

WORLD FEDERALIST NEWS

Ring in the New!

CITIZENS FOR GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

Minnesota Chapter Newsletter, January 2004

Building Peace, Justice and Freedom in a Democratically Governed World

EDITORIAL

This newsletter marks a major transition, not only from one year to another, but from one organizational structure and name to another, as reflected in the dual masthead above. The change came about for a number of reasons and was the result of much thought and work. Briefly, it became apparent over the years that the word "Federalist" in WFA's old name meant little to most of the potential activists we were trying to attract to our movement. Research revealed that for most of the under-fifty set, the word simply had no emotional or intellectual appeal. Some confused WFA with The Federalist Society, a right-wing think tank, or believed that we had some connection with Lyndon LaRouche, who publishes a newspaper called *The New Federalist*. Others, sad to say, had very little notion of what the concept of federalism was all about, even if they were generally sympathetic to the idea of world law and the necessity for global justice as a prerequisite for global peace. Finally, there were many who, while warm to many of our ideas, nevertheless recoiled from promoting "world government," which, they feared, could soon become global tyranny.

Apart from the name problem, there was the issue of wasteful overlap between the work done by WFA and that of CUNR (the Campaign for UN Reform). The former was a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) educational organization, the latter – a spin-off from WFA – was a political 501(c)(4) entity, free to promote legislation, lobby Congress, and support political candidates, all of which it did with remarkable success, given its meager financial and staff resources. A decision was made by the Boards of both organizations in March 2003 to enter into a strategic merger under a new common name and with a common new structure and revised mission statement. We can expect greater emphasis in the future on needed political action. After much debate and soul searching, and with the assistance of an outside consulting firm, a set of proposals was put forward for consideration by the National Councils and Boards of both WFA and CUNR at their joint meeting this past November in Braintree, MA (a suburb of Boston).

The recommended changes were heatedly debated and approved by overwhelming majorities. The level of debate was remarkably high and, even though I found myself in the minority on certain issues, I was proud to be associated with a group of individuals as dedicated to a common cause as those who took the trouble to come to Braintree.

Though literally hundreds of suggestions for a new name were put forward, the choice ultimately made was based on several key considerations: that the word "Citizens" suggested a greater commitment to action than "Association," and that the phrase "Global Solutions," would speak to the characteristically American "can-do" ethos and responded well to the old WFA precept that "*Global problems require global solutions.*"

All concerned recognize that the changes being made are fraught with risk; but doing nothing, it was felt, also presented risks, most notably that of gradual atrophy from failing to get our message across. Happily, although the "federalist" aspect of our message may now be somewhat diluted, the *end* toward which we are working (an end to which federalism was but a means) has scarcely changed. That end is expressed in the tagline that you will find on the masthead above and in the vision and mission statements on page 2. No less important, I believe, is the fact that the same set of dedicated leaders and workers are aboard in the new structure as in the old one. No one opposed to the changes is leaving either WFA or CUNR because s/he failed to prevail in the debate on them. And the prospects for bringing in new talent now appear to be better than they have been in decades.

Joe Schwartzberg, Chapter President

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

We've got a terrific **Third Thursday Global Issues Forum** planned for **January 15**. See p. 3 for details.