International Justice Day a serious event for our UNA-GP Garden Party

On Sunday July 17th, over sixty members and guests showed up for a pleasant garden party, full of sunshine, good food (I was told) and plenty of drinks. The party was set in the context of International Justice Day and many groups were invited to participate. Amnesty International was there, as was the PBA, the Explorers Sans Frontieres and the Ethical Society, among others. Rotary Madrugadores, Citizens for Global Solutions and the newly formed Global Philadelphia Association brought banners, and the Project for Nuclear Awareness used the opportunity to showcase books and rocket dummies. Stephanie DeMora and her beau provided background music, singing songs of peace and justice that created the right atmosphere for the party.

The serious part of the event started with Enid Adler reading the Proclamation of Mayor Nutter (see the text of the proclamation on our website). After that, Mary Day Kent introduced our keynote speaker, Adam Isacson, who addressed the interface between seeking justice and forging peace in the modern history of Colombia. His talk illustrated how intensely difficult it will be to proceed on the path of rightful justice, a path we need to travel if we want to reach a state of peace where we can flourish as human beings, all human beings.

After Adam’s talk, the folks flocked to tables that had been designated with signs, in order to discuss topical issues. Most intensive were the discussions around Human Trafficking, Environmental Justice and the state of justice for the global LGBT movements and its members. Coop students had prepared talking points and made suggestions for further reading. The results of the discussions, while not recorded verbatim, will be used by UNA-GP to develop a four part seminar series in the coming academic year.

Due to technical difficulties, we were not able to show a clip made by Talha Malik. It can be seen on our website and on the internet, please visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbTJnnXUhe1

The party was a fundraiser; we grossed just over $900. Enough to say: Let’s do it again next year.

Adam Isacson of WOLA, addressing the UNA-GP garden party
Peace Day Philly 2011
United Nations International Day of Peace
Wednesday, September 21, 2011
A global day of cease-fire & non-violence

PEACE & DEMOCRACY: Make Your Voice Heard!
www.internationaldayofpeace.org & www.peaceoneday.org

SAVE the date
Sept. 21

MAKE a commitment to get involved in a Peace activity

SPREAD the word about the International Day of Peace!

Peace Talks Event
• With guest speakers on topics of peace related to personal/family, local/community & global/policy

Community Peace Event
• Fair: Info & resource share - peace/non-violence orgs
• World: Peace program video clips & global video links
• Jam: Multi-cultural music & performance

Peace Day Observances Across Philadelphia
• Activities for children & youth in school/after-school settings
• Programs & gatherings at social service, civic & neighborhood organizations
• One Day One Goal soccer games for unity
• Arts activities, including film screenings
• Academic discussions & forums

Would you like your organization to participate?
Do you have ideas/resources to share?
Contact us at peacephilly2011@gmail.com

Organized by The United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia, The Alliance for a Sustainable Future, and individuals supporting PEACE observance & action the Philadelphia region
Risks of Nuclear Proliferation!

The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) wants to draw attention to the risks of nuclear proliferation. Regional arms races and nuclear terrorism are just some of the risks we might face if nuclear weapons continue to spread.

There are currently 8,400 active and operational nuclear weapons worldwide. Thousands of warheads remain on high alert. There have been over 20 recorded instances of false alarms (including computer glitches) that could easily have led to a disastrous defensive response by one of the two sides. The United States and Russia possess 95% of the world’s nuclear weapons arsenal. Six other countries have confirmed possession of nuclear weapons. The risk of nuclear proliferation increases if the commitments of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are not honored and the verification regime is not maintained.

(Source: The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Global Security Institute)

Russian President Supports Nuclear-free Effort

Thursday, June 23, 2011

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Wednesday offered his support to an international movement to eliminate all nuclear weapons and said he wants to see more nations join in arms control efforts with Russia and the United States (see GSN, Feb. 5, 2010 for some background).

The Global Zero organization organized a two-day conference in London this week that was set to wrap up Thursday (see GSN, June 20). Representing Moscow was Russian Federation Council international affairs committee Chairman Mikhail Margelov. Medvedev also provided a personal message of support to participants.

"Progress towards a nuclear-free world is one of Russia’s foreign policy goals too. Fully conscious of its share of responsibility in this process, the Russian Federation is making broad reductions to its nuclear forces," Medvedev said in provided remarks.

The Russian president highlighted the implementation this year of a nuclear arms control treaty that obligates his nation and the United States to each cap their deployed strategic arsenals at 1,550 weapons (see related GSN story, today). "In accordance with the spirit and letter of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the New START treaty makes real, verifiable and irreversible cuts to nuclear arms and their means of delivery. The treaty's implementation will give practical reinforcement to our world’s strategic stability."

Medvedev said achieving worldwide nuclear disarmament would require efforts by nations beyond Russia and the United States, which together hold roughly 95 percent of the planet's nuclear arms. "One of the main tasks at the current stage is to involve all countries with military nuclear arsenals in the disarmament process" (Russian Presidential Executive Office release, June 22).

The Global Zero movement began in late 2008 with the aim of achieving worldwide nuclear disarmament no later than 2030.

Former Russian nuclear missile chief Viktor Yesin told conference attendees that Moscow and Washington could reach the 1,550 deployed strategic warhead limit set by New START within two years, ITAR-Tass reported...

(for the full story, go to our Web site, for Thursday, June 23rd, under NTI-Global-Security NewsWire)
Veterans For Peace Philadelphia Film Series

As veterans for peace we draw on our personal experiences and perspectives gained as veterans to raise public awareness of the costs and consequences of militarism and war. We are having a film series to raise this public awareness and show some fine films.

Tuesday evenings in June, August and October at 7PM
Christian Association, 118 South 37th St, Philadelphia, the Great Room
Directions @ www.upennca.org/top/facilities/directions/

Handouts will be provided about the movie explaining why the presenter thinks it addresses the issues of the tragedy of war. Discussion will follow the showing of the films. The three movies scheduled are:

TUESDAY, JUNE 28 at 7PM
Go Tell The Spartans (1978)
A less-well-known Vietnam War picture with an interesting point of view formed while memories of the war were still fresh. Burt Lancaster plays a tough U.S. military advisor in 1964 who must assemble a platoon out of inexperienced American soldiers. As he experiences the war firsthand, his doubts about the U.S. involvement grow.
Presenter: Thompson Bradley, US Army Cold War veteran, retired Professor, Swarthmore College.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 23 at 7PM
Catch 22 (1970)
Satirical war film adapted from the novel by Joseph Heller revolving around US military personnel running World War II bombing missions. Though not about Vietnam, Catch-22's ludicrous military machinations directly evoked its contemporary context in the Vietnam era. The film's ensemble cast and pungent sensibility effectively underline the insanity of war.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25 at 7PM
In the Valley of Elah (2007)
In The Valley of Elah is based on actual events, portraying a father's search for his son after his return from combat in Iraq. The film explores themes including the Iraq war, abuse of prisoners, and post-traumatic stress disorder. This is a story of how war dehumanizes individuals to the point where the taking of a life makes no sense and where there are no rules.

As seating is limited please RSVP to vfpaphila@yahoo.com
Updates from the Volunteers!

Joshua Dylan Stevenson works on bringing a greater awareness of UNESCO into the local educational community. The UNA-GP Global Focal Point program continues to grow and “firm up”. Presentations have been made to the faculty at the Furness High School and University City High School. Early next academic year we will present the program to the student body. Meanwhile Joshua and his team are working with small groups of students at University City High over the summer, introducing them to the UN and the UN system. Our Co-op students will be presenting their lesson plans to the students who will learn more about geography and cultural diversity.

At Jackson Middle School, Mrs. Han’s art classes have been working to help decorate the “UN Room” in the school’s library with a focus on Women and Africa (UNESCO’S main focus). We have been developing a design for the space, and Principal Kaplan has specifically asked for our help in developing a program to help students learn about self-government and self-determination. Joshua has had a great input as to the design of the UN Global Focal Point and how to make the students feel as though they connect with that space. He wants to incorporate student artwork into the project, so they can better relate. Finally we have a chance to take advantage of what we have been working on, and create better understanding and opportunities for these students.

Reminder from our Volunteer Coordinator Manisha Patel!

Dear Members and Volunteers,

This note is for some of you who are our UNA-GP connection to the Universities. UNA-GP is working with others for Peace Day Philly 2011 (September 21) and we are bringing city wide organizations, schools, and universities together on the topic of Peace.

This will be one of our bigger events and some of the activities in the works involve three possible venues. See the announcement elsewhere in the newsletter (page 2). UNA-GP will have our own video produced by high school students on Peace Day.

Bringing together Youth of Philadelphia from Universities on Peace is going to be very important and I am writing to you today with the hope that you all will help us in outreach by passing the info to either student union leaders or individual students or any organization you represent who would be interested in volunteering. This is a great opportunity for volunteer work for your resume!

Manisha: manishaayutpatel@yahoo.com
Lisa: lisadinparker@gmail.com
Our Annual membership meeting 2011 was well attended with just under fifty people filling the MLK room at the Friends Center just about to capacity.

After a period of meet and greet, where members could discuss the work of our work-study students, who had prepared posters, the meeting kicked off with a short talk by Ed Aguilar of the Project for Nuclear Awareness. Ed began by giving a brief history of PNA. He advocated consideration of the threat of nuclear weapons as having the highest priority, because the possibility of use poses an immediate threat to the very existence of human beings. Although there have been hopeful meetings among nations, there is still no comprehensive test ban treaty, and the United States and Russia still have fast launch time procedures in place. Aguilar encouraged participation by colleges and universities in the University Nuclear Education Series, which can be found by way of the PNA web site.

Zabeth Teelucksingh and Aghigh (Aggie) Ebrahimi Bazaz addressed the newly started website of the Global Philadelphia Association, of which the UNA-GP is a founding member. The purpose of the GPA is to promote global thinking and global orientation in Philadelphia and to help trade groups and other organizations with international concerns coordinate their programs and events with one another. Zabeth is enthusiastic about the related resources in the Philadelphia area, and asserts that the GPA organization can serve needs of those who come here from outside the US. She asked us to help to inform groups we thought should be interested in joining GPA. Aghigh, the web master for GPA’s web site (www.globalphiladelphia.org), projected screens for the attendees to view the type of information and capabilities of the site that would interest groups in GPA. It so happened that the featured “Global Philadelphian of the week” was Craig Eisendrath, former UNA-GP board member.

The reports by Christiaan Morssink, president, who also covered for Jessica Lee, treasurer, can be found on our website and do not need to be repeated here. After Christiaan, Ed Gracely reported on the by-law committee’s findings and had to conclude that the latest instructions from UNAUSA require another round of reviewing. Another membership meeting is planned for late 2011 to adjust the bylaws and adopt a fiscal year 2012 budget.

Jackie McLaughlin presented for nomination to the board Ben Hover and Shonta Collins (who were already appointed mid-term by the board) as well as Labaron Palmer, Raili Roy, Carla Campbell and Bob Hornsby. All nominations were approved by those present.

After adjourning for the evening, several students helped with the clean-up and a small group kept the meeting going over drinks and food at a nearby locale.

Congratulations to our new board members Ben Hover, Shonta Collins, Carla Campbell, Bob Hornsby, Labaron Palmer, and Raili Roy!
On July 6th, Sofia Carreno and Melissa Drennan brought their message about the need to globalize the nursing curriculum to the new interns at Abington Memorial Hospital. Their first speaking gig!! Both are eager to get the message out at other schools in the coming year.

Go Sofia and Melissa!!!
UN CAFÉ

Stephanie DeMora is a junior at Drexel University, with an International Area Studies major and Arabic minor. She enjoys playing guitar, reading, and writing. At the moment, she spends most of her time studying, and working in Southern New Jersey. Stephanie is currently the head of the UN Café Project, and has been hosting the event weekly.

The U.N Café is held each Thursday from 6:00 - 9:30 p.m. at Grey Social Club & Bar (132 Chestnut Street). Each week has a different theme, or topic open for discussion. These events are meant to raise awareness on international issues as well as connect local communities. Right now Stephanie is busy promoting the events, and hoping to build a greater audience, which is rather spotty. Every week Stephanie gathers materials and literature that pertain to the topic at hand. Please show your support and feel free to bring friends along to this great socializing opportunity. Please note that the topics are not set in stone and that discussions can shift at will.

We are working on a mechanism to notify people in advance of the topics. Check out the UNA-GP Facebook page — that’s one likely place to announce them!

Upcoming cafés:
8-11-11: World Business
8-18-11: International jobs/careers

Stephanie DeMora at work in the Egyptian Black Desert.