

UUSJ Newsletter – Fall 2016

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

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Chair's Corner:

During this lead up to our presidential election, filled with ugly rhetoric, it is important to us to keep in mind the values we hold as Unitarian Universalists. The issues of economic inequality, poverty, violence and health care disparities are but a few of the challenges that our public officials must deal with and we must demand that they represent us all. We must raise our voices and let the world know that UUs believe in freedom, equality, peace and love. Our 7 principles are more than just words on paper. I challenge each and every one of you along with myself to reflect often on those 7 principles and how we can apply them to every action we take each and every day.

Karen M Kortsch

UUSJ Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force Report

At the UUSJ Annual Meeting on Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016, from 2 to 5 p.m., at Third Unitarian Church, this task will lead a program that focuses

UUSJ Fall/Annual Meeting

The UUSJ Fall/Annual Meeting will take place in Third Unitarian Church, 301 North Mayfield, Chicago, IL 60644, Sunday, December 4, from 2 to 5 p.m. The Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force will lead a program that focuses on the topic of income inequality. We will watch an appropriate Technology, Entertainment, and Design (TED) talk video and discuss the draft.

on the topic of income equality. We will watch an appropriate TED talk video and discuss the draft Congregational Study Action Issue on Income Inequality to identify ways it can be improved, and encourage us to get our home congregations to hold similar discussions and submit their comments by the deadline in early 2017.

In the last UUSJ newsletter this writer informed you that the Our Home program of Connections for the Homeless, an Evanston based non-profit organization serving the homeless, had been selected as our last Home and Hope Booster grant. That column provided the details

about that program and the volunteer and financial help provided to it by the members of the Unitarian Church of Evanston. At that time we were just starting to collect pledges to fund that grant. I am pleased to report that we received pledges sufficient to provide a grant of \$560 for the Our Home program. The deadline for our next Home and Hope Booster grant is at the end of September; with selection of the next grant scheduled to occur at our next task force meeting on October 15.

In July this task force distributed its first economic justice education piece, titled "Illinois: Economic Wealth and Taxes", which could be used as an Order of Service insert, or shared in many other ways. It was distributed to all the UU congregations in Illinois, plus to about 30 economic justice organizations in Illinois. If you haven't seen it and would like a copy, just send your request to uusj@sbcglobal.net.

We have only had one Action Alert since the spring. That Action Alert involved sending letters to Illinois Comptroller Leslie Munger regarding how payments to contracted service providers for the homeless would be paid under the Stop-Gap-Budget legislation. The contracted homeless service providers did subsequently receive their amounts due for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. We hope that continues for the first half of the current fiscal year, which was also included in that budget bill. The Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness will hold its next meeting on Saturday, Oct. 15,

between 12:30 and 2 p.m., at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave. All are welcome.

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

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Congregational Reports:

(1) First Unitarian Church of Chicago

There are now 9 members in the Green Sanctuary Group; They will participate in 63rd St. Beach Cleanup on September 17th; will continue to pay, as needed, for replacement of standard lights with Motion Sensor Lights, and for a second solar panel on the office roof; are trying to organize a book reading & discussion group. The Church will use their \$5,000 contribution for a new dish washer to install it as part of the capital campaign renovations.

(2) Second Unitarian Church of Chicago. The Green Sanctuary is on hold.

(3) Beverly Unitarian Church Is planning to have a number of Mini-Forums after Sunday Service; First one at a date to be determined will be on the Green Economic Corridor on the SE side of Chicago; They will have their usual electronic/hazardous waste collection on October 1st at the Church, and a spring hazardous waste collection in May in Pullman,

held in conjunction with the 9th and 10th Ward Green Festival.

(4) Evanston The church continues to compost and that they are including biodegradable cups, etc. in this composting. Their Green Sanctuary Group is doing stewardship work at Harms Woods, which is 2 to 3 miles from the church. Their group submits a column to the church newsletter roughly every other month. The two rain gardens are doing well.

Since the Spring UUSJ Newsletter, the Environmental task force has issued **two action alerts:** (1) on June 29 to both Illinois senators in favor of GMO labeling on all food, and (2) to President Obama thanking him for veto the outrageous Spruce No. 1 Mine and to veto similar mining bills permitting mountain top removal for the balance of his term.

Educational inserts: We are completing one by Allan on the pros and cons of GMO foods. Fran has drafted one on “The Pros and Cons of Nuclear Energy as a Source of Electricity in the U.S.” which we plan to distribute in late October.

Next meeting: Will start at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 29th at Bee Zee at 424 S. Wabash.

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

UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

The Peace Task Force sponsored the program at the UUSJ Summer Quarterly meeting on August 28. The workshop centered on Restorative Justice and Peace Circles and was led by Prof. Michael Seng of the Restorative Justice Program at John Marshall Law School and by Linda Cooper of Beverly Unitarian and the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Organization.



Photo of peace circle by Andrew Fisher

In their presentation, Prof. Seng stressed that restorative justice is not punitive. Its aim is to bring healing to the community, to bring all relevant parties to the table. Prof Seng went on to say, “You can’t separate restorative justice from civil rights.” He said the Chicago Police Dept is supporting the restorative justice program, and Chicago is ‘leading the nation’ in community courts. Restorative justice hubs are

monitoring and supporting young people on parole and awaiting sentencing, he said.

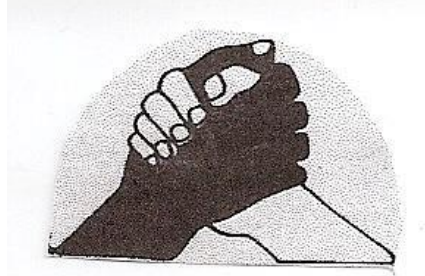
Linda Cooper then led the group in a demonstration peace circle. She told participants that peace circles create an intentional space for us to be physically present for each other. Everyone in the circle is equal, and the purpose of the circle is for us to LISTEN to each other; everyone speaks without interruption.

At their July meeting the Peace Task Force approved writing a letter to our US Senators in opposition to drone warfare. We have agreed to a model letter, which we plan to initiate as an Action Alert in October. This spring UU chaplain Chris Antal resigned his military commission as a sign of his opposition to the country's nuclear and drone warfare policies. The task force urges all congregations to spread the word about Rev. Antal's actions and to explore ways of supporting him.

Justice – Peace Task Force –

contact
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Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) Report



“The Unity of the Light and Dark Skinned People of the World.”

Report from the Unitarian
Universalist Multiracial Unity Action
Caucus

By Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell,
Member, the Executive Committee

Opening words:

the election season is now rushing to fruition. Here is my prediction. Hillary Clinton will win the election, it will definitely be a victory for feminism; however, It will not be a victory for multiracial Unitarian Universalism, since she does not believe that white male workers, students, and professionals are victims of anti-black racism.

UUMUAC (AKA the Mac) Executive Committee Meeting

September 9, 2016

First, we shared our recollections of our last meeting, which was in the late spring 2016 where we made preparations for the 2016 General Assembly. This turned out to be an important event.

Here is a final overview of our activities there:

1. We passed out a total of over 300 UUMUAC brochures at key plenary sessions and distributed dozens of copies of our key books;
2. After being denied the use of available spaces for our meetings by the GA Program Committee, we went ahead and had daily lunch meetings with other delegates, ranging from 8 to 28 participants, sharing our ideas about multiracial unity in opposition to the neo-racism dominating the discussion about how to fight racism, especially the idea of "black spaces" and all black conferences;
3. We held a small workshop, with nine attendees, about the nature of neo-racism. Nine people either joined or signed our contact sheet.

For a full analysis of our work there, contact me at:
fcamp10501@aol.com .

As many of you already know, we **took part in the UUSJ Spring Quarterly 2016 meeting** with a report on Taye Woldesmiate's outreach activities in East Africa.

After finishing our recollections of the past, we discussed the issues of the present. Brother Lindrup summarized some of the bills dealing with criminal justice reform in the Illinois General Assembly. He proposed an action alert to support Illinois Senate bill 3292, to make minor possessions of illegal substances misdemeanors rather than felonies. We agree to have an action alert to support this legislation. This is important work in

light of the fact that the Prisons and Restorative Justice Task Force recently dissolved itself as a part of UUSJ. And since many issues of incarceration, including the incarceration of white brothers and sisters, reflect neo-racism, we felt that it was important for us to do so.

Another item of business was the African Refugee Fund. Allan presented his proposal for an Africa Refugee Fund, separate from our Africa outreach fund. The purpose of this special fund is to support the specific case of a UU from Africa seeking asylum here in the United States and needing help in settling in the Chicago area. The proposal was adopted unanimously. Allan said he would be offering a \$2500 matching grant to match contributions from folks not members or friends of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago, which has agreed, through its Social Justice Council, to help support this asylum seeker. (More on this in a future mailing).

Next, we discussed the need to have a major outreach effort in the Chicago area. We hope to be able to set up Mac literature at those churches where we have members. The plan is to start with Second Unitarian Church where Gene is a member. He will inquire about the feasibility of this proposal.

Finally, I presented a proposal concerning a major fundraising effort for the Afghan Women' Collective. This would be in the form of a pre-Christmas Bazaar, which would feature the products of the Afghan Women's Collective, under the

leadership of Sister Fahima Gaheez. The proposal that we develop this project for November 18, 19, and 20, (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) 2016. We would seek to involve three of our churches with Mac members: First, Second, and Third U with First U on Friday, Second U on Saturday, and Third U on Sunday. UUMUAC would be the main organizing group but with the endorsement and the active support of UUSJ, interested CAUUC congregations, and the Global Studies Group of the Social Justice Council of the First Unitarian church of Chicago. The need for active support is crucial to the success of this project.

Now, what exactly would this be? It would be a pre-Christmas Bazaar, featuring the sales of items ranging from jewelry made by Afghan women collective to their finely detailed "carpetry." In addition, we would invite local persons from each church to also contribute items to make the Bazaar more inclusive. The financial arrangement would be as follows: 30 per cent to co-sponsoring UU churches and social justice organizations and 70 per cent to the Afghanistan Women's Collective. In addition, we would have a film showing of a Kathleen Foster's Afghanistan: Ten Years Later and a power point presentation by Sister Gaheez, where feasible.

Our participation in this event will accomplish three goals: To show support to the Collective, to earn some income for our Africa fund, and to demonstrate the principle of international solidarity.

We voted unanimously to set up a committee to do a feasibility study dealing with the question of financing, division of the profits, and expenses for Ms. Fahima. Update: Finley Campbell and Marie Cobbs have formed this committee and we are seeking the third member of that committee. More later.

We then discussed the upcoming events, which are of general interest to UU's for Social Justice. See below for details.

Events:

Past: Saturday, October 8, 2016
UUMUAC workshop entitled --
Conversations Against Racism: How to Use Multiracial Unitarian Universalism in the Struggle against Neo-racism both within and outside our Association of Congregations. 10 am – 2 pm at the First Unitarian Church of Chicago, 5650 South Woodlawn Ave, in Hull Chapel. A flyer previously mailed to you had details.

Upcoming: Chicago Sinfonietta: January 2017: We agreed that UUMUAC would officially support the Martin Luther King Day Musical Concert Birthday celebration, which is held annually. We would publicize the event through our communication network, and we would sponsor Sinfonietta outreach activities to UU churches in the Chicago area.

Our next meeting will be at the Exchequer Pub and Restaurant at 224 S. Wabash, between Adams and Jackson, on Friday October 7 at

1:00 PM to finalize our proposals. Our meetings are open to all UUSJ members and friends.

Bearing Witness Actions

UUMUAC was among a list of co-sponsors of a Peace Walk, sponsored as a Peace Action Interfaith event, with Rev. Tom Capo serving as our contact. This event was held on Sunday, September 11, 2016, in commemoration of that tragic example of neo-racist terrorism in action.

Mac members also took part in an event marking the 50th anniversary of the Attica Prison Rebellion, with Allan Lindrup and Gene Horcher representing us. It began with a rally at the Thompson Center then a march to the Metropolitan Correction Center at 71 West Van Buren Street near Clark St for another rally. The event was called by the International Workers of the World Organizing Committee to commemorate this rebellion, where both prisoners and guards died because of the neo-racist actions of Governor Rockefeller, including white prisoners, like the New Left terrorist Sam Melville.

Editorial

Recently, there was a documentary movie shown over PBS TV, produced by Ken Burns and based on a film by Artemis Jourkowsky, called "The Sharps' War Against the Nazis," dealing with the role that Rev. Waitstill Sharp and his wife Martha played in the old World War 2 Popular Front against fascism.

The film has garnered a lot of praise, including from the UUA Leadership. But this was not always the case. That leadership marginalized the film when it first came out, several years ago. It was the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus, which first endorsed the documentary film about the Sharps' participation in the old Popular Front period. The first version was called "The Minister's War," then there was a second, more polished version, called "Two Who Dared." It was this version, which UUMUAC presented in the basement of the GA Convention Center at the Louisville General Assembly, showing the film on a bare wall since we could not get a screen.

So why did it take so long for the UUA to support the film? My hypothesis is that it was reluctant to support this movie because it went against the ideological position which dominates the UUA's anti-racist/anti-oppression work. And that is that white UU's all suffer from the sin of white privilege, which, unless they have been forgiven by the powers that be, by endorsing neo-racism, cannot be forgiven. And here was a movie showing two white UU's using their privileges to fight against the most powerful white supremacist/racist movement of its time, Nazism. Such neo-racist marginalization also explains why the UUA will not celebrate the struggle of white UU's against slavery, segregation, and the new Jim Crow. But that's just my hypothesis.

Conclusion

Since the Black Lives Matter Movement has become the leader of the anti-oppression/anti-racist forces in this country, especially with a 100 million dollar grant from the Ford Foundation, it is even more important that UUMUAC reaffirms our position on working with the rank and file members of this group. Earlier at our Executive Meeting, we confirmed that whenever they act in a multiracial manner, we will support them as an organization, whenever they act in a neo-racist manner, we would oppose them. And I reserve to the right to critique in a cautious and courteous manner their support of black power/black liberation ideology or their neo-racist

connections to the US American capitalist elite.

Let me reiterate that only through multiracial Unitarian Universalism or its left wing equivalence can we achieve the establishment of the Beloved Community – multiracial, multicultural, and international -- as an historic reality. This is the vision, always, which sustains UUMUAC. Join us.

Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell,
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Executive Committee of the
UUMUAC
773 752 4019 for more information.

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