

UNA Westchester Global Connection



United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) Westchester Chapter

<http://www.unawestchester.org>

April 2008

Annual General Meeting and An Insider's Guide to the UN: A Journalist's Perspective

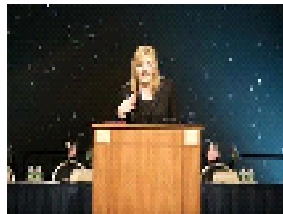
Sunday, May 4, 2008, 2:00–4:00 P.M.

Scarsdale Public Library

52 Olmstead Avenue, off Post Road (Route 22)

UNA-USA Westchester's brief Annual Meeting will be followed by a program featuring Linda Fasulo, the UN Correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC and a frequent independent reporter for National Public Radio. She will discuss her book, *An Insider's Guide to the UN* (see the book review on the next page) and her perspectives on the UNA's advocacy campaign.

Ms. Fasulo will discuss the multifaceted role of the UN in global affairs. She will speak on the efforts of the UN Security Council to respond to crises worldwide, including those in Darfur, Iraq, Iran, and Kosovo. Ms. Fasulo will also address the growth of peacekeeping operations, the impact of the new Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, the state of US-UN relations, as well as the endeavors to reform the UN, including the creation of the new UN Human Rights Council.



Ms. Fasulo, a resident of Larchmont who has covered the United Nations since the first Gulf War, will also share her insights and experiences working as a diplomatic correspondent at the United Nations. Her

talk will be followed by a question-and-answer session, an opportunity to purchase autographed copies of the book, and a wine-and-cheese reception.

Cosponsors: Westchester Council for Social Studies, the Westchester Martin Luther King Institute, the African American Men of Westchester, and the American Association of University Women (Westchester). For more information, contact Ms. Doris Benson, dwbenson@us.ibm.com (914) 961-6554 or visit our website: www.unawestchester.org.

In This Issue ...

Letter from the President	2
Book Review	
<i>An Insider's Guide to the UN</i>	2
Nominations for	
The Board of Directors	2
UNA-USA Westchester	
2007–2008 Annual Report	2
Mt. Vernon High School Students	
Visit the United Nations	5
A Student's Perspective	6
2008 UNA-USA Westchester Local	
High School Essay Awards	7
Board, Officers, and Committees	7

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Since much of this issue of *Global Connection* is taken up with our Annual Report, I will keep my letter extremely brief. When I think of our Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 4, 2:00–4:00 P.M., at the Scarsdale Library, I am reminded of a sign I saw at the entrance to a small church that read: “**Visitors welcome, members expected!**” If you only come out for one of our meetings, make it this one. We need your vote for our nominations, your ideas for upcoming programs, and your reaction to the presentation by our nationally famous UN Correspondent, Linda Fasulo. I have included a review of her book below. See you on May 4!

Book Review: “An Insider’s Guide to the UN” by Linda Fasulo

Linda Fasulo, as UN Correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC and an independent reporter for National Public Radio (NPR) for many years, can certainly qualify as an “insider.” At the same time, as neither a staff member nor a diplomat, she is well placed to provide a citizen’s perspective and answer the questions of ordinary Americans.

She wrote this book in 2004 for “those who want to know more, who ask how the proceedings are conceived, prepared and paid for, and about their chances for a lasting impact.” She has done an excellent job of responding to this challenge.

She begins by reviewing the UN’s history and structure and uses the UN’s reaction to terrorism, particularly 9/11, as an example of how the system actually operates. She then deals with a variety of issues such as U.S. “rights and sovereignty” with respect to

the International Criminal Court, which became operational in 2003. Finally, she demystifies the complex UN system of funds, programs, and specialized agencies around the world.

Ms. Fasulo refers to the UN as “one of the world’s finest and most important governing bodies,” although she is ready to point out areas where improvement is needed. Similarly, she is, most often, positive, neutral, or silent on the U.S. leadership at the UN. I would recommend this book to all UNA Westchester members and friends and encourage you to meet Ms. Fasulo personally after her presentation at our May 4, 2008, Annual Meeting.

Phil Reynolds
President, UNA Westchester

Nominations for The Board of Directors

In accordance with Article IX of the Bylaws, the Nominating Committee presents the following slate for consideration at the Annual General Meeting:

Directors, Class of 2011:
Sarah Angel (Director, webmaster)
Brenda Smith (new nominee)
Marcia Wallace (Director, Education
Chair)
Secretary: Scott Monje

UNA-USA Westchester 2007–2008 Annual Report (July 1–June 30)

It is an honor for me to present my first Annual Report to UNA-USA Westchester. This year has been full of challenges, both for the UN and for our Association, but there have been significant accomplishments in which we can all take some satisfaction.

Management

In July 2007 UNA Westchester experienced a significant change as the incumbent President and Executive Secretary, David and Ginger Stillman, respectively, finished their terms. Phil Reynolds was elected President of the Chapter, but the jobs of Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, Program Chair, and Membership Chair, which had effectively been carried by Ginger as a modestly paid Executive Secretary, needed to be filled with volunteers. Fortunately, we were blessed with a group of qualified and enthusiastic Board members and other volunteers who stepped up to their new responsibilities as follows: Secretary, Scott Monje; Newsletter Editor, Marcia Brewster; Webmaster, Sarah Angel; and Program Chair, Doris Benson. My heartfelt thanks go out to them for the excellent job they are doing.

We still need volunteers to take over the chairs for Membership, Publicity, Fund-Raising, and other committees. I urge all UNA Westchester members to consider where your talents and interests could best be used and to become part of our team.

Program

Few who have not been involved realize the effort that goes into the four public events each year. Doris Benson, Program Chair, with support from members of the Program Committee (Lee Bloom, Joan Katen, Marcia Brewster, Patrick Sciaratta and Scott Monje with Phil Reynolds *ex officio*), organized a UN Day event on October 23 and subsequently established a program for the rest of 2007–2008. She is responsible for identifying substantive featured speakers, reserving the venues, arranging for hospitality, and generally making sure things happen as planned.

Manhattanville College hosted our UN Day event on October 23, 2007, “Common Sense and Our Common Heritage: Ratifying the

Law of the Sea.” UNA Westchester member and professor of international law and diplomacy at Columbia University School of Law José Álvarez was master of ceremonies. Valentina Germani, of the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, was the main speaker. The audience was very impressed with the program.

On Sunday, December 9, 2007, the Bronxville Library hosted an innovative program entitled “What Good Is the United Nations?” in which Board members presented an array of ways in which the UN makes a difference in our daily lives. The Youth Philharmonic for the UN (YPhUN) also gave an enthusiastic presentation. About 100 people attended.

On Saturday, March 15, 2008, the Greenburgh Nature Center hosted our event “Climate Change: Too Hot to Handle?” Richard Ottinger, our former representative in Congress and dean emeritus and professor of law at Pace University Law School, gave a well thought out and impressive paper that will be featured on our Web site (www.unawestchester.org). David Anderson of IBM gave a fascinating presentation of the ways in which his company is becoming carbon neutral. An enthusiastic audience of about 50 enlivened the event with their questions.

On Sunday, May 4, 2008, the Scarsdale Library will host our Annual Meeting and an exciting presentation by Linda Fasulo, UN Correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC and frequent independent reporter for NPR. Her topic, “An Insider’s Guide to the UN,” corresponds to the title of her book, which will be available for purchasing and autographing at the event.

All in all, it has been a successful program year. The Board would welcome suggestions for future programs and the Program Committee would welcome new members.

Web Site

As part of our April 2007 grant from the Verizon Foundation, we received \$2,000 for our Web site. Sarah Angel, our Webmaster, has made good use of this as well as a great deal of her scarce time (full-time IBM employee and graduate student) to migrate our web site to www.unawestchester.org, which uses ClubRunner as a base. Thank goodness Sarah understands the complexity of the endeavor. The new site is up and running, and Sarah has described it and its useful links in past newsletters. Check it out!

Newsletters

Marcia Brewster, a recent UN retiree, has made sure that each of our public events has been preceded by an issue of *UNA Westchester Global Connection*, the new title for our newsletter. She has been ably supported by Scott Monje, a prolific writer himself, and Sarah Angel for design and layout. The result is impressive indeed. While we may start offering electronic subscriptions to our members in the future, we will also continue to mail out hard copies for the foreseeable future. Your contributions to the newsletter are welcomed.

Education

Marcia Wallace, Education Chair, has one of the most active committees. Other members of the Education Committee include: Abel Lushiku, Asha Castleberry, Elisabeth Lloyd, Ginger Stillman, Lee Bloom, Leila Farour, Luis Mojica, Karen Rockwell El-Badry, Tom Clark, and Eugene Walsh (*ex officio*). Under a flagship program ("Peace Makes the World Go Around"), led by Karen Rockwell El-Badry, Association members are working in teams and making 30-minute age-appropriate presentations on the UN to 1,200 Yonkers third-graders in 48 classes in spring 2008. After each presentation, the students prepare drawings of what peace means to them and take them home. This is the fourth year of this successful program.

Using the April 2007 grant from the Verizon Foundation, Marcia Wallace and Demetrios Mihailidis ("Mr. M."), a teacher and leader of the UN Club at Mt. Vernon High School, took 18 ninth-graders on a tour of the UN, UNICEF, and the German Mission to the UN on February 29, 2008. This was the third year for the "Mt. Vernon Global Awareness Education Project," which was originated by Board member Charlene Morriseau. It is noteworthy that we have submitted these two projects to UNA-USA National as "Best Practices." In its outreach efforts, the Education Committee has sent UN educational materials to over 100 middle and high schools in the county.

More than 35 students submitted essays for the UNA's National High School Essay Contest (on HIV/AIDS). The committee evaluated these and selected local prize winners.

At our May 4, 2008, Annual Meeting, awards will be given to the best high school essay writers and to schools with programs that teach about the UN and its activities. With this extremely heavy workload, Marcia invites members to participate in these programs and to join her committee.

Advocacy

A considerable amount of our advocacy takes place through the UNA-USA National "E-News" and "E-Alerts." You can sign up for these at www.unausa.org. The same site has links to the positions of Republican and Democratic presidential candidates toward the UN.

Our Advocacy Chair, Molly Bruce, also plays an active role on the UNA-USA National Advocacy Committee. The Advocacy Committee currently includes: Doris Benson, Dave Finch, Patrick Sciaratta, Joan Katen, Karen Rockwell El-Badry, Luis Mojica, Sarah Angel, John Lloyd, and Lee

Bloom with Phil Reynolds *ex officio*). At our March 15, 2008, event on climate change, 32 participants signed a petition urging our senators and representatives to support a US leadership role in climate change negotiations. The program events on the law of the sea and on climate change directly supported the UNA-USA national advocacy agenda for 2008.

Membership

In the (much regretted) absence of a Membership Chair, your President has attempted to welcome new members and to follow up, or get others to follow up, with lapsed members. At the end of February 2008, we had 235 members. This places us eighth out of UNA-USA's 175 chapters, but we are only reaching a small fraction of potential members in Westchester. I urge members to respond to this challenge and help out in this critical area.

Finance

The balance in the budget as at July 1, 2007, was \$20,468 and the balance at March 31, 2008, was \$14,266. The grant funds received had been committed when I took office, with the exception of the April 2007 Verizon grant of \$5,190 for the Mt. Vernon Global Awareness Education Project. An amount of \$1,377 was carried over to 2008 for the trip to the UN in February. Of the \$2,000 in the grant reserved for the Web site, \$1,400 was used in setting up the new site and \$600 remains for future web site work. All of this has been reported to the Verizon Foundation. The budget for calendar year 2007 and proposed budget for 2008 are available on request.

Cosponsorships

UNA Westchester has continued to cosponsor other events that further the goals of the Chapter, including the Ambassador's Club at Manhattanville College and the Westchester Martin Luther King Institute Hip-Hop event in February 2008. The Board

will use its Web site to publicize events of interest to our membership beyond our own four events.

Challenges and Opportunities

As we look forward to the next year, we need to build on achievements and set specific goals. Although these goals will be reviewed by the Board, these are some of the things I have in mind:

- Recruit Board members to fill Membership, Publicity, and Fund-Raising vacancies;
- Encourage members to play a more active role in our Association (e-alerts, Membership Day, participation in our programs, Web site discussions etc.);
- Reach out to new members, especially the youth of Westchester County through Model UN.

At our Annual Meeting on May 4, 2:00–4:00 P.M., at the Scarsdale Library, I hope that members will add to this list.

Submitted by Phil Reynolds, President

Mt. Vernon High School Students Visit the United Nations

On Friday, February 29, 2008, through the auspices of UNA-USA Westchester Chapter, and supported by a Verizon Awards Grant to "The Mt. Vernon Global Awareness Education Project," 18 students from the Mt. Vernon High School UN Club were accorded a privileged welcome at the UN. Our Chapter is most grateful to John Butler, Director of External Affairs, Verizon Foundation, for providing support to this project.

The students had studied about the UN Millennium Development Goals, which cover targets to alleviate poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, child and maternal mortality, disease, and environmental degradation. They had

written essays on the topic “What can the United States do to help combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases around the world?” The essays were submitted to the 2008 National High School Essay Contest sponsored by the UNA-USA. All entrants will receive a certificate acknowledging their efforts.

The UN Club is supervised by Mr. Demetrios Mihailidis, teacher of social studies, who arranged the events and conducted the United Nations trip. He was assisted by Ms. Laina Jones, a language teacher at the high school. Ms. Maureen Walker, Comptroller of the City of Mt. Vernon, also accompanied the students on this trip and was awarded a plaque of appreciation for her support in a moving tribute by the students. UNA Westchester had initiated the Mt. Vernon Going Global Project in 2006 under the guidance of Board member Charlene Morisseau. Other representatives of the Chapter who participated in the February 29 trip were Asha Castleberry and Marcia Wallace, members of the Education Committee. In addition, Renée Wilson, a sophomore at Cardinal Spellman High School who has been participating in the project as an intern, accompanied the group and wrote a report that details the activities of the day below.

The students visited the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, and were welcomed by Mr. Marco Loritz, Protocol Officer, to whom the students gave a plaque of appreciation for his interesting briefing and hospitality. At UNICEF, the students were oriented by Ms. Ingaard Taylor to the efforts of UNICEF to address the needs of children throughout the world who suffer from malnutrition, illness, and lack of clean water. Mr. Aaron Greenberg, Alternative Care Specialist and Child Protection Officer at UNICEF, provided an eye-opening briefing for the students on violence and abuse against children. After an enthusiastic

discussion, the students presented Ms. Taylor with a plaque of appreciation.

A surprise guest at UNICEF was Brenda Smith, past superintendent of the Mt. Vernon School District, who is now a representative to the UN from a nongovernmental organization, United Church Women. After lunch at the UNICEF cafeteria, the students took an official tour of the United Nations, where trained guides informed them of the main organs and issues of the UN.

Marcia Wallace

A Student’s Perspective on the Mt. Vernon Global Awareness Education Project

On Friday, February 29, 2008, a group of Mt. Vernon High students and I took a trip to the UN, the German Mission to the UN, and the UNICEF building. The project was sponsored by the Verizon Foundation.

At the German Mission to the UN, we learned that in 1961 a wall was built that divided Berlin into two parts: East (Communist) and West (Democratic). The Berlin Wall was brought down in 1989, 28 years later. The country is now united with a female leader from the former Communist part of the country. We were told that most Germans are still ecstatic about having their first female chancellor, Angela Merkel (and think she is doing a far better job than past male Chancellors!). The fact that Chancellor Merkel is originally from East Germany makes her election a great accomplishment.

The experience was really insightful academically as well. We had microphones to talk into (as a matter of fact it made me feel like an official) for asking questions. For example, I asked, “What is the economy like now that the euro has strengthened and the American dollar has weakened?” Their response was, “It is not great for the

economy, because Germany is a country that profits from exports. So as a result, instead of an Americans buying a BMW or a Volkswagen, they would invest in a Lexus.” That was interesting to me because I would have assumed that the German economy would be booming with the strong euro.

At the UN we received a great tour of the organization’s many departments and the chambers where important world issues are discussed. Out of everything we saw and did at the UN, my favorite was the UNICEF exhibit showing the medical supplies and educational materials that UNICEF provides to children in developing countries. It showcased how UNICEF provides health and nourishment as well as a basic education to families in these countries. It really tugged at my heart strings and made me think about what we have and how we are so quick to criticize the flaws of our health-care and education systems. In the U.S., we take our social support systems for granted. Although they are not perfect, the fact that we even have them is something to be thankful for. It really tore me up to see how much suffering goes on and how difficult it is to live with little food and water for months at a time, or to walk more than five miles a day to collect water from a well that may not be clean.

This wonderful trip would not have been possible without the efforts of Mr. Mihailidis (“Mr. M.,” Social Studies Chair at Mt. Vernon High School), Ms. Maureen Walker, the UN, UNICEF, the German House, UNA Westchester, and everyone else involved. I thank the Westchester Chapter of the UNA-USA from the bottom of my heart for this grand opportunity.

*Renée Wilson
Sophomore, Cardinal Spellman High School*

2008 UNA-USA Westchester Local High School Essay Awards

Winners of the High School Essay Contest from Westchester County will be honored with prizes at the Annual Meeting on May 4. The topic of the essay was: “What can the United States do to help combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases around the world?” The first prize of \$200 will go to Kaitlyn Raymond, a junior at Tuckahoe High School. The second prize of \$100 will go to Jocelyn Pedro, a freshman at Ossining High School, and the third prize (\$50) will go to Anna Kagoro, a sophomore at Mt. Vernon High School. Congratulations to these fine students.

Board Members, Officers, and Committee Chairs

Phil Reynolds, President, 914-472-5490, Philreynolds60@hotmail.com
Doris Benson, VP, Program and Hospitality, 914-961-6554, dwbenson@us.ibm.com
Marcia Brewster, VP and Newsletter, 914-924-2460, mmbrewsterny@aol.com
David R. Finch, Treasurer and Nominating, 914-381-6347, DavidRFinch@juno.com
Scott C. Monje, Secretary, 203-797-3465, smonje@scholastic.com
Margaret Bruce, Advocacy, 914-666-7387, MKBruce@verizon.net
Marcia Wallace, Education and Youth, 914-681-0101, mtswal@optonline.net
Sarah Angel, Communications, 845-235-5434, sangel@us.ibm.com
Lee Bloom, Southern NY State Division, 914-834-5293, LeeHBloom@aol.com
Vacant, Membership

Directors: Tom Clark, Joan Katen, John Lloyd, Luis Mojica, Charlene Morisseau, Karen Rockwell El-Badry, Patrick Sciaratta

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! Join UNA-USA Westchester Today!

____ Please renew my membership

____ Please enroll me as a member of UNA-USA at the following level:

- | | | | |
|--|---------|---|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (one-time payment) | \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Member | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Introductory (first year only) | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | \$ 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$10 |

In addition to my membership dues, I would like to contribute to:

- Westchester Chapter \$ _____
- National Office \$ _____
- Total enclosed \$ _____
- My company matches employee contributions. (My company's matching form is attached.)
- Please send me information on making a Planned Gift.

Areas of interest (circle): Program, Advocacy, Education, Membership, Newsletter

Name _____ (Please print)
Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Tel: _____ E-mail: _____

Please return this, along with your check payable to UNA-USA, to:

UNA-USA WESTCHESTER CHAPTER
5 Robin Hill Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583