

UUSJ Newsletter – Spring 2013

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

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Chair's Corner:

Here is my Earth Day-evolved credo for my role of the UUSJ chair.

1. To extend the reach of our ... Environment Task Force is timely as today is Earth Day. Background: on April 16 we received an action-alert (AA) email from Allan Lindrup, UUSJ AA Administrator, on behalf of the Environmental Task Force. "We urge that you communicate with your IL House Representative in support of H.B. 2615 [IL Senate has already passed it], a bill that would establish strong regulations regarding hydraulic fracturing (fracking), which is currently legal and virtually unregulated in Illinois. Please see the attached model letter, which you may use for your communication on this issue." ~Allan Lindrup

I have been alerted, but have not taken action yet. I'll act today, Earth Day, when fracking in IL has been a major concern of the big Earth Day rally at the Thompson Center. In case there are other UUSJ's like me, I make this offer to the UUSJ membership: If you need to read the Environmental Task Force action alert and letter, but need a copy of them, email me at jeryparkr@yahoo.com and I'll send them to you, or you may contact Allan at uusj@sbcglobal.net.

2. Suggest how Task Forces can socialize and discuss more with their own and other-Task Force members, as well UUSJ members without a Task Force. Andrew Fisher, Chair of the Environmental Task Force, and I heard

an Earth Day speaker say that becoming vegetarian saves water. My friend who is pursuing the Meatless Mondays program says that eating vegetarian not only allows for more food and water for people, it helps prevent CO2 and methane (from cows) and stream pollution (from run-off fertilizer and from cow waste).

What about a meal at a vegetarian restaurant for members of the Environmental Task Force and other UUSJ folk interested in learning more and about the vegetarian option and discussing it with fellow UUs, with some socializing to boot. The date could be set so that people had time for a little research they could bring to the discussion.

3. Invite UUSJ's who are not yet members of a Task Force and members of UU congregations who are not UUSJ members, but have social-justice issues they're very concerned about, to visit Task Force meetings. Maybe meetings after meals would draw more visitors. What about a meal meeting some days after the Peace Task Force's annual Tax Day Protest of the proposed US military budget for the next fiscal year? The Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes sheets from the War Resisters League, which show the pie-graph of discretionary spending—military gets a 47% slice of the pie, non-military, excluding SS, Medicare, and Medicaid, gets a 53% slice. Task Force Chair Gene Horcher buys a ream of these sheets and organizes several

Task Force members to distribute them to people passing the Federal Plaza/Post Office on Tax Day. These sheets were also passed out by our UU suburban peace activists: Karla Chew at the Oak Park post office and by Jane Banner at the Evanston post office. At a post-Tax-Day meal/discussion, partakers would have had time to read both sides of the War Resisters League sheet. They're available on line. Under War Resisters League, click < war resisters league pie chart >—both front and back sides are available. There are links to war tax resistance. Film and curriculum resources are listed.

4. Share ideas about subgroups within Task Forces and new Task Forces as well. A subgroup of the Peace Task Force might focus on Disarmament Globally and Locally. The current struggle about gun control could be central to this subgroup. Another subgroup might be: US Youth War—Murder One-on-One. (Murder = War.) New Task Forces that might be pondered are:* Social Spending;* Healthcare—for Women and Children, Disabled, Poor, Minorities, Veterans, Elderly;* Criminal Justice System.

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UUSJ Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force Report

Since the last UUSJ newsletter, the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness has initiated two Action

Alerts. In the first of those two, directed to President Obama and Senator Durbin, we suggested that taxes on securities transactions and/or on carbon emissions could generate large new revenue sources that could be considered when trying to negotiated a combination of revenue increases and spending cuts to move our nation toward a more balanced federal budget and get away from the various fiscal cliffs, failure to raise the national debt limit when needed, and other crises that the federal government is facing in 2013. In the second action alert we supported Illinois Senate Bill 34 as it moves to the Illinois House after passage in the state Senate, to establish a fair and balanced, and some would say consumer friendly, Illinois Health Care Marketplace for those individuals and employees of small businesses, who would benefit from purchasing health insurance under such a structure, as called for under the Affordable Care Act. (Alternative proposals would have given the insurance industry a dominant voice in the management of our state's Health Care Marketplace).

This task force has created a new workshop, which can fit within a one hour time slot at your church or in other public venues. It is entitled "Move to Amend: Background, Hurdles and Strategies". To schedule one at your church or other venue, contact Karla Chew (708-524-9695 or karlachew@aol.com). In a related measure, this task force voted to support the Move to Amend Action of Immediate Witness at the UUA's 2013 General Assembly, which will be held in Louisville, KY, in late June. At General Assembly the UU Just Economic Community organization will have a new adult education package on economic justice, which you can take back to your home congregation for use there.

The most recent Home and Hope Booster grant was awarded to the U.U. Congregation of McHenry (formerly in Woodstock), for its new program to assist the homeless of McHenry County during the warmer half of the year, when the county's PADS shelters are closed. This new program is titled "Compassion for Campers". It refers to the fact that the homeless of McHenry County generally spend the warmer half of the year living out of their auto or other vehicle, sometimes with an adjoining campsite, almost always doing so where such a lifestyle is illegal, which makes them subject to harassment, and confiscation of property outside their vehicle, by law enforcement personnel. The program provides a weekly luncheon at a resource center where the homeless can get showers and other services, and allows church members to determine what supplies the homeless need, so that they can secure them and provide them to the homeless the following luncheon. The U.U. Congregation of McHenry expended well over \$1,000, and roughly 500 volunteer hours on this program in 2012, which was its first year of operation, with the hope of expanding it this year. The Home and Hope Booster grant that was distributed to that congregation earlier this month was for \$405. We congratulate the U.U. Congregation of McHenry for this new program to service the homeless in their county.

Task Force members have gathered updated information for the City of Chicago, and are close to finishing doing so for its suburbs in Illinois, so that we may create and distribute updated copies of the If YOU or Someone You Know Need Help resource sheets, which are for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. We have a database of over 100 organizations (including all of the U.U. congregations in Chicago and

its Illinois suburbs), social workers, and others, who look forward to receiving the annual updates of these resource sheets. The task force should have them distributed by the end of May.

The next meeting of this task force will occur on Saturday, July 27, from 12:30 to 2 p.m., at Third Unitarian Church. All are welcome. If you would like to get reminders and agendas for meetings of this task force, please let me know.

Allan Lindrup, Chair
uusj@sbcglobal.net or 773-595-4921

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Congregational Reports:

First Unitarian Church of Chicago:
Their Green Sanctuary special collection, to fund expenses related to their Final Action Plan, had raised about \$5,400. This will be enough to cover all expected expenses, except that one of the three types of more energy efficient lighting had to be dropped from the Green Sanctuary plan. (The church's Property Committee is now expected to pick up that expense out of their budget).

On Monday, April 22, at 7 p.m., First Unitarian hosted the Hyde Park and Kenwood Interfaith Council's annual Earth Day Interfaith Worship Service. Hosting this community worship service was one of the elements of the Green Sanctuary Group's Final Action Plan.

Second Unitarian

In May members of their church will be helping with a clean-up of the Chicago River. The Center for Neighborhood Technology may be doing an energy audit of 2U, providing the congregation

can either budget or otherwise assemble the \$800 cost of this audit.

Beverly:

On April 6 Beverly Unitarian Church had another of its household hazardous waste and electronics recycling collections. It had a lot of volunteers and ran very smoothly. (It also made a nice “net profit”, as contributions exceeded expenses by about \$550 dollars). Beverly had an Earth Day Worship Service on April 21.

Evanston:

They are in the process of establishing their second rain garden. Andrew Fisher now coordinates the articles that are submitted for the Eco-News column in the church’s monthly newsletter.

Action Alerts:

we approved having an Action Alert to support IL H.B. 2615, which will provide for stringent regulation of fracking in Illinois. We also discussed having an Action Alert, targeting the President and Sec. of State Kerry, regarding the State Department’s upcoming decision on whether to authorize the Keystone XL Pipeline. A hearing on that proposed pipeline will be held later this month, in Nebraska, so the decision is not expected before May. We agreed to have this Action Alert a few weeks after the Action Alert on IL H.B. 2615. Lastly, we discussed whether a letter to the President, asking that the U.S. Ambassador to the UN seek a new conference to discuss and negotiate controls on carbon emissions, was likely to be productive. No decision was made on that last matter.

Educational Insert:

Kerry Nelson has an update on hybrid vehicles. He expects to call it “Electric, Hybrid, Solar: Auto Power Alternatives”. Part of it drafted, but he had the flu so it will wait for next meeting. Allan has

been so busy he can’t do “Today’s Recycling Issues” until summer.

We will be presenting the program at the UUSJ Spring Quarterly Meeting. To see details and reviews of this “Bidder 70” documentary, follow this link:

<http://www.uusforsocialjustice.org/UpcomingEvents.htm>

The UUSJ Spring Quarterly Meeting

on May 11 at First Unitarian Church at 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago 60637 (in the parlor) 2:00 to 3:25pm Program “Bidder 70” acclaimed 70 minute documentary then discussion by Environmental Task Force. 3:30 to 5:00 UUSJ Board Meeting – all are welcome

Next meeting:

The Environmental Task Force will meet on Sunday, June 16, 2013, from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. at the LaSalle Street Metra Station at LaSalle and Congress.

With any questions, contact:

Andrew T. Fisher – Chair
847-492-1832 or fishorqn1580@att.net

UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

The Peace Task Force met 4-13-13. We planned a Tax Day Action. We agreed to continue as a Task Force, and we made plans for a program to be presented 8-18-13 at the UUSJ quarterly meeting in Hobart, IN.

The Tax Day Action held 4-15-13 at the Federal Plaza in Chicago was successful. We met members of A War Resister group at that Action and we may join their coalition.

All interested CAUUC church members and friends are invited to attend our next meeting tentatively scheduled for Saturday, 7-6-13, 2PM at Third Unitarian Church. For details contact:
Gene Horcher Co-chair at:
773-561-5296, e-mail: horcher@att.net

UUSJ Immigration Justice Task Force Report

Because of my cancer surgery in March, the Immigration Justice Task force has had only one meeting this spring, and no action alerts were sent out. We will be getting back to business soon.

Sue Rekenhaller – Chair
815-678-7072 tomatos@mc.net

Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) Report

Report of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus of Unitarian Universalist for Social Justice (Jan - April 2013)

The purpose of this report is to describe the various actions, large and small, which our small group has been doing since our last report. What have some of these actions been? First of all, our Executive Committee met back in February to formulate some key plans for the future. We voted to have some kind of workshop at the CMWD meeting in April to center on a neo-racism 101.

The outcome was in doubt since our request for a room was never answered. So, we will build our presence at the last District Assembly around the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council table. When we get to DA, we will improvise some kind of gathering. I will be proposing at our Caucus meeting that we sponsor a multiracial unity party to mark the end of the Central Mid-West District. We are also seeking to have an open forum on the need for multiracial Unitarian Universalism in the struggle against racism, old and new, on Wednesday June 19, 2013 at the UUA General Assembly in Louisville before the super-regional meetings at 5 pm. Again, even though the convention will not be in session, the Program Committee denied our request for a room. This has been a traditional response to our efforts since the Charlotte General Assembly. Again, we will seek to get a space once we get there through a loophole in the Committee's procedure.

In terms of immediate actions, we have made contact with the Native American Center for future collaborations seeking to have a more creative response to the Doctrine of Discovery instead of blaming why white brothers and sisters as the original resolution did. We need to do follow up. In terms of mass agitation, I did pass out UUMUAC pamphlets at the CAUUC wide Men's Meeting in Evanston in April and offered my services regarding multiracial Unitarian Universalism at the CAUUC annual meeting. I also passed out brochures at the Leadership conference at Palatine. Another more demonstrative action we supported was the demonstrations against the closing of the Mental Health Facilities. Jerry Parker and I were a part of about 45 people who held a demonstration in front of the mayor's office protesting this outrageous situation. I led a chant stating, Asian Latin Black Red White, against racism we will unite.

Finally, we have agreed to oppose the following plans coming down from the Bishops of Boston (UU leaders who command from above), for the upcoming GA 2013. These plans include the following: (1) eliminating Acts of Immediate Witness, (2) eliminating the non-discrimination clause, and (3) changing our denominational structure from an Association of Congregations to "a religious movement." Our main reason for opposing this last plan is that it would institutionalize racially segregated groups such as Allies for Racial Equity (ARE) – (which recently held a gathering for those who identify as white at the Unitarian Church of Rockford in March), Latino (a) UU Networking Association (LUUNA), Diverse & Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM), and

other forms of racially segregated groupings, while excluding organizations like UUMUAC, which fights for racial integration. To conclude; we will continue to oppose the continual neo-racist attacks on our white Unitarian Universalist brothers and sisters by those who use such terms as privilege, white privilege, white supremacy, white dominance to justify excluding them from full participation as comrades, and not just as allies, in the struggle to create The Beloved Community or what some have called the classless society.

For more information, contact Finley C. Campbell, Co-Chair
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finleycampbell5222@comcast.net

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