

UNA-Westchester Global Connection



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

<http://www.unawestchester.org>

May 2011

Come to our Annual General Meeting, 2010–2011! Celebrate Spring!

“Facing the Crises of Our Times: The United States and the United Nations in the 21st Century”

Sunday, May 15, 2011; 3:00–5:00 P.M.

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



Keynote Speaker: Gillian Sorensen

**Senior Adviser at the United Nations Foundation
Former UN Assistant Secretary-General for External
Relations**

Discussion Moderator:

Reverend Carol A. Huston, Chair, Westchester
Coalition on Worldwide Poverty and AIDS

Program Highlights:

- Brief Annual Meeting (Marcia Brewster, President, presiding)
- Awards to Westchester High School Students UNA-USA Essay Contest Winners
- Special Service Award to Mr. Demetrios Mihailidis, Mount Vernon High School
- Recognition of PeaceKeepers of Mt. Vernon

The program will be followed by a question-and-answer session and reception. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact: Brenda Smith, bsmith0825@aol.com, (914) 428-6008, or Claire Heskestad, claryenne@aol.com, (845) 629-8971.

***Directions:** The church is located near Exit 25 of the Hutchinson River Parkway: 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: Marcia Brewster, Scott Monje



Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

The major portion of our May *Global Connection* is taken up with my first Annual Report, so I will keep this letter brief. In fact, 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 15, at the beautiful Community Unitarian Church in White Plains. Gillian Sorensen is a great speaker, as many of you know, and she will explore the future of U.S.-UN relations under the current U.S. Congress. Please join the discussion and bring your votes, your ideas, and your friends to our celebration of spring.

I hope to see you there or to receive your support for our slate of Board Candidates (please see page 3).

—*Marcia Brewster*

Biodiversity Summit Reaches Accord

Biological diversity, or biodiversity as it is popularly known, is the term given to the variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms. The biodiversity we see today is the result of billions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes, and increasingly by the influence of humans. It forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we so fully depend. The diversity is often understood in terms of the wide variety of plants, animals, and microorganisms. So far, about 1.75 million species have been identified, mostly small creatures such as insects. Scientists reckon that there are actually around 13 million species, though estimates range from three to 100 million. Biodiversity also includes genetic differences within each species—for example, among the varieties of crops, breeds, and livestock.

Another aspect of biodiversity is the variety of ecosystems, such as those that occur in deserts, forests and wetlands, mountains, lakes, rivers and agricultural landscapes. Living creatures, including humans, form a community in each ecosystem, interacting with one another and with the air, water, and soil around them.

The United Nations celebrated the year 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). It was a celebration of life on Earth and the value of biological diversity for our lives. The world was being challenged to take action to safeguard the variety of life on Earth. It is important to realize that we depend on this diversity of life to provide us with the food, fuel, medicine, and other essentials we cannot live without. Yet this rich diversity is being lost because of unrestrained human activities. This impoverishes us all and weakens the ability of the living systems to resist growing threats such as climate change. IYB was thus a good opportunity to increase understanding of the vital role that biodiversity plays in sustaining life on Earth.

Some 18,000 participants representing the 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and their partners met for the Biodiversity Summit in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan. Governments agreed on a package of measures that would ensure that the ecosystems of the planet could continue to sustain human well-being into the future. The meeting achieved its three interlinked goals: adoption of a new ten-year strategic plan to guide international and national efforts to save biodiversity and meet the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity; a resource mobilization strategy that would support a substantial increase in current levels of official development assistance in support of biodiversity; and a new international protocol on access to, and sharing of, the benefits from the use of the genetic resources of the planet.

Parties to the Convention adopted the Strategic Plan (2011–2020) or the “Aichi Targets.” Among the goals, to be achieved by 2020, are:

- To reduce by at least half the rate of loss of natural habitats, including forests, and where feasible to bring the rate close to zero;
- To conserve at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, through well-connected systems of protected areas;
- To restore at least 15% of degraded areas; and
- To make special efforts to reduce the pressures faced by coral reefs.

The “Aichi Targets” will serve as the overarching framework on biodiversity, not only for the biodiversity-related conventions, but also for the entire United Nations system. Each Party agreed to translate this framework into a national biodiversity strategy and action plans within two years.

Parties also agreed to a substantial increase in the level of financial resources in support of implementation of the Convention. Representatives of 34 bilateral and multilateral donor agencies agreed to translate the Plan into their respective development assistance priorities. Some financial support for implementation of the Convention was announced. The prime minister of Japan announced a contribution of \$2 billion in financing, and the minister of environment announced the establishment of a Japan Biodiversity Fund. Additional resources were announced by France, the European Union, and Norway. Some \$110 million were mobilized in support of projects under the CBD LifeWeb Initiative (<http://www.cbd.int/lifeweb/>) aimed at enhancing the protected-area agenda (Source: CBD).

—Narinder Kakar

Nominations for Board of Directors

In accordance with Article IX of the By-Laws, the Nominating Committee presents the following slate for consideration at the Annual General Meeting:

Two year terms:

President:	Marcia M. Brewster
Vice President:	Narinder Kakar
Secretary:	Scott C. Monje
Treasurer:	David R. Finch
Board Class of '12:	Audley Seymour-Foster
Board Class of '14:	Brenda L.G. Smith
Chair, Nominating Committee:	Marcia Wallace
Nominating Committee Members:	Peter Moock Patrick Sciarratta

Résumés of the new candidates will be available at the Annual Meeting. If you would like to nominate additional candidates, please contact David Finch, Chair of the Committee (DavidRFinch@juno.com, tel. 914-381-6347).

Advocacy Corner

Members of your Advocacy Committee joined a conference call with Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Dr. Robert Orr. The call addressed the challenges facing the UN and how the organization has chosen to meet them head-on, as in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. One of the challenges we face is the assault on UN funding. Some in our Congress would have the United States financially support only those projects that they deem to directly benefit U.S. interests. This would be a blow to the organization. Dr. Orr encouraged us to lobby for the continuation of the present method of UN funding. He also said we must lobby those of our representatives who agree with us, just as much as those who don't, so that our friends feel supported and will be able to work harder to keep the funding for the UN. I have included in this issue of the *Global Connection* a letter from Rep. Nita Lowey in

response to my letter in which I ask her to continue her high level of support for the United Nations. Please call or write your representatives in support of the continuation of the present method of UN funding.

—*Joan Katen*

March 15, 2011

Dear Ms. Katen:

Thank you for contacting me to express your support for the United Nations (UN). I appreciate having the benefit of your views, and I welcome the opportunity to respond.

As the most prosperous nation in the world, it is imperative for the United States to engage actively with the UN. By appropriately funding the UN and other multilateral organizations that support global cooperation and security, the U.S. maintains and promotes successful, peaceful relationships around the world.

As Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, I will continue to fight for increased funding for the UN and monitor future developments with our shared interest in mind.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts with me. If you would like more information on this and other issues, or to sign up for my regular e-newsletter, visit my website at www.lowey.house.gov. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help you in any way.

Sincerely,
[Nita]
Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress

Westchester High School Students to Receive UNA-Westchester Awards

Four local students will be awarded prizes for their excellence in essays on the United Nations that they submitted in the 2011 UNA-Westchester High School Essay Contest. Awards will be presented to first-prize winner Olesya Bylim, a 12th-grade student at Sleepy Hollow High School; second-prize winner Jada Smith, a 10th-grade student at Mount Vernon High School; and two students who tied for third place, Nadia Floyd, a 10th-grade student at Mount Vernon High School, and Ryan Malpass, a 10th-grade student at Dobbs Ferry High School. The awards are a \$300 first prize, a \$100 second prize, and a \$50 third prize. They will be presented at the UNSA-Westchester annual meeting, to be held on Sunday, May 15, at the Unitarian Church on Rosedale Avenue, White Plains, from 3:00 to 5:00. Join us in celebrating this achievement.

The essay contest originated in 1986 as a national UNA high school essay contest on the United Nations to inspire students to engage global issues and the work of the UN through scholarship and critical thinking. This year, in a departure from past practice, the national UNA organization did not sponsor an essay contest. The Westchester chapter determined to offer an opportunity to Westchester students in order to continue the tradition, which we consider to be instrumental in motivating our young students' interest in the work of the United Nations. The topic of this year's contest was "Child Soldiers: What Can Be Done?" The essays were to address the causes, the problems, and measures to be taken by the United States and international organizations to find a solution. We are proud of the students who competed in this contest and take special pride in making these UNA-Westchester awards to our contest winners. Congratulations!

—*Marcia Wallace*

UNA-USA Westchester Chapter 2010-2011 Annual Report (July 1-June 30)

Introduction

This has been a momentous year for UNA-USA, in light of the conclusion of its alliance with the United Nations Foundation and its sister organization, the Better World Fund (BWF). The alliance joins the financial stability and advocacy expertise of the UN Foundation with the traditions, credibility, and grassroots membership of UNA-USA. We are now the largest grassroots foreign policy organization in the United States.

The BWF encourages the engagement of U.S.-based corporations, individuals, and NGOs in the work of the UN. As UNA-USA has similar goals in building support for the work of the UN, BWF is its natural partner within the UN Foundation network.

Changes to UNA-USA at the national level are significant, with UNA becoming a division of the Better World Fund, and being administered by an Executive Director hired by that group. At the chapter level, the changes will be negligible. UNA chapters and divisions will function just as they have before, and they will continue to have the autonomy and freedom of action to which they are accustomed.

This new alliance aims to support peace, cooperation, and development through the United Nations. We hope you will join us in greeting this new collaborative effort in the name of a better understanding of the UN and the ideals that it works for.

With regard to U.S.-UN relations, the very positive changes in the attitude of the U.S. government towards the United Nations up until late 2010 were being threatened by mid-2011. Thus, an intensification of our advocacy efforts will be needed to maintain the momentum of the 2009-2010 period. We can only hope that, with the support of UNA-

USA and its 133 chapters, we will be able to maintain U.S. support of the United Nations.

UNA-USA National

Ed Elmendorf, former chair of the Council of Chapters and Divisions, had been acting as interim director of UNA-USA until the March 15, 2011, appointment of Patrick Madden as executive director of UNA-USA. We look forward to meeting Patrick either at one of our board meetings or that of the Southern New York Division.

UNA-Westchester Board

At the end of June 2010, Phil Reynolds resigned his post as president because of his impending move to Annapolis, Maryland. Vice President Marcia Brewster took over the final year of Phil's presidential term, and Narinder Kakar, who represents the University of Peace and the IUCN at the UN, took up the position of vice president in Marcia's place. We welcomed a new board member, Claire Heskestad, who teaches history at Sleepy Hollow High School and who agreed to be co-chair (with Brenda Smith) of the Program Committee.

The board has been very active this year. In addition to three main members' programs (October, March, and May), we participated in community activities such as AIDS Day (Dec. 1), Human Rights Day (Dec 10), and international careers programs at Bergen Community College and Purchase College. Westchester Human Rights Commissioner Delores Brathwaite recognized UNA-Westchester as an ambassador of peace and unity on Human Rights Day.

The board meets at the White Plains YMCA (250 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains) at 7:30 P.M. on the first Monday of each month. UNA-Westchester members are welcome to attend as observers.

Advocacy

Joan Katen, an adjunct professor of political science at Pace University, took up the position of chair of the Advocacy Committee in 2010. Molly Bruce continued to support the committee through her experience related to the UNA-USA advocacy agenda.

The Advocacy Committee encouraged UNA-Westchester members to contact their representatives in Congress regarding support to current issues related to the UN. Sample letters and contact information for our representatives in the U.S. Congress were provided to UNA members, who could send them out or modify them.

The newsletter now contains an “Advocacy Corner” to keep our members informed of the current issues before the U.S. Congress and endeavor to inspire them to take action.

Joan Katen and Molly Bruce did a careful analysis of the U.S. record on human rights, because the periodic review of the U.S. as a member of the Human Rights Council was coming up. The report on the pros and cons of U.S. actions vis-à-vis human rights was submitted to UNA-USA National, and was much appreciated. A warm thank-you letter was sent to our chapter, indicating that parts of our report were used for the UNA-USA submission to the Department of State.

Molly Bruce continues to be a wonderful resource for advocacy for the UN. During the period she spoke to students at Pace University, and they were thrilled to learn from her how the Declaration of Human Rights took shape.

We recently received the national Advocacy Agenda and are focusing on gaining support for U.S. funding of the UN, as there is a threat now to UN funding from bills put before the U.S. Congress. For instance, the new chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee wants to make UN Funding

voluntary. This issue is dealt with in the opinion piece by Scott Monje in this issue. The committee will have petitions at our annual meeting in support of UN funding.

Program

The Program Committee was ably cochaired by Brenda Smith and Claire Heskestad, who took over the responsibility from Doris Benson in May 2010. The committee organized, sponsored, and/or participated in the planning of several activities:

Sunday, October 24—Our *UN Day* event was held at the Community Unitarian Church, White Plains, NY, on the theme “Meeting the Millennium Development Goals: Westchester’s Contributions.” This excellent event featured: Dr. Susan Stukes, former UN representative for the Links, Inc., who spoke on maternal health and her organization’s work to introduce the Maama Kit (a clean and safe delivery care kit) in Uganda; Hon. J. Yuhanna Edwards, who spoke on gender equality and his work in Rwanda; and Doris Benson, who presented a video of her personal efforts and projects sponsored by Rotary International in Madagascar and Zambia.

Friday, December 10—*Human Rights Day*: USA-Westchester contributed to a number of local events in recognition of Human Rights Day on December 10, 2010. Board member Dr. Brenda L. G. Smith joined many individuals and several organizations to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Westchester County Human Rights Commission. On the same day, UNA-Westchester board member Karen Rockwell El-Badry and Education Committee member Audley Seymour-Foster participated at the Human Rights Day celebration at School 23 in Yonkers. On the same day, Education Committee chair Marcia Wallace set up a booth at the annual conference of the Westchester–Lower Hudson Council for the Social Studies in White Plains. She distributed

UNA materials and was assisted by Martin Rubenstein and Abel Lushiku.

Tuesday, March 8—*International Women's Day* at Sarah Lawrence College: Co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters and others, this event celebrated the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. Speakers included: Dr. Rona Holub on the connection between Sarah Lawrence College and Women's Day; Tara Rosenblum on an award-winning report about international custody issues for women from Yemen; and Nana Fosu-Randall on her experience in the UN Peacekeeping Forces. UNA-Westchester president Marcia Brewster moderated the discussion. A reception followed.

Wednesday, April 13—*International Career Day* at Purchase College, SUNY: UNA-Westchester vice president Narinder Kakar presented international careers in the UN.

Sunday, May 15—*Annual Meeting* at the Community Unitarian Church, White Plains: The keynote speaker will be Gillian Sorensen, former assistant secretary-general of the UN and adviser to the UN Foundation, on the issue of the importance of U.S. support for the UN. The discussion will be moderated by Reverend Carol Huston. A short annual meeting will be held, and awards will be presented to students who won the high school essay contest and to long-term supporter of the UN and UNA, Mr. Demetrios Mihailidis. "Mr. M" is adviser to the United Nations Club at Mt. Vernon High School and has partnered with our chapter for years to educate students on the history, achievements, and continuing role of the United Nations in today's society as well as to create an interactive experience to personalize the UN organization for them. UNA-Westchester will also recognize the PeaceKeepers organization of Mt. Vernon for its work.

A reception and refreshments will follow the program.

Please come out and celebrate spring and UNA-Westchester on May 15 from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. Be inspired and enjoy the fellowship of like-minded internationalists. And please bring a friend or two!

Education

Marcia Wallace continued in her role as Education Committee chair with members Lee Bloom, Asha Castleberry, Claire Heskestad, Audley Foster, Elizabeth Lloyd, Abel Lushiku, Karen Rockwell El-Badry, and Brenda Smith.

We mourn the passing of long-time committee member Edith Segall, who died in early 2011. We miss her already.

In October 2010 information about UN Day, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Websites, and the essay contest was mailed to 96 Westchester middle and high schools and to 46 superintendants of schools.

On Human Rights Day (December 10), the committee had a booth at the Westchester Social Studies Conference, with information about the UN and UNA. Information was distributed on a wide range of topics to about 50 teachers. Karen Rockwell and Audley Foster participated in the Human Rights Day program at Yonkers School 23.

In early March, Councilman J. Yuhanna Edwards of Mount Vernon presented a proposal, conceived with Audley Foster and Demetrios Mihailidis ("Mr. M."), to develop a "UN Day in Mount Vernon" in October 2011. This would celebrate the diverse nationalities in Mount Vernon and their capacity to coexist peacefully. The board agreed to the proposal, and sent a letter of support (not financial) to the superintendant of the Mount Vernon School District.

In April, with support of the board and in the absence of a national contest, the committee sponsored a high school essay contest on the

subject of child soldiers. Winners of the contest will be presented with awards at the annual meeting in May.

The Yonkers third-grade program under Karen Rockwell's leadership continues its efforts to teach third-graders about the UN and peace. The Mt. Vernon project for ninth-graders has scheduled its trip to the UN for May 12. We have made reservations for the tour, and Mr. M. is preparing the students and making other arrangements.

The committee members continue to seek ways to interest Westchester schools in including UN topics in their curricula. Although we cannot identify which schools are doing what, we are satisfied that there are a number of programs of a global nature.

A national online conversation on education has been initiated by June Gorman, chair of the CCD Education Committee, to identify existing programs and find commonality and mutual support. June Gorman's focus is on strengthening UNA support for Model UN and for efforts in human rights teaching.

Young Professionals for International Cooperation (YPIC)

UNA-Westchester has lost its YPIC leadership and is eagerly looking for young professionals to participate in the programs of UNA-Westchester, as well as in the activities of YPIC in New York City.

Web Site

Our Web site (www.unawestchester.org) is a critical element of our networking and outreach, but we are looking for a new Webmaster to assist us. In the interim, we have been assisted by Camille Boothe in keeping the Web site up to date.

Newsletter

Marcia Brewster and Scott Monje have maintained a high standard for our newsletter, the *Global Connection*, which was issued

three times during the past year. The newsletter is our main link with our members. We may increase electronic distribution to save on costs during the coming year. Please send contributions for the newsletter to Scott Monje at smonje@scholastic.com.

Membership

In 2010 our membership remained steady at around 215. We have been trying to recruit Westchester-based members of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (i.e., retired UN staff) to join us. We need assistance with our membership drive, and volunteers are encouraged to speak to Marcia Brewster or Narinder Kakar with their ideas.

Finance

Dave Finch has continued as our loyal treasurer and kept us solvent through good times and bad. These were the finances for calendar year 2010:

- Opening Balance	\$11,341
- Total 2010 Income	6,860
- Total 2010 Expenditure	6,804
- End-of-Year Balance	<u>11,397</u>
- Net 2010 Change	56

Finances in 2010 were in better balance than in 2009, with some board members and others making generous contributions to the treasury, which are critical for UNA-Westchester to maintain its activities.

Conclusion

As I complete my first year as president of your association, I thank you all, especially the board, for your support and active cooperation. For those of you who have not served on the board and who value the United Nations, I urge you to participate in one of our committees. I look forward to continuing to work with this incredibly dedicated group of people as we face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the UN, the UNA-USA, and the UN Foundation.

Sleepy Hollow Students Attend Peace Bell Equinox Ceremony at UN HQ

Thirteen students from Sleepy Hollow High School, representing Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Iran, Indonesia, and the United States, attended the Peace Bell ceremony celebrating the Equinox at UN headquarters in New York City on Sunday, March 20. Accompanied by Claire Heskestad, Model UN Club adviser, and Leana Peltier, adviser to Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Responsibility (SPEAR), the students were given a private tour of the General Assembly building, where they learned about the involvement of the United Nations around the world, observed works created by international artists, and stood in the General Assembly hall. Following a dinner where they listened to a presentation by Barbara Herlain Hillary, the first African-American woman to reach both the North Pole and the South Pole, students attended the ceremony in the Rose Garden, by the East River. They joined in a minute of silence for the victims of Japan's earthquake and tsunami, as well as for the civilians caught in the conflict in Libya.

Presenters read messages from around the world and acknowledged the various organizations and individuals who actively contribute to increasing the awareness of environmental issues worldwide. Speakers included Aye Aye Thant, daughter of former UN Secretary-General U Thant, as well as Solange Muller, daughter of former Assistant-Secretary-General Robert Muller. Music was provided by the Tarumi Violinists, who helped ring the bell at exactly 7:21 P.M. The event was sponsored by UNESCO and the Earth Society Foundation. The UN is celebrating 2011 as the International Year of Forests as well as the International Year of Youth with the theme of "dialogue and mutual understanding." The Sleepy Hollow students were acknowledged for their presence at the ceremony, an event that gave them a better

understanding of the United Nations' many duties and responsibilities. Funding for the trip was provided by the United Nations Association, Southwestern Connecticut Chapter (tour) and the United Nations Association of Connecticut (dinner).

—*Claire Heskestad*

Opinion: The New Congress, Budgets, and the United Nations

This January the Republican Party took the reins of the House of Representatives and established a new set of priorities in that half of the U.S. Congress. The new leaders have placed special emphasis on austerity as a way to deal with growing federal budget deficits and debt. In addition, some Republicans bear a skepticism, or even outright hostility, toward international engagement and multilateral institutions. They appear to have given little thought to how easily their approach could backfire.

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida assumed the chair of the Committee on Foreign Relations and quickly established UN reform as one of her priorities. In particular, she seeks both to ingrain transparency and accountability in UN operations and to assure that UN activities advance U.S. interests and values. To these ends, Ros-Lehtinen has proposed, for the immediate term, withholding funds until the institution conforms to U.S. preferences and, for the longer term, shifting funding from an assessed basis (according to each member state's ability to pay) to a voluntary basis.¹ Thus, Washington would decide how much it would contribute to the UN and how the UN could spend it.

It is in the interest of the United States to foster international cooperation, which is hardly compatible with compelling a

¹ "Ros-Lehtinen Opening Statement at Hearing on UN Reform with Ambassador Rice," April 7, 2011, http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press_display.asp?id=1781.

multinational institution to adhere to one member's partisan preferences. Apart from that, however, the proposal establishes a peculiar precedent. If the United States can insist that the UN conform itself to its preferences, so can other countries or groups of countries. What, then, if the United States withdraws its funding and another state or group takes up the slack? Will the international community adhere to U.S. preferences or follow those of the new funders? Might Washington's influence wane to the point of irrelevance?

It is worth noting here that another Republican initiative with implications for foreign affairs is working its way through Congress. Rep. Paul Ryan proposed a budget for fiscal year 2012, which the House of Representatives passed on April 15. (It has little prospect of being enacted as is, but it may well influence the final budget.) Ryan's proposals for cutting and restructuring Medicare and Medicaid while also cutting taxes have garnered the most attention. Under his plan, however, government spending on all aspects of government other than Social Security and health care (i.e., defense, foreign affairs, road building, everything), as a portion of GDP, would be cut by more than 70% over the next 40 years (from 12% of GDP to 3.5%).² British financial commentator Martin Wolf has predicted that the plan—if actually followed—would lead to the collapse of nearly all government functions.³ The bright side of this scenario, of course, is that the loss of influence in the United Nations would be the least of our worries. Over the long term, it certainly leaves little room for any subtle manipulation that Ros-Lehtinen might have in mind or for much of anything else.

² "Long-Term Analysis of Budget Proposal by Chairman Ryan," (Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, April 5, 2011), <http://www.cbo.gov>. Ryan does not specify how this will happen.

³ Martin Wolf, "The Radical Right and the US State," *Financial Times*, April 12, 2011.

The importance of dealing with deficits and debts is indisputable. The issue has implications for both domestic and foreign affairs. The problem has been mounting for more than 40 years (with the exception of the last years of the Clinton administration) and has been exacerbated in the past decade by ill-considered tax cuts, unfunded wars, and a major economic crisis. Reducing government demand before the recovery of consumer and corporate demand, however, is counterproductive and could drive the economy back down (as happened in 1937). Identifying the right moment to introduce austerity measures is an honest area of debate. But undermining the government's foreign and domestic functions in the name of further tax cutting is short-sighted. The U.S. tax burden is already lower than it was under George W. Bush—the lowest, in fact, in 60 years—and lower than in most other developed countries.⁴ It is also worth noting that foreign aid—the only thing most people can agree on when it comes to finding something to cut—actually constitutes less than 1% of the U.S. federal budget. Finally, failing to remain engaged in foreign affairs will cost more in the long run as problems are left to fester and spread. And engagement through the United Nations is one of the most cost-effective ways to go.⁵

—*Scott C. Monje*

⁴ "U.S. Tax Burden at Lowest Point in Years," UPI, May 11, 2010; "Trends in Federal Tax Revenues and Rates," Testimony by Douglas W. Elmendorf, Director of the Congressional Budget Office, before the Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate, December 2, 2010; <http://www.cbo.gov>.

⁵ See, for example, "A Comparative Evaluation of United Nations Peacekeeping," Testimony by James Dobbins, Rand Corporation, before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, June 13, 2007.

Mount Vernon PeaceKeepers to Receive Recognition

At its annual meeting on Sunday, May 15, UNA-Westchester will recognize the PeaceKeepers of Mount Vernon for their efforts to eliminate social problems that lead to community conflicts. The PeaceKeepers of Mount Vernon is part of a national organization, PeaceKeepers Global Initiative (<http://www.thepeacekeepers.info>), formed by Capt. Dennis Muhammad, that specializes in improving relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve and in teaching youth how to respect themselves, people in authority, and the general community. The PeaceKeepers pursue a Community Action Plan designed to help keep the peace in a community that is plagued by crime and gun violence by recruiting, training, and organizing men to protect, respect, and control their communities. Comprising more than 270 men in Mount Vernon, the group is also forming an organization in Yonkers. Russell Simmons, a well-known entrepreneur, is a member of the national PeaceKeepers organization. Mr. Lowes Moore, Executive Director, Mount Vernon Boys and Girls Club, is chairman of the Lower Westchester branch.

—*Brenda Smith*

Board Members, Officers, and Chairs

Marcia Brewster, President, Westchester Chapter, and Vice President, SNY Division, 914-924-2460, mmbrewsterny@aol.com

Narinder Kakar, Vice President and Membership, 212-286-1076, nkakar@upeace.org

David R. Finch, Treasurer and Nominating, 914-381-6347, DavidRFinch@juno.com

Scott C. Monje, Secretary and Newsletter, 203-797-3465, smonje@scholastic.com

Lee Bloom, Southern NY State Division, 914-834-5203, LeeHBloom@aol.com

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Brenda Smith, Program Cochair, 914-428-6008, bsmith0825@aol.com

Marcia Wallace, Education and Youth, 914-681-0101, mtswal@optonline.net

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

Our Mission: The UNA-USA is dedicated to educating, inspiring, and mobilizing Americans to support the principles and vital work of the United Nations, strengthening the United Nations system, promoting constructive United States leadership in that system, and achieving the goals of the UN Charter.

Our Vision: A world in which humanity is spared the scourge of war, human rights are honored, the natural environment is protected, and the United States is a constructive member of the United Nations for the well-being of all humankind.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

_____ 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:

- Westchester Chapter \$ _____
- National Office \$ _____
- Total enclosed \$ _____
- My company matches employee contributions. (My company's matching form is attached.)
- Please send me information on making a Planned Gift.

Name _____ (Please print)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Tel: _____ E-mail: _____

Please make your check payable to UNA-USA.

Or Charge payment to your Credit Card: VISA MC Am. Express

Number: _____ Exp.Date: _____

Signature _____

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

UNA-USA WESTCHESTER CHAPTER

35 Heath Place

Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706