

UUSJ Newsletter – Winter 2012

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

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Chair's Corner:

2011 Annual Meeting

Thanks go to UCE Evanston for hosting the UUSJ program and annual meeting in December. The Peace Task Force presented a well-received program: The Cost of War. There were so many questions after the talk by Vincent Emanuel (IVAW) that we could have gone for another hour. But the annual meeting must go on, so the board members let our generous speaker go and then got to work.

Welcome to UUMUAC

UUSJ started a unique relationship with The Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus at the annual meeting in December. The UUMUAC will operate as an autonomous task force of UUSJ. Unlike our other task forces, it will have independent funding and will not require pre-approval for activities outside the CAUUC (Chicago Area UU Council) area.

Finley Campbell attended the December meeting as CAUUC

representative. As a founding member of UUMUAC he was able to tell us about the history and goals of the new group. They will work for racial justice as a spiritual principle with an eye toward the mutual goals of justice and support for all. They intend to offer workshops to UU Churches. The workshops will be free for Chicago area UU churches and fee-based for other churches.

Finley, as lead co-chair of UUMUAC, will represent the group on the UUSJ Board of Directors.

Congregational Study/Action issues

Upcoming opportunities and deadlines on UUA CSAIs:

February 1st

Vote in the Congregational Poll for Potential Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAI) for 2012-2016. Those CSAI's selected by the congregations will be on the General Assembly (GA) Final Agenda for delegates to select one at GA 2012.

- Climate Action and Adaptation Plans: Why Greenhouse Gases and their Effects Matter to Us
- Ending Slavery
- Exploring Class Barriers
- Families, Population, and the Environment
- Reproductive Justice: Expanding Our Social Justice Calling

March 1st

Submit comments on the current CSAI (2010-2012) "Immigration as a Moral Issue."

You can find more information at www.UUA.org .

As I begin my tenure as UUSJ Chair, I invite you to take another step toward Social Justice this year. Visit a task force. Come to one of our quarterly programs. Let us know what you're doing in your congregation. We'd love to meet you and hear about your goals and accomplishments.

Anne Ward 847-854-1111
anne@creativecore.com

UUSJ Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force Report

While I was on sabbatical from this task force, in connection with building rehabilitation and moving activities, my task force Co-Chair, Ron Chew, passed away (as report in more depth in the last UUSJ newsletter). When the task force resumed meeting, in November, I was approved as the sole Chair of this task force.

We have been pleased that the Occupy Movement has raised the public awareness of issues, such as the growing divide between the wealthy and most Americans over the last three decades, and the issue of corporate personhood, both of which this task force has raised through its workshops (*The Growing Divide* and *Corporate Personhood*). Roughly 50 U.U.s, representing mainly three area UU congregations (First Unitarian Society of Chicago, Third Unitarian Church, and Unity Temple, U.U.), participated in the Occupy Chicago General Assembly on the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 13. At this task force's November meeting we voted to recommend to UUSJ that UUSJ as a whole offer to become the fiscal agent for the Occupy Chicago movement, which was at that time seeking a non-profit fiscal agent. Before that motion would come before UUSJ, at its 2011 annual meeting, we learned that another faith-based non-profit organization had offered to serve as Occupy Chicago's fiscal agent and that such a proposal was agreed to by the Occupy Chicago movement in late November.

Our last Action Alert, initiated shortly before Thanksgiving, opposed a proposed Constitutional Amendment that would have required a balanced U.S. budget. Our opposition was based on the fact that the proposal was drafted by very conservative members of the U.S. House and was not balanced, requiring balancing of the budget solely through budget cuts, with provisions that would have made tax increases virtually impossible. The proposed Constitutional Amendment failed to secure the requisite two-thirds vote to pass the U.S. House of Representatives.

The word was sent out at the end of November that nominations for our next Home and Hope Booster grant were due to be received by the end of January, 2012. If your congregation provides financial and/or volunteer assistance to an organization serving the homeless, or provides services to the homeless directly, we encourage a Social Justice Committee Chair, or other appropriate individual, to submit a nomination, particularly if it has not submitted a nomination in the past 24 months. Anyone needing the form can find it on the UUSJ web site, or may contact this writer.

Items of a miscellaneous nature include the following. The U.U. Just Economic Community's former web site (which ended with .org) was hijacked or otherwise lost, so they have reestablished a web presence at www.uujec.com. This task force normally maintains a membership in

one local organization fighting homelessness, plus one local organization fighting for economic justice. We renewed our membership in the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, while deferring a decision on which local economic justice organization to have a membership in. The next meeting of this task force will occur on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., at Third Unitarian Church. Anyone interested in our work is become to come.

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

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Congregational Reports:

Beverly:

They have a great program for recycling electronics, which recycles about 8,000 pounds of electronics per collection. Their next collection is on April 7, between 8:30 and 10 a.m. On Sunday, March 18, between 3 and 5 p.m., they will host a community forum on Jobs vs. The Environment.

They are currently fighting developers of a nearby golf course to turn it into a park instead of condos and/or commerce.

Finally, they are planning for an Earth Day on April 14.

Elgin:

They are continuing with a winter farmers market. Also, they recently successfully completed their prairie garden burn (before any of the snow).

Evanston:

They are starting a committee to investigate and (hopefully) execute the many steps to mount photovoltaic solar panels on the sanctuary roof. They are still using a compost pick-up program for all the compost from the weekly lunches every Sunday after the service. Lynn Lawson is continuing to write “ecotips” in our newsletters.

Action Alerts:

The Environmental Task Force just sent (1) an Action Alert urging support of the federal RESTORE act, (HR 3096 and S 1400) in both the House and Senate, to direct more funds to the Gulf Coast for long term ecological and economic restoration following the extensive BP’s deepwater oil spill. These funds go to the Gulf States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas for coastal restoration of biological resources, programs to promote tourism particularly for seafood consumption and clean coast recreation, job creation, and improvement of coastal state parks.

(2) They plan to issue a state Action Alert opposing coal gasification for these main reasons. It will:

- Add much climate change CO2;
- Increase electric rates because it takes much more energy to get the gas from coal; and
- Kill jobs by driving employers away by high electric costs.

Educational Insert:

We completed and distributed an “Environmental Guide to Pesticides in Produce”. It lists a “dirty dozen” that are highest in pesticides, and a “Clean 15” that are lowest in pesticides. It recommends that you purchase any in the dirty dozen list as organic. To view this insert yourself right now, click on this link and open it under “Eating”.

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

Next meeting:

To be held on Sunday, March 18, 2012 from 2:30 to 4:00 PM at the Unity Temple, 875 Lake Street, Oak Park. All are welcome.

With any questions, contact:
Andrew T. Fisher – Chair
847-492-1832 or fishorgn1580@att.net

UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

Note that the next Peace Task Force meeting is scheduled for Saturday 2-18-12, 2:30 PM at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N. Mayfield, Chicago. All CAUUC area church members and friends are invited to attend. To attend by conference call, dial 1-800-704-9804 then enter the code 892781#.

Last fall at the UUSJ Annual Meeting, the Peace Task Force presented a program, The Cost of War, with Iraq veteran Vincent Emanule as speaker. Mr. Emanule covered not only the cost of war but also the entire basis of USA defense and foreign policy. He questioned not only the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq but also imperialism, the need for foreign defense bases and a standing army! While all readers may not agree with Mr. Emanule on every point, he served as a US Marine for two tours in Iraq. He "has been there and done that". A discussion of his remarks will be included as part of our meeting on 2-18-12, Come and join us!

Gene Horcher Co-chair 773-561-5296
or

horcher@att.net

UUSJ Immigration Justice Task Force Report

The next meeting of the immigration task force will be held on February 12, 2012, 2PM at Countryside Unitarian Universalist Church in Palatine Illinois.

I would like to extend an invitation to anyone in your congregations who are interested in the issue of immigration reform to join us on the 12th.

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

Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) Report

At a special interfaith conference in New York in November 2011 for social justice/racial justice activists, it was highly recommended that those of us committed to multiracial Unitarian Universalism become more visible in the local congregations and be more active in the 2012 struggles which will be coming up. Until now, UUMUAC has primarily been a discussion group, sponsoring where possible, small gatherings, although we did have a larger grouping at the CMWD 's open tables session at the 2011 annual District Assembly. Moreover, we have spent a lot of our GA time opposing the DRUUMM/ARE (Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries/Allies for Racial Equity) in their advocacy of racial caucusing; i.e.

opposing the New Jim Crow in the UUA. This approach has won the support of many rank and file UU's, but it did not stop the DRUUMM/ARE takeover of the racial justice work of the Association. Thus, the best way to oppose their neo-racism is not through debates and position papers alone, but through acts of immediate or long term witness against the racism in the world beyond our UU walls. In other words, racial justice activism.

I say it is time to lead by example. Since we were already working with UUSJ as our financial manager, I proposed at the UUSJ 2011 Annual Meeting that we become more integrated with it, since it is our social justice activism arm in the Chicago land area. And since at the time they had no racial justice activism, except that connected with immigration, homelessness or economic justice, I proposed that we become the racial justice arm of UUSJ while still keeping our autonomy, becoming UUSJ's anti-racist task force. This proposal was adopted.

UUMUAC meets the UUSJ task force criterion of having five or more activists from three or more local (CAUUC) congregations, and we are also an affiliate of CAUCC. We have Eileen Wiviott and Doug Erickson from the Unitarian Church of Evanston, Allan Lindrup and I from First Unitarian (Chicago), Jerry Parker from Third Unitarian, Gene Horcher from Second Unitarian, and Carl Wolf from First Unitarian (Hobart), among others. We also

have sympathizers at Beverly Unitarian and Unity Temple, U.U.

One goal is to link up with other racial justice activists in the Chicago area U.U. congregations and begin to participate as UUMUAC in bringing the ideals of multiracial Unitarian Universalism and the issues of racist unemployment, racist criminal justice systems, and racist imperialist wars into the various struggles which will emerge out of the next phase of the Occupy Movement, and on other fronts, in 2012.

In addition, we can offer our workshop on building multiracial Unitarian Universalism in predominantly white congregations on a purely donation basis to any interested church in the UUSJ area, as a part of our participation in UUSJ.

Our first major project as an interdependent member of UUSJ is an open forum on the following topic: White Privilege or Multi-Racial Unity in Preparing For Justice GA 2012 in Phoenix Arizona: A Debate. We plan to have a panel with representatives from DRUUMM/ARE, UUMUAC, and from other groups to debate this issue, followed by UUMUAC workshops on racial justice activism. The date is Saturday, March 24, 2012 beginning at 9:00 am, registration, and going to 2:30 pm. The place is the First Unitarian Church of Chicago. Registration is \$10, which can also be a membership. A formal notice and flyer will be prepared, as soon as we have received replies from invited participants.

For more information, contact Finley C. Campbell, Co-Chair
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