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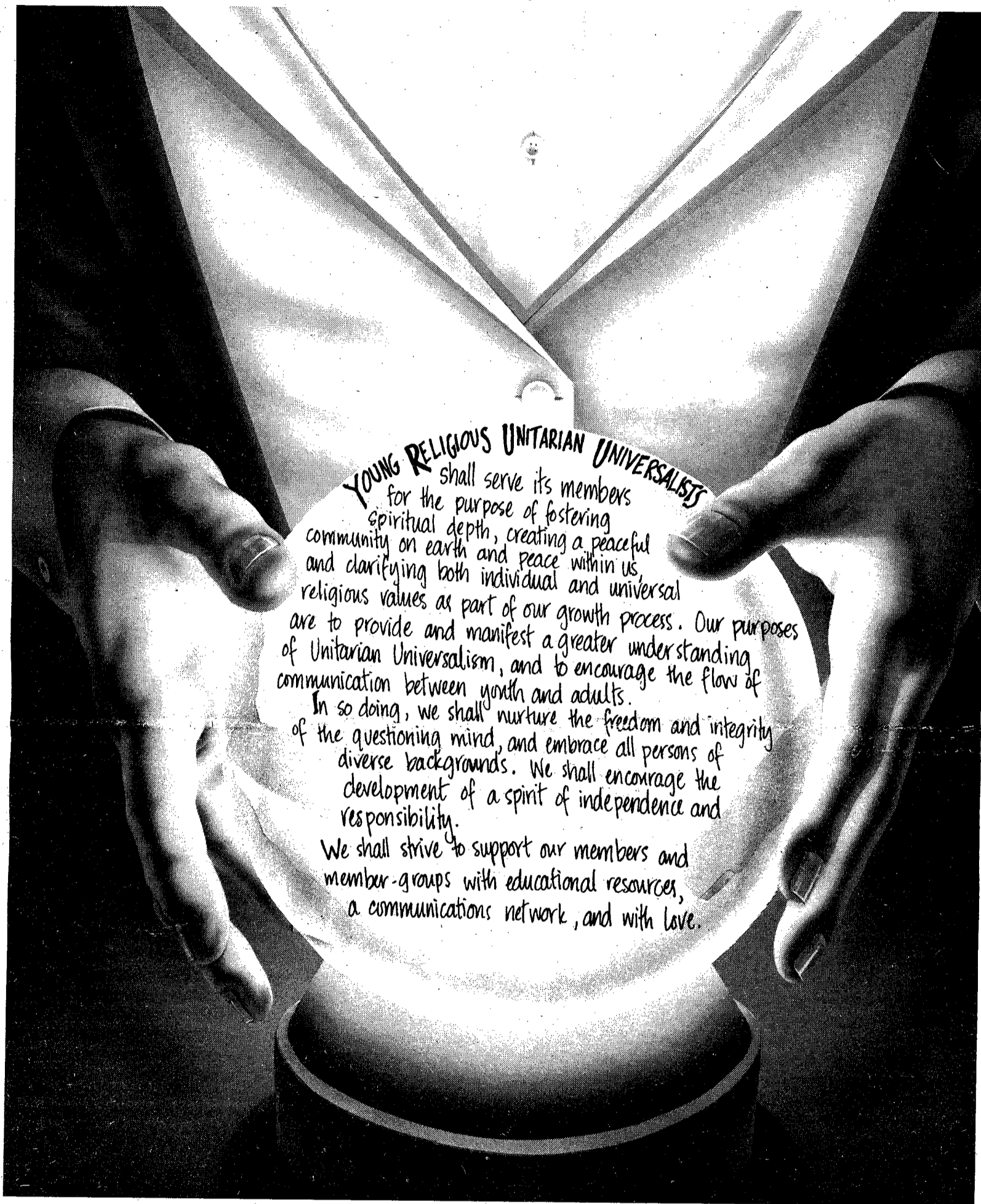
SYNAPSE

ENERGY AND
INFORMATION
ARE EXCHANGED

Printed in the United States of America



Volume VIII, Issue 2, Winter 1990



YOUNG RELIGIOUS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS shall serve its members for the purpose of fostering spiritual depth, creating a peaceful community on earth and peace within us, and clarifying both individual and universal religious values as part of our growth process. Our purposes are to provide and manifest a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalism, and to encourage the flow of communication between youth and adults. In so doing, we shall nurture the freedom and integrity of the questioning mind, and embrace all persons of diverse backgrounds. We shall encourage the development of a spirit of independence and responsibility. We shall strive to support our members and member-groups with educational resources, a communications network, and with love.

I want to receive more
information about:

- ☐ Black Concerns
- ☐ Canadian Unitarian Council
- ☐ UU Women's Federation
- ☐ Lesbian & Gay Concerns
- ☐ Young Adult Programs (ages 18-35)
- ☐ UU Peace Network

Your name and address will be
forwarded to the appropriate UU
organization.

☐ Please add me to the Synapse mailing list. I have written my name and address to the right.



Young Religious Unitarian Universalists
Unitarian Universalist Association
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108-2800

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Permit No. 8652

You've got me wrong! I have marked my correct address on the mailing label. ☐

WELCOME TO SYNAPSE

Hey, What Is This?

So you've just gotten this funky-looking newspaperish thing in your mailbox; "what in the world is it and why did it come to MY mailbox?" you might be thinking. Well, sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of some faithful youth, who sit in an office on Beacon Hill (Boston) and bring this news to you...All (well, most) goofiness aside, the reason you received this paper is because you: a) are a member of a YRUU group, b) are associated with a YRUU group, c) are in the office of a local congregation, or d) live at the former address of the YRUUer to whom this is addressed. *Synapse* is a

publication of the YRUU Youth Office (staffed by two YRUU Programs Specialists and the Youth Programs Director) of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is meant to serve as a "point of contact where energy and information are exchanged." Basically we hope that it gives you some information you might not otherwise have about UU youth, advisors, groups, and activities. We also hope that you will be engaged enough while reading this to send us *your* news; it's really *your* paper, and any suggestions you have for improvement are not only welcomed, they're expected!

QUESTIONS? call or write the Youth Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA,

02108

(617) 742-2100

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Everything To Know About *Synapse*

Synapse is a publication of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, the youth organization of the Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108-2800. Subscription is free. Two issues per annum.

YRUU Staff- Adam Leite, Parisa Parsa, Meg Riley, and Anne Fleming.

Mechanicals—Proofreading, editing and layout by your friendly staff (above.)

Editorial Policy - Articles for *Synapse* are chosen from among those submitted by Unitarian Universalist youth and adults working with youth, and other interested parties. Articles are chosen on the basis of content and quality, with some preference given to new authors. All written materials are subject to editing before publication, and graphics may be enhanced. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editors or the majority readership.

Submissions Policy—Each submission must have name and address attached. Multiple submissions accepted. The editors observe the following limits for each author's submission:

Articles: One per issue of each of 3 types: theme, news, and reflective.

Poems: One per issue.

Personals: Two per issue, up to 50 words each.

Graphics: No limit.

Submissions not used will be kept on file for possible future use. Name may be withheld upon request. If you wish to be notified prior to publication, enclose a self-addressed envelope (no stamp necessary).

Advertising—Rates for camera-ready for UUA-related groups are:

Standard

\$10.00 - per (2.25") column-inch

\$45.00 - eighth of a page

\$90.00 - quarter of a page

Special (need advance warning)

\$13.00 - per (3.25") column-inch

\$65.00 - sixth of a page

\$130.00 - third of a page

For all other (non-UU) groups, these rates are double. For non-camera-ready ads, there is an additional fee of up to \$25.00, negotiable with the Youth Office. Advertisements do not carry the endorsement of the Youth Office or YRUU. The editors reserve the right to refuse any advertisements.

Submission and Advertising Due Date for Next issue:

March 15, 1991

YRUU, What Are You You?

Ah, questions! You think you want to know what YRUU is now that you've seen the lovely purpose statement on the cover, do you? I suppose that's a reasonable request, and one we can accommodate. YRUU stands for Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, and is an organization of the Unitarian Universalist Association. YRUU is not a membership organization; if you are a UU youth between the ages of 12 and 22, YRUU is your organization, a network of youth across the continent who are learning about and struggling with UU values and ideals as they share with one another in youth groups, UU congregations, youth conferences, UU camps - anywhere UU youth may come together. YRUU embraces a philosophy of youth empowerment through youth and adult cooperation and co-leadership, through encouraging social and spiritual question-

ing, and through providing a challenging, accepting, and loving community.

Guided by the goals and purposes established in the formation of YRUU, each local group determines its own program, goals, and vision. Age groupings are also set by each local group in order to best meet their own needs. Historically, youth have often been on the forefront of discussions and actions on major issues and in the formation of a positive UU movement.

The annual business of YRUU takes place at Youth Council, where youth and adults, as district and at-large delegates, decide the direction of the youth movement and discuss what works and what doesn't in their part of the continent. If you would like to know who's representing you, check the list of Youth Council members inside.

SYNAPSE appreciates letters to the editors, but has received none since the last issue. Look for them next time!

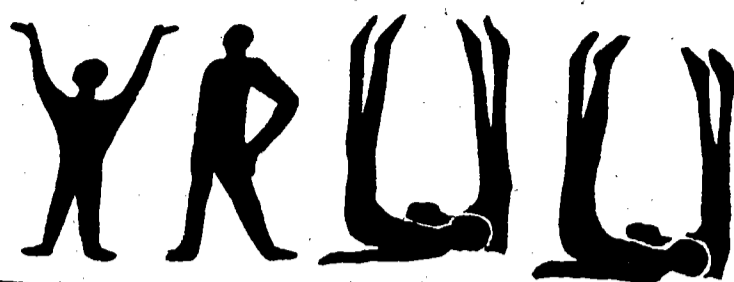
Celebrating the Fashion Within:

Synapse 3

The Cutting Edge of YRUU T-shirt Style



the
hard
work
&
the
hip
look



Young Religious Unitarian Universalists



HI!

We are the YRUUs of Glens Falls, New York, UU Society. When we saw in REACH that the theme for the next Synapse would be "Changes: Celebrating the Child Within" we decided to write and tell you about our shirt project that celebrates the "people within" YRUU.

Three years ago our group was making mosaics to hang in our new YRUU room. Russell Serrienne, an artist, and church member was helping us. We had a great time with Russell, and he offered to help us design our own shirts, and then make them ourselves at his shop, Seri-Graphics. We all worked on the designs for the front and back of the shirts, and then had a chance to see how a design goes from an idea to multiple screens for multi-colors, to our own shirts.

Our front graphic is the letters YRUU formed by people in various positions (no snickering, please). We always get compliments and questions about the shirts when we wear them. We know the official symbol for YRUU is a chalice, but YRUU is about people, and that is what our symbol celebrates!

Our Fellowship is really unique - we have 60 adult members and 50 kids in RE!! Fund raisers for us are a nightmare, because the kids almost outnumber the adults. We YRUUs have tried to be self supporting over the past few years. We even contracted to clean the church weekly for a year. After a year the group and the fellowship decided to leave the cleaning to the experts. Soooooooo, we have decided to go public with our shirts!! We updated our design to include the full name of the organization below the graphic, and added a small chalice at each side. We are copyrighting the graphic (this is supposed to be an educational experience) and offering the design in tee shirts and sweats.

For more information and prices write to us at YRUU, Unitarian, Universalist Society of Glens Falls, PO Box 4104, Glens Falls, New York 12801. When you write, don't forget to tell us about yourselves (send pictures, poems, etc.).

From all of us! Ginny Chagnon, Steve Thompson, Adelynn Rydinsky, David Carter, Brian Smith, John Machell, Heather George, Tony Lim, Ben Stephens, Kari Smith, Matt Thompson, George Thompson, Sherry Rydinsky.

THEY DID IT THEIR WAY

by Bill Gupton

The local senior high YRUU youth group at the UU Congregation of Atlanta (UUA-YRUU) was looking for a way to start its new year afresh. So the group sought permission to replace the old behavior code which it had inherited from its predecessors in the early '80s with newly written guidelines. The church agreed to the idea, letting the group propose its own guidelines and regulations for all its local YRUU activities (Sunday morning and evening meetings, overnights, etc.). The proposed guidelines, written and adopted by the 60 members of the group, were subsequently accepted by the church's youth/adult committee and are now in effect.

UUA's group is proud of its new, self-produced guidelines, and would like to share them with other YRUUs, encouraging everyone to make periodic reviews of local policies and seek youth empowerment in the guideline-making process. Here are the new UUA policies: (Trivia question: What does B.O.F. mean?)

Bill Gupton is an advisor for the YRUU group at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta.



What's COOL and What's NOT: Important Guidelines

Senior High Youth Group of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta

I. What is the PURPOSE of having a youth group? WE BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY. THE VALIDATION OF EXPERIENCE REQUIRES THE CONFIRMATION OF PEERS, WHO PROVIDE A CRITICAL PLATFORM ALONG WITH A NETWORK OF MUTUAL SUPPORT. — David O. Rankin.

The youth group room is our room. It is our sanctuary. We need some rules; but, we don't want to feel restricted or suppressed. The youth group room is our room. It is our sanctuary.

II. ON SMOKING

1) It is a state law in Georgia that persons under the age of 17 are not permitted to buy tobacco or tobacco products. However, smoking will be tolerated at youth group functions and activities. Let it be understood that our youth group does not approve of or encourage cigarette smoking by ANYONE.

2) WHERE: UUA rules have it that smoking is not permitted inside the church building. Smoking will not be allowed inside the Children's Playground. Please put your cig. butts in the trash. (Give a hoot; don't pollute and only you can help prevent forest fires.)

3) WHEN: Being that individuals tend to do what they want and that nobody wants to enforce restrictions on when others can smoke, there will be no set times that individuals will "get in trouble" for smoking. It is church policy that YRUU adult advisors are responsible for YRUU members under the age of 18 during programming time.

For this reason, and because the following are special times for all of us to be a community, let it be understood that it is considered ultra UNCOOL to smoke:

- on Sunday mornings during the church service from 10:30-11:45AM.
- during Sunday Nite Live from 7:00-9:00 PM.
- during Wonderful Wednesday services or Support Group.
- during worship circles at lock-ins, conferences, or other youth meetings.

III. The following are serious offenses and will be dealt with immediately by a YAC (Youth Adult Committee), which will have been previously chosen by the group:

- violence and fighting (Pow! JAM! BAM!)
- possession of anything that is a weapon and might hurt somebody else, such as knives, firearms, fireworks, etc. (No nuclear explosives!)
- engaging in sexual intercourse or exhibiting sexually explicit behavior
- possessing alcohol or other illegal substances.

IV. The following behavior is UNCOOL and deters the growth of the community:

- leaving or coming in unnecessarily during a youth meeting of any kind. You know what time we start. Try to get things like telephone calls, rap sessions, bathroom breaks, food breaks, smoking reliefs, reliefs, etc. done BEFORE you enter a meeting. We all have our needs, but please RESPECT others.

2) interrupting or talking while somebody else is talking.

3) messing with the sound and light equipment in the sanctuary without a specific certificate to do so. (Take the course, damn it!)

4) having to be referred to the Spirit Council because you don't have your permission slip, you need to leave early, etc. (we are *minors*, remember?)

5) running around the church without respect for the art. The church is a registered gallery. (If you don't believe it, take a look at some of the prices.)

6) B.O.F.

* Basically, use common sense: RESPECT others.

V. WHO? Meetings, lock-ins, and conferences.

1) Being a member of YRUU youth group does not make you a member of the UUA church. Joint membership is cool. Being a member of YRUU means that you get our mail, are on our roll, and can go to lock-ins and cons (It's fun; try it sometime.)

2) You must be a member of YRUU to go to a conference. RATIONALE: (1) Conferences should be something that members get to do. It isn't fair for outsiders to be able to go to cons without caring at all for our youth group or putting time in for vans and stuff. (2) The advisors are responsible for us across the border (ROAD TRIP) and don't want to be responsible for people they've NEVER met. (3) Besides, only YRUU members receive forms to go to cons. Van space is always limited and will be given on a "first come, first serve basis".

Synapse wants to know what's up with YOUR local!

Send us your juicy tidbits! 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA, 02108

Weaving a Web of (Young) UU Women

by Valerie Tremelat

This past April contained five glorious days, the days of "Womanquest." It was a continental conference gathering 320 women together for fun, sharing, and creating.

The goals of the business part of the conference were to formulate concrete ideas about a Unitarian Universalist women's organization and to lay the groundwork for getting the organization started. Both these goals were achieved by working in small groups, brainstorming and prioritizing, and in the large group, to reach consensus on the issues we thought were the most important for the focus of a UU women's organization.

The friendships made at Womanquest ... can never be broken ...

It was decided that the following areas should be the focus of the next phase of the UU women's movement:

1. The development and implementation of strong district level women's programming
2. The proactive inclusion of all women in district programming.
3. The Women and Religion Committee work on being the voice of conscience for women's concerns and act as an advocate of funding for women's programming.
4. The continued efforts of the UU Women's Federation to form a non-hierarchical, member-based organization that oversees the network of communication and the development and sharing of program resources for all UU women.

In an effort to oversee the implementa-

tion of these ideas, it was suggested that districts form Women's Program Councils with representatives from every church, as well as YRUU and C*UUYAN.

The celebration of the female gender and the interests we all shared (i.e. education, affordable day care, saving our environment, and more), plus our common experiences as females brought us closer together (there was a lot of bonding going on!). Every face on the campus of George Williams College in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin seemed like a familiar face, and the person wearing it was a warm, loving, interesting woman. The friendships made at Womanquest are the kind that can never be broken, and memories will last forever.

I cannot express how important Womanquest was to me. It came at the perfect time for me to begin my interests in women's issues and in the power of being a woman. It was a terrific display of how effective women are when they work together and it inspired me to think of all the things women will create and accomplish in the future. And it made me think of YOU.

Yes, you who are reading this, whether you are female or male, your interest in Womanquest and women's issues is the energy we need to get the UU women's movement off the ground. I would like to mention a few ways for you to help with and benefit from the UU women's organizations. You could become a member of the UU Women's Federation. For a nominal fee*, you can receive the UUWF's newslet-

ter and be tapped into information relating to UU women. Also, you could send your address to me (see below) because I am compiling a list of young UU women who are interested in women's issues, conferences, curricula, and anything else. If there is enough energy from you we may be able to form a network and get ourselves organized.

... and memories will last forever.

Also, if you ever, ever receive something in the mail about a women's event, I would like to highly encourage you to attend. There tends to be scholarship money available for people who need it and if you don't go, you may be missing a once in a lifetime experience. If you aren't interested, please spread the word. Don't deprive someone else of the experience of a lifetime. At Womanquest, out of 320 women, only 8 participants were under 22 years of age. Please get the word out about UU women's events and I hope to see you at the next continental women's conference.

**The fee for individual membership in the UUWF is \$25/year. There is a discount offered to groups of five or more (\$5 per person per year). If you are interested in joining, contact the UUWF at 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA, 02108.*

Valerie Tremelat, a high school senior, is a member of the YRUU Steering Committee, served on the Womanquest planning committee, and is an active member of both her local youth group and the Central Midwest District Youth Adult Committee. She can be reached at: 5804 Ledgemont Ct., Madison, WI 53711.

GENDER RAP ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

reported by Valerie Tremelat

At Con-Con 1990 a women's rap was held that raised some very important issues and generated some provocative questions. Some of these questions were shared with the men's rap group in the form of a fishbowl conversation. Many felt that these areas of concern were not adequately addressed at Con-Con, and should be brought out for discussion by men and women in youth groups, classrooms, by the fireside - where ever. It would be valuable for you to send in thoughts and ideas you and/or your youth group generated so the responses can be compiled and shared with other women and men who are interested in these issues. No names will be published. But please don't forget to include your age and your gender. Nothing will be sent to Ann Landers, and no one will answer your letters. I'm just putting it all together. You can help others who are struggling with these issues/questions by sharing your ideas and insights. If a topic or question is something you have dealt with yourself, please share your experience with others who care. A lot can be gained by exchanging ideas, experiences, and opinions.

QUESTIONS

How do you feel affected by the media? Does it influence what you find attractive in a woman or man?

How do you feel about women having children without men?(artificial insemination)

How do you feel about women going topless?

What do you do to stop reinforcing stereotypes about women or men?

How do you define sexual harassment? Where do you draw the line between what is acceptable behavior and what is offensive?

Do your closest friends tend to be women or men?

How do you feel about househusbands?

How do you feel about men wearing skirts?

Do you think women should be drafted?

Do you think less of women that have been raped?

Is it easier to grow up as a female or a male?

How do you feel about homosexuality (esp. lesbianism)? How do you feel about bisexuality?

In what instances have you had to stand up for yourself as a woman? What did you do?

Do you think we judge others by external beauty? Why do we?

Is it more acceptable for women to show their feelings? How does that make you feel?

How do you feel about women providing the condoms in an intimate situation?

Do you imagine yourself having children? What kind of world would you like to raise them in?

ISSUES

The unwillingness of society to affirm "traditional" women's* roles as valid and necessary occupations

The unwillingness of society to accept "traditional" crafts as art

The feeling among women that their importance and status is based on their boyfriend's importance or status

The difficulty in defining a "feminist" - being a feminist versus being a separatist

How you stand up for yourself as a woman

Why you stand up for yourself as a woman

Feminist theory needs to be accessible to all women

Sexual discrimination: how do you recognize it, how do you prove it?

Rape, Sexual abuse, Violence against women

Abortion/reproductive rights

Rock lyrics and media promoting negative attitudes about and towards women

Being taken seriously as a woman

**The word women does not mean all women, and is not meant to exclude men.*

All responses will be graciously and respectfully accepted.

Please send them to:
**Rap Issues and Questions
Youth Office
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108**

TO C.O. OR NOT TO C.O. - *that is the question!*

With the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, the Youth Office has received numerous requests for information about conscientious objection. In the following articles, we hope to provide information and resources that will help young men make informed decisions about U.S. military service and conscientious objection. If you are a young man under the age of 18, it is important for you to begin thinking about these issues now. If you are a young woman, you might want to consider learning more about military service and conscientious objection so that you can help your male friends as they face the possibility of being drafted for a war in the Middle East. We were unable to obtain information about Canadian draft law in a timely fashion. If you are a Canadian YRUUer, maybe you can provide us with some information to publish in a later issue.

by Bill Gupton

When Adam Leite asked me to write a brief *Synapse* article about draft registration and conscientious objection (C.O.), I readily agreed. After all, I'd led discussions at Youth Council and a workshop at Con-Con about the subject, and as an advisor (I always liked that term) I have given my share of well-intentioned advice to UU youth over the years.

But what I've learned about advice is that most of the time it is better just to examine the facts objectively and enable youth to make a well-informed decision. When it comes to draft registration and conscientious objection, that's the only advice draft counselors have given me — DON'T GIVE ADVICE.

So here are just the facts, man. American young men are required by law to register for the draft sometime between 30 days before and 29 days after their 18th birthday. This registration gives the government a list of potential names of men to use if there is ever a decision to resume the military draft. Currently there is not a mili-

tary draft in the U.S.

Conscientious objectors are those people "who, by reason of religious training and belief, [are] conscientiously opposed to war in any form." The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that "religious training and belief" includes moral and ethical beliefs not necessarily tied to traditional religious beliefs. If a young man is classified as a conscientious objector by his local draft board, he cannot be forced to participate in the military.

So here are just the facts, man.

Each individual young man (there is no draft or draft registration for women) must decide for himself whether or not to register for the draft, and whether or not to declare himself a conscientious objector. Statistics indicate that at least half a million young men who have been required to register for the draft since 1980 have not done so; only a handful have ever been prosecuted. Failure to register for the draft does, however, disqualify a person from receiv-

ing federal financial aid to pay for college.

There are no statistics on how many young men have declared themselves C.O.'s, largely because this is often a private declaration. (Editor's note: The Selective Service does not permit registration as a conscientious objector. There is no place on the registration card to state your opposition to military service.)

The Unitarian Universalist Association, and many local UU churches, have agreed to help potential conscientious objectors by keeping files documenting their C.O. claims. The Unitarian Universalist Association office in Boston keeps records of whatever documentation, forms, and letters a young UU sends in regarding his conscientious objection. Such records and backing from the Unitarian Universalist denomination could be very beneficial in substantiating a C.O. claim before a local draft board.

It is never too soon, or too late, to declare oneself a conscientious objector, but it is certainly wise to be as well-informed as possible. The best way to do this is to contact a reputable counseling organization for free help and information. Two organizations I have found particularly helpful with draft and C.O. information are the Central Committee for Conscientious Objection (CCCCO) and the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO).

Bill Gupton is an advisor for the youth group at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU STAND?

by Adam Leite

If the draft was reestablished and you were drafted, you would have 10 days from the time your induction notice is issued to request reclassification as a conscientious objector. You would then have only a few days more to complete your application for conscientious objector status.

So it is never too early to start thinking about how you would support your claim. The first and most important thing to do is decide where you stand. Do your deeply and sincerely held moral, ethical, religious, or a combination of religious and moral beliefs prevent you from participating in war? Why?

That is what you will have to explain to your local draft board if you request C.O. status, so it is important that you take the time to thoroughly clarify your beliefs about war and reflect carefully on your own conclusions.

The following questions might help you in that process (they might make great discussion topics for your youth group, too).

1. What are your beliefs about war? What are your beliefs about the relationship of war to peace, truth, and justice?
2. Do you believe that there are just and unjust wars?
3. Do you have a deep conviction, motivated by conscience, that prevents you from taking part in armed combat? How can that best be described?

4. How did you acquire these beliefs?
5. How do your beliefs affect the way you live and the type of work you do or plan to do? Can you describe specific actions or incidents that demonstrate your beliefs?
6. If you could not participate in armed combat, could you perform noncombatant duties such as medic, clerk, or cook? Why or why not? (C.O.'s are required to do noncombatant military service, unless their conscience prevents them from such participation, in which case they are required to do civilian work as alternative service.)

In addition to clarifying your own beliefs, it is important to begin keeping a file to substantiate your C.O. claim. Keep written notes about your beliefs, records of any humanitarian, public service, or anti-war work you do, and copies of term papers, letters to the editor, or any other writings that publicly declare your beliefs. In addition, keep some letters of support from people who know you well and can attest to the sincerity of your beliefs.

If you are a member of a Unitarian Universalist church or fellowship, you can record a statement of your objection to participation in war with the UU Registry of Conscientious Objectors. For more information or to submit a statement, write to the Registry of Conscientious Objectors, at the

below address.

Why not take the crucial first step? Ask yourself: *What do I believe about war?*

Adam Leite is one of the two YRUU Programs Specialists working at the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston. Much of the information in this article was taken from the Unitarian Universalist Associations' pamphlet Facts on Military Service and Conscientious Objection. Copies of this pamphlet can be obtained by contacting the UUA Bookstore, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. Pamphlets cost \$12 for 25.

Resource Organizations

UU Registry of Conscientious Objectors: Office of the Executive Vice President, Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108-2800. *A registry kept by the Association for young men wishing to record a formal statement of their objection to participation in war and for family members wishing to document their support for such statements.*

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCCO): 2208 South St., Philadelphia, PA 19146, (215) 545-4626. *Nonprofit agency for military and draft counseling; publishes a quarterly newsletter.*

CCCCO - Western Region: P.O. box 42249, San Francisco, CA 94142, (415) 695-7755.

Fellowship of Reconciliation: P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960, (914) 358-4601. *Interfaith pacifist organization.*

National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO): 1601 Connecticut Ave., NW, suite #750, Washington, DC 20009-1035, (202) 483-4510. *Interreligious organization set up to counsel young persons on conscription alternatives; UUA is a member.*

Hormones and Religious Understanding

by Liv Gjestvang



CHAM

I have been wondering what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist for a long time. But in all of the religious discussions I've had, I have never gotten a very clear answer. Then I realized that all of the people I've ever talked to about it have been through puberty. I made a sudden and shocking realization at that moment, that perhaps the wisdom and knowledge of UUism is lost in the process of physical development. The mind has so much to concentrate on: sprouting armpit hairs, increasing odor-output from sweat glands, producing ever-represented blemishes, and attempting to bring hormonal imbalances to non life-threatening levels. Perhaps UUism loses priority during this phase. I decided to talk to the smooth-skinned, sweet smelling youth of the Rockford (IL) Church to test my theory. I received a variety of interesting answers, the majority of which were some version of "huh?? I don't know what you're talking about!" Some girls I talked to were very impressive though. When I asked them what it meant to be Unitarian Universalist they answered:

"It means you take in different ideas and they are interesting."

"A little bit of everything!"

"It means you like to play outside and do work."

"They always give you some weird juice like nectar juice to drink!"

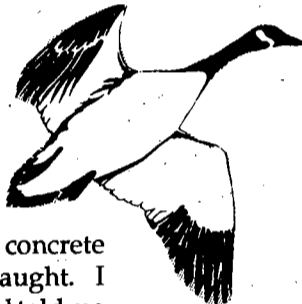
"Everyone can believe in anything."

"You will accept people even if they're different."

and my personal favorite -

"You are UGLY!!" ...but please don't take that one personally; she was looking at me when she said it so I'll take all credit for that one.

I certainly enjoyed dragging answers out of the 4-10 year olds and I decided (unfortunately) that UUism is never really clear to anyone, NOT EVEN FOUR YEAR OLDS!!



Growing up Unitarian Universalist, I was never told what to believe. I was encouraged, however, to observe and discover for myself what I believe in. With the help of my Catholic neighbors, I formulated the following beliefs:

1. Babies are "mail-ordered" from God with choice of eye color, hair color, and gender.

2. Once the baby is ready, God puts it in the mom's tummy and it pops out of her belly button (what else could belly buttons be for?)

3. The rain is actually God crying because he is sad.

4. The sound of thunder is really God bowling in the sky.

Although I grew up in a UU church, the influence I got from my non-UU friends seemed to dominate. For a long

time I wanted to cling to the concrete beliefs that other churches taught. I used to wish that someone had told me what to answer when I was asked what I believe in. But now I realize that not knowing is a part of UUism: not knowing about deadlines, not knowing whose turn it is to drive in the carpool, not knowing you were supposed to be early! But mostly being secure in not understanding everything is the trick. A Unitarian Universalist church is a place to be supported. At my church I have not memorized another person's view of the world, but I learned to look for my own. I have learned to be religious. I have learned to be open-minded and to respect people's differences. I have learned to believe in myself. (Oh, and one of the most valuable things I have learned is how to play a mean game of wink!)

Liv Gjestvang is a sophomore in high school and a member of the YRUU Steering Committee.

THE U.S.S.R. AND YOU YOU

Do you want to travel to exotic places? Do you like conferences? Did you ever wonder what it would be like to combine the two? Next July (sometime between G.A. and Con Con), a select group of young Unitarian Universalists (ages 17-21) will go on the ultimate road trip - a 15-day "traveling conference" within the Soviet Union!

For an application form and more information, fill out this form *promptly* and mail it to:

"Bill's Excellent Adventure"
c/o Bill Gupion
1078 Briarcliff NE apt. 3
Atlanta, GA 30306

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Birthdate: _____



SO,

by Jill Huebner

So, I'm into organized religion without (the) deity, I believe (opposite of his mother) I don't like the way it sounds: organized religion. and I don't believe it is that organized, not as the phrase implies: coordinated belief structure everyone believes the same thing, what they are told dogma however, we do have our 'principles and purposes' "...the worth and dignity of every human..." sounds more like a constitution we are perhaps more organized as a denomination than many others I say more or less than Catholicism more bureaucracy you could say committees

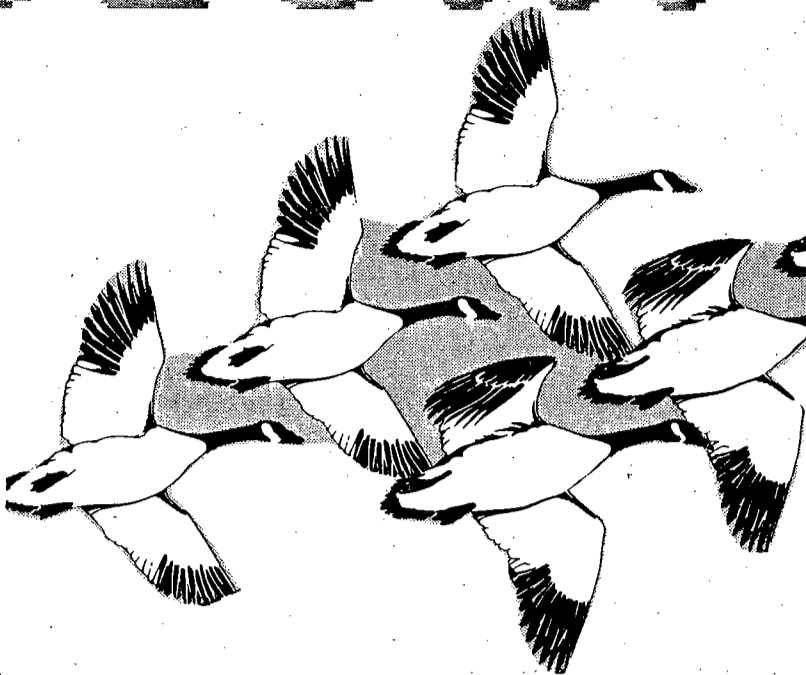
"Does your family celebrate Easter?" "when we were little Dad would hide colored eggs for us does that count?" and we went to church, not unusual sometimes there would be a flower communion once or twice we got new clothes I don't even remember thinking about a crucified man being resurrected and we never ate lamb didn't get huge ugly expensive bright baskets of sugar occasionally a hollow chocolate bunny, though, we always wanted one (chocolate bunny) sometimes we had pastel pancakes We were celebrating spring on the christian holiday sort of regressing, returning to the religion's roots I like this idea: celebrating the resurrection of life life in general, plants, leaving the religious suffering out of spring.

he sees that much harm has been done by organized religion I too but I also see that people have a need for fellowship affirmation it is comforting to be able to go to a Unitarian Universalist church or 4 in New York City and feel a sense of belonging spiritual community a tie to the people, not to icons not even necessarily the beliefs save the belief in choice and worth it has brought me much good, my religion experience, knowledge, people, a place to live in NYC. I would like for him to understand this my --- he does not have to embrace it but not just accept I would not say it is a need, though needs are fulfilled it is a choice, my choice of religion.



Jill Huebner is a long time YRUUer from Florida.

NGES...



Fight the Power

by Tom Doyle

It must be time to write an article for *Synapse*. I have none of my school work done, I am tired, and I am more pessimistic about the future of the U.S. than I am about the chances for the Boston Celtics to win the championship this year (and *that's* pessimistic). It is, in fact, the perfect time to write an article for *Synapse*!

The North American continent is not as happy as it used to be. The United States faces economic decline, military conflict, environmental catastrophe, racism in the form of a "drug war" against a large number of its citizens, white power, anti-semitism, voter apathy, and Dan Quayle. And with all due respect to Canadians, y'all aren't doing too well either. Constitutional crisis, Quebec secession and the Native American conflict have all dawned in the recent past. Even Tom Brokaw has a glower of despair these days.

Amidst all of this, what is a white, male, nineteen year old, middle class Unitarian Universalist supposed to do? I say, **Fight it!** But not blindly. It is my contention that Unitarian Universalism, as a religion, compels us to work toward social reform and social justice by any means necessary. Every religion has a set of principles agreed to by its followers. For some religions these are very clear dogma, like "don't go around swearing or sleeping with whoever you want." Unitarian Universalism has a somewhat less narrow dogma. Central to this, and perhaps what "this" is, are the principles and purposes of our denomination. It is these principles that hold us together and affirm our diversity while bonding us in a language of cooperation. Respect for the transcendence of these principles is key for us to be anything besides a social club of relatively okay people. It is thus central to who we are as UU's to oppose any detraction from these principles for the sake of expedience or the good of a privileged few. It is for this reason that social action, in any form, is essential for us to call ourselves a religious organization.

The world is ours to improve. Apathy is the only thing that keeps us from starting to tear down the power structures that keep all of us down. But, you say, "Yeah. SO?" or "not more of this 60's crap again, *thirtysomething* is where all that stuff ends up." I say think what you want, but you and I will continue to be blamed for much of the injustice in this world unless we begin to stop it now.

"Fighting the power" can take many forms, from working in soup kitchens to building houses for the homeless. Election day has passed, but new elections are held all the time; get involved with campaigns and hand out literature at voting booths. Also, getting others involved (both in your church and elsewhere) can be very important. In contrast to these legal means, you can go out and wage war against corporate America. Monkey wrenching (i.e. vandalizing bulldozers and tractors sent to clear-cut forests) is illegal, but is another way to stand up for what you believe.

We, as Unitarian Universalists, have great resources in our hands. The greatest of these is each other. There are, by some estimates, 10,000 YRUUers out there. Working on the local level is bound to bring about change in your hometown. Your district can also coordinate whole weekends of social action centered around particular themes. Continental YRUU has recently started a comprehensive social action program to help with a concerted effort to stop the social injustice that is everywhere.

It is part of who we are as Unitarian Universalists to work toward the goals of recognizing the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." Unitarian Universalism has a long history of working and living by these ideals. Michael Servetus was burned for these beliefs. Dana Maclean Greeley, the first president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, led the Board of Trustees to Selma, Alabama to march with Martin Luther King, Jr. And our current president, William Schulz, has kept alive our beliefs by participating in the "March for Women's Lives" in Washington, D.C. The youth, as always, have been on the forefront of all these actions; our purposes state this, and we must carry it through. It is now time that we act like Unitarian Universalists and attempt to make the world a better place: to pull our heads out of our butts and start to fight the powers that be.

Tom Doyle is a member of the YRUU Steering Committee.



CELEBRATE!

by Justina Prenatt

Why do we fail to see that life is a celebration? Instead of being in a constant state of exaltation, we tend to mope, to lose ourselves in self-made catacombs - so close to each of our fellow humans, but blocked off by thick walls of mortar and despair. I don't want to stay there - catacombs don't smell as nice as sunny days in the park. Away from analogy, don't you agree? I want to escape this human (teenage) tendency to wallow in depressing, death obsession, and I need your help! I can't do it alone, and I don't want to! It's time to loosen your clutches on me, and I promise I'll take mine from you. I've been trying for a year to emerge in the sunlight: I want to walk on country roads, not dwell in urban stench, but every time I look for another break free, you're writing, singing, thinking, screaming about the darkness. If you try my dirt path instead of your cracked sidewalk you might like it. Plus it feels better on your feet: I know, my boots kicked along the same tar for a while. My toes breathe better now. So, I'm not preaching; why would I? We're all in this together. So this is my plea for help; instead of begging for an end to it all, I'm asking for a new beginning. Come with me. Start out slowly - look for daisies growing on the side of the road, listen to a song about love (as cheesy as it sounds!), and write a poem about your friends that are alive - you probably have more of them than those who aren't. Your next step can be this - drive as far from urbania as you can until you find a secluded scenic spot. Take with you all your favorite people, a radio, a frisbee, and lots of fun food. This is called a picnic. I picnic more than anyone alive; it is the thing we live for, as close as I've come to the meaning of life. I understand if sometimes you need to have a black day. When you do, indulge it. After you've done that you will find that you really have an easier and a hell of a lot more fun celebration, I mean, life, if you picnic. You're all invited on my picnic, and we can go as soon as you're ready. In the meantime I'll be baking some bread to take with us. See ya soon!

Justina Prenatt is Ohio Meadville District's Youth Council Representative.

It's Time for a Change!



Hi! I'm Christine Murphy and I will be the new YRUU Programs Specialist beginning January 2nd. Presently I am a double major in Women's Studies and Journalism at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. For fun I like to have long discussions over late night coffee. I also enjoy reading and going to the movies. I'm a total media junkie, and could spend hours on end reading the newspaper while watching CNN. I'm really excited to be back on the east side of Massachusetts, especially in Boston, and I can't wait to discover all the challenges this new job will bring.

ETHICS into ACTION

by Richard Foote

Entering my second year as an advisor working in our local church, I am occasionally amazed at the difference in my perception of a youth during a conference or YRUU meeting and the way that our adult community views the same individual. It is something to see a young man or woman be a caring, responsible force only to have those qualities go unrecognized in the larger, adult dominated community.

The difference reminds me of the fragility of the process of developing one's own personal power. Now in my forties, I take my rights somewhat for granted. I get to choose what I want within the larger scope of choices I have made, and can defend myself against those who would pressure me into accepting other choices. For us adults being older usually includes knowing our selves and our abilities. This knowing is such a part of our adult selves that we may forget the struggle it was to get here, and forget the relative vulnerability and weakness of youth in our culture.

It is this imbalance of power that demands that we as adults develop and subscribe to standards of ethical behavior in our relationships with youth. One such standard is the "Code of Ethics for Persons Working with Youth in UUA Sponsored Programming." This statement recognizes the special care we must take to never "sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse." This

code calls upon us to do our part.

But if we only look at this statement as being for adults, we miss something valuable. This statement does more than present a code for the behavior of adults. It represents a brief statement of the inalienable rights of youth. Youth have a right to fair and moral treatment from adults. I encourage all youth to look upon this code not only as a contract for adults working with youth, but as a basic guideline to the kind of treatment one should expect, deserve and demand from adults in one's life. Use this code as a tool. Measure the conduct of the adults in your life against it. If you discover your personal rights are being violated, you have a right to complain about such treatment. Complain to your parents, youth group advisor, your minister, Child Protective Services, sympathetic school officials, or anyone else you feel you can trust. You may not feel you have such rights, or such power, but you do.

The Code of Ethics is about the protection of personal rights from the abuses of power. But there are also personal freedoms that can be enjoyed once one's basic right to safety is assured. Once one is free from persecution, one can take a step from surviving to thriving. There are freedoms that a person must enjoy if they are to become a healthy, whole human being. The following list presents some basic freedoms that all people deserve. At the center of these freedoms is the free-

dom from pressure to conform. Youth are at risk of losing these to schools, parents, or other groups that can't wait to tell youth what to think or how to feel. This list was developed by the late Virginia Satir.

THE BASIC POWERS AND FREEDOMS OF HUMAN BEINGS

Human beings have a right to have lives of value, lives with meaning, lives with purpose, lives of quality.

Human beings deserve these freedoms:
To see and hear what you see and hear, not what you should see and hear.

To know what you know rather than what you should know.

To want what you want, rather than what you should want.

Richard Foote is a youth group advisor in Walnut Creek, CA.

To imagine what you imagine, rather than what you should imagine.

To feel what you feel rather than what you should feel.

To express what you want to express, rather than what you should express.

To create what you want, rather than what you should create.

Just as with the Code of Ethics, these seven freedoms can be used to evaluate the behavior of those around you to see if it measures up to what you deserve. As a group begins to believe it has rights and demands fair treatment from those in power around the group, then a new era begins. And time may come when the empowerment of youth does not have to end when the conference is over.

Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care and support that will enable youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential is to be realized. There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that youth and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with persons in their care; therefore, leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

◀ **Bananas, not bombs!** (from left) Rebecca Sherouse, Hannah Wells, Chad Moncy, Ryan Flaherty, Erik Johnson, and Katy Taylor take a quick break for food energy at the UU-UNO Youth Conference on Disarmament.
Photo by Joan Stiehl



A Disarming Statement

The following is the conference statement of the Youth Conference on Disarmament held in New York City, November 15-18, 1990

"A human being is a part of the whole called by us "Universe," a part limited in time and space. One experiences oneself, one's thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of one's consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty." -Albert Einstein

We, 26 Unitarian Universalist youth from North America, came here as individuals with our own thoughts, concerns, and ideas only to discover we all shared common goals. Leaving our very different lives behind, we came and created one unified yet diverse community. We gathered strength and knowledge from the many United Nations delegates we spoke with. From them we gained appreciation of the fact that all humans are partners in a common endeavor. It simply is not sufficient to shift the responsibility to others; it is imperative that we accept the consequences of our actions. Such thinking implies major change and commitment starting at home. It suggests alternatives in everything we think and do. It involves assuming a feeling of personal and historical responsibility for all the assaults upon the health of our planet. It requires us to get involved with our community, our world. This is our challenge.

If you lie down in the face of turmoil and dissent, you are just another brick paving the road to our destruction. We believe that we must deal with the causes of war or we will surely suffer the effects. Every war in recorded history can be traced to three main causes: greed, intolerance, and oppression. It is these causes

that must be rooted out if we are to achieve a permanent disarmament solution. We must eliminate archaic and hypocritical attitudes toward resolving conflicts. We need to have a peaceful and unbiased forum where conflicts and misunderstandings can be resolved. The world must take up a non-violent crusade to end war and other armed conflict. This crusade must use the tools of peace, those being the United Nations, development of all countries, and the conversion of military industry and resources to a more humanitarian pursuit. To work toward a non-violent world, we can become the tools of peace by writing, getting involved in demonstrations, and educating others. It is a battle we must win. There is no other option.

This world is fighting against a common enemy; it's not the communists, the socialists, the capitalists, or Iraq. Our common enemy is our ignorance: the ignorance of our potential for our own destruction. We need to fight for a common goal, a common cause, a common responsibility. We are unified by the fact that we all live on this earth together. An earth that, when seen from far away, has no dividing lines for separate countries. This earth has the responsibility as one to ensure its peaceful existence. The fact that this earth is made up of separate countries that differ greatly should only contribute to a unity through diversity. We cannot afford to let our differences and selfish motivations destroy us. When we commit ourselves to hostile defense, we will surely kill others. And since we are one, when we kill others, we kill ourselves.

WE REALIZE THAT WE NEED TO BUILD A PEACEFUL WORLD,
WHERE WE CAN ALL LIVE FREE FROM THE THREAT OF WAR.

• The UU-United Nations Office Youth Conference on Disarmament is an annual event for youth ages 15-17 from the U.S. and Canada. For more information, contact the Youth Office. •

Eyes line the procession

by Joseph Phillips, St. Paul, MN

Eyes line the procession
this parade will never end.
warmed explosive eyes. liquid
smiles erect infrequently tying face and
mind together
lions smile, death jaws wide. growing

two eyes float away, enjoying a
perfect Sky

walks, talks
bars, stripshows, fine luxurious wine
up from California in the dense,
fleshy heat

watch for the fires
notes from home
leave me once now
forever

watch for the street killer
he smokes eyes
collecting cornias,
rare pleasure
Indian night



Freedom

by Andrew Daniel, Houlton, ME

When I was born I was free
to run around naked if I wanted to,
then I went to school.
Naptime! Playtime! Readtime!
Wrapping me up in a security blanket
that slowly grew!
and grew!
and grew!
into a straightjacket too big for me
to fill!
Now I'm feeling more and more
comfortable with the bonds,
So they begin to loosen them
Giving me more and more room to
roam
Soon they'll take off the jacket
After imposing one last bond on
me:
Responsibility

Lack of Silence

by Tina Abich, Jax, FL

A symphony of flute, cello, and
violin sing Mozart's song.
Pulsing progressive pumps from a
band spiked and long.
Marley marry with island bumbo
and jam
And Spanish flamenco full of
rhythm and
emotion from the Catelan.
Bong and bungle
Spicey hot, red and yellow steel
drums on earthen floor.
The waves sound like a bowl
full of marbles upon the shore.
This is the New Age.



Kiva

by Kristen Fikkan,
Salt Lake City, UT

Her hands opening
releasing sand
spilling it onto the sphere of sky
molded like a clay pot
by Ancient Ones.

Eyelids close, lashes
the flutter of the crows wing.

Night black silken strands
cross her face
full of sand-rich red stone
red as her skin.

Her skirt billows around her
woven clouds
brushing the grass
tumbling in a tide
of wind on the rise.

Breathless as the red hill
she could be another tree
climbing its back
shaped by the wind
with roots reaching deep
into the land.

she descends into the kiva
tastes the rock-
history and smoke.
Circles of stones made for spirits of
earth
and fertility.

Across the vastness of her eye
a pipe is played
the land like red sand
in her palm.



PERSONALS

Emily and Coleen are the only ones
who know I'm "away" at school: Jill
Huebner, 423-1A Tower Lake, Ed-
wardsville, IL 62025. You've no excuse
now.

Elena- so these brief times together will
be our memories of youth. I wouldn't
have it any other way. You know how
much I treasure memories. More than
this I prize our time together.

U...

F...

Zebadiah K-Roe

American Country Hick with The Ac-
cent? When was I in Ottawa and in the
company of those I don't know. Is
someone stealing my experience or
just my name. Am I forgetful or just
befogged. - Zebadiah

Co-Co: I miss you. Thanks for the hugs
and hands-holding and late-night/ early
morning talks. You have touched me
deep inside and I smile and thrill when-
ever I think that you are no teven a good
movie's length drive away from me. I
saw a shooting star that night.

Love and snuggles, Your Secret Buddy
Elon: Dull and superficial? A rose by
any other name would smell as sweet.
To me you are
long shapes smooth bendy flowing bubbly forever
into the infinite dusky horizon. *Pop*
Here's where the story ends - but this is
only the beginning. I am not there in
T.C., but I am always with you.
Many foolrubs to you with love,
Jan Erik, your catfish friend

A little philosophical thought for my
fellow Michigianians and anyone else
who has had one of Kirk's candies: Life
is like a Super Lemon; you have to
grimace through the sourness that's on
the outside without spitting it out before
you can taste the sweetness. Caitlin.
To my dress-wearing cardiologist: Just
a quick message from the one who
talks too much and misses you more:
Whatever you do, don't lose any more
points before Washington! Please write
me today and explain why states can't
be arranged alphabetically and long
distance isn't free!

To the best touch group ever: THE
SUNSHINE FAMILY! I miss you all
soooo much and my picture didn't turn
out. If you have a good photo please
send it to me! Take care of yourselves
and never forget that I love you all;
Erica, Denis, Julie Ann, Graham, Erin,
Sean, Barrett, Jana, Tara, Jeanne and
Septembre. Yo' mamma Val.

To my beloved friends who weren't at
Con-Con 1990; Seth L., Eliza, Dan R.,
Ane, Jason, Joseph, HAB, Erik, Julian
and all the rest. Con-Con felt empty
without you. I feel empty without you.
With loving memories, Val.

Just a big, cheery hello to the best boys
I know; that's right, I mean Mr. Fabu-
lous, The Chicken, Yhazu, Puddin' and
the unforgettable ALBERT HERBERT
MUFFINHEAD REINHARDT, III! Visit
Visit Visit!
Much mushiness from Coleen

P.S. Oh, yeah, Mark, I guess I love you,
too... Sparky.

Rachelspiderwoman - Don't lose faith!
Not happy with Mass Bay? Well,
Change It! It's all up to you - you're a
wonderful leader and you can do *what-
ever* you want! I love you, Kater.

Mass Bay Steering Comm. - Goddess,
I miss you guys! Oberlin is great, but I
miss our cons. Hope to see you all this
summer. Hang in there! Love Kate,
Oberlin College Mailroom Box 1620,
Oberlin, OH 44074.

Krissy: miss you; hope we can get
together this summer. Love and culi-
nary thought, Jon.

Ashley: I'm truly sorry. Please contact
me, Jon.

Dear Kate, Nate, Andrew, Steve,
Sarah(s), **Wayland and Gloucester:**
you are WONDERFUL [spaghetti, Van
o' Luv, Playroom, all my questions,
Frutjiif Capra and the ballet, connect-
ing, music, basketing, the ocean and
the quarries, Jack Fall, lovecat, Moxie,
uncle Dana, Basketcase, Russia trains,
letters, phone calls...] Love, Cynthia.
"Roots and Wings" indeed! SUUSI was
the best thanx to my SUUSI Family. I
love you folks. (XNFJ) Tina Abich.

Laura Smith in Greenville, SC. (and all
of cabin 19) I miss you, I love you!
Need human contact. Please write.
"You'll dance to anything by the Smiths"
Love eternally, your lustbunny.
Hey, Pepsi! You must feel so special...
Ethan who? I know no Ethan! I love

you!
love, Diet Coke (guess!)
Desperately Seeking Ethan F.... You
are somewhere out there, maybe in the
"wide" world of Warren Wilson. I won't
forget you!

Always, A Stranger.
Uncle Vennie,
Thanks for giving me a new
perspective. Jennifer M.

DOO DODD'S, I miss y'all! Love, Mom
To the newly-wed Rev.'s Jacob B. ten
Hove and Barbara Wells, "homegrown"
East Coast UU's and now West Coast
ministers. CONGRATULATIONS !!!

Dear DOO DODDS, I love you all...it
was great to be related to you! I still
think of us and our sparky life savers
and eye massages. I miss you, Bedelia
Julie, thanks a TON for the Flying
Zucchini. It was really great! We'll miss
you lots when you're gone! you're leav-
ing a tough spot to fill. Love, Liv
Anna N., Did you tell anyone about the
damper? How's the traction on your
shoes? Seen any little mice lately?
Maybe you should get bigger mittens
so they'll fit on your feet! another Ranger
Mac-er loves you!

Ellie, How's geometry? Mine's ever so
exciting since I started using floures-
cent fabric paint! Lets dance in a strobe
with cool nails again someday! Oh give
me a home...

Charley/Chaz: whoever, wherever you
are now, I thank you for the memories
- Parisa

CON-CON 1990: Celebrating the Child Within

by Juliana Tillema

Con-Con, the annual continental conference joining youth from across the continent, was held August 18-24, 1990, at The Mountain Conference Center in North Carolina. The Mountain is literally an entire mountain devoted to UU activities. It is one of the most beautiful and most peaceful places I have ever been.



Andrew Daniel and Kathy Murphy (from left), enjoying the community at Con-Con 1990 (photo by Adam Leite).

The official theme at Con-Con this year was *Changes: The Child Within*, and workshops focused on expressing the healthy, nurtured child within all of us. Workshops included: The Creator Within - creative problem solving, Meditation Blues - expression through song, Juggling, Standing Up for Women NOW, and many others. One shot workshops were held in the afternoons and included

a young men's and women's discussion, a trip to a rock slide, hiking, swimming, a youth and adult fishbowl, massage, and "grooming."

Besides learning and sharing at our individual workshops, the whole group converged for worship services, energy circles, and meals. Each evening held an all-camp activity - story-telling, a banquet, dancing, and a coffeehouse, which provided people with an opportunity to come together, laugh, sing and talk. PLUS ... this year's annual all-day, all-camp activity was ... a carnival. Fortunes were told, feet were washed, apples bobbed for, and lots of laughs were had by all.

Besides all of these wonderful planned activities, there was plenty of free time to laze around, relax, and do your own thing. It was during this time that I formed some amazing and powerful friendships. Friendships at Con-Con seem to form almost instantly, and will last a lifetime. They seem to form not because of similarities between people and their backgrounds, but from a common respect for diversity and difference. The friendships I made were with people of all different shapes, sizes, beliefs, backgrounds, colors, and understandings, yet we all shared the inherent similarity of human beingness - an important link we often forget.

I urge anyone who is interested to attend Con-Con next August. It is a great way to have lots of fun, sing, dance, talk, love, and learn from people of all kinds.

Juliana Tillema is a member of the Madison, Wisconsin, youth group, and will be one of the worship coordinators for Con-Con 1991.

Con-Con 1991

"The blueprint for our dreams"

Organized by the YRUU Steering Committee and the Youth Office at the UUA, Con-Con is the annual continental conference for YRUU. In 1991 it will be held at Ocean Park Camp, Washington, from August 19-25. Adults over the age of 25 are especially encouraged to attend as advisors. For registration information, contact the Youth Office (25 Beacon St., Boston, MA, 02108).

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND YOUTH SODALITY

Youth Caucus 1990

by Jan Erik Gjestvang

I went to my first General Assembly Youth Caucus this year. I was quite anxious/scared/excited by it all: my fears were not justified, my excitement was. It was the high point of the last two years of my life, including graduating from good ol' Auburn High School.

I will give a short explanation of General Assembly and Youth Caucus for those of you who do not know, or have forgotten, what they are. G.A. stands for General Assembly, not Gothic Architecture, as some of you undoubtedly thought. G.A. is the Unitarian Universalist Association's annual business meeting. Each member congregation gets a certain number of delegates based on its size. The business is conducted in Plenary Sessions that anyone can attend, but only delegates may vote on or discuss the business items.

G.A. is not just Plenaries (thank God, or whoever your Superior Being is, if you have one). There are literally hundreds of workshops, worships, lectures and other activities to keep people busy. G.A. is a place where UU's from all over the world can meet and exchange friendship and ideas.

Youth Caucus is exactly what it is called: a caucus of UU youth who are attending G.A. (*Roget's Thesaurus* gives these synonyms for "caucus:" party, gang, group, coalition, league, club, guild, sodality, tribe, clan, sect.) Delegates who are part of Youth Caucus can address the General Assembly at Plenary Sessions on behalf of the Youth Caucus, explaining the positions of the youth on specific issues and why they have taken it. Youth Caucus is the only group at G.A. that has this privilege, and we use it to give the adults our opinions as a community of youth. Youth Caucus is also, as *Roget's Thesaurus* says, a PARTY! There are planned activities specifically for youth, but the most fun are the unplanned ones: cruisin' Grand Avenue Mall, eating pancakes at Big Boy, and just hangin' at the funky Hotel Wisconsin.

Not only was this my first G.A., but I was also a delegate, so I was forced to digest a lot of information on plenaries very quickly. I was impressed by the way we UU's can whip the ponderous Beaucocratic Beast into action, an ability that the United States Congress doesn't seem to have. I was not so impressed by the long speeches and reports, but I did like the slide of the UUA's illustrious president [Bill Schulz] standing ankle-deep in a river wearing only a cloth diaper.

I was impressed by the respect that Youth Caucus is given. The adults really listen to us and take our opinions seriously, and we deserve it.

One of the most important things to come out of G.A. 1990 is the Youth in Crisis resolution. It was put together, as Adam Leite said, "by a rather unique group" made up of members of the Youth Caucus, the Black UU Network, the Urban Church Coalition, and others. This resolution openly and honestly

addresses the problems that youth face as being symptoms of the problems of society as a whole, and the UUA's congregations to support "programs that empower the voices of youth."

I was overwhelmed by trying to schedule my time. Should I go to the Anti-Racism workshop or listen to a panel discussion on UU Spirituality? Should I go to the Workshop on Economic Conversion or see the Rev. So-and-So's presentation on Nature? There was so much that I wanted to do, and there was nowhere near enough time. Naturally, sleep took the place of least importance (except for during the 4th Plenary). There were workshops and discussions and worships of all shapes and sorts and sizes: silly and serious, religious and secular. I was opened to a completely new world: UUism on a global scale (no



Arwen Hawes greets an unknown UU young adult during a joint Youth Caucus / Continental UU Young Adult Network event at General Assembly 1990 (photo by Adam Leite).

pun intended, honest). I met new people, made new friends, got to know old friends better, and I was challenged and changed by new ideas. Hope I'll see you there next year.

Jan Erik Gjestvang is a YRUUer from Rockford, Illinois. He has attended both Youth Caucus and Con-Con.

General Assembly 1991, "Speak to the Earth and It Shall Teach Thee"

June 20 -25, Hollywood, Florida

Youth Caucus is a program for youth aged 14-22 at General Assembly. For information or a scholarship form, please contact the Youth Office. For registration or to arrange housing, please contact the General Assembly Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA, 02108. New for this year, there will be a program for youth aged 11-14. Contact the General Assembly Office for information.

WHAT HAPPENED AT YOUTH COUNCIL

Synapse 11

Thoughts From a First Year Rep.

by Jasmine Harvest Nielsen

WOW! For a newcomer to continental YRUU, Youth Council 1990 was pretty impressive. It helped me understand how YRUU is structured, and gave me some great ideas for my own district. Suddenly, I was visualizing YRUU as more than just local conferences. I now see YRUU as a giant web, including all different people and programs.

Spending anywhere from an hour to two days travelling, approximately 40 youth, adults, and people who found themselves somewhere in between congregated at the Georgia Institute of Technology for what can only be described as hard work, deep thought, and lots of personal and group development.

Among the youth were some old-timers who could almost (but not quite) remember the days of Liberal Religious Youth and Common Ground [the 1982 conference at which YRUU was created], who knew exactly what to expect, and newcomers like me, who had no idea what they were getting into. This fusion of the old and new was celebrated on our first night through a renewal ceremony, in which we paraded from outside into an underground room, chanting "We are the old council, we are the new council." Once there, Meg Riley, the Youth Programs Director at the UUA, led us in what was probably the most incredible worship service that I've ever participated in.

The next week was spent drafting resolutions, going over past resolutions, and resolving to write new resolutions. I found these work sessions to be some of the most frustrating, thought-provoking, and rewarding projects that I'd ever done. It's amazing how much we accomplished in only one week.

I must say, though, that the best part of Youth Council was the people. In any Unitarian Universalist gathering, there are bound to be many wonderful people, and Youth Council was no exception. I arrived at Youth Council having no idea what to expect and not knowing anyone, but I was immediately made to feel welcome. From my experiences at Youth Council, I did a lot of personal growth and realized what I am and who I want to be. Without the support and nurturing that I found at Youth Council, this would not have been possible. Thanks to everyone - I love you all!

Jasmine Harvest Nielsen is the Youth Council Representative from the Florida District.

1990?

THE NEWS

NewsFlash! At its meet-

ing in August 1990, the YRUU Youth Council committed to a greater focus on social action in YRUU, decided to continue the process for changing YRUU's age range from 12-22 to 14-20, charged a special committee of youth and adults with exploring ways in which youth can have a larger voice in the Unitarian Universalist denomination, began the process of creating new guidelines for behavior at YRUU events, and committed to increasing cooperation between YRUU and UU young adult programs!

Youth Council is the governing body of YRUU. It consists of one youth representative from each of the 23 districts and eleven at-large representatives - one youth representing jr. highers, one representing sr. highers, and one representing post-highers, and eight adults (including a representative from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Board of Trustees). The Youth Council sets continental YRUU's priorities for the coming year, reviews what is happening for youth in each district, and makes important decisions about YRUU's structure. If you want to know more about what happened at this year's Youth Council or if you want to get involved with continental YRUU, just call your district Youth Council Representative or the YRUU Youth Office at the UUA.

1990-91 Youth Council Representatives

UUA Board Rep.*

Erv Miller, 921 Third Ave SE, Rochester, MN, 55904, (507) 282-2429

Western Canada District

Lorne Tyndale, 5620 Dalhousie NW, Calgary, AB, CANADA, T3A 1P9, (403) 247-1239, (403) 247-2550

Thomas Jefferson District

Lorin Harvey, 176 Ballard Creek Rd., Fairview, NC 28730, (704) 629-2534

Ohio Valley District

Barney Beal, 1335 Highland, Louisville, KY, 40204, (502) 584-2332

Mountain-Desert District

Hughes Smith, 2884 S. Ursula Ct., Aurora, CO, 80014, (303) 751-3190

(Mountain)-Desert District*

Clare Lewis, 5421 Granite NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87110, (505) 266-3723

Adult At-large (Pacific Central District)

Brian Maus, PO Box 1314, Novato, CA, 94948-1314, (415) 898-2751

Ohio-Meadville District

Justina Prenatt, 100 W. Undercliff, Pittsburg, PA, 15223, (412) 487-5377

Pacific Southwest District

Serena Smallin, 7654 New Salem, San Diego, CA 92126, (619) 549-2748

Mid-South District*

Sean Ramsey, Hess Hall Box K420B, 1720 Melrose Ave, Knoxville, TN, 37916, (615) 595-9713

Adult At-large (Metro New York District)

Susan Dermon, 118 Garden St., Roslyn Hts., NY, 11577, (516) 484-5965

Florida District

Jasmine Harvest-Nielsen, 454 NE 3rd St., Boca Raton, FL, 33432, (407) 391-3148

Northeast District

Andrew Daniel, 20 1/2 Park St., Houlton, ME, 04730, (207) 532-6061

St. Lawrence District

Jenna Wells, 12 West Ave, Arkport, NY, 14807, (607) 295-7235

Jr. High At-large*

Liv Gjestvang, Rm. 1504 C21, 1500 W. Sullivan, Aurora, IL, 60506, (708) 801-6431

Adult At-large (Northeast District)

Nancy Crowder-Chaplin, 112 Witchtrot, South Berwick, ME, 03908, (207) 384-3288

Central Massachusetts District

Andrew Mitchell, CPU Box 272266, U of Rochester, Rochester, NY, 14627-2266, (716) 274-3634

New Hampshire, 1/2 Lowell, Nashua, NH, 03060, (603) 595-7036

Religious Education Liaison*

Tom Doyle, Reed College, Box 551, Portland, OR, 97202, (503) 235-5083

Adult At-large (Pacific Southwest District)

Tony Host, 8001 Janeen Cir., La Palma, CA, 90023, (714) 229-0051 H, (213) 269-7421W

Prairie Star District

Mandi Cohen, 8010 Lillibridge, Lincoln, NE, 68506, (402) 483-0480

Southwest District

Jennifer Martin, 2629 Brennan Ct, Plano, TX, 75075, (214) 596-2016

Central Midwest District*

Valerie Tremelot, 5804 Ledgemont Ct., Madison, WI, 53711, (608) 276-4002

Adult At-large (Southwest District)

Scott Buxton, 2952 S. Peoria, Tulsa, OK, 74114, (918) 743-2363

Connecticut Valley District

Tim Pinto, 1856 State St., Hamden, CT, 06511, (203) 624-6196

Joseph Priestley District

Adam Winner, 4803 Shimerville, Emmaus, PA, 18049, (215) 967-3656

Pacific Central District*

Jennifer Cullison, UCSC Cowell 467, 1156 High St., Santa Cruz, CA, 95064

Adult At-large (Florida District)

Kathy Murphy, 14401 Alico Rd., Fort Myers, FL, 33913, (813) 267-3316

Massachusetts Bay

John Harvey, 7 Sycamore Rd., Wavland, MA, 01778, (508) 653-8940

Sr. High At-large (Pacific Central District)

Neil Laslett, Crown College, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA, 95064, (408) 429-5268

Pacific Northwest District

Lara Nieuwenhuis, 1810 Regan Ave., Coquitlam, BC, CANADA, V3J 3B9, (604) 939-993

Adult At-large*

Holly Jamison, 610 Cedar Lane, Mt. Prospect, IL, 60056, (708) 253-8647

Ballou Channing District

Emma Brackett, 4 Vermeer Ct., Osterville, MA, 02655, (508) 428-7062

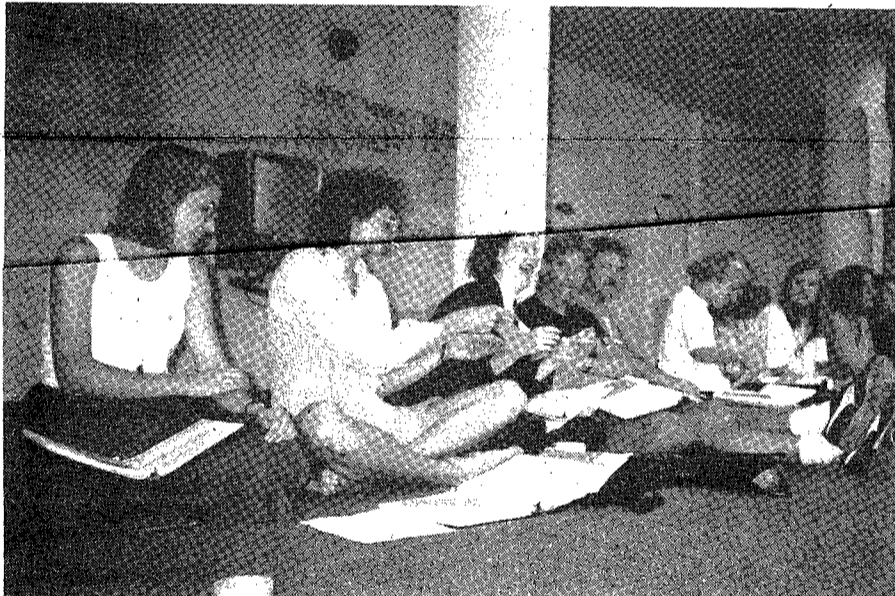
Michigan District

Sabrina Harle, 362 Seidschlag Hall, Kalamazoo, MI, 49008-1026, (313) 881-9742

Post High At-large (Metro New York District)

Kat Mitchell, 310-312 East 35th St. #4H, New York, NY, 10016, (212) 725-6157

* = member of the 1990-91 YRUU Steering Committee



Lara Nieuwenhuis, Tom Doyle, Kat Mitchell, Barney Beal, Roger Hollon, Liv Anne Gjestvang, Emma Brackett, Justina Prenatt, and Lorin Harvey (from left) at a business meeting of Youth Council 1990. (Photo by Rebecca Scott)

Help Create Programs for Jr. High!

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists is attempting to help strengthen programs for jr. highers (ages 11-14) in local congregations and districts across the continent! As you may remember, Youth Council 1989 voted to change the lower age range of continental YRUU from 12 to 14, provided, among other things, that there are strong programs for jr. highers in place. The age range will not change for at least two years, but now is the time to be helping build great jr. high programs! The Youth Office has helped create a new jr. high program for next year's General Assembly of the UUA (in Hollywood, Florida, June, 1991). But what is happening in your congregation and district? Does your congregation have a jr. high youth group? Are there jr. high events in your district? Please write to the Youth Office at the UUA and let us know what is, or what you wish were, happening and working in your area.

Youth and Adults... Be An At- Large Member of Youth Council!

- o Help determine the future of YRUU.
- o Meet youth and advisors from all over the US and Canada.
- o Address the concerns of people in your age group.

The following positions are available:

Adult At-large: (age 23 and up) three positions, two year term; Jr. High At-large: (age 12-15) one position, one year term; Sr. High At-large: (age 15-18) one position, one year term; Post High At-large: (age 18-22) one position, one year term.

At-large representatives are appointed to represent the members of their age group and may be from any district. During the Spring and Summer of 1991, they will be responsible for soliciting concerns from YRUU members of their age group. In August, 1991, they will attend the Youth Council, (the annual meeting of YRUU's governing body,) in the Pacific Northwest District (travel expenses paid). During the following year, they will be in communication with the Youth Office regarding age-specific issues. Applicants should be enthusiastic and prepared to work hard during the week of Youth Council.

To apply, submit a letter discussing your experience, qualifications and strengths, and three letters of recommendation to the YRUU Steering Committee c/o the Youth Office, UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. Applications are due March 15, 1991.

CONTACT THE YOUTH OFFICE!

- o for information about youth conferences and events
- o for ideas and resources for youth groups
- o for help in starting a youth group
- o if you want to become an advisor
- o if your youth group wants to receive Synapse

YRUU Youth Office, Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 (617) 742-2100

For information about continental YRUU events, as well as about YRUU in your district, give your district Youth Council representative a call!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE 15TH ANNUAL UU NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

"From Greed to Justice: Moral Implications of our Middle East Policy"
APRIL 21-23, 1991

The Youth Caucus at the National Workshop on Social Justice is an active and exciting group within the larger conference. Participants take part in workshops centered around the conference theme and are trained in lobbying. The conference culminates with a chance for participants to lobby their Congressional representatives.

The workshop is an excellent opportunity to learn and meet UUs from all over the U.S. For more information, contact the UU Washington Office, 100 Maryland Ave. NE suite #106, Washington, D.C., 20002, (202) 547-0254. Youthscholarships are available.

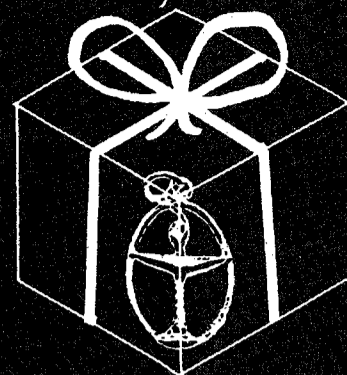
Do you want to continue to receive Synapse?

Then don't be a dork!!! Send us your new address every time your address changes!!! If you don't want *Synapse* to come to your mail box ever again, please let us know. We really don't want to waste the money to print and mail it to you. If your name was dropped in the Great *Synapse* Mailing List Purge and you want to receive *Synapse* gain, just send us your name, address, phone number, and birth date, and we will be happy to put you back on.

Please Accept Our Apologies ...

The Great *Synapse* Mailing List Purge is over, and about 5,000 names have been cut. But many of you who did send in your purge slips last year may have been distressed to find that you did not receive the Spring/Summer 1990 issue. Don't worry, you are still on our mailing list. However, we had HUGE mailing problems with the last issue. We are very, very sorry if you did not receive your copy.

Give the
Flaming Chalice
this year ...



Gold, silver, pewter
Necklaces, pins,
pendants & ornaments

Write or call:

617-742-2100

CLF/Jewelry
25 Beacon Street
Boston MA 02108

1991-92 INTERN SOUGHT FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST UNITED NATIONS OFFICE

The young adult UU chosen for the internship will work at the UU United Nations Office (located directly across 1st Ave. from the United Nations), attend UN meetings, and live in New York City. The term is from June 1, 1991 through May 31, 1992. A stipend covering basic living expenses is provided. The job responsibilities include: stimulating support for the UN and the UU UN Office by contributing to the Offices newsletter, *Window on the World*, preparing UN Sunday materials, speaking to UU congregations, helping to organize the April Seminar and the Youth Conference on Disarmament, and assisting with office work. To apply, send an application letter with a resume of educational and employment history, pertinent skills and interests, and the names of three references. The application deadline is February 28, 1991. For further details, contact the UU United Nations Office, 777 UN Plaza suite 7D, New York, NY 10017, USA, (212) 986-5165.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A "PEN PAL" WITH A UU TEEN FROM GREAT BRITAIN? CONTACT THE YOUTH OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Seeking A New YRUU Programs Specialist

The YRUU Programs Specialist position is a one year paid internship for youth working at the Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters in Boston. The new YRUU Programs Specialist will work with the other YRUU Program Specialist and the Director of Youth Programs to manage the day to day business of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. Responsibilities include: editing and laying out *Synapse*, managing the continental YRUU office, planning and administering conferences and other youth gatherings, participating in meetings of and implementing decisions of the YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee, and traveling to district and local groups for outreach. The term is one year, beginning September 1, 1991 and ending August 31, 1992. Moving expenses to and from Boston are paid, and a stipend covers living expenses.

The successful applicant will:

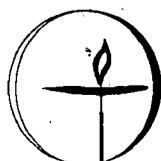
be between the ages of 16 and 22 at the time work begins, have an amiable personality with leadership qualities, have good written and verbal communication skills, have the maturity and creativity to handle an often hectic but rewarding full time job, and have the freedom to live in the Boston area and travel.

The following qualifications are also considered important:

Some experience writing/editing a newspaper, YRUU and other leadership experience, the ability to work sensitively and diplomatically with people of all ages, an understanding of Unitarian Universalism and of YRUU's history and structure, good mental, physical and emotional health, and an ability to work under pressure.

To apply:

Please write to the Youth Office at: 25 Beacon St. Boston, MA 02108 for an application kit. Your application MUST be postmarked by March 15, 1991 and sent to the YRUU Steering Committee, c/o Youth Office, Unitarian Universalist Assoc., 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA, 02108.



THE WORLD, THE MAGAZINE OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, IS LOOKING FOR ARTICLES BY AND ABOUT YOUTH!!

This year's theme is leadership, but there is interest in articles on many other topics as well. Have you or your youth group done something remarkable in the community? Do you have interesting reflections to share on UUism and the family (the theme of the Sept. 1991 issue), gender issues, or what it is like to be a teen in the early '90's? Would your youth group be interested in reviewing a new book from Beacon Press (the UU press)? Contact the Youth Office for more information!

Help make youth more visible as a vital part of our denomination!

We are, after all, its future!

YOU TOO CAN JOIN THE LIST OF CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE HELPED SAVE SYNAPSE!

"I wouldn't believe it if it didn't come right to my home."—Basil Kennedy.

"It's the best thing since guacamole on rye crisps."—Anonymous.

"Sometimes, at night, I like to lie awake and fantasize about the editors."—Teri Garr.

These are the words people are using to describe the hottest publication of our time: *Synapse*. Where else could you find such an honest example of youth culture in a newspaper: poetry about love, reflections on YRUU, political and social commentaries, district news, bad grammar, zany graphics, support for advisors, local youth group ideas, and the low down on continental events? "Almost anywhere?" No, *Synapse* is a one of a kind publication, and you know it.

Although *Synapse* has been coming to us (all 6,000 of us on the mailing list) for years, we might be seeing fewer issues. Why? This is the official word. Originally, *Synapse* was to be published 3 times a year, and the UUA was supposed to fund it. But, things change. We can put out only two issues a year, and that's just the way it goes. However, there is hope. We are accepting donations in order to produce a special, extra issue. You can become a Friend (\$1-\$5), Patron (\$6-\$20), Benefactor (\$21-\$50) or Super-Duper-Happy-Synapse Celebrity (\$51-a zillion dollars) in the *I Saved Synapse* campaign. Anyone can make a donation. All donations received will be used strictly to pay for the production of *Synapse*. Checks may be made payable to YRUU, with a memo designating that it is for *I Saved Synapse*. Any contributions are appreciated.

Synapse Celebrities

The following people or groups have generously contributed during summer and fall 1990 to help save *Synapse*. Many thanks go to them for their donations and their helpful suggestions about how we can improve *Synapse*.

FRIENDS: Joan Paribello

PATRONS: Lois Gisher, Kaye McSpadden, Jennifer Eldridge, Maralee M. Meskinis, Brian Knight, Claudia Pennell, Lauralee Butt

BENEFACTORS: Laila Ibrahim

It's the I SAVED SYNAPSE COUPON

I, _____ would like to see *Synapse* continue to be published. I support its future existence by giving this contribution in the name of *I Saved Synapse*.

Enclosed are answers to the evaluation questions below. I mean, hey, since I as a reader of *Synapse*, am partly responsible for its content, I will give the editors some really handy evaluation material with which to work.

1) My favorite sections of *Synapse* are:

2) Overall, I rate the content of *Synapse*— 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3) I would like to see more articles about:

4) What could be improved?

5) Would you like to write an article?