

# UNA-Westchester Global Connection



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

<http://www.unawestchester.org>

February 2011

## *Coming Events for UNA-Westchester—Please Join Us!*

### February 11, 2011: Mid-Atlantic Conference/UNA Members' Day

This is the first UNA-USA Members Day at the United Nations following our strategic alliance with the United Nations Foundation. We encourage you to participate in helping advance the goal of informing Americans on the role of the UN in peace and security, human rights, and ending poverty.

The conference will include panels with notable speakers on “Energy and Climate Change,” “New Dimensions in Health, Gender, and Development,” “Africa’s Transformation in the 21st Century: Capturing Its Economic Dynamism,” and “Afghanistan: Is a Negotiated Settlement Possible?” A lunchtime panel on “Navigating Your Path toward a Successful Career in International Affairs” features speakers on careers in international development, international law, and international finance. It will be a good opportunity to meet friends and colleagues from different UNA chapters.

It will be held at UN HQ in New York City from 9 A.M. until 5 P.M. All UNA members need to register at: <http://www.unausa.org/membersday2011/register>

For information contact one of the cochairs, Jeanne Betsock Stillman or Meron Demisse, at [una@unasouthernny.org](mailto:una@unasouthernny.org) (tel: 914-478-3450); or George Garland, executive director of the conference: [gagarland@gmail.com](mailto:gagarland@gmail.com) (tel: 917-736-5388).

### March 8, 2011: 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day

UNA-Westchester will partner with the League of Women Voters and the Women's History Program at Sarah Lawrence College to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8. The theme is “Celebrating 100 Years of International Women's Day: Access to Education as the Key to Equality.” The program will take place at the Titsworth Lecture Hall at Sarah Lawrence in Bronxville and will begin at 6:00 P.M.

Invited speakers include: Priscilla Murolo and Rona Holub, Co-chairs of the Women's History Program; Ms. Nana-Fosu Randall, former UN senior officer and founder of Voices of African Mothers; and Tara Rosenblum, Emmy nominee and News Westchester Anchor. Details of the program will be sent out by e-mail, but please put it on your calendar.

For more information contact Claire Heskestad, 845-629-8971, [cheskestad@tufsd.org](mailto:cheskestad@tufsd.org), or Brenda Smith, 914-428- 6008, [bsmith0825@aol.com](mailto:bsmith0825@aol.com).

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*Editors: Marcia Brewster, Scott Monje*



*Letter from the President*

Dear Friends,

As we usher in the New Year, UNA-USA looks to its new alliance with the UN Foundation as an opportunity to revitalize our work and outreach. We are now the largest grassroots foreign policy organization in the US. Also, we were very pleased to welcome a number of interested members at our board meeting in January 2011. You are all invited to observe our meetings.

Our board has been very active since our last newsletter in October. Our UN Day event on October 24 at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains was exceptionally good, highlighting the outstanding work being done by Westchester residents to reduce poverty, improve maternal health and gender equality, and promote small businesses in developing countries. We received UN Day proclamations from Governor Paterson, and a number of mayors and town supervisors in honor of the 65th anniversary of the UN. I also joined other NY chapter presidents to meet Governor Paterson the next day at his office. This was arranged by Michele Lee Clarke-Ceres, who attended our UN Day event as the Governor’s UN Day Chair. Please visit our Web site for an article and photos: [www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org).

A number of your board members were present at the World AIDS Day event in White Plains on December 1, 2010, where we manned a booth and I had the honor to introduce Michele Clarke-Ceres as the keynote speaker.

Members of the board also played prominent roles at several different local events commemorating Human Rights Day on

December 10, 2010, as you can see from the article starting on page 3.

I encourage all our members to make every effort to attend the upcoming Mid- Atlantic Conference and Members Day at the UN on February 11. For the last two years, this has been an extremely interesting conference, with many students attending. This is the essence of our Association.

Our event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of International Women’s Day on March 8 is also going to be an exciting community event. We are partnering with Sarah Lawrence College’s Women’s History Program and the League of Women Voters of Westchester County. Details will be sent to you by e-mail.

Finally, we very much look forward to seeing you all at our annual meeting, scheduled for Sunday, May 15, at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains. Mark your calendars!  
*Marcia Brewster  
President, UNA-Westchester*

*Advocacy Corner*

As we enter a new year, I wish you all a happy, healthful, and peaceful 2011. A quick look around shows us a world in turmoil and upheaval. People yearn for peace, democracy, a voice in their governments, human rights, and the rule of law, be it international, national, or local. The people of the southern Sudan and Tunisia, for instance, want to use democratic voting to attain freedom and their human rights. That is exactly what the UN was created to provide—peace and respect for human rights in a world ruled by law.

The four areas that we will be advocating for in 2011 are all in keeping with the main goals of the United Nations. They are:

1. Continuing the funding of the work of the United Nations by the United States.

2. Supporting Human Rights and improving the operations of the Human Rights Council (of which the United States is now a member).
3. Supporting the ratification of international treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Law of the Sea Convention, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Treaty on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is very important for our organization to lobby the new incoming group of senators in favor of ratification. The New START treaty, approved in late December is a successful example of lobbying.
4. Supporting the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals, which would bring people out of poverty and improve livelihoods and development prospects

Our former Advocacy chair, Ms. Margaret (Molly) Bruce, continues her community outreach. The work of Ms. Bruce on the Human Rights Declaration is well known by our members, and Pace University students had the opportunity to listen to her give a talk on November 23.

Students of Pace's "Keys to Peace" class studied and answered questions on the Declaration of Human Rights before they had the privilege of hearing Ms. Bruce speak about its creation and adoption. Needless to say they were in awe of Ms. Bruce and listened very carefully to all she had to say.

She told of her time as a young student in Germany right before World War II, when what she experienced and saw awakened her interest in human rights. She suggested that the Declaration set a standard to which all nations can aspire, and that we should not dwell on what we have not achieved, but on what we can and should achieve. Ms. Bruce is a wonderful resource and representative of UNA-Westchester. She inspires us to advocate for the United Nations and what it has the potential to accomplish.

*Joan Katen*

### *In Case You Missed It: Human Rights Day, December 10, 2010*

The United Nations Association (UNA-USA), Westchester Chapter, contributed to a number of local events in recognition of Human Rights Day on Friday, December 10, 2010. A summary of these events is presented below.

UNA-Westchester board member Dr. Brenda L. G. Smith joined many individuals and several organizations on December 10 at the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Westchester County Human Rights Commission. According to Commissioner Mrs. Delores Scott Brathwaite, Esq., "The Westchester County Human Rights Commission has served more than 3,000 individuals and obtained more than \$1.2 million dollars in compensatory damages and an unquantifiable amount of equitable relief." She noted that the "mission and goals of the Commission are to work toward the elimination of bigotry, prejudice, and other forms of discrimination in this county."

Held at the Westchester Marriott, the theme was "A Day of Unity—A Day of Peace: Celebrating 10 Years of Service: 2000-2010." The honorary chairs for the event were Mrs. Ruby Dee, the renowned actress, whose career had spanned more than fifty years, including theater, radio, television, and movies, and Rabbi Emeritus Amiel Wohl, the founder of the Interreligious Council of New Rochelle, which "for the first time, brought together Christian and Jewish religious institutions."

The day began with an Interfaith Breakfast, at which the Reverend Dr. James A. Forbes, senior minister emeritus of Riverside Church, NYC, delivered the keynote address. Attendees then participated in two panel discussions: *Our Journey: Finding Unity in Community*, moderated by New York state senator Andrea Stewart Cousins, and *Stereotyping: Fact or Fiction? Removing the Barriers that Divide Us*, moderated by Alison E. Greene, Esq.

Another highlight was the Unity Luncheon and Awards Ceremony, with Ms. Lisa LaRocca of Channel 12 News as MC. UNA-Westchester board member Brenda Smith, introduced the keynote speaker, Mrs. Jacqueline Ogega, director of the Women's Mobilization Program at Religions for Peace at the United Nations. Honorees included: students from Woodlands, Harrison, and Ardsley high schools for winning the Donald N. Silverman Moot Court Competition; Ms. Jacqueline Ogega, Champion of Human Rights Award; the Reverend Dr. James A. Forbes, recipient of the Ossie Davis Lifetime Achievement Award; and Ms. Nicole Sheindlin, founder of Her Honor Mentoring supported by her stepmother, Judith Sheindlin (known to many as "Judge Judy").

Commissioner Brathwaite recognized UNA-Westchester as an ambassador of peace and unity. Special thanks were also extended to chapter president Marcia Brewster, in her absence, for her contribution.

On the same day, UNA-Westchester board member Karen Rockwell El-Badry and Education Committee member Audley Seymour-Foster were guests at the Human Rights Day celebration at School 23 in Yonkers. They were invited by a group of 45 students—one 7th-grade class plus 15 members of the school's History Club, comprising 7th- and 8th-graders. The Club, sponsored by Social Studies teacher Ms. Alvarez, had created a 15-minute film about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, combining footage from a UN documentary with pictures they had found themselves and narrated mostly by the students. They did a lot of research, included each article of the Declaration, covered the Millennium Development Goals, and incorporated the main points of the subject.

Our UNA participants were very impressed with the work of the students, inspired and directed by an excellent teacher. The project

resulted from a packet that UNA-Westchester had sent out to schools which was then passed on to this energetic teacher.

By the time the film had been shown, Karen and Audley had about 20 minutes to present the highlights of their remarks. Karen used a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt focusing on the importance of each individual and addressing the question, "Where do human rights begin?" (Close to home.) Audley, a member of the UN Singers, ended his talk by singing for them, "Let There Be Peace on Earth," which has become a sort of theme song of the UN.

A videographer filmed the event for the local Yonkers channel (75), and included after-class interviews by a man from the Board of Education with Karen, Audley, and three of the students who created the film. The film and interviews were shown for two weeks on channel 75, and it is on the school's Web site. This is a very positive result of the work of our Education Committee!

Also on December 10, board member and Education Committee chair Marcia Wallace attended the annual conference of the Westchester-Lower Hudson Council for the Social Studies at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains. She brought UNA materials and set up a booth, and was assisted by Martin Rubenstein and Abel Lushiku. The materials displayed included UN publications, videos and handouts (e.g. "60 Ways the UN Helps," Model UN, Web site references, UNA-USA brochures, and information on the Westchester essay contest). UNA-Westchester had an excellent location for its table, and the UN flag was displayed on the wall above the table. So we had terrific visibility, although only about 50-60 of the 200 attendees actually visited the various booths.

Some of the teachers who visited were looking for all types of material on human rights, conflict resolution, health, children, women, climate change, etc. Marcia Wallace made a

concerted effort to promote our essay contest, so nearly everyone who came by got the necessary information. A few people asked about Model UN programs in Westchester, but unfortunately detailed information is not readily available in a centralized location. Our committee is making an effort this year to track the schools that hold these Model UN programs throughout the county. Anyone with information should contact Marcia Wallace at [mtswal@optonline.net](mailto:mtswal@optonline.net).

While UNA-Westchester did not have its own separate event on Human Rights Day in 2010, participation in these joint activities is very valuable for our outreach to the community.

### *A Follow-up on Climate Change and IPCC*

Regular readers of the *Global Connection* may recall an earlier article on the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, a scientific body that, along with Al Gore, was awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize (“A Nobel Prize for Peace: The IPCC,” February 2008). Created in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, the IPCC brings together thousands of climate experts to review research on climate change and issue periodic reports—reports that are “policy-relevant but not prescriptive”—on the state of the field. The IPCC thus sets the scientific foundation for international climate policy. Climate change has wide-ranging consequences, including changes in weather patterns and the availability of water, and can be expected to be a source of conflict in future years.<sup>1</sup> With each report, the IPCC’s

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<sup>1</sup> See John Podesta and Peter Odgen, “The Security Implications of Climate Change,” *Washington Quarterly* 31:1 (Winter 2007–08): 115–38; Kurt M. Campbell, ed., *Climatic Cataclysm: The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Climate Change* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Joshua W. Busby, *Climate Change and National Security: An Agenda for Action*, Council Special Report No. 32 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations,

confidence has grown regarding both the fact of global warming and the role of human activity as a source of it. In its 2007 report, the IPCC stated that the evidence for these trends was “unequivocal.”

The IPCC and climate change have been back in the news, not because of anything the panel has done, but because of politically effective accusations made by climate skeptics. First, in November 2009, shortly before the Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen, climate-change skeptics hacked into the computers of the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia, stealing thousands of e-mail messages and documents. They then charged that the documents revealed that climate scientists had concealed data, exaggerated the evidence of global warming, and sought to prevent the publication of papers by skeptics. The press devoted particular attention to Prof. Michael E. Mann’s use of the word “trick” when discussing part of his methodology in a personal e-mail.<sup>2</sup> The “trick”—used for a graph produced for the IPCC in 1999—involved combining indirect temperature readings (derived from tree-ring data) for older eras with direct temperature readings for the period since 1960 (when tree rings inexplicably stopped reacting to known temperature changes). Mann was using the word “trick” in the informal sense of a clever solution, he had always been open about the technique, but his detractors took the term to be evidence of deception.

“Climategate” resulted in a public uproar and was a major blow to the credibility of climate science. Attorney General Kenneth T.

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November 2007). Note, for example, that the conflict in Darfur, Sudan, began as a dispute over shrinking water resources. In Pakistan, flooding has undermined support for the government at a time when it is under challenge from Islamist rebels.

<sup>2</sup> “Michael E. Mann: A Scientist in the Crosshairs of Climate-Change Denial,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 66:6 (November–December 2010): 1–7.

Cuccinelli II of Virginia demanded that the University of Virginia produce documents for an investigation of whether Mann had engaged in fraud and misuse of state funds while doing climate research there. A state judge rejected Cuccinelli's subpoena in August 2010 as lacking justification, but he issued a revised subpoena in October and continues to pursue the case.

The scientists at East Anglia and elsewhere have countered that the documents do not support their critics' charges. Subsequently, reviews of the controversy were conducted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Meteorological Association, the American Geophysical Union, the British Parliament, and twice by Pennsylvania State University (where Mann is currently located). All of them found in favor of Mann, the CRU, and climate science generally, although some said that the unit could have been more forthcoming with information and could have had a more tolerant attitude toward its critics.

While the "Climategate" controversy still flourished, other charges were made directly against the IPCC and its 2007 report. One found its statement that the glaciers of the Himalayas (the source of many of Asia's major rivers) would melt by 2035 to be exaggerated; that is, although the glaciers are melting, the process will probably take longer than that. Another said the report had overstated the potential impact of global warming on fish catches and that there was a tendency to emphasize negative potential effects of global warming and to downplay positive ones (such as longer growing seasons in northern latitudes).

These charges had more foundation than the original "Climategate" accusations. On the other hand, they dealt with a few specific details (in a roughly 3,000-page document), and they did not challenge the fundamental propositions. Because errors had found their

way into the report, in March 2010 UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and IPCC chairman Rajendra K. Pachauri asked the InterAcademy Council (IAC), an Amsterdam-based association of the world's scientific academies, to review the panel's processes and procedures.

The IAC report, issued in August 2010, called the IPCC's process successful overall. Nevertheless, it recommended a number of significant changes regarding leadership, the assured participation of top scientists, adaptability, and openness. The report called, for example, for the establishment of an executive committee and a full-time executive director to assure an ongoing decision-making capability between meetings of the full committee. At the same time, it recommended term limits that would essentially restrict top leaders to the time necessary for a single report.

Regarding the review process itself, the report called for a stricter enforcement of existing rules. The IPCC's reports should clearly acknowledge and document legitimate scientific disagreements. Working groups should strive for greater consistency in the way they characterize uncertainty and fully describe the evidence that supports their conclusions. Also, the IPCC should implement a communications strategy that would allow for transparency and for prompt, authoritative, and thoughtful responses to critics.

The IPCC discussed the IAC report at its plenary session in October 2010. It accepted some of the recommendations immediately, including a mandate to assess thoroughly the quality of available research, and agreed to form committees to review other recommendations before the next plenary session, scheduled for May 2011. The latter included recommendations for management reform.

The implementation of the IAC's recommendations should help bolster the IPCC's credibility. The next IPCC report is expected in 2014. Some climate scientists hope the reforms will move the discussion out of the domain of polarized extremes.<sup>3</sup>

Fundamentally different conclusions about the prospects of climate change, however, are not likely to be among the results.

In the meantime, climate change remains a charged political issue, with some U.S. politicians denying that a scientific consensus exists. The incoming chair of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Rep. Ralph Hall (R-Tex.), has suggested that "Climategate" has raised doubts about the quality of climate science and he plans to hold hearings on the subject. The 87-year-old Hall, a strong supporter of oil and gas development, insists that he is not a climate skeptic. The hearings, however, will be led by Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), an outspoken critic of climate change. In addition, Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga.) will chair the committee's Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee. He has stated, "I very much would like to debunk this myth that there is a scientific consensus that we have human-induced climate change." Scientific supporters of the concept hope that open hearings will have the effect of clearing the air on global warming.<sup>4</sup>

*Scott C. Monje*

<sup>3</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, "Review Finds Flaws in U.N. Climate Panel Structure," *New York Times*, August 31, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Robin Bravender, "Ralph Hall to Chair Science Panel," *Politico.com*, December 7, 2010; Lauren Morello, "New Science Panel Chairman to Probe 'Quality' of Climate Science," *New York Times*, January 6, 2011.

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

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Directors: Doris Benson, Karen Rockwell El-Badry. *Ex officio*: Margaret (Molly) Bruce, Phil Reynolds, John Robinson, Jeanne Betsock Stillman, Catherine White.

### ***All Members Please Note: Electronic version of this Newsletter***

For budgetary reasons, we will have to reduce the number of hard copy newsletters we send out in the future.

Any member who is willing to receive this newsletter by e-mail, please inform our secretary, Scott Monje, [smonje@scholastic.com](mailto:smonje@scholastic.com).

We will follow this up with an e-mail to you all and a request at the Annual Meeting on May 15.

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

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