We wish all our members and friends a cheerful holiday season and a prosperous, healthy and progressive 2011, full of “blue” action.

Board and student workers of UNA-GP

The majority of our student workers are in this picture, taken at the Liberty museum on December 10. Because of their dedication to the causes of the UNA-GP, we were able to collaborate in real time with our friends of OXFAM Action Corps, Alliance for a Sustainable Future, Philadelphia Global Water Initiative, the Project for Nuclear Awareness, Rotary Madrugadores and the Global Philadelphia Association. I am looking forward to more good work when they come back in January.

Christopher, Kiahana, Jaclyn, Maryam, Doug, Ayrton, Hassan, Autumn, Nisa, Stacy, Gledisa, Marisa, Elias…, thank you all for your support. Christiaan Morssink
Something to worry about?  
(Downloaded and adapted from Huffington Post, 12-17-10)

……..The UN has announced that a "Working Group on Internet Governance," made up solely of member states (governments), will consider changes to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), a "forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on public policy related to Internet governance issues, such as the Internet's sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development." The working group is an initiative of Brazil.

The government-only makeup of the working group has attracted criticism from groups including Google, the International Chamber of Commerce, and The Internet Society. "Father of the Internet" Vint Cerf, now Google's Chief Internet Evangelist, denounced the UN's working group in a blog post titled "Governments Shouldn't Have a Monopoly on Internet Governance."

"Today, I have signed that petition on Google's behalf because we don't believe governments should be allowed to grant themselves a monopoly on Internet governance. The current bottom-up open approach works, protecting users from vested interests and enabling rapid innovation. Let's fight to keep it that way," Cerf wrote.

There were those at the UN who also expressed doubts that this was the best approach to taking on improvements to Internet governance……

(Christiaan’s comment: The discussion is far from over, but serious attacks by the leaders of the world on the availability and privacy of the Internet are underway. They feel threatened by the unbelievable level of democratic discourse that is possible through the Internet, and are just plain angry over the exposure from the latest Wikileaks barrage. They also want increasing powers to intercept or block Internet-based communications, although in much of the world such powers are far more likely to be used to suppress dissent than to fight terrorism)

Global Nursing Club of Philadelphia  
(a UNA-GP initiative)

In August, our new member, Kiahana Brooks undertook the task of starting a global awareness-raising campaign among Philadelphia area nursing professionals, students, teachers and practitioners. We supported that effort wholeheartedly as the nursing profession is instrumental to several of the UNMDGs and because we think that well-organized, well-informed nurses can have better involvement in the policy deliberation of the World Health Organization. Kiahana started an outreach campaign and a reading plan and seminar series. She has gotten great feedback from colleagues at Penn, Jefferson, Drexel and Villanova, among others. As one of the members of the club wrote recently:

"From the initiation of the club I have been very interested because I feel that it is important for all nurses to be aware of the local and global environment within which we may potentially serve, treat, and educate as nurse clinicians. I feel it is especially important for the promotion of this club because often I observe individuals working with in a narrow scope of practice. The ideas and opportunities offered by the journal club allow for people in the nursing field to become educated about global conditions and needs, as well as becoming more self….”

On October 20, 2010, the speaker series started with a lecture by Kelly Delaney of Action Against Hunger in Kenya on the topic of "How to Become a Global Nurse." On December 8th, 2010, Sandrina DaCruz of VSO spoke on the topic of "Health and Education: Case Studies in Mongolia." Furthermore, as an initiative to increase awareness of global health issues among nurses, Kiahana and her crew created an online journal club which has read and debated articles about "global health in nurse education", "the HIV free generation" and "cholera preventative therapies." The possibilities of the internet make for great strides in educational and knowledge sharing, but also help with building professional strength through social networking.

Next semester, the speaker series will host Dr. Haviland of the American Public Health Association in January and Dr. Adams of the National League of Nursing in March. Emily Hall, an alumna of Penn who did a two year stint in Rwanda, is invited as well. The club will continue the online journal discussions and outreach campaigns aimed to expand its membership to new schools. Finally, they plan to hold an annual fundraiser for a nursing-related development initiative.

Meanwhile, Kiahana Brooks will be taking off for a year to work in Uganda (we expect many field reports!!) and a leadership change is underway in the team, with Melissa Drennan slated to take over the helm. We all look forward to working with this group that put globalization of their profession in the context of an active UN support. Let’s find some pharmacists, engineers, accountants and other professionals who want to debate how they can influence their professions and their peers into becoming active cosmopolitan thinkers and operators.

For more information contact
Melissa Drennan at melissa.drennan@jefferson.edu.

UNA-GP NEEDS A NEWSLETTER AND COMMUNICATION TEAM.  
Please help if you can
Celebrating International Human Rights Day, December 10

By Ed Gracely

Many chapters of the UNA-USA, as well as friendly others, organized events to celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on or about December 10. Our celebration took place on the anniversary date itself, Dec 10, at the interesting and attractive National Liberty Museum on Chestnut Street. The museum, which features a variety of works of art, images, and informational materials about human rights issues, provided a great setting of our event.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) rights and issues, with particular focus on violence, oppression and marginalization was the theme of our event. This theme was chosen, not only because certain segments of the US population, including high ranking politicians, are deeply involved in shameful assistance of homophobia-derived anti-gay legislation, but also because the whole notion of sexual orientation is an issue not addressed at all in the UDHR.

Keynote speaker Bruce Knotts described horrific experiences that LGBT people have in many countries of the world. Until relatively recently, almost no organizations were speaking up for their rights and their plights, including his own Unitarian Universalist Church. Bruce took every effort possible to bring the rights of LGBT people onto the political agenda and he was able to force a breakthrough in 2008. Today his church has clear positions in support of sexual minorities and the NGO Commission of Human Rights for the United Nations has added sexual orientation to its agenda items. Recently the oldest gay national movement in the world, the Dutch COC, received accreditation status at the UN. Unfortunately, the fight for human rights for homosexuals is far from over. To quote Bruce:

“Many recent victories have been tarnished by a defeat this year. Every year the UN General Assembly passes a resolution against extra-judicial killings based on race, gender, ethnic origin, creed and sexual orientation. Every year, the Organization of Islamic Countries tries to remove “sexual orientation” from this resolution and every year they failed until this year when they obtained enough support from eastern European states to get “sexual orientation” removed from the resolution against extra-judicial killing, leaving one with the impression that it is OK for governments to kill gays and lesbians outside the law. We will fight this battle again next year and we plan to win.”

(The whole keynote address of Bruce Knotts as well as pictures can be found on our website.)

A distinguished panel followed, consisting of Marla Gold, Dean of Drexel's School of Public Health, Jeanne Stanley, counseling psychologist and Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Peter Lien, a professional videographer and photographer. The moderator was PhD student and UNA-GP board member Jessica Lee.

Dr. Gold emphasized the need for sexual minorities to be more visible (a point also made by Mr. Knotts), because “—only as straight individuals get to know gays, lesbians, and others, and come to realize that they in fact *know* a lot of LGBT people, will attitudes change.”. At the same time, she stressed the need for everyone, and she meant YOU and ME, to speak out against injustice and prejudice whenever they encounter it.

Dr. Stanley presented data indicating the early age at which sexual orientation presents itself -- she said that most gays and lesbians realize they are attracted to their own sex as early as 10-11 years of age. Indeed, often they perceive an unspecified "differentness" as early as a few years before that. Recognition and coming out can then lead to years of abuse, bullying, and depression. Perhaps 40% of homeless youth are LGBT, forced from their homes. Suicide among LGBT kids is much higher than among other teens. These kids need support now and a realistic hope for their future. Gay/Straight alliances have been formed in a number of schools and they provide one source of hope for the future. The level of homophobia in certain areas is shown by the fact that some states have banned all after school programs rather than allow Gay/Straight alliances to meet. Isn't that sad? Clearly, the situation of sexual minority youth now is still very bad, and there is much more work to be done.

(continue page 7)
From the world of International Human Rights

Our Board member Enid Adler alerted us to the existence of a serious action group, Iran180. From her email:

Dear Friends,

As you may be aware, there is a critical vote taking place at the United Nations on Monday, December 20th regarding Iran’s human rights record. It is vital that we express our views on this vote and sign Iran180’s petition voicing our support for this resolution which condemns Iran’s human rights violations and demands that international human rights inspectors be allowed in Iran.

I hope you will join me in signing and circulating Iran180’s petition which will be delivered to the United Nations Secretary General, the media, and others.

Please help us move this effort forward by encouraging your social and organizational networks to circulate the petition. For more information, visit: http://

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Board news:

The composition of the board changed starting almost immediately after it was seated at the end of the annual board meeting in June. First, Michael Majok Kuch, who had just earned his Masters at Arcadia, returned to his home in the Southern Sudan, after he failed to secure a job in Philadelphia. This was unexpected and regretted, but any reversal of the current brain drain should also be applauded. Second, Sarah Edwards could not participate in the first board meetings and she requested to be registered as a volunteer. However, in November the board decided to switch to a doodle system to schedule meetings and Sarah may be able to stay on.

Lastly, two weeks ago, we received a letter from Kiran Qurachi, explaining that she had to return to Pakistan, where her family needs her presence and input following the aftermath of the environmental problems that has besieged that country and her family.

Both resignations were a problem that the board was able to handle through intermediate action. The board approved, via email balloting and for intermediate seating, two new, young members. They are Ben Hover, a teacher in the Philadelphia school system and highly interested in the global classroom ideology, and Shonta Collins, a nurse and founder of Explorers Sans Frontiers. Shonta is deeply involved with global health work, specifically focusing on Haiti.

In light of these developments, we propose to expand the role of the nominating committee to stay in function during the year. This will be discussed at our next board meeting in January, date to be determined.

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FROM HEADQUARTERS (Or as some of us say FROM NATION-AL)

UNA-USA/UN Foundation Strategic Alliance Launched!

After a decade of working together and building bridges between Americans and the United Nations, UNA-USA and the UN Foundation have become one family. We are joining forces to build a broader base of citizen support for U.S. engagement and the work of the UN. UN Foundation Founder and Chairman Ted Turner, joined by UN Foundation President Senator Timothy E. Wirth, and Co-Chair of UNA-USA Thomas Pickering, made the announcement of this alliance during the Global Leadership Dinner at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City on November 18. Together our two organizations represent the single largest network of American supporters of the UN!

Welcome Packets were mailed to every chapter and division president, and you can find a virtual Welcome Packet online at www.unfoundation.org/una-usa.

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Special Message from Tanisha Dyall, Coordinator, UNA Program Outreach and Events

This is the time of year when we embrace, reminisce and reflect on the past, present and future; as you reflect, I would like to encourage you to think about your chapter and what it means to you and the value that it adds to your community, your society and our country. I attended my first CCD-SC meeting this past weekend and was encouraged by the enthusiasm and excellent discussion. During the meeting I promised to work with each chapter on programs and events in a capacity to enhance your ability to recruit and retain members and gain more visibility in your community.

I want to get to know each chapter as much as possible, and would like to request that each of you compile a list of programmatic and event goals for your chapter for 2011. Please email them to me at tdyall@unausa.org and we will work with you to achieve these goals.

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renew your membership
International Youth Service Day 2011
Misha Baker, Maryam Halimi and Jaclyn Kouci

In an effort to address worldwide issues of hunger and food access, the UNA-GP will organize a two-part program culminating in the 2011 Youth Service Day, “Youth Building Roots” in Philadelphia. The program will connect Philadelphia middle school students with students abroad to discuss issues of hunger, food security, and access to adequate nutrition.

Thirty middle school students from two participating local schools will gather in early March for a propagation party, plant seeds and get instruction on how to interact with their families and communities to promote the idea of growing your own food. This event will encourage students to understand food availability in their neighborhoods and spread information about urban farming, nutrition and food access. Students may engage in the sale of their plants for fundraising, with proceeds going to a local organization of the students’ choosing.

While tending to their seeding beds, students will be challenged to discuss the barriers to alleviating hunger locally as well as possible solutions to these barriers.

On International Youth Service Day 2011, April 15-17 (yes, it’s 3 days!), the students will gather to plant trees, distribute the seedlings to interested households in their community and learn more about the benefits of urban agriculture and urban forestry from the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society. The students will be asked to reflect on urban farming and nutrition initiatives. As a conclusion of the program, they will then share their experiences via video conferencing with students in Allada, Benin, who have engaged in a similar tree-planting project that focused on nutrition, community building, and entrepreneurship with a nonprofit, Novi NGO. Philadelphia students will be challenged to think and act locally while engaging in global dialogue.

Stamps, Stamps, Stamps, Stamps everywhere

We are buried in stamps; correction, Autumn Elliott is buried, buried under thousands of stamps, all about the UN and all from the collection of a fervent UN supporter. We have started the task of sorting it all out and we have gotten some help from experts in the region. Autumn intends to travel early next year to Bellefonte (near State College in central Pennsylvania), to the National Stamp Museum and Education center, to learn more what can be done with the material. Part of it we will sell, among them “Medallions” as they are called, part we will keep to make entries for exhibitions that philatelists organize in the region and parts we want to make available for education. Members who would like to lend a hand to catalogue, digitally, the collection can contact Autumn Elliott, ase28@drexel.edu.
A NOT SO CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT:
US diplomats spied on UN leadership
(from www.guardian.co.uk, Sunday 28 November 2010)

Washington is running a secret intelligence campaign targeted at the leadership of the United Nations, including the secretary general, Ban Ki-moon and the permanent security council representatives from China, Russia, France and the UK.

A classified directive which appears to blur the line between diplomacy and spying was issued to US diplomats under Hillary Clinton's name in July 2009, demanding forensic technical details about the communications systems used by top UN officials, including passwords and personal encryption keys used in private and commercial networks for official communications.

It called for detailed biometric information "on key UN officials, to include undersecretaries, heads of specialized agencies and their chief advisers, top SYG [secretary general] aides, heads of peace operations and political field missions, including force commanders" as well as intelligence on Ban's "management and decision-making style and his influence on the secretariat". ..... The secret "national human intelligence collection directive" was sent to US missions at the UN in New York, Vienna and Rome; 33 embassies and consulates, including those in London, Paris and Moscow.....

The operation targeted at the UN appears to have involved all of Washington's main intelligence agencies. The CIA's clandestine service, the US Secret Service and the FBI were included in the "reporting and collection needs" cable alongside the state department under the heading "collection requirements and tasking". The leak of the directive is likely to spark questions about the legality of the operation and about whether state department diplomats are expected to spy. The level of technical and personal detail demanded about the UN top team's communication systems could be seen as laying the groundwork for surveillance or hacking operations. ..... The UN has previously asserted that bugging the secretary general is illegal, citing the 1946 UN convention on privileges and immunities which states: "The premises of the United Nations shall be inviolable. The property and assets of the United Nations, wherever located and by whomsoever held, shall be immune from search, requisition, confiscation, expropriation and any other form of interference, whether by executive, administrative, judicial or legislative action". The 1961 Vienna convention on diplomatic relations, which covers the UN, also states that "the official correspondence of the mission shall be inviolable". (for the whole article go the theguardian.co.uk)

Arcadia Student Alliance

Four years after our student/friend/member Tammy Murphy made the first attempt to start a UNA presence on the Arcadia campus, until her study abroad and subsequent marriage, child, and move to the west coast, a new group has stepped up to the plate to organize the new Arcadia Student Alliance. The current initiative is led by Carolina Greca, President, Jacqueline Beck, Treasurer, Elizabeth Gluck, Secretary, and Fan Yang and Alie Kargbo. They had their inaugural meeting on December 7th, drawing inspiration from the Drexel Student Alliance (thank you Ayrton Hamilton and Marco Salerno) and had their first impromptu event on the 9th when Sandrina da Cruz came to talk about her work in Mongolia. The Arcadia Student Alliance is mapping out a series of actions that include outreach to the larger community outside its campus. Organizational details about communications and events will follow soon.
Contact CGreca@arcadia.edu for more information.

At left: At the COP16 Global Warming Summit in Cancun delegates reached some kind of agreement that holds some promise, but oh so little, for action in the coming years. Many organizations were present at the summit and the 350.org group did a bit different mass picture, as shown. Media coverage from the USA was shamefully low, actually absent. Only Democracy Now had journalists from the USA. You may want to read Canadian, Australian and English newspapers to stay informed.
From Christiaan’s Desk

This is the final newsletter of the year 2010. It has been a looong way in coming. The last newsletter came out in August and we simply could not keep up the pace. We are a volunteer organization and we need to spend our efforts where it counts most. We did a lot of work. Work in terms of advocacy, in terms of education, in terms of raising awareness about the crucial roles that the UN system plays in today’s humanity and how these roles are supported or obstructed by the actions of the USA government. Yet, with all the work that falls within our mission, we have to keep paying attention to our communication. A communication plan that can be taken up by a few members is needed. In short, we need to work on three areas, that are crucial for any membership organization:

1. Our communication with you needs to be streamlined and be relevant and timely. We rely on support of volunteers for that in a more sustained way, but we have not yet been successful. Suggestions have been made to simplify our de-briefing process, relying more and more on our website, but that still leaves a good 30% of our members without regular information.

2. Our communication towards the general public is insufficient. We need a better rapport with many press persons in the city; we need to beef up our message that can be picked up by the journalists in Philadelphia who need to get a better understanding about the importance of a multilateral and global approach to understanding problems here and abroad. Linking with other organizations to work on this seems a logical solution;

3. We need to better understand the motivations that drive the young members to our organization and the old guard who are still willing to hang in there. Communication that is wrong in tone, method or message can alienate or confuse easily. I myself cannot seem to understand how “google groups” work, or what happens if you write on someone’s wall and how important that is. In short, we need to strategize better and in more diverse ways about reaching out.

As we do every year, in January we make promises and we set goals. My promise is that we will try to execute a better and more systematic way of communicating with all who have signed up with the ideals and vision of Eleanor Roosevelt. Progress will happen I am sure. We have been getting a small but steady stream of people who are willing to volunteer some of their time and talents. We have possibilities to get these volunteers involved, through our events, our school outreach programs and our work with the Global Philadelphia Association. Let’s have them involved with membership outreach as well.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find some reports and a list of pending projects/programs and services/events planned. I want to end this text about our communication issues on a more seasonal note. On behalf of the co-op Students of Drexel, the work-study students of Penn and the intern from Arcadia, as well as our board members and other volunteers, I wish you all a good and pleasant ending of 2010 as well as a healthy, fruitful and sustainable 2011. Cheers!

(Continued from page 2)

Mr. Lien often travels to Africa. He told a story of a young African in a family he knew. The young man asked a lot of seemingly-hostile questions about gay sex, but finally admitted that he himself might be gay. Lien stressed the difficulty someone faces even in the US at being a sexual minority. He said that even for him as a middle-aged gay man, it was still at times a struggle to deal with internally. For youth with little support (and often active hostility in the society) the problem is far worse.

The Q and A with the audience was intense and went from professional questions on how to work with homosexual patients and students to the linkage with other social movements that fought and fight for the rights of the oppressed, such as the civil rights movement. Few people addressed the global span of the movement. Several guests from abroad came away with a sense to re-address their own assumptions about home. Marietta Tanner, who was the engine behind the whole event, addressed the issue of homophobia in (black) churches and in our own families. She called upon the UNA-GP to keep working on awareness-raising about the plight of the LGBT “communities” in the context of hetero-sexual socio-political hegemony. Next year, the UNA-GP will follow up, in collaboration with the International Visitors Council, and will bring the topic of LGBT rights to an event in March, when human rights activists from Egypt will be in Philadelphia.

Of course there was also a reception, with wine and cheese and all such things. We have human rights after all, universal human rights; and that is worthwhile fighting for, as well as to be thankful for. “Let us all salute Eleanor Roosevelt!!!”

Lastly, a great thank you to Marietta Tanner, Marisa Hobbs and the co-op Drexel and Penn students for their support and energy.
New Address for Membership Payments and Information

Memberships will now be processed out of the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the United Nations Foundation. Please send all membership payments and forms to the following address:

BWF/UNF-USA  
PO Box 96397  
Washington DC 20090-6397

Sending membership information to the New York Office will result in a delay in processing memberships. If you have any questions regarding this new procedure please contact Roger Nokes at Rnokes@unusa.org. Additionally, please make sure to forward membership payments to this address as soon as possible as older payments cannot always be processed.

http://www.cio.com/article/645964/  

UN Human Rights Head 'concerned' Over Pressure on WikiLeaks

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said she is concerned over reports of government pressure on Internet service providers and other companies to stop doing business with WikiLeaks. Speaking on the eve of Friday's International Human Rights Day, she said the case raises complex questions about balancing freedom of information, the right of people to know, and the need to protect national security.

"I am concerned about the reports about pressure exerted on private companies, including banks, credit cards companies and Internet service providers to close down credit lines for donations to WikiLeaks as well as to stop hosting the website or its mirror sites," said Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a televised news conference in Geneva on Thursday. "While it is unclear whether these individual measures taken by private actors directly infringe on states' human rights obligations to ensure respect of the right to freedom of expression, taken as a whole they could be interpreted as an attempt to censure the publication of information thus potentially violating WikiLeaks' right to freedom of expression," said Pillay. (See her comments in a YouTube video)

OUR GLOBAL FOCAL POINT PROJECT

The UNA-GP has been working with libraries and schools for several years in our Blue Shelf Program. Since August we have focused on starting our first Global Focal Point in a few libraries, starting with the Furness High School. We have made rather slow progress, not in the least because of the need to establish the proper connections to activate different decision makers in the process. Stacy Buzzetto is our main project coordinator and she has reported some good news that will facilitate significant progress in January. First of all she has been able to secure a donation of furniture form Steelcase Corp. which will be delivered early January. We also have received a limited amount of funding from the African Studies Center of the University of Pennsylvania to pay for the expenses of teaching the volunteers and interested faculty members at the Furness High School. Furthermore we received a donation of 36 books from the 2048 project of the bay area UNA chapter, enough to provide teachers at three schools with these necessary documents. Some of our volunteers and work-study students may participate in a training session on Jan 15 2011, scheduled by the Global Education Motivators of Chestnut Hill College, after which we can begin implementing the program. Members who want to participate in this training (not free) should contact www.gem-ngo.org.

We are still hoping to get sponsorship to obtain electronic display screens as well as some desktop computers. Feel free to offer suggestions on how to get hold of this type of equipment. We have volunteers from Engineers without Borders ready to set up the system at Furness, once the hardware has arrived.