



February 2010 — Volume 10, Number 1

# UNA-USA EAST BAY



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United Nations Association of the United States of America

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

## Challenges of the New Decade

BY HERB BEHRSTOCK  
EAST BAY CHAPTER PRESIDENT

At the beginning of 2010, we should pause and consider the last decade's successes and failures and the challenges and hopes for a better future.

We in the United Nations Association assert that with international cooperation fostered by the unique role and activities of the United Nations, humankind has a better chance of creating a peaceful world. With a means for nations to unite in cooperation, global objectives can be set and achieved. Sustainable solutions yearned for by rich and poor, weak and strong, men and women, can be attained with justice and human security.

As the saying goes, "If the UN didn't exist, governments would rush to create one." It's true.

This newsletter focuses on three themes central to our lives now and for future generations:

- Climate change—impact on health and life expectancy
- Nuclear proliferation—high risks of armed nations and terrorists
- Empowerment of women and girls—the rights and roles of half of humankind

Our coverage of such enormous topics is humble but we hope instructive by:

- Providing experts' insights about these compelling themes
- Underscoring the critical leadership of the United Nations
- Noting how your local East

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## CLIMATE CHANGE and HEALTH: Annual Meeting and Lecture

*Once a year, UNA-East Bay invites members and the community to our annual meeting and public lecture. On January 24, a sizeable crowd learned about achievements of UNA-East Bay in 2009 and plans for 2010, and elected new Board members (see page 6-7).*

*Keynote speaker Professor Kirk Smith presented his assessment of the disappointments and prospects following the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen in December 2009. Dr. Smith, professor of global environmental health at UC Berkeley, focused on ways that climate change is advancing as well as the actions that can be prioritized to mitigate and adapt to these enormous and growing challenges while at the same time improving human health—what he calls "co-benefits."*

SEE STORY, PG.2



Guatemalan field staff measures lung function in children exposed to indoor air pollution. About half of the world's population relies on wood, dung, crops, and coal for household energy. This results in very high levels of indoor air pollution to which women and young children are exposed daily, a leading cause of preventable deaths. Reducing the use of these fuels would both mitigate climate change and improve health.

## UN International Women's Day Celebrations in March

In 1908, a time of great industrial turbulence, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights. In accordance with a declaration by the Socialist Party of America, the first National Woman's Day (NWD) was observed across the United States on 28 February. In 1910 a second International Conference of Working Women was held in Copenhagen (100 women from 17 countries) at which



International Women's Day was created.

More recently, the UN Commission on the Status of Women has organized world conferences on women in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). Over the past decade, the Commission has systematically reviewed progress in the implementation of the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action at its annual sessions, and has adopted action-oriented recommendations to facilitate increased implementation at all levels.

Mark your calendar to hear from a national advocate for women's rights on Sunday, March 7, at UC Berkeley's International House. Aileen Hernández is chair of the California Women's Agenda, an alliance of over 600 organizations in California working on the areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action at the UN Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995.

CONT. PG.2

# Co-Benefits & Climate Change: Protecting Health in a New Environment

EXCERPTED FROM ARTICLE BY LINDA ANDERBERG PUBLISHED IN BERKELEY HEALTH, FALL 2009



KIRK SMITH

Finding climate change solutions that also improve human health is a passion of Professor Kirk Smith, professor of global environmental health at UC Berkeley.

Rapid climate change is a relatively new phenomenon in human history; however, its effects on health will in some ways be very familiar. Age-old threats, such as malnutrition and communicable disease, will rise with the temperatures and sea levels. For infectious diseases that are already widespread globally, even a slight increase in the percentage of cases will have a large effect. One million people die of malaria each year, including many young children; a 10 percent increase in the spread of malaria would result in another 100,000 deaths per year. It is clear that the burden will be inequitable, with those disadvantaged...populations already burdened most with ill health facing the most serious health consequences.

Global response to climate change, while well intentioned, does not often improve health, and can sometimes lead to negative health impacts. For example, the recent push to develop biofuels has provided renewable energy resources that produce less greenhouse

pollutants, especially in developed countries where fuel consumption is highest. However, it has also led to a decrease in the amount of crops that are available to feed people, which has exacerbated malnutrition problems in some areas and increased deforestation in others.

Smith believes that the idea of co-benefits can hold appeal to developing countries like China and India, whose leaders might worry that changing poli-

pollution in family dwellings locally, they also reduce greenhouse emissions globally.

Solid fuel stoves are still being used in about half of the world's households, meaning an intervention in this area offers enormous co-benefits for both health and the environment if adopted on a wide scale. Smith is now working to put his decades of pioneering research into practice.

*“The rich will find their world to be more expensive, inconvenient, uncomfortable, disrupted, and colorless—in general, more unpleasant and unpredictable, perhaps greatly so. The poor will die.”*

cies would negatively affect their growth. “Co-benefits give them incentive because it’s their populations that will benefit,” he says. “The health benefits are local—reduction in indoor air pollution or urban air pollution. The greenhouse benefits are global.”

Smith has spent decades researching the health and climate effects from indoor cooking fires and stoves that use solid fuels. His research team has developed and tested cook stoves in Guatemala that are more fuel-efficient and well-ventilated. Not only can improved stoves reduce indoor air



Kirk Smith and intern Kellen Winden

## International Women's Day

CONT. FROM COVER



A strategy in Zaria, Nigeria to improve maternal health is to promote education for girls by paying for school fees and books for junior secondary school

Then, on Wednesday, March 24, Professor Malcolm Potts from UC Berkeley will speak and lead a discussion at our Dinner Forum. An obstetrician and biologist, Dr. Potts has worked internationally since the late 1960s, when he became the first medical director of the London-based International Planned Parenthood Federation. He has conducted research on maternal mortality, family planning, and HIV prevention in 40 countries. His humanitarian work has taken him to many war torn countries, including Bangladesh immediately after the War of Liberation, Cambodia during Pol Pot's attack on the capital, and to Afghanistan, Angola, Gaza, Liberia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Sri Lanka.

Bay chapter is helping to raise awareness and involvement. Our goal is to empower the East Bay community to make our voices heard by providing the knowledge to act and the means to channel worries and hopes through UNA's public education and advocacy activities. To strengthen our voice we challenge you to give your most precious gift—the gift of your time—to help us plan and execute programs that expand our reach.

The year 2010 also marks the end of the first ten of 15 years designated to achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While basic human needs of billions of people have progressed towards fulfillment during the past decade, global economic decline has exacerbated problems of the 'bottom billion.'

Our chapter adopted the eight MDGs to guide our programming. This historic social and economic compact was adopted by all 192 UN member states in 2000 to mark our commitment to improve the lives of all people in the 21st century by setting measurable objectives. It encompasses poverty, hunger, disease, gender equality, the environment, and sustainable human development.

We celebrated UN Day on October 24th last year with our 4th Annual Global Citizens Awards by honoring four champion organizations whose activities contribute to achieving the three MDGs related to health.

You, your family and friends are invited to engage with these critical issues in the new decade. Students are especially welcomed to become leaders to reach, teach and inspire future generations.

The world needs an effective UN. And both the UN and the U.S. government need the voices of an informed, supportive, and committed public to address the world's challenges.

# NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

*On January 13th Norm Bowen, professor of political science at Cal State East Bay, spoke at the UNA-East Bay Dinner Forum on nuclear non-proliferation. The Forum was launched in mid-2009 to engage experts on a UN-related topic in a lively Q-&-A discussion with members over an inexpensive ethnic meal. See our web site or the calendar on the back page for upcoming topics. Below is a summary of Dr. Bowen's talk.*

*In the accompanying article, Jackie Cabasso, executive director of the Oakland-based Western States Legal Foundation, draws attention to the importance of the May 2010 nuclear non-proliferation review conference for the long term viability of nuclear non-proliferation. She was the recipient of the International Peace Bureau's 2008 Sean MacBride Peace Award.*

## Prospects for 2010

BY **NORMAN BOWEN**  
EAST BAY CHAPTER EDUCATION CHAIR, AND  
PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
CAL STATE EAST BAY

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), ratified in 1970 and extended indefinitely in 1995, is an historic effort to prevent the spread of and eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear states agreed to relinquish their right to develop weapons in exchange for enhanced access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is charged with both the nuclear monitoring and the promotion of civilian nuclear technology in non-nuclear states.

The nuclear weapons states committed (without a timetable) to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The NPT succeeded in markedly slowing the number of new nuclear weapons states, which had been expected to expand to twenty or thirty. It led to the abandonment of nuclear weapons (South Africa) or nuclear weapons programs (Argentina and Brazil) by some states. It helped to energize the regional Nuclear Weapons Free Zones movement within the United Nations. The two nuclear superpowers, the U.S. and the Russian Federation, have reduced their strategic nuclear arsenals by two-thirds under the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaties but still have over 2000 strategic nuclear weapons each.

Some new states have joined the nuclear weapons club since 1970. Several countries never signed the NPT and are not formally bound by it even though the nuclear weapons states vowed to try and prevent all states from obtaining nuclear status. Non-NPT states Israel, India, and Pakistan all have nuclear weapons. Only part of India's program is now under partial IAEA monitoring. No serious efforts have been made to impose sanctions or take other action against these states.

Iraq was developing a clandestine nuclear weapons program in spite of IAEA monitoring

## Review Conference: Make-it or break-it

BY **JACQUELINE CABASSO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
WESTERN STATES LEGAL FOUNDATION

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) represents the only binding commitment by the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to the goal of disarmament. The treaty, which entered into force in 1970, aimed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. The NWS pledged to end the arms race and to negotiate in good faith the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, while the Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) pledged not to acquire nuclear weapons. As an incentive, NNWS were promised assistance with nuclear energy for

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## UNA-USA President Speaks at Peace Forum



A Peace Forum organized by the East Bay chapter on the UN's International Day of Peace at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology featured Tom Miller (left), national president of UNA-USA who came from New York, and Professor David Holloway of Stanford who spoke about his specialty—controlling nuclear arms and disarmament. Holloway noted the United Nations' central role in achieving disarmament and peace.

# UN Approves new Women's Agency

Following years of energetic efforts and considerable frustration, the United Nations General Assembly voted on September 14, 2009 to establish a UN women's agency. Expectations are high that it will begin operation in 2010 despite past opposition from a handful of governments.

Initiated three years ago with the support of many governments, more than 300 non-governmental organizations operating in 80 countries, and enthusiastic backing by then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the new agency will consolidate and strengthen four existing UN entities: UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) and three offices based in New York: the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, the UN Division for Advancement of Women, and INSTRAW (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women). In 2009, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took up the cause.

The new agency is supposed to be headed by an Under Secretary-General, giving women's issues direct access to the Secretary General. If ideals are met through governments' voluntary contributions, the new agency will be more generously funded—much more than UNIFEM's present budget of about \$275 million (which for programs aimed at women is roughly only 7 percent of what UNICEF receives to support children).

This historic step was achieved 34 years after the UN convened the first International Women's Conference in Mexico City in 1975, raising global awareness of gender inequality, discrimination, and the denial of rights and opportunities.

Since that time, the current UN women's organizations have been established, and many nations have introduced laws giving women and girls greater rights and opportunities.

Moreover, the UN adopted in 1979 the Convention to End all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, the USA is one of only eight countries that has not ratified CEDAW.

It is not surprising that the UN's fourth International Women's Conference, held in Beijing in 1995 concluded that the "women's agenda" was not being sufficiently implemented in many countries.

Looking ahead, the United Nations requires the leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to secure the support and financial pledges of UN member governments that are indispensable to making the new agency operational.

UNA-USA urges implementation of the newly approved agency to strengthen the voice of women through the United Nations, and our chapter will continue to urge our Congressional representatives to promote U.S. ratification of CEDAW.

*For you to take action supporting ratification, visit the UNA-USA's advocacy section at [www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org) or sign the petition directly at <http://capwiz.com/unausa/issues/alert/?alertid=14478891>*



Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Esther Brimmer visited California in late September. She sought a special meeting with UNA chapter leaders from Northern California and said she found it useful to discuss how to raise American's awareness and support of the UN, working in harmony with UNA-USA. She is responsible for coordination of U.S. policy related to the UN and briefed our 18 leaders about the Obama Administration's foreign policy and plans affecting the UN for the coming year.

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## CEDAW: Treaty for Women's Rights Awaits U.S. Ratification

BY RITA MARAN  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVOCACY

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has been coined the international bill of rights for women. Thus far, 186 states have ratified or acceded to the treaty since it was opened for signature and ratification by the UN General Assembly on December 18, 1979. The eight UN member states that have not become parties to the treaty include the United States, Iran, Nauru, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and the Holy See (the Vatican). Although the United States signed the convention under the Carter administration on July 17, 1980, the U.S. remains the only country that has signed but not ratified it. However, CEDAW is currently on a priority list of 17 UN treaties that the Obama administration sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 11, 2009, urging ratification. Two U.S. cities have implemented CEDAW locally: San Francisco and Berkeley, in 1998 and 2004 respectively.

The controversy over CEDAW has centered on claims that it is a promotion of "radical feminism" as well as being culturally biased toward western values. A number of Islamic states have claimed that CEDAW's culturally-biased stance is a fundamental contradiction of Shari'a law.

*To learn more about CEDAW and to urge ratification, go to our chapter's web site: [unausaeastbay.org](http://unausaeastbay.org). There you will also learn more about our Chapter's advocacy activities and how you can get involved.*

# Berkeley Students Launch UNA Club



UNA Student Club Co-presidents Eugenié George (left) and Amy Belsher

A group of UC Berkeley students, led by Co-Presidents Amy Belsher and Eugenié George, have joined together to create a UNA Student Alliance Club on campus. The club will collaborate with and support the activities of the UNA East Bay chapter. Club events will include a movie series and speakers with knowledge of the United Nation's vital role in international affairs. The

club will reach out to the many other international clubs already in existence at UC Berkeley. The hope is to bring the mission and goals of the UN onto campus and get more students involved in educating and advocating on critical international issues. Membership is open for spring semester. If interested, contact Amy [amybelsher@berkeley.edu](mailto:amybelsher@berkeley.edu) or Eugenié [eugeorge@berkeley.edu](mailto:eugeorge@berkeley.edu).

## Prospects for 2010

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before Israel destroyed a key reactor in 1981. In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, Iraq was discovered to have restarted its nuclear weapons program, which was then dismantled by the IAEA under the Security Council imposed disarming of Iraq that followed the war. Since then a stronger monitoring program has been developed.

North Korea, which withdrew from the NPT in 2003, also developed nuclear weapons while under IAEA scrutiny and, in addition, has intercontinental ballistic missiles (but probably not the ability to miniaturize the weapons sufficiently to actually launch them). Negotiations continue to convince North Korea to return to the NPT framework and abandon the nuclear weapons program. Security Council sanctions on North Korea continue.

*Dr. Bowen's article is continued on our web site—[unacausaeastbay.org](http://unacausaeastbay.org)—and includes information on how the NPT has been applied to Iraq, North Korea, and Iran.*

## NPT Review Conference

CONT. FROM PG.3

peaceful purposes, “without discrimination” – a deal which has become increasingly problematic.

The NPT defined a NWS as one which had exploded a nuclear weapon prior to January 1, 1967, effectively limiting membership in the exclusive “nuclear club” to the U.S., the Soviet Union (and its successor, Russia), the U.K., France and China. Eventually, a total of 189 countries ratified the

NPT—more than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement. Only nuclear-armed India, Israel and Pakistan remain outside the NPT, while North Korea's declared withdrawal has not been accepted.

The NPT's initial duration was 25 years. At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, deep divisions emerged between NWS and NNWS, who felt that the treaty was being used by the NWS as a mechanism for perpetuating a hypocritical international double standard. The U.S. and its allies insisted on indefinite extension. As a result, the decision to extend the treaty indefinitely was coupled with a package of nonbinding Principles and Objectives for Nonproliferation and Disarmament, in which the NWS reaffirmed their disarmament commitment, called for progress toward establishment of a Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction—directed primarily at Israel—and established a strengthened review process.

It seemed that a breakthrough occurred at the conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference (RevCon) when the NWS committed to an “unequivocal undertaking... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.” For the first time they dropped qualifiers like “ultimate goal” regarding their nuclear disarmament obligation. They also agreed to “a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies... to facilitate the process of their total elimination.” The U.S. also promised to work with Russia to take nuclear forces off hair-trigger alert, and agreed that a no-backtracking “principle of irreversibility” applies to nuclear disarmament.

At the 2005 RevCon, however, the U.S. refused to even acknowledge the outcome of the 2000 RevCon, and the 2005 meeting ended in diplomatic failure, unable to agree on a final document.

The May 2010 NPT RevCon is widely seen as a make-it-or-break-it point for the long term viability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The NNWS are rightly expecting the NWS to finally make good on their 40-year old pledge to disarm. This will be a significant test of the reality behind President Obama's promising nuclear disarmament rhetoric.

*For more information about NGO activities in preparation for the May 2010 NPT RevCon, visit: [www.peaceandjusticenow.org](http://www.peaceandjusticenow.org).*

# Saving Lives: Honoring Public Health's "Global Citizens"

## 4th Annual Awards Given by East Bay Chapter at UN Anniversary Celebration

Nearly 300 people filled International House to capacity at UC Berkeley for the fourth consecutive year as a feature of the UNA-USA East Bay chapter's UN Day celebrations. Students and community residents recognized the 64th anniversary of the United Nations' founding in October, 1945 in San Francisco. The chapter honored the contributions of four organizations for their exemplary achievements towards meeting the UN's Millennium Development Goals related to health:

**Children's Hospital and Research**

**Institute, Oakland** – for international programs to reduce child mortality and infectious disease

**Rotary International's East Bay Districts and Chapters** – for on-going contributions to eradicate polio and other preventable diseases, collaborating with WHO and UNICEF

**School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley** – for improving health and life-expectancy world-wide

**Hesperian, Berkeley** publisher for their influential primary health care books distributed globally



Deborah Dean, executive director of the Global Health Initiative, and Casey Culbertson, infant mortality specialist, from Children's Hospital Oakland and Research Institute.



Dean Steve Shortell, students Aubree Gordon and Leah Marsh (hidden) and Professor Malcolm Potts, of the School of Public Health



UN Day reception at UC International House



Art Reingold, Assistant Faculty Director, Center for Global Public Health, UC Berkeley



Rotary District leadership from East Bay. Brad Howard (far right) is past Governor of East Bay district and "Polio Plus" Regional Coordinator of Rotary International. Howard explained Rotary's multi-million dollar contributions to help eradicate polio globally, working in conjunction with WHO and UNICEF.

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The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official position of the UNA-USA-East Bay or its Board of Directors.

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# UNA-East Bay Center Thrives, Supports UNICEF

2009 was another good year for the UNA East Bay Center. At year end, the Center team, given new life by intern Blerta Kumbaro, reported that visitors and annual sales jumped for the holidays. Through the sale of UNICEF cards, \$2,700 has been contributed from Center profits to support UNICEF programs benefitting children world-wide.

New volunteers with computer and digital photography skills joined the staff. Many are recent college graduates with international experience, such as the Peace Corps, study abroad, or having grown up in another country. Loyal customers and former volunteers joined year-round volunteer Billy Trice Jr. and others to support UNA and UNICEF.

Pat Daniels, long-time coordinator of the annual Trick-or-Treat for

UNICEF program, couldn't join the campaign this year. UNA Center staff transmitted \$3,000 on behalf of children and others who received Trick-or-Treat boxes from the Center, while some schools transmitted funds directly to support UNICEF.

Professor Norman Bowen and the education committee put volunteers to work mailing notices of the UNA-USA High School Essay Contest, and expanding educational outreach. The local winner of the essay contest is Kathy Pham

Contact *Ingeborg Nienhold* ([ICNIEN03@aol.com](mailto:ICNIEN03@aol.com)), *Blerta Kumbaro* ([bkumbaro@yahoo.com](mailto:bkumbaro@yahoo.com)), or *Carol Mosher* ([cabmosher@gmail.com](mailto:cabmosher@gmail.com)) if you would like to join the team. Or phone 510-849-1752.

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**NEW!** Join, Renew, and Donate online:  
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*We the peoples of the United Nations [are] determined to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors...*

—United Nations Charter

## CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

[Check for updates on our web site:  
unausaeastbay.org]  
UNA-USA East Bay Chapter

### NOTE for all DINNER FORUMS:

Space is limited at restaurants, making advance reservations necessary.  
**\$20 (\$10 students)** cash or check only

RSVP to Mary Steiner:  
me.steiner41@gmail.com,  
or 510-269-0144

### DINNER FORUM

**Wed, Feb. 24, 6:30 pm**

*Traditional Diplomacy: Contribution or Hindrance to Peaceful Resolution*  
**David C. McGaffey and Stewart Levine**  
Negotiation experts, teachers, authors with rich, diverse global and US experiences  
Everest Cafe, 1645 Solano Ave, Berkeley

### UN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Sunday, March 7, 3:00 pm**

*Women's Human Rights: Turning Principles into Practice*

**Aileen Hernández, National leader, activist for Women's Rights**

Hosted by International House, UC Berkeley

### DINNER FORUM

**Wed, March 24, 6:30 pm**

*Access to Family Planning Services: Key to Women's Health and Population Sustainability*

**Professor Malcolm Potts, Professor of Global Health**

Mandarin Garden Restaurant  
2025 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley'

### DINNER FORUM

**Wed, April 28, 6:30 pm**

*Landmines: Human Tragedy in Afghanistan, the UN Treaty and Global Landmine Ban.*

**Andrew Lyons, Vice President (West), HALO Trust USA, the world's largest humanitarian landmine clearance organization.**

Location to be announced-see web site

## Kathy Pham is East Bay winner of National H.S. Essay Contest



Every fall UNA-USA selects an international topic of concern on which high school students are invited to write an essay and submit to their local chapter. The best essay in each chapter is sent to the national office where the three top essays are selected. Winners receive cash prizes and national recognition.

Kathy Pham, an 11th grader from Andrew P. Hill High School in San Jose, won the East Bay Chapter's award and presented a synopsis of her essay at our annual general meeting. She was accompanied by very proud family members. To read Kathy's essay go to our web site: [unausaeastbay.org](http://unausaeastbay.org)