

# UNA-Westchester Global Connection



United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) Westchester Chapter  
<http://www.unawestchester.org> April 2015

Please Join Our Celebration of Spring!

UNA-USA Westchester Annual Meeting

## *“The UN at 70: Its Evolution and its Relevance Today”*

Sunday, May 31, 2015, 4:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M.  
(Registration starts at 3:30)

Community Unitarian Church, 468 Rosedale Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605\*

### *Featured Speaker:*



### **Robert Clark**

Acting Director and Archivist, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. Bob Clark has been interested in the United Nations since he was a student in junior high school in Texas. After practicing law for some years, he returned to his love of archival work at the FDR Presidential Library and became Acting Director in early 2015. His love of the history of the UN and its work will inspire us to continue our strong advocacy for the institution.

We will also hear from UNA-USA members about their motivation and support to the United Nations.

### **Program Highlights:**

- Brief annual meeting (Marcia Brewster, President, presiding)
- Keynote address and discussion session
- Reflections by UNA members and thoughts about future directions for the association
- Recognition of long-term and regular UNA-Westchester members
- Recognition of award-winning Model UN teams
- Video contest winners
- Reception with refreshments

**\*Directions:** Take the Hutchinson River Parkway to Exit 25 for North St. Follow the sign to White Plains (LEFT if you are traveling NORTH; RIGHT if you are traveling SOUTH) onto North St. At first light, turn LEFT onto Rosedale Ave. Go one block and look for sign. Turn RIGHT onto Sycamore Lane.

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

Please register: [www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org) or  
contact [unawestchester@gmail.com](mailto:unawestchester@gmail.com)

## *Letter from the President*



Dear Friends,

As the major portion of our April newsletter is taken up with our Annual Report, I will keep this letter brief. We are very excited to be honoring UNA long-term members at our annual meeting. I urge you all as UNA-Westchester members to participate and vote at the meeting and enjoy our celebration of spring at the beautiful Community Unitarian Church in White Plains from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. on Sunday, May 31. We are honored to have Bob Clark, Acting Director at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum and an expert on the history of the United Nations, as our keynote speaker. We also plan to recognize any winning Westchester team from the National Model UN conference held in New York City and any student winners of the video contest from Westchester.

Please join the discussion at the annual meeting and share you reflections on the work of the organization and directions for the future. Bring an interested friend or two to the meeting and reception to enjoy an afternoon of interesting discussion and fellowship. The Board would love to have more active contributions to our committee work and sincerely solicits your thoughts on programs, educational and youth outreach, and ways to revitalize our membership. I also personally want to thank you all for your support and the board for its harmonious cooperation.

Also, please put our celebration of UN Day on Sunday, October 25, on your calendars. We will let you know about venue and timing.

I hope to see you at the annual meeting and welcome you to our celebration of spring.

—*Marcia Brewster*

## *Nominations for the Board of Directors*

In accordance with the by-laws, the Nominations Committee has put forward a 2015 slate of nominees for vacancies on the Board of Directors.

The 2015 slate required nominations for Vice President and one Director for the class of 2016 and five Directors for the class of 2017. The slate was accepted by the Board of Directors on April 6, 2014, is being presented to the membership through this Newsletter, and will be voted on by the membership at the Annual Meeting on May 31, 2015. The slate is as follows:

### *Class of 2016*

*Vice President* Narinder Kakar  
*Director* James Rapp

### *Class of 2017*

*Directors* J. Yuhanna Edwards  
Andrew Laub  
Martha Perez  
Lilli Schindler  
Brenda L. G. Smith

*The following officers and directors remain in position for one more year:*

*Officers* President: Marcia Brewster  
Secretary: Scott C. Monje  
Treasurer: David R. Finch  
Nominations: Marcia Wallace  
*Directors* Joan Katen  
Karen Rockwell El-Badry  
Robina Singh

Respectfully submitted by the Nominations Committee: Marcia Wallace, chair; Doris Benson, Lilli Schindler, Patrick Sciarratta, and Robina Singh, members.

## ***UNA-USA Westchester 2014–2015 Annual Report (May 1–April 30)***

### **Introduction**

The past year was an exciting one for the Westchester chapter of UNA-USA, leading up to the important events being held in 2015 related to the Sustainable Development Goals and the 70th anniversary celebration of the United Nations. We organized excellent programs in new venues and engaged a higher proportion of youth in the work of the UN.

UNA-USA Executive Director Chris Whatley has been very active in our programs related to the post-2015 Development Agenda and at the Mid-Atlantic/Members Day conference on February 20, 2015. Membership in UNA-USA now tops 20,000, of whom 6,000 are students.

UNA-USA has established a new partnership with the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. Our chapter's Vice President, Dr. Brenda L. G. Smith, is a member of the sorority, and she is encouraging AKA members in Westchester County to join our UNA chapter. In particular, we will be working with the AKA's Zeta Nu Omega and Pi Iota Omega Chapters on Model UN and Global Classrooms programs at high schools around the county.

In December 2014, the Southern New York State Division of UNA-USA presented the Lee H. Bloom Leadership Award to chapter President Marcia M. Brewster. The award reflected her many years of inspirational leadership in both the chapter and the division, supported by her wide knowledge and experience of the UN and her dedication to the goals of UNA-USA. The Board is honored to have their president's valuable contributions recognized.

### **UNA-USA Annual Meeting**

President Marcia Brewster and Intern/YP member Nicole Chi attended the UNA-USA annual meeting in Washington in June 2014. The theme was "Mobilizing for the World We

Want." The conference took place at the National Education Association June 8–10 and included a day of lobbying on Capitol Hill. There were several high-profile speakers whom we considered inspiring, in particular Will Davis, Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Washington, D.C., and Dr. Robert C. Orr, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Strategic Planning. We also heard a very insightful summary of the U.S. position in a number of conflict areas from Thomas Pickering, former Ambassador to the United Nations. Samantha Power, U.S. Ambassador to the UN, was featured in a video message to the chapter leaders.

Attending the annual meeting is a good way to meet the leaders of UNA-USA and to get an idea of what the organization is doing at the national level. I encourage members of our chapter to attend the meeting this year, which will be held June 7–9 in Washington.

### **UNA-Westchester Board**

At our annual meeting in May 2014, we elected four people to the Board of Directors: Claire Heskestad, Joan Katen, Karen Rockwell El-Badry, and Robina Singh.

Emma Clancy was unable to continue in her position on the board and as YP Chair, as she moved to California. We were very happy to welcome Martha Perez to fill the empty board position. The Board of Directors also voted to create a new board position and elected Andrew Laub as director. He and Martha Perez are co-chairs of the Young Professionals program. They are both doing an excellent job of bringing new young people to participate in our events and education programs.

Four of the five officers and four members of the board will continue in their posts for one more year. Dr. Brenda Smith will remain as a

Director, but has relinquished her position as Vice President. Narinder Kakar is nominated for that position. Claire Heskestad has also resigned as Director, owing to other substantial commitments. We are very grateful to Claire for her leadership of the Education Committee, and we will miss her deep insight in the education area.

The board meets at the White Plains YMCA (250 Mamaroneck Ave, White Plains) at 7:30 P.M., normally on the first Monday of each month. Check the website to make sure of the date. All UNA-Westchester members are welcome to attend as observers.

### **Advocacy Committee**

The Advocacy Committee, cochaired by Professor Joan Katen and Councilman J. Yuhanna Edwards, organized several activities to support the work of the UN.

This year your advocacy committee asked for your support in lobbying our representatives in Congress to fully fund the World Health Organization (WHO) so that it could combat the Ebola epidemic that swept some African Nations and threatened world health. The importance of WHO and its expertise in cases like this cannot be overstated, and we must never underfund this vital arm of the United Nations.

The committee also decided to back the Cities for CEDAW Campaign. CEDAW stands for the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979. In 1981, it officially became an International Treaty. President Carter signed the treaty for the United States, but the U.S. Senate has still not ratified it. The United States Conference of Mayors, NGO groups, and individual cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Louisville support the adoption of ordinances to promote CEDAW in their communities. NYC is debating the adoption of such an ordinance and we in UNA-Westchester are lobbying our cities and county to do the

same. Advocacy cochair, J. Yuhanna Edwards, has introduced the concept to the Mount Vernon City Council. CEDAW has made a difference, where it has been adopted, in public safety, budget allocations, and equality in employment. We count on your support in this effort.

Whenever the United Nations is attacked in the media, it is good to remember all the positive things the UN does and has done. We must endeavor to make our friends and local newspapers aware of these things. If the UN didn't exist, we would have to invent it. Where else could the nations of the world sit together to resolve disagreements? Who else would provide food to 90 million people in 73 countries or alert the world to inhumane conditions endangering vulnerable people? Who would vaccinate 58% of the world's children, saving 2.5 million lives a year? Who would keep peace with 120,000 peacekeepers in 16 operations on 4 continents?

Right now, UNRWA's Chris Gunness and Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl are speaking out for Palestinians in the Syrian refugee Camp, Yarmouk, besieged by ISIS, raising the world's conscience and asking for relief and help in evacuation of civilians.

As we advocate for the United Nations, we can access information on where our congressmen and women stand on each bill that affects the UN and its funding by going to [votesmart.org](http://votesmart.org). We urge all of you to join our advocacy efforts and activities. Please contact Joan Katen at [jmkaten@yahoo.com](mailto:jmkaten@yahoo.com) or J. Yuhanna Edwards at [yuhanna@aol.com](mailto:yuhanna@aol.com).

### **Program Committee**

The program committee, ably led by Lilli Schindler and Brenda L. G. Smith, organized, sponsored, and/or participated in many activities. The main events organized by our chapter are listed below.

**May 4, 2014:** Our *2014 Annual Meeting* addressed the theme "Corporate Social Responsibility and Partnership with the UN"

and featured keynote speakers Amir Dossal, Chairman, Global Partnerships Forum, and Dan Bena, head of Sustainable Development Global Operations at PepsiCo. We recognized two outstanding Model UN college teams to the National Model UN competition in NYC, Mercy College and Pace University.

### ***United Nations Day***

**October 25:** UNA-Westchester teamed up with the Mamaroneck Library for a panel discussion on “Empowering the World’s Women” held at the library. The panelists were Dr. Mahjabeen Hassan, Ms. Michaela Walsh, and Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf. The program was moderated by Professor Joan Katen of Pace University. Much of the discussion related to women’s role in the Middle East.

**October 26:** Our UN Day event “Empowering Youth in Westchester and the World” at the YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester engaged over 80 high school and college students and another 40 interested community members. Students were asked to contribute their ideas to “The World I Want” consultations related to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We were delighted by the way our 10 young facilitators were able to draw out innovative ideas from the participants. We received an award (\$1,000) from UNA national headquarters to support this event, which aimed to incorporate issues in six SDGs that the students found most relevant to them. Their recommendations were presented to the assembled participants, and then UNA-USA submitted them as part of its report to the U.S. mission to the UN, adding a civil-society voice to the UN’s SDG deliberations. Active cosponsors included YWCA, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, The Links, Inc., Sister to Sister International, and local high schools and colleges. Photos and a video are on our website. The Board expects to continue to work with these groups for future activities aimed at engaging students and young professionals.

**February 20, 2015:** *Seventh Annual Mid-*

*Atlantic Conference and Members’ Day*, at the United Nations. The chapter president was on the organizing committee and a number of Westchester members attended the event, “The UN at 70: A Year for Bold Action.” It attracted about 700 members and students from around the country and included a warm welcome from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and a keynote address by Dr. David Nabarro, the UN’s special envoy on Ebola. We heard excellent panels on climate change, global health, human rights, and the situation in the Middle East. Of particular interest were the calls to action by the panelists in areas of climate change and human rights. This conference has become one of the main vehicles for raising awareness of the work of the UN among U.S. citizens.

**March 8:** *International Women’s Day:* Our Young Professionals, headed by Andy Laub and Martha Perez, helped organize the Women’s Day event at the Yonkers Riverfront Library, with a welcome by Mayor Mike Spano. The event included a screening of *Women, War and Peace: War Redefined*, a PBS documentary on the role of women in peace and security around the world. Speaker Linda Fasulo, an NPR independent correspondent to the UN, led a lively discussion, followed by Gerardo Porteny Backal, who headed the youth engagement team for UN-Women’s “He for She” campaign. Over 100 men and women attended the event, cosponsored by AKA sorority, the Yonkers Library, and Sarah Lawrence College.

**March 25:** *Women’s History Month, Town of Greenburgh:* UNA and the Town of Greenburgh honored nine outstanding women of Westchester who had made important contributions to community service.

**May 31:** *Annual Meeting.* The annual meeting will feature a very special event to recognize and honor all UNA-Westchester members. Members who have served the longest terms will be given very special acknowledgement. This recognition occurs at a time when we are

celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations. The event's keynote speaker is Robert Clark, Acting Director at the FDR Library and Museum. He will speak on "The UN at 70: Its Evolution and its Relevance Today." Some long-term members will also provide their observations on the work of the UN and the UNA in supporting it.

A short business meeting will be held, and officers will be elected. We would love the inputs of all members on directions for the future. A reception will follow. Please register for the event at: [www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org).

### **Education Committee**

The Education and Youth Committee, cochaired by Claire Heskestad, a teacher at Sleepy Hollow High School, and Karen Rockwell El-Badry, a retired UN administrative officer, continued its program of outreach to the young people of the community. For the ninth year, the peace/art project, "Peace Makes the World a Better Place," was brought to third-grade classes in Yonkers public schools. Board members and volunteers from Mercy College participated. The project aims to provide an introduction to the United Nations and the concept of peacemaking. As always, the presenters were rewarded with interest and enthusiasm from the students and teachers. Members of the committee are now working on creating a digital model of this project, which could be made available online to help other chapters or interested groups to launch similar programs.

The committee assisted the Southern New York State Division in promoting its video contest to middle and high school students for spring 2015. In addition, committee members Karen El-Badry and Marcia Wallace, along with Marcia Brewster and Joan Katen, held an informational meeting in January with members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, with whom the chapter plans to partner in presenting mini-simulations of Model UN to high school classes. Two schools have been identified for a pilot program, to be expanded

later to include more schools. Mr. Troy Wolfe from UNA-USA national headquarters spoke at the meeting and offered helpful details about how to use the digital information created by his office for this purpose.

### **Nominations Committee**

The report of the Nominations Committee, chaired by Marcia Wallace, is presented on page 2.

### **Young Professionals Program**

The YP group, cochaired by Martha Perez and Andy Laub, continues to be very involved at the heart of UNA-Westchester's events. The group contributed substantially to our UN Day event in October 2014, when most of the facilitators and many of the participants were from the YP group. Members of the group, including students from Mount Vernon High School, attended UNA's annual Mid-Atlantic conference and Members' Day at the UN in February, where they heard from top UN officials on issues ranging from ISIS to ebola and climate change.

The Young Professionals were proud to cosponsor the successful International Women's Day event at the Yonkers Riverfront Library on March 8, described above, which was attended by many young professionals including students from Mercy College's Model UN Club. The YP's helped recruit speaker Gerardo Porteny Backal, who stressed the need to have men involved as partners in women's rights and peacebuilding.

The Young Professionals program is focused on expanding, and we are working with UNA-Women's YP group in New York City as well as the Southern New York State Division's YP group, which is hosting a global health summit on April 18 in New York City. We plan to hold more events this year, particularly on climate change and the 70th anniversary of the UN, so stay tuned!

### **Finance**

Dave Finch has continued as our loyal treasurer and kept us solvent. These were the finances



for calendar 2014:

Balance, January 1, 2014:	\$8,447
2014 Income:	2,969
2014 Expenditures:	3,091
Balance, December 31, 2014:	8,325
Change:	– \$122

### Website and Social Media

Robina Singh has taken the initiative to improve our website by changing the host to Weebly. Thanks also to our interns for enhancing the website and our social media presence. These are crucial to our outreach and networking.

- ✓ Visit [www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org) for announcements and updates.
- ✓ Check out our Calendar for upcoming chapter and external events.
- ✓ Connect with us:  
[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)
- ✓ [Join Our Mailing List](#)

We have been using Eventbrite for event registrations and this helps us keep track of participants at our events.

### Newsletter

Scott Monje has maintained a high standard for our newsletter, the *Global Connection*, which was issued three times during the past year. We may increase electronic distribution to save on costs during the coming year. Newsletter contributions can be submitted to [unawestchester@gmail.com](mailto:unawestchester@gmail.com).

### Membership

The Membership Committee seeks to increase, maintain, and re-enlist members. We currently have a membership of 152 persons, 26% of whom are students or young professionals.

1. Westchester made progress in reconciling and understanding the National reports. According to the National HQ, membership has grown to 20,000 with the greatest growth coming from student members, from 10% in 2011 to 60% in 2014. Westchester membership

reflects a growth to 22% student membership.

2. Efforts to gain and retain members are made at every chapter event, where the President encourages guests to join at our membership table. In 2014 there was an increase of 41 new members (31 regular members and 10 students). At the same time, there was a loss of 25 regular members, resulting in a total gain of six regular members. Nevertheless, all new members are highly valued.

We made personal efforts to contact the 25 non-student members who were dropped from the list, with the following results: 10 who were reached by personal contact agreed to renew; one declined to renew with reason withheld; and 13 who could not be reached by telephone were sent letters.

3. Plans for 2015: An event is planned to honor Westchester chapter long-term members on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the UN in an attempt to rally all members to celebrate and hopefully encourage new members to join.

### Interns

We have benefitted greatly from outstanding student interns over the past year. They include Robbie MacDonald (Middlebury College); Nicole Chi (Amherst College); Conny Krusius, Sooin Bang, and Ainur Ontalapyzy (EF language school); and April Lowry, Martha Perez, and Yein Kim (Mercy College). These students helped organize volunteers, programs, and outreach for our events, kept the website current, and assisted the president in critical ways.

### Conclusion

Thank you to the Committee Chairs who have contributed to this report. We would welcome more of our members to participate in our program, education, advocacy, and membership committees to help support the work of the United Nations. Please contact us with your ideas at [unawestchester.org](http://unawestchester.org).

**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                        | FREE |

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

- Westchester Chapter \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Lee Bloom Memorial Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- National Office \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- My company matches employee contributions. (My company's matching form is attached.)

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

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