

UUSJ Newsletter – Fall 2018

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

Andrew T. Fisher, Editor & Communications Director

1448 East 52nd Street, PM Box 144

Chicago, IL 60615

Phone: 773-595-4921 / E-mail: uusj@sbcglobal.net

Web site: <http://uusforsocialjustice.org/>

Chair's Corner:

Sometime we experience personal, family and other problems which impact our morale and yet the need to keep on pushing is strong. I'm sure we all have gone through a lot of these feelings regarding the current political climate both nationally and in our own organization. It appears that we all are involved in some sort of drama that sometimes keep us off balance, yet we feel that we must continue to fight for our democratic principles.

The successful meeting in Joliet, despite the opposition to UUSJ by a few members of the UU Ministers Association, proves that UUSJ still has an important role to play in advancing social justice. The meeting highlighted the importance of reaching out to smaller congregations.

We need to ensure that our mission and vision statement is underscored as the tie that binds us together, especially as found expressed in our Bylaws, which we are in the process of updating through amendments.

The Supreme Court hearings reveal a deadly contradictions in our government, for if we lose faith in the integrity of the court, then dangerous divisions lie ahead, underscoring the need for UUSJ as a part of the

UUSJ Fall/Annual Meeting

The UUSJ Fall/Annual Meeting will take place in the Unity Temple, Community Center at 1019 South Blvd., Oak Park, on Sunday, December 2, from 2 to 5 p.m. The Interfaith Criminal Justice Task Force will organize the program.

resistance to institutionalized racism and other injustices.

Finally, despite any problems we face, we will overcome them and work hard during the remainder of 2018 and beyond to grow UUSJ. In that regard, we look forward to an Oct. 21, 2 to 4 p.m. meeting with UU young adults, organized and facilitated by Anna Carvlin, as we look to start turning UUSJ over to younger generations.

Marie Cobbs, Chair

UUSJ Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force Report

UUSJ endorsed the Poor People's Campaign and this task force was committed to participation in that campaign's efforts in Illinois. As the

Chair of this task force I participated in the campaign's efforts in five of the six weeks of the 40 day campaign. I traveled to Springfield and engaged in non-violent civil disobedience on four consecutive Mondays. While I was ready to be arrested on any of those four Mondays, it wasn't until June 4 that I was arrested, along with ten others, as part of a sit-in demonstration. The nine of us who did not have physical disabilities were held in the Sangamon County Jail for five hours, until we were bailed out. We were each charged with three misdemeanors and given court dates in August. In July we learned that the Sangamon County District Attorney had decided to not press charges against any of us, so we did not have to return for court dates. The final campaign event was a march and rally in Chicago, which I and other UUSJ activists participated in.

We did not receive any Home and Hope Booster grant nominations prior to the task force's meeting in July, so the task force members committed to do further outreach, as we seek to secure one or more grant nominations by the new nomination deadline of Sept. 30. If your congregation helps an organization helping the homeless, or provides direct services to the homeless, please have an appropriate leader in that effort or the social justice committee, etc. complete the two page application and submit it by the end of September (either by ground mail to the UUSJ box, or via email to uusj@sbcglobal.net). To secure a

copy of the nomination form, send an email request to uusj@sbcglobal.net .

After information fact checking, etc. we updated the Chicago and Suburban Chicago versions of our *If YOU or Someone You Know Needs Help* resource sheets. The updated sheets (colored versions and masters on white paper) along with a cover letter were distributed to the database of Chicago area UU churches, non-profit organizations, social work agencies and independent social workers, and other who have requested copies, at the start of August.

Since the last UUSJ newsletter this task force has had one Action Alert, to our Illinois state Representatives and Senators, asking for them to co-sponsor, or at minimum commit to support H.B. 5508, which amends the Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act. During the legislative process it got renamed the Access to Affordable, Permanent and Supportive Housing Act. It basically prohibits a unit of local government from requiring a person to vacate a public space unless adequate affordable housing is available for them. This legislation has not yet gathered enough support to pass the IL House, so was re-referred to the Rules Committee.

We have been creating a Money and Politics – Illinois resource sheet, to lay out the rules related to campaign spending and other campaign matters, as it relates to Illinois state elections and also those for Chicago municipal elections. It should get distributed later this month to a

variety of social and justice organizations in Illinois. Anyone may request a copy by writing to uusj@sbcglobal.net.

The next meeting of this task force will occur on Saturday, Oct. 13, between 12:30 and 2 p.m., at Second Unitarian Church, 656 W. Barry, Chicago IL 60657. All are welcome.

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

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Congregational Reports:

- (1) First Unitarian Church of Chicago Green Sanctuary is considering the feasibility of using other recycling services such as the Resource Center. They might also collect compost material. The cost of new specialty containers might require a special collection from the congregation. Styrofoam will be collected in the fall, and will be taken to Dart Industries for recycling. The Environmental Book Club met in June and chose *How Culture Shapes the Climate Debate*, by Andrew Hoffman, as their next book.
- (2) Joliet. Christine McGuire reported that they are pursuing Green Sanctuary Certification.
- (3) Beverly Unitarian Church Green Sanctuary will hold another Electronic and Household Hazardous Waste Collection on October 6th in Beverly, probably in the lot of a neighboring Church.
- (4) Evanston The green team has a

goal of zero waste by composting biodegradable cups, etc. with a bin outside for members, as well as recycling. They collect electronic waste (batteries, I-phones) as well. The two rain gardens are doing well.

Since the Spring UUSJ Newsletter, the Environmental task force has issued **two action alerts:** (1) on July 2 to the IL House supporting SB3174 which makes public information on hazardous chemicals from fracking, and (2) on Aug. 18 to Senators Durbin and Duckworth to change the Farm Bill (currently in conference committee) to oppose adverse effects on our national forests and clear cutting.

Educational inserts: The one by Eleanor Hall on Divestment from Fossil Fuel and Reinvestment in Clean Energy has been distributed. We are finalizing one by Allan on Solar Energy and Residential Energy Credits and will distribute it soon.

THIS TASK FORCE MIGHT BE DISOLVED since Gene Horcher resigned and the minimum is five members (we now only have 4). With President Trump believing climate change is a hoax yet so many hurricanes, droughts/wildfires, polar ice melting to rising sea levels, and so much scientific research finding human caused climate change is real and growing, we currently NEED this task force more than ever. If you are interested in joining (only a meeting every 2 months), please come to our next meeting.

Next meeting: Will start at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 14th at Native Foods, 216 S. Clark, Chicago With any questions, contact: Andrew T. Fisher – Chair

847-492-1832 or
fishorgn1580@gmail.com

UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

By Jane Bannor, Task force chair

The UUSJ Peace Task force distributed the War Resisters League's flyer criticizing the level of US military spending at the Monday, Sept 17 Daley Plaza celebration of the International Day of Peace. The event marked the 40th consecutive year that the city of Chicago has held this observance. According to one of the speakers, the commemoration is the longest continuous-running event of its kind in the US.

Peace Task force members wore their 'Standing on the Side of Love' tee-shirts and buttons and talked up the importance of peace and peace activism to the many school students and on-lookers at the plaza. Many Chicago area high school and elementary school students took part in the event, parading with flags from all of the countries around the globe, holding placards and performing in music and dance ensembles.

As usual, the members of Chicago counselor corps were present, and a welcoming speech was given by Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. Task force members were glad to see a larger emphasis on peace than in previous years.

The head of Illinois Veterans for Peace delivered a rousing statement, and the crowd was led from the podium in a chant of "What do we Want?" Peace. "When do we Want it?" NOW.

According to the flyer the task force distributed, 47% of the US budget is spent on the military when expenses for retiree health and pension benefits are combined with current costs and debt re-payments for uncovered previous costs. Task force members emphasized that this money could be much better spent on funding for education and housing.

The Peace Task force's next meeting will be held Saturday, Oct 13 at 2pm at the Second Unitarian Church, 656 West Barry Street. For the past quarter the task force has tried using monthly meetings to increase interest and attendance. So far this effort has not been successful. At their next meeting the group intends to continue working on this problem and will consider radical re-structuring of the group and possible disbanding. We'd appreciate your input in this process. You're welcome to either join us in person or by phoning in to a new conference line: 1-605- 475-5900, code 508310#.

Any questions contact
Chair Jane Bannor,
jbannor@sbcglobal.net

Interfaith Criminal Justice Task Force Report

The Interfaith Criminal Justice Task Force met in June, August, and September. The two main initiatives taken are continued support for the no-money-bail coalition and its activities, and for passage of a Cook

County Ordinance outlawing blanket bans of returning citizens from housing access.

The impact of eliminating money bail on family separations, loss of jobs, loss of housing, and absence from school programs is tremendous. According to the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions, people are innocent until proven guilty. People released on bond are able to organize a defense to charges and do not need to plead guilty just to get out of jail. They do not need to sit in jail for months, only to see charges dismissed. They are less likely to be convicted, and those convicted get lesser sentences. But that is not how the Cook County Court system and most counties in Illinois operate. People who cannot post money bond are jailed without any threat justification prior to trial. Compliance by Judges with the legislatively mandated procedures and actions prescribed by the Chief Judge Evans is very spotty. Compliance will demand continuing citizen action to secure justice for poor people.

It does not have to be this way. Systems are now in place in other states and the District of Columbia to release people prior to trial, unless they pose a public safety threat. There is no money bail involved. Experience has shown that compliance with court dates is quite good. Despite the failure of Clerk of the Court Dorothy Brown to post the court docket on the internet so that people can look up their court dates and changes to them, a system of notification has been implemented by the County using grant money from the MacArthur

foundation. Further legislative action in Springfield is also warranted to achieve a fully no-money-bond system.

In addition to the bond issue, the IFCJTF has endorsed the Fair Housing Alliance. The Fair Housing Initiative proposes an amendment to the Cook County housing ordinance that would ban blanket exclusion from housing of citizens who have criminal records. Landlords would still be able to accept or reject applicants on an individual basis. The Alliance was formed by the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance and includes over a hundred organizations as members, and has organized an active campaign to advocate the initiative to Cook County Commissioners.

In addition, discussions were held regarding:

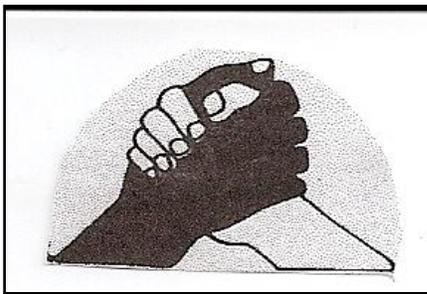
1. The University of Chicago police force and its conduct
2. The action of the Illinois Supreme Court to decline a privilege rule for restorative justice information
3. Connections to the Illinois Coalition against Racism
4. Drug reform legislation from the ACLU
5. Report on the fifteen or so bills passed by the legislature, most now signed into law by Governor Rauner
6. Support for preservation of the demonstration projects established by IDOC Director Baldwin, following the change in administration in Springfield.

Major actions taken are:

1. Continue to support the End Money Bail Alliance. Advocacy is now joined by Peoples Lobby and Community Renewal Society as well.
2. Vote to join the Fair Housing Alliance
3. Vote to identify the social justice chairs at area congregations to contact
4. Actions to establish a website for ICJTF
5. Notifications to members regarding the volunteer opportunities at the IDOC Summit of Hope in Little Village in October.

Evan Freund
773-624-0333

Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) Report



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

finleycampbell5222@comcast.net

The **Final Report** of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) by Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, Spokesperson
Note: Brother Campbell is an ordained

Baptist minister and received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He is not a part of the Unitarian Universalist Ministerial Association, nor is he a minister of any UU congregation.

Background: Greetings and alas farewell to members and friends of Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice – the Chicago Area. It is with a heavy heart that I am writing to inform you that the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus aka UUMUAC is hereby withdrawing as a task force in your organization. We do not do this lightly since we have spent several years dedicated to the multiracial struggle against racism both within and without our Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations as a part of UUSJ. And in the process, we have taken part in many events together ranging from demonstrations to programs to meetings.

But recent events, beginning in January, 2018, with the disaffiliation of UUSJ from CAUUC because of our commitment to multiracial Unitarian Universalism and our opposition to racial segregation in the UUA, have made it clear that our presence has created division among veteran members of UUSJ. This has led to two of our dear friends to think about quitting the organization. Rather than letting that happen, especially since we were not a part of the original UUSJ, we feel it necessary to withdraw our membership.

Essentially, the issue is this: In order for UUMUAC to remain free to voice its views without constraint, while also allowing those who wish to work for social justice through UUSJ, but who feel uncomfortable with all the conflict relating to multiracial unity, UUMUAC shall commence slowly disassociating from UUs for Social Justice (Greater Chicago Area), for the mutual benefit of both organizations, and work to establish itself as an independent Illinois non-for-profit corporation, with its own bank account, and eventual Sec. 501(c)

(3) status under the IRS code. This then is the background to this report.

What has UUMUAC done since the spring of 2018, despite attempts to silence us? In June we attended the GA where we decided to have the first MAC booth in our history. The presence of multi-racial based Unitarian Universalism as small as it was became a vital presence at the GA. We always had people dropping by to get our literature and to engage in frank conversations, even conversations with supporters of BLUU; at lunch and supper, we had modestly attended table forums on a variety of subjects. In addition, we had scores of UU's who signed up to get more information. Most of all, we had an international flavor as Sister Fahima Gaheez of the Afghan Women's Fund had a booth of her wares right next to ours. So there was an enthusiastic response by many to our simple truth: we can't fight racism by meeting in separate "safe" spaces. We felt that our dissent was heard with great respect, even by some who disagreed with us. And in a real sense, Booth 327 was the really safe space, an island of multiracial unity in a sea of racial segregation and whitesupremacyology

Meanwhile, also in June, we had our annual activities in East Africa, with Brothers Taye Woldesmiate and Jonathan Wilson, one of our young black members, representing UUMUAC at two major gatherings. The first part which met in June was a conference involving not only our regular set of contacts, but also NGOs, student activist groups, and progressive organizations. The central theme was the role of East African neo-colonial elites like Mugabe in facilitating Chinese imperialist activities in East Africa. Of course, we call all this neo-racism since both the Chinese and the East African ruling circles are people of color. A lot of work but with a future pay off which we hope and pray will strengthen our commitment to international solidarity.

In July we had a forum at First U. Chicago sharing our General Assembly adventures in a more comprehensive way with a large number of members and friends. Our forum was a response to the two delegates from our church who were pushing the whitesupremacyology line. It was a lively discussion, with many points of view presented pro and con regarding the Black Lives of UU Collective.

In early August, we went to Gettysburg National Cemetery in Gettysburg Pennsylvania. One of the important tools in the UUMUAC toolbox is the symbolic action, that is, an action which while small in itself symbolizes what would be a powerful force if it involved more people. Despite the fact that we had sent out over 50 announcements to the Gettysburg area and surroundings, in the end only a small group attended from the Chicago area, South Carolina, and Washington. This outcome did not silence our commitment to honor our white brothers who successfully defied one of the most powerful white supremacist armies the world had ever seen. We presented a program in two parts: a pageant at the Peace Monument (attended by a small group of non-UU people) and a laying of the wreath ceremony at Little Round Top Hill to honor the Maine 20th Volunteer Infantry Regiment whose valiant stand at The Battle of Little Round Top Hill, July 2, 1863, 155 years ago, helped to win the battle and eventually the war for the Union forces. Also, our small multiracial group was a part of thousands of others who had come to take part in the Gettysburg experience as a symbolic action of the time when white men killed other white men because the lives of black slave-workers mattered to them.

But what was unique about the UUMUAC event was our last night program in the spirit of dissent where we honored the Confederate general, James E. Longstreet, whom some consider to have

been a secret abolitionist though a dedicated Secessionist, whose “failure” to commit his troops at the right time helped to defeat the Confederates at Gettysburg, and who later after the war became a radical Republican (a so-called Scalawag) and a leader of the Reconstruction cause in Louisiana.

To conclude: We have always been willing to fully discuss the best way to fight racism, especially anti-black racism, with others having different positions. We proudly proclaim the right to dissent, but recognize that dissent is now considered divisive. Many years ago, one of the key leaders of BLUU, Ms. Paula Lee Jones, confronted me at the Tulsa meeting on multiracial, multicultural issues and said that those who supported multiracial unity were on the wrong side of history and would be defeated. What she did not say then, but it turns out now that the only way to defeat us would be through preventing us from dissenting openly with her vision.



Monuments to the 20th Maine Volunteers at Little Round Top

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