

# *UUSJ Newsletter - Spring 2011*

## *Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice*

*An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council*

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### ***Chair's Corner:***

UUSJ tries to facilitate the formation of new task forces, providing there are a minimum of five activists from at least three different UU congregations who are interested in working together on a particular social justice area. I am pleased to report that six activists from three Chicago area UU congregations held a formative meeting for a new Immigration Justice Task Force on March 26, 2011. There are indications that additional individuals, who could not make that meeting, would be interested in participating in the work of such a task force in the months ahead. Janet Holden of Unity Temple, U.U. (in Oak Park) and Sue Rekenhaller of the UU. Congregation of Woodstock agreed to Co-Chair this new task force. The UUSJ Board of Directors was asked to recognize this new UUSJ task force, which the Board did within 40 hours via an email vote. If you would like to get involved with the work of the Immigration Justice Task Force you are encouraged to get in touch with the Co-Chairs – Janet Holden at 708-386-7179 or [janetholden@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janetholden@sbcglobal.net), and Sue Rekenhaller at [tomatos@mc.net](mailto:tomatos@mc.net) or 815-678-7072.

UUSJ, which is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation with Sec. 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code, has been an affiliate of the Chicago Area UU Council (CAUUC) since the mid 1990s and receives a significant portion of its annual support from CAUUC. At this time CAUUC and the congregations that support it are assessing whether CAUUC should continue, and if so with what mission and structure going forward. The expected merger of local UUA districts into larger regions is another factor

to consider in determining a role for CAUUC in the next few years. The CAUUC annual meeting, titled "Re-creation", because participants will be brainstorming the need for and structure of a new CAUUC, will take place on Saturday, May 21, from 9 a.m. to noon, at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N. Mayfield, in Chicago's Austin community. If you are interested in how Chicago area UUs should work together to advance our common interests, you are encouraged to inquire about being a delegate from your congregation to the CAUUC annual meeting.

An embryonic organization called the UU Action Network of Illinois (UUANI) is hoping to build a state-wide action alert network and hire a part-time lobbyist to help advance UU social justice concerns at the Illinois state capital. UUSJ wants to coordinate with such an organization, if it transforms into a realized vision, particularly with regard to state issues. As such an organization will need a fiscal agent until it achieves status under the IRS code, the UUSJ Board, at its winter quarterly meeting, voted to offer to serve as UUANI's fiscal agent, if it wishes to take up that offer. We understand that it is also considering a fiscal agency offer from the Abraham Lincoln UU Congregation in Springfield.

### **UUSJ Spring Meeting**

Sunday June 12, 2 to 5 PM  
UU Church of South Suburbs  
70 Sycamore Drive  
Park Forest, IL 60466  
Program (from 2 to 3): How  
should we proceed toward  
reducing our nation's deficit and  
long term debt?

The UUSJ spring quarterly meeting will be held on Sunday, June 12, between 2 and 5 p.m., at the UU Church of the South Suburbs, at 70 Sycamore Dr., Park Forest IL 60466. The program, which will take up roughly the first hour, is sponsored by our Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness, and will address how we should proceed toward reducing our nation's deficit and rapidly growing long-term debt. Two proposals, one which can be considered a reasonable, realistic alternative to the report of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, and a second which will present an idealistic, though currently unrealistic, alternative will be presented for your consideration and group discussion. Our summer quarterly meeting will be held on August 28, also between 2 and 5 p.m., at the U.U. Church of Elgin, 39 W 830 Highland Ave., Elgin IL 60123. The program, presented during the first hour, comes from our Environmental Task Force. It will address various issues related to community gardens and native landscaping.

We are also exploring a special meeting that would help educate social justice leaders in our congregations about the Statement of Conscience (SOC) process from inception of a proposed SOC through adoption after several years of study and action, and the year that follows adoption. The ways congregations can be involved at all stages of the process would be presented. Some information on Actions of Immediate Witness could also be presented. A member of the Commission on Social Witness, who lives in the Midwest, or who has access to Chicago at modest cost, will be sought as a speaker who could also answer questions.

Allan Lindrup, Chair 773-643-8061 or [uusj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uusj@sbcglobal.net)

## **Report of the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness**

As our nation's deficit and the long term implications of a rapidly growing debt are a major concern to America's policy makers and most well informed

Americans, members of the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness have studied the report of The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, which was released last December. The majority of the active members of the task force have built on the framework of that report, to develop what could be considered a reasonable and realistic alternative to that proposal. Others on the task force are seeking to develop the ideal alternative to that report, even though it would not be realistic. When the UUSJ has its Spring Quarterly Meeting, on Sunday, June 12, at the UU Community Church of the South Suburbs, at 70 Sycamore Dr. in Park Forest, those two alternatives will be presented during the program portion of the meeting, which begins at 2 p.m.

This task force has recently decided to have an Action Alert in support of IL H.B. 1574. That legislation amends Illinois' Security Deposit Return Act, specifically the provision that requires a lessor to return a security deposit or prepaid rent to the lessee upon transfer of residential property, removing the exception for property acquired by a lienholder. Currently, when rental property, in those parts of Illinois outside Chicago, is lost to a bank in foreclosure, the renter(s) loses any security deposits or prepaid rent. In 2010 the City of Chicago passed an ordinance that made banks, like any other owner, responsible for security deposits, but Illinois renters living outside Chicago remain unprotected.

### **UUSJ Summer Meeting**

Sunday, August 28, 2 to 5 PM  
U.U. Church of Elgin  
39 W 830 Highland Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60123

Program from 2 to 3 by the Environmental Task Force is about community gardens and native landscaping with a guided tour.

Two members of the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness are verifying the current accuracy of the information on the Chicago and Suburban Chicago versions of the *If YOU or Someone You Know Need Help* resource sheets. After updating the information on those sheets and getting sufficient quantities printed, it is expected that copies will be distributed to the database of interested organizations and individuals, probably sometime between late April and late May.

While this task force's April meeting has not yet occurred as of this writing, it is expected that the task force will be approving the Home and Hope Booster grant nomination submitted by the Chair of the Social Justice Committee at Beverly Unitarian Church. It is expected to be the one approved because it was the only one received by the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. The nomination named the South Suburban PADS shelter located at the Pilgrim Faith UCC congregation in Oak Lawn, which Beverly Unitarian Church has been assisting with volunteers and with funds raised through special collections.

The date of this task force's next (summer quarter) meeting has not been set as of this writing. If you would be interested in attending, please contact Co-Chair Ron Chew at the below phone or email, to find out the date, time and place. As Co-Chair Allan Lindrup will be devoting much of his time to overseeing the rehabbing of a new home, plus packing and moving, he will be largely on sabbatical from this task force from May through October.

Allan Lindrup, Co-Chair, 773-643-8061 or [uusj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uusj@sbcglobal.net)  
Ron Chew, Co-Chair, 708-524-9695 or [ronnkarla@aol.com](mailto:ronnkarla@aol.com)

## UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Action Alert: The ETF has had two action alerts related to H.R.1 and Republican efforts to both cut EPA funding and to block enforcement of the Clean Air Act. The first action alerts targeted our U.S. Senators and more recently we urged the President to veto any measure containing such right wing ideological riders.

Educational Inserts: (1) We're about to mail Andrew Fisher's about clean sustainable travel methods; (2) Mary Alice Masonick is drafting one on food guidelines; and (3) Allan Lindrup suggested two: (a) Electric Vehicles and (b) Getting Rid of Anything.

Individual Congregations Here are the reports from many UU churches:

- *North Shore Unitarian Church* – had an Earth Hour event on 3/26/11; an Earth Day service is planned on 4/17/11 followed by Church outdoor cleanup. They have Styrofoam recycling at nearby SWALCO.
- *Second Unitarian Church* – Gene reported Libby Hill is working on environmental issues. They plan a cleanup along the Chicago River.
- *Beverly Unitarian Church* – They had a presentation and discussion on factory farming; and are continuing their electronics and household hazardous waste collections three times annually.
- *Unitarian Church of Evanston* – The GS Committee is proposing a rain garden as well as cistern to collect roof rainwater for landscape water. They had an organic lunch, showed "Deep Green", "Living Downstream" and plan to show "Bag It".
- *Elgin* – The GS Committee had a winter farmer's market 3/20/11. Organic breads are sold weekly soon to be joined by an organic farmer. They are starting native gardens and native landscaping.

Next meeting is Sunday, May 29, 2011 from 3:00 to 4:30 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 [fisher.a@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fisher.a@sbcglobal.net)

**UUSJ Peace  
Task Force Report**

The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for Saturday, July 16, 2 PM at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N, Mayfield, Chicago. All CAUUC Church members and friends are invited to attend.

In the last quarter we sent out one Action Alert urging our Illinois senators to cut back on USA Defense spending.

Members of the Task Force marched in a Chicago Peace Parade March 19 carrying the UUSJ banner. We noted marchers from many UU churches including Unity, First, Second, Third, Peoples, and Bloomington. Did we miss your church? Tell us about it!

This quarter we are sending out an Action Alert on H. R. 780 proposing to move USA forces out of Afghanistan . On April 15 and 18 we plan an Action distributing flyers showing how much USA tax money is being spent on current and past wars. If you want to participate in our meetings, actions, or have Questions, Contact

Gene Horcher – Chair  
at (773) 561-5296

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