

NOVEMBER 1984 SYNAPSE

A PUBLICATION OF
Young Religious Unitarian Universalists
25 Beacon St. Boston, Massachusetts 02108

FAMILIES



Synapse - from the Greek sunapsis - a point of contact where energy and information is exchanged.
Synapse - a publication of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists

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PRSNLS

Sunny,
I miss you, you Yellow Snowball! Love your favorite fluff-muffin.

July

Lenore, Renegade and all those California Bimbos-
It really sucked to see you at Summer's End (And I am a Harlem Globetrotter) . See you soon, or later. Write!

July

Susan-
You suck.
Lisa
(and lick and snort and et al. I love you)

Andrea-Mon Cherie,
Ha Ha-we are rude and disrespectful-so typical of us, eh?

love,
Lisa

To everyone I gave the wrong address to
My new address is:
512 Beacon St., Box 1310 (not PO Box, just box) ,
Boston, MA 02115
WRITE TO ME NOW!!!

Love Dagmar

Dear LRY People;
Chris Murphy, AKA Horizon, AKA Glaucus, well known to old LRY'ers and SRL'ers, was killed on the Pennsylvania Turnpike Nov. 20, 1982. He was a rather avid songwriter and old LRY'ers will remember his conference serenades. We are trying to produce a posthumous album of his songs, BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP. If you taped his songs, or know older LRY'ers who knew him, please put out the word, and anyone with tapes, lines on tapes, or even rumors of tapes, or Morning Dew Associates (MDA) people, please contact Rainbow or Dagmar, 700 Dunclee Road. Olympia, WA 98502, 206-943-6456, or Mushroom Richard Gaines, 726, 14th Street SE. Olympia, WA 98501, 206-357-4522.

Sincerely,
Rainbow
Dagmar
Richard

Ellen,
Girls with pink hair just want to have fun!!!
WRITE ME!!! Rt. 39 box 254, Ft. Myers, FL 3391311

I LOVE YOU!!!! LUV MAUREEN

TO THE KEN AND BARBIE OF CON-CON/ MIT-CHIE HUN AN MARA DOVE
You two were so unexciting we had to do something to liven you up. Please forgive me, but I had to lower myself to juvenile extremes. You do understand? I LOVE YOU BOTH!!!

Lylas (guess!)

Paul,
Your school seems pretty hip. Let me know how it's going. (In other words, WRITE ME DAMMIT!!)
Love,
Your older, wiser, and loving brother-Dan

BrOck-Welcome to Boston you Bumdog. Even though I don't trust you anymore, we're gonna have a blast! Love, Dan.
P.S. Let's double date sometime-I know these two sisters...

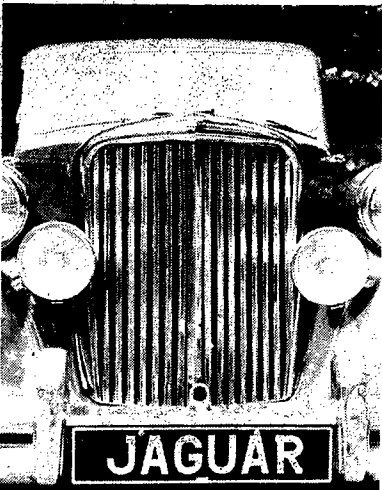
Oh Tara, oh oh, You squeeze my heart and then you let it go. Oooh Tara, my oh my. I can't afford it, no, I wouldn't try. I can't explain, no, I don't know how; it only frightens you anyhow. You'll never know what you've done to me. The agony and the ecstasy. Ooh Tara, it's alright ... but I miss you tonight.
I don't expect you to understand the thrill I feel when I hold your hand. But this is something I never planned. You're thinking of me as just a friend. My heart is breaking, I can't pretend. Ooh Tara, it's for real. I can't help how I feel ... With Love, Always Your Rogue

Old Steering Committee & ConCon staff- thanks for letting me be a part. I miss you. Love, Ben

Andrew, Benita, Jill, Nicole - I miss you! When's our next reunion?

Love Ben

For Mara Lyn



To the Inspirations gang: LOOTLOOTLOOT-LOOOOT LOOTLOOTLOOTLOOT! P.S. Wendy, **remember**, the best man for the job may be a woman! (that goes for you, too, Jill) xxxxx & many more, Spee D. (Coleen) .

Scott: You keep on dreamin ... I'm a lover, not a fighter. . (mine, mine) ...

-Rock

Cappie: Yes, we should. - M. from M.

Lenore: Yes, we would. -M from M



The Northern GZC (Ground Zero Club) is now recruiting members. We have just infiltrated the personals at Synapse headquarters and turned the UDL into an ancient form of slime mold.

Bye for now,
GZC

Neill- You have nice tits too.

Attention!
The UDL inc. has returned with a slight cut in the personnel. The remaining members are as follows: Lee Becky-Thatcher, Hand Purse, Kneith Gayz, Martial Pigeon Hawkins, Jeff Boobs. Former employees please dispose of corporate uniforms. We have met the elite and they are us.

Hey UDL-
The elite are wang poodlers of the earth. Politics will have you Burns hangin' from the highest yardarm.

GZC

Prospective GZC members please write to:
Cat
50 Whitehead Ave.
Hull, MA 02045

Hey Irish Boy-
The all great, all knowing, all powerful!?!? HA, HA, HA, HA, HA.

Goodbye to the ole deep south. My heart will still lie in the flowing cold waters of the upper swimming hole where Phil Rogers fell in January and my soul will lie at the bottom of beautiful Emerald Quarry with that Ducati 250. I'm gonna miss all my friends in Knoxville and Winston and Charlotte, but I'm still alive so come see me in Boston.

Love, Bruce Fiene

Well Hi Y'all (bad speech patterns die hard y'know?) , time is almost up for this kid in Boston. I want to thank all of you for your smiles and support. I knew I couldn't do it alone and I didn't have to. I love you all as I can. Eric, E. Charles, Earache, Polack Karma-estey/Kaminetzky P.S.- look for the next installment of the Star Spangled Polish story in either Boulder or Berkeley! Meanwhile, you can always get mail to me though 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. Yooooooo!

spee-dee
one of these days I'll get ya for myself.

Q-bert

Claudia,
I learned a lot from
you about a lot of
different things at Star.

Thanx, Luv ... Meredith

Hey all you folks out west-
Don't forget me. I'm trapped out here with a bunch of raving maniacs. They don't even know that there is ice cream in a milkshake, and they think regular coffee has cream in it! Write me, write me, write me!
Lai Dawn

Dear Tristen,
Congratulations on getting the part in the school play as "the girl who can't say no"
the LDU

Yo Jeff
Con-Con was great. I can't wait for Star.
Hank
P.S. Stephen from Calif. - You're a milkface

DOKTOR WISE IS MOVING
Yes, times change. Friends move, and then sell out. That's exactly what I'm doing. If for some reason you wish to contact me, my new address is:
Doktor Christian Wise
1624 So. Fourth St.
Philadelphia, PA 19148
(215-271-5929)
Make cheques payable to CGW Enterprises

GUEST WEEKENDS

A new idea from Y.U.C.K.I. local in Media, PA

Choose a weekend and ask each member of your local to invite a guest to spend that Friday night at their house. Think of someone that you wouldn't ordinarily invite to your local or a conference. On Saturday all of the guests and hosts meet at your church (or meeting place) to have lunch, activities, games, a workshop, **whatever**. Have dinner (potluck?) and a coffee house or worship. Spend the night together as a group. On Sunday morning cook breakfast (bagels, cream cheese and O.J. are a tradition) have a closing circle and say goodbye. You can charge a few dollars and make a profit if you like, but the real purpose is to bring new people around in a gentle way. Friday night/Saturday morning is good for one on one with your friend. Let them get used to the idea of meeting with the rest of the group. Your guest will not be the only

new person at the overnight. Then see what happens when you introduce your guest to a bunch of people you like and care for. You may get a new member or a bunch. Make sure to do things like name games so that everyone knows everyone else.

Advantages

Easy to arrange
Doesn't conflict with Friday night singles groups
Can be a fundraiser
Good practice for running a conference
Creates new local members and/or keeps you in touch with far away conference friends
Strengthens bonds between local members
You can do these four times a year or more

With love
Sue Hindorff
Antioch, OH



Closing at Continental Conference, 1984

My little Lion: Starwishing still ... why do i write about you - much love, you know -

July: My boysenberry yogurt-
do I know you - I'm here.
I love you - Tristan

Room 104
Ding, ding. ...
See you all in Winnipeg '84; London '85!
In spirit if not body. Remember our own Flypaper - it takes any number of personals.
(Edmonton - August's issue
Beacon - November's issue
Hamilton - February's Issue
Calgary - April's issue.)

signed

A Little warm Fuzzie
P.S. Malae - keep 'em active and in line. If you're ever in Calgary say Hi to ... or in Winnipeg to ...

Scott
Call me when you're 65 and I'll dig out my black boots and sharpen my nails.
-Cheers to the wild life after one marriage. Does it **have** to be the same girl?

Warm Fuzzies
The Small Black Cat

Hi folks, I'm Alphonso your UUA computron - I've gone Punk now and changed my name to TRASH. Please stop calling me. Alphonso....

Do you have a pen in search of a pal? An envelope and stamp- with no place to go? Then consider me:
Phill Hall
3215 Arlington Ave.
Bronx, NY 10463
You may find a new, potential friend in the exotic and uncharted wilderness that is the Bronx.

To whom it may concern:
As of Sept. 1 - June 1 I will be
Cass Kahn, c/o First Men's Dorm, International Christian University, 10-2, Osawa 3-chome, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181 JAPAN

Mingling Sue--Yo!! Are you still alive? Write to me: OCMR Box 2411, Oberlin, OH 44074. OK?--Mingling M.P.S. Told you I'd write you a personal someday!

Attention Ohio-Meadville District Post-High Youth
Hi! I'm attempting to put together a post-high mailing list for all you folks in the O-MD. If that includes you, write me, Marin Ritter, OCMR Box 2411, Oberlin, OH 44074. And if you have any ideas for activities, a newsletter, whatever, send them along too!!!

ALLAN: (see, I can spell) It was/is/will be way cool - especially when I finally come out West - s'like, keep in touch and try not to be too much of a vandal. I gave it to you on the tower, and I'll gladly give it again: All my L...4 ever, Coleen (just a little cherry tomato) .

Application for the Youth Staff position commencing September 1, 1985 and ending August 31, 1986.

Qualifications:
Must be between the ages of 12 and 22 at the time work begins. Must have administrative office skills, freedom to live in the Boston area and to travel, and demonstrated leadership and communications skills.

in meetings of and implementing the recommendations of the YRUU Steering Committee and Youth Council, and managing the Continental YRUU office.

Stipend:
8000.00 dollars per year, room and board to be paid therefrom. Assistance will be provided in finding living quarters.

Applicants for the Youth Staff Internship position are invited to submit their applications printed or typed on 8 1/2" by 11" pages. Applications should be sent to the Youth Programs Office of the Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, by March 15, 1985.

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 youth organizations as outreach; planning and administering conferences and other youth gatherings; participating

CONTINENTALITIES

YOUTH COUNCIL '84

YRUU is now two years old. Many of our initial problems are gone or at least reduced; now, we can concentrate on growth, on strength and on looking ahead.

The second Youth Council of YRUU met August 14-18 at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta Georgia. The Council consists of representatives from each of the 23 UUA districts; 8 at-large delegates (one from each are specific - junior, senior and post-high - plus 7 adults); the youth staff from 25 Beacon Street; Eric Kaminetzky, Mara Schoeny, Laila Ibrahim and Rev. Wayne Arnason; and the old Steering Committee. (Steering Committee elections are held each year at the Council meeting.) Moderators were Mara Schoeny and Jenny Brooks.

Each district representative gave a 10-minute report on YRUU activity in their district, including such information as average attendance at conferences, structure of the district Youth-Adult Committee (YAC), funding, average age of YRUU members, etc. Time was allowed for questions, and that evening there was a "district swap shop" - an informal opportunity to share both problems and solutions. The reports took all morning and most of an afternoon.

Wednesday afternoon we subdivided into six commissions:

Budget - responsible for setting priorities for the 1986-87 YRUU budget and for presenting the proposed 1985-86 budget for discussion and approval.

Social Action - is responsible for presenting recommendations about social action YRUU should be taking, and resolutions stating the YRUU position on such topics as testing the cruise missile, availability of contraceptives, etc.

Denominational Concerns - is responsible for presenting bylaw amendments, and resolutions and recommendations concerning both YRUU itself and its relations with the denomination at large.

Age Specifics - is responsible for working on methods whereby the greatest possible spectrum of youth aged 12-22 can be included in YRUU.

Networking and Communications - is responsible for the presentation of recommendations about **SYNAPSE**, the YRUU newspaper, and about improving and maintaining communications networks between districts, between Canada and the U.S., and between Beacon Street and districts.

Outreach and Extension - is responsible for recommendations about getting new YRUU groups started, attracting youth to YRUU, campus ministry, etc.

These commissions deliberated from Wednesday evening to Thursday afternoon, then presented their recommendations to the Council for voting and/or discussion.

Next came the Steering Committee elections. The Steering Committee is an eleven member body who takes the initiatives passed by Council and decides how to implement them. In short, Council decides what direction YRUU will take in the coming year and the Steering Committee decides how to get there. It is also responsible for choosing the at-large delegates to Youth Council, planning the Youth Council meeting and the YRUU Continental Conference (ConCon), and choosing youth staff. At least one of the five elected youth members is from each of the three age specifics to ensure adequate representation. There is also one elected adult. Of the six people elected this year, three are Canadians, which is fantastic.

The 1984-85 Steering Committee is:

Liz Harris - Central Midwest - post high

July Siebecker - Metro New York - post high

Scott Keeler - Western Canada - post high

Johanne Babb - St. Lawrence - senior high

Denise Thomson - PNWD - junior high

Judi Spendlow - Mountain Desert - adult

Ben Ford - liaison to Religious Education Advisory Committee

Don King - liaison to UUA Board

Eric Kaminetzky and Laila Ibrahim - UUA youth staff

the UUA Consultant on Youth Programs (vacant position)

The Committee meets four times a year, three times in Boston (October, January and May), and in August at the council meeting.

We closed with an extremely moving and powerful worship service in honour of Rev. Wayne Arnason, retiring Youth Consultant. Wayne has been the guiding spirit behind the formation of YRUU. He is universally loved and will be intensely missed.

Denise Thomson
Burnaby, British Columbia

INTERIM YOUTH CONSULTANT NAMED

Hi! Let me briefly introduce myself: I am Ellen Brandenburg and will be serving as your interim Youth Consultant for the next ten months or until a permanent Youth Consultant is named. I'm from Lexington, Massachusetts where I was the Director of Religious Education at First Parish Church for about six years. I spent many years as an LRY advisor and junior high youth group leader. Last year I was Interim Minister at the UU Church in Marlbehead, MA. I've especially enjoyed leading "About Your Sexuality" groups and teacher training workshops in churches and for the districts. Now that I am here at the UUA I am looking forward to helping YRUU continue to develop into a strong and effective organization. So far I have met with the YRUU Steering Committee and have worked in the Youth Office for three whole days. It's been great! Now I'm anxious to meet and hear from you!



Hi Y'All,

This is your introduction to the new Youth Staff—me! My name is Laila Ibrahim and I recently moved to Boston to work for YRUU on a full-time basis. Originally I'm from Whittier, CA which is outside of Los Angeles. For the past year I have been living in Oakland, CA studying Psychology at Mills College.

So far things in the office have been great despite all of the work I'm swamped with. Eric and I haven't killed each other yet and it looks like we'll make it until January. Fairly soon we will know who the new Youth Consultant will be and we'll have a full staff again. The UUA is a wonderful place to work and everyone here has reached out to welcome me here.

I'm very excited about the next year. I'm looking forward to getting to know Boston, the UUA, and a bunch of you better. I love to hear from people when I'm in the office (when I'm at home, too, for that matter), so get in touch with me—phone calls and letters are



what I live for. I feel like I'm here to serve all of you—you are YRUU—so let me know what I can do for you.

Laila Ibrahim
Boston, MA

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Holly Sakarison
P.O. Box 1332
Providence, RI 02901
(401) 521-3699

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(617) 278-5074

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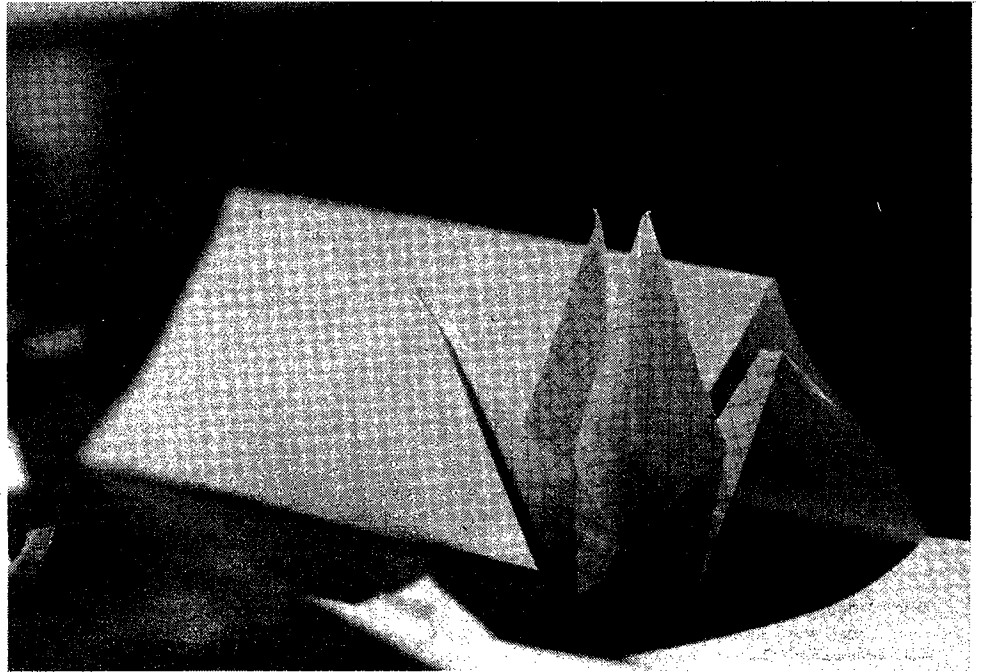
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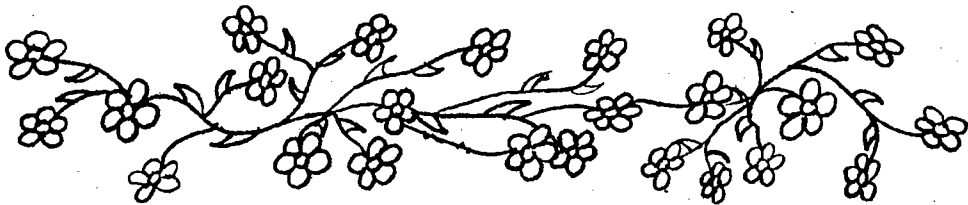
Denise Thomson
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(604) 437-4471

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Manchester, NH 03104
(603) 668-1760

***REAC**
Ben Ford
5700 N. Tamiami Terrace
Sarasota, FL 33580
(813) 355-7671 ext. 249

*Steering Committee Member





Dear Thomb:

I was thinking about you the other day. I think about you most days. Did I ever tell you that, of my six foster sisters, I love you most. My very first memory is of the day you arrived. I guess I must have been four and a half—no, almost five years old. You came in September and they put you right into second grade although you only spoke Vietnamese.

It is difficult for me to distinguish between what I remember and what I've been told. Mom and Dad left Josh and me with a babysitter while they went to the hospital. This I remember because Jonathan, the babysitter, gave us little, chalky, chocolate tablets which, he told us, would keep us from missing our parents. It worked for me.

He let us stay up until 10:30 p.m. when you came. Dad was carrying you, remember? You were seven, but smaller than I. You had straight, short, black hair, huge sparkling brown eyes, and a wide, wide smile with crooked teeth. You were skinny, and your right ankle was bandaged and set in a brace. Napalm burns covered you from your neck down.

You did not look horrific to me. I realize now how terrible your condition was. Oh, I saw the wounds, but I did not equate them with suffering because you were smiling, even glowing; and, you babbled something to me in Vietnamese. You were my new big sister and would share my room. What was it you said? Do you remember?

Do you remember Hesby Street Elementary School? I was in Mrs. Kushman's kindergarten class and you were in crazy Ms. Klein's class. I cannot recall much from that year except that Mrs. Kushman was grandma-like, chubby, and red-nosed. From pictures, I know that we had matching clothes. Mom says we used to play dress-up and other pretend games. You learned English.

There was one day—I guess it was in April—that we received permission to walk home from school. What was the name of that blonde girl with whom you used to play on the days I had tap dancing lessons? Well, I guess it doesn't matter; it's just that as we walked up Haskell Avenue I remember looking at her huge, white, two-story house with pillars and shutter-covered windows. After going up Haskell, we turned onto Ventura Boulevard, and finally cut through the bowling alley parking lot onto our street. In the parking lot, we saw Dean Singer, that boy in my class. He threw a rock at me, then laughed and dared me to cry. You said he just did it because he had a crush on me and that I should just ignore him. I punched him in the face. Remember?

"That's not smart," you told me after we had run the rest of the way home and bolted the front door of the house. "Now he not talk to you no more." You were right, Thomb, he never did. I did have a crush on him before he threw the rock at me, but I would never have admitted it at the time. I was sorry that we would never get to be friends because I had socked him in the face.

When I got into second grade I had crazy Ms. Klein for a teacher, just like you had. That was the year you left. I remember too clearly your leaving. November 11, 1972, two days after your birthday, we took a trip to San Francisco to see you off at the boat. We went to the marine life exhibit and rode on the merry-go-round. We rode the trolley cars down and up the steep hills. You insisted on hanging onto the poles like the teenage boys did. You were 10 years old. Your burns had become scars; your two front teeth had fallen out and new ones had grown in straight; your bandages were gone, but the brace on your right leg remained. You were laughing all the time, and we were wearing our matching navy blue dresses. We didn't realize you were going away forever; you and I never thought that we might never see each other again.

I waved at you as the social worker took you onto the ship. Maybe you were crying. I can't recall the images, only a feeling: my mind confused by conflicting theories about where you were being taken, why you were going, and when you'd be back. Back home, Mom moved your half of the trundle bed back under mine.

Letters came, sometimes from you, but more often from a Vietnamese social worker. We had to have the letters translated. "Thomb is fine," they said.

"I not go to school here," you wrote. "Why you send me back here? Here have bombs. Go boom. When I coming home?"

Thomb, I don't know when you're coming home. Legally, Da Nang was your home. Although your parents were killed; you had a 14-year-old sister.

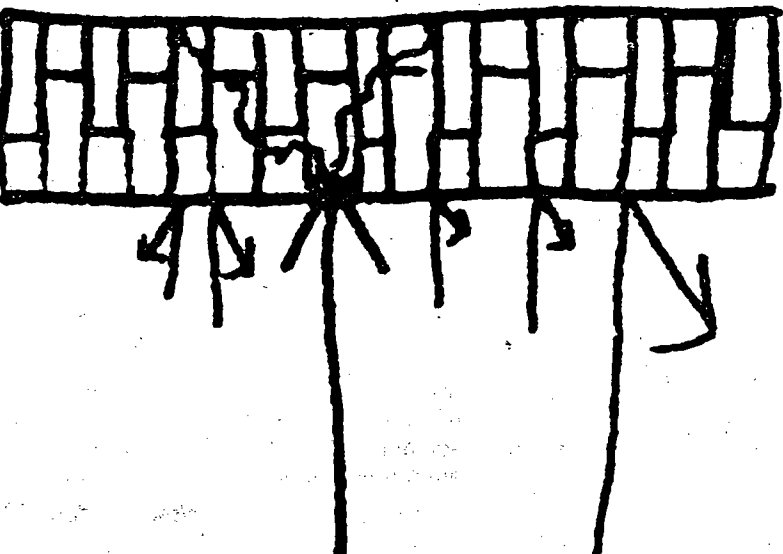
The social worker sent us a picture of you when you were 12-years-old. You were wearing the same dress you wore on the day you left. Your hair had grown down to your shoulders. You were in a dirty village. And, you were smiling.

In 1974, the letters stopped coming. Saigon and Da Nang fell to the communists. I guess I should really hate those communists, shouldn't I? Actually, I have more animosity towards my government for making you go back.

Well, I just thought I'd write to tell you. . . but I won't send this letter. I have nowhere to send it. "To Nuyen Thi Thomb: somewhere in Vietnam?" No. Mom has tried to find you. She has written to everyone who might know where you are. If she could, I know she'd go to Vietnam and search by herself. She wanted to adopt you, but they wouldn't let her. You must be 20 years old now. No matter how much my nightmares torture me, I refuse to believe that you are dead.

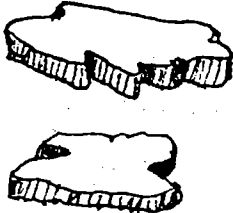
Please take care, big sister, in your dusty village and swampy rice paddies. I understand there are no bombs there right now. I hope that means you are safe.

Love,
Cappie



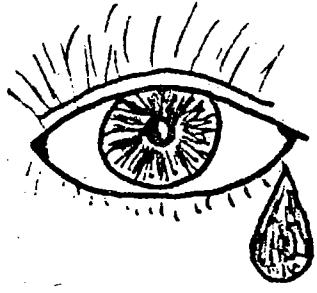
Dear Dad,
I've never asked for much from you.
What I wanted required something that you didn't seem to have.
Your big promises didn't impress me,
they only made my insides hurt worse.
When I was younger, I wanted you
to be close for me.
I dreamed of talking to you.
With my young, optimistic mind, I
offered to find you a job so you could return.
You laughed, thanking me, and knowing
that you wouldn't be coming back.
I wrote you endless letters—three or
four to each one of yours.
I wished that someday you would be
back so I could share my life with you and
so that you could share yours with me.
Now I've outgrown my dream, I no
longer care.
I've come to realize that you will never be
back—even if only to visit in the place where
I've grown so much.
I hardly know you,
And you, you don't know or understand me.
I've tried to understand you, I've tried to
accept you—sometimes I hate what I see.
When I last talked with you on the phone,
You didn't even acknowledge my presence.
I'm tired of trying—now I'm filling
your space with my friend's love.
I don't expect you to understand what I'm
saying.
Most likely you'll take what I've said
offensively and write back in a defensive
manner with a statement designed to dominate
me and make me see how wrong I am.
You know, you've hurt me.
I know I've hurt you, too.
Will we ever come to know and understand
each other? Can we show our love without
wearing a mask which hides our fears?
I love you because you are my father,
but I don't know the person you are.

Your daughter



My mom
Sleeps in a double bed
and one side of the bed sags down
—the side she sleeps on.
She has a small closet
That holds her clothes
And on her dresser
Are pictures of us Three Daughters.
There are two nightstands by the bed
The one on her side holds her clock,
Her journal. The lamp.
The one on the other side holds
Travel brochures
And books that she hasn't read yet.
My mom reads in bed a lot.
And under the bed
is a box
covered with dust
lying
All wrinkled
is a dress.
A white dress
That she wore once
And will never wear again.

—July



My Ultimate Nightmare: Coming Out

Being gay today is not easy, especially when it comes to talking to your parents and family about your sexual preference. For me, being gay has always been natural. I was never told that to be gay was wrong, or immoral. As far as coming out to your parents, each person has to decide when it is best for them to tell their parents, or if they should tell them at all. I never actually told my parents I was gay; they just figured it out by themselves. I never had any problems with my parents accepting me for what I am but my sister refuses to accept the FACT that I am gay.

I "came out" when I was a sophomore in high school. I know that sounds hard for some of you to do but for me, I was tired of playing the charade. Most people didn't believe me at first. It took until my senior year before people began to take me seriously. There were people I had been in school with for 11

years who were now scared of me because I "preferred" men to women. I explained it to them by saying, "You now know something about me that you didn't know before;" that's the only difference.

Many of you know me as "openly gay." I am. I'm proud to be gay and I should be. My parents accept me for who I am; I'm still the little boy they raised into a young man. They love me as much as my brother and sister.

When Laila asked me to write an article for SYNAPSE, I wasn't sure what to write so I wrote about my experiences. For those of you who are "still in the closet" my best suggestion is, when you feel comfortable about telling your family, that is the best time to do it, and only then. Being gay is hard but it's getting easier.

Kevin Paul Backman
Wilmington, MA

FAMILIES



YRUU in the Family and Vice versa: the Gibby Experience

As most of you know, YRUU can help you get in touch with yourself and help you relate to other people better. You become very close to a great deal of people who are very different from yourself. If you think of it, many of your closest friends are probably in your youth group. YRUU has done all of these things for me, but, in addition, it has also made me closer to my family. In fact, it has made my family closer to... my family.

Because of YRUU, my parents, brothers, sisters, and I can relate to each other in a more personal way. I have seen several positive changes in my family since I joined my local youth group, in Lincroft, N.J., four years ago.

In September, 1980, my family received a letter from our church informing us that a high school age youth group, called Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) was re-forming there. My younger brother, Paul, was the first to go to these LRY meetings. I soon began to see his enthusiasm grow and a new warmth about him. I became interested, but not encouraged to join. I already had my love, acting, and now Paul had one—LRY. Paul wasn't too keen on having his older, stage-ham, loud-mouthed brother interfering with his life, but he could see that I was curious about it.

In November of that year, I finally dragged myself out of bed early one Sunday morning to go to an LRY meeting. It was the first time I went to the Lincroft Unitarian Church in about three years. I'm glad I went, for I fell in love as well. I pretty much plunged right into LRY, and soon my brother and I, having little in common, were like close friends. We could now have meaningful conversations and enjoy each other's company. (He was pleased at the fact that his new love was now conferences—which I didn't go to because of my theatrical involvements—so he still had an edge over me.) Best of all, we could hug each other—something we never did before our youth group days.

By this time, our involvement with the youth group inspired our parents to go to church again. Sometimes we would go to services together, which would bring us closer. Now, I can hug my folks, too. It's great.

I ventured off to college in the fall of 1982, the year my even-younger brother, Mark, joined LRY. Mark and I never talked much, even when we shared a room. We just didn't have much to say to each other. My impression of him was that he was a pretty shy guy, but when I came home for my Thanksgiving

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The YRUU Family: Trite, but True

It seems very appropriate to be writing my last article for Synapse on my last day in our Boston office, and to be writing it on "Families."

For 19 years I have been involved in exploring the meaning of "family" within the context of the youth movement of Unitarian Universalism. Aside from the family of my origin, there has been no other group of people or institution in my life that has more to do with developing and deepening my understanding of "family" than LRY/YRUU. My deepest friendships, my most significant relationships, my longest term commitments have been discovered and shaped within various roles that have opened up to me within LRY and YRUU.

Yet, I feel that I have sometimes been too glib in throwing the word "family" around, and in using it to describe the community that we try to form when we are together. Family is not a given within YRUU. It is a goal. It is not always achieved. It is certainly not achieved automatically after the first worship service of a conference. When it is achieved, it is something that is fragile and can be lost. Being part of family is not easy.

Like most of us, before I was in my teens, I took my family for granted. I was born into a particular network of people at a particular time with a particular ethnic and geographic heritage. I had a wonderful family upbringing, and as I began exploring how to leave that family of origin, it was perhaps natural for me to look for a new "family" context within the Unitarian Universalist youth movement where I was meeting new friends and making exciting self discoveries.

When I left LRY on the local level and became involved on the continental level, "family" was a metaphor that I could use to describe the important friendships that I had made around the continent. It seemed a powerful way to talk about a growing sense of broader commitments to people in very diverse places and from diverse backgrounds. Somehow we had been thrown together within LRY, and there seemed to be a bonding that was holding us together through the chaotic times of the late sixties and seventies into young adulthood.

Occasionally, there came along a new word or metaphor which seemed to describe our situation better than "family." In Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Cats Cradle* he invents the concept of "karass," which he describes as a group of people who find themselves inescapably tied to each other traveling through life together without any apparent logical reason beyond the connection itself evident to explain why.

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Church Family?

I woke up early, in anticipation. All summer, I'd stayed home Sunday mornings, working in the yard, or perhaps I'd gone to the mountains. It was fall now, a time of new beginnings (school year rhythms take a long time to fade), and it was "Homecoming Sunday" at our Boulder, Colorado UU Church. My internal guide was urging me to get on the road.

My own daughters, 18 and 14, elected to stay home. Their surface reasons were legitimate enough: I was staying in Boulder for most of the afternoon; Debby needed to be at her job in Denver by 1:00; and Kerensa had plans for a highly anticipated game of volleyball, also in Denver that afternoon. I felt a pang of loss; had they no other commitments, I doubted whether they would have joined me for church anyhow.

The service itself gave me a sense of in-gathering. We had a water-blessing ceremony, during which we mingled waters that folks had brought from their various summer travels—from high peaks in Switzerland, from the beginnings and the mouth of the great Mississippi, from sacred springs in Mexico and places south—creating holy water to use in baby-blessings and other rituals throughout the coming year.

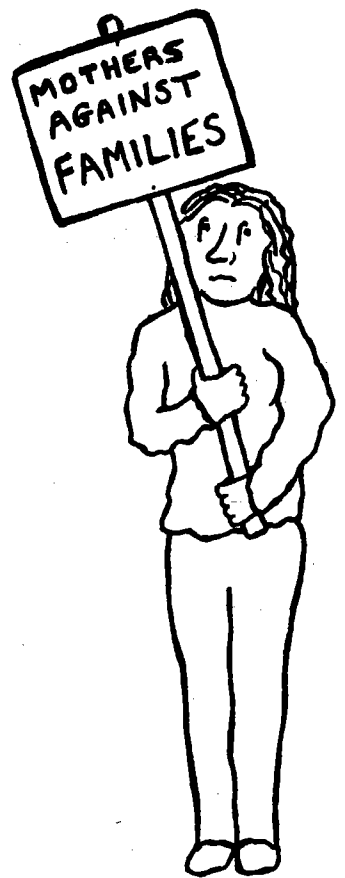
I looked about the congregation at our church family, and felt at peace—partially.

Here were our "senior citizens," many of whom have been active members of our church family for years, and sitting nearby, mothers nursing small babies, while fathers gazed on with pride. Adults, singly and in couples, and families with younger children, were also present. Our morning worship leader read off various ways in which members participate in the creation of our church community, and invited us to stand as she listed our roles. By the end, just about everyone was standing; for me, our interdependence upon each other was affirmed.

BUT—and it's a big one for me—I still felt a loss. As I looked around at the folks on the benches, I saw only one teenager, one sole member of the Boulder LRY, our local YRUU high school group. There were a few junior high schoolers in the room, and one or two young people who looked as if they might be attending the University of Colorado. On the "hole" (pun intended), we had a gap. As on many previous Sundays, and probably many Sundays to come, people that I would like to have as part of our church family were not there.

In earlier years of our nation, when we spoke of families, we thought of large, intergenerational units, com-

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Kate Titus

The Politics of Family


The political "conservatives" have made it clear that they are strongly pro-family. It seems time, then, that we who consider ourselves "liberal" actively pursue an anti-family crusade. Where are our demonstrators with "nuke the family" signs, our protest songs against the Brady Brunch, the Cleavers and the Waltons? When was the last time you attended an anti-family rally?

Perhaps the lack of protest is not due to apathy but rather confusion about the whole issue. After all, many of us have pleasant memories of some family group or another. In fact, most of us probably believe that deep down we are pro-family ourselves. This, however, is incorrect.

It is incorrect, at any rate, in the traditional sense of the term, for here family means patriarchy—a system where the one (father) rules the many. Like the military, patriarchy is a hierarchical institution depending on the existence of authority and subservience. It is threatened by anything which weakens the ruler or empowers the followers (i.e., male liberation, feminism, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, day care). In an August speech, President Reagan voiced his regret over the decline of big families "where generations lived together and lines of authority were clear."

Finding it difficult to support the patriarchy, one might give up on families altogether. However, there is an alternative—many alternatives, in fact. Groups consisting of single parents, several parents, married, unmarried, homosexuals, adopted children, no children, groups who cooperate, relate with love and respect, distribute housework equally, live separately, these are some of the possibilities for our families. We youth, who have not yet chosen our future lifestyles, have the ability to redefine the word family to encompass an unlimited potential. We need not necessarily choose anti-family, although this too is an option. We can work both socially and politically for the choice of alternative families.

Kate Titus
New London, CT




MORAL MAJORITY

499 S. Capitol St., Suite 101
Washington, D.C. 20003

B0501519

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists

Your 1983 Moral Majority Membership Card



PRESIDENT

We Are All One Family

International Association for Religious Freedom

The one thing that excited me the most about going to the IARF Congress in Japan this summer was the opportunity it could offer for dialogue on religion and spirituality. It's not hard to find books on "foreign" religions and spiritual practices. But I looked forward to a real-life encounter, a living person to talk to and even argue with. Opportunities to come together under a religious theme with persons representing so many different traditions are certainly not common, especially for youth.

The pre-Congress Youth Encounter, July 23-26, was an exciting and frustrating venture, with the purpose of fostering such dialogue and bringing young people together to get to know each other in a variety of ways. There were about 30 overseas participants from 6 countries and 40 Japanese participants representing 6 religious organizations of Japan. The Japanese had obviously spent many hours in preparation, and during the encounter itself "multi-national" groups were constantly meeting to discuss, to plan, or to prepare presentations.

By the end of the encounter I came to a conclusion which surprised me, but which seemed borne out by the events of the main Congress. When working with large cultural and language barriers, I concluded, ACTION can be much easier than DIALOGUE. I had been afraid that the Congress would be all talk and little action. During the Congress we had the services of professional translators and a large staff of "language specialists" who spoke English with varying degrees of fluency. Yet most of the talking, especially in the "working group" sessions, consisted of statements made with ears closed and with very little response and dialogue. Yet, the conference itself was a monumental achievement of multinational organization.

At the more personal youth encounter, language was a big problem, but our ears were open and our minds as well. Communication of opinions and feelings about peace and God was a mental (and even physical) struggle at times. I deeply appreciate the efforts of some of the Japanese, who showed in their laborious translations and their strained faces, how important it was to them to be understood, and to understand. Although we stumbled over the precise meanings of words and sentences, we still succeeded in sharing our hearts, not our leaders' or our organizations' official versions of reality.

Americans almost take it for granted that people from other countries will learn English and that they need not seriously learn any "foreign" language. But the English language carries with it certain cultural meanings, and excludes others. This conference reminded me that to really understand another culture, or religion, one must study the language too. When Americans rely on the Japanese to learn English so we can carry on a dialogue in our own language, we place a heavy burden on them, while at the same time closing off the opportunity for ourselves to truly understand Japan and its culture.

My own pathetic attempts to speak the language were greatly appreciated, I think, by the Japanese who heard them; these attempts communicated willingness on my part to build the bridge of communication from my side, rather than waiting for them to come to me. In a larger way, our presence in Japan for the IARF Congress carried the same message. Perhaps the action spoke louder than words.

Marianna Tubman Berkeley, CA

On the Threshold of a Dream

In 400 acres of woods in southern Oregon a small group of college age/post-high school Unitarian-Universalist's (the daily average of conferees was 13) met for a weeklong conference which touched its participants very deeply. The site was the home of Spirit and Sunow Bradley, a couple who adopt and care for emotionally disturbed children, and who have a distinctive way of seeing the world. They shared their world view with us during two workshops they gave; the first was on confronting anger and fighting productively, the second was on understanding each of our unique roles in the world.

Each evening there was a worship service including a pagan ritual, a non-verbal noise making event, and a worship in which we reclaimed the right to love our bodies. Other events included tarot reading, making a scrapbook on living-on-your-own ideas, a revel complete with a maypole and many discussions about the problems and joys of being out of high school and facing a new part of the "real world."

In addition for being a great experience for those involved, the conference which was sponsored by the Pacific Northwest, Pacific Central and Pacific Southwest Districts helped to create the beginning of a link between these districts that will



Pigs from Starr Island

hopefully grow strong. Another unique feature of this conference was that it involved two denominations. The Bradley's have close ties with Quaker folks and as a result several Quakers joined us during our various activities and helped to form another tie that contributed to the success of the conference.

For more information on College Age/Post-High activities on the west coast, contact the following people: Nathan Wilson, 5506 SE Holgate, Portland, OR 97206, 503-771-2242; Bob King, 3870 Rhoda Ave., Oakland, CA 94602, 415-482-1369; Kelly Frechette, 334 Valerio, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, 805-687-0438.

Various Animals at the Zoological Gardens Portland, OR



Peace Rally at General Assembly

SUMMER CO



California truck at Con-Con

Le Menu		
	Breakfast	Lunch
Monday		
Tuesday	English Muffins, Fried Ham, Fruit	Tuna Salad Sandwiches
Wednesday	Blueberry Pancakes	Egg Salad Sandwiches
Thursday	Oatmeal, Raisin & Cinnamon Bread, Yogurt, granola, Fruit	Grilled Cheese Sandwiches
Friday	Omelettes, Fruit	Composed Leftovers
Saturday	French Toast, Fruit	Pita Bread Subs, Veggies, Soup & Sala Banana Fruit-Smoothies
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT. This is not the end. For more details		

General Assembly

General Assembly (GA) is the annual business meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) . GA 84 was held in Columbus, OH from June 24-30.

Youth Caucus at GA numbered almost eighty people aged 12-22 from all over the continent. People had diverse attitudes and a variety of reasons for being there. Some of us were there as our local society's official delegates, while some came because our parents "dragged" us. Some came to see old friends and all of us made new ones.

But what did we do there? Well, in a nutshell, we didn't sleep very much. We didn't sleep during the workshops and programs that filled our afternoons. We didn't sleep through the Youth Caucus meetings each evening, where feelings were shared and group concerns voiced; where Bill Schulz and Sandy Caron (the two candidates for UUA president) addressed us on issues pertinent to youth; and where we joined together to create a moving worship service by examining peace and our many perceptions of it. No, there was no sleeping there.

And who had time to sleep after midnight amidst that all night games of "Darling if you love me," mass massage sessions, tree climbing

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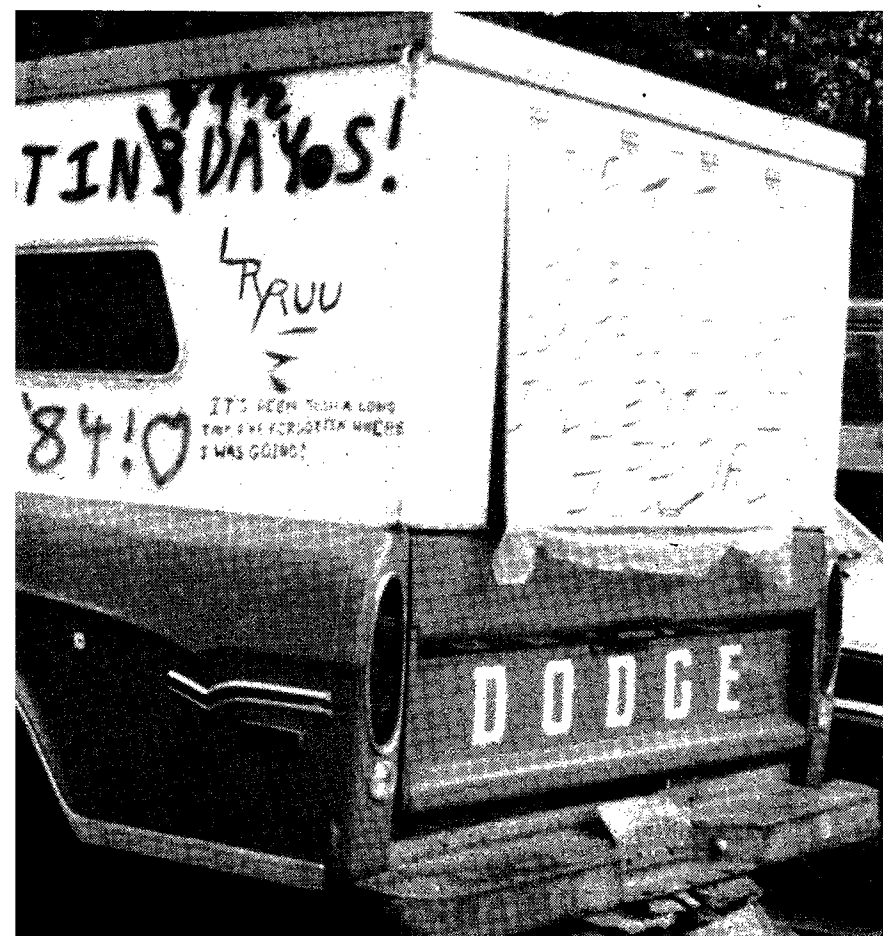


Continental Conference

MICON '84

ye mountains of Colorado July 23-29 The theme of this year's Mid-continental conference was "Journeys and Transitions." It included workshops on culture shock, marriage, freedom and responsibility, political activism, and age crises. In typical Mountain Desert District fashion, the conference also contained such activities as the MICON olympics (not your normal competitions, boy was

INFERENCES



Ete Fini

End the menu will be printed in full as the review of the conference.

Dinner

Stir-fry Veggies
w/Rice
Pizza,
Salad

Quiche Lorraine,
Salad
B.B.Q. Chicken,
Corn on the Cob,
Tofu & Salad
Tuna-
Macaroni &
Cheese, Salad
Lasagne, Salad

Midnight Snack

Banana/Blueberry
Mush Shortbread

Apple Pie

Brownies

Apple Crisp

Homemade Icecream &
Cake

f Summer's End see the article to the right.



that jello snorfling fun!), the tie-dyed toga party, political story telling, and a very popular musical group, the Daves, live in concert. There were thirty-four people in attendance with roughly a third from out of state. It was from these people that the nine member 1985 MICON planning committee was elected. For information about MICON '85 write to Alan Norton 2443 12th Ave., Greeley, CO 80631.

Alan Norton
Greeley, CO

Con-Con '84

at The Mountain August 19-24

ConCon was pretty amazing this year. About one hundred and eighty people showed up at The Mountain in Highlands, N.C.

The beauty of the area is the only thing which could have rivaled the beauty of the community. We had youth and adults from twenty eight states and Canada. That is one of the highlights of the Continental Conference experience. So many differing opinions and visions to bring together make for a spectacular if challenging event.

Week long workshops included: Sexuality, Spirituality, Boomerangs, Youthwork Training, Social Action, Inspiration, Writing and more. Since ConCon is organized by the YRUU Steering Committee we can choose people from all over the continent. The staff numbered twenty-four and there were times when it was difficult to get all of the work done to take care of such a large conference, but everybody muled through and I think that everyone had a good time.

Afternoons were dominated by outdoor activities offered by the Mountain staff. We went swimming, hiking, horseback riding, and there was a trip to a few places where you could go rock sliding over waterfalls.

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Momentum '84

There were the mountains! We were finally in the Banff National Park, and in half an hour we would be at the Banff International Hostel. MOMENTUM '84, The Third Annual Canadian Unitarian Youth Conference would soon begin. My excitement for this weekend was exploding within me. We, Calgary and Edmonton YRUUs, had worked so hard over the last year for this moment. So many letters, phone calls, visits, and so much tension, and laughter had gone into creating this May 1984 weekend that was about to unfold.

So many unknowns still ahead of me: Would everything run smoothly? Would people like each other? Could we, would we, abide by the Hostel rules? Would it intimidate anyone that we would share space with others? Would I ever learn to relax and enjoy myself?

Now I look back. MOMENTUM '84 has passed. There are warm memories, humorous photographs, and friendly autographs to forever remind us of the time twenty-nine youths and two adult advisors became a community.

The scheduled events generally went as planned. Some last minute rearranging made the conference, I think, even better. A worship was cancelled so that CUC guest speaker Roy Bonisteel, host of CBC's Man Alive program, could share some time with us. We spent an hour and a half



Closing at Con-Con

Sunday morning discussing media as a career, evolution of Religious Programming, quality of television shows, ratings, and "Man Alive." Throughout, Mr. Bonisteel stressed the point that we, viewers, do have an impact on programming. "Let the producers know what you think of their shows. Tell them, write them."

Our discussion concluded with the moral question "What is our responsibility as Canadians."

Mr. Bonisteel summed up: "We are very fortunate. We must understand and realize this so that we can act on unfavourable conditions."

There were many highlights during those three days that passed so quickly. There were many significant moments.

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Worship at Con-Con

Y.R.U.U. Week on Starr Island

Q: What happens when you put 100 people on to a special island where they are thrown into a psychodrama. A psychodrama of totalitarianism where the staff become inhuman, and the conferees become subject to a leader that they can't see?

A: You get people to think, and to work together.

All this happened this past year on Star Island. It couldn't have worked better, through co-operation and working together the conferees were able to overcome the totalitarian leaders. Then they brought the leaders into the new structure which had been set up. And it occurred in the first two days.

The rest of the week was spent talking politics, hanging out, going to workshops, worshipping and, of course, enjoying our beautiful Star Island.

The '85 Star Island Week will be focusing on how to achieve your goals and how to deal with those achievements. It will be run by the all great, all knowing, all powerful me. For more information on next year's conference, contact me.

Hank Pierce
20 Spring Park Ave.
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
617-522-2603

Summer's End Conference

Aug. 27 - Sept 1

Sponsored by the North East Regional Organization

A tasty conference I must admit. There was nothing but rambunctious warm fuzzies circulating at this conference.

It is the end of the summer, that long vacation. Now, you're getting ready to go back to school, college, work, or the humdrum rut of home. So what are ya gonna do? No, no, no. We're not gonna call Ghost Busters, we're gonna have one hell of an end of the summer conference, food and all.

Here is the other sample menu of the conference. Yoga, art, polarity, poetry, Karma-chanics, dancing, music, auctioning, coffee-housing, music, story telling, Quest For Fire Meal (a major mess), frisbee golf, capture the flag, spool racing, canoe racing, and a general consensus that drugs, violence, and Ralph Nader would not even have the chance to ruin our community. It was wonderful. Sigh!!! Can't wait till next summer. For information on Summer's End '85, call or write Richie Dawkins Box 1118 GPO Brooklyn, NY 11202, or Triston Boyer, 15 Little John, Englishtown, NJ 07726.

S.U.U.S.I.

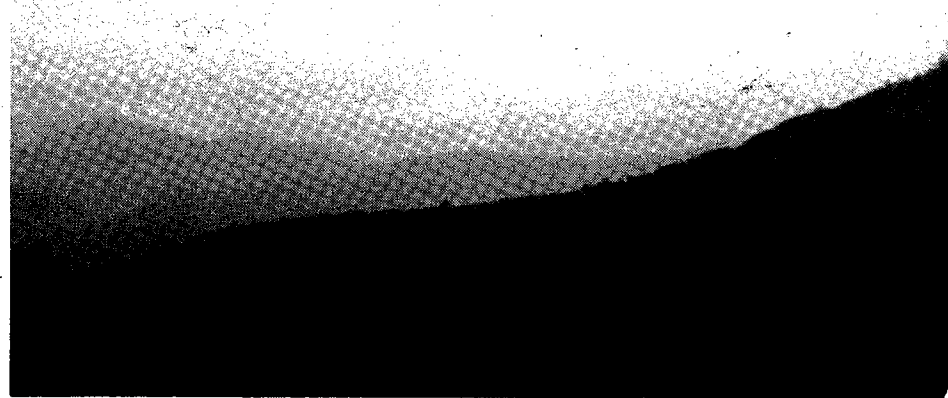
(Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute) July 23-30.

It was another perfect summer week spent at Radford College in Virginia with 1300 UU's and their friends.

The theme of SUUSI '84 was "connections." New people were able to identify with feeling left out or not being able to comprehend such a diverse group, so the theme was used to help connect all of the new people into workshops, day trips, dances, and the conference as a whole.

It would be impossible to sum up SUUSI in anything smaller than a novel. So many chapters occur at once. Leo Tolstoy would be lost in bliss.

Editorials



View from "the Mountain"

July 4, 1984

Dear Citizens of the United States,

Greetings from the Berkshire Mountains of Western Massachusetts, where at this moment sunlight dances on the leaves with such beauty that life sings its preciousness. Simultaneously, deep in the earth, beneath the seas, and high above us, dreadful weapons are poised to extinguish life as we know it. For thousands of years, for so long it is difficult to conceive of alternatives, wars have been fought over territory and natural resources. But the "state of the art" of modern warfare compels us to turn our energies in new directions. We are in a time of great opportunity as well as great danger and I would like to offer some clear and sensible perspectives.

I believe in democracy. Having written letters to the government for many years, I now write instead to the people, for in fact we are the government. It is our people as a whole who have built this great country and who now have the ability and desire to generate the energy, ideas and actions to transform it. If we wait for the politicians to lead us, we will miss the opportunity that grows out of the current world crisis.

One concept central to the American dream is inclusiveness. Can our vision be wide enough to include millionaires and breakdancers, Chicanos and squash players, lesbians and ladies, Native Americans and marines, ghetto blacks and subsistence farmers, rugged individualists and socialists, Asian immigrants and the Daughters of the American Revolution? I know it can, for this is the strength and genius of the United States of America. Attempts to polarize the world into two camps, whether capitalist-communist, or proletariat-bourgeoisie, are the real enemy. The magnificence of the world rests upon its diversity. There are thousands of kinds of animals, millions of kinds of plants, billions of people, each unique, each doing his or her best to manifest the spark of divinity we all contain. When we look at Central America and see friends and foes, supporters of "free enterprise" and "Marxist-Leninists," we do not see reality. The dominant belief system there is Catholic. As a North American Protestant clergyman, I see much to admire in the early inclusiveness of the Catholics. The word catholic itself means universal. When they colonized much of the Americas, the Catholics believed the Indians had souls and included them in their societies. In North America we suffer from the we-they, saved-damned world view, which is at odds with our ability to be the world's melting pot. The polarized world view enabled us to kill most of the Native Americans, who many of our people grew up believing were savages. In fact they had a vast and diverse variety of sophisticated, complex and respectable cultures. Some were warlike and many were peace loving.

What we now call the Third World was callously and arbitrarily divided by the European powers. For a long time the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America suffered under overt colonialism, now they suffer under the current super-power rivalry. The people, not their governments or its officials, have been the losers. We cannot reproduce the American miracle throughout the whole world. There is not enough oil and iron, aluminum and uranium to go around. We, the citizens of this great nation, would be richer if we would learn to do with a little less, if we reduced the injustice that our current economic system perpetuates. There is enough abundance on this earth for everyone to live decent and secure lives. When thirty people die of starvation every minute that \$1,300,000 is spent on weapons, we cannot deny that these statistics are connected.

Everything on this earth is connected. Don't look now, but the current problems of the Third World, food and water, will soon be our problems, too. Everything on our beautiful and fragile planet is part of the same life system. We live in an intricately complex web of life and have been too prone to tear the web, to seek to extract what we did not like or did not understand. I always preferred to think of our earth not as a spaceship but as a life raft. We cannot eliminate the Russians without jeopardizing our own children. We are in clear danger of sinking the entire raft.

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To SYNAPSE, YRUU, and You:

I would like to tell about my experience at Con-Con '84—a conferee's point of view. I am stressing the label "conferee," because at Con-Con I felt like the label was pasted to my forehead. What I am having a difficult time bringing up is... how separate the Con-Con staff was from the rest of the conference.

It seemed as if a few "select" staff members were in control of the whole conference. Although we conferees could enjoy ourselves, we had little or no say as to what went on. For example, staff members ran all of the workshops without the help of conferees. I guess I could have asked to help, but I definitely wasn't encouraged or inspired to. In addition, there weren't any workshops run by workshops or even a Quaker worship, in which *anyone* can say what she or he feels. I felt as if our opinions did not matter to the whole of the conference. A conference is a complete success when everyone can contribute something to it.

During YRUU week at Star Island, we learned, as a conference, that everyone is responsible for what happens there. In a sense, I was "part owner" of the Star Island conference and shared the responsibility of making sure that all went OK. At Con-Con we were told, "the staff owns the rules—we (the staff) are responsible for what goes on here," as if we conferees were predestined to break the rules and the staff were the only ones who could save us.

What bothered me the most was the secret staff activity apart from the rest of the conference. (Is this YRUU I'm talking about?) How is that for confer-

ence unity? First of all—a *secret* from the conferees, then a private staff trip to add to the "staff-trips" some of them were on.

Maybe I sound a bit too harsh for someone who did manage to enjoy himself for the most part, despite the separation of staff and conference, but the last thing our youth group needs is a YRUU-elite.

I thought that I was the only one who felt this way, therefore I stupidly kept quiet about it. I later found out that many other conferees felt left out as well.

I'm sorry if I've hurt anyone by bringing up these facts; especially because you are people whom I love and really worked hard to make Con-Con happen, but facts like these must be brought out in the open so something like this does not happen again.

I have learned from all of this. As a staff member at Summer's End '84, the following week, I felt awkward toward my role. I talked to some conferees about Con-Con and asked them to let me know if I was taking too much control. I was told once. It's tough—I know. As a solution, I gave conferees authority over certain activities, and I made sure that I had fun—as a conferee. I am upset over what happened at Con-Con, but I am thankful for the lesson that I learned.

Here's to Conferee/Staff unity!

Live, Love, and Learn,
Daniel Gibson
Boston, MA



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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.
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Senior High • Jr. High • Post High • Intergenerational • Local • District • Clusters • Continental

Workshops • Conferences • Workshops

YRUU SLIDE SHOW

The YRUU Steering Committee is putting together a slide show about YRUU—who we are, what we do, why we do it.

We need your help in getting slides from all over the continent. Please send us slides, with a description, on anything related to youth work. Send them to: Laila Ibrahim, Slide Show, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. Or call if you have any questions: (617) 742-2100, ext. 246.

Overnights • Youth Sundays • Group Meetings

United Nations Tree Project

Plan conferences, workshops, and worships in 1985! The United Nations proclaimed 1985 to be the International Youth Year. As part of the plan, youth throughout the world are participating in the Tree Project, which was set up by the non-governmental members of the UN. The 1984 YRUU Youth Council decided that the Tree Project gives the UU youth movement an excellent year-long theme, as well as a chance to take part in a global event. So, go plant trees.

Widespread loss of forest land is accelerating. Some studies conclude that the world's forests will be lost by the year 2030 if the current rate of deforestation continues. The Global 2000 Report predicts that "forests in South and Southeast Asia will be reduced by half in 2000" if deforestation is not checked.

Trees are essential to our environmental health. Half the oxygen we breathe is produced by trees. Forests help prevent erosion, flooding and drought, reduce soil depletion, improve growing conditions, and increase survival possibilities for endangered species. The soil loss due to erosion from lack of ground cover amounts to three billion tons a year. The run-off clogs waterways and ruins once fertile farmlands, seriously reducing food production, so planting trees is of world importance.

The purpose of the Tree Project is to encourage and assist every youth in the world to plant and nurture a tree in 1985. The actual number of new trees expected to be planted is 1,000 million. If that goal is to be reached, YRUU will have to do its part. We will join in by planting trees at the same time as other youth groups are planting trees all over the world. These are some of the ideas that will be implemented in 1985:

- planting a green belt along the expanding southern edge of the Sahara Desert;
- reforesting a designated area in the tropics which has been cleared for industrial development, agriculture or firewood;
- planting trees in rural areas as flood and windbreaks to protect farmlands from topsoil loss and crop destruction;
- planting trees in urban areas to create a more attractive environment and recreational space, while reducing traffic noise and air pollution.

The UN expects that by working together we, the youth of the world, will gain personal responsibility, positive self esteem, community pride, and global awareness.

Here are some ideas for how to get involved.

1. Plan a Youth Sunday at your church. Have the youth group do the service and make the central theme be IYY: Tree Project. As part of the ceremony, plant a tree.
 2. Find out from your local park service where trees need planting, or where you would be allowed to plant trees, in or near your town. Then make the planting of those trees a project for your youth group.
 3. At a conference, make trees the symbol and theme. As part of it, plant some trees.
 4. What else? If you and your youth group come up with other ideas, send them to SYNAPSE so we can print them for other groups to use. Also, the International Association is putting together a report of all the things groups are doing for the Tree Project.
- For more information on what's happening in your district, contact your district's Youth Council Representative. Their names and addresses are listed on Page 3.

May We not Live By Our Fears But By Our Hopes

I've been really negative about the peace movement lately. But I think I'm finally getting to the point at which I can make the distinctions I need to make so that I don't generalize my negative-ness anymore. First let me explain my negative feelings:

I am in complete sympathy with the objectives of most of the movement—I am as opposed to the nuclear arms race; to Ronald Reagan as president, and to rising military budgets as anyone else. But there is something fundamentally wrong with the way we struggle for our objectives.

I'd better try to define what I mean by the "peace movement"—I guess it's never been quite clear even to me. I mean mainly all of the anti-military, anti-nuclear organizations and activities around today. This movement is definitely gaining in force.

Possibly the best way to talk about what I see as wrong with the peace movement would be for me to talk about what I think is wrong with the world; i.e., what we should be addressing, and then for me to show how I think we deviate from this.

I see the terms in which we view relationships—or more specifically, the way we view conflict in relationships—as the most basic problem we must try to reform. Our methods of resolving conflicts are outgrowths of this view, and the nuclear arms race and Reagan's election to the presidency are manifestations of our understanding of the conflict resolution process.

Conflict to me is essentially disagreement: When opinions, ideas, anything, do not mesh nicely, we have conflict. In this society (and in most, from what little I know), we tend to view conflict as bad—simply by association, for most people—and hence we treat it as something which must be eliminated as quickly as possible. The most obvious and, in the past, the quickest way to eliminate conflict has been through confrontation, power play, etc. Conflict has come to imply violence of one form or another for most of us. Even the basic decision-making tool at the governmental level of which we are so proud—democracy—is a power play.

We see this confrontational method of dealing with conflict at all levels—the international on down to the individual. I've seen it in couples, in families, in some UU churches, in a Friends Meeting, and, most importantly, in myself.

Conflict within ourselves—I believe all our other problems in handling conflict are rooted in our inability to constructively deal with it in ourselves. Religion, I think, must play a very large role.

Let me move on to how I see the peace movement deviating from this central problem:

The nuclear arms race, war, and escalating military budgets are all manifestations on an international level of our conflict-resolving methods and assumptions. I think the peace movement focuses on these types of issues because they are big, fairly obvious to everyone, and for the most part not very close to home, to the heart. They are concrete, physical items on which it is easy to focus.

This is fine—I have no quarrel with using concrete issues as representations of much larger, much more abstract problems. My argument comes in when the smaller, more concrete issue becomes the problem—when underlying causes become secondary or even forgotten. I guess this could be called the "treating the symptoms rather than the causes" argument.

My second beef is more serious. I feel that the way these symptoms (the arms race, etc.) are attacked is contrary to the principles which, if we were in touch with the underlying causes, we would be fighting for. In other words, the way we struggle to achieve a nuclear freeze or an end to Central American covert aid is itself symptomatic of our confrontational manner of dealing with conflict; fighting for peace is like fucking for virginity. Our finger-pointing, self righteous, us-them fight for so many of the issues will, I believe, do us more harm than good. We should be able to find other means of achieving these goals which would be just as effective in the short run and much more so in the long haul.

Garrison Keillor, host of the radio
continued on page 11

SOCIALLY

Sewing For Peace

"The Ribbon" is a freeze campaign that was started in Denver, Colorado and has now spread nationwide. The group intends to create a "banner of peace" long enough to encircle the Pentagon as a symbol of our need to end the arms race. They are asking people around the nation to create yard-long panels on the theme: "What I cannot bear to think of as lost forever in a nuclear war." The banner will be completed and used in a peaceful demonstration at the Pentagon in August of 1985, the 40th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Participants may applique, batik, embroider, hook, needlepoint, paint, quilt, silk-screen, tie dye, weave reproduce photographs, use iron-on fabric paints, create... to tell this nation that we love the earth and its people. First, claim your fear; then, praying for peace, affirm life by making something beautiful out of your fears and through your prayers.

You will need muslin or equally sturdy fabric doubled for finished size of 18" x 36". Allow for a 2" border on all four sides with reinforced stitching. The size of the finished symbol is 14" x 32". You may use the 36" reinforced border to carry your name, town, state, however, identification is not required.

Join together with a group of friends, your local youth group, or even at a conference to make a banner. This is a tangible way in which we can make a statement about peace. For more information how to create a banner or what to do with it when it's completed, write to:

"The Ribbon," PO Box 2206, Denver, CO 80201.

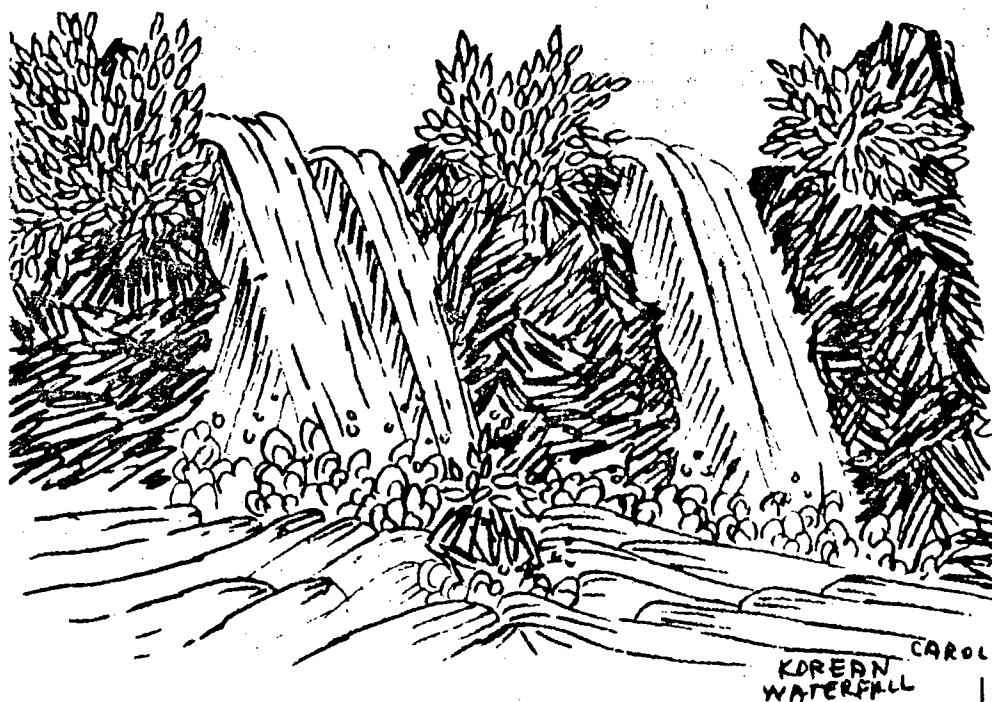


Next Issue:

SPIRITUALITY—What does it look like?
Is there a place for it, a need for it, in our lives?

Please contribute pictures, stories, poems, doodles. Call or write Youth Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. (617) 742-2100, ext. 246.

Deadline for submissions: January 15, 1985



The Gibby Experience

continued from page 5

and Christmas breaks that year, I noticed a great change in Mark. He was a lot more open, and at LRY meetings I saw a silly side in him that I never saw before. Now, Mark is practically Metro District's token "cosmically-groovy" YRUU'er. Golly, am I ever proud of him! What a silly goose.

At that same time, LRY evolved into YRUU and I started going to conferences. It was tough at first because I was living under Paul's shadow; something I was not used to as the oldest brother. Paul was (and still is, I hope) well liked and everyone asked me how he was doing without asking how I was doing. I was even referred to as "Paul's brother" a few times. This irritated me, so I broke the mold by writing "Paul's Brother" on my mailbag and a conference mailing list. Some people got angry at me, saying that I had an identity, too. I said, "Exactly—that's the point I'm trying to make." They understood and now I'm "Dan" again. Yay!

The next fall, when I was at home working again, my sister Rachel found her way to YRUU. I had always felt that Rachel and I got along the worst within our family. There are six years between us and we really didn't communicate well. Because I was home that fall, I alternated between Summit and Lincroft LRY/YRUU meetings, and once again got to know a member of my family better. We always had a lot in common: acting, singing, and being Leos—(oh no!), but we never talked about these things. Now we have sung together at conference coffeehouses. There is still more I'd like to know about her, but that will come in time. We have come a long way in the past year.

So now there are four of us in the same youth group. We have all grown closer in the last few years, but there can be disadvantages to the situation we're in as well. We are now coined "The Gibbies," which I don't mind so much, but it bothers me when someone refers to me as "a gibby" instead of Dan. We are all different and "it's a Gibby!" sounds like we're all one and the same. During a group discussion, it can be a little strange talking about things like "sex" or "parents" with my brothers and sister around, but I'm getting used to it.

The advantages of all of us being in YRUU together are obvious. Although Paul and I are away at school, our family still has this great level of closeness that YRUU has helped us achieve. We had it *in* us—YRUU helped us bring it *out*. As we grow, the love between us grows. I don't think I could have said that four years ago. We're still a crazy family, but now we're a crazy family that loves, respects, understands, and cares.

... And we each have something to offer it.

Daniel Gibson
Boston, MA

Trite but True

continued from page 5

"Karass" seemed like a better word to use than family for a while. The "karass" I was thrown together with from LRY days began to describe itself with a name. Even though we were not an economic unit, even though we lived in a variety of places in different households, there was a sense of group identity that seemed to demand a name.

As I moved through my twenties I became aware that there were other networks of people that had come together through LRY that were described by different names. It seemed that the experience of bonding and family that I had found were not unique to my "generation" of youth movement people. It seemed that there was something about what happened to us within this organization that made for powerful connections and a desire to stay connected and growing as our lives moved on.

Now having come full circle, and started a new family, a new nuclear family myself, I look back and see that none of the other meanings of family that I have found have disappeared. My family of origin is still very much a part of my life. The connections to my family of friendships that were made within LRY are still present in my life, even though letters, telephone calls and encounters are fewer. The sense of "karass" is still there for many of us, even though fancy names, for a sense of family are not used as often.

What is different now for me is the knowledge that even though there is always an element of family that is beyond our choosing, to know there is always that feeling of being thrown together with people that you didn't necessarily choose, active choosing is never wholly absent from family connections. Families do not survive without continually choosing to be together. This is true for nuclear families, families of friendship, "karass" families, and the broader sense of family that we hope characterizes our churches. The forces in the world that tear apart nations, revolutions, movements, and all manner of good intentions tear apart families as well. Maintenance, loving care, watering and weeding is needed to keep any family strong and connected.

It is a joy for me to see friends of LRY days connect their nuclear families with each other and expand the sense of family that we found then into our lives now. It is a miracle to watch connections such as I have found discovered and rediscovered again and again, conference after conference, meeting after meeting, within the whole process of creating YRUU which has happened over the past four years. Everything that we have done has been to enable those connections to take place, to help the dance that we do within this youth movement go on a little better for a little longer. Thank you for being part of my family.

—Wayne Arnason
Charlottesville, VA

Church Family

continued from page 5

posed of grandparents, perhaps unmarried aunts and uncles, and maybe orphaned cousins, living together with the typical nuclear family unit of father, mother, and children, which comprises our "model" (albeit not a tremendously stable model) family in this age. In small communities, churches and schoolhouses were the main gathering places for families in the area to come together, to create a larger sense of family within the community. Survival needs created interdependence, within the family and within the community, and forged bonds which were not lightly broken. Technological advances and broadening of opportunities have drastically changed our earlier ways of life, and often even nuclear families find it difficult to create a sense of family, with all members, young and old, having other needs and responsibilities within the community that draw them from their homes. I own that I create this for myself, within my own family.

Yet for me, and I know for others, too, the spiritual needs for communion have not gone away, and I look to the church to fill my need for family, for drawing together. And frequently I have these needs met within the UU framework: at a UUWF meeting; in a circle of hope at Con-Con this year, at 3:00 in the morning, after the group had folded over 1,000 cranes in the name of abused children; on Sunday evenings, singing "Dear Friends" to close out an LRY meeting. For others, it may happen at GA, perhaps in Youth Caucus, or in a meditation circle, or working on a UUSC service project, or in any of the other places in which UUs gather.

What I don't often get, however, is a complete sense of family at our Sunday morning church services, and I don't think the problem is specific to the Boulder church alone. (Nor, as I realize, it is specific to UU churches alone.) The dialogue has gone on before, and yet it needs to be a continuing one. There is a real need for teens, especially, to develop a sense of community among their peers, to create support while they are learning skills and developing independence, which are necessary parts of growth, in order to make it in today's world. Yet I don't think this needs to happen to the exclusion of involvement with and participation in the larger body of the church, at the time that we specifically set aside to consider things of worth and to challenge our minds and spirits.

And, so, I pose questions to all of us, youth and adult alike, and invite your responses, either through this publication, or directly to me at my home.

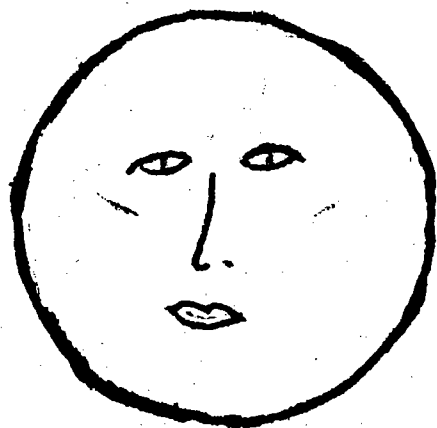
For youth: What could happen at a Sunday service, that you, our teenagers, would want to be there for? What goes on now, that you might be staying away from? How could the church change, so that you would join your vitality with ours? What are you doing now, to make this happen?

For adults: When was the last time you approached a young person at a Sunday service, and openly welcomed them into the church family? What might you have wanted as a teenager, that would have encouraged you to attend Sunday services (or what did happen for you, if you did)? How do you think our services might change, so that teenagers would feel involved, along with adults. What are you doing now, to make this happen?

And for those of you, youth or adults, who have found ways to create an intergenerational community on Sunday mornings, please share them with those of us who are struggling with this loss.

Judi Spendelow

(Judi Spendelow is an advisor with the Boulder LRY group, an active member of the RMAC YRUU Youth Council, and our recently elected adult member of the Continental YRUU Steering Committee. Responses to this article may be sent to her in care of Synapse, Youth Office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, or to her home address, 2341 Eudora Street, Denver, CO 80207.



Con Con '84

continued from page 6

Nighttime saw music and dancing, all kinds of worship styles, people meeting new and old friends, and general star gazing.

Next year ConCon will be in the Mid West of America. If you would like more information on ConCon '85 please write to ConCon: Laila Ibrahim, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108.



General Assembly

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parties, and various other intellectual pursuits? Or during the morning worship service? Or breakfast, lunch, or dinner?

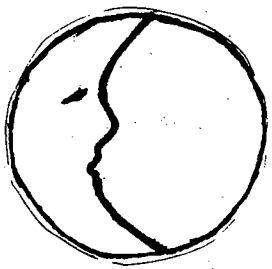
And we most certainly did not sleep through the plenary sessions, where you can take a close look at the inner workings of our denomination, and where we as a group can exercise power on issues that effect us.

I went to GA not knowing what to expect. What I brought back from it I can't describe. During the week, the Youth Caucus formed a slightly scattered yet strangely closely knit group where you can join just because you are there.

We were strong at GA 84 and we will be stronger at GA 85 in Atlanta, GA. Youth need to come out in force for the presidential election which will be held there. YRUU will play a key role as the number of YRUU age delegates increases. So ask your church to send you as a delegate and call the Youth Office for information on scholarships and specific details. It pays to check into these kinds of things early.

Even if you don't know what to expect, I am urging you to call the Youth Office and check it out. For more information contact Laila Ibrahim Youth Caucus, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108, (617) 742-2100 Ex 246.

Coleen Murphy
Ft. Myers, FL



Momentum '84

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Rev. Wayne Arnason, MOMENTUM 84's guest speaker, shared his thoughts and memories with us. A Canadian, this was not Rev. Arnason's first visit to the town of Banff. He had been here before . . . and quickly our attention was held hearing about a man from Boston who had once been our age and had lived in the town we were now in. Much of Rev. Arnason's address dealt with the idea of momentum. What is it, how does it apply to each of our lives? Some of us, on Rev. Arnason's invitation, shared personal experiences which dealt with adding to our life's momentum. In saying: You, I, each of us must make ourselves a part of this weekend so that we may leave feeling fulfilled. Passiveness will leave us outsiders in our own conference. Active involvement will provide each of us experiences and encounters that will have the potential of becoming meaningful memories.

How true that was. The friendships that evolved through sharing songs, backrubs, discussions, and the cosy-yet sometimes loud-room 104, would probably be considered the highlight for many of us. Great friendships!

Augene Nanning
Edmonton, Alberta



Letter of Peace

continued from page 8

I am no friend of the dreary, centralized, bureaucratic government of the U.S.S.R., but I can look beyond their government to their people, a long-suffering, downtrodden but still great people. They have made magnificent contributions to world civilization, be it literature, art, science, music, athletics, and more. Whatever evil we see in the Russians is in us as well. Good and bad are in all people and all nations. I see Russia as an insecure, inferior bully who must maintain a certain bravado to save face. Rather than continuing to run them into the ground, let us reach out our hand to bring forth their best. At the same time, we will bring forth the best in ourselves. As Albert Schweitzer once said, "Example is not the best teacher, it is the *only* teacher."

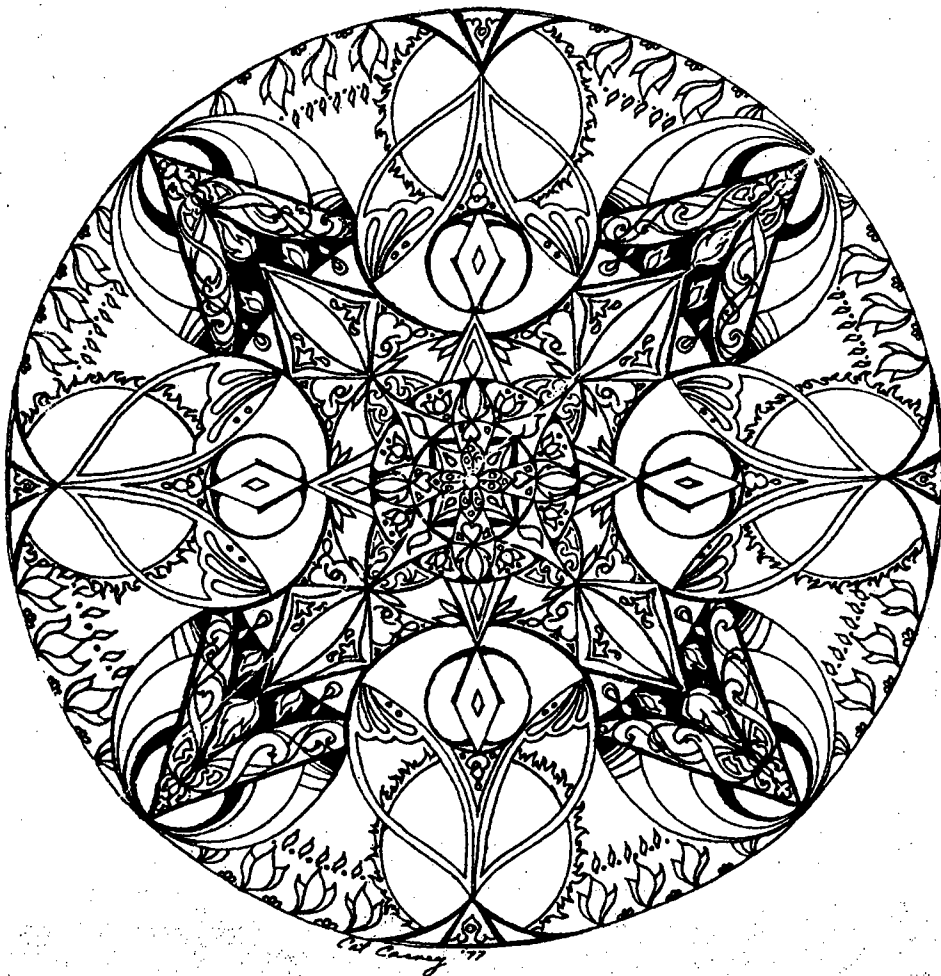
Nuclear weapons are only extensions of the fist and the sword but they show, in unavoidable terms, the necessity for change. It is one thing to get a bloody nose, lose an arm, or even one's life. It is another to murder our own grandchildren. War is now obsolete, but do not expect to hear these words from politicians. They must hear them from us. The most sensible way to stop the arms race is to stop making more weapons. We can take steps in this direction without jeopardizing our national security. Indeed, our only real security rests in ending the arms race. Are we more secure than we were in 1981, or 1963, or 1945?

The United States is an international experiment. Ours is one of the very few countries where foreigners can be assimilated. Our inclusiveness is our strength. What we are called to do is extend the assimilation to the whole world. How many millions of Americans have relatives in Russia? With a small leap of faith, we can see that each woman on the earth is our mother, sister or daughter; each man our father, brother or son. When we come to understand this truth, it becomes impossible to divide the world into "we" and "they." Moslems, for example, are seeking to retain a way of life they know and love, not to deprive us of our mobile way of life. Our true self-interest lies with the strength and health of the whole world, not our nation. This is not an argument for one world government, for I deeply believe local people should control local affairs. It does argue for taking an inclusive, unifying view of the nature of our civilization for this precious and exquisite earth.

I appreciate our great country and seek to use the freedom of speech that is our right and our duty. Each of us can join the human chorus, can find ways to act in our own lives that create a climate where peace and justice are possible. Let us not allow our attempts to secure what we now have blind us to the long range view of the effects of our actions on our grandchildren. As we have learned to compete and acquire, we can learn to cooperate and share. As General Omar Bradley said in 1957 about the creation of peace, "Until we get started, we shall never know what can be done." There is a greater law than military might. It is the law of love, and as love enters more and more into our lives, we will find the transformation of the larger world has begun.

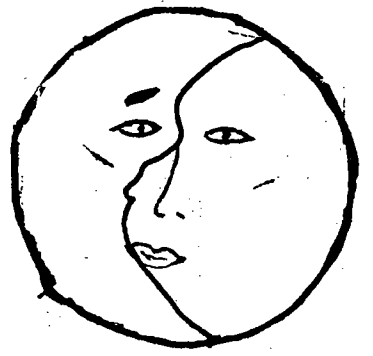
Yours in peace,
The Rev. Douglas Wilson
Rowe, MA

(Douglas Fir Wilson is a Unitarian Universalist minister, Executive Director of Rowe Camp and Conference Center, and author of *Letter to Government 1983-1971*.)



"Gracchus, aren't you going to come downstairs and be part of the family?"
"After the next song ma."

Gracchus then spent the next seventy-two hours trying to decide what song he would play next. In a fixed election (aren't they all?) the Velvet Underground's rendition of "Heroin" narrowly defeated the version that appears on *Rock & Roll Animal* primarily because Gracchus didn't own a copy of said musical piece.



Live By Our Hope

continued from page 9

show, "A Prairie Home Companion," said in a Westminster Town Hall Forum speech last year:

"Children. . . will teach you something about caring about the world; they'll teach you that caring about the world does not begin with fear, it doesn't begin with display of pieties, it doesn't begin with morbidity; it begins with fascination—with beautiful, shining things that are near at hand, that engage your eye, so that you are inspired to stand up on unreliable legs and launch out from a chair across a very tricky floor. . . ."

Much of the peace movement operates through fear. I went to Helen Caldicott's speech at General Assembly, and it made me mad as hell. Not at any government or president, but at Helen Caldicott. She did *nothing* in her speech but move people to despair. She said at one point that "what will happen after you have heard this speech is at first a period of intense despair, during which you will be effectively immobilized; this will be followed by a period of intense anger. Use this anger constructively." My problems with this sentence are several: First, I see too many people become mired in the despair, never moving beyond. More importantly, I believe that anger, which is indeed how many people escape their despair, is primarily a destructive and not a constructive energy, feeling, whatever. Through anger we may possibly bring about a nuclear freeze, but I believe that there are other methods of achieving the same goal which are not as destructive to the individuals involved. I believe the peace movement must do more than move people to despair, fear, and anger—it must somehow help people move beyond those negative energies to positive, constructive ones which will help the individual deal with despair.

So now me—what do all these thoughts mean for my actions? Well, as these thoughts have been developing over the past year or two, I have tended to discount the entire peace movement—I've kept marching and writing letters, but my heart hasn't been in it like it used to be.

Now I'm realizing that the whole thing isn't necessarily screwed up because some aspects of it are—and I am discovering that there are many, many constructive, effective, fantastic programs and organizations out there—local housing initiatives such as the one in Virginia we discussed at Youth Council, for example; or on a larger scale, the project which the UU/UN office is currently working on which involves establishing dialogues between U.S. and Soviet non-governmental organizations.

Most importantly, I think, I've learned that treating the symptoms is important for the time it gives us—if we want to teach a starving person to fish, but it takes six weeks for the fishing course, we'd better keep him/her fed for those six weeks or he/she will never get a chance to try his/her new-found skills. I've decided that I should be true to my own ranting and raving—and that means coming up with and participating in constructive alternatives to the problems I see.

Ben Ford
Sarasota, FL

COOKING GOOD CONFERENCE FOOD: AN OUTLINE

Everyone’s an expert on food; they’ve had it two or three times a day since they were born.

I was talking to a friend about a conference she had just attended and I asked her how it was. “It was great, I mean I loved the workshop on body painting, but the food was atrocious.” That’s odd. For all of the other things you do at a conference, why focus on the food? Well, it is a community thing. We all eat together, and food can really set the tone of a conference.

The only way to make good food is to have a good kitchen, and the only way to have good meals is to start with a menu. You’ve got to be responsible and reasonable when you create a menu. It is easy to get in over your head at the menu level, but try to restrain your self cuz if you made the menu and you mess it up, you will get all of the grief when there is bland, lifeless, undescribable, or inedible swill sitting on the table.

To Begin Kitchening:

- One - Know your kitchen facilities (space, equipment, storage, etc.)
- Two - Plan balanced meals (food from at least three of the four basic food groups i.e. fruit & vegetables, breads & grains, dairy, protein) . Look for recipes using Tofu for cheap protein.
- Three - Try to cater dishes to a wide variety of people. Your grandmother may make a wicked scrapple cheesecake, but more people will eat spaghetti.
- Four - Plan something easy to prepare in volume (pasta, beans, soup, rice, salads, eggs, oatmeal, stir fry, etc.) .
- Five - Time! Time! Time! Time! & Time! again. You don’t want to spend all of your time in the kitchen during a conference, so pick food that isn’t going to take all day to prepare (refer to step four) .
- Six - You must be aware that there are people out there who don’t eat meat, so plan on vegetarian alternatives on Roast Yak night. A good way to find your veggies is to put a little space on conference registration forms asking if that person is vegetarian. Another situation you will come up against are the truly non-conventional eaters. People with lactose intolerances, allergies to vegetables and allergies in general. Please inquire before the first meal for people that need special meals.
- Seven - Plan for leftovers. For instance: Dinner Monday evening is Stir Fry Veggies w/rice on the side. Leftovers can be used for soup and rice pudding in Tuesday’s lunch or dinner menu.
- Eight - Price! Food bought in bulk is cheap.

ORDERING

Ordering food takes more than waltzing into the A & P on Friday afternoon before your conference starts. Co-ops are your best bet for cheap food and they may be able to supply you with good bulk food recipes. Buy generic brand foodstuffs; Mom may buy Kellogs and Prago exclusively, but you can do better pricewise. Look to make things like bread, sauces, and soups.

Amounts: Know how many people you are cooking for, but don’t just multiply amounts by the number of people. Look in cookbooks for accurate recipe requirements. You can double or triple up to twenty times the original amounts and come out pretty well. Also, do not overlook the Pig-Out factor. This is where you calculate how much certain gluttonous characters will consume at any given meal. You can compare this with the difference made by the Anorexic Clan, but they never seem to balance out perfectly. Remember to keep your menu in mind when ordering. Pancakes are great and sell fast; lentil loaf will usually hang out and make friends with a Glad Hefty bag.

PREPARATION

Now that you’ve bought the food and squared away the kitchen, chopping, boiling, opening, grating. Question 1: Who’s doing the prep work? Hopefully not you at every meal. There should be an adequate kitchen staff and a few volunteers or family groups at every meal (all kitchen staff should get at least one meal off during a weekend conference) . Question 2: What is the attitude in the kitchen? There is room for comedy, comraderie and responsibility for everyone involved. It’s even OK to yell on occasions, but always make up before the next meal or the tension will kill the kitchen. Question 3: In starting a meal what do you do first? Start with the items which will take the longest time to cook and work your way down.

A View From The INVISIBLE MOM

Friday:

- 7:30 A.M. I awoke with a tension headache. Was this enough to cancel my next 36 hours with 40 to 50 teenagers at the Knoxville conference? -
- 8:30 A.M. A backache began. Was this enough to excuse my aging back from the torture of sleeping on the floor for the next two nights?
- 9:00 A.M. Clouds on the horizon. Could a snowstorm be brewing and cancel our 5 hour drive into the heart of the most ferocious storm in fifty years?
- 12:00 Noon A combination headache, stomach, plus an eyeache from scanning the horizon for a promising snowstorm pounded my frail 40 year old body. Could I be coming down with the flu?
- 2:00 P.M. Two hours to come up with an honest reason not to spend a weekend with my son and fourteen other new wave braves from Winston-Salem.
- 4:00 P.M. No Van. Maybe they forgot about their uninvited guest. After all no one really knew why I was going. Worst of all, I didn’t know why I was going, except to answer some nagging questions about the almost mystic appeal of a “conference.”
- 5:00 P.M. Son called, said they were late getting away and was I SURE I wanted to go. I ominously thought about as sure as wanting to take a quart of castor oil. Bravely I announced, “Ready as you are to have me go.”
- 6:30 P.M. Van arrived. Out popped green and pink hair, blue hair, leather and chains. I am definitely overdressed for this crowd. Way out warriors climbed into my station wagon while I gratefully accepted a ride in the Mellow bus. My last chance, Mellow or Yellow—no turning back.
- 12:30 A.M. Arrived Alive! Totally surprized that we had survived a nearly disastrous confrontation with local yokels at a McDonald’s. But after all, people who buy hamburgers from a man with orange hair and bobo shoes can’t be all that bad.
- 1:30 A.M. Safely settled in a relatively quiet corner, I paused to reflect. My initial reaction to the raucous welcome to the Knoxville church had not given me away as a M-O-T-H-E-R. Perhaps I could be invisible.

COOKING

A process in which heat is often times applied to food. Now that the prep work is done it is time to cook. Throw **all** non-essential persons out of the kitchen. One common conference problem is a late meal. When your kitchen is behind schedule you put everyone else behind schedule too. Plan ahead! At home it may take five minutes to boil water for spaghetti, but it can take up to ten times longer to boil enough water for one hundred people. For a 7:00 dinner you should be in the kitchen by 4:30 with all food prepped and your staff briefed.

THEORY & PRACTICE OF SERVING

The main question: do we take the food to the people or do we bring the people to the food?

- Method 1: The ole’ set the food out and let people go for it! (wrong)
- Method 2: Serve the food at one spot and let people file through (not bad, but time consuming and boring)
- Method 3: Kitchen staff and a crew of helpers carry the food on trays to the tables. (Great! It’s just like a large, happy communal farm home in Hippieland, U.S.A.)

A note: breakfast is a good meal for a main grab table. It should be well stocked with food, fruit & juice. Lunch can be set up the same way with plenty of ingredients for easy to make sandwiches. Set up at least two tables to shorten lines.

CLEAN-UP

Oh yea! This is the best part of the meal. Can you say family groups? I knew you could. Part of the kitchen staff should supervise clean-up, but they are not obligated to work on the clean up. Some people will not show for clean up. You will have to deal with that as a conference group. Always leave the kitchen spotless at the end of your conference because that is often times how the church will judge your group.

OK, groovy guys and gals, we’ve fed you a lot of pretty starchy stuff here, so cover it with sauce and enjoy. Please remember that this is just an outline for you to begin. The rest is up to you.

Bon appetite
Jon Mallet & Bruce Fiene
Boston, MA

P.S. For a sample week-long menu see the article on the Summer’s End Conference in this issue.

- 7:30 A.M. My imagined aches had turned into real ones after the first night sleeping on the floor, but miracle of miracles, I smelled fresh brewed coffee.
- 7:45 A.M. Led by my nose, I found a kitchen where KIDS were busily cooking breakfast. They talked to me with a reasonable amout of maturity. Still suspicious, I listened for comments — anti-mothers, anti-family, anti-government, anti-religion, anti-social responsibility to argue for all those things I held dear. Armed with ready responses for this hot bed of rebellion and youthful dissent, no one ever mentioned these issues.
- 8:30 A.M. Promised workshops were not getting under way as planned. I secretly celebrated. How would I fit into “body-painting” or “game-playing?”
- 11:00 A.M. Went to a workshop on “Job Choices.” Here was something I knew about, being a career woman myself. Slipped quietly in the back of the room to hear a tragic life story from a young, innocent-looking girl. I listened and gained insight about the support LRY must have given her.
- 12:00 Noon My ears, though already permanently damaged by my own three teenagers’ loud music, could take no more. I sought the refuge of the University of Tennessee Library, I discovered the students didn’t look all that different from the ones I just left!
- 5:00 P.M. Back at the ranch. They actually asked me where I had been. I wasn’t invisible after all. I met an advisor from Asheville, and one from Charlottesville. I sat in on a Y.A.C. meeting which helped me gain perspective.
- 5:30 P.M. One teen I knew lingered on to talk. We talked and talked and talked until the room was totally dark. When we finally finished, she reached out and hugged me. Even in the dark, I suddenly knew I was not invisible, and she had enjoyed my company.
- 7:00 P.M. Real looking parents came in to assist the Knoxville planners. Dinner came and went with the kids fixing, cleaning, rounding up stray plates. I wanted to record the magic words which motivated these teens to do it all by themselves.
- 11:00 P.M. Tired, Cranky, and irritable from lack of sleep, I relished my quiet corner. The quiet corner was under a very loud movie. Sleep impossible, I wandered up and down the halls looking for an advisor to complain to. Advisors were relishing the very loud movie. Finally, at tempers end, I announced they could find me at the Ramada Inn or possibly Winston-Salem. Immediate attention was given one tired, worn out parent. I slept soundly that night in an office.
- Sunday:
 - 8:00 A.M. I awoke stiffly. I walked upstairs and the place was virtual no-man’s land, littered with sleeping human bodies and personal belongings.
 - 8:15 A.M. All began to stir. Bodies miraculously moved into action and began to straighten, clean, vacuum, pick-up and organize. Very little was said by the advisors and I marveled at this well-orchestrated scene.
 - 9:30 A.M. Breakfast was finished and another small miracle of sorts had been accomplished. Gone was the kinetic energy of so many teens gathered in one spot. In its place was a mellow feeling of comraderie at another “conference” accomplished.
 - 10:00 A.M. The circle began to gather outside the church and hugs began. As I listened to them sing, I felt a strong sense of **why** these kids had gathered to share a weekend. It wasn’t to plot against the establishment and it wasn’t to cause friction in dissent. It was to love and be loved, to be and to be free, to learn from each other and to touch each other in the mystical, magical moments possible only when the realities of the world were shut out.
 - 5:00 P.M. I am home, smelly, exhausted, exhilarated, pleased, sad and melancholy. The weekend had taught me a great deal. Some I did not like and some I was surprised to learn. I had found the revelation: that reality can trick us into losing precious moments of human closeness. As an adult, I knew that much more time would be spent dealing with reality in life than these kids could fathom. It was important to have memories of what one could lose so easily in the adult world. LRY has some nagging problems brought about possibly by the reliance on the adult perspective or the kids perspective of the purpose of a conference. We parents who trust our children know they will be faced with life decisions soon enough. By allowing them their “Never Never” land, all our Peter Pans return with the knowledge of deeper human commitment to each other and to the preservation of the world around them.

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