



April 2018

NEWSLETTER

United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia

Table of Contents:

(Click to jump to topic)

- [2](#)—From Christiaan’s Desk
- [3](#)—General Updates
- [5](#)— GWA Annual Conference
- [6](#)— Upcoming Events
- [7](#)—Spotlight on Human Rights
- [8](#)—Support the UNA-GP

In this Issue:

Spotlight on Human Rights

Learn more about our human rights group of the month: The US Human Rights Network

Page: 7



GWA Annual Conference



Catch up on the summary of the proceedings about groundwater in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Page 5

General Updates

Read about some of the newest events and projects coming up in the second half of 2018

Page: 3-4

Also, check out our new logo

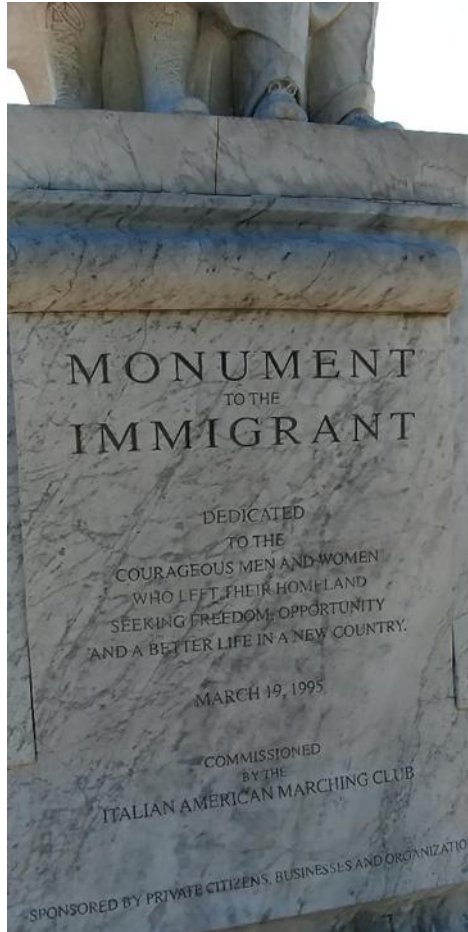


Stay abreast of the United Nations five days per week with UN Wire.

You can receive it free in your inbox [here](#).

From Christiaan's Desk

A Few Words from our Executive Director



Just walked back from a long stroll along the river walk in New Orleans, finding myself looking at monuments from European immigrants, and Jeanne D'Arc from Orleans (golden colors on a horse of course). There are plenty of tourists and many folks trying to earn a living from those tourists.

There is a festival today, with bag and body searching at the entry, "to keep everyone safe". New Orleans is celebrating 300 years of history as a European settlers' city. It's the Big Easy. They say. It looks easy, on the surface, but I am not so sure. I remember Katrina and the lower Ninth Ward, the police killings on the bridge that week. There is an undertone, I sense, and probably stronger so in the rest of the south, around lingering apartheid and racism, reactivated onto the surface by the alt right dominance of the recent political dialogue. Is that old-fashioned Jim Crow awakened by the eight-year period of having a black commander in chief? I am not at ease in the big easy. Something more has to change.



Two months ago, I was in Auckland. A Big Easy down under. Really a big easy. Like New Orleans, also about 300 years of European Settlers' history. And also a history full of negative ethnic problems and violence, but never experiencing capitalist slavery, never developing those dumb cultural and structural rules around one-drop-of-blood, of plain apartheid. Auckland makes easy living for all, from wherever, including from those who never came from anywhere else.

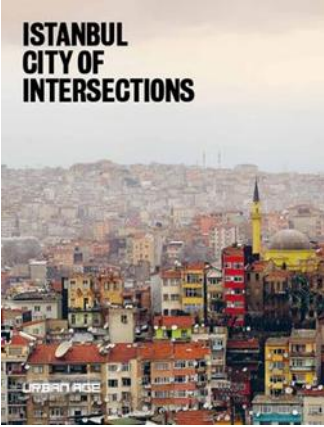
In Hungary, last week, the elections were won by the prime minister, who ran on a virulent anti-migration message. Douglas Wake, head of a mission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said that "hostile and intimidating campaign rhetoric limited the space for substantive debate and diminished voters' ability to make an informed choice." The capital Budapest is a very old city, which has seen long periods of occupation by the German



Hungarian border fences being installed

From Christiaan's Desk (cont.)

speaking Austrians and has felt under threat for centuries by the Turkish Muslims, who once had their eyes on controlling the whole watershed of the Danube. Anti-migration is interwoven with a deep sense of struggle, centuries old, for identity and continental “respect”. Budapest isn’t a Big Easy. It never was. Full of rich history, but not easy history.



Istanbul, I think, has had the hallmarks of a big easy for a very long time; where trade, and migrations and moneys and languages, and food ways intersected. Its centuries-old Grand Bazaar will never be outdone by a Turkish Amazon. The culture is too deep. Of course, it has had its conflicts, wars and nasty periods of oppression, but overall it has a remarkably open character, empowered by trade, overshadowed on occasion by political dialogues and rhetoric from the capital Ankara.

I think that cities that are really a big easy, have an openness, and sense of belonging, of harbor, for all its inhabitants, that have a culture of embrace and respect for all, whether poor or rich, whether speaking with an accent thick or thin, whether worshipping this or that or nothing at all. In a big easy, a cosmopolitan, global mindset prevails, the horizons in a big easy are far, the ships that come and go, the planes that land and take off, they are all understood as connecting with that what’s beyond those horizons. No walls, no bans, just welcoming systems set up in such a way as to assure that the big easy can stay that way. I enjoy being in a big easy.

Philadelphia is a World Heritage City. Philadelphia is a sanctuary city. Philadelphia is a welcoming city.

Is my city of choice a big easy?



General Updates:

Moving Forward in 2018

The UNA-GP has received a small financial contribution from UNA-USA to create a human rights dialogue/event with and for high school students to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the UDHR. Our members Esther Wieman and Ellen Firestone are taking the lead on this project. It is part of the "Stand Up for Someone's Rights" Campaign of the UNA-USA. Stay tuned for updates.



General Updates (cont.)

Next year the International Labor Organization will celebrate its Centennial on April 11th. We hope to inform you soon about what the ILO office in the USA will do to commemorate that moment. Looking farther forward, May 12th, 2019 is also the 75th anniversary of the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia. Christiaan Morssink has started discussions with groups in the city to see how UNA-GP can celebrate the adoption of this Declaration and highlight how it has shaped the working conditions and labor relations all over the world. Read the milestone document here. http://blue.lim.ilo.org/cariblex/pdfs/ILO_dec_philadelphia.pdf

Anybody interested in working with Christiaan on this topic: please reach out via info@una-gp.org.



Luis Bravo, one of our dedicated work-study students, has written an outline about re-structuring our educational work in high schools. Additionally, the Global Philadelphia Association is working hard on the World Heritage City Educational outreach plans, and, at UPenn, our board member, Anastasia Shown, is still laboring with the global education activities and collaboration with teachers. Meanwhile, Hillary Kane of PHENND (Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development) is doing outreach to schools where UNA-GP could forge new connections as well. Meanwhile, our own blue nook project seems to fit the new library format well, and we have been in touch with two librarians to re-set the format.



All this to say that we are calling on members who are interested in education and bringing global thinking into the mindset of our youngsters to join our education committee and help navigate the turbulent waters of the Philadelphia Education "market".

Our friends at Harmony for Peace informed us of a concert they are organizing in St. Louis, Missouri, April 29th. Promoting World Peace/19399/Harmony For Peace Foundation. If you know of folks in St. Louis, please spread the word.



HARMONY FOR PEACE
FOUNDATION

Contrasting the Bill of Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). What gives, what's missing, what's hurting? We are seeking bloggers to opine about this topic in the 70th year of the UDHR. The intention is to post blogs on our website. Two topic will definitely be addressed: the right to safe water, and the rights regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation

Global Water Alliance Annual Conference 2018

(from our friends at GWA)

Groundwater, the Hidden and Disappearing Resource

On April 5th, 2018, we were honored to bring together students, professionals and experts in the field of groundwater to discuss a series of topics that ought to be at the forefront of future projects and research. With powerful contributions from professionals from the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), Water 2020, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), Pennoni consultants, and many academic institutions, our panels were able to profoundly explore some of the biggest problems facing Sub-Saharan Africa currently.

Many topics were discussed including a survey of the resource, water and security, groundwater management and careers in the field. With speakers from a wide range of backgrounds, all of our conversations brought in unique viewpoints.

Additionally, the very first Global Water Association Lifetime Achievement award was given to Arun Deb for his incredible work with communities in India. Between his arsenic filters, community management, and girls education, he has been invaluable in the Philadelphia water community and abroad.



Upcoming Events

Save the Date!!

UNA-GP supports the work of Common Cause Pennsylvania as a local group that works to promote democracy, acceptance of the Rule of Law, and good government. As such it does locally what can and should be done globally in the spirit of the United Nations' Charter.

Hence, we inform our members about this "save the date announcement". More information will follow.

"Common Cause Pennsylvania is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2018 Public Service Achievement Awards. Zane Memeger, a partner at Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP, is honored for his outstanding service as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Ajay Raju, Chairman and CEO of Dilworth Paxson LLP, is honored for founding The Germination Project, a leadership incubator, and The Philadelphia Citizen, a public policy focused online news organization.

The awards will be presented at a reception at The Pyramid Club on June 12, 2018, beginning at 5:30 PM.

Common Cause Pennsylvania is a non-partisan, non-profit organization with 30,000 members and followers working to create a more accountable, responsive, and transparent democracy in Pennsylvania. It is focused on fair elections and the fight against partisan gerrymandering, as well as money in politics, voting rights, and other good government reforms. It is part of Common Cause, a nonpartisan, nonprofit democracy organization with over 1.1 million members and local organizations in 35 states.

For information contact Micah Sims, Executive Director, msims@commoncause.org

Using Water to Make Peace

A Symposium during Peace Week 2018. West Chester University

September 20th, 9:00AM- 2:00PM

Coming up in the fall, we are excited to be presenting a symposium to dive into how peace and water interact. After the UN published their report on the same subject, we are looking locally to get people equipped to think in terms of peace and building a regional network of water peace activists. Working alongside other dedicated organizations, the ultimate goal is to address peace and broad questions of social, cultural, livelihood impacts when implementing water projects between communities and countries. For now, ponder this quote and the implications of water in international conflict:

"... here's a small example of Shimon Peres' mindset: "I approached Putin," he told me not too long ago, when he was nearly 90, "and I told him this: in a few years Egypt is going to lose its rights to the Nile. The historic agreement with Britain and France will expire. Ethiopia is already demanding water, and that could spark war. Let's go both of us together to Morsi [then the Egyptian president] and tell him: 'we, Israel, will give you three Niles! We have the knowledge and the capacity to double Egypt's water supply!' "Morsi," Peres added, "won't listen to me; but to you, Putin, he'll listen. But we won't come to him as part of an initiative of states, states are already passé, we'll come through companies, through corporations, they're the ones who run the world today ..." -David Grossman, 2016, in The Guardian

The Mayor's Office and the City Council of Philadelphia

Christiaan Morrisk

The Mayor's office and the City Council of Philadelphia do not need to be introduced. They are well known entities that do the political work of governing our city. As such it behooves us to acknowledge the roles they play in the promotion and protection of human rights. That does not always go without debate and sometimes heated disagreements, but overall, our mayor and our city council are doing their work with the bill of rights AND the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in mind. I am proud of our mayors being members of the International "Mayors for Peace" organization. I am proud of our mayor and council members when they speak out about the "Starbucks Incident." More importantly, when our immigration laws and the very lax (employer driven) handling of those laws create dilemmas, American Dilemmas, in bold and with a tip of the hat to Gunnar Myrdal, our Mayor and our City Council take the moral high ground and do what they can to protect dreamers. USING HUMAN RIGHTS AS THEIR MORAL GUIDANCE. We are a sanctuary city, because we apply the morality behind our universal human rights. The laws be damned if the laws create 'immoral' situations. That goes for the Jim Crow laws, and that goes for our immigration "mess". We salute our local politicians.

PS: let's ask our Council to follow this lead: <https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/resolutions/2018/resolution-2018-17.pdf>

Spotlight on Human Rights

The US Human Rights Network

The US Human Rights Network (USHRN) is a [national advocacy organization](#) composed of wide range of groups. As part of its mission, USHRN aims to connect local struggles and groups with UN human rights work.

USHRN coordinated national initiatives to provide citizen input regarding US compliance with the International Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination. Another national effort focused on getting grassroots input to the UN's first Universal Periodic Review of our nation's compliance with Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2010. [Juntos](#), a major immigrant/youth advocacy group in Philadelphia, is a member of USHRN. The [National Human Rights Cities Alliance](#) was created by USHRN. The Alliance aims to link city-based organizers, scholars and grassroots groups around rights-based advocacy. The Human Rights Cities Alliance of Pittsburgh is an active member. A national meeting of the Human Rights Cities Alliance will be held in Jackson, Mississippi this June. The Cities Alliance has begun compiling resources such as [Strategies for Improving Local Implementation of Human Rights](#).

The United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia



You can help the United Nations Association!

Please [donate](#) whatever you can to the UNA-GP, and in turn, Philadelphians and beyond!

Have any ideas for fundraising events? We're all ears! We are always in need of volunteers, no matter how much or how (seemingly!) little time you have to devote. Volunteers with all types of skill sets are welcome to work with the UNA-GP, short or long term. If interested, please contact Manisha Patel, Volunteer Coordinator and President, at mpatel@una-gp.org



If this newsletter was forwarded or shared with you, you can get your own subscription and keep up with our chapter's activities! Sign up on our [website](#).

The UNA-GP is a chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of American (UNA-USA). Our website offers information about our mission and upcoming events, and ways to get involved, including volunteering and becoming a member.

Visit our website at www.una-gp.org

Check out our social media at www.facebook.com/UNAGP and www.twitter.com/UNAGP

Our office is located at 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

Connect with us!

Join the UNA-GP [page](#) or [group](#) on LinkedIn to meet and connect with other global citizens.