

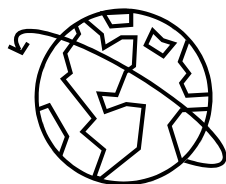
UNA-GKC NEWS

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Up Coming Events in Kansas City and Elsewhere

- UNA-USA Day on Capitol Hill, June 26, 2003.
- National Forum on the U.N. and the UNA-USA Biennial National Convention, June 26-29, 2003, Washington, D.C.
- Kansas City World Citizen Award presented, October 14, 2003.
- Kansas City Mayor's UN Dinner, October 14, 2003.
- American Model UN Conference for UMKC Model UN group, Chicago, Illinois, November 22-25, 2003.



U.N. Peace Plaza dedication

By James Everett

On April 25th 2003 the United Nations Association of USA/Greater Kansas City Chapter coordinated the dedication of the U.N. Peace Plaza located at Lexington & Walnut in Independence, Missouri. UNA/GKC board member James Everett served as master-of-ceremonies at the on-site dedication with approximately 200 in attendance. Speakers included Kevin Flattery and Dr. Willadee Wehmeyer, former and present UNA/GKC presidents respectively; Mr. Bill Dunn, Sr. of J.E. Dunn Construction; Independence Mayor Ron Stewart and Community of Christ Presiding Bishop (Ret.) Norman Swails. Tom Corbin, who sculptured



the 12.5 foot "Girl with Dove" statue that dominates the Plaza, released twenty white doves at the conclusion of the ceremony to symbolize the message of peace radiating from the Plaza.

The statue stands on a

4-foot high dome covered with a ceramic mural representing the earth as seen from space. A 600-gallon-per-minute (continued on page 3)

United Nations World Food Programme Address

By Jay Sjerven

James T. Morris, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme, addressed members of the Kansas City community on the evening of April

14 regarding the dramatic rise in the need for food aid in the wake of an unprecedented series of natural and social calamities, including war in Iraq and drought and the HIV/

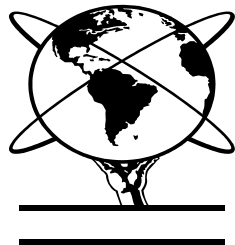
AIDS pandemic in Africa. The public meeting was held at the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in midtown Kansas City and was (continued on page 3)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE UN

The UN is expanding. The total number of nations now stands at 191 with the addition of Switzerland and East Timor.

SWITZERLAND, TIMOR LESTE BRING U.N. MEMBERSHIP TO 191

In September, 2002, the U.N. General Assembly welcomed two additional members into its ranks —Switzerland, a long-time observer state, and East Timor, the former Portuguese enclave in the East Indies that Indonesia disgorged in 1999 after 24 years of occupation. With Switzerland now a United Nations member, the Vatican (Holy See) becomes the only widely recognized state yet to join.



Though Switzerland hosts many offices and agencies of the United Nations in Geneva, Swiss voters had long opposed membership in the United Nations itself, fearing its collective security obligations would compromise Switzerland's neutral status. Even in 2002, just 55 percent of Swiss voters supported joining the United Nations, barely carrying the necessary majority of the country's cantons. In 1986, only 25 percent of Swiss citizens voted in favor of membership.

East Timor —formally admitted under its Portuguese name, Timor Leste —is the first state to join the United Nations after being midwifed by a U.N. transitional administration. The first U.N. chief administrator there, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, has now

become U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has been succeeded in East Timor by India's former U.N., representative Kamalesh Sharma. Catherine Bertini, the former head of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), has been appointed as the U.N.'s top management official, effective January 1, 2003. Although a Timorese government is now recognized as sovereign, the U.N. mission will continue for at least another year to assist the fledgling and impoverished state.

ICC BEGINS

July 1, 2002 began the International Criminal

The International Criminal Court has 18 newly-elected judges.

Court's (ICC) jurisdiction over serious crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Since that date, there has been an advance team working in The Hague, logging communications from around the world and preparing the Court's offices and procedures for the arrival of the

judges, officers and staff.

The first 18 judges of the Assembly were elected in early February 2003, resulting in a bench containing judges from all regions of the world, including 7 women and 11 men. The judges were sworn in at The Hague on March 11, 2003.



Ireland took over as President of the U.N. Disarmament Conference in May, 2003

IRAQ, IRAN DECLINE PRESIDENCIES OF U.N. DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Amid growing U.S. criticism of its scheduled appointment as President of the U.N. Disarmament Conference in May, Iraq has declined its chairmanship, turning over the Presidency to Ireland. The alphabetical order that determines the monthly rotation schedule for the head of the Geneva-

based conference had queued Iraq to lead the May session of the conference. Iran, which was to lead the March and interim sessions of the conference had already declined its Presidency, which would have left the next in line — Iraq — to fill in that term as well as its own scheduled term. However, on February 14, 2003, Iraq informed the U.N. that it had decided not to assume the Presidency.

As a result, Ireland moved up to chair the March and the interim session; Israel assumed the Presidency for the term beginning in May.

The President chairs plenary sessions of the Conference but cannot initiate any agenda items without the approval of the conference. The UN Conference on Disarmament was founded in 1979. The 66-member body has negotiated many major disarmament agreements.

U.N. Peace Plaza dedication (from p. 1)

fountain flows from the base of the statue.

The UN Peace Plaza project is truly world-class. The cost of the project in both cash and in-kind gifts exceeds a half-million dollars. The Plaza is rapidly becoming internationally recognized as a significant enhancement to the Greater Kansas City community as well as a symbol of the desire for peace and justice that is shared among all the peoples of the world. The Plaza's location is geographically relevant as it is in immediate proximity to The Auditorium in Independence, Missouri where the late President Harry S. Truman announced to the

The U.N. Peace Plaza project began as a tribute to the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations

world that the United States had become a signatory to the then newly-formed United Nations.

The on-site dedication was followed by a program in the sanctuary of the nearby 1,600-seat Community of Christ Temple. Brief speeches were given by Ambassador David Scheffer, Vice President UNA-USA, and Gillian Sorensen, United Nation's Assistant Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs.

The audience was then entertained by a magnificent concert of national folk songs by the world-renowned U.N. Singers, representing 35 countries. Local choral groups from Truman High School in Independence and Paseo High School in Kansas City participated in two of the musical numbers.

A generous grant from the Muriel McBrian Kauffman Foundation covered most of the costs of these dedicatory events, as well as making it possible for members of the U.N. Singers to give informational programs about the United Nations to some 30 schools in the greater Kansas City area.

The U.N. Peace Plaza project began as a tribute to the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations and as a memorial to those who have given their lives in U.N. peacekeeping and making activities. It has taken nearly seven years, and support from many persons and firms, to move this project from idea to dedication.

We still solicit help in the form of Memorial Bricks to help fund ongoing expenses such as maintenance, annual replacement of flags, water & electricity bills and insurance. Informational brochures are available on-site or call James Everett, (816) 373-6422.

Checks can be made out to either UNA/GKC or the Truman Heartland Community



UN World Food Programme (from p. 1)

organized by the United Nations Association-U.S.A., Greater Kansas City Chapter with the assistance of the International Relations Council and Heart to Heart International, the latter a Kansas City-based non-governmental organization primarily involved in providing medical supplies to those in need during domestic and international emergencies.

Mr. Morris told Kansas Citians that the need for food aid has never been

greater. "There have been twice as many natural disasters this year as there were 10 years ago, and three times as many as were recorded 35 years ago," Mr. Morris said. "The world is generous, but it is having difficult keeping people alive through these emergencies."

The World Food Programme, the world's principal provider of humanitarian aid, will be responsible for carrying out what could prove to be the largest food

aid program ever, in Iraq. At the same time that it devotes wholehearted energy to Iraqi relief, In addi-



tion, the W.F.P. is at the fore of world efforts to defeat famine in Africa. "Issues in Africa are almost overwhelming," said Mr.

hundred million people are undernourished, and 40 million people are severely at risk."

Mr. Morris said that 7 million farmers in southern Africa have lost their lives to AIDS in recent years, and 15 million more will lose their lives in the next 10 years. Average life expectancies have been plummeting in the region. The W.F.P. budget for Africa alone in 2003 was expected to exceed spending on all W.F.P. activities in 2002. Contributions may be made to US Friends of the WFP, P.O. Box 11856, Washington, D.C. 20008.

UMKC Model UN Program Begins

UMKC now officially has a Model UN program. It has a charter and a newly-elected president, Mr. Medhi Ben Guirat. After about a year of delib-

eration and consultation, the group is now preparing for its first Model UN conference, the American Model UN conference to be held in Chicago,

Illinois, November 22-25, 2003. Their assigned country is Afghanistan which is very timely given the various significant events in that country recently.



**United Nations Association of the
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**On This Day in
History**

- First World Conference on the Environment, Stockholm, June 3, 1972
- International Day of Innocent Children, Victims of Aggression, June 4.
- World Refugee Day, June 20
- Treaty of Versailles creating the League of Nations, signed, June 28, 1919.
- International Criminal Court jurisdiction began, July 1, 2002.
- Independence Day, USA, July 4.
- UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women became effective, July 7, 1954
- World Population Day, July 11.
- First post-World War II summit conference on disarmament in Geneva, July 23, 1955.



UNA-GKC NEWSLETTER— INTRODUCTORY ISSUE

Welcome to the first issue of the UNA-GKC Newsletter. The Board of the Greater Kansas City area chapter of the UNA-USA decided that a new and up-to-date format was needed to inform their members and others of the UN-related activities both here in Kansas City and elsewhere. We hope this newsletter will be informative and stimulate your interest in learning more about the UN. The UN topics outlined here, as well as the detail of a variety of other subjects, may be found at www.un.org or at the UNA-USA website, www.unausa.org.

If you would like to become a member of the UNA-USA, Greater Kansas City Chapter, please use the form below or register online at www.unausa.org. If you are already member, we thank you for your continued support.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Bus Phone: _____

Please check I am a new member

I am renewing my existing membership

I am purchasing a gift membership

Chapter: Greater Kansas City Area Chapter

Membership: \$1000 Lifetime (one time dues payment)

\$ 500 Patron

\$ 100 Sponsor

\$ 40 Member

\$ 25 Introductory (First Year Only)

\$ 25 Senior

\$ 10 Student

Please make your check payable to UNA-USA and send it to:
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