

# *UUSJ Newsletter – Spring 2017*

## *Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice*

*An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council*

*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](mailto:uusj@sbcglobal.net)*

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

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

On May 1st, the historic revolutionary workers' day, join with thousands of others (including a good sample of UU'ers). This is from the UUA:

On May 1st members of immigrant, refugee, Muslim, Black and Brown, indigenous, LGBTQ communities, workers, women, environmental justice activists, and all who support a vibrant and diverse future for our country will Rise Up because interdependence means that none of us are free until we are all free.

We're coming together across the country in 100 cities to resist the current administration's deportation machine, it's 'law and order' agenda, and the scapegoating and criminalization of whole communities. We'll take collective action for collective liberation and against policies that threaten our planet and our collective well-being. The UUA and Standing on the Side of Love are joining other faith communities, unions, the Movement for Black Lives, Mijente and migrant rights organizations, climate justice groups, indigenous networks, and a massive spectrum of progressive allies.

**Schedule for Monday, May 1st in Chicago: 1pm Rally in Union Park, Ashland and Lake; 2 pm March; 4 pm Rally in Daley Plaza.**

On Saturday, May 20th at 2 pm, 117th and Avenue "O", United Steelworkers of America are hosting a memorial/commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Republic Steel

Memorial Day Massacre when ten striking steelworkers were gunned down by Chicago Police as they peacefully assembled to stand up for workers' rights. For more information, call 773-387-3869 or email [wolfer43@yahoo.com](mailto:wolfer43@yahoo.com).

---Mike Wolf

### **Spring Quarterly Meeting**

The UUSJ Spring Quarterly Meeting is in DuPage Church UU on Sunday, May 7, from 2 to 5 p.m. The Environmental task force will give the program on *Eearth* by Bill McKibben entitled "Climate Change: Extinction or Serious Action".

## **UUSJ Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force Report**

UUs for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) held its Reversing Inequality conference in Washington D.C. from April 3 to 5, with a focus on protecting the gains made under the Affordable Care Act. One day was spent lobbying attendees' U.S. Senators, sometimes through key staff members. Likewise, our first Action Alert of 2017 focused on

health care and standards we would expect our Members of Congress to stand up for in any efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. The proposal that the Republicans majority in the U.S. House developed, in connection with the new Trump Administration, did not satisfy the standards we laid out, so we are pleased that it has been blocked by Congress. Our second Action Alert of 2017, being initiated during the second week of April, focuses on our standards for any tax changes that the Congress will consider, which are expected to be a focus over the next few months.

March 31 was the deadline for the current round of Home and Hope Booster grant nominations. No nomination was received so we have extended the deadline for nominations to be submitted. If your congregation has not submitted a Home and Hope Booster grant nomination in the past year you are encouraged to do so this month, using the nomination form on the [uusforsocialjustice.org](http://uusforsocialjustice.org) web site. Alternately, you may contact this writer to request the form.

Each spring we update and distribute our If YOU or Someone You Know Need Help resource sheets (one focused on Chicago and another focused on Chicago's suburbs). The checking on information for the Chicago version has been complete, while the checking on the information for suburban Chicago is still in progress. These updates get sent out to all the UU congregations in northeastern Illinois, plus to a wide range of non-profits that work with or encounter the homeless. They are also sent out to social workers and others who have asked to receive the updates when they are being distributed.

We have created an Economic Justice Movies resource sheet, which will be distributed to UU congregations, plus to

other economic justice organizations operating in Illinois, before the end of April. The next meeting of this task force will take place on Saturday, July 15, between 12:30 and 2 p.m., probably at the Unitarian Church of Evanston.

Allan Lindrup, Task Force Chair,  
773-595-4921 or [uusj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uusj@sbcglobal.net)

## **UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report**

### **Congregational Reports:**

#### **First Unitarian Church of Chicago –**

Allan reported that (1) an environmental book club was forming and the first book they were reading was *Eaarth* by McKibben; (2) on April 22 they are planning to cleanup Rainbow Beach Park and Allan is in charge; and (3) they are conducting a survey for a capital campaign which will include funds for a new dishwasher. They are planning an Earth Day service with Arnold Randall, chief executive of the Cook County Forest Preserve, speaking at the forum following the worship service;

(2) **Second Unitarian Church of Chicago**  
Gene said there is nothing new at 2U, but the church does recycle and Gene is usually the person who does it.

(3) **Beverly** – Fran reported that BUC Green Sanctuary has paid for a "green" cleaning of the rugs in the Sanctuary and on the stairway, as well as 11 upholstered chairs, in the amount of \$771. They will conduct a hazardous waste collection in Pullman on May 6th, at which large styrofoam pieces will also be accepted. Their Earth Day Service on April 23rd will emphasize the need to support independent, peer-reviewed science on the issue of global warming; and

(4) **Evanston** – Andrew reported from the Green outreach team at their

3/12/17 meeting that: (1) UCE is approaching zero waste, Mike Drennan is posting posters that document this; (2) UCE wants increased involvement with local and state groups such as Faith in Place, Citizen's Climate Lobby, People's Climate Movement March, etc.; (3) Earth Day activities at UCE – (a) Luncheon? (b) Candlelight readings for WWF earth hour March 25, 8 PM at UCE; (4) more local networking – Andrew gave them the UUSJ website URL; and (5) possibility of UCE as CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) drop-off.

**Action Alert:** Since the Winter UUSJ Newsletter, the Environmental task force has issued one action alert on March 20 to both senators and representatives about the EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) funding to help restore ecosystems, study climate change, and support communities disproportionately impacted by industrial pollution. The Administration's proposed federal budget includes severe budget cuts to environmental and climate programs of the EPA and NOAA. The proposal shows the Administration doesn't hold the same American values for clean air, clean water and healthy land as the vast majority of its citizens. It urged opposition to severe budget cuts to governmental environmental programs, climate research, and climate change adaptation and mitigation programs, such as the following:

- Funding to combat algae blooms, invasive species and other water pollution problems in the Great Lakes, which are proposed for a cut from \$300 million to \$10 million.
- The Environmental Justice program budget, which has historically supplied grants to 1,400 frontline communities, which is proposed to

have a 78% cut, from \$6.7 million to \$1.4 million.

- Funding for restoration in Chesapeake Bay, the country's largest estuary, is proposed to be cut from \$73 million to \$5 million, while funding for restoration work in Puget Sound is proposed to be cut from \$28 million to \$2 million.
- The EPA's work studying endocrine disruptor chemicals that can interfere with the body's reproductive and development systems would nearly be eliminated, dropping from \$7.5 million to \$445,000.
- Funding for state testing of bacteria levels at beaches around the country would be totally eliminated.
- NOAA's budget cuts endanger climate science research and data collection, and coastal resilience programs meant to help coastal communities adapt to the increased risk of extreme weather and sea level rise. NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research would lose \$126 million, or 26 percent of its current budget.

It looks forward to replies, with their positions on the Administration's proposed budget cuts to the EPA and NOAA budgets.

**Educational inserts:** We recently sent out a survey to all recipients, but due to our VERY LIMITED response thus far, it won't be discussed till later. Fran brought up the issue of not doing educational inserts at all and suggested that our energy would be better spent on giving additional support to the issues raised in the Action Alerts.

**Next meeting:** – We agreed to hold our next meeting on Saturday, June 10,

from 1:30 to 3 p.m., at Bee Zee Restaurant on Wabash Ave.

With any questions, contact:  
Andrew T. Fisher – Chair  
847-492-1832 or  
[fishorqn1580@gmail.com](mailto:fishorqn1580@gmail.com)

## **UUSJ Peace Task Force Report**

By Jane Bannor, Peace Task Force chair

The peace task force is making plans for a demonstration at Federal Plaza on Tue, April 18 (Tax Day) to protest the portion of our taxes that goes to the military. We will be distributing the War Resister's League pie chart graph that highlights the many ways our taxes support the military. Activists from Voices for Creative Non-Violence, the Chicago Pacifist Party and the American Friends Service Committee have been invited to join us. Given recent US bombing attacks in Syria and Afghanistan we're expecting added interest in our message.

All UUs are encouraged to join us at the demonstration in front of the Plaza Post Office at 211 So. Clark Street on April 18, 11:30am – 1pm. In case of rain, we'll hold the action one day earlier on Monday, April 17 – same time and place. Contact Jane Bannor, task force chair, at [jbannor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jbannor@sbcglobal.net) if you want confirmation of the day we're holding the demonstration.

At our recent task force meeting on April 8 the task force also discussed ways to make our meetings more helpful and relevant to our members. We discussed hosting speakers and holding training sessions on relevant topics. We also

started to discuss how we'd design the program for the December 3 UUSJ Quarterly meeting. We considered involving UUSJ Chair Michael Wolf and Southsiders for Peace in developing the topic and finding speakers. The UUSJ Quaterly meeting in question is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Hindsdale UU Church. Gene Horcher volunteered to contact Mike Wolf for programming suggestions.

The group also discussed possible topics for Action Alerts. The group approved writing a letter to our US Congressional delegation on the War Powers Act and the legality of bombing Syria (and now Afghanistan also) without a declaration of war or imminent threat. Jane volunteered to write the first draft of such a letter.

Finally, the peace task force offers their best wishes to long-time member Rev. Jean Darling, our inspiration and voice of reason and compassion on so many issues. We wish Jean a vibrant and active retirement as she moves to warmer climes.

## **Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) Report**



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

The Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus Report by Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, co-chair, the Executive Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) aka the Mac – [finleycampbell5222@comcast.net](mailto:finleycampbell5222@comcast.net) . Or snail mail me at 5222 S. Dorchester Avenue, apt 1, Chicago IL 60615

UUmuc will be leading the struggle against the accusation that white supremacy is rampant in the UUA. If your church is participating in the so call White supremacy teach in on April 30 or May 7, be sure to have our literature about Neoracism as a part of the discussion.

The following reports represent some of the Mac’s activities and its members since our last quarterly meeting. Quick Notes:

UUMUAC member, Marie Cobbs, was a delegate to the Black UU’s meeting in New Orleans where she saw played out what we mean by neo-racism. Where possible she raised the vision of multiracial Unitarian Universalism. She also noted that there were no practical plans to fight racism at the meeting. Mainly it was about spiritual healing and building Black UU Caucuses in local congregations. Of course, she opposed this form of new segregation.

I represented Mac in my capacity as the spokesperson preaching at the Heartland Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Indianapolis. A plate offering of \$137 was raised by our brothers and sisters there for our Conference. This was thanks to UUMUAC member Dwayne Matthews

for bringing me down there. A video of my sermon dealing with multiracial Unitarian Universalism (MUUism) is on my Facebook page, an audio internet version is being developed, and a hard copy is also available on request.

Our 15% percent from our major fundraising effort for the Afghan Woman’s Fund, under the leadership of Sister Fahima Gaheez, was \$400 dollars. In addition, she has joined the Mac, increasing our international outlook even more. This is very important since recently one of the deadliest non-nuclear bombs in the arsenal of US imperialism was dropped on alleged ISIS fighters in Afghanistan.

I also represented UUMUAC at the UUJEC national conference in Washington in early April. The focus of the conference was on lobbying US senators to support expanding the Affordable Care Act. I was with a team which visited the offices of Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Tammy Duckworth. Unfortunately, they did not make time for their aides to meet with us. However, we did meet with an aide for Senator Johnson, a Wisconsin Republican, who is against the ACA. I pointed out that a fellow Republican, Senator Mark Kirk, had benefited greatly from having full service medical insurance as a Senator. Surely the ordinary worker, student, and professional deserves the same. Our remarks were received in a positive manner. We also met with the aide of independent Senator King from Maine who was very supportive of our demands. His aide gave me an enthusiastic reception to the idea of honoring our white brothers from the Maine 20th regiment who saved the day at the Battle of Gettysburg. I will be proposing a celebration for this event in 2018 to our Mac executive committee and raise the idea, if approved, at the upcoming conference. By the way: Sister Jane Bannor (UCE, UUSJ) and

Sister Karla Chew (Third U, UUSJ) were members of our multiracial team.

against racism by making us fight among ourselves.

Our next major action as a group will be in late April 2017 at the upcoming Unitarian Universalist Association Mid-America Regional Assembly in Oakbrook, Illinois. There will be a major conference on the need for Multiracial UUism in the fight against neo-racism during the era of President Trump, of Friday, April 28th, at the Drake Hotel, before the Mid America Region opens. Then we will have our Conversation Against Racism workshop on Saturday, April 29, 2017. Finally, we will have a special post-Regional gathering on Sunday, April 30th after the Regional Church service to discuss creating Mac as a CommUUnity organization in those areas which do not want us as a church group. This will be our answer to the BLUUOC attempt to derail the fight

This is turning out to be a major event, in light of the turmoil which neo-racism has created in the Boston headquarters of the UUA. On one side are those who believe that white supremacy is causing the problems in our Association; on the other side, led by us, are those who believe it is caused by neo-racism. We will be raising the ideas of MUUism at the special 4 pm Speaking Circle event on Friday, right after our conference. This speaking circle is being sponsored by the Mid America Region Programming Office. More later on the issues facing the Unitarian Universalist Association.

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