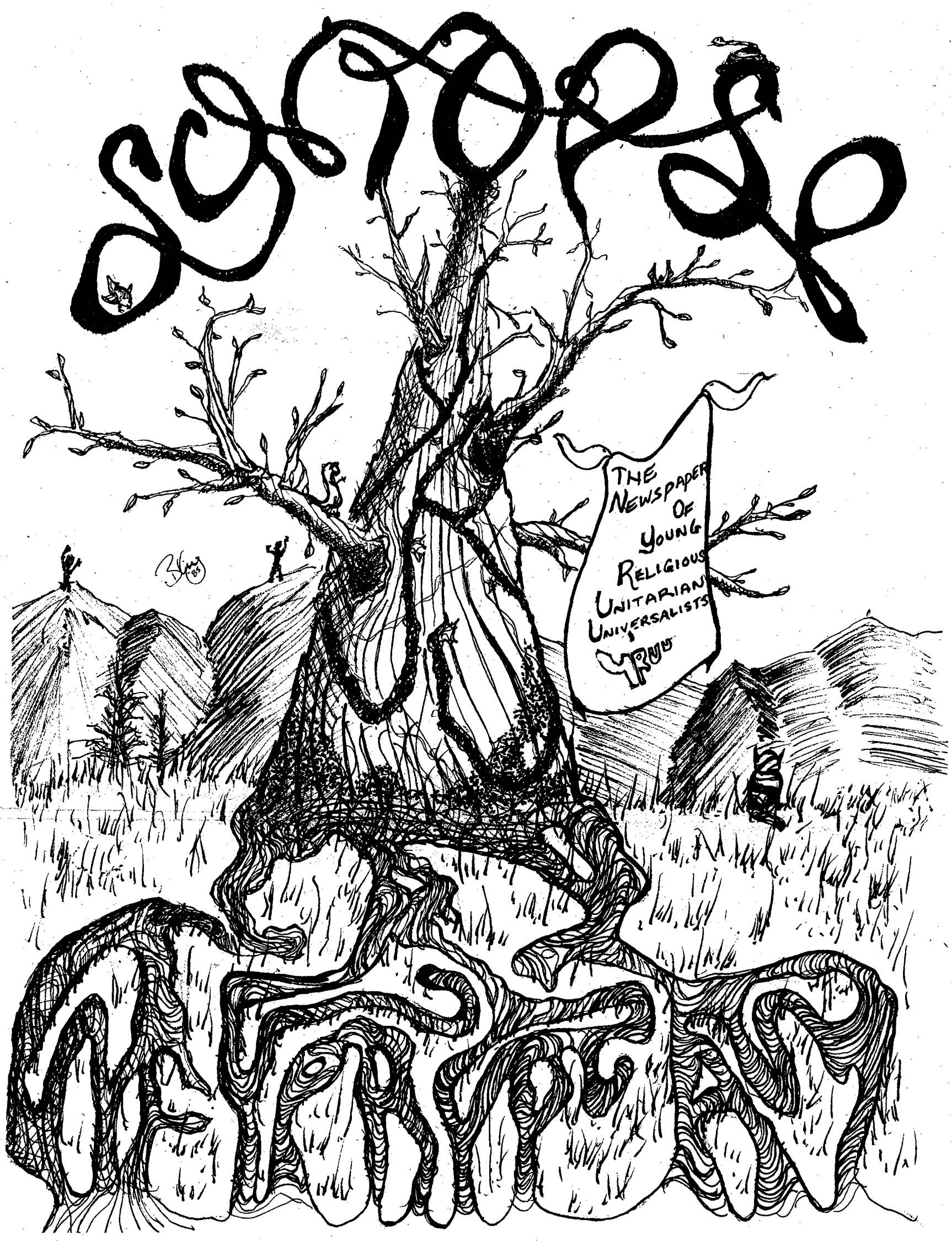


VOL 3 ISS 2



Synapse - a publication of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists



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PRSNLS

Personals may be submitted by any person at no cost. Limit: two personals per person. There is no guarantee that personals will be printed. Submit them to the Youth Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108.

A TOAST TO ABSENT FRIENDS!!! Even though I have not written much, you are in my mind and heart! I'd love to see you again this summer—anywhere, anyhow!

Love and Friendship,
Matthias (Pilger)

I have moved (again). If you wish to locate me, I am at: 47 Hillside St., Roxbury Crossing, MA 02120. Feel free to write, even if we haven't spoken in years.

Love, etc.
Rebecca Kovar

Scotts and Kurt-san-

Had any Balloot recently; how's the S.O.P. (stamp out picon) fund; come here, come here, come here—go away, go away, go away; I'd K for a C; got any San Miguel; "One of these things is not . . ."; California in '87; IARF-u; Kaibigan Kita; IGI; Toblerone; Left-Thumbs Up!

Thank You For Sharing!
Zebrahim

To anyone that should read this: I am interested in having "pen pals" from all over the country and other countries as well—if you're interested please write to me: Chris Green, 2235 Del Rio Dr., Stockton, CA 95204.

To Liz, Mary and Monica—Thanks for being such super-fantastic friends.

I love you all
Chris

Hello—My name is Anja lbrom. I am 19 and graduating from high school this year, and I would like to correspond with young men to exchange ideas. Please write in English to: Anja lbrom, Goldknopf-gasse 4, 8070 Ingolstadt, West Germany.

Dure,

Looks like we've lost touch. I would have written sooner but my arm was kidnapped by a group of militant right-wing Guatemalans and a Sociology paper. But enough excuses, it was YOUR turn to write!

Love,
Dan

P.S. See you at Con-Con



Fadem-face,

It's great to see people like you entering the YRUU scene. You add a great deal of positive energy wherever you go. Stay hip and don't let this get to your ego.

the elder, wiser, wishy-washier
Gibson

Calling all Zarkfarts—yeah, you know who you are. It's been terrific—see you all in August but it just won't be the same.

Love you muchly,
Denise

Cheryl: Bhudda just called, said he had mice (instead of ants and roaches) so kill some mice for Bhudda.

- Member me
Love ya,
Tracy

Chris R—Hi!!! I love you and the peaches!! Live life and Love it! From a friend in Illinois whom you haven't written to for a while.

Luv,
T.S.

COOL DUDE: Do I have to wait until you're 65, I'm 65 or we're both 65—which I don't think can happen. Aw, I just wanted to see you again, roof-top or not!

Warm Fuzzies from
the BLACK CAT

P.S. The goddess is beautiful (soul and body) but I want to meet a god.

Exploring my roots, I thought of you all . . . M.F.—nudge, nudge, wink, wink WOW!, HOSERS—like, uh, did you take off, eh & lose my address, eh?, NY—I miss you (Michael, especially the warm fuzzie good nights & good mornings), Platapus—peace, right!, L.A.—how's Salami; dove off any cliffs lately?, Beth and John—I have a letter . . . Uh, just forgot to mail it!, Lisa Feldstein (?)—What's Your Address?, C. Bird—Boston envelopes aren't the same, T.O.—LYRers—thanks for accepting a YRUUer in your midst, Edmonton—I still miss you.
WARM FUZZIES TO YOU ALL!!
Auguste

Jonathan W—I love you and I miss you—darling if you love me won't you please, please, smile! And remember to keep in touch!

Sharon

Wayne M—Get a haircut; Get a job in Jax.

- Mr. Subtle

P.S. I'll just get a job.

Scenic O's—Had a great time with y'all in April—thanks a bunch! See you this summer—take care.

Love to you all,
Sharon

Too Bored In Bellevue—Say Sweetheart, what're you doing for fun this summer? Com'on down and visit and we'll have a party in glorius Santa Cruz and make you G-O-H.

B.K.
visiting Bo-town

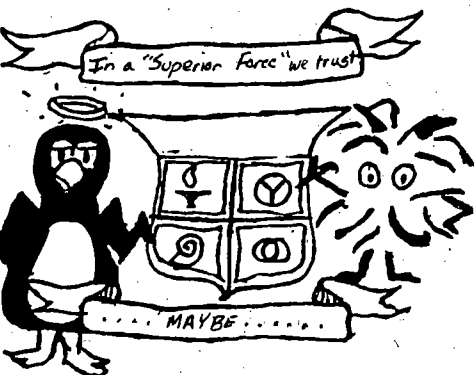
B.F., Ryk, K.C., Austin, Lai, wishy Gib, Fitz Lies, sunshine, polite bums MTBA, Peoples E, California S., and C—It's becoming a trip; so short and thanks for the pizza.

Bobbo

To Prince—Castles made of sand must fall into the sea eventually.

I love you,

July



Dear July (or is it November)

Stop fussing and keep singing; it is much more beautiful to these ears. And don't forget your chicken noodle soup.

- The Little Blond Kid

Hey WCD—Let's all go to ConCon. Yeah! Maybe?—SMK

Manufactured—I love you. IIID

Hey Pizza Specialist

I sure have enjoyed getting to be buddies this year. you've made a lot of the meetings and conferences I've been to more special just by your presence. Thank you for your love and support. I'm going to miss seeing you so often.

L from
Cal

Dirk,

Drop me a line. Bruce has my address. I'd love to hear from you.

Lisa

Mr. Ring,

Here's to getting buzzed and obnoxious on the highway in my white Toyota. I miss you and you take of yourself. Keep your head lifting.

The Wretch Queen

No! no no no no no No No NO,No!!!

Dear Nora From the West Coast . . . Hi! How are you, where are you, what are you doing, and are you going to Con-Con and Scummers End???

Love,
Your Favorite Month
(and you've got a friend too)

To Eric Kaminetsky,

I suppose you'd like a note from one of your fans saying, "Gee Eric I really miss you, you wonderful guy you." Forget it Fat Face, because we're the Meat Men and you suck.

Love,
That New Tennis Instructor

Anonymous

With deep respect,
YRUU gets to meet you my little puppy-muffin!!!
my idol!!! I wish you and I hope everyone in
LOVE YOU you're gorgeous and wonderful and
Dear July,

To Keith Knost,

Hi Keeeeteeee!! to my favorite (in fact the only) 60's-80's hybrid hippie, poser, punk. I Love you.

Love,
Prince

Dearest darling Bruce-i-kins,

My darling JellyToes, my sweetest JoyChunks!!! Thank you SOOO much for showing me your, uh, personality! No seriously, you're a sweetie and you **deserve** a slushy personal.

Love and squishy things,
Someday O'Someday

Dear Everyone,

Who are you people? How do you all know each other? What does LRY stand for? What is con-con? Should I start going to the Unitarian Church again? Who put me on the mailing list to get your strange (albeit interesting and enjoyable) publication?

Lyn Stoesen
611 Candlewood Dr.
Greensboro, NC 27403

Local Group Idea: Action Against Apartheid

The two YRUU staffers, Laila Ibrahim and Caprice Young, were arrested outside the Washington, D.C., South African Embassy on February 21 with President O. Eugene Pickett and 35 other Unitarian Universalist leaders. Why? They are part of an ongoing protest against the official policy of the South African government to oppress and deny even minimal civil rights to more than two-thirds of its people for the sole reason that they are not white. That policy is called apartheid.

In 1966, the UU General Assembly began the official stance of the UUA by passing a resolution condemning apartheid. At their April, 1985, meeting, the UUA Board of Trustees re-affirmed their opposition to apartheid by voting to divest from companies doing business in or with South Africa. In their Investment Policy Guidelines, they, "condemn the moral and ethical wrongs expressed in the apartheid policies of the South African government, policies which demean and degrade fellow human beings, policies imposed by a minority government maintaining itself in office by denying the franchise to the majority of its populace." The Board of Trustees also called "on other religious institutions throughout the world to speak for compassion, justice and equality."

You and your youth group can get involved in this international struggle to end this injustice by joining in, or initiating and supporting, anti-apartheid demonstrations and campaigns in your community. Compelling questions do challenge us closer to home, and we must strengthen our efforts to end injustice here. Yet we know that the struggles for human freedom are **connected**. We must not allow the oppression of the majority of the population in South Africa.

Ideas for Action:

- * Use the study action kit, "Responding to Apartheid: The 'Hitler Exception' of our Time," published by the UUA Section on Social Responsibility. It is a tool to help us become aware of what it's like to love under apartheid, of the theological roots of apartheid and of our

responses to it, and of how to deal with apartheid from afar. It serves as a guide to groups of people who want to respond to apartheid . . . including suggestions for a Coffee Hour Action Bazaar, ways to keep informed about what is happening and ways to influence changes. Copies may be ordered by groups or individuals for \$9.00 per kit, from the UUA Distribution Center, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108.

- * Invite a speaker and/or show a film on the current realities for Blacks, Coloreds, Asians and Whites in South Africa. An intergenerational pot-luck setting works well for challenging and creative discussion.

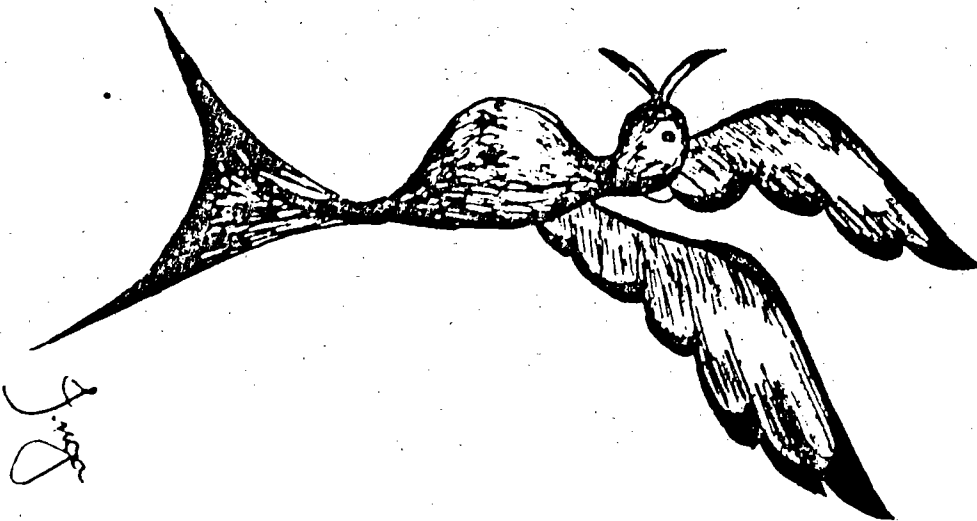
- * Write letters to elected officials—sending copies to the press—urging them to call for immediate disinvestment by US and Canadian corporations doing business in South Africa and asking them to support other sanctions against the current South African government.

- * Find out if your bank sells Krugerrands. An information service is maintained by the International Gold Corporation. The number is: (800) 522-4503.

- * Urge local banks and currency traders to cease selling Krugerrands and instead promote Canadian, Mexican and American gold coins. Quote South Africa's former Prime Minister, John Vorster: "Foreign investment is the brick and mortar on which South Africa is built."

- * Raise money for the International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, an organization which provides legal defense for political prisoners, and food, clothing, and shelter for the families of prisoners. IDAF chapters can be found in the US, Canada, Great Britain, and elsewhere. Address: P.O. Box 17, Cambridge, MA 02238.

- * Call the Anti-Apartheid Action Hotline, (202) 546-0408, for the latest legislative information and action suggestions regarding congressional, United States, and local anti-apartheid action.



Greetings to All People—Young and Old and Beautiful and Small: If YOU are ever in need, remember that you're loved by many people, especially me!

- Tony

Hi to Mara Lyn from Kevin

Rebel—What's your mood this week?

- A midget from Joisey

To All—We want your bodies. Come visit us.
-Lisa, Lynn, and Dagmar
28 Weld Hill
Jamaica Plain, MA
(617) 524-5847

To All at the Navasink house—I have many good memories there, come make some at my house.
- Lynn S.

Hank—I just wish you weren't so generous with your clothes pin.

- 3 very cruel people who aren't involved in this.

SYNAPSE Volume III Issue II
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EDITORIAL POLICY:
Articles appearing in SYNAPSE are chosen for their social, spiritual, intellectual, practical or aesthetic value. They may express opinions and/or values that are not necessarily those of the editors or of some of our readers, and dissenting opinion will be given fair exposure in subsequent issues. We recognize the need to keep from offending the sensibilities of the wide variety of our readers and also a need to respect the integrity of our contributors. Where these values conflict we will err on the side of accurate representation.
Henceforth there shall be a limit of two personals per person per issue. All personals must be accompanied with a return address in case for any reason the editors find it impossible to run the personal.
Advertising rates are \$4.00/column inch for UUA related groups and \$8.00/column inch for others. For UUA related groups, rates for larger blocks are:
Quarter page \$60.00
Half page \$110.00
Full page \$200.00
For groups other than UU related organizations, the rates are double those for UU groups.



Dear LUUcy BUUth,

I have a problem. You see, I wrote a couple of personals to the youth newspaper, like one to "Vandy Lee" and I wrote, "We have seen the elite and it is trash," but it came out as "We have seen the blite. . ." Also, an article I wrote which was "edited" was so hacked to pieces that some of the original meaning was lost. What am I to do?

Signed,
A Confused Prince

Dear Confused Prince,

Ha-ha-ha-ha. "We have seen the elite and it is trash." LUUcy likes that. Your problem, however, reveals two things about yourself: 1) You have lousy handwriting, and 2) humility is not one of your virtues. We suspect your article was "edited" to save you and the newspaper any further embarrassment. What to do? Suffer. It builds character.

Signed, —
LUUcy BUUth

Dear Luucy Buuth,

Frequent weekend travelling, to minicons and meetings, is a fact of life for many YRUU-ers, and many a pitstop is made at gas stations and roadside restaurants during the arduous highway trips we make. Our question is: What kind of diseases can one **really** get from a toilet seat?

Signed,
Concerned in California

Dear Concerned in California,

Luucy hopes she can put your mind at rest and make your pitstops more enjoyable and less anxiety-ridden.

The answer to your question, according to the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health, is "Practically none." The "practically" part worried Luucy, so a follow-up question was asked, revealing the slight possibility of contracting public lice (also known as crabs—at least on this coast) and Herpes simplex II. Let us emphasize this is **rare**. Now, for those of you who might think (or want to think) that gonorrhea and syphilis can come your way via the toilet seat, forget it.

Signed,
Luucy Buuth



Here it is, at last!
The new YRUU logo
which was designed
by Michele McIntosh
of Kirkwood, Missouri.



The community together,
friends, hugging . . . loving
spirituality builds within us,
lighting the chalice of love,
the chalice of knowledge.



Hi Y'all.

Well, I'm finally in. Yep, little ol' me from way down here in Texas. I'm finally coming to Boston as your new Youth Staff person.

For you folks I don't already know, here's a bit about me. I grew up in Dallas (which by the way is not the place you see on TV where everyone wears cowboy hats and owns oil wells). Right now I'm living in a little town south of Austin called San Marcos; studying psychology at South West Texas State University, but come September I'll be in Boston.

I'm so excited about finally getting this chance to come up there and get in



the thick of things (so to speak). I'm especially looking forward to getting to know as many of you as possible, so let me hear from you. Letters, phone calls, anything, I'm really interested in finding out what y'all think, feel, want, or need. You folks out there are what I'm here for, so let me know.

Well, now I just have to hang on until September. It's going to be a busy summer for me and I'm sure I'll see a lot of you at General Assembly, Youth Council, and Con-Con. In the meantime, y'all take care!

Peace,
David Levine

WORK BEGINS FOR YAMS

Have you ever noticed that people between the ages of 18 and 30 are virtually non-existent in most UU churches? There are lots of reasons for this. Young adults, whether they are in college, at work, or travelling, are typically in a transitional phase of life when they are questioning the beliefs and ideologies they have grown up with. Young adulthood is a time when many become "deinstitutionalized" from their childhood faith. This is not unique to UUs—it happens among Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and others as well. In addition, young adults are highly mobile and they are often taking on new, sometimes burdensome, responsibilities and forming new communities.

At the same time, there seems to be a growing number of post-high aged UUs who aren't willing to be abandoned by their church. Some are even angry and resentful that, having outgrown their local youth group, there is nowhere else to go . . . no ongoing programs that will help them keep in touch with their friends and faith community. Perhaps because of the strong fundamentalist presence on campuses and in society, or a growing need to establish and maintain personal relationships in our increasingly insecure technological world, young adult UUs are becoming more and more vocal about their need to remain affiliated and identified with UUism. YRUU and the UUA are anxious to find ways to address this growing reality and do a better job of nurturing the faith in people of **all** ages.

The Age Specifics Commission of the YRUU Youth Council in 1984 felt the best way to start doing this would be to have the UUA hire a Consultant on Young Adult Ministries with overall responsibilities for providing programs and services for the post-high age group. The Religious Education Advisory Committee and the UUA Administration, while aware of other pressing budget priorities, were nonetheless convinced by the YRUU statement of need and have supported our concerns. As a result, the UUA Board of Trustees has appointed a Task Force on Young Adult Ministries which will begin work very soon on figuring out the best way for the UUA to serve the needs of young adults. The five-plus members of the task force are:

Peter Hausland, Santa Paula, CA
Tom Kunesch, Minneapolis, MN
Yvonne Chapelle, Washington, D.C.
Deborah Raible, Seattle, WA
Gerald Krick, West Newton, MA
Youth Office liaison, Boston, MA

To a great extent, the success of the task force will depend on the ideas and information which **you** contribute. We urge you to participate in our efforts by sending us your wishes and dreams, program ideas, and accounts of experiences you may have had upon finishing your high school years. Address your letters to the Task Force on YAMS, c/o Youth Office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108. Thank you for your help!

Ellen Brandenburg
Boston, MA.

Application for the Youth Staff position commencing January 1, 1986 and ending December 31, 1986.

Qualifications

The applicant must:

- * be between the ages of 12 to 22 at the time work begins
- * have an amiable personality with leadership qualities
- * have good written and verbal communication skills
- * have administrative and general office skills
- * She/he must have the maturity and creativity to handle and live in an often hectic but rewarding full time job
- * have the freedom to live in the Boston area and to travel

Responsibilities

Work with the UUA Consultant on Youth programs, in conjunction with the other youth staff person, to carry out the administration of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. Duties will include but not be limited to: preparing a youth newspaper, travelling to district and local organizations as outreach; planning and administering conferences and other youth gatherings; participating in meetings of and implementing the recommendations of the YRUU Steering Committee and Youth Council, and managing the Continental YRUU office.

Stipend

\$8700.00 (US) per year, room and board is *not* paid for but, assistance will be provided in finding living quarters.

Applicants for the Youth Staff Internship position are requested to submit their applications printed or typed on 8½" x 11" pages. It is recommended that the applications should at least contain the applicant's work, school, Unitarian Universalist, and youth action histories and three letters of recommendation.

NOT JUST A NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIR

Living in Europe?
Going to Europe?
Moving to Europe?
Studying Abroad next Fall? Well. . .

Unitarian Universalist Youth in Europe are forming a communications network and holding YRUU conferences. In fact, they're planning one for November 8-10, at the 1985 European Unitarian Universalist Fall Retreat! Want to go? Want more information? Contact: Aimee Hooverson, HHC 59th ORD BRD, Box 266, APO New York 09189. Tele.: (06) 395-8151

LETTERS to

the EDITOR

Letter from an Editor:

In the last issue of *Synapse* we ran an article about Mrs. Marie McBroom, a Unitarian Universalist who was being detained on false charges in a Nigerian prison. The YRUU Steering Committee, the Metro-New York YRUU Board, and other YRUU people joined the thousands of citizens and public leaders who wrote to the Nigerian government pleading for her release and humane treatment. If Mrs. McBroom had been found guilty of the crimes she was said to have committed, she would have faced the firing squad.

Many times when we are working for human rights, or most other large causes, we cannot see the results of our work in any concrete form. We may march in the street for a Nuclear Arms Freeze but it is difficult to see what good your action has brought about. Marie McBroom's acquittal and release on February 27, gives us new hope that our actions for human rights are valuable and that we do have power to change the world for the better.

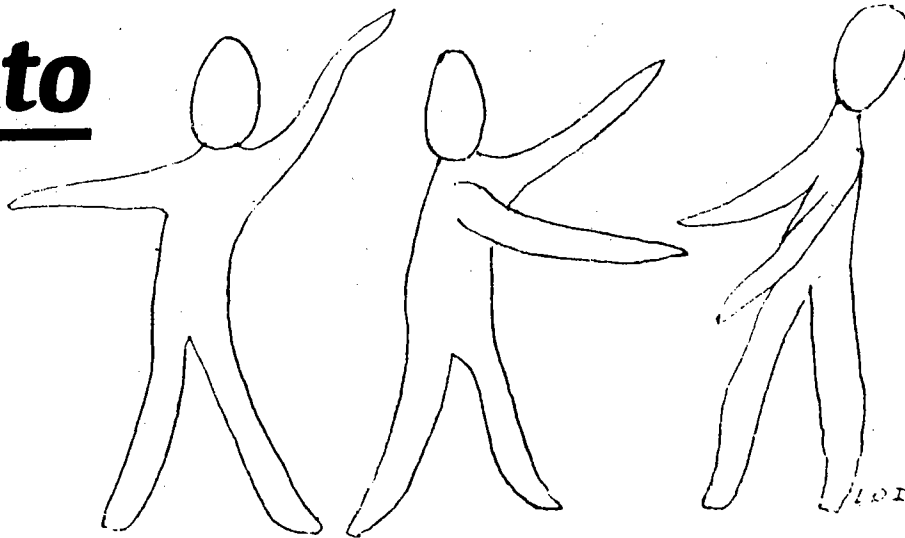
Marie McBroom and her daughter, Marcia McBroom Landes, attended the Unitarian Universalist Conference on Social and Economic Justice, in Washington, D.C., in April. I was lucky enough to talk with Mrs. McBroom and hear her speak about her year in the Nigerian prison. She told the conference about the inhuman conditions of the prisons in which she was held. She spoke of the many months she spent waiting to find out why she had been arrested. She explained her frustration during the months the government continued to change and invent new crimes for which to prosecute her.

The most important thing she told us was that our letters of concern kept her safe and, eventually, got her out of Nigeria. While other prisoners were beaten, she was left alone. Even now, with Mrs. McBroom safely back in the United States, many people are still waiting in prison to find out what crimes they are said to have committed and whether or not they will be allowed to leave.

Mrs. McBroom said that the guards and officers in Nigeria asked her if she was some kind of politician or important person because they couldn't understand why so many people were writing letters for her. She believes that the major reason she is alive and free today is that so many people wrote letters on her behalf.

Seeing Marie McBroom free can encourage all of us that our actions do matter, that we must continue to speak out when we see or hear of injustice, that we each can make a difference by holding world leaders responsible for their crimes against human rights. If we want a peaceful world, a world of justice and prosperity for all, then all of us will have to work constantly to make and keep that world—even if one of our actions is simply writing a letter on behalf of a single political prisoner.

—Caprice Young



Dear Mr. Peirce,

In response to your article entitled "My Spirituality" in the spring issue:

I agree with you that we need to know the people around us, indeed the person directly next to you. We need to share with others intimately.

You said: "We should stop doing these stupid worships and worry about something more important, getting to know the person next to you."

I also feel that worships are important and useful to help us to get to know ourselves. Not to mention that worships are integral to enabling the group to enter and develop a sense of community and togetherness. They also provide an opportunity for people to present issues to the group. Some even have what they might consider a "spiritual" experience. I have witnessed many emotional outpourings.

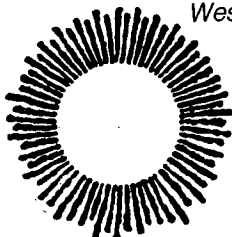
Unfortunately, some people choose to disturb other people's organized worship by "laughing and rolling around on the floor" (as you, yourself said you do), while the group is attempting to cooperate in silence or a quiet talk.

In response to the idea of "getting to know the person next to you:" I have heard on numerous occasions, people complaining that old U.D.L. (which you were a member of) was distancing itself and preventing intimate interaction between people by their raucous behavior.

So, while I agree with the general premise of your letter, I fail to see what you are doing about it. If you don't like the worships, don't attend them. But, just because you don't agree with some of the superficialities (you said, "I'll puke if I ever have to sit in another circle, hold hands with some weekend hippy from New Jersey while staring at some candle . . ."), doesn't give you the right to disturb others.

I'm sorry my first letter to *Synapse* had to be a negative one.

Doug Hewitt
Westfield, N.J.



The poem titled *A Soul Without Love* was by Dairi Cataloano formerly of the Thomas Jefferson District and was once published in *God; M*, our district newsletter.

Eddie Zuber
Greensboro, NC

Dear Hank,

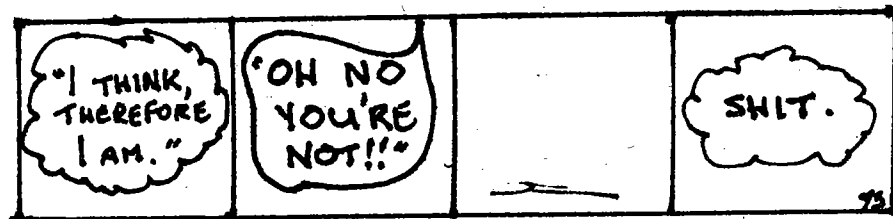
No one could have expressed my feelings better than you did in your article "My Spirituality." I haven't been active in YRUU for a couple of years now, mainly because I've felt like there are no alternatives for me besides holding hands in a circle and looking at a candle. Since I first went to LRY at Star Island in 1981 it's been that way and when I went to the college age group at the church in my area in September, 1984, it was *still* that way. I was so frustrated!!!! I haven't been since.

I agree with you that worship should be more structured, but the part I liked best was when you said "for a change." Is there room for change in YRUU worship? We are all unique individuals who are growing and changing: shouldn't our religion be able to change with us?

I realize it was rather apathetic of me to just "drop out" of YRUU because I was frustrated, but hearing someone else who felt the same way has recharged me. I am ready for change and willing to help do the changing. My religion as well as my spirituality are worth it to me. I can't "drop out" forever.

Thanks for your words, Hank,

Julie Fine
Lesley College,
Cambridge, MA



To the Editors,

Mike Davis' article, "US out of El Salvador?", was very upsetting to me. While he professes a horror of liberals and government officials who see issues as having two absolute sides ("bad and wrong," as he says, and—I assume—"good and right") he himself seems to see the governments of Central America in this light. He seems to abhor communism and all countries which use the economic system. Does he find El Salvador's government more palatable than that of the Sandinista government of Nicaragua? El Salvador is not communist yet its human rights record is appalling in comparison to Nicaragua's record.

I dislike using overworked examples but I think citing our role in the overthrow of Allende's government in Chile would not be inappropriate here. In this case we overthrew a working socialist government, helping to put into power one of the most ugly dictatorships of our time—that of Pinochet.

It seems to be that Mike Davis would be wiser if he did not automatically condemn communist governments but took his own advice and considered governments with a "wide scope of view." I see little difference between him and the "blind flower throwing . . . liberals" he cites as saying "Oh isn't our government bad and wrong!"

Aside from this absolutist viewpoint, Mike Davis confronts us with an alarming picture—that of a person who would not criticize his government for doing something he found reprehensi-

Dear Ellen,

I disagree with your opinion that adults do not participate in teen activities because they are afraid the teens wouldn't like them—as you stated in the last *Synapse*.

I've been asking around. Here is what I've gotten so far: 1) My opinion—a conference with 100 kids and only 1 other adult over age 25 (I am 51) is boring: no one to talk to and with! I'm just there in case something goes wrong, and it always does—but all the rest of the time I have NOTHING to do and that is not my idea of fun! Kids are so busy with each other—not because they dislike ME, but because they see each other so rarely! In this world of instant gratification, few kids want to "be nice" and take the time to talk with anyone older. And very few adults think it is their responsibility to help with the teens. 2) One high school teacher said all the kids in high school ignore anyone older—it's typical behavior. They treat older people like they don't exist . . . look right through you. And it is very uncomfortable to be ignored by 100 teens! 3) Another high school teacher said it's a status question—kids look down on teachers like royalty on servants—Adults are *things* to be used.

Only thing I can figure out to do about it is to somehow make them both feel guilty about ignoring one another. Urge courtesy conversation in the kids and urge concern for the future generations of UUs in our adults. But . . . How?

Sincerely,
Shirley Sherry
Hanover, PA

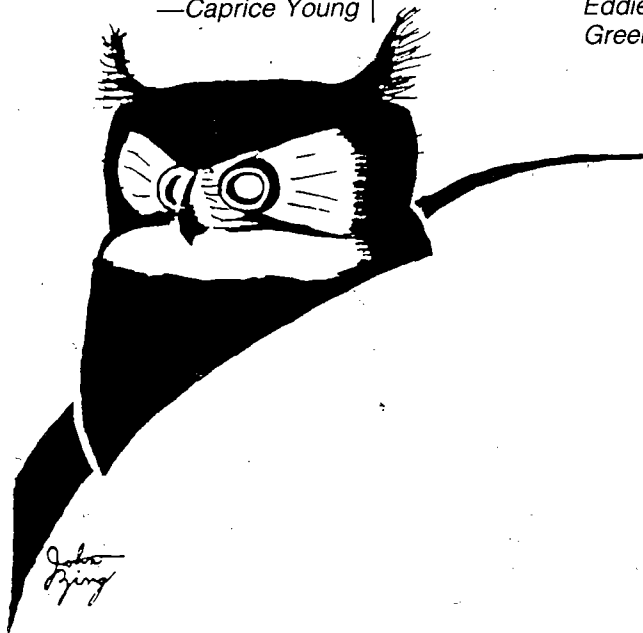
P.S. My observances are only based on conference experiences and not in a local group. I'm sure the dynamics are different in that situation.

ble. His comment that "it is contradictory to say, yes I am part of a nation that uses up a grossly disproportionate amount of the planet's resources (I want that), but at the same time to bite the hand that feeds us" seems to show a very limited allegiance. Limited because, according to this statement we have two choices reminiscent of that popular bumper sticker of the Viet Nam war—"America, love it or leave it." Again he presents us with extremes rather than a spectrum of choices. He appears to say that if you object to our government's policies you are a hypocrite—if you are, at the same time, using its resources and protection.

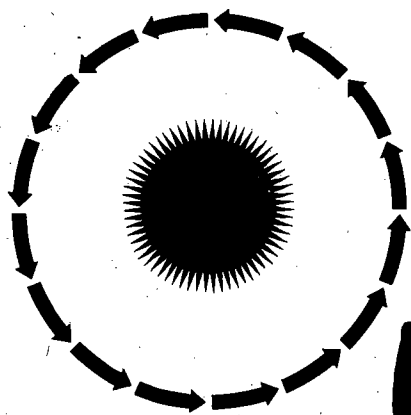
Mike Davis seems to forget that our government is precisely that-ours. Its policies are subject to change according to our priorities and one may lobby for change while still supporting our country (the aspects that you do like). To view our country as imperfect and still believe in its capacity for growth is perhaps an even greater patriotism than the one Mike Davis suggests.

The U.S. has always been a pluralistic society and in my opinion Mike Davis' greatest error is in his last few words where he finds "the increase of controversy" a thing to be avoided. He denies our heritage of being made up of many different groups and the right of free speech which we are struggling to keep, a right that inevitably leads to controversy.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Poyourow
Brooklyn, NY



Sooner or later the inevitable question had to be asked, "Why Are You You?" We felt it would be appropriate to include in this issue of SYNAPSE which deals with the roots of our present youth organization, YRUU, reflections on our personal histories as well. YRUU, after all, is made up of many, many **people**, each with a unique set of experiences which have contributed to who they are today. On these pages, YRUUers from across the continent share with you their thoughts on learning, growing, and learning.



Exploring Ourselves

WHY go to Church?

The Ring of Truth

I have come to the conclusion that writing about spirituality is particularly difficult when we are young. We absorb a great deal of intellectual knowledge of what spirituality is supposed to be; we learn the jargon very young. But we have very little experience connecting particular feelings to particular words. It takes practice to be able to say "this is how love feels" or "this is how power feels" or "this is how connectedness feels." And always it is possible that a new experience will come along and make us realize that we were wrong—that what we had previously labeled love or power or connectedness was just a shadow of this new experience. I believe this possibility is always there, no matter how old you are. However, it is more probable for us, the young, because we have fewer experiences to compare against each other. So how can we know when and where to use such words?

It is tempting, when writing or talking about spirituality, to sling about spiritual

jargon indiscriminately. It sounds good. It's fun. But we pay a price in loss of our greatest ethical responsibilities: learning to speak honestly.

If this crying nirvana?) we may find that our words have become powerless when we truly need them.

Oddly, I find that I am almost never aware I am faking it while I am doing so. What has enabled me to recognize "faking it" is the experience of *not* doing so. Speaking from the heart carries with it a very different set of feelings than does speaking because it sounds good or to make an impression. After having felt the difference many, many times I am finally beginning to recognize it. I have lately become so impressed with the sheer enormous power of words, the sorcery of communicating ideas, that I have concluded that one of my greatest ethical responsibilities is learning to speak honestly.

Meg Wilson
Portland, OR

It was the second week in my new school. It was Ash Wednesday, and my new Catholic friend had packed meat, so she wasn't eating.

"What religion are you, Laura?"

"I'm a Unitarian Universalist."

"What is a Unitarian Universalist?"

"It is a church with sort of an open forum so everyone can form his own philosophy of life."

"Is it like a Methodist?"

And I thought I'd explained it so well. I had a card that I'd gotten at church explaining what a U.U. is. She read it.

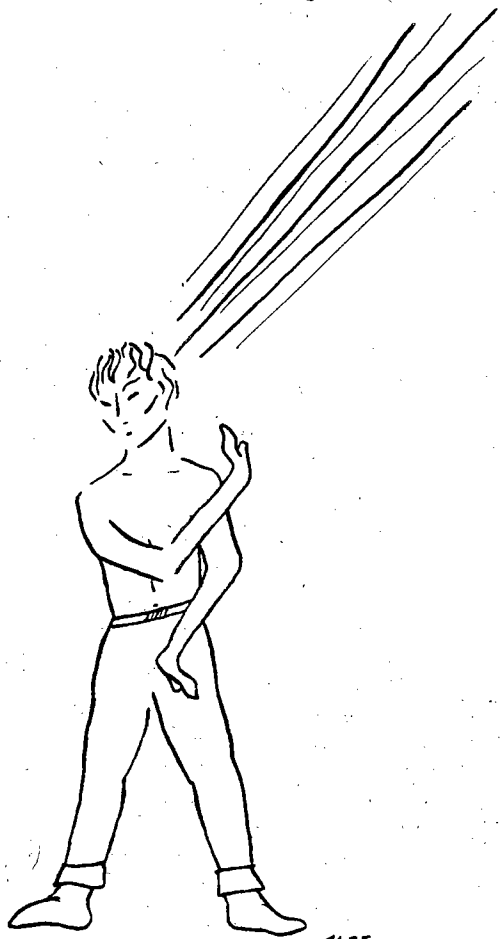
"This is more like a way of life than a religion."

She understands, I thought. "You're right."

"Then why go to church?"

Well, she got me thinking. Why *do* I go to church? It isn't to see people my age. I can do that at school. So what is it? Maybe it's the chance to discuss things with people who already understand what a Unitarian is. The chance to discuss my ideas without worrying about people being shocked. But mostly I think it's the chance to be part of something. To have a group of people who understand some of the same things and have similar experiences. The same reasons Catholics go to church. My friend still doesn't understand it.

Laura-Lee
Birmingham, Michigan



1585

YOU, NOW-radically

Hey you
Yah, me
Want to write an article for the Synapse?

What on? Roots-

I didn't see it.

Shhh. Roots: Becoming who we are.

A Brahman/Atman kind of thing?

No

Sive skanhas?

No, write about how your roots nourish the you yet to be.

You mean I should write about how our past limits us?

Not really, my thoughts were more on the lines of the tree metaphor.

The you of the yet grows from the you of the past.

Oh, I thought you meant the Greek tragedy kind of piece where your past determines your future.

No Oedipus won't do.

How about a deal then?

What kind?

Drop the "roots" and I'll give it a try?

Like what?

Oh, like, your present decisions make you what you are.

I don't get it.

Why don't you punch me in the nose?

Why would I do that?

Why don't you?

Because, I don't want to.

That's your decision. A decision that determines, in part, who you are.

So I'm free to deck you but don't because I choose not to—and that shapes me?

Yep, in fact, you are radically free. You could choose to do

any of an infinitude of things right now, but you'll choose only one—

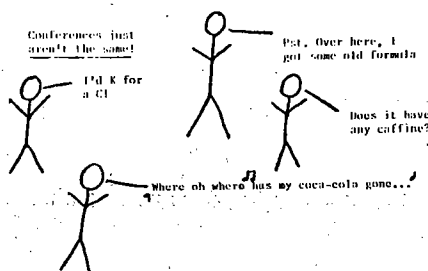
—and that one defines who I am.

You've got it.

Well, that's a nice idea but it won't work, no "roots."

In that case put me down as quoting Old Yahweh: I am who I am.

Tad Waddington
Tempe, AZ



Dear LRY/YRUU,

I have spent the last eight months traveling around the country with the National Audubon Society Expedition Institute, an environmental education program for high school, undergraduate, and graduate students. We travel around the country in a school bus, visiting people and places all across America, experientially learning natural and social sciences. While traveling around this year, my first year away from home, I have learned a great deal about myself, our culture, and the world.

One of the most important things I have become aware of is the extent to which I let myself be controlled by relating to people and situations as authorities, from which I cause myself to feel restricted and resentful. I realized how afraid I am of taking hold of the reins, of taking responsibility for myself and my life. These two things are incredibly connected. While I feel restricted and resentful when I relate to people in authority, I also feel a certain amount of security in letting people and situations become authorities and create my experience of life for me. To stop relating to my environment in this manner is to accept that my experience of life is of my own making and to take responsibility for it. That's scary in a lot of ways! That's letting go of the authority security blanket that I've hung onto for so many years.

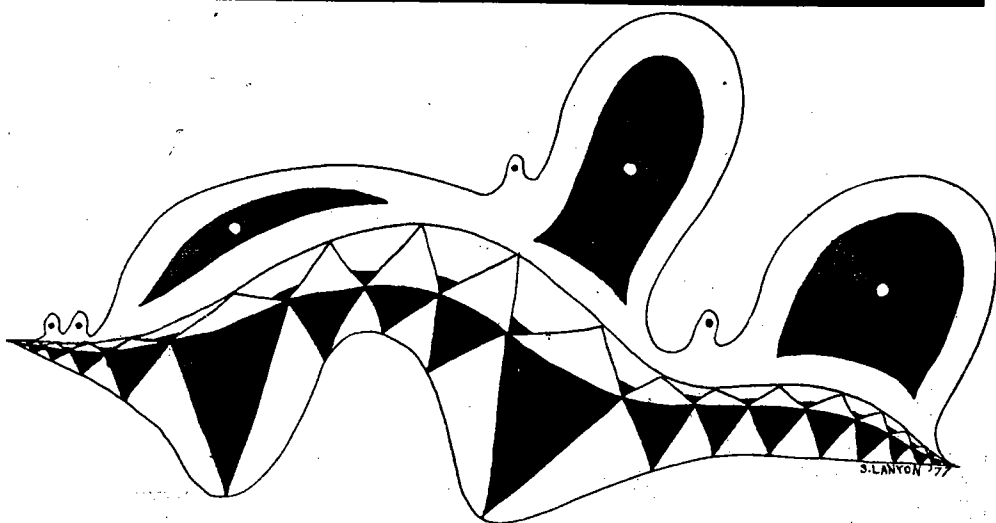
It's scary, but it is also incredibly important to me. When I take responsibility for my experience of life, I notice that it is much easier to change my perception of the world to one of a cooperative, supportive system. When I'm in a situation with people of authority, sharing myself with others is the last thing I want to do. They will only condemn me, reject me, separate me, alienate me, and control me, I imagine. When I am feeling responsible for my experience of life, of feeling like I have the reins, of

feeling in control, I view those fears as things I do to myself as a product of my own mindset. I realize now that hiding only creates separation and gives power to authority. Being involved in the process of changing my mindset, the desire to hide is being replaced by a strange desire to open up and share myself with people, to break down the fear inside of me which clings to the authority security blanket that creates separation, and to be a part of what's going on.

Another area in which I've really grown a lot is in gaining a new and broader perspective of our culture and of the world. Gary Snyder is a poet who perceives the Earth as a living organism and is very in touch with the natural rhythms of his body and emotions as well as with the Earth's body and emotions. He was once asked on a radio show, "How do you feel having so radically departed from the mainstream?" He replied, "I haven't departed from the mainstream. I'm in the four billion year mainstream of the Earth and the rest of the world's just in the middle of a 16,000 year eddy!" Wow! Talk about stepping back to get a broader perspective! And what a neat way of looking at things.

As I sat and wrote the first draft of this letter, I was in a Dairy Queen, with pop music playing, stores and pavement all around and cars rolling by. So what? That's normal. That's exactly it! That's a *normal* environment for me. However, when I stop and think about it, it's a very *abnormal* environment in the scale of things. It is entirely a product of human civilization, which has only been around for 16,000 years. Furthermore, the Dairy Queen, the cars, the pop music, and the pavement are all products of *this century*. The Earth, however, has been alive for four billion years now! That's 40 million centuries!

(Continued on Page 11)



Last summer, right after I started working in the youth office, I heard a young YRUUer ask, "What does LRY stand for again?" I realized then that it was time to put in SYNAPSE a history of all the groups that preceded YRUU. I'm sure that many UU youth today have never even heard of UYF or YPRU.

What does it matter though? Why is it important for us to remember our roots and embrace where we have come from? For me it is important because it helps me feel like a part of something larger. When I think about the UU youth that came before us I realize that we come from a proud history. Those youth, 20-40-80 years ago, worked for reforms in their time that have shaped the world we know today. They spoke out for freedom much in the same way we do. The causes may have been different, but the work was the same.

I also feel more connected into Unitarian Universalism as a religious move-

1910's

The Eight O'Clock Club, while not a part of the Sunday School grew out of it and was for several years (during the 1890's) a flourishing institution well loved by us in our late teens and early twenties. Its members were Toledo, Ohio Unitarians and our friends who attended other churches or none at all. We met on Monday evenings in the church parlor.

The programs, and they were often lively, consisted of music, recitations, dissertations on various subjects, debates. There were usually 125 or more present and it didn't take refreshments to bring them out, for there were none. It just satisfied the natural desire of young people for sociability.

ment when I reflect upon our "ancestors." When you read through UU youth history the leaders of the youth movement very often became the leaders of the entire association. I know that I feel strongly about being a Unitarian Universalist because of my experiences in LRYRUU. What we learn and feel in our youth groups shapes our feelings about Unitarian Universalism. Throughout our association's history the "adult" church seems to follow suit in the actions of the youth group. This may be just because the youth leaders have grown up, but I believe it is because we, as youth, have a vision for the way our faith as UUs can be expressed.

Many of the personal blurbs on this spread and most of the dates on the time line are from the book **Follow The Gleam**. I'd like to thank Wayne Arnason for his willingness to let us use his book.

Laila Ibrahim
Boston, MA

At a later meeting I was assigned to speak on "What Jesus Means To Me." Although I was teaching school at the time and should have possessed some sense and ability, this seemed like an impossible task and I am sure the results were far from inspiring.

Normal Unitarian young people were not used then, if they are now, to offering prayer or exposing their innermost beliefs on religious subjects. And so the Toledo branch of the Y.P.R.U. died aborning, in spite of its now famous founder.

Lucie Hermen
Toledo, OH

To help youth through a bit of the soup here is a list of some acronym and what they stand for:

- AUA**-American Unitarian Association
- AUY**-American Unitarian Youth
- IRF**-International Religious Fellowship
- LRY**-Liberal Religious Youth
- SCOYP**-Special Committee on Youth Programs
- SFRL**-Students Federation of Religious Liberals
- SRL**-Student Religious Liberals
- UGC**-Universalist General Convention
- UUA**-Unitarian Universalist Association
- UYF**-Universalist Youth Fellowship
- YPCU**-Young People's Christian Union (Universalist)
- YPRU**-Young People's Religious Union (Unitarian)
- YRUU**-Young Religious Unitarian Universalists

1940's

My election in 1944 at Ferry Beach as continental treasurer of American Unitarian Youth was a turning point.

A high school sophomore in Buffalo, I suddenly entered upon the great world, travelling extensively on two continents, North America and Europe, in behalf of the cause of liberal religion. My four years in AUY were easily as important to me as my years at Antioch, the University of Chicago, and in my several ministries.

I learned in AUY that in decision and intimacy we grow beyond ourselves, and the life beyond becomes the self. It was wonderful. Cheers!

David B. Parke
Boston, MA

exploring our ROOTS

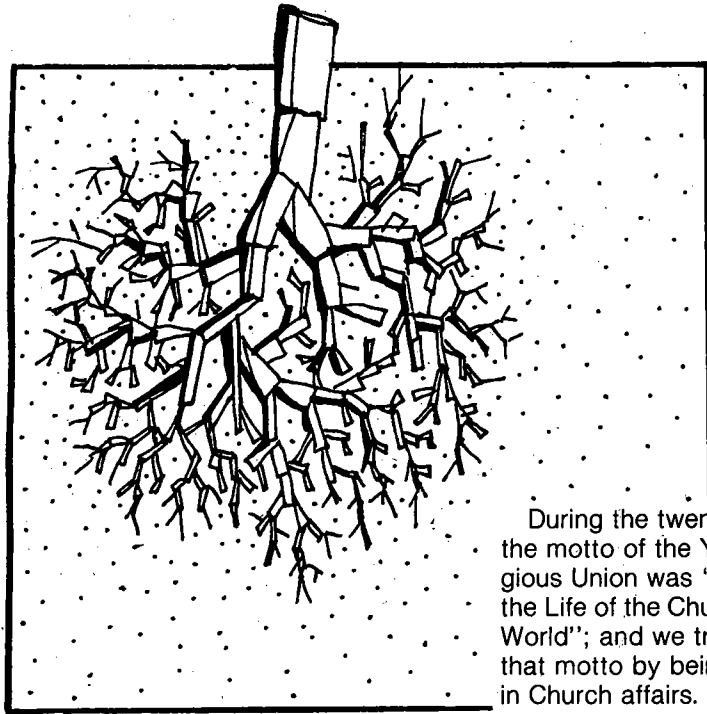


LET'S DO

AWAY WITH

THE LOCK!

Taken from The Youth Leader, the Universalist Youth Newsletter, March,



ADRIAN

1930's

One of my memories of involvement in Universalist Youth Activities is of the convention which marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Young People's Christian Union (Y.P.C.U.), one of the predecessors of Y.R.U.U. 300-400 people came to Lynn, Mass. (my home town) Universalist Church where in 1889 the Y.P.C.U. had been founded. The Convention was held in early July of 1939, and those attending were of all ages, and came from all parts of the country. Prior to World War II, the "youth group" age range was 15 to 35. There was much reminiscing about the "early days," since there were people there who had been on hand at the beginning, in 1889. A plaque on the church's sanctuary wall memorialized the founding event. It occurs to me that 1989 will be the centennial year. Perhaps we should start making plans to mark the event.

Gordon B. McKeenan
President, Starr King School
For the Ministry,
Berkeley, California

During the twenties and early thirties the motto of the Young People's Religious Union was "The Spirit of Youth in the Life of the Church Is the Hope of the World"; and we tried hard to live up to that motto by being active participants in Church affairs. But as the Great Depression wore on the focus of attention for liberal youth, as well as for most others, became socio-economic problems; and increasingly the attention of most of us was focussed on society's problems rather than merely on the "Life of the Church."

At the same time, changes in life patterns brought about a revolution in our denomination's youth organization. We had been a rather strongly autonomous organization, with much of the membership of college age, and with virtually all the leadership roles taken by "youths" in their twenties.

The implementation of the Appraisal Commission Report, "Unitarians Face a New Age," in the late thirties, brought about a basic age change in the Membership; with the older youth dropping out as they went to college, or took jobs, or soon after; with leadership coming under AUA-appointed ministerial advisers; and with a change of name to American Unitarian Youth. So, as we came out of the Depression into the War years the YPRU remained only as a very fond memory, the autonomy of the youth organization was curtailed, at least for a time, and the basic age of the young people's groups had become much younger than previously.

Roland B. Greeley
ex-pres., YPRU

TIME LINE UNIVERSALIST

- 1889** - Young People's Christian Union is founded at the Universalist General Convention in Lynn, Massachusetts.
- 1895** - Largest YPCU National Convention with 600 delegates.
- 1889-1939** - YPCU raises an average of \$2,000 a year for domestic and international missions.
- 1892** - First "Young People's Day" (Youth Sunday) is held on January 31.
- 1910** - YPCU hires one full-time staff person.
- 1919** - YPCU has between 4,000 and 5,000 members with younger members beginning to join.
- 1920's** - The National Conventions are moved all around the country extending as far as Chicago and Los Angeles.
- 1939** - There are 134 local groups affiliated with YPCU.
- 1941** - The YPCU Convention in Oak Park, IL proposes structural changes. The delegates represent only 9 states and 21 local groups. The organization is re-named Universalist Youth Fellowship.
- 1947** - UYF formalizes its college student work under the title of the Murray Foundation. It has a \$100 budget.

TIME LINE UNITARIAN

- 1886** - Young People's Religious Union founded by the American Unitarian Association.
- 1900** - YPRU has approximately 4,000 members mostly in New England the the Mid-Atlantic states.
- 1911** - YPRU is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It raised \$22,000 for an endowment fund.
- 1917** - YPRU hires the first Field Secretary in an attempt to reach out to member groups further away from Boston
- 1920's** - Shift in leadership from people in their thirties to people below thirty. One full time paid staff.
- 1925** - \$50,000 in the endowment fund.
- 1917** - The first "Young People's Sunday" is held (Youth Sundays)
- 1921** - First week-end conference held at the Isle of Shoals (Star Island)
- 1923-1940** - Two week long conferences are held at Star Island in conjunction with the YPRU Annual Meeting.
- 1936** - YPRU is an independent affiliate organization of AUA. AUA is feeling like YPRU isn't dealing with needs of all youth in the denomination. Especially the need of College Students.
- 1938** - Unitarian Youth Commission established to focus primarily on college programming.
- Feb. 23-25,** - Special board meeting in Connecticut to make final recommendations for the re-organization of YPRU.
- 1942** -
- Oct. 17, 1942** - YPRU changes to American Unitarian Youth to serve youth ages 15 to 25. There are 14 regional representatives with an Executive Committee of four people that are elected at a biennial convention.
- 1947** - Channing Foundation established to meet the needs of college-age people. It had an \$1,100 budget and a seven person committee.

What has been important to me about being in the I.R.F.? First and most of all learning to accept other people's way of life. Can you imagine that I was embarrassed when an American friend who stayed with me made himself a super sandwich at my table? It's not that I couldn't afford such an expense, but I was brought up in the years of scarcity just after World War II in the Netherlands, a country that has known many a hungry winter. Moreover, we are taught to be modest when we are the guest in another's home. I've known many other situations in which my childhood—or deeply anchored and culturally determined—convictions were shaken by friends from other countries.

There also exist all sorts of differences in thinking between the various language groups. I attended a workshop once on "language" at a conference, and while the English-speaking people were eager to begin, a French person asked: "Are we talking about 'langue, language, parole, or mot?' " In other words the French think in more precise categories for the concept of language. I've always found it amusing that the constitution of IRF (published in both English and German) contains the provision: "in case of doubt, the English version shall rule!" And English phrases are often so ambiguous!

Discovering my own values has been a striking aspect of going to IRF for me. It has provided an opportunity to build long-lasting relationships. Having been at eleven summer IRF conferences I can testify that IRF is able to create a support group for youth and young adults from many parts of the world.

One thing is certain. I have experienced many firsts in my life at IRF meetings; I've made my first and only macrame belt, played a simulation game on world development for the first time, had my first women's discussion in IRF, enjoyed and felt comfortable in a worship service as I'd never done before, stayed up to watch the sunrise, ate my first lobster, stood for the first time in a circle holding many friends and singing the two following chants that summarize for me the meaning of the International Religious Fellowship:

wearing my long wing feathers
I circle around
the boundaries of the earth

Listen Listen Listen
to my heart's song
I will never forget you
I will never forsake you

Lucy Meijer
Frankfort, Germany



National YPCU
Executive Board,
1903-05

THE LINE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

- 1897** - The first Unitarian - Universalist rally is held at the Universalist's Columbus Avenue Church in Boston.
- 1923** - Student Federation of Religious Liberals (SFRL) is founded by both YPRU and YPCU for college students.
- 1926** - The SFRL is disbanded.
- 1927** - The groups are talking of merger.
- 1931-35** - Both groups participate in Peace Caravans in which they arrange speaking engagements for themselves on the subject of "peace."
- 1945** - *The Young Liberal* is put out as a joint publication.
- 1951** - The merger process between AUF and UYF is begun.
- 1951** - A joint convention is held at Camp Idelwild. Both groups endorse, in their separate sessions, a two-year plan for a merger.
- 1953** - The Murray Foundation and the Channing Foundation are merged into the Channing-Murray Foundation.
- 1953** - The AUF-UYF joint convention is held at Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana. The new youth group is named the Liberal Religious Youth (LRY).
- 1954** - LRY has its first continental convention. It is incorporated as an organization to serve youth between the ages of 14 and 25. Their offices are in the Universalist's Headquarters.
- 1958** - The International Religious Fellowship (IRF) Congress is held in Madison, Wisconsin.
- 1961** - The AUA and the UCA merge into the UUA.
- 1961** - Student Religious Liberals (SRL) is founded which incorporates Channing-Murray Foundation and expands college age programming.
- 1961-65** - Both the LRY and the SRL are active in anti-war, civil rights, and free speech movements.
- 1961** - W.C. Fields campaign begins to raise money for UUA annual program fund.
- 1969** - The UUA gives LRY and SRL control over their own funds causing them to be affiliate organizations. LRY has a 10 person executive committee with a president and no adult consultant.
- 1974** - LRY Executive Committee is brought down to four people with no hierarchy.
- 1979** - Youth Adult Committee is established to act as a funnel for Youth Program monies.
- 1969-76** - SRL has held fairly large summer conferences and provides some programming for college age youth.
- 1978** - SRL's structure is dissolved and the endowment is given to the LRY.
- 1975** - The UUA Board created a Special Committee On Youth Programs (SCOYP) to study the existing youth programs in the denomination.
- 1977** - The SCOYP, which is made up of 3 youths and 4 adults, made its report. The most substantial recommendation is that the LRY executive committee be replaced by an Office of Youth Programs.
- 1979** - Youth Consultant is hired by UUA for the first time in ten years.
- 1981** - Common Ground Youth Assembly is held in Minnesota. Delegates from all districts participate in deciding future youth programming.
- 1982** - Common Ground: Coming of Age is held in Bowdoin, Maine to finalize transition from LRY into a new youth organization. This group is named Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU).
- 1983** - LRY as a corporation is dissolved.
- 1985** - YRUU is going strong.
- 1987** - ?



Larry Brown and Wendy Cod, 1971

1960's

In the winter of 1968, The Western Canada Federation of LRY had its Christmas Conference in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The fellowship building there was too small for the size of conference we expected, so we rented the facilities of the nearby church of another denomination. It was one of my last full district conferences before I irrevocably caught the "continental bug" and left Western Canada.

We often had guests at our conference from Eastern Canada at that time—friends some of us had made at Continental Conferences, or people who were interested in travelling and visiting.

I was still carrying around an unrequited love for a girl from another Western Canadian city. We saw each other at conferences and perhaps a few times a year otherwise. (I hitchhiked unspeakable distances in inconceivable

winter temperatures to see her.) It was pretty well established my love would never be reciprocated, but we were still good friends. This girl and another cory of mine from Eastern Canada had gotten involved with each other, and they showed up together at the Saskatoon conference announcing that they had been married in the East the week before. The news took the whole conference by surprise and by storm. Most of us were pretty cynical or skeptical about marriage, for political reasons or simply because the whole thought of it terrified us, so it was pretty hard to conceive of these two friends of ours actually having gone and "done it."

In spite of our surprise, skepticism, and hard-to-define hurt about what they had done, it was clear to me that we needed to celebrate this event somehow. In talking to them, they wanted a

continued on page 11

1970's

Many people wonder what it was like to work for LRY in Boston back in "The old days." People in my group in Morristown looked at the Boston office with a mixture of mystery, boredom and awe. . . who are these people? What do they do?

Well, I was one of those people. I have many memories of those times; good ones, bad ones, silly ones, poignant ones. Mostly they were unrelated to each other, but they were my life, and my life was LRY.

A lot of the work we did in those final days was, unfortunately, trying to 'sell' LRY to people, to convince them that we were worth having around. I traveled to Texas, California, Illinois, New York . . . all over the place with my long hair and my ratty jeans trying to save LRY from disaster; i.e., no funding. I remember showing up at UUA Board meetings in the best clothes I owned (remember I made \$65 a month) trying to make an impression. In the end . . . well, we're still here (the names have changed to protect the innocent).

Mostly I remember people; falling in love with Nina, the birthday cake from Ruth when I thought no one had remembered, Cheryl collecting tootsie-pop wrappers, Gretchen sitting in her room watching Dr. Who. I remember, when things got really rough or really silly, we'd play UNO, and in our version, if you played a one you made up a rule. I'll never forgive having been made to take a shower with my clothes on, or having to go outside and scream "LRY Uber alles" five times . . . but I digress.

In any case, LRY was and *is* special, for it is not dead, it lives on in the hearts of many. For me it was a way of life, I worked it, I played with it, I lived with it . . . and it helped, I learned a lot how to be a caring, loving, spiritual person. May that never die. And to Amy of Cooperstown, who I met in Buffalo in '79 and have not seen since—I still owe you a backrub! *

Dave Williams
Santa Cruz, CA

1980's

BEING HERE IS . . .

rewarding (3) fun (7) beautiful (2) a physical strain/worth the trouble (3) hard work (8) historic (2) terrific (3) loving (5) tiring (7) interesting (4) quite an experience (2) learning (6) meeting people (5) wonderful (10) moving/caring (4) very emotional (4) friendship (3) inspiring (2) excellent (2) great (15) tough / warm / a good time / necessary / very good (4) making a contribution (2) an accomplishment (4) a great place (2) one of the best things I've ever done/busy (2) satisfying/fulfilling /uplifting /encouraging/existing/ important (2) depressing / thought-provoking/a lot of tension/exciting (11) no sleep/enlightening as to the widespread youth problem/tears never far from my eyes / a building sense of UUism unbelievable, a dream (2) high pressure/involving / intense (2) something I'd never want to do again, but worth it/exhilarating (5) exhausting (7) better than I had dreamed/ fantastic (7) tense/joyous / challenging (2) a great personal experience (8) something I'll never forget (2) an education / ecstasy/scary/ I loved it! a high/ heart warming/ an honor/ a privilege/ a must / trust/ like being on holy ground /terrific/ what I pictured/ growing (3) more wondrous than I ever expected . . .

(From the Evaluations of *Common Ground*)

Social Action...

Conflict **H** Education **H** Action **H** Solution **H** Resolution

Sexual *Violence* EVERYBODY'S PROBLEM

Sexual violence can only be understood in the context of other kinds of violence against women. This phrase is often misunderstood. When I say, "I'm against violence against women," people often respond, "Why just women? Shouldn't we be against all violence?" Well, yes, of course. Certainly all forms of violence need to be eradicated from our lives. But violence against women is a subject unto itself for a number of reasons. First, it is so widespread that it affects every woman on this planet. In the dialoguing that has been occurring as a result of the United Nations Decade of Women (1975-1985), domestic violence has emerged as one of the three main issues that unite women worldwide. (The other two are reproductive rights and access to credit.) Take rape in the United States for instance. The figures are staggering: by conservative FBI estimates, a woman is raped every 15 seconds. One out of three women will be raped in her lifetime, 3/4 of whom will be under 18 years old. Reported incidences of gang rape are on the rise especially after the gang rape at "Big Dan's" Bar in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1983. Whether this increase and the increase of rape statistics in general is due to more rapes or more reporting is not clear. In any case, we are getting a more realistic idea of the magnitude of the problem, and it's more than just the victims who are affected.

The rape of one woman makes all women potential victims: victims have ranged in age from two years to 90 years, and rape can happen anywhere. A dark alley, yes, but more likely in our

A woman is raped every 15 seconds....

own homes by somebody we know. Date rape is an issue of increasing concern. It can happen on a college campus or even, unfortunately, at a conference. We often plan our schedules around the need to travel in daylight. Even something as mundane as taking a shower can become a scary experience when you're alone in an apartment.

Rape continues to be a misunderstood crime. It is an act of violence, not lust. It has to do with power, not sexuality. The confusion arises because a sexual organ becomes a violent weapon. Most rapists do not even ejaculate after "penetration." The Hite Report tells us that men who fantasize about rape do so when they have feelings of anger, or powerlessness. Typical comments run, "Some women are really well built and goodlooking, but they are also snotty as hell. Those are the kind I would like to just rape the hell out of," or "Yes, I hated the bitch. A broomstick would have been fine." Clearly, feelings of sexuality have nothing to do with the desire to rape a woman. But in spite of all this, people still ask, "What was she wearing?" of a woman who has been raped, as if a low cut tight shirt will instantly fill a male passerby with uncontrollable sexual desire.

Non-stranger rape is even less understood. There is a tendency to assume that either "she was giving out signals

and 'deserved' it" or "she really wanted it." These attitudes just contribute to the "blaming the victim" syndrome. Really, date rape happens because of women's powerlessness. Men who rape believe that women's bodies are simply there for men to use as they want to. A rather disturbing survey at one university showed that, out of the men surveyed, 2/3 would rape a woman if they thought they could get away with it.

Rape is an accepted fact in our culture. Forcible rape has a lower conviction rate than any other crime listed in the Uniform Crime reports. It is still legal in 40 states for a husband to rape his wife, and legal in six states to beat her. But violence against women is not just rape. It is street hassles and the sexist jokes, which are more accepted and prevalent than their equally dehumanizing racial and ethnic counterparts. Vice President George Bush, when asked when he was going to stop beating into the ground the issue of the Ferraro/Zaccaro finances, replied, "I haven't stopped beating my wife yet." Ha, ha! What do you think would have been the response if he had substituted "slave" for "wife?" Jokes about violence are not funny.

Other aspects of our culture create tolerance for violence, further dehumanize women, and make us more vulnerable. We are constantly being bombarded with images that objectify women: sexist advertising, pornographic magazines, such as the infamous *Hustler* cover featuring a woman pulverized in a meat grinder (which, by the way, was Larry Flynt's way of keeping his promise that "we will not hang women up like pieces of meat"), or the rock and roll industry—chained and beaten women grace album covers as rock and roll "art." Even when we are little, we watch cartoons showing a weak helpless Olive Oyl in the clutches of a dastardly Bluto. Women feel the effect of these influences in many instances. The practically daily street hassles, obscene phone calls, and the all too friendly professors and teachers remind us of our vulnerability. Sexual violence takes place in a culture ripe for it, not in a vacuum.

The sex stereotyping promoted by all this hurts men as well as women. These crimes turn all men into potential perpetrators and stereotypes will continue as long as violence against women continues. Men are socialized with the cultural myth that they are violent. Boys will be boys, the saying goes. Men who are aware of the severity of the issue have a hard battle to face. They must not laugh at the sexist jokes, or look at the pornographic magazines, even though there is enormous peer pressure to do so. As a first step in the battle against violence against women, we all need to fight the stereotypes that dehumanize men and victimize women.

Let's put sexual violence against women back into the bigger picture. First of all, some interesting work has come out connecting violence against women and another form of violence that we are all concerned about, also: war. Apart from the whole rape-like metaphor of war—phallic tanks, guns and missiles penetrating "enemy territory"—violence against women is a routine part of battle. General Patton wrote, "I then told (him) that in spite of my most diligent efforts, there would unquestionably be some raping, and that I should like to have the details as early as possible so that the offenders could be properly hanged." At least he appeared to be against it, although I don't agree with his punishment. A Vietnam veteran recalls his troops being told on their way to Vietnam that, "There's a lot of loose ass over there, men, and they just love GI dick. And best of all, they are only Gooks, so if you get tired of them, you can cram a grenade up their cunt and waste them." Note the double dehumanization: not only is a human being called a "loose ass," but she is reduced to a "Gook" loose ass at that. This leads me to another point: it is very important to keep a racial awareness in dealing with violence against women.

In the United States, minority women are the target of double violence, as attested, for example, by the many accounts of police raping black women who were arrested during the civil rights movement. The myth of the black rapist or the macho Latino does as much to

institutionalize racism as it does to perpetuate those male/female stereotypes. Our predominantly white feminist movement has also done its share to perpetuate racism. In the campaign against clitoridectomies (ritual removal of the clitoris happens to about 30 million women a year, mostly in northern Africa), they have tended to portray the Third World women as backward, helpless victims of traditional male practices, who need our help. This isn't to say that we shouldn't fight violence against women, but rather we must be sensitive to a variety of factors in order to respect people's dignity.

Well, I've already typed a lot of pages and I feel like I've hardly begun to scratch the surface. I've hardly mentioned wife-battering or the problems of incest and child pornography. But I hope I've given you some new things to think about. There are a lot of things we can do in our daily lives. The most important thing is to remember that our most valuable resource is each other.

Some ideas:

—Get together in groups to talk about experiences. Knowing that other people have the same things happen to them really does lighten the load. It can happen in single sex or coed groups—whatever seems appropriate.

—Support your local rape crisis center or battered women's shelter (by volunteering, raising \$\$).

—Educate yourself. Read Cynthia Enloe's *Does Khaki Become You*, or Susan Brownmiller's book on rape. Bring the very powerful documentary about pornography, "Not a Love Story," to your society—or join your church's social concerns committee and show the film through that group to your congregation.

—Jane Park
Tiburon, CA

An opportunity to see for yourself

The United Nations has proclaimed 1986 to be the International Year of Peace. To begin the International Year of Peace, YRUU is helping to set up a trip for a group of mature young adults, ages 16-39, to Nicaragua from the end of December, 1985, until the beginning of January, 1986, sponsored by the Nicaraguan Exchange.

Participants called Brigadiers, will live with campesinos in farm housing and pick coffee beans during the days. Meals will consist of rice and beans three times a day in primitive conditions. This trip is not a tour. It will be very difficult. Corinne Rafferty, the Nicaraguan Exchange organizer, says the hardest lesson is learning, "to live so closely with people who are so poor, when we are so rich. Strong, strong friendship bonds are formed."

The Nicaraguan Exchange is a group of Americans and Nicaraguans working together. Brigadiers live with their Nicaraguan hosts during the stay. Although the Nicaraguan organizers are careful not to send Brigadiers into any part of the country they feel is unprotected, there is danger. Mortar fire is sometimes within earshot. Past participants say the experience of going into a country at war and living the life of a worker there, even for just a month, has changed their way of thinking and living.

The expedition will cost approximately \$700.00 for all expenses from Miami. Participants will be asked to bring their experiences back into their community and church groups when they return so that as many people as possible will share their rare insight. Some scholarship money may be available. Knowledge of Spanish is helpful, but not mandatory. If you are interested in joining the Brigadiers, please write to the YRUU office for more information, or contact the Nicaraguan Exchange directly at:

Corinne Rafferty
Nicaraguan Exchange
239 Centre Street
New York, NY 10013



DYING FOR PEACE

- A simple way to increase awareness about a complex problem -

An important step for solving a problem is increasing awareness of that problem. If enough people are aware of a problem, it can be solved. * Derived from Ken Keyes Jr., "The Hundredth Monkey"

Many people are now involved with many humanitarian causes, such as aiding starving Ethiopians and putting pressure on corporations operating in racist South Africa. These are important issues that need much attention, but in recent times, the most important issue, the threat of our planet being obliterated by a nuclear war, cannot be overshadowed. On my campus (at Boston University, which has an apathetic reputation these days) some friends and I - from different political/social groups - formed a group called the GROUND ZERO CLUB. (Thanks to Brock and Charlotte Goobs for the title).

Every Wednesday, in the center of the campus, at 11:55 sharp, we point to the sky, scream, and then fall-down and "die" from a mock-nuclear attack. * We have a different sign each week saying things like "NUCLEAR WAR IS BAD FOR YOUR GRADE POINT AVERAGE

AGE . . . CAREER . . . SOCIAL LIFE . . . etc.," Sayings that will "hit home" with the students that pass by. Whoever makes the sign one week, gets someone to do it for the next week.

This weekly demonstration makes people *think* and it's very simple - there are no leaders (besides the initial organizers) and no money is needed.

The results:

- The first week, we had no publicity and eight people "fell-out."

- 2nd week - campus aroused - 26 participants.

- 3rd week - campus newspaper coverage and 75 participants!!! including professors!!

- 4th week - *Boston Globe* coverage - and still going strong !!!

See what a little time and organization can do!!! An "apathetic" campus was awakened to an important issue in just two weeks. Maybe the GZC could go national! Form a group at your school. Try it - every Wed. at 11:55. Maybe we could wake the whole country up!

"Join the GZC club or it may join you!"

Daniel Gibson

* We lie down for two minutes, so participants can make their 12:00 classes.



Ground Zero Club at Boston University

YRUU: Finding Its Place at the UN

I still sometimes have trouble believing that it's really happening. I am living and working in midtown Manhattan! I could easily stroll over to see a Broadway show (if only I could afford one!). I work **right across the street** from the United Nations! I have a little plastic card that lets me go in the entrances where the official-looking people go in.

I am one of the official-looking people!

At other times, of course, it is all too real—times when I am taking something to the copy center two blocks away, in the rain, with the wind threatening to invert my umbrella.

I love it!

I began my internship at the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office on March 4, and will be here until the 14th of June. The UU-UNO is an independent affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and receives no funds from the UUA. The staff of the Office consists of the Executive Director (Jim Olsen), Administrative Assistant (Judith Galindez), part-time Membership Secretary (Lois Poltin Olsen), and me.

Put the four of us in a **small** office on the seventh floor of the Church Center for the UN, and you have an environ-

ment which can be rather hectic at times, and at others, very stimulating.

What do I do? At various times, everything. I spend a fair amount of time stuffing envelopes and pasting labels, but I also spend a lot of time covering UN meetings, contacting speakers for various events, and attending symposia and seminars on a variety of topics as a representative of the UUA.

My first few weeks of UN meetings were rather frustrating—I had a hard time dealing with the incredible slowness of any progress. An amazing amount of time is spent in UN committees on protocol and forced civility, and I constantly had the urge to stand up and yell at all the delegates to DO SOMETHING. Fortunately, I never followed through.

The UN's political workings—the big Committee, Council, and Assembly meetings—are the parts of the UN which are most visible. So it was for me at the beginning of March: the UN was a place where governments got together to discuss their political problems.

Naturally, it was extremely disheartening to arrive and find what looked like **very** politicized committees, and delegates who seemed convinced that nothing substantial would come of their deliberations, and who didn't care that this was the case. To some degree, I still think that these are the ways things work—but I am no longer bothered by them nearly as much. Two things have eased my frustrations considerably:

First, I began to understand how much of the UN structure is relatively remote from those conference rooms in NYC. The number of people who are fed, clothed, educated, or cured; the forests which have been saved; and the pollution which has been lessened through the efforts of the Secretariat or Specialized agencies of the UN are rather amazing. (I will not go into the structure of the UN family here, but the vastness of the "action" sector has been very encouraging).

Second, and just as important, I have become convinced that, though **far** from sufficient, a forum such as the UN is very necessary. Even if no substantial progress is ever made on issues, the existence of a place where governments force themselves to be civil with each other and to come to some agreements (if only minor ones) is inherently valuable.

I could expand more, but I'm still working out most of the details in my own mind as I learn more about the UN. More later! See you at Con-Con!

Ben Ford
NY, NY

DON'T JUST COMPLAIN: ACT!

I was very pleased to see such a wide coverage of social action topics in the last issue of *SYNAPSE*. Many groups and their addresses were named so YRUUers can get involved in these areas of concern: nuclear weapons, Central America, South Africa, political prisoners, etc. When our elected government fails to solve these problems or address them with political rhetoric (that many people believe without questioning), it is up to the people, that's right—*us*, to try and solve these problems and sway the government into action towards justice. But how can the people tackle such responsibilities? Often, I see groups working for a good cause, but are not "together" as a group themselves. If a group of people cannot work together in a positive atmosphere, their work can often become counter-productive.

Here are some tips on how to make your group work well and avoid the problems within the social activism movement:

1) Don't just complain, act! (Don't mourn, organize.)

2) Always keep a positive attitude within the group. Encourage, appreciate, and compliment the work of others—remember: EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS. Be social. Apply some

LRY/YRUU warmth to the situation. Make new members feel welcome. Be real.

3) Prepare for discouragement. Being in a small group or having the "unpopular" viewpoint may get you down at times, but a lot of good things can still be accomplished. Keep reminding yourself of what you are working towards, and that the world will benefit from it.

4) Prepare for close-mindedness of others. Keep a strong will and stay calm. Prepare how to deal with them. You may have to argue/defend your point of view; know your facts and *state your sources*.

5) Keep *your* mind open—always! Listen and learn.

6) Avoid elitism. Everyone in your group should share responsibility. Remember, we are all human—no one is more important than anyone else.

7) Don't spread yourself too thin trying to work for every cause. Pick one or two causes and concentrate on them. (One local cause and one national/international cause is good.) This way, your work will be most productive, instead of "burning-out" trying to do too many things at once. You can educate yourself on other causes and attend lectures, rallies, etc., but make

sure the one you're involved with is getting the time it deserves.

8) Don't fight systems of hatred with hatred.

Don't fight systems of violence with violence.

Don't "fight" for peace—work for it constructively.

Corny as it sounds, apply truth, justice, and love to everything you do.

9) Most importantly:

DON'T FORGET THE CAUSE THAT YOU ARE WORKING FOR!

Don't do activism for the sake of activism. Don't be active just be "liberal" or "radical" or "cool"—do it for what you feel is right.

10) Activism isn't just rallies and marches—it is also:

- Lobbying politicians/writing letters and editorials

- Petitioning

- INCREASING AWARENESS: Publishing informative material.

Holding lectures, debates, and discussions and the publicity involved.

Workshops.

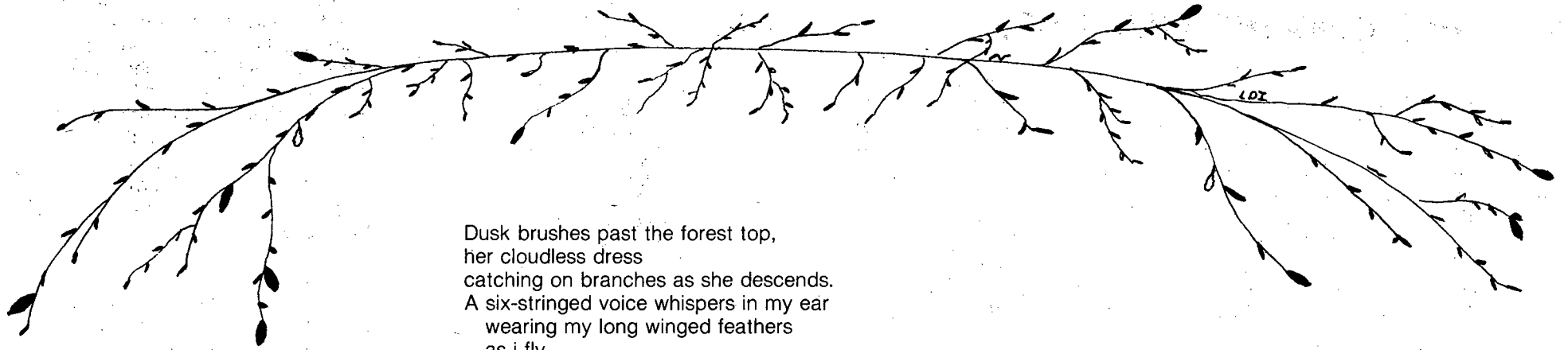
I hope that these tips prove to be helpful and that all goes well. Live, love, and learn.

Daniel Gibson
Homdel, NJ

If you're planning a career in science or engineering and are worried that you may end up working in nuclear weapons related areas. . .

"Your Career and Nuclear Weapons," a 25 page booklet written by research scientists, is free.

Contact:
Peace Resource Center
of Santa Barbara
331 N. Milpas Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93013
(805) 965-8583



Dusk brushes past the forest top,
her cloudless dress
catching on branches as she descends.
A six-stringed voice whispers in my ear
wearing my long winged feathers
as i fly. . .

my feet follow themselves down the trail,
past new games and ameobas, warm fuzzies, lifesavers, mailbags
pot-bellied stove
thru workshops and raps, massages, songs
dancing
To a path
where the heat of tears still rises
from the earth,
and tattered wails still blow in the air.
Once in the meadow,
I reach for your hand,
reaching back to my heart.
Holding close enough to cry all our pain—
there is a bond that holds itself around us,
grows within us—
speaks our names.

Sharon Kay Lutz
Oakland, CA



How I Wish

How I wish I could express my feelings.
My bleeding heart, cold and unhealing.
The blood of compassion slowly drips away,
with each searing score of your whip.
The arrow in my heart has a poisoned tip.

How I wish I could express my pain.
Things are getting harder to fain.
Your Pretty Mind Games I can no longer play.
A burnt out shell, I go through the motions,
a prisoner, dependent on your whims and notions.

How I wish I could express your helplessness,
watching our light slowly die in the west.
wondering if I'll survive the coming day,
I throw off the cold burlap shroud,
and hold back the thickening storm cloud.

How I wish I could express my feelings.
My empty heart lies dead and unbeating
for the blood of compassion has all dripped away.
Aware of the numbness from your vicious whip,
I'll succumb to the poisoned tip.

Geoff Bumbugh
Syracuse, N.Y.

The Neighborhood Church YRUU, in Pasadena, California, had a very moving "Youth Sunday" on APRIL 14th. For the Sunday service, the youth presented the theme "TEENS ARE NOT TALL CHILDREN." The service was divided into three different parts: "It's tough to be a kid," "I don't want to grow up" and "What gives us courage, hope, and motivation."

Reverend Junella Hanson said the adult responses were incredible. "Letters poured into the newsletter editor applauding the genuine, authentic quality of the service." She sent *Synapse* a copy of the front page of the newsletter where one of the parents wrote a poem expressing her feelings as she watched and listened that day in the service. Here it is:

From a distance
you all seem alike
to us
our senses blunted
by fear
bizarre sights and sounds
we don't understand
and can't control
in our own houses.

We love you desperately.
We are afraid.
You are afraid.
We neglect to tell each other
any of this.

Today we made ourselves
sit down before you and listen.
Now we are ready
now we can hear
We are yours
do what you will.

And you showed us you.
Not the strange outfits
and special language you use
to set yourselves apart.
But you.

You are dreams and ideals
You are poetry and thought
You are anger and fear
frustration and loneliness
You are hope and joy
and fun and sharing
and love.

Under the shaggy hair
beneath dangly earrings and da-glo
colors
inside the ragged black shirt
painted with monster idols
is a human being.

Like we were
like we are
Different from everybody.

—Diane Miller



If you are interested in having a youth Sunday at your church, society, or fellowship and want some ideas about how to do it, the April REACH packet in your church office has some helpful hints.

Elegy For A Veteran

My uncle is dead,
i fled
to the woods
sucking nicotine
in haste, fearing
i'd lose what grief i had summoned
feet crunching old snow
a midnight squirrel chattered
lonesome birdsong

My uncle is dead,
then it was time
to grieve
for a man who fought
driving across desert sands
in a light tank with a popgun
killing tigers and huns
guilty of the rape of Europe
2 million jews
dead
He was there too
killing aryan pride
with a 50 caliber on the turret

My uncle is dead,
passed away last night
from a cancer that grew
out of his silence
from not telling
the horrors he saw

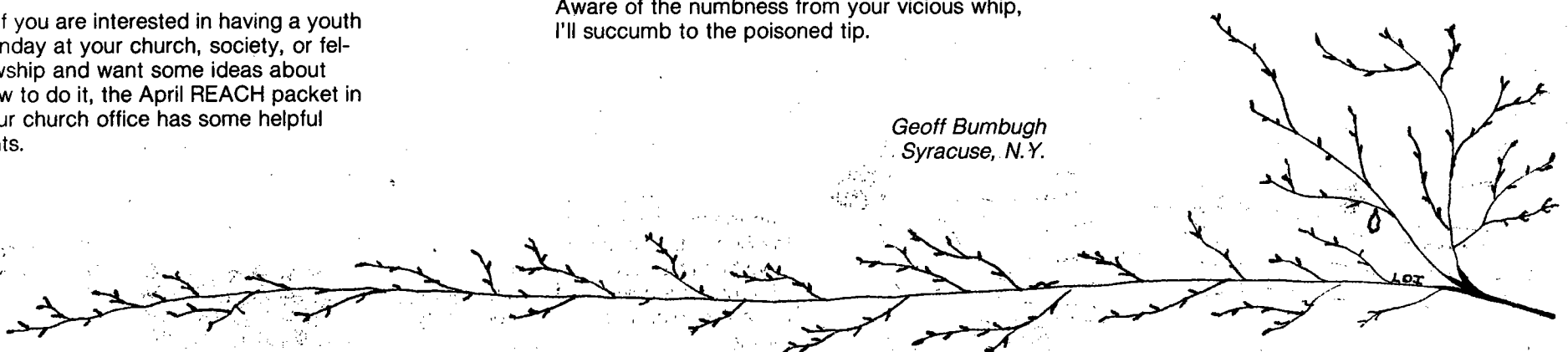
half eaten skeleton flesh,
a tattered uniform lying
half buried in a sand dune
carrion
nor
the frozen corpses
in the snow
when the bulge was pushed back
nor
his drunken spree
on R and R
maybe his lost love
he died a bachelor

My uncle
my great unknown uncle

My father's father's brother
will never tell me now

My great uncle
who used a coke bottle
to mash potatoes
for Thanksgiving
and made sure
that we never changed channels too quickly
on his color television
in his big frame house
with the deep old world bathtubs
on Staten Island.

Tym Sympson
Rochester, NY



ENCOUNTERING THE PHILIPPINES

I just returned from a three week tour in the Philippines that was sponsored by the International Association For Religious Freedom. It was a Youth Encounter with participants from five different countries that came together to work, play, and interchange in the spirit of international co-operation and understanding.

It is difficult for me to share my experiences without writing a novel, but I'll do my best.

To start out with, I felt I stood out like a sore thumb. There were only two other North Americans who were there, Scott Keeler and Kurt Haag, so we often stood out in a crowd and got a lot of attention directed at us. It was disturbing because I was getting attention not because of who I am, but because I was an American and Americans are looked up to. There is a strong admiration for America because of what our nation perpetuates to the world. The American Dream has spread and now everyone has bought into it- or at least that's the way it seemed at the time.

In order to move beyond that, I had to work at not drawing attention to myself. I also had to be sure to continually give people permission to speak English poorly. I realize that because the encounter was in English, the English speaking participants had a great advantage. Often, people were intimidated

to speak to us because they were embarrassed about their own fluency. I always told them that my Japanese wasn't so hot and that my Tagalog was even worse.

The times when the cultural barriers were broken most easily were when we were playing games together. When we were playing it didn't matter that we couldn't speak the same language—we transcended the differences imposed on us by society.

When working together we also created a feeling of being connected in a greater way. While doing service for a village we felt as if we were making a difference in the world, even if it was in a small way. Throughout the Encounter I got a strong sense that we all knew that in some way we were helping to create peace in the world. That, as young people from nations that were at war only 40 years ago, we could now take a stand for peace in our time. No matter how small our work is it is a step towards understanding other cultures and to realizing that we actually aren't so different. The youth from other countries are dealing with the same questions we deal with in our lives. The same doubts about career choices and what we want our lives to look like. These questions are the same regardless of culture or economic background.



Young child from the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines.

We interacted with people in the Philippines from severely different socioeconomic backgrounds. It was hard to be with people that earned 50¢ to \$1.00 a day while drinking cokes that cost that much. Yet, it is impossible for someone of my upbringing to actually understand what that means. Fifty cents a day. It is inconceivable to me. Even after having gone to where they live, and slept on the bamboo floors with them, and eaten the food that I helped fish out of the sea it is hard for me to realize what it is like to live that life everyday.

In talking with Milcah, a 17 year old woman from the Negros Islands, I realized that she is a truly happy person despite her poverty. We talked about how it felt for her to be in Manila in a fancy convention center with some people looking down on her because she is poor. She told me that she knows she is a good person and that if people look down on her it is because they don't like themselves. A poor woman who by our standards has little, but she will go through life feeling good about herself. How many of us can make claim to that. For most of us we move through our lives continually searching for more. Always believing that someday we will find happiness — after high school, after

marriage, after retirement etc. It seems as if the more we have the more we want and then the more we need. I can remember feeling like I should do something to help Milcah and her family and then I realized how arrogant that is of me. How dare I presume that she needs anything from me besides my care and respect. We need to learn to respect others for what they are and not what they have. Material things actually mean nothing, yet in our society we continually put so much emphasis on them.

One of the most important aspects of the Youth Encounter was the worship. I experienced more worship during the three weeks I was there than I have in the past year. Each participating group had the opportunity to share a traditional worship service from their religion. It was incredible to feel a strong sense of spirituality through participating in worship that is different from what I am used to. It gave me a feeling of the universality of religion. I realized that the way in which we worship is not nearly as important as the desire to worship. I really miss having the opportunity to focus in on myself and become spiritually in touch everyday. Religion is so removed from our society because it is perceived as a "Sunday Affair," it so rarely penetrates into our daily lives. I believe this lack of spirituality is detrimental to society. The west can learn a lot from the east about getting in touch with god (or whatever you wish to call it).

Overall the Youth Encounter was an incredible experience. I interacted with people from around the world, was exposed to many different religions, learned about Filipino culture and along the way I even made some friends. It's an experience I know I'll hold onto for the rest of my life. Every so often I stop what I am doing to think about what time it is in the Philippines and I imagine what all the different people I met there are doing — fishing for food, attending school, worshipping, hanging out. It's pretty amazing to feel connected to a place half-way around the world. In some ways it helps give me hope for the future of the world. It makes me feel more a part of the entire Earth as opposed to just my part of it.

Laila Ibrahim
Boston, MA



Laila Ibrahim and Father Bayani de Jesus in Manila.

1960's

continued from page 7

celebration also, and wanted to recreate the marriage with all their Western Canadian friends present. So we planned and celebrated an elaborate wedding for them during the five days of our Christmas Conference. It was a beautiful event. The music, the readings, the ceremony, the vows, felt all very complete and sincere. Our federation advisor was very close to the "bride" and participated with a reading and sharing of his feelings. To this day, I remember it as one of the finest weddings I've ever done.

When it was over, the "bride" and "groom" turned to the assembled conference and told us it was all a hoax. They had not gotten married back East, although they had been thinking of it. They decided to tell us they had really done it to see what the reaction would be, and had gotten caught up in the excitement and the idea of a wedding ceremony here. After a while it felt to them like revealing the hoax would be worse than letting it all go through.

My response was very strange. At first I felt foolish, then angry, but after a little while I felt elated and celebrative. It was easy to forgive my bizarre friends. The ceremony that we had done had its own validity, and the experience of putting it together was indescribably important.

I contribute this story to your *Synapse* issue on our traditions and history because for me, in my memory, it stands out as a symbol of one thing our youth movement has always been about and will always be about: trying out. In so many ways our youth groups and conferences enable people to dare to be someone or something they want to try out—a leader, another personality, a hippie, a punk, an adult, a minister, an organizer, an artist.

Some people even decide that the person they are trying out is the person that they've always wanted to be. Amazing.

Wayne Arnason
Charlottesville, VA

Dear LRY/YRUU

(continued from page 5)

What was the Earth like for the millions of centuries before modern humans? How normal is the environment that is so normal to me?

Not long ago, we went on a 10-day backpack in the Superstition Mountains in Arizona. The wilderness is a place where, if you can find it, the Earth's processes are continuing in the four billion year mainstream, for the most part. Most of my life is spent out of touch with that flow. Just *being* in the wilderness is such a totally different experience from what I'm used to. I can't explain it in words, but then again the Earth doesn't communicate to me through words, but through feelings, the feelings I experience when I am with her, in the Superstitions and in other natural areas we have been. I can say, however, that it really changes my view of what reality is. The wilderness feels very real to me. Why? Because it works! For four billion years the Earth has been growing, changing, fluctuating, emoting, building up tension, releasing tension, giving birth, keeping things in balance, maintaining a healthy environment for life... *living*. To think that the kind of lifestyle that is normal to me can in any way continue with such a self-regulating balance for any length of time, not to mention four billions—now that is a fantasy.

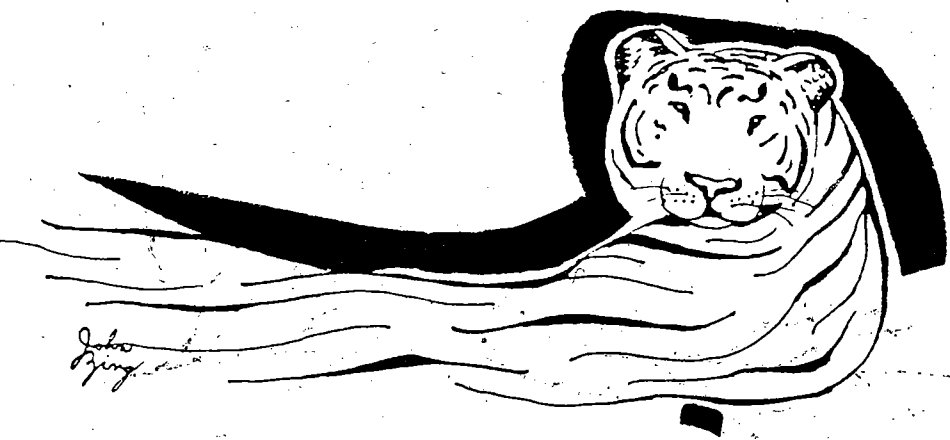
So, in that light, getting back in touch with the natural rhythms of the Earth in the Superstitions and in other areas we have been has been like getting in touch with reality, a new kind of reality for me, but a very old, tried, and tested reality for the Earth.

So I've learned a great deal about myself and about our culture and the world. How do these tie together? I'll start by looking at our culture and the world again, in a different way this time.

Not only does our culture appear fantastical to me in light of the four billion year old reality of the Earth, but it is conquering this old reality out of existence. Wilderness areas such as the Superstitions where one can experience it are few. We visited the Glen Canyon Dam: a big piece of concrete stopping the flow of the Colorado River, altering the natural rhythms of the Earth's bloodstream, backing up the water and drowning the ecosystems of several side canyons. There are so many dams on the Colorado River that it no longer reaches the gulf of California.

So what does this have to do with me? A whole lot. Because my natural flow has been dammed and altered, one example of a dam in me being my internal authority that I mentioned in the beginning of this letter. But how can I do anything to help restore the natural four billion year flow of the Earth? The Colorado River is dammed and probably will be for a long time. But I am a part of the Earth that I have control over, if I choose to accept the responsibility! Wow! Sounds like a pretty big responsibility. In light of what I have learned this year about the Earth, our culture, and myself, I accept.

Paul Gibson
Holmdel, NJ



8/10 - 8/16
'85

Hints: Youth work training, bonfires, mysticism, serious things, music, building your own theology, groovy things, Unitarian Universalism, mollusk appreciation, understanding your complimentary sex, food by John Mallett and Co., silly things, bridge building, etc.

Linda and Jennifer Brown
3745 Garfield
Lincoln, NE 68506
402-489-2381

CON CON HINTS

1. There is limited registration so register early if possible.
2. If you have workshop ideas, please bring them.
3. New songs will be welcome.
4. Musical instruments, poetry, worship materials, etc.
5. Bug Spray!!!
6. Bathing Suit



SUMMERCAMPS

FOR TEENS

• CHANNING CAMP • BALLOU CAMP

Junior High
Entering grades 7, 8, 9
I: June 30 - July 6
with Jim Moomaw
Theme: Coming Together:
For Better or Worse
II: July 6 - July 12
Theme: Music Talks Again!

Senior High
Entering grades 10, 11, 12 and just
completed 12
I. August 12 - August 18
II. August 18 - August 24
Camper committee planned programs
Also, come with your family:
Family Camp I: July 14 - July 20
SLUUD RE Week: July 29 - August 2
Creative Family Week: August 5 - Au-
gust 11
Pitch in Time: August 25 - September 2

1985

Join us for peace and growth in 1985. This is the time for you. Unirondack is a member of CU₂C₂.

For brochure with full 1985 schedule, contact Sally Stevens, Administrator; 320 Rockingham St., Rochester, NY 14620 (716) 271-6434

NEXT ISSUE: VISIONS OF OUR FUTURE:

Where is YRUU headed? How do we get there?
Share your vision with us.

Please contribute pictures, stories, poems, doodles, etc. Call or write: The Youth Office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02018, (617) 742-2100, ext. 246. Deadline for Submissions: September 15, 1985.

I HAD TO DO IT... IT WAS A
MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

ONE DAY AT WORK I WAS LEAVING
THROUGH THE LATEST COPY OF MY
FAVOURITE PAPER WHEN AN
INTERESTING CAUGHT MY
ROVING EYEBALLS...

Hmm... I wonder if they would print some of my drawings? I know they're not good but the worst they could do is send them back... And if I don't send anything then they won't print them for certain.

BUT THAT WAS SOON FORGOTTEN AND MY DRAWING TABLE BEGAN TO GET COBWEBS ON IT...

THEN I GOT THE NEXT SYNAPSE.

BUT I WAS NOT FAST ENOUGH...
FOR ONE DAY...

A cartoon illustration. At the top left, a speech bubble says "ooh boy! Synapse!". At the top right, another speech bubble asks "What's this?". In the center, a large speech bubble contains the text: "No synapse this month, this quarter, or this year. No one cares. So we quit. - the editors". Below this, there is a drawing of an open book with "NO SYNAPSE" written on its cover. At the bottom left is a small figure of a person, and at the bottom right is a speech bubble that says "Pardon?".

Well then and there, a bell in my head went "ding" and I began drawing feverishly...

I SENT IN THE FRUITS OF MY
LABOUR... AND SURE ENOUGH... A NEW
ISSUE... featuring me!!

YARK YARK! isn't that an inspiring story? Doesnt it just make your fingers itch to be writing or drawing something for synapse now

WELL SYNAPSE IS FOR YOU AND BY YOU! SO SEND US SOMETHING OR THEIR WONT BE ANY TELL TOMORROW... OR ANY NEW SYNAPSES!

SEND IN SOMETHING NOW!!

Well love you for it!