

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE HISTORY OF THE WEST TRIANGLE CHAPTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION – 1950-2011

1950-1959

- **Lillian Brinton** and **Paul Morris** organized the Orange/Durham Chapter of the UNA-USA with about thirty members

1960-1979

- Meetings were held intermittently because members identified primarily with the national organization.

1980-1989

- **Julia Henderson, Helen Martikainen, Martha Branscomb** and **Helaine Plaut** restructured, reorganized and revitalized the Chapter.
- The new Orange/Durham Chapter presented **Brian Urquhart**, Undersecretary General of the United Nations, at a meeting attended by about 300 members of the community and many distinguished guests.
- **Helaine Plaut** and **Helen Martikainen** assumed a leading role in helping to plan, reorganize and activate the North Carolina Division of the UNA. **Helaine** and **John Fobes** each headed the Division for a while.

1990-1999

- The Orange/Durham Chapter was renamed the West Triangle Chapter to better reflect its membership, which included significant numbers from retirement communities in northern Chatham County.
- **Madeline Albright**, then Secretary of State, spoke to a meeting jointly sponsored with the NC Emerging Issues Forum at a celebration of UNFifty.
- The Chapter also served as host of a two-day conference celebrating UNFifty which drew participants from the six North Carolina Chapters of the UNA. The conference, held in Raleigh, was co-planned by **Helaine Plaut** and **Helen Martikainen**.
- The Chapter negotiated with the UNC's Davis Library to include UNA West Triangle material in their UN repository.
- The Chapter gave scholarships for internships at the United Nations to UNC students.
- The Chapter's Newsletter, *The UNA-USA Klaxon*, was started under the editorship of **Elizabeth Watkins**. After a Chapter-wide contest, the publication was re-named *The West Triangle World*.
- Chapter Presidents during this decade included **Helaine Plaut, Norma Green, Ron Sher, David Work**, and **Jerry Berke**.

2000-2009

- In cooperation with the Wake County and Minnesota UNA Chapters, the West Triangle Chapter "adopted" minefields in Mozambique and Afghanistan under UNA's *Adopt-a-Minefield* project. The objective of this project is to clear mines and thereby eliminate the menace mines constitute to the people living in and near mined areas. In addition to raising funds directly, our Chapter sponsored a major classical concert by the internationally known Duke University-based Ciompi Quartet to benefit the clearance work.
- Publication of *The West Triangle World* continued under the editorship of **Jerry Berke**, as it does now. .

- Lunch and Learn, a well-attended forum featuring speakers from local universities and the UN, became a monthly event.



UNC's Professor Jay Swaminathan, discusses India's emergence as an economic superpower.

- The Chapter brought UN leaders, Undersecretary General **Sashi Tharoor** and Assistant Secretaries General **Gillian Sorenson** and **Jon Ruggie** to Chapel Hill to speak to the members and to the community.
- The Education Outreach Committee, led by **Tuck** and **Jean Green**, provides area schools with curriculum materials pertaining to the U.N. and supports Model United Clubs in the high schools. The Committee also works with the student United Nations Organization at UNC and the International Relations Association at Duke. A United Nations Contest for high school students was initiated and draws entrants from four area schools.
- The Children's Health Initiative supported the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies program of the Chatham County Health Department for several years. This Committee, founded by **Barbara Terry** and now led by **Greg Flood**, also cooperates with local hospitals to provide surplus medical supplies to developing countries such as Haiti and Liberia.
- A major part of the Chapter's celebration of UNSixty was The People Speak forum, held at UNC's Friday Center. The topic of discussion among the ninety plus attendees was "Building a Safer World: Defining the U.S.-U.N. Relationship in the 21st Century as it Impacts Worldwide Poverty, Hunger, and Health." **Barbara Terry** worked with our co-host, the League of Women Voters of Orange, Durham, and Chatham Counties, to organize the event. Our October Lunch and Learn commemorated UNSixty with UNC Professor **Tim McKeown's** discussion of UN Peacekeeping.
- In 2007 our Chapter and the Wake County Chapter sponsored a full day conference about Human Rights. The conference, held at N.C. State's conference center, drew over 250 members of the public.
- We offered several events in an effort to attract working adults to the Chapter. The most successful of these were two UNA Documentary Film Festivals, organized by **Michele Yeo** and **Kongite Wessen**.
- West Triangle Chapter members continue to support generously national UN-related activities including *Adopt-A-Minefield* and the *34 Million Friends Campaign* for UN population activities.
- The Chapter established a web site which provides information to its members and the public.
- **Jerry Berke** received the Goodman Award from the United Nations Association for his long and extensive service on behalf of UNA-USA
- Chapter Presidents during the decade included **Penelope Easton**, **Barbara Terry**, **Charles "Tuck" Green**, and **Robert Cherniak**,

2010-2019

- Newsletter editor **Jerry Berke** began supervising interns from Duke and UNC who write articles for *The West Triangle World* and manage electronic media to distribute news about the Chapter, including Facebook, twitter, and a blog.
- The Chapter co-sponsored a U.N. Peacekeeping workshop with the Center for Global Initiatives and the Peace, War and Defense program of UNC as well as the Triangle Institute for Security Studies. The conference was held in the FedEx Global Education Center on the UNC campus and drew almost 200 participants.
- The Ciompi Quartet from Duke helped the Chapter raise \$4,000 through a benefit concert to provide insecticide-impregnated bed-nets which help prevent malaria in tropical Africa.
- In cooperation with the United Nations Organization at UNC, UNC's School of



Education, and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School District, the Chapter sponsors annual middle school Model U.N. conferences. Each conference typically involves four simulations with up to 120 students drawn from the four middle schools. The conferences are held in the North Carolina Center for Educational Excellence, the director of which is Chapter member **Björn Hennings**.

*Middle School Model U.N:
"Columbia" presents its position on the
Israel/Palestine conflict*

- The Chapter can now be reached via Facebook and Twitter and maintains a blog in addition to its web site.
- Chapter Presidents during this decade so far include **Erdman "Pal" Palmore** and **Greg Flood**.

Original version of history compiled 2004
Revised 2011