

UUSJ Newsletter – Winter 2017

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

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Chair's Corner:

As the 2017 Chair of UUSJ, I would like to introduce myself and to thank everyone for this opportunity to contribute to our important work. I have been a member of the Beverly Unitarian Church since 2010 and am currently serving as the chair of our Social Action Committee. I am a retired steelworker and active in our retirees group. I am also a member of Southsiders for Peace and Unity in Diversity.

Many of us were shocked, angered and disheartened by the election of Donald Trump. Let's remember that despite the results, most people do in fact reject racism, xenophobia, sexism and gay-hatred. It's our responsibility as UUs and progressives to stand up, show the way as best we can. Also, let's keep in mind the unending outrages and atrocities being perpetrated from the streets of Chicago to Gaza or Aleppo, these outrages often done in our name, as Americans. The needs, the struggles continue and we can be there.

Here's another event I thought many would like: The Women's March on Chicago will start at **Petrillo Bandshell** in **Chicago's Grant Park** at 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 21, 2017.

We will mobilize as women and supporters of women to protect our rights and civil liberties. We stand in solidarity with other women's marches planned across the country and the world on January 21. WE WILL BE SEEN AND HEARD by the new administration. We are people of different colors, backgrounds, religious faiths, and politics. We support women's/human rights. We are activists, seasoned and new. We are people of varying economic, educational, and social situations. We are immigrants of all statuses. We are native and indigenous. We are people of diverse gender identification and sexual identities—LGBTQ, hetero, and other. We are of diverse marital status and age. We have varied abilities. We are survivors of trauma.

The mission of Women's March on Chicago is: CONNECT, PROTECT, ACTIVATE. We CONNECT to support each other in PROTECT-ing and furthering women's rights and civil liberties. We ACTIVATE in our communities to uphold and strengthen values, rights, and humanity.
JOIN US.

FOR GROUPS larger than 10 people, or to share Meet-up Locations please register via the group registration button on the March website.

<http://womens121marchonchicago.org/register-for-the-march/>

. – Mike Wolf

UUSJ Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force Report

Since the last UUSJ newsletter the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness initiated one Action Alert. It was in opposition to the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership trade treaty and was initiated for the then upcoming post-election lame-duck session, when there was expected to be one last push to pass that treaty. Supporters of that treaty realized they did not have the votes to pass it, so it was ultimately not called for a vote in the Senate.

The draft Statement of Conscience (SOC) on Escalating Inequality was released in mid-November. UU congregations have until February 1, 2017 to consider that draft and submit suggestions for improvements.

Comments need to be submitted through the church office, as part of the submission that includes membership numbers and other information. UUs concerned about our nation's escalating inequality should work to see that their congregation considers that draft SOC, a copy of which is available on the UUA web site, or which may be requested through this writer, through a forum or whatever means your congregation uses to gather input on such positions.

The UU Just Economic Community (UUJEC) will be holding a conference in Washington D.C. in April, 2017. Individuals may go to the UUJEC web site for more information and to register.

At its meeting on Oct. 15 the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness approved a Home and Hope Booster grant nomination submitted on behalf of the Social Justice Committee at the Beverly Unitarian Church. The nomination was in support of the PADS program at Pilgrim Faith UCC congregation in Oak Lawn, one of the sites in the South Suburban PADS network. The PADS programs provide emergency overnight shelter, plus two or three meals, for homeless individuals, during the colder half of each year, with case management available for those interested in such assistance.

During the October through April season that the PADS shelter network is open, Beverly Unitarian Church provides 10 volunteers, over three shifts covering the 12 hours that the shelter is open, to staff the PADS shelter at Pilgrim Faith UCC church each fifth Thursday, which happens two or three times during each October through April season. This translates to 80 to 120 hours of volunteer service at this PADS shelter each year. In addition, Beverly Unitarian Church takes a special collection, to help with the expenses of operating this shelter, twice a year, which raises several hundred dollars that go to that purpose. We thank Beverly Unitarian Church members for their many years of service and financial support to that PADS shelter. Our

Home and Hope Booster grant pledgers provided \$525 in contributions to fund this grant, which was sent to the nominated organization in early December.

Some members of this task force participated in one or more demonstrations held on Nov. 29 in support of The Fight for \$15 (per hour). The next meeting of this task force will be held on Saturday, January 14, 2017, between 12:30 and 2 p.m. The location will be the Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave., Evanston. All are welcome. For further information, contact the task force Chair at the below phone or email.
Allan Lindrup, task force Chair
773-595-4921 or uusj@sbcglobal.net

lunches. The Green Sanctuary is also cleaning up Harms Woods.

Legislative Advocacy:

Since the Fall UUSJ Newsletter, we've issued two **action alerts:** (1) to all IL reps. to co-sponsor SB0550 monitoring lead levels in water – particularly in schools. And (2) to Obama urging him to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline to address environmental and other concerns.

Since the last UUSJ newsletter, we have distributed two **educational inserts:** “The Pros and Cons of GMO Foods” and “The Pros and Cons of Nuclear Power”.

Next meeting:

On Sunday, Jan. 15, 2017, 2:30 at Native Foods, 218 S Clark, Chicago

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

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Congregational Reports:

Beverly Unitarian Church – They are continuing to collect hazardous and electronic waste to properly dispose of.

First Unitarian Church of Chicago – has helped clean up 63rd street beach, put up motion detectors for lights inside, and a second solar roof panel for outdoor lights.

Unitarian Church of Evanston – It is continuing to compost at all church

The Peace Task Force

The Peace Task Force held its last meeting on October 15, 2016 at the Unitarian Church of Evanston. The group reviewed the appearance of Prof. Michael Seng of John Marshall Law School at the UUSJ summer quarterly meeting. With the help of facilitator Linda Cooper, peace circles were demonstrated and those at the meeting were informed of the progress of Restorative Justice initiatives are making in the Chicago area. Both the city and the county are setting up programs that use these techniques.

Members described their activities for International Day of Peace in

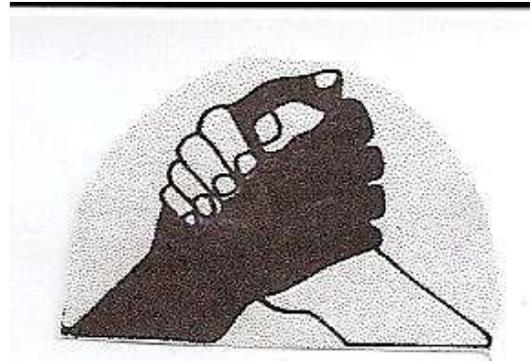
September. The annual city observance was held at Daley Plaza with school children and dignitaries from various consulate offices participating.

Peace activities in our local congregations have been fairly sparse in recent months. The group spent some time discussing how our task force might help out those needing an “inspiration boost”.

Members suggested we re-structure our meetings to include reports from community peace groups and perhaps an occasional talk by a local peace activist or subject matter expert. At our next meeting we plan to consider developing regional peace programming that a cluster of church Peace and Justice Committees could sponsor jointly.

Our next meeting will be held on January 14 at 2pm. Due to a scheduling conflict, the meeting will once again be held at the Evanston Unitarian Church, 1330 Ridge Ave. For details on attending the meeting or information on how to phone-in, contact task force chair Jane Bannor at JBannor@sbcglobal.net

Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) Report



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

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.

Or snail mail me at 5222 S. Dorchester Avenue, apt 1, Chicago IL 60615

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

Quick Notes:

UUMUAC member, Marie Cobbs, is an active participant in preparing for the Million Women’s March, both here in the Chicago area and in Washington DC, on January 21, 2017, to oppose the neo-racist attacks on women’s social rights which are happening and which will be increasing under President Trump’s vision of the USA.

I represented Mac, in my capacity as a minister, at the Cook County Commissioners

meeting in December, where I gave the invocation. It ended with the UUMUAC call to action: multiracial unity, international solidarity, and multicultural synergy, calling special attention to the need to include those white brothers and sisters who are also victims of neo-racism, like the recent victim of racist violence.

Back at our September 2016 meeting we voted to support the annual Chicago Sinfonietta Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr's birthday, January 15, 2017. One way we do this is by advertising the event and offering discounted prices for lower balcony seats for the Monday evening performance. The price now is \$32.45, and must be prepaid to Bobbi Lammers Campbell and sent to 5222 S. Dorchester Avenue, Apt 1, Chicago Illinois 60615 by Friday, January 13, 2017.

Here are the venues:

Sunday, Jan. 15, 2017

3:00pm

Wentz Concert Hall

North Central College

171 E. Chicago Ave Naperville, IL 60540

Monday, Jan. 16, 2017

7:30pm

Symphony Center

220 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago, IL 60604

Our Main Actions:

In October 2016, we held our first Conversations Against Racism (CAR) workshop. Twelve people attended, 10 from First U, Chgo, one from Unity Temple, plus one

community person. Our guest presenter was Dr. Norma Poinsett, a longtime leader in the UUAC, member of First U. Chgo, and a veteran fighter for racial justice, having helped to develop one of the first, successful anti-racist programs, Jubilee World. A very useful guideline document was developed for this event and is available on requests.

In November 2016, we had a major fundraising effort for the Afghan Woman's Fund, under the leadership of Sister Fahima Gaheez. Thanks to a contribution from Eugene Horcher and the work of Marie Cobbs and Jerry Parker, we were able to secure three sites for this event. Through a mix of sales of rugs, scarves, etc., UUMUAC helped raise roughly \$5000 for the Fund, before payments for Sister Gaheez's travel expenses. This was a wonderful expression of the UUMUAC principles of multiracial unity, international solidarity, and multicultural synergy. For a more expanded presentation of this event, contact me at the above email or snail mail address.

Also in November I was invited by UUs in the Kalispell area of Montana, specifically in Whitefish, the center of an anti-Muslim racist group, to present the Mac vision of building multiracial resistance and to develop a Mac chapter there. I was totally caught by

surprise by what ended up being a major turnout for building multiracial unity. I had been interviewed previously over the local NPR station, so that might account for some of the turnout.

Anyway, I spoke at a local community college before some 45 students, staff, faculty members, and the head of the Kalispell City publicity department. I also conducted a CAR session for a UU/Community group in which some 75 people, overwhelmingly white, turned out. The workshop was well received, though interesting disagreements on the nature of and origins of racism emerged. I argued that racism was based on ideology not prejudiced; that it was a product of slave labor capitalism, not human nature; and that it was the product of individual ideologists, like Thomas Jefferson, not white privilege.

Then on Sunday, I preached the Mac Sermon, called Building the Rainbow of Steel: Developing a UUMUAC chapter in the Kalispell area. 51 folks, community and UU, showed up for that. During the story hour, I told a tale about a mosquito that fell in love with an elephant, illustrating the personal power of unity across divisions.

So, over a hundred people heard the message about multiracial Unitarian Universalism. Some 12 people signed up to either join the Mac or to be put on a mailing list. And this took place right after the 2016 election. So, it was quite ... amazing. A longer essay on this event is available upon request.

In December 2016, inspired by the brothers and sisters in Montana, I proposed to a group of First U. Chgo members, including two Mac members, that we organize a symbolic action/struggle to oppose the Trump “selection” as president of the United States. The essence of this action would be to petition US Representatives and Senators, wherever we had Mac members, to file objections, on January 6, 2017, when it came time to certify the results of the Electoral College vote. This idea was submitted to the UUMUAC Exec Committee and approved, with the following key change: that we focus on the eventual abolition of the Electoral College and that we form a committee consisting of at least three members, from multiple UU Churches: this we eventually did, consisting of Marie Cobbs and William Bassin from First U; Gene Horcher from Second U, Maggie Kivisto from DuPage

U, and Kelvin Sandridge, representing the community.

We led a broad campaign to get people to sign our petitions. At UUMUAC's request, Allan Lindrup, also sent out a UUSJ action alert on this issue. In addition, we encouraged people to call their Congress people and request that they file an objection to the Electoral College vote on Friday January 6, 2017. The filing of objections has happened three times in American history: 1877, 2001, and 2005, to protest the flawed nature of the Electoral College system and results.

On January 3, five of us went to meet with Senator Dick Durbin, seeking his agreement to file an objection. He was not available, but we did meet with Mr. Greg Bales, the Senator's community outreach person, who welcomed us cordially and agreed to share our proposal with the Senator. Later we received a letter from Senator Durbin agreeing with our efforts to begin a campaign to abolish the electoral college, but making no commitment to filing an objection.

Since this was a symbolic action/struggle, we felt that Senator Durbin's response was a victory, given the fact that many liberals, even some

UU members, were afraid or disagreed with the action. In total, we collected over 120 signatures and statements of support for the UUMUAC position.

Here is a copy of our rationale for this action:

- 1) Voters/votes in states that are perceived as swing states are more important to electing a President than those in non-swing states. Voters/votes in Texas are not as important as those in Florida; voters/votes in Illinois are not as important as those in Ohio; voters/votes in Kansas are not as important as those in New Hampshire, and so forth.
- 2) Voters in small states have fewer people per each Electoral College vote than the ratio in more populous states. For example, voters in Wyoming and Vermont have an Electoral College vote for roughly each 160,000 people, while in the most populous states there are well over 500,000 voters for each Electoral College vote.
- 3) If a President's election is supposed to reflect the *popular will*, then the winner of the Presidency need to reflect the *popular vote*.

Our next major action will be in April 2017 at the upcoming UUA Mid-America Regional Assembly in Oakbrook,

Illinois. Our proposal to present a Conversation Against Racisms workshop was accepted. And we are also planning, on Friday before the Assembly begins, to have a UUMUAC Conference on the importance of building the Mac as a mass organization, connected to our UU churches but expanding outward to individual and organizations which have no objections with our Seven

Principles and the UUMUAC mission and vision statement.

To conclude: As the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus has been saying for years: if we do not fight racism in all its forms with multiracial unity, racism in all its form will intensify. Its most insidious form in neo-racism, a racism which hurts all of us who are committed to social justice, regardless of our race, color, or creed. Join us in making this struggle a real one in the coming years of the Trump presidency.

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