



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ORTHODOX OBSERVER

Orthodox Observer

Report to the 40th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress

The *Orthodox Observer* has been publishing sporadically since January 2009 because of budget considerations, with some issues being bi-monthly. It is hoped that it will return to monthly status in the near future.

However, efforts continue to include as much coverage of the Metropolises as possible, balanced with theological articles and news of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Archdiocese as a whole.

Following a recommendation at last November's Archdiocesan Council Communications Committee meeting to attract more writers for the newspaper, the *Orthodox Observer* is developing a network of volunteer "regional correspondents" consisting of college students majoring in journalism or public relations. This is being accomplished with the cooperation of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), which includes about 4,000 members on college campuses throughout the U.S.

With the support and cooperation of Presbytera Shylla Hadzellis, the OCF development director, a small notice appeared in a recent OCF online newsletter aimed at journalism majors at the undergraduate (upper class level) or graduate students in journalism or public relations, and perhaps with some professional experience. The notice will run periodically each year.

This effort will serve to increase the professionalism of the *Orthodox Observer* and will also provide students with experience to include on their resumes.

Thus far, one student, in her fourth year at the University of Denver majoring in journalism, is on board. A second journalism student, in his fourth year at the University of Kansas, is another potential candidate.

Coverage highlights

A highlight of the *Orthodox Observer's* coverage over the past two years has been the visit in 2009 of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the presence and participation of Archbishop Demetrios at the inauguration of President Barack Obama and subsequent visits to the White House.

The *Orthodox Observer* also has enhanced its coverage of youth-related activities, including the St. John Chrysostom National Oratorical Festival, the dance festivals in the Atlanta, San Francisco and New Jersey metropolises and the Junior Olympics weekends in the Chicago and New Jersey metropolises and the Direct Archdiocesan District. It has also boosted its coverage of YAL and OCF activities.

Circulation boost

With the coordination of staff and the Department of Administration and Department of Information Technology, the *Orthodox Observer* mailing list increased from 123,000 to 165,000 names and addresses.

Stewardship was collected from all parishes for a merging of addresses with the present list. This was a very detailed process and took more than 18 months to complete the acquisition of mailing lists.

From September through December 2009 a complete merge was undertaken to combine the new mailing list with the old mailing list. The merge was completed in December that resulted in an increase of more than 42,000 names.

The mailing list reaches beyond parish membership and the goal must be to increase the number of people interested in the Faith. A primary use of the list will be to increase the number of households receiving the *Orthodox Observer*.

“Green edition”

Upon the recommendation of the Archdiocesan Council Communications Committee, a GREEN version of the *Orthodox Observer* has been distributed to those who have expressly requested to be removed from the mailing list and only receive a digital version of the national newspaper.

Beginning with the May 2010 issue the flip page version has received many positive comments.

Sales Consultant

Also at the recommendation of the Archdiocesan Council Communication Committee a sales consultant was retained to assist in securing more advertising for the newspaper. Although the process has been slower than anticipated, there has been an increased interest and familiarity with the newspaper among advertisers and an increase in advertising is anticipated.

Index project

Another effort under way is the indexing of the *Orthodox Observer* issues, which has never been undertaken. The *Orthodox Observer*'s administrative assistant began the project in January. This is expected to take a few years as it involves issues going back to October 1971.

Jim Golding
Orthodox Observer
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