

UNA-Westchester Global Connection



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

<http://www.unawestchester.org>

May 2009

Annual General Meeting, 2008–2009, and “Bombs Away? New Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament”

- The state of nuclear disarmament in today’s world
- The role of the United Nations
- U.S. disarmament policy and prospects for change during the Obama presidency

**Sunday, May 17, 2009, 2:00–4:00 P.M.
Bronxville Public Library
201 Pondfield Road, Bronxville, NY**

Featuring: Dr. Randy Rydell

Randy Rydell is Senior Political Affairs Officer in the Office of the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and was Report Director for the Weapons of Mass Destruction (Blix) Commission. He assisted in drafting the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994, while working for Senator John Glenn. Dr. Rydell will be attending the talks on the Non-Proliferation Treaty in Geneva the previous week and will report on the latest developments.



Dr. Rydell’s talk will be preceded by a brief meeting and followed by a question-and-answer session and reception. Refreshments will be served.

The program is cosponsored by UNA-Westchester and Concerned Families of Westchester (CFOW)

For more information, contact: Doris Benson, dwbenson1@verizon.net, (914) 961-6554, or www.unawestchester.org

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Editors: Marcia Brewster, Scott Monje

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Once again, the major portion of our May *Global Connection* is taken up with my Annual Report, so I will keep this letter brief. In fact, I would simply urge you as UNA-Westchester Members to participate and enjoy our Annual Meeting and reception from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 17, at the Bronxville Library. We need your votes, your ideas, and your response to Dr. Randy Rydell's presentation on New Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament: Bombs Away?



I hope to see you there or to receive your support for our slate of Board Candidates (please see back page).

-- Phil Reynolds

UNA-USA Westchester 2008–2009 Annual Report (July 1–June 30)

Introduction

This year we had new enthusiasm, a new brochure, and yes, a new U.S. president. Although UNA Westchester is a nonpartisan organization, we couldn't help but notice a new direction in Washington which bodes well for many of our long-term interest areas. Already, the Obama administration has given the go-ahead for the U.S. to pay its share of the UN Fund for Population Activities, to apply for membership on the Human Rights Council, and to consider how to deal with the International Criminal Court. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea will hopefully be ratified in 2009. Much remains to be done, but the start of this new administration is encouraging.

Ginger Stillman and I represented UNA-Westchester at the Annual Convention of UNA-USA in Washington in June 2008. A feature that all members might find helpful was the Advocacy Training workshop which can be accessed at: www.unausa.org/advocacytraining2008. The two of us met with Representative Nita Lowey and the offices of Senators Schumer and Clinton and urged their continued support of UN issues. The next Annual Convention of UNA-USA is scheduled for June 12–14 in Washington, D.C. There will be an advocacy day in Washington during the course of the convention. UNA-Westchester will be ably represented at the Annual Convention by VP Marcia Brewster. I urge all UNA-Westchester members to consider attending this interesting and inspiring event.

Board

This year one of our most respected Board members, Tom Clark, moved out of town and off the Board. Raquel Breckinridge joined the Board and began building our Young Professionals for International Cooperation (YPIC) program. She, too, moved out of town, so we are trying to find someone to take her place. We just learned that our dynamic Webmaster, Sarah Angel, may have to resign from the Board due to other commitments. The good news is that the Board was strengthened with the addition of Ms. Brenda Smith, former superintendent of the Mount Vernon City School District. Your Board meets monthly and is the backbone of the Association. The dates are posted on www.unawestchester.org, and Association members are welcome as observers.

We are still actively seeking assistance in the areas of membership, publicity, fund-raising, and Web site management. Please let us know if you can help.

Program

Programs are our high-profile (high-effort) events organized by the Program Chair, Doris

Benson, and her committee: Marcia Brewster, Patrick Sciaratta, Peter Moock, and Scott Monje. We kicked off our UN Day program in October 2008 with Mike White, CEO of PepsiCo International, and Gavin Power, UN Global Compact Office, speaking to an enthusiastic group of members and students at Pace University on “Corporate Social Responsibility.”

Then, on December 7 we celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, starting with a lovely luncheon for Advocacy Chair, Molly Bruce, who participated in drafting the Declaration under Eleanor Roosevelt's leadership. Later that day we had a first-rate presentation by Craig Mokhiber (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) on the question of whether the UN should intervene in sovereign countries to protect human rights—the responsibility to protect. As if that weren't enough, we were also treated to a spirited concert by the Youth Band for the United Nations.

On March 11, 2009 Ferid Belhaj, Special Representative of the World Bank to the UN, addressed members and students of Sarah Lawrence College on the “World Bank in a Time of Global Financial Crisis.” The season will finish with our annual meeting on May 17, where we are honored to welcome Mr. Randy Rydell, Senior Political Affairs Officer in the Office of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who will speak on “New Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament.”

In keeping with tradition, the Program Committee, ably chaired by Doris Benson, has outlined a series of programs for the 2009–2010 period, which will include the following topics: Jeffery Sachs's Millennium Villages; the International Criminal Court; the renegotiation of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change; and Women's Rights and Gender Equality. These issues will all be

widely discussed in the coming year, so these programs will certainly be stimulating!

Education

Marcia Wallace and her Education Committee have once again had a highly productive year. The Committee includes: Audley Foster, Brenda Smith, Edith Segal, Abel Lushiku, Asha Castleberry, Elisabeth Lloyd, Lee Bloom, Luis Mojica, Karen Rockwell El-Badry and Ginger Stillman (ex officio). In the fall of 2008, they sent letters to over 100 middle and high schools asking and helping them to increase their teaching about the UN. Nine schools in Westchester submitted essays to UNA-USA's national essay contest. Our chapter will present local awards at our Annual Meeting on May 17.

Under a continuing grant from the Verizon Foundation and under the able leadership of Demetrios Mihailidis, groups of 30 Mt. Vernon High School students capped off their UN studies with trips to the UN, UNICEF, and the German Mission to the UN in May and December 2008. The next trip is planned for Thursday May 14, 2009.

Karen Rockwell El-Badry's Yonkers Children's Peace Project continued to reach approximately 1,200 third-graders with presentations on the UN by UNA-Westchester volunteers (why not try this yourself?).

The Board authorized \$1,600 to enable 11 local TV stations to broadcast 26 “*Going Global with the UN*” DVDs, featuring actors like Michael Douglas speaking about UN programs. Finally, the Education Committee reached out to teachers at the December 2008 Westchester Social Studies Conference.

Advocacy

Molly Bruce continued to chair the Advocacy Committee, which included: Doris Benson, Joan Katen, John Lloyd, Lee Bloom, Marcia Brewster, Phil Reynolds (ex officio), Marcia Wallace, and Debbie Tarlow. They launched an initiative that produced a great advocacy

paper entitled “Eight Areas Where the US Benefits by Working with the UN,” which is included in this newsletter. For 2009 UNA-USA has produced an extremely professional Advocacy Agenda, which can be accessed at www.unausa.org. The Advocacy Committee will submit abstracts of appropriate sections for our *Global Connection* newsletter.

Web site

During the absence of Sarah Angel, Jacob Daniel has been kind enough to help with our Web site (www.unawestchester.org). We hope to do even more with this site next program year.

Newsletter

Marcia Brewster and Scott Monje have kept our *Global Connection* lively and interesting. For many, this is their main link to UNA Westchester. Please let them know what you would like to see. They welcome your letters and articles for publication in the newsletter.

Finance

Having done all of this, we ended our calendar year with a balance of \$15,040. Thanks go out to our loyal Treasurer, Dave Finch. Our budget for the year 2009 is \$11,900. We particularly appreciate the special contributions to UNA-Westchester, which totaled \$3,747 in 2008. Our budget balance sheets are available on request.

Partnership

We would like to see UNA-Westchester as a go-to place for international affairs in Westchester. We cannot do this alone. To this end we have cosponsored activities such as Manhattanville College’s “Meet the Ambassador” series, which recently featured the Ambassadors to the UN from Zimbabwe and Vietnam. We also cosponsored the Martin Luther King Institute’s Hip-Hop event. Through our VP Marcia Brewster, we were also active in the successful UNA-USA Southern New York Division Mid-Atlantic Conference on “Year of Change: New

Prospects for America at the United Nations.” Through our programs, we have reached out to partners, including Manhattanville College, Pace University, PepsiCo, the Community Unitarian Church (White Plains), ACCION, Amnesty International, Concerned Families of Westchester, and others this year. We are pleased to post partners’ events related to the UN on our website.

Membership

In the absence of a much-needed membership chair, I have just completed a letter/e-mail campaign to get the 200 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV) in Westchester County to consider joining UNA-Westchester. If you know some of these folks, please encourage them to join. Why not bring a friend to our next event?

The future of UNA-Westchester is a responsibility we all share.

Nominations for Board of Directors

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

President:	Phillip Reynolds
VP:	Marcia Brewster
Secretary:	Scott Monje
Treasurer:	David R. Finch
Board Class '12:	Doris Benson Lee Bloom Narinder Kakar

Revision of UNA-Westchester By-Laws to Be Considered at the Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting of UNA-Westchester to be held from 2:00–4:00 P.M. on Sunday, May 17, the Board of Directors will present the following proposal for a revision of the Chapter By-Laws for approval by the Chapter:

Proposed revision of Article VI Board of Directors, sections 3 and 5 to reduce, over three years, elected Directors from 12 to 9 to facilitate the filling of all posts and the achievement of Quorum; AND proposed revision of Article V Officers to consolidate the posts of Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary into one Secretary post.

The rationale for the reducing the number of elected Directors reflects the difficulty of locating qualified and committed candidates and the consequent problem of achieving a quorum at Board meetings. It is not unusual for an association of 200 members, such as UNA-Westchester, to have nine elected Directors.

The rationale for combining the posts of Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary into a single Secretary reflects the reality that we have, over the past few years, had and needed only one Secretary. Our current Secretary, Scott Monje, is comfortable with this change. Most of the correspondence is, in fact, done by the President.

Your Board of Directors recommends approval of this revision.

Express Your Views and Preferences at the Annual Meeting

Our Board wants to hear from you about directions for the future. Please provide your input on the following:

1. What types of program do you prefer?
2. What topics interest you?
3. How can UNA-Westchester reach out to more Westchester residents who care deeply about the major global issues being debated at the UN?

Please let us know at the Annual Meeting on May 17, either verbally or in writing.

Current Board Members, Officers, and Committee Chairs

Phil Reynolds, President, 914-472-5490, Philreynolds60@hotmail.com
Doris Benson, VP, Program and Hospitality, 914-961-6554, dwbenson1@verizon.net
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
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, 914-834-5203, LeeHBloom@aol.com
Margaret Bruce, Advocacy (*ex officio*), 914-666-7387, MKBruce@verizon.net

Directors: Joan Katen, John Lloyd, Luis Mojica, Karen R. El-Badry, Patrick Sciarratta, Brenda Smith, Jacob Daniel (*ex officio*)

Westchester High School Students to Receive UNA-Westchester Prizes

Three local students will be awarded prizes for their excellence in essays that they submitted for the 2009 UNA-USA National High School Essay Contest. Awards will be presented to first-prize winner Nicole Chi, a 10th-grader at Scarsdale High School; second-prize winner Laya Rajan, an 11th-grader at Yorktown High School; and third-prize winner Matthew Hillsberg, a 12th-grader at Rye High School. They will receive awards of \$ 300, \$100, and \$50, respectively. The awards will be presented at the UNA-Westchester Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday, May 17, at the Bronxville Library at 2:00 P.M. Join us in celebrating this achievement.

This year's topic focused on the challenge of ensuring environmental sustainability. The

students were asked to write a letter to the president of the United States explaining why sustainability is important and what the United States should do to ensure that Millennium Development goal number 7, related to environmental sustainability, will be reached. The National High School Essay Contest on the United Nations, which was started in 1986, has inspired students to engage in global issues and the work of the UN through scholarship and critical thinking. The UNA-USA publishes a topic of particular importance to the international community each year. The students are asked to write a response based on research and also their own views and opinions.

National UNA-USA prizes went to students from California, New Mexico, and Minnesota. We are proud of all the Westchester students who competed in the National contest and are sorry none of them were selected for one of the National awards. However, we are very pleased to present these UNA-Westchester awards to our local contest winners.

Thomas Miller Appointed New President of UNA-USA

The United Nations Association of America (UNA-USA) announced in early April that Ambassador Thomas J. Miller would become its new president starting on May 11, 2009. He succeeds Ambassador William H. Luers, who has served a distinguished 11-year tenure as President.

Miller has 29 years experience as a high-profile career diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service. His career includes ambassadorships to Greece and to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and his assignment as a Cyprus negotiator. During his years in the U.S. Foreign Service, Miller contributed to policy development in the Balkans, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. He began his career in Thailand, and then worked on Middle East and North African

matters, including the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, at the State Department. Miller was named ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1999. During his two years in Sarajevo, he worked on postwar political and economic reconstruction as well as refugee and humanitarian issues.

Mr. Miller served as U.S. ambassador to Greece from 2001–2004. At the State Department in Washington and in Greece, he concentrated on counterterrorism, focusing particularly on domestic terrorism in Greece and security during the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. After receiving numerous State Department awards throughout his career, Miller retired from the Foreign Service in December 2004.

Mr. Miller then became the chief executive of Plan International, an international agency that focuses on improving children's lives in developing countries. Miller was based at Plan International's headquarters in London, where he was responsible for the management of all the agency's operations in 49 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Miller has also taught university courses on international relations and diplomacy. He founded the Model United Nations program in Washington, DC, in 1993, and created a Model UN organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Miller initiated the Community Service Network for local and American volunteers at U.S. embassies in Sarajevo and Athens and personally participated in rebuilding homes for war returnees in Bosnia and for refugees and disabled children in Athens. Miller is married and has a daughter and a son.

The UNA-Westchester Board looks forward to meeting with Ambassador Miller in mid-May at the next Division meeting and at the National Convention to be held in Washington, D.C., in June.

Eight Areas where the United States Benefits by working with the UN

In response to the question “Why should the United States support the United Nations?” our Advocacy Committee has summarized eight of the most important reasons:

Peace and security: UN operations cost much less than similar operations undertaken by the United States. Since 1948 the UN has engaged in 63 peacekeeping and observer missions in the world’s trouble spots, and currently has 16 operations in place. Other areas where the UN is actively involved, and international agreements are essential, include: limiting nuclear proliferation; fighting terrorism; prosecuting war criminals; and mine clearing.

Democracy and elections: UN-monitored elections help to ensure transparency and democracy—an important United States goal. The UN has supported free and fair elections in several countries, including Cambodia, El Salvador, Kosovo, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, South Africa, and Timor-Leste. It has also provided electoral advice and assistance, including the monitoring of results, to more than 90 countries, often at decisive moments in the nation’s history (e.g., Afghanistan and Burundi).

Development: The UN and its agencies stretch U.S. funds further and improve development outcomes. The UN Development Programme, for example, has staff in 166 countries, and UNICEF is working in 157 countries. The UN allocates over \$10 billion per year for development, with another \$18–\$20 billion in loans and grants provided by the World Bank. Those are resources that enhance United States development assistance.

Human rights: All issues of human rights, including the rights of women, are of vital concern to the United States, especially in today’s dangerous world. The UN has been actively promoting human rights since its foundation in 1945. Following the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, it has enacted a number of major

agreements on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights—all important to the policy of the United States. Recently, it has sought to strengthen the machinery available to deal with alleged violations of human rights, and has focused world attention on cases of torture, disappearance and arbitrary detention, and violence against women. It has also brought pressure to bear on governments to improve their human rights record.

Health: The UN (especially the World Health Organization, WHO) alerted the United States and the rest of the world to epidemics, such as the SARS virus. It has essentially eradicated polio and smallpox. Current campaigns are focused on reducing the impact of malaria and HIV/AIDS, and improving child and maternal health. Without the UN, the United States would be left on its own to discover and treat such major diseases.

Environment: The UN stands with the United States and other nations to reduce the effects of climate change, global warming, and air and water pollution. Unless these problems are addressed internationally, environmental losses will deplete the resources on which human survival depends.

Emergencies and disasters: The UN and its agencies distribute vital assistance to regions hit by natural or man-made disasters. Within 24 hours of the Asian tsunami in 2004, for example, UN disaster teams had been dispatched to the hardest-hit areas. The UN distributed food to more than 1.7 million people and provided shelter, drinking water, and vaccinations for the victims. UN appeals raise more than \$2 billion a year for emergency assistance.

International standards and regulations: UN agencies provide the standards and measures for the global economy. For example, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) sets the rules for international mail among its 190 member countries, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) sets standards for air travel, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has helped to make the seas more secure.

ANNUAL MEETING RESPONSE

To: Secretary Scott Monje, 30 W. Elizabeth St., Tarrytown, NY 10591

From: _____ (name)

___ I intend to attend the Annual Meeting

___ I cannot attend but cast my ballot for the listed slate of nominees.

* * * * *

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

___ Please renew my membership

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

- () Lifetime (one-time payment) \$1,000 () Member \$40
- () Patron \$ 500 () Introductory (first year only) \$25
- () Sponsor \$ 100 () Student Free!

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.

Name _____ (Please print)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Tel: _____ E-mail: _____

Please make your check payable to UNA-USA.

Or Charge payment to your Credit Card: VISA MC Am. Express

Number: _____ Exp.Date: _____

Signature _____

Return this, with your payment to UNA-USA, to:
UNA-USA WESTCHESTER CHAPTER
5 Robin Hill Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583