Haven’t gotten your Registration in yet? How about your Development Fund Application (if needed)? It’s not too late to get on board with both, but hurry!

- All registrations postmarked by Wednesday, April 15, 2009 will be able to take advantage of the Advance Registration Discount. Since our hosts need our registration information in advance to order food and support staff, registrations received postmarked after that point will be subject to a $50 surcharge.

- If money is of greater concern than the time required to attend the Assembly, take heart. That same deadline of Wednesday, April 15, 2009 applies for submission of applications for financial support from the CC Development Fund. The Fund is provided to make it possible for every CC in North America to be represented at the Assembly. It will underwrite both the cost of the Assembly registration fee, which includes all Assembly expenses including room and board Thursday, May 7 through Sunday noon, May 10, as well as up to $350 in travel expenses to the Assembly by air or car. While the amount of funds are limited, this “scholarship program” is specifically designed to assist those individuals and CCs who could not come to the Assembly otherwise to be able to do so. Those CCs who are able to attend the Assembly without using the Development Fund’s limited resources make it possible for that goal to be met by others who are in greater need of assistance.

Kick-off Time: Regional Assembly 2009 will begin at 6:00pm on Thursday, May 7, 2009 with dinner at the Lutheridge Conference Center in Arden, North Carolina. Located halfway between Asheville and Hendersonville, just two miles from the Asheville Airport, the Conference Center is convenient to everything. Free shuttle service will be provided to and from the airport by our hospitality hosts of nearby URI of Henderson County, NC.

The Assembly will have plenty of opportunities for networking with those in other CCs to cross-pollinate ideas and find ways to work together to vitalize your CC, regardless of its current state of operations. You can find a list of those already registered to attend, a current schedule of activities, information on the shared agreement for decision making (model selection), and more on what to expect at the NA website at www.uri.org/na. If you still have questions, feel free to contact the Assembly Registrar, Sandy Westin, by email or phone at (828) 749-3581.
Blessed Are the Peacemakers  
(As revised 4/20/09 by Rebecca Gonzales-Tobias)

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Ethics (RWIE) CC affords our members a welcome opportunity to engage in coalition building for the good of our community, and we have embraced this charge with vigor and strength. We are honored to be standing shoulder to shoulder in the company of dedicated social change advocates who are committed to local and national coalition building guided by URI principles.

What follows are some of the service-learning projects that we are concurrently engaged in with both youth and adults:

- RWIE CC member Miriam Stein was privileged to participate in PEACE JAM last fall where over 3,000 young people from every continent gathered at Loyola Marymount University to engage with seven of the GCA Nobel Peace Prize Laureates working with a generation of young leaders committed to positive change in themselves and their communities. She joined a group of teens that used poetry to demonstrate how poverty impedes peace and was moved by Archbishop Desmond Tutu who remarked, “Nobel Laureates don’t fall from the sky—Nobel Laureates are ordinary human beings like you,” he says. “At one time we were as young as you and you have it in you!”

- Over this past year our RWIE CC has adopted a Middle East peace education community outreach program featuring the film “Encounter Point,” coupled with its extensively researched well developed adjunct teaching curriculum, both are produced by the non-profit organization Just Vision. Since their introduction in 2007 the Institute has conducted multiple screenings and facilitated discussions using these materials in formal and informal classroom settings with religious congregations, community activists, and civic leaders using non-violence as a methodology for achieving peace and reconciliation aimed at affecting lasting positive social change.

- The modeling of nonviolent communication is at the heart of the Salaam Shalom Education Foundation (SSEF), our CC’s satellite project in Israel and her territories directed by Shephra Vainstein which provides peace education programs for Jewish and Arab children, so that together they may develop new capacities for problem solving and new potentials for cooperation programs combine a variety of class topics, educational methods, and communication skills training. http://www.sashedf.org/~sashedfo/site/ SSEF’s aim is to foster a generation of individuals educated to cultivate new social, cultural, and economic endeavors so that communities of Israelis and Palestinians may learn to thrive together.
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~sashedfo/site/ SSEF’s aim is to foster a generation of individuals educated to cultivate new social, cultural, and economic endeavors so that communities of Israelis and Palestinians may learn to thrive together.

These efforts lie at the heart of our planned, “Trauma and Reconciliation” conference coordinated by Dr. Stephen Sideroff who is gathering a team of mental health professionals interested in designing a public forum in which to explore foundational issues of grief and loss to better identify the core challenges that perpetuate the personal and national sense of victimhood and entitlement that serves as an obstacle to effective dialogue between stakeholders in the Middle East region.

• In January while in Israel lending support for these programs, Byron DeLear and I were first graciously welcomed by former URI Regional Trustee Elana Rosenman of Jerusalem's Trust-EMUN, and hosted by many kind and dedicated URI bothers and sisters eager to mentor us through the stark realities of the pressing social and religious challenges faced each day by the majority of the Holy Land's richly diverse inhabitants. After a pleasant Shabbat in Jerusalem with Dr. Yehuda Stolov of the and his family, we were stewarded by Eliyahu McLean and Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bukhari into Hebron meeting with GC Trustee Tareq J. al Tamini and Dr. Taleb Al-Harithi. Details of the journey where the work of the URI its members are featured prominently see Byron's blog at: http://mepeace.ning.com/profiles/blog/list?user=2h5wwmdqf40gcOnline

• One of our broadest local/national collaborations is headed by RWIE CC member Roger Eaton who has designed Wallenberg's Group Dialog software that is playing a key role in the Los Angeles Area Nuclear Disarmament Coalition. RWIE CC’s Dr. Stephen Krashen is a newly active advocate with this project. The LAANDC strategic plan is to bring world opinion to bear on the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) conference. We think we can ramp up quickly using our innovative “voting-on-messages” software on the web, and the massive majority that exists globally for nuclear disarmament. We will partner with global organizations that already exist. In particular, Mayors for Peace with its 2020 Vision which provides an existing structure that makes rapid action on a global scale possible.

• We look forward to going global and electing a message with tens of thousands of participants from all the cities of the earth. The software allows each metro area to have its own “voice” while also electing a message from all participants together to represent humanity as a whole. Please feel free to join the online Nuclear Disarmament Dialog at http://globalassembly.net.

This is the spirit of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Ethics CC as reflected in the words of the prophet Isaiah 2:4 “And he shall judge among the nations, they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”.

May G-d's infinite mercy grace you and yours...Respectfully Submitted – Rebecca Tobias, NA Global Trustee

Rebecca@raoulwallenberginstitute.org
S.A.R.A.H. CC Crafts a Tapestry for President Obama

By Sande Hart,
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SARAH, the Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope CC in Los Angeles, sent a letter to President Obama this Spring informing him that those attending the Global Assembly in Mayapur, India, last December crafted a Peace Tapestry for him in honor of his commitment to interfaith and multicultural at-onement.

We impressed upon him our vision to create more harmonious communities by empowering our country with opportunities for dialogue and community service.

We are patiently waiting to hear if we can present this to him in person.

Our initiative is in direct alignment with a movement of our society that is clearly gaining ground at not just the grassroots level, but also with our government’s leadership. With the cabinet appointment of Joshua DuBois to head the White House’s Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, we are reminded of the consideration to focus on interfaith reconciliation. This creates an organic, authentic and swift growth of the interfaith movement when it’s coupled with activating us all into service – real “harmonic convergence”.

Yoland Trevino to Present Pre-Parliament Event Keynote at Los Angeles Sunday, April 19

If you can be in the LA area this week, you can get a taste of what The Parliament of World Religions will offer this December in Melbourne, Australia. While 10,000 people are expected to be in attendance in Melbourne to explore the theme of “Hearing Each Other, Healing the Earth,” 500 are expected in Los Angeles on April 19 to attend a Pre-Parliament event, one of several being held around the US this year.

The keynote speaker will be none other than our very own Yoland Trevino, Global Council Chair of URI. Yoland is an indigenous Mayan born in Guatemala, and is a pioneering bridge-builder in the dialogue between indigenous and established religious traditions. She has served on Bill Clinton’s Domestic Policy Council and the Latino Caucus for Family Support in America. More information is available at the socalparliamentofreligions.org/ website.

Paper vs. Electrons

To save on the mounting expense of printing and mailing (about $2.00 per address), the North America newsletter is now distributed primarily via e-mail. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter in hard copy only, please contact Sandy Westin. Share this newsletter with a click of your “forward email” button. Let others in your CC and community know about the peacebuilding work of URI. If you are not a Primary CC Contact and prefer to not receive future editions of this e-newsletter, please let us know. We would be sad to see you go, but will honor your preferences.

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