

UNA-Westchester Global Connection



United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) Westchester Chapter
<http://www.unawestchester.org> April 2016

Don't Miss the UNA-Westchester Annual Meeting, May 1, 2016!

Cosponsored by the UNA Southern New York State Division's Energy Project and
Sustainable Westchester

“Confronting the Challenge of Climate Change and Building Sustainable Communities”

Sunday, May 1, 2016, 3:00–5:00 (registration opens at 2:30)
Community Unitarian Church, 468 Rosedale Ave., White Plains, NY 10605

Please register at www.unawestchester.org!



Keynote speaker: His Excellency Robert Van Lierop, Former Ambassador of Vanuatu to the United Nations. Ambassador Van Lierop was the first chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), 1990–94. He has been a leader in UN efforts to confront the challenge of climate change for many years.

Program includes:

- Short annual report and election of directors
- Keynote address
- Sustainable Westchester statement: “What we can do in Westchester to cope with the changing climate”
- Discussion and Q&A
- Recognition of winning Model UN teams in Westchester
- Reception with refreshments

Doors open for registration at 2:30. The event is free and open to the public.

Would you like to join the United Nations Association? There is a special, reduced introductory fee of \$25 for new members. Students are free. For more information visit: www.unawestchester.org.

UNA-USA Leadership Summit

The UNA-USA 2016 Leadership Summit will be held in Washington, D.C., from 12 to 14 June. To register, go to: www.unausa.org or <http://www.globalproblems-globalsolutions.org/site/Calendar?id=102063&view=Detail>.

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Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

Our April newsletter is mainly devoted to the full annual report, so this letter will be brief. I would simply urge you as UNA-Westchester members to participate and enjoy our annual meeting and reception from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. on Sunday, May 01, at the beautiful Community Unitarian Church in White Plains. We are excited to have H. E. Robert Van Lierop, the former ambassador of Vanuatu and first head of the Alliance of Small Island States. The theme will be “Confronting the Challenge of Climate Change and Building Sustainable Communities,” and it will be co-sponsored by Sustainable Westchester. We expect to showcase some local strategies to cope with climate change and will recognize any winning Westchester team from the National Model UN conference held in March.

I also wanted to mention what a great celebration of International Women’s Day we had at the Yonkers Riverfront Library on Saturday March 5. The room was packed with 120 enthusiastic and engaged participants.

Please bring your votes and ideas to the discussion at our annual meeting. We encourage our members to participate in and contribute to our committee work: advocacy, communications, education, membership, and program. We would love your input on future programs, educational and youth outreach, and ways to invigorate our membership. Please bring your friends and enjoy an afternoon of discussion and fellowship. I also personally want to thank you all for your support to me and the board for its harmonious cooperation.

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

—*Marcia Brewster*

UNA-USA Westchester Chapter Annual Report, May 1, 2015–April 30, 2016

The past year was an exciting one for the Westchester chapter of UNA-USA, as we participated actively in events related to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 70th anniversary celebration of the United Nations. We supported a number of excellent programs in different venues and engaged a higher proportion of youth in the work of the UN.

Chris Whatley, UNA-USA’s executive director in Washington, has been active in our programs related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and at the Eighth UNA Mid-Atlantic Conference and Members’ Day, held at the United Nations on February 19, 2016. Membership in UNA-USA now tops 22,000 nationwide, one third of whom are students.

UNA-USA’s national partnership with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., has thrived in our chapter. UNA-Westchester and the three Westchester chapters of AKA—Zeta Nu Omega, Pi Iota Omega, and the undergraduate chapter Omicron Eta at Manhattanville College—cosponsored UN Day 2015, and UNA and AKA cosponsored our celebration of International Women’s Day in March 2016. In addition, UNA-Westchester, AKA, and Westchester schools have been working together on a Global Classrooms mini-simulation (a sort of one-hour model UN). We have received a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency to develop a “mini-sim” called “The Road to Paris,” based on the Climate Change Agreement that was reached in Paris in December 2015.

UNA-USA National Annual Meeting

President Marcia Brewster and Vice President Brenda Smith attended the UNA-USA annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in June 2015.

The conference took place at the National

Education Association on June 7–9 and included a day of lobbying on Capitol Hill. There were several high-profile speakers whom we considered inspiring, in particular Ameerah Haq, vice chair of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations at the UN. We had some excellent meetings with other chapter leaders and various partners, including AKA.

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 in Washington on June 12–14.

UNA-Westchester Board

At our chapter's annual meeting in May 2015, we elected seven people to the Board of Directors: for the class of 2016 we elected Narinder Kakar as vice president and Jim Rapp as director. For the class of 2017 (two-year terms) we elected J. Yuhanna Edwards, Andrew Laub, Martha Perez, Lilli Schindler, and Brenda L. G. Smith. During the course of the year, Narinder Kakar stepped down as vice president and he was replaced by Brenda Smith. Four officers and three directors continued their terms.

In 2016 all five officers and four members of the board are up for election or re-election. See details of nominations under Nominations Committee. We have three new nominees for the board, Myrna Anover, Mary Seward Downes and Victor Madubuko, who have already made important contributions to the work of the board. We are indeed fortunate to have such a harmonious board of directors.

The board meets at the White Plains YMCA (250 Mamaroneck Ave, White Plains) at 7:00 P.M., normally on the first Thursday of each month. (Note that this is a change from the previous schedule.) Check the website to make sure of the date in any given month. All UNA-USA members are welcome to attend.

Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee has been working in two main areas this year. The first is advocating for CEDAW—the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. CEDAW was completed in 1979 and went into effect in 1981. Since the United States signed it 36 years ago but has yet to ratify it, a coalition of nongovernmental organizations has commenced a campaign, called Cities for CEDAW, to encourage individual cities to endorse and abide by the convention. J. Yuhanna Edwards, Mount Vernon councilman and cochair of the UNA-Westchester Advocacy Committee, brought the convention before the Mount Vernon Council, and the council passed a resolution approving it. We now have a template to bring to other cities to support CEDAW, but implementation of an ordinance in Mount Vernon will take time. Councilman Edwards has been a great supporter of the convention and assures us that he will continue to encourage the council to pass legislation to implement CEDAW.

We have also joined the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Series. This is a discussion of US foreign policy that takes place at the same time and with the same topics all over the country. Joan Katen, cochair of the Advocacy Committee, is leading one at the Harrison Public Library. The United Nations comes up often in the discussions as the go-to alternative for peace and security in this world—if it is supported and strengthened. Thomas Weiss who has written extensively on the United Nations wrote the section of the briefing book devoted to the UN. Katen decided to take the position as moderator for the discussions because of the large place the UN can and must play in US foreign policy and in helping mankind realize the goal of a peaceful world in which each human being can reach his or her potential.

Program Committee

The Program Committee, ably led by Myrna Anover and Lilli Schindler, organized,

sponsored, and participated in many activities. The main events organized by our chapter are listed below.

May 31, 2015: Our *2015 Annual Meeting* addressed the theme “The UN at 70: Its Evolution and Its Relevance Today” and featured keynote speaker Robert Clark, acting director of the FDR Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, NY. The annual meeting recognized all UNA-Westchester members, and long-serving members were given very special acknowledgement. Some long-term members provided their observations on the work of the UN and the UNA in supporting it.

October 23-25: Marking *United Nations Day*, UNA-Westchester had an amazing weekend celebrating the UN’s 70th anniversary on October 23–25, 2015. On Friday, October 23 Mayor Thomas Roach of White Plains graciously presided over a ceremony to raise the UN flag at City Hall. UNA-Westchester board members and partners from the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester and The Links, Inc. attended the ceremony. The main celebration of UN Day in Westchester took place on October 25 at the YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester. The theme was “Fostering Global Citizens to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” Over 140 people attended the event, representing communities throughout Westchester, including high school students from Mount Vernon, White Plains, Woodlands, and Valhalla high schools.

February 19, 2016: *Eighth Annual Mid-Atlantic Conference and Members’ Day* at the United Nations. The chapter president was on the organizing committee and a number of UNA-Westchester members attended the event. The theme was “From Road Blocks to Building Blocks: Global Crises and the Role of the UN.” The event attracted more than 700 members and students from around the country and

included some outstanding panels on climate change, the refugee crisis, the Sustainable Development Goals, and Security Council reform. The interaction with the participants was lively. This conference has become one of the main vehicles for raising awareness of the work of the UN among US citizens.

March 5, 2016: *International Women’s Day*—UNA and AKA organized a fabulous Women’s Day event this year at the Yonkers Riverfront Library, with the theme “Women’s Political Empowerment: Cracking the Glass Ceiling.” Featured guests included: keynote speaker H. E. Ms. Nguyen Phuong Nga, Ambassador of Vietnam to the United Nations; New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins on her political journey; and Professor Joan Katen of Pace University who introduced the film *Madame Parliamentarian* about women trying to gain a political voice in Lebanon. An excellent discussion session was moderated by Ms. Cheryl Brannan, CEO of Sister-to-Sister International. Among the 120 participants were 20 international exchange students from AFS New York. The event was cosponsored by UNA, AKA, the Yonkers Public Library, and AFS New York.

May 1, 2016: *Annual Meeting*—UNA-Westchester will team up with Sustainable Westchester for its annual meeting with the theme “Confronting the Challenge of Climate Change and Building Sustainable Communities.” The meeting will be held at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. (registration begins at 2:30). The keynote speaker will be H. E. Robert Van Lierop, the former ambassador of Vanuatu, who was the first chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), 1990–94, and has been a leader in UN efforts to confront the challenge of climate change. 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.

Education Committee

The past year has been an interesting one for the Education Committee, chaired by Karen El-Badry, as it prepared to participate in UNA-USA's featured project, Model UN mini-simulations in local schools. The project was designed to extend this valuable concept to students who do not have the opportunity of taking part in any of the traditional Model UN conferences held each year. By downloading a special computer app, a wealth of material is available to teachers, including background information on topics of interest, briefing cards pertaining to individual countries, and guidelines for conducting simulated meetings of the UN General Assembly. In partnership with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Education Committee was pleased to report a successful exercise in December between students of Mt. Vernon High School and Woodlands High School of Greenburgh on the topic of Global Warming/Climate Change. In further support of this partnership, UNA-Westchester secured a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a special campaign titled The Road-to-Paris Project, which provides funding for UNA to engage educators in a train-the-trainer workshop with the goal of reaching even more students. Middle and high school teachers will receive professional development through this project and then return to their schools to engage students in the climate-change mini-simulation. Two schools have been identified to take part in this program during the current spring semester.

For the tenth consecutive year, the chapter brought its peace/art project, Peace Makes the World a Better Place, to third-grade classes in some of the 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 peace-making. With a view to making this successful project available to other chapters or groups who are interested in adopting it, we are putting a digital version on

the chapter website, with description and links to pictures used in the classes. From our resources, a classroom presentation may be prepared using a large poster board with pictures, or as a power-point presentation.

The Education Committee also had a display table and presenters at the annual conference of the Westchester-Lower Hudson Council for the Social Studies, in December. We had a variety of materials on hand to assist teachers in incorporating the United Nations into their social studies curriculum.

Nominations Committee

The 2016 slate required nominations for all five officers and four directors for the class of 2018 and one director for the class of 2017. Three directors will continue their terms through 2017. Two directors, Robina Singh and Jim Rapp, have decided to step down. We are most grateful for all their important work, particularly in the communications and education areas. We thank you both for your dedicated hard work.

The slate was accepted by the Board of Directors on March 3, 2016, will be presented to the membership in the newsletter, and will be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting on May 1, 2016. The slate is as follows:

OFFICERS, CLASS OF 2018:

President Marcia Brewster
Vice President Brenda L.G. Smith
Secretary Scott C. Monje
Treasurer David R. Finch
Nominations Marcia Wallace

DIRECTORS, CLASS OF 2018:

Myrna Anover
Mary Seward Downes
Joan Katen
Karen Rockwell El-Badry

DIRECTOR, CLASS OF 2017:

Victor Madubuko

The following directors will continue their terms until June 2017:

DIRECTORS, CLASS OF 2017 (continuing):

J. Yuhanna Edwards
Andrew Laub
Martha Perez
Lilli Schindler

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

Young Professionals Program

The Young Professionals Program (YPP), cochaired by Martha Perez and Andy Laub, has had a wonderful year of growth and outreach. The YPP remains very involved at the heart of UNA-Westchester's events. The group contributed substantially to the UN Day event by organizing a group of high school students to express the importance of addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a local level.

The YPP and UNA-Westchester also had an amazing partnership with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority sponsoring eleven students to participate in the Youth Assembly held at the United Nations on August 5–7, 2015. These eleven students from Westchester were able to attend an assembly focused on global development and fostering tomorrow's leaders with youth-led initiatives.

The Young Professionals Program is also focused on expanding, and we are working with UNA- Women's Young Professionals Program in New York City, some of whom were present at our International Women's Day event, as well as the UNA Southern New York State Division's YPP, who are hosting a global health summit on April 18 in New York City.

The YPP is excited about hosting career and networking events in the future, as well as more educational events to inspire the

community to become more involved in promoting change both locally and globally. We also plan to hold more events this year, particularly on climate change and strengthening global citizenship among youth. Please visit our link at unawestchester.org or e-mail questions to: yp.unawestchester@gmail.com for more information on how to become involved!

Finance

Dave Finch has continued as our loyal treasurer and kept us solvent. These were the finances for calendar year 2015:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Balance: January 1, 2015: | \$8,399 |
| 2015 Income: | 3,133 |
| 2015 Expenditures: | 3,803 |
| Balance: December 31, 2015: | 7,725 |
| Change: | – 674 |

Website and Social Media

We make every effort to keep our website current, so please be sure to pay a visit for all chapter-wide activities. It is a great source of information! We encourage our members to provide testimonials on how our chapter has helped you and your community. The testimonials will be showcased on our website. If you are interested, please email us: unawestchester@gmail.com. Visit www.unawestchester.org for announcements and updates. You can also connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube and join our mailing list.

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

Newsletter

Scott Monje has maintained a high standard for our newsletter, *The UNA-Westchester Global Connection*, which was issued three times during the past year. We may increase electronic distribution to save on costs during the coming year. If you would like to

contribute an article to the newsletter, send it to unawestchester@gmail.com.

Membership

The statistics for calendar year 2015 are as follows: On January 1, 2015, we had 149 members, of whom 34 were students. We gained 50 new members over the year, four of whom were returning after an absence. Over the year, we lost 31 members, some of whom died or moved away. On December 31, we had 164 members of whom 30 were students.

The Membership Committee developed a program to honor all members, with special recognition of 19 long-term members and 4 life members, as part of our celebration of the 70th anniversary of the UN at the 2015 annual meeting. In a month-by-month analysis of new members, it was found that 27 new members joined in the following month, May, in contrast to an average 1–6 in other months. Particular appreciation is given to Karen Rockwell El-Badry, intern Yein Kim, Joan Katen, the Program Committee, and Marcia Brewster for their work on this program.

An analysis of where members reside shows the largest cluster in the White Plains–Central Westchester area. A map with the number of members in each location has been developed. This can be used to determine venues for future meetings to serve or attract members. The survey also showed that 28 members live outside the county, almost 20% of the total.

Interns

We have benefitted greatly from a series of student interns over the past year. They include Yein Kim (Mercy College); Maricielo Gomez (Pace University), Faraj Haddad (Mercy College), and Sasha Baranov (Mercy College). These students helped organize volunteers, programs, and outreach for our program events,

kept the Website current, and assisted the president in a number of critical ways.

Conclusion

Thank you to the committee chairs who have contributed to this report. We invite more of our members to participate in our program, education, advocacy, and membership committees. Members, your association needs your contributions to help support the work of the United Nations. Please contact us with your ideas at unawestchester@gmail.com.

Board Members, Officers, and Committee Chairs

Marcia Brewster, President,
914-924-2460, mmbrewsterny@gmail.com
David R. Finch, Treasurer, 914-381-6347,
DavidRFinch@juno.com
Scott C. Monje, Secretary and Newsletter,
203-797-3465, smonje@scholastic.com
Marcia Wallace, Nominations Committee,
Membership Committee, 914- 681-0101,
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J. Yuhanna Edwards, Advocacy Cochair, 914-
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Lilli Schindler, Program Cochair, 917-553-
7295, schindler@un.org
Karen Rockwell El-Badry, Education Chair,
914-693-5308, rockwell150@aol.com
Robina Singh, Communications Chair, 914-
356-4184, robina.ny09@gmail.com
Brenda Smith, Partnerships Chair, 914-428-6008,
bsmith0825@aol.com
Young Professionals Program Cochairs:
Martha Perez, marthap1993@gmail.com
Andrew Laub, andydl321@verizon.net

Ex officio: Myrna Anover, Program Cochair,
George Garland, Jeanne Betsock Stillman.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (this can also be submitted on line at 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 | \$50 |
| <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 American Express

Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature _____

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

UNA-USA WESTCHESTER CHAPTER

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