



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

JUNE 2009

UNA-GP.ORG

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UNA-GP Annual Membership meeting, June 10, 2009

The bylaws of the UNA-GP call for a meeting of the membership once a year to address administrative issues, vote on board member nominations, bless the work of the treasurer and debate plans for the coming year. On the 10th of June we had that meeting for the year 2009, this time at the Ethical Society on Rittenhouse Square, pending the renovations at the Friends Center.

Just over 30 members ate some food, drank some wine (actually quite a bit), socialized and welcomed the new president of the UNUSA, Tom Miller, and the coordinator of the Council Of Organizations, Jessica Hartl. Ambassador Miller used his talk to indicate that we are in dire financial circumstances as a national organization, although the work of the UNAUSA seems to experience much less headwind with the current Obama administration. Mr. Miller is also coming in at a time that the UNAUSA headquarters is dramatically changing its operational formats,



mostly for the better. Especially their website is much improved and I expect that it will be a joy to work with and in. Ms. Hartl, whose office is in Washington DC, discussed the plan to add a grassroots component to the nationally operating Council of Organizations (COO). Her message for

us in Philadelphia was that we should seek collaboration with the local chapters of these organizations (say CARE or Amnesty International). Next, our treasurer ,Damon Kletzien, reported that we are operating on a small budget, and that we are in the black and have a few dollars in

the bank. We will need to do some serious fundraising if we want to raise our operational capacity to the level of hiring part time or full time staff. Damon is also involved with upgrading our website and expanding its function for the local members and the local population. Donna Wang is the consultant whose work will soon be available for all to

experience. Karen Young presented the nominating committee's report. We bid adieu, with thanks, to Teta Banks, Ella Torrey, Diane Melnichenko and Mayosha Mendis. Re-elected were Margaret Lippincott, Marietta Tanner, Carol Jenkins, Gillian Gilhool, and Enid

Adler. New board members are Nick Sanders, Garcia Sozinho, Eddie Faustin, and Jessica Lee. Please see their picture in this newsletter.

Christiaan reviewed the year that was, what was attempted, executed or failed, and he outlined the vision of local collaborations around fulfilling our mandate. He especially mentioned his wish to organize an event around Philadelphia's strength in handling the global food prob-

lems through organic and urban farming, and to seek further collaboration with the local groups that work on water and sanitation.

After the event, some folks mingled a bit, Lilla, Damon and Nick did a great job with cleaning up and Christiaan took the young board members to dinner, together with our award winning Anastasia, Jessica Hartl, and our member and South Africa activist Sharon Katz. The dinner was great and meant to boost the energy levels of the team for the hard work ahead.

Onward. ∞



Tom Miller



Jessica Hartl

From Christiaan's Desk

I am writing from Cascais, Portugal, where my wife is attending the 2009 convention of an international society, and I am attending to her. The society is one of those professional NGOs that have members from most continents, are applying a global perspective to their work, and consist of members who translate regional research and problems into worthwhile data for a global audience and global consumption. There are hundreds of these globally-operating NGOs, bringing into practice the worldwide discourse of multilateralism in science, education, technology, health, social services and economic development. At this conference several references have been made to UN agencies and the work they are doing, and much critique of these agencies has been leveled as well. It is fun to be here and watch all that global citizenship at work.

We did a bit of sightseeing as well. Portugal is one of those areas with a rich history of clashing cultures, dominating religions and much trade activity during the Middle Ages. I saw several monuments, and even whole towns, like Sintra, that had a proud marker: **World Heritage Site**, bestowed by UNESCO. In Philadelphia **Independence Hall** has been designated a World Heritage Site. I wonder if we ever put up a prominent UNESCO sign, like the Portuguese, in front of the hall.

I like UNESCO; the organization provides a venue to showcase the many ways we humans do distinctive things in our own cultures; we are finding these needs for cultural distinctiveness everywhere, like a global, cosmopolitan force. UNESCO tracks the development of cultures, of educational pathways, of communication patterns throughout the world. Just as the WHO tracks epidemics and sets standards for fighting disease, so does UNESCO help with the dissemination of the world's cultural heritage, expressions and developments. Here in Portugal we listened to singers of the fado, a kind of reflective, melancholic music

style.

After a few songs I said to my wife that it reminds me of Satchmo or Otis Redding; every country has its own blues, its own way to weave music, pain and social suffering. No need to keep score, to make one more important than the other, they all just are. That's what multilateralism is all about. We all just are. In whatever we do, it behooves us to listen and ponder, not to compare, rank and outperform.

I try to become a global citizen and a multilateralist. However, during dinner last night I got into a conversation with two nutritionists from Norway. They tried to convince me that there are really good recipes for preparing whale blubber as a festive dish. I could not be convinced, too limited in my taste and my imagination I assume. I am not yet a fully developed cosmopolitan multilateralist. Much work still lies ahead, for me and also for them, especially as I couldn't believe that they did not appreciate the delicious taste and texture of a fresh, green herring, covered with some raw onion, and eaten while standing. How ethnocentric they were!!!

Welcome Yufei Cao.

We have a new Project Assistant Coordinator in our midst. The UNA-GP has obtained the part time services of Yufei Cao, who will be working on the Library project and will work most intensely with Marietta Tanner, our board member who leads this project. She is joining our current team of volunteers, Tiffany Wang and Lilla Finta-Peterffy and will be with us for the duration of academic year 09/10. She can be reached at:
Jufeicao@sas.upenn.edu

Countries Eye a Coveted Cultural Honor

By Ekaterina Strelakova

June 24 -- Three countries are holding their breath while Unesco reviews its nominations for inscription as World Heritage Sites at the 33rd World Heritage Committee session in Seville, Spain, which started on June 22 and ends June 30. The list of sites is to be announced by Saturday, June 27.

The current roster of 878 natural and cultural properties are located in 145 countries. Among the 27 nominated sites this year, only Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and Kyrgyzstan have no previous Unesco designations.

To read more, visit:

<http://www.unausa.org/Page.aspx?pid=1334>

Biennial Convention in DC Strikes Positive Chords by Matt Tobin

June 24 -- The air-conditioned confines of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace provided relief from the muggy weather unfolding in Washington DC on Friday morning, June 12, as delegates hailing from across the country filled conference rooms for UNA-USA's three-day 2009 biennial convention.

It began with a speech from Council of Chapters and Divisions Chair Larry Levine and UNA-USA Co-Chair Bill McDonough, followed by an introduction of UNA-USA's new president and chief executive, Tom Miller, who made brief remarks about the state of the organization and his goals for it. His words were well received by the convention participants, who at the conclusion of the welcoming session adjourned to the initial hearings for substantive resolutions put forward by UNA chapters and divisions.

The hearings were divided into three sessions based on the resolutions'

subject matter: human rights and international law; peace, security and disarmament; and development, climate change and UN reform. Convention delegates spent the rest of the morning engaged in spirited discussions on the resolutions and working with sponsors to draft revisions.

After lunch, delegates settled into an afternoon of plenary speakers. These included Esther Brimmer, assistant secretary of state for international organizations, who spoke on the

Obama administration and the UN. After Brimmer's address, a panel discussion was held, titled "The United Nations Foundation and the Better World Campaign: UNA-USA's Partners in Engaging the American Public." It featured the UN Foundation's chief operating officer, Kathy Calvin; senior adviser Gillian Sorensen; and Peter Yeo, vice president of the public policy department and executive director of the Better World Campaign. The list of speakers was topped by Kemal Dervis, former UNDP chief and vice president and director of the global economy and development program at the Brookings Institution.

On Saturday morning, June 13, convention delegates had the choice of participating in three separate sessions on UN issues, one of which was the opportunities and obstacles of UN strengthening and reform. This was presented through the perspective of Princeton Lyman, adjunct senior fel-

My highlight in DC was the moment when our own Anastasia received her YPIC national award for exemplary global citizenship and advocacy. I was really proud of her and got quite a few compliments from the die-hards in the audience. Life is fun when you can work with people like Anastasia



low for Africa Policy Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and a former assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, as well as David Birnebaum and Linda Jamison.

The second, simultaneous session was a discussion on the prospects for US ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, with speakers Sarah Albert, Ketayoun Darvich-Kodjouri and Penny Wakefield. The third session was "The Road From Prague to a World Without Nuclear Weapons: Where the Obama Nuclear Goals and the UN Intersect," moderated by Jennifer Smyser from the Stanley Foundation and opinions from Barry Blechman and Jeffrey Lewis. All three sessions were well attended. After lunch, audiences participated in the Council of Chapters and Divisions' annual meeting, open discussions on the priorities of UNA-USA (specifically, building membership and strengthening chapters) and an address by Tom Miller on "UNA-USA: Some Initial Impressions and Perspectives on the Way Forward" with an introduction by Bill McDonough.

Sunday, the convention made final decisions on the entire list of proposed substantive resolutions. Another round of open discussions on UNA-USA priorities occurred in the afternoon with three topics: "Policy and Advocacy," "Communications Strategies" (internal and external) and "Attracting Students and Young Adults to UNA-USA." The 2009 UNA-USA Biennial National Convention closed with an open UNA-USA board meeting, with the highlight a final address by Tom Miller on the present and future of the organization and his plans to strengthen and improve the economic health of UNA-USA. The convention proved to be a strong success: it produced a body of resolutions dealing with current global issues, educated participants through its expert speakers and allowed for

the exchange between delegates of many valuable ideas for improvement of the organization on the chapter and division level.

Matt Tobin is a membership department intern at UNAUSA.

**UNA-USA ADVOCACY AGENDA 2009:
Restoring U.S. Leadership Through Global Cooperation**

Adopted by the UNA-USA Board of Directors on December 15, 2008

Each month we publish in our newsletter one of six priority issues as adopted by the UNA-USA on December 15, 2008. This month we highlight Priority Issue # 5

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The United Nations is spearheading a unique and ambitious international effort to **improve the lives of the world's poor and help reduce sources of conflict** and instability throughout the world.

At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, every UN member state, including the United States, agreed to a detailed development agenda to strengthen the world's focus on, and commitment to, the fight against poverty. Reaffirmed by the United States and other world leaders in 2005, the Millennium Development Goals (or MDGs) include eight concrete objectives to be achieved by 2015.

Progress has been made toward meeting the MDGs and the goals are still achievable. However, given the current global financial crisis, success will require a renewed effort on the part of the entire international community, including world leaders and citizen activists.

Emerging efforts to modernize and reform U.S. foreign assistance machinery should take account of and reflect the Millennium Development Goals, agreed to by the past two Administrations as the global roadmap for poverty reduction. In addition, the role and value of foreign assistance provided through international organizations should be reflected prominently in U.S. strategy.

Goals:

- Soon after taking office, President Obama should publicly endorse the MDGs and re-commit the United States to the 2015 deadline for achieving the MDGs;
- The Congress and the Obama administration should develop a strategic plan for achieving the MDGs that takes advantage of multilateral devel-

- opment assistance channels; and
- The United States should align its foreign assistance programs with the Millennium Development Goals.

Action Items for UNA-USA Leaders and Members:

- Join UNA-USA's HERO program to help achieve the MDGs dealing with child health and the spread of infectious diseases (visit <http://www.heroaction.org/>);
- Recruit and organize other community members and like-minded organizations that care about the UN and the fight against global poverty to increase public awareness about the MDGs and their importance to the achievement of U.S. national priorities; and
- Organize letter-writing campaigns, petition drives, and postcard mailings to encourage the President and Secretary of State to publicly pro-

mote the MDGs and take steps to ensure their achievement.∞

WE WANT YOU TO

Volunteer!!!

If you have time and interest, please consider volunteering for our library project. As a volunteer you will be trained on the basics of the UN System and on organizing after school events with children about becoming the UN. This year the focus will be on water and the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center has graciously offered their support for the project. Please shoot an email to info@una-gp.org or call 267-252-1199 for further questions.

Our new board members: Garcia, Eddie, Jessica and Nick.

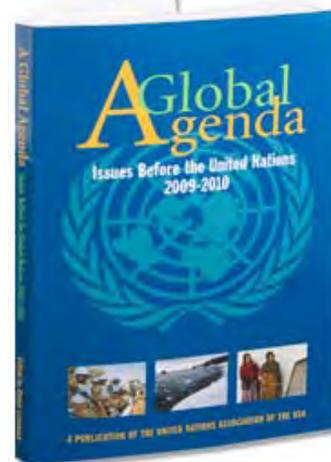


"A GLOBAL AGENDA: Issues Before the United Nations."

Many of you are already familiar with the series, which was last published in 2006. "A Global Agenda" is an essential academic and policy guide for diplomats, academics and students seeking in-depth information about the issues facing the UN. The topics in this new edition tackle climate change, international security, peacekeeping efforts, humanitarian assistance and development aid, human rights, international justice and UN reform.

"A Global Agenda" retails for \$28 (shipping included) and is now available through UNA-USA by calling (866) 335-4001 or by ordering it through the Web site at unausa.org/store.

For more information on excerpting the book, arranging an interview with "A Global Agenda" authors or a book signing, please contact Dulcie Leimbach, Publications Director, UNA-USA; 212-907-1390; dleimbach@unausa.org.



Board UNA-GP, as of 6-10-2009

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Send us your email if you have one

There is a remarkable uptick in the communication from UNA-USA headquarters in New York City and Washington DC, albeit all of it electronically and internet based. We can get that communication to you fast and for free if we have an email address. MAKE BETTER



Please consider a donation



We have a few projects under consideration, such as the library project, and although much can be done with volunteers, we do need cash to keep operating. Our share of the membership fee of UNA-USA is very small and most of

that is spent on mailings of newsletters and administrative expenses. Your donations will be used to launch our projects and pay for the website upkeep.

"And Now, Declare Peace"

Friday, July 3:

Independence Mall, "People's Plaza"
 -- behind the Independence Visitors' Center--
 -- 12:00 to 1:30 pm, by a coalition of 7 groups. At 12:30, representing PNA, Ed will discuss
 "In Solidarity with Justice in Iran-- and building toward nuclear disarmament in the Middle East."
<http://feeds.feedburner.com/ProjectForNuclearAwareness>



We received the following request from UNUSA for our members:

National Advocacy Week

June 27 - July 3

WHAT IS NATIONAL ADVOCACY WEEK?

All UNA-USA chapters and divisions, members, and affiliated organizations are invited to participate in National Advocacy Week by visiting the local offices of your members of Congress during the Independence Day recess from *June 27-July 3*.

Visiting with your legislators and their staff is the most effective way to get your message heard. By joining your fellow UNA-USA activists around the country during National Advocacy Week, you can make a tangible impression on your elected representatives of the strong public support that exists for working through the United Nations.

for more information visit: <http://www.unausa.org/advocacyweek>



Iran accused U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday of interfering in its state affairs in his comments about the Islamic Republic's disputed June 12 election, the ISNA news agency reported.

When will we learn that there are broader interests beyond "national sovereignty"? CBM



Silenced by brutal oppression. Only the force of courage and justice on your side when confronted with guns, sticks and naked lust for power. I stand in pain and helplessness, utterly frustrated that thugs rule and fascism is being revived. Christiaan