

# UNA-Westchester Global Connection



United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) Westchester Chapter  
<http://www.unawestchester.org> October 2013

## Please Join Us for UN Day, 2013!

Help UNA Celebrate the UN's 68th Anniversary – and UNA's 70th anniversary!

### *“Celebrating International Diversity in Westchester: Partnerships for Global Progress”*

Sunday, October 20, 2013, 4:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

Wartburg Conference Center, 1 Wartburg Place, Mount Vernon, NY 10552



Featuring keynote speaker, *Ahmad Alhendawi*  
*United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth*

The program will include:

- Welcome by Mayor Ernest D. Davis, City of Mt. Vernon and other local leaders.
- Keynote presentation by

*Ahmad Alhendawi.*

- Q and A moderated by J. Yuhanna Edwards, President of Mt. Vernon City Council.
- 70th Anniversary Legacy Award to outstanding UNA Chapter member.
- Recognition of Model UN student leaders.
- Entertainment by African dance troupe and the Concordia College GospelKnights.
- Networking

An International Pot Luck Buffet and reception will follow the program.

#### **Please register:**

<http://unawestchesterunday2013.eventbrite.com/>  
or contact [unawestchester@gmail.com](mailto:unawestchester@gmail.com).

**\*Directions to Wartburg:** Take exit 12 on Hutchinson Parkway (just south of Cross County). Go west on East Lincoln Ave toward Mt. Vernon; at next traffic light turn R on Wartburg Pl (or Station Place). Go two blocks N to gatehouse.

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***Editor: Scott C. Monje, Marcia Brewster***

## *Letter from the President*



Dear Friends,

A lot has happened since our last newsletter in April. We had an exciting annual meeting on April 28 this year, with H.E.

Mohammed Loulichki,

Ambassador of Morocco to the United Nations and H.E. Narinder Kakar, Representative of the University for Peace and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to the UN. The theme was "Peace and Security – Essential for Development." Mr. Loulichki, who serves on the Security Council and chairs the Anti-Terrorism Committee, explored some of the key elements to a peaceful and secure society that can contribute to human development. Mr. Kakar provided background to the evolution of the Millennium Development Goals and to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, which are being elaborated now. One important point is that these future goals will be for all countries, not only developing nations. These will relate to energy, water, and ecosystems.

The chapter also honored Pace University student Andrea Bogojevich, who has been recognized as a Dyson fellow for her research on Lebanon as a microcosm of the struggles faced by sovereign states in the Middle East, and the award-winning Model UN teams from Pace University and Mercy College (the only recipients of National Model UN awards in Westchester County).

The chapter elected board members for the coming year; we will retain five officers

and four directors who are serving one more year in their current terms. We elected four directors who will serve for the next two years on the board: Mr. Donald Carlson, Hon. J. Yuhanna Edwards, Mr. James Rapp, and Ms. Lilli Schindler. Their résumés can be found on the website and in the April newsletter. I am honored to serve with such a committed and cooperative board. The full list of officers, directors and committee chairs can be found on page 7 of the newsletter. I would encourage other of our members to stand for election to the board or join one of our committees.

Jim Rapp and I attended the annual meeting of UNA-USA in Washington in June. We met the chapter and national leaders from UNA-USA and our colleagues from the UN Foundation. We had good discussions with staff working on the education program and membership outreach. UNA-USA has a new executive director, Chris Whatley, who was formerly with the Council of State Governments.

The prospects for an improved US relationship with the UN are limited right now, even though we have a well-respected human rights activist as our new ambassador to the UN, Ms. Samantha Power. There is little motivation for congressional representatives to fight for the UN, when Congress is fighting its own internal battles. We were pleased when a non-military solution to the chemical weapons crisis in Syria was brought to the UN (see article on page 5) and that the U.S. recently signed the Arms Trade Treaty, regulating international trade in conventional arms.

## *Youth Envoy Addresses Chapter*

Our United Nations Day event this year (on October 20) has as its theme “Celebrating International Diversity in Westchester: Partnerships for Global Progress.” Our keynote speaker is the secretary-general’s envoy for youth, Ahmad Alhendawi. The program features a welcome address from the mayor of Mt. Vernon, an African dance troupe, a chorus from Concordia College, and an international buffet. We will also recognize one of our chapter members with the UNA-USA 70th Anniversary Legacy Award. Please show your support of their efforts and of your UN Association by attending and bringing a friend.

The chapter is cosponsoring a second UN Day event, a conference at Pace University on October 23: “The Effects of Conflict on Global Health,” from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. (including dinner). RSVP to Laurie Davis-Ford, ldavisford@pace.edu, and say you’re with UNA. Moreover, we are participating in a post-2015 Development Goals Round Table (“The World We Want”) on November 1, sponsored by the Southern New York State Division. It is part of a UNA-USA effort to provide a U.S. grassroots contribution to the formulation of the UN’s post-2015 development goals.

Finally, I want to acknowledge two board members whose terms came to an end this year. Narinder Kakar and Audley Seymour Foster both made excellent contributions to the board of directors and to the chapter, and both will be sorely missed.

– *Marcia Brewster*

UNA-Westchester is pleased to have Ahmad Alhendawi as the keynote speaker as we mark 68 years of the UN.

Mr. Alhendawi, who is from Jordan, is the first-ever United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, having assumed office in February 2013. He previously worked as a team leader on a World Bank program on Institutional Development to Strengthen Arab Policy and Participation. Prior to this, he served as the youth policy adviser for the League of Arab States in Cairo and as an officer of the Arab Youth and Sports Ministers Council. He also served as a youth program associate at the Iraq office of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and for the international humanitarian organization Save the Children. As a regional consultant, he supported the Danish Youth Council's projects in the Middle East and North Africa. Born in 1984, Mr. Alhendawi holds a master’s degree in advanced European studies and international relations, a diploma from the Institut Européen in Nice, and a bachelor’s degree from the Al-Balqa Applied University in Jordan. He has written extensively on youth and civil society, including on the role of civil society in the Arab spring. The International Youth Foundation in Washington D.C. awarded him the Youth Action Net Fellowship as a Young Social Entrepreneur.

Even older than the UN is the UNA-USA. Its predecessor, the America Association for the United Nations (AAUN), was established in 1943 to advocate for the founding of an international organization to replace the League of Nations.

## ***Conflict and Global Health at Pace***

As part of its own celebration of UN Day, Pace University's Pleasantville campus will host a conference, "The Effects of Conflict on Global Health." The exciting event takes place in the Gottesman Room on Wednesday, October 23, 4:00-8:00 p.m. and is jointly sponsored by Lienhard School of Nursing, Dyson College, Paragon House, and the UNA.

The conference will examine the effects of conflict on the human condition, on our environment, and on our planet as a whole. The Dalai Lama once said, "War is old fashioned." Now that mankind can communicate with language we should be able to get along. Let's look at what various conflicts have done to us and how we can move forward as a human race. The keynote speaker will be Brian Williams of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office.

His Excellency Narinder Kakar of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) will give the concluding remarks and discuss the way forward through the Sustainable Development Goals, the anticipated follow-on to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) program of 2000-2015. One panel discussion will feature nurses who have returned from serving on active duty in combat situations.

– Marie Londrigan and Joan Katen

## ***Board Member Receives Recognition***

Brenda L. G. Smith, a member of UNA-Westchester's Board of Directors and a cochair of the Program Committee, will be

honored on Thursday, October 10, by the Westchester County Press, one of Westchester's oldest weekly newspapers, during its 85th gala anniversary celebration. The celebration will be held at Manhattanville College's Reid Castle. The event will also honor other community trailblazers, newsmakers of the year, and major supporters of the paper. A focal point of the celebrations will be the contributions of the late M. Paul Redd, Sr., who served the newspaper as president, publisher, and columnist and the community as a civic and civil rights lion.

In a letter to Brenda, Sandra Blackwell, the current publisher of the Press, stated, "Your reputation as a loving, caring role model to so many young people and the work you are doing to help others locally, nationally, and internationally has inspired us to show you just how much you are appreciated in the Westchester community. Because of your concern, commitment, and involvement in the community, the Westchester County Press would like to honor you with an award at the 85th Anniversary Celebration."

## ***Educators' Corner***

Summer trips for educators abound, but many are not well advertised. For those interested in East Asia, the Japan Society and the Korea Society offer opportunities for middle and high school teachers to visit their respective countries.

The Japan Society offers a three-week tour of Japan to ten educators from different departments for the modest participatory sum of \$1,000. The trip includes two homestays, visits to several schools, and tours of major cities, such as Hiroshima

and Kyoto. Teachers are expected to attend a three day workshop prior to the trip and post a lesson plan upon their return. For more information, visit <http://www.japansociety.org/>

The Korea Society offers an all-expenses-paid twelve-day fellowship to forty social-studies teachers three times a year. Included are seminars at Korea University, a walking tour of Seoul, and visits to a school, main museums, and tourist spots. In addition, during a five-day tour of the peninsula by bus, participants visit several UNESCO World Heritage sites and a steel plant and attend a paper-making workshop. An excursion to the DMZ concludes the trip. All accommodations are in Western-style hotels. Teachers are expected to present a summary of two non-fiction books prior to the trip and post a lesson plan upon their return. For more information, visit <http://www.koreasociety.org/tag/fellowships.html>

Other East Asian organizations:  
The China Institute:  
<http://www.chinainstitute.org/>  
The Asia Society: <http://asiasociety.org/>  
– Claire Heskestad

### ***Syria, Poison Gas, and the UN***

For a while the extent to which Syria had been breaking the law through its use of banned chemical weapons was actually less clear-cut than most people assumed. Nonetheless, there is now an ambitious agreement to destroy the country's stockpiles of poison gas or place them under international control. Syria has already complied with its first obligation under the agreement, having submitted an

inventory of its stockpiles. Although the agreement was forged bilaterally by the United States and Russia, the UN system created the foundation upon which it was built, the UN is where was formalized and legitimized, and UN agencies will be intimately involved in its further implementation and enforcement.

First, what are chemical weapons and the current rules governing them? The term “chemical weapons” refers to several varieties of poison gas that work in different ways. The main categories are: nerve agents, blister agents, choking agents, and blood agents. The gas recently used in Syria – sarin – is a nerve agent, which means it attacks the central nervous system, inhibiting the body's respiratory and cardiovascular functions. In addition, Syria reportedly has stockpiles of VX, another nerve agent, and mustard gas, a blistering agent that causes severe burns and blistering on the skin and in the lungs.

There are two fundamental laws governing chemical weapons. The first, the Geneva Protocol of 1925, was part of the backlash against the widespread use of poison gas in World War I. It is a long-standing and effective part of international law, but it has two significant shortcomings. The first is that it bans only the “use” of chemical weapons. It does not address other factors, such as research, production, storage, or commerce. Even the ban on use is lifted if a country is attacked with chemical weapons. The notion that all bets are off as soon as one side employs poison gas was intended as a deterrent to that initial use, but it also left open a possible escape from the rule. This potential deterrent use, incidentally, permitted the United States and the Soviet

Union to legally accumulate 28,577 tons and 40,000 tons of chemical weapons, respectively, during the Cold War.

The second shortcoming is that the authors of the Geneva Protocol, with World War I in mind, framed the issue in terms of international war. The use of chemical weapons in civil war was not expressly prohibited. Today experts in international law remain divided on the significance of this. Some maintain that the Protocol banned the use of chemical weapons in general, if not expressly than by forming a norm against their use that has become part of customary international law. Others assert that the ban was not extended to civil wars and cannot be so extended retroactively.

To address these shortcomings, the members of the United Nations drew up the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of 1993, which entered into effect in 1997. A far-reaching agreement – clearly written by detail-oriented lawyers – the CWC bans the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, and physical transfer of chemical weapons as well as their use and preparations for their use. Existing stockpiles must be declared and destroyed by approved means in compliance with a strict international verification regime, and chemical industries must be monitored. This was the first multilateral disarmament and nonproliferation treaty in history to provide for the global elimination of an entire category of weapons. (Because of the vast quantities involved, the United States and Russia have been actively destroying their stockpiles, under verification, for over a decade and continue to do so. They were given extensions when neither was able to complete the task by the 2012

deadline.) To implement the treaty and verify compliance, a new special agency was established, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Although technically not a part of the United Nations, the OPCW has a treaty-governed working relationship with that body; the OPCW can place its resources at the disposal of the UN secretary general to conduct investigations in countries that are not signatories to the CWC. The UN teams that investigated the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and determined them to be sarin, included inspectors from the OPCW as well as those from the World Health Organization.

The potential legal complication surrounding Syria's use of chemical weapons derived from the fact that the country had acceded to the Geneva Protocol (in 1967) but had never signed the CWC. Arguably, the Syrian government was not technically prohibited from gassing its own people if it so pleased. This complicated the Obama administration's efforts in August and early September to assemble legal justifications for unilateral action against the country. That changed when uncoordinated, unilateral actions by the United States and Russia created the basis for a joint solution. Russia had been vetoing UN action against its ally Syria. The United States did not have the leverage necessary to force Syria to stop using its chemical weapons without using or threatening to use force. Russia did not have an incentive to pressure Syria until the United States did threaten to use force. The U.S. threat of a missile strike against Syria moved Russia to press its ally to give up its chemical weapons. Syria was not in a position to defy both the United States and Russia on an issue that did not

directly involve regime survival. Thus Syria acceded to the CWC on September 12, 2013. Two days later, the Americans and the Russians agreed to a plan whereby the OPCW would control or remove Syria's stockpiles under the conditions of ongoing war. That plan was then endorsed by the OPCW and then by the UN Security Council within two weeks, with implementation scheduled to commence on October 1.

Note that the threatened U.S. strike never had the potential to eliminate Syria's chemical arsenal. No military action against the chemical stockpiles per se was contemplated because the resulting toxic cloud would have made the entire exercise pointless. The hope for the missile strike was merely to give Assad an incentive not to use chemical weapons again. The diplomatic solution goes much farther than the original unilateral plan

This plan, of course, does not settle Syria's civil war. (The missile strike would not have done that either.) The Obama administration hopes to leverage the current agreement into a general peace conference, to be conducted in Geneva under UN auspices, which with luck would lead to a peaceful transition of power. The apparent stalemate on the battlefield, and the sight of the Americans and the Russians cooperating, could strengthen the incentives for the Syrian parties to opt for a negotiated solution. That is far from certain, but it is a goal worth pursuing.

– Scott C. Monje

### ***UNA-Westchester and Social Media***

A new look and enhanced features are coming to our chapter website [www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org)! We are migrating our website to a new platform and expect to launch the new website in coming months.

Our Young Professionals team is working on starting a Meetup Group for our young members and supporters in Westchester. Stay tuned for more information on this.

– Robina Singh

### ***Board Members, Officers, and Committee Chairs***

Marcia Brewster, President,  
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Directors: Don Carlson, Lilli Schindler

*Ex officio:* George Garland, Jeanne Betsock  
Stillman.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION** (this can also be submitted on line at [www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org)):

\_\_\_\_ 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:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Westchester Chapter  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lee Bloom Memorial Fund  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Office  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Total enclosed   | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My company matches employee contributions. (My company's matching form is attached.) |          |

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UNA-USA WESTCHESTER CHAPTER

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