

Minutes for the Social Justice Council Monthly Meeting

April 1, 2010 7:30 – 9:30 pm

Cedar Lane Library

Present: Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Nancy Janssen, Kay Gottesman, Becky White, Pat Karlsen, Connie Nissley, Marge Dimond, Helen Strang, Mike Benefiel, Sandy Shaw, Mike Burski, Anne Thompson, Steve Colgan, Roger Fritts

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting: Roger Fritts read words written by A. Powell Davies. Lines from the Covenant were read by individual members.

Requests for SJC support/decisions

- Fall Candidate Forum – Steve Colgan proposed Cedar Lane sponsor a forum for candidates for the State Legislature from District 18 prior to the primary in mid-September. We can do this as long as the event is not biased toward any specific candidate. We need a moderator, space and publicity. Mike Benefiel suggested Charles Duffy as moderator. Helen suggested blank cards on seats so audience members could write down their questions.
- National Religious Coalition Against Torture Resource/Event – This group has produced a 20-minute video and discussion guide for specific faith groups, including Unitarian Universalists. Pat and Betsy will look into this. (details included below)
- Request from Machar about joint event May 6 on *Moving Millions: How Coyote Capitalism Fuels Global Immigration*. – The Washington Congregation Secular Humanistic Judaism meets at Cedar Lane. Since this is the date of our May meeting, we have rescheduled our meeting to Tuesday May 4th. Sandy, Betsy and Helen will work on this. (details included below)

General SJC Business

- Nominations Committee –Current SJC members Connie Nissley and Kay Scott have been nominated for another 3 year term. The following people have been nominated to new 3 year terms: Steve Colgan and Al Carr. Voting will take place at the annual meeting on April 11.
- 50/50 – Sandy provided a handout with a summary of the 50/50 collections since July 2008.
- Annual Report – Betsy reminded committee liaisons to get their reports to Helen.
- Finance Report – Connie provided the current report. The following issues were discussed.
 - \$450 was transferred from SJ Led Events to Rebuilding Together for their April 24 project.
 - Pat expressed concerns about our financial commitment to UUSJ.
 - Roger requested that SJC consider a 50/50 collection for the Administrative Discretionary Fund, which is used to help both members and non-members.
 - There is currently insufficient money in the Maurer Scholarship Fund for a full year. Becky will look into this issue and we will discuss it at the next meeting.
 - Marge requested to move the LGBT balance of \$475 to the Yamamoto Fund.
 - Budget requests for next year need to be submitted to the Finance Committee.

Other Announcements/Updates

- Helen reported that she had purchased 70 cards from the UUA Washington Office about immigration reform and about 65 were signed by Cedar Lane members. These will be hand delivered to members of Congress when they return from their spring break. Most of ours will go to Chris Van Hollen.
- Nancy reported that about 30 Cedar Laners attended the March 21 immigration reform rally on the Mall.

- Afghan opposition leader Dr. Abdullah Abdullah will speak at Cedar Lane sponsored by the International Concerns Coalition c/o Kabultec. This will probably be on May 23.
- An AIM action related to usury laws will take place April 14 on Capitol Hill.
- Mike Burski reported that 20 people have signed up for Rebuilding Together. Prep work in the kitchen and front room of the house will be done on Friday, and the rest of the work on Saturday.
- Mike Benefiel reported that a meeting of the UU Legislative Ministry will take place in Annapolis April 24. Al Carr will attend.
- Pat announced that the final UUSJ meeting of the year will take place May 22 in Arlington. Two Cedar Laners will attend.

Closing: The members observed a moment of silence.

National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)

Paz Artaza-Regan contacted us about the resource below. Anyone interested in helping organize an event?

NRCAT has produced a new resource to help congregations and other religious organizations discuss the issue of torture in the context of their faith. With polls indicating that increasing numbers of Americans (including people of faith) believe that torture is often or sometimes justified, this is a critical time for faith communities to engage in this dialogue.

[“Ending U.S.-Sponsored Torture Forever”](#) is a 20-minute video featuring statements from prominent religious leaders, a former military interrogator, a human rights attorney, and others. Six versions of the [detailed discussion guide](#) are designed to meet the needs of specific faith groups (Catholic, evangelical Christian, Jewish, mainline Protestant, Muslim and Unitarian Universalist).

This resource will allow a facilitator **who is not an expert** on the issue to lead a thoughtful dialogue, drawing upon scripture and the statements of the religious leaders. The DVD is available for only \$5.

I am working with NRCAT to identify congregations in this state to participate in their campaign to have 300 congregations use this resource. I hope your congregation will consider participating in this effort.

Please review the materials on NRCAT’s website:

- [20-min video](#)
- [Discussion guides](#)
- [More information about the campaign](#)

Let me know if you need any further information (301-949-0099 or PazRegan@aol.com). If your congregation does agree to participate, please register online so we can keep track of where the project is making an impact.

Moving Millions: How Coyote Capitalism Fuels Global Immigration

Machar Book event Thursday, May 6 7:30

Sara Deshler received this message from Roz Seidenstein, Executive Director of Machar, The Washington Congregation Secular Humanistic Judaism that meets at Cedar Lane. **Anyone interested in working with Roz on this event?**

Hi Sara,

I received an email from Jeffrey Kaye, a well-known correspondent for the PBS NewsHour. He says-

I'm a journalist as well as a longtime activist in the Sholem Community [a sister group of Machar] in Los Angeles, and I've written a book about immigration that will be coming out next month. I'm planning a trip to DC in early May, and I'm writing to see if you might be interested in hosting me as a speaker. I've spent most of my professional career as a correspondent for the PBS News Hour. My book is: "Moving Millions: How Coyote Capitalism Fuels Global Immigration."

More at my website at: www.jeffreykaye.net.

Our Social Action Committee would like to host this. We have a member who works at Politics and Prose, and we're trying to get them involved for publicity, too.

We thought that perhaps your Social Justice Council might want to co-sponsor. First of all, we think that you'll agree that this is a topic of interest. Secondly, with CLUU involved, we could also publicize with other UUs around town. We can publicize through the Jewish community, too. We really want Jeffrey to have a good crowd--and be able to sell books. And, of course, you have a venue!

Please let me know ASAP.

Thanks. Roslynn (Roz) Seidenstein www.machar.org 301-754-2462