,” n.d., attached to Michelle Macfarlane, letter to National Advisory Board, 25 Oct. 1985, in “National Advisory Board” folder.

27. “Job Description, Publisher/President, Sunstone Foundation,” *ibid.*

28. Peggy Fletcher Stack, letter to Jolene Graves, Feb. 1986, in “Donations, General” folder, Sunstone Papers.

29. Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, 12 Apr. 1984, in “Executive Committee” folder.