

UNA-Westchester Global Connection



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

<http://www.unawestchester.org>

January 2012

Members' Day at the UN: The UN in American Foreign Policy

Members' Day provides an opportunity for UNA-USA members to attend special briefings and panel discussions regarding the most pressing issues on the UN's agenda. The event is a great benefit to members, as they gain access to the UN and see the importance of their commitment, support and work toward a strong U.S.-UN relationship. Guest speakers and panelists will shed light on the challenges and opportunities faced by Americans and the United Nations system in today's increasingly interconnected world.

Conference attendees will have an opportunity to meet with high ranking UN officials and to engage in topical discussions with some of the most prominent foreign policy shapers of our time. This year's conference offers a unique preview into the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) before the conference in June; insight into the evolution of UN peacekeeping operations; a discussion of what comes after 2015 in relation to the MDGs; and the growing assertiveness of the Security Council in dealing with peace and security issues in the 21st century.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, Quetelet Professor of Sustainable Development and Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University, Director of the Earth Institute, and Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Members' Day is also the UNA-USA's Fourth Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference. The event will be held at the United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 1, 9:00–5:00, on Friday, February 10. Enter at First Avenue at 46th Street, New York City.

Everyone must register! To Register go to: <http://www.unausa.org/members-day> and follow the link for Members. Please bring non-member friends. They can register for the day and their registration can apply toward an introductory membership. University and high school students may register free of charge.

For further information, email: unasouthernny@gmail.com.

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Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

May the New Year bring you peace, prosperity and good

health! As we look toward the year ahead, we expect that the UNA-USA alliance with the UN Foundation will provide wider opportunities to revitalize our work and outreach. Please plan to attend the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Conference at the United Nations on Friday, February 10, to get a closer look at what the alliance has to offer. For the past three years, this has been a stimulating gathering, with many students attending. This is the essence of our Association and the new alliance. Please also try to join us for one of our board meetings, normally held on the first Monday of the month at the YMCA office on Mamaroneck Road in White Plains. Members are welcome to observe our meetings.

We were extremely saddened by the death of our long-standing and much-loved board member Lee H. Bloom in December at the age of 92. He made an invaluable contribution to UNA-USA since its founding, and he will be very much missed. An obituary is included in this newsletter.

On a more positive note, our board is very happy to introduce Robina Singh, its new chair of the Young Professionals program. Robina joined us just before our UN Day celebration on October 23. She mobilized a number of volunteers for the celebration at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains, and has been a huge source of support during her short time on the board. The UN Day event was exceptionally good, with excellent presentations by Westchester residents who are making important contributions to bridge the development gap in water and sanitation (David Winder), education (Cream Wright),

and poverty and children’s health (Clare Effiong). We were entertained by the eco-rock band Solar Punch, and the reception provided an opportunity for networking and good cheer.

Robina has also started the process of updating and improving our Web site, while we wait for the opportunity to link more closely with UNA-USA’s national Web site. For the time being, we have essential information at www.unawestchester.org. There is an article on the UN Day event and information on how to join the Young Professionals. Stay tuned for Web site improvements and developments on the Young Professionals Program (YPP).

Members of the board played prominent roles at several different local events for Human Rights Day around December 10, 2011. We are also planning to organize an event to commemorate International Women’s Day in March 2012 with the Westchester Board of Legislators. Details will be sent to you by e-mail. We also very much look forward to seeing you all at our annual meeting, scheduled for Sunday, April 29, at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains. Please mark your calendars.

Finally, I want to thank all the members of the board and other supporters for all their assistance during a year when I was often not available. It is such a pleasure to work with a group of people so dedicated to the work of the United Nations and world peace.

*Marcia Brewster
President, UNA-Westchester*

Advocacy Corner

I will begin this advocacy column by wishing you all a happy and healthful 2012.

But there is a note of sadness—the United Nations has lost one of its strongest advocates in the passing of Lee Bloom, a distinguished member of our committee who added so much

in wisdom and guidance. In honor of Lee, who worked so tirelessly on behalf of the UN, we shall continue to advocate for international peace and the Millennium Development Goals. And we ask you to do the same. Please urge your representatives to support our positions vis-à-vis the United Nations and tell them why the work of the UN is so important.

On another note: The United States is now withholding funding for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), because this UN agency recognized Palestine's aspiration to become a member. We hope that the good work of UNESCO, which has been severely curtailed by the withdrawal of U.S. funding, will be able to resume as the U.S. reconsiders this law targeting one people. We advocate that this law be repealed and that UNESCO continue its work in such areas as tsunami early-warning stations in the Pacific and elsewhere. We also hope that UNESCO will carry on with its designation and protection of World Heritage Sites and other educational and scientific work.

The current advocacy agenda focuses on support for: human rights; funding for the UN; the Millennium Development Goals; and U.S. ratification of treaties such as the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Treaty on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Again, may the coming year bring peace, good health and support to our work.

—Joan Katzen

Lee H. Bloom, 1919–2011
UNA Mentor and Historian

The leadership and entire membership of the UNA-USA were very saddened to learn of the

death of Lee Bloom on December 12, 2011, at the age of 92. Lee was our friend and mentor. He had an institutional memory of the history of UNA that cannot be equaled by anyone else. He joined the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Chapter of the American Association for the United Nations (UNA-USA's predecessor) in 1957. He was president of the chapter in 1962 and 1963; it merged with others to form the Westchester Chapter. Lee served for several years as a Mid-Atlantic Representative to the UNA's Council of Chapters and Divisions. In addition to his UNA work, he was a founding member of the Business Council for the United Nations.

A long-time board member of the Westchester Chapter, he served on the chapter's Education, Advocacy, and Hospitality committees, was a treasurer of the chapter, and served for over a decade as treasurer of the Southern New York State Division.

Lee was called on by the New York Department of Education to be a "Critical Friend" to help develop the third-grade curriculum on culture. His connections with the New York State Board of Regents led to his developing a letter to all superintendents in the state highlighting ways in which schools could educate students about the UN and celebrate its 60th anniversary. Through the years he partnered with his late wife Mary Lou, also a Westchester board member, to raise over \$250,000 for UNICEF.

In 2002 Lee received the UNA-USA Arnold Goodman Award for his outstanding leadership among the chapters and divisions. He set a standard of excellence and commitment to the work of the association. The Westchester Chapter also nominated Lee for the "Someone Special" award, which he received in January 2007. On May 15, 2011, he was honored by the Westchester Chapter at its annual meeting for his commitment to the organization, the chapter, and the Southern New York State Division.

The chapter and the division also honored him at a luncheon on September 9, 2011, at Harvest on Hudson in Hastings.

In addition to his many contributions to the UNA, Lee was involved with many community and charitable boards, and served his community as councilman of the town of Mamaroneck for over 16 years. Lee served as a director on numerous boards related to education, human rights, and the environment. He was affiliated with the Sheldrake Environmental Center in Larchmont and the Mamaroneck-Larchmont Human Rights Commission. He was a man who gave far more than his share.

Lee was born in New York City in 1919, attended school in New Rochelle, and graduated from MIT in 1940. After one year at Harvard Law School, he entered the U.S. Navy and served as a lieutenant commander until 1945. He married his wife Mary Louise in the Philadelphia Naval Yard, and went back to finish his law degree at Harvard. He then started a 36-year career as an executive with Lever Brothers Company, and moved his family to Larchmont in 1951. He was predeceased by his wife in 2005 and is survived by his three children, Daniel (wife Sherri, sons Joel and Josh), Louise Abel (husband Irving), and Douglas. Lee is also survived by his special lady Alice LaSala.

A Step in the Right Direction for Child Protection

On July 12, 2011, UNICEF facilitated the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1998, specifically designed for the protection of children. It recognizes among other things that schools and hospitals are sanctuaries for children, immune from any kind of attack or military occupation. Moreover, the resolution expressly states that any individual or party who engages in such actions against schools and hospitals should be held accountable in an international

criminal tribunal. It is in everyone's interest that such strong international legal provisions be implemented to protect and foster the development of our children. If implemented effectively, Resolution 1998 is likely to improve living conditions for children in volatile communities throughout the world.

As a Security Council resolution, Resolution 1998 is binding on all member states of the United Nations. Recalling in its preamble the United Nations' commitment to international peace and security, it underlines the adverse impact of conflicts on children. This is an important step in the right direction for child protection. Council members demonstrated their commitment to the protection of children in armed conflict by endorsing the strong language necessary for "a comprehensive strategy to resolve conflict." Further, the Council stressed the importance of all parties complying with international law specifically designed to protect civilians in armed conflict, such as the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In addition, the resolution emphasizes the need to end impunity to perpetrators of violent acts against children. This is reminiscent of that master piece of international humanitarian law, the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court. For example, the resolution "call[s] upon member states concerned to take decisive and immediate action against persistent perpetrators of violations and abuses committed against children in situations of armed conflict." It further calls upon states to "bring to justice those responsible for such violations." This is a timely injunction given the spate of attacks on hospitals and schools during conflicts in recent years in places such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and northern Uganda. According to a recent UNICEF report, schools have increasingly become targets of violent attacks by government and armed nongovernment forces in at least 31

countries in the Middle East, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

The text of Resolution 1998 also condemns denial of children's access to schools or hospitals in times of armed conflict or threat of attack. By requesting that the UN secretary-general monitor and report on the illegal military use of schools, the resolution highlights the United Nations' determination to curb this violation of international law. The Security Council emphasized the need to stop all violations of international law involving the recruitment or re-recruitment of children in armed conflict, sexual violence, rape, abduction or killing. It is noteworthy that some parties to armed conflict have prepared plans to end the use of children in conflict. Yet there are other parties who need to be urged to fulfill their obligations and prepare time tables to end this illegal practice.

Resolution 1998, adopted on July 12, 2011, represents a milestone in the history of international efforts aimed at child protection; it is an event worthy of annual commemoration. This resolution underscores the UN's commitment to work with its sister agency UNICEF and include provisions for child protection in its peacekeeping, peace-building, and political missions.

—*Audley-Seymour Foster*

An Evening on the Life and Work of Eleanor Roosevelt

Brigid O'Farrell, author of *She Was One of Us: Eleanor Roosevelt and the American Worker*, was a featured speaker at an event about the former first lady at Sarah Lawrence College on October 11, 2011. The audience also had the privilege to hear a recorded excerpt from Mrs. Roosevelt's commencement address, delivered on June 7, 1957, at Sarah Lawrence College.

Ms. O'Farrell remarked that much has been written about Mrs. Roosevelt's work at the United Nations and, in particular, about her role in the writing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Westchester chapter of UNA-USA takes great pride in the fact that Mrs. Molly Bruce, one of our distinguished, long-time members, was an assistant to Mrs. Roosevelt during the process of drafting that declaration. The primary focus of Ms. O'Farrell's book is on Mrs. Roosevelt's "lifelong commitment to the American labor movement," which has received little attention. According to Susan Ware, editor of *Notable American Women: Completing the Twentieth Century*, "Mrs. Roosevelt's legacy serves as a challenge and an inspiration to new generations in their quest for economic justice for all citizens."

The special guest for the evening was Mrs. Roosevelt's grandson, Dr. Frank Roosevelt, a member of the economics faculty at Sarah Lawrence. Dr. Roosevelt delighted the audience with fond memories of his grandmother. As she had been born on October 11, 1884, he noted that she would have turned 127 years of age on the day of the event.

As Mrs. Roosevelt demonstrated throughout her life, we, too, must remember that true leadership begins by taking a serious look inside, by learning that what we do for others, what we invest and deposit in the lives of others, is what we must be about. She believed that if there was going to be peace on earth, it had to begin with each of us as individuals, going above and beyond mere good intentions. "For it isn't enough to talk about peace," Mrs. Roosevelt said. "One must believe in it. And, it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it." That she did and accomplished so much.

—*Brenda L. G. Smith*

In Case You Missed It: Westchester Helps Bridge the Development Gap

Celebrating the United Nations' 66th anniversary, the UNA-USA Westchester chapter organized an event titled "Westchester Helps Bridge the Development Gap: Committed Leaders Improve Water, Education, and Health" on Sunday, October 23, 2011. This celebratory and important event was cosponsored by the Bronxville Rotary Club, Westchester County Human Rights Commission, Community Unitarian Church, and World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. The event and panelists were introduced by chapter president Marcia Brewster and featured: Dr. David Winder (C.E.O. of WaterAid America), Dr. Cream Wright (head of REDI4Change LLC and former global chief of the UNICEF Education Program), and Ms. Clare M. Effiong (founder and director of Esther's Aid for Needy and Abandoned Children). Mr. George C. McKinnis (World Community Service chair of Rotary International), moderated the session.

The theme of United Nations Day 2011 was "The United Nations: In Everyone's Interest." Speaking directly to this theme, the panel discussion focused on what Westchester residents are doing to support the UN's efforts in water and sanitation, in girls' and boys' education, and in addressing HIV/AIDS in Africa. The speakers addressed their work and contributions to these efforts and provided recommendations on how we can all work together to improve the lives of people around the globe. For a full report of the event, please visit our Web site: www.unawestchester.org.

-Robina Singh

UNA-Westchester at Social Studies Conference

The education committee of UNA-USA's Westchester Chapter participated in the

Westchester-Lower Hudson Conference for the Social Studies (WLHCSS) on Friday, December 9. Teachers from Westchester, Rockland, and other parts of the lower Hudson Valley flocked to the conference, whose theme this year was "The Impact of the Common Core on Social Studies in New York." As part of the conference, Claire Heskestad, the chair of the education committee and a social studies teacher at Sleepy Hollow High School, conducted a workshop entitled *United Nations: Challenge and Changes*. The workshop included a brief presentation about the goals and achievements of the UN and about the Choices Program, a national education initiative developed at Brown University, which offers a teaching unit on the topic. Claire then conducted a crisis simulation in which teachers participated in resolving a "humanitarian crisis" in the fictitious country of Averoa.

In addition, the education committee managed a display booth of United Nations materials in the conference's exhibition area. Marcia Wallace, Karen Rockwell, and Claire Heskestad shared information about UNA-USA and activities sponsored by the Westchester chapter, such as the annual essay contest. They handed out brochures, video-tapes, and a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in light of the celebrations of International Human Rights Day taking place across the region that day. Jill Milliken, a social studies teacher at Scarsdale Middle School, won the drawing for a full set of sixty UN-related video-tapes.

—Claire Heskestad

2012 High School Essay Contest

"How Can Clean Water Be Made Available To All People In A Sustainable Way?"

Background: Each year since 1986, the United Nations Association of the USA has held a national high school essay contest, which has inspired students to engage global

issues and the work of the UN through scholarship and critical thinking. While the national association is not holding a contest this year, the Westchester Chapter is carrying on the tradition and inviting students to participate.

The Topic: On July 28, 2010, the UN's General Assembly declared that safe and clean drinking water is a human right essential to the full enjoyment of life and all other human rights. It voiced deep concern that almost 900 million people worldwide do not have access to clean water. In their essay, students are asked to define and give some background of the problem; explore some of the causes of the unavailability of clean water; cite measures being taken by the United Nations and by other international organizations to remedy this situation; and suggest how governments, including our own, can contribute to finding a solution. It is suggested that you select one country or region of the developing world to focus on for this topic.

Some useful sources of information on this topic include: <http://www.unwater.org>; www.wsscc.org; www.unicef.org/wash/; and www.un.org/waterforlifedecade.

For more information visit our Web site, www.unawestchester.org or contact Chesk_una@yahoo.com. All entries must be received by March 16, 2012.

Local Model UN Events, 2012

Hastings-on-Hudson High School will be hosting the 38th Westchester Model United Nations Conference (WestMUNC) on Saturday March 24. The cost is \$10 per delegate, which includes an international dinner. For more information, contact Tim O'Brien at (914) 478-6292 or e-mail the following: Eliza.Cadoux@gmail.com or EvaKalikoff@gmail.com.

Mercy College is offering a Model United Nations Program for high school students this summer from July 9 through July 20. The fee is \$400 for the two weeks and includes lunch, guest speakers, and field trips. The goals are to develop global leaders, inspire scholarship, and prepare students for successful careers and lifetime skills in public speaking, research, and critical thinking. For more information, contact Carolyn M. Tragni, Executive Dean for Academic Engagement and Planning at (914) 674-7582 or ctragni@mercy.edu.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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:

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

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 _____

Please circle areas of interest: Program, Advocacy, Education, Membership, Newsletter

Return this, with your payment to UNA-USA, to:

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