



UUJEC Fall Newsletter 2017

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community

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A-Mazing!! The UUA passes “Reversing Economic Inequity” Statement of Conscience

We (the UUA) have come a long way. In 1979, President Paul Carnes created the UU Task Force on Economic Justice. Soon, Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert published, “How Much Do We Deserve?” and with Dr. Loretta Williams, Director of the UUA Office of Social Responsibility, published the first economic justice curriculum, “A Call to Do Justice.” In 1989, the Rev. Paul Sawyer called a group of colleagues together with lecturers from the Center for Popular Economics and, out of the dialogue, UUJEC, an affiliate UUA organization, was born. Years of study, curricula, workshops, GA resolutions, marches followed. In 2017, the UUA has just passed its comprehensive Statement of Conscience on economic justice. Drawing from the study and actions of many congregations, UUSC, UUJEC, Class Conversations and others, the SOC contains many specific action proposals to inspire us to carry on the work. It is amazing to see so much, once dreamed of initiative toward economic justice, publicly affirmed. Achieving any one of the actions proposed would be worthy progress.



UUJEC Board Member Carl McCargo at the SOC Debate in New Orleans.

But, are we there yet? The actions described can themselves be seen as a maze. Mazes have

cul-de-sacs and you have to go back to find the main trail. An example is the \$15 an hour minimum wage, a much-appreciated step toward a living wage for many. *But*, \$15 an hour, when a CEO in the same company is allowed to be paid 300 times that, is not *equitable*. It is only a patch on a system that is inherently unjust.

To exit the deceptive maze, we (and now the *we* is society and world) we must abort the capitalist system and a world view of individualism/nationalism, i.e., “survival of the fittest,” and birth genuine economic democracy and a world view of we-will-all-solve-it-and-benefit-from-it-together communitarianism and globalism.

Patchwork quilts can be beautiful. But they easily fray. We need whole cloth if we are to achieve equity. The introduction to the SOC states the goal: ***we are committed to working to change economic and social systems with a goal of equitable outcomes of life, dignity, and well-being experienced by all*** and the recent decades’ exacerbation of inequality. So, we have come a long way. The next study and action must go deeper and be stronger even while we keep patching healthcare, wages and renewable energy just to keep afloat. The word “revolution” comes to mind now we are committed to *systemic* change. Let us be creative and daring, together.

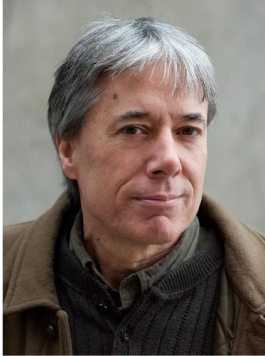
Article by Lucy Hitchcock, UUJEC Board member
Visit:

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/economic-inequality-statement-2017> To watch the SOC debate at GA, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHzMAQ2JBQI>

Webinar Oct 5: Reversing Inequality with Chuck Collins

UUJEC Advisory Board Member Chuck Collins, in Partnership with The Next System Project & The Institute for Policy Studies, released an impactful report “REVERSING INEQUALITY: Unleashing the Transformative Potential of an Equitable Economy.”



In collaboration with UU’s for Social Justice, we are proud to have Chuck join us on **Thursday, October 5th at 8pm (eastern time)** for a ZOOM webinar to discuss his report and its findings. For webinar details, please visit <http://uujec.com/webinars>

Webinar archives: To access information about past webinars, please visit <http://uujec.com/webinars>

October 7, 2017 UU Justice Summit in Seattle Washington

UUJEC is a proud sponsor of the 7th Annual UU Justice Summit to be held **Saturday, October 7** at the University Unitarian Church in Seattle Washington. The theme of this year’s summit is *Called to Action*. **Please register and participate!**
<http://www.nwuujn.org>

Dr. Jerome Dugan On Health & Economics



Our UUJEC/UUSJ webinar with Health Economist Dr. Jerome Dugan was very informative. You can view the webinar recording on the UUSJ YouTube channel https://youtu.be/_fKRc0jbms0 To learn more about Dr. Dugan and his colleagues’ work visit their website, Health Economics Analytics Laboratory www.healresearch.org and follow him on twitter @profdugan.

Terry Sterrenberg & Laurie Simons: “Now is the Time: Healthcare for Everybody”



Filmmakers Terry Sterrenberg & Laurie Simons joined us recently to discuss healthcare justice and their newest documentary “Now is the Time: Healthcare for Everybody”. If you missed our discussion, you can view the recording on the UUJEC YouTube channel here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hBsO17r-vY> . Also, learn more about the film by visiting their website <http://www.nowisthetimemovie.com/> and follow them on twitter @Nowsthetimemovi.

A Devastating Critique of Neoliberal Finance

a Review of

“Can We Avoid Another Financial Crisis?” by
Steve Keen (2017)

Steve Keen is the world’s leading heterodox economist, so when he speaks, I listen. In this little book, he sums up his model of money and debt, the one that he used to predict the financial crash of 2008, and even the “great moderation” before it. Most economists were left red-faced, running for cover. Even today, Keen’s simple, common-sense approach is fiercely resisted by mainstream economists like Paul Krugman, who are wedded to a very primitive barter-like concept of money.



This book expects some familiarity with the terminology and thinking of economics, including models and graphs, but for such readers it is expository rather than technical in nature. Keen shows what countries (“debt-zombies-to-be”) are at risk of future financial crises, or prolonged stagnation like Japan. This is due to their level of debt and their inability to write down that debt or inflate it away. First, and foremost, of course, is China, with the US already categorized as a “debt zombie” after the 2008 meltdown.

According to Keen, monetary authorities should carefully monitor the “private debt to GDP ratio”, doing whatever it takes to keep it below 100%. But he considers this unlikely in most countries, given the continued dominance of neo-liberal economics and the stranglehold of big finance on politics. Instead global stagnation is the likely outcome. Here I wish Keen had noted that even the best financial policies will not overcome the limits-to-growth imposed by planet earth. So, what kind of finance would work best with future de-growth scenarios?

By Dick Burkhart, Board Member UUJEC

Living Wage Certification Toolkit

The Richmond Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy Chapter is partnering with the Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building to develop a Living Wage Certification program. This is a voluntary certification program designed to recognize and promote employers that pay living wages. The Certification Committee has set \$16 or more per hour for the Gold Star Living Wage Certification, \$12.50 or more for the Silver Star Living Wage Certification, and \$11 or more for the Aspiring Living Wage Certification.



As a result of our work, the "Living Wage Certification Toolkit: Creating & Sustaining A Living Wage Certification Program in Your Community" was developed and is available online here:
<http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Living-Wage-Certification-Toolkit.pdf>

Article by Dean Wanderer, UUJEC Board Member

Become a Member of UUJEC today!
To learn more, visit:

<http://uujec.com/membership>

Presentations for your Congregations

The benefits of membership in the Unitarian Universalist Just Economic Community (UUJEC) are many. The benefits which I have taken advantage of several times are the resources available on the UUJEC website. Go to the UUJEC website (uujec.com), click on the menu “escalating inequality” and a drop-down menu will appear with several workshops and videos which can be presented at your congregation or community setting. I have had personal success with TED Talk presentations.



I chose TED Talks to present at our Fellowship in Door County Wisconsin. My timing was not the greatest. I made the first presentation of TED Talks during the non-tourist season. There are just a handful of communities in northern Door County. These communities all have populations less than a thousand. During the tourist season, there are tens of thousands of folks in Door County. During the non-tourist season, it is common to see neither a car nor person on the main streets. These same streets during tourist season are so crowded open parking spaces cannot be found and walking is difficult due to the crowds. My expectations were low.

I advertised the TED Talks as being presentations and discussions around income and wealth distribution in the United States and possible remedies, if there is something to remedy. I expressly encouraged all political views to participate. I advertised in the local weekly paper’s community events section, the local radio station’s community event broadcast, and the Fellowship’s Order of Service. I convinced myself if two people showed up I would deem the presentation a success. I set up the TV in the gathering room at the Fellowship. I loaded in the TED Talks, a TED Talk which discussed how income is distributed in the United States and a TED Talk by Richard Wilkinson, whose discussion pointed out

that those countries where income is more equally distributed are healthier and happier.

I then went to another section of the Fellowship for a meeting which preceded the TED Talks. When the meeting ended I raced into the gathering room hoping to find at least two people. There were over twenty folks there to watch the TED Talks.

Not all of the folks who attended the TED Talks were from the Fellowship. There were several from the community, covering the political spectrum from liberal to conservative. Everyone attentively watched the TED Talks. Afterwards there was a robust respectful discussion. Every voice was given an opportunity and everyone was listened to.

I continued to present the TED Talks for four consecutive weeks. The TED Talks were all found on the UUJEC website. At each presentation, there were about twenty participants. The presentations were followed by respectful robust discussions. I have since made two more four-week presentations of TED Talks at the Fellowship. All were well attended. All were easy to present because the folks at UUJEC have sorted through numerous TED Talks and selected those most impactful around the topic of income inequality.

So, a major benefit to being a member of UUJEC is to support the efforts which created the resources found at the UUJEC website. At my Fellowship, the TED Talks were so successful other members of the Fellowship visited UUJEC’s website and found other resources. We are in the process of putting together a six-week workshop around income inequality through the resources found at www.uujec.com

Article by Jim Black, UUJEC Board Member

<http://uujec.com/tedcurriculum>

<http://uujec.com/corruptionDemocracy>