

A Point of Contact Where Energy and Information Are Exchanged

SYNAPSE

Jennifer Martin hates cole slaw. Jory Agate has a great new T-shirt. Sean R. has been accepted into the University of Massachusetts. Jennifer Martin loves to eat at the S&M Deli where they don't serve cole slaw. There is a new rooming to Boston. Jory Agate's new Youth Office. The Youth Office was once called the Pink Flamingo Lounge. Listen to the new and over on page 1993. Sean R. is from California at Camp. Sean R. is from Benneville Pines. The Youth Office isn't really located at 25 Beacon Street. Sean R. is 5'3" tall. Sean R. is the greatest new person all time! Believe that! So there!

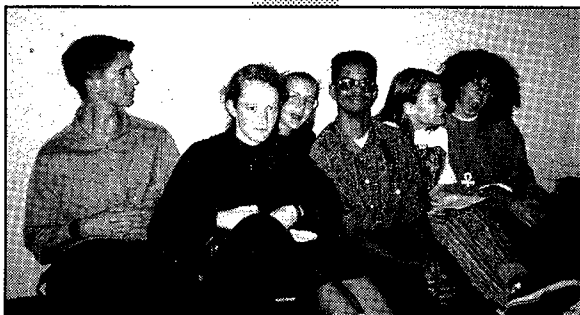
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Volume X, Issue 2, Fall/Winter 1992

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**Page 3: NEW YRUU PROGRAMS
SPECIALIST starting in January**



**Page 4:
PERSONals**

What lies
behind you
and what lies
before you
are tiny matters
compared to
what lies
within you.

- R.W. Emerson -



**PAGE 8:
The YRUU
LOGO Con-
test Update!
&
The Prose
Garden**



You will honestly not be able to count all the great things that have been included in this issue...or can you?



Page 5: The Continental "It's the main thang. Whatever come 4 and after, that is Ying Yang."



**Page 6&7: Lesbian/
Bisexual/Gay Concerns**



**Page
12:
Con Con
1993 &
other
An-
nounce-
ments**



Greetings!
from
Anne,
Jory,
Jennifer,
& Sean.

☐ **TRIM It!** This is a repeat copy! Even though I love Synapse, I don't need more than one more copy. Here is my correct address. Please Delete others from your your files. Thanks.

☐ **Forward It!** I have an alternate address, and have clearly marked which is which and when each is valid. Please add my new address to your list. Thanks.

☐ **DUMP It!** Take me off your list, I don't want it anymore! (Even though it's great!) Thanks.

☐ **MOVING?** I have moved and I would like you to change my address so that I can still receive you wonderful paper! Thanks.

☐ **LOVE It!** I love your paper and I just wanted you to know it! Thanks a lot!

☐ **Change It!** You've got it all wrong! I have marked the corrections on the right. Please make the changes in your records. Thanks.



YRUU at the UUA
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

☐ **Add It!** I want my Synapse! Here is my name, address, and birthday for your mailing list. Please add me on! Thanks.
____ I am an adult.
____ I am an advisor.

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Letters to the Editors

Hey all you YRUU assholes,

What the hell is it all about? I've been alienated for years so I clutched, I clinged to a cluster of people from Star Island conference for a couple of years. Later I noticed corruption. Okay, you seem to be an eccentric, diverse crowd, yet still cold and empty. Why? Because you just can't help being fakes even though you try to play real. You all cluster together. You all discourage individuality. It's a crock of shit, even though you don't know it. You all are like the traditional high school cliques just with a hippie facade. Such values are for the birds.

Though I agree with you all about liberal values and saving the earth, just the way you all try to be so utopian about it is all so cockeyed and unreal.

How do I know this? Because my offerings have been rejected by the likes of you before and I next asked out. I had to.

It has taken me awhile to see through it all. I was consumed by it for awhile myself. At the fateful first and only YRUU conference I attended I found myself dropped on the floor, abandoned, just wanting to be left alone with my dreams that weren't there.

-Anonymous

P.S. Elvis is sold out. He shoots TVs. He's rotting in his grave but lives in supermarket tabloids. He sold himself. Why do you care about him?

P.S. Again. If you want to know what I'm like so you know why I said this, 2 words, James Dean.

P.S. Once more. I dare you to print this.

Dear Anonymous,

We are very sorry to hear of your unhappy experiences in YRUU, but instead of brooding about it and dropping out of the movement completely, why don't you help make the conference experience a wonderful one for new YRUUers by integrating not by disengaging yourself? If you're not happy with the way things are, change them. That's the beauty of YRUU. You have the power to make your's and others' experiences all they can be. Keep the faith. - The Editors

Dear Staff and Synapse lovers everywhere,

The news of Synapse's possible demise devastated me! If this letter gets published I want every single person who reads it to realize what a wonderful publication Synapse is. It would be a *crime* to let Synapse die because we, the readers, were too lazy to give it life. Synapse offers young writers and artists a spectacular opportunity for introducing their work through a supportive medium!

We have to help you guys keep Synapse alive! Even if you editors are doing a marvelous job, we readers must take some responsibility!

Peace and hot fudge, Samira Mehta (the girl who swallowed a soap box)

SSS

Dear Synapse,

I'd just like to let you know that I think y'all are great! I have just become a receiver of your newsletter and I really enjoyed the Spring/Summer '92 issue. It was neat to see pictures from the last conference I was at (Spring Con in Cherry Hill, NJ), and read articles by other YRUUers. I never realized what a great way Synapse is for YRUUers to keep in touch before, so I'm really glad y'all are out there. Keep up the good work!

Love and peace, Abby Bass

SSS

Dear Synapse,

I just wanted to share with you all of the great things that you people place into these really wonderful pages. With all the great things about life and about other Unitarian Universalists I really believe this is the most incredible thing I have ever read.

-Brian Goona

Dear Samira, Abby, and Brian,

Thank you, thank you, thank you! We appreciate your enthusiasm. It makes us smile. We think Synapse is pretty nifty, too. Keep on keepin' on reading. - The Editors

Everything You Need to Know About Synapse... But Were Afraid to Ask

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

YRUU Staff: Sean Ramsey, Jennifer Martin, Jory Agate, and Anne Fleming.

Mechanicals: Proofreading, edits and layout by your ever so groovy staff.

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 the name and address attached. Multiple submissions accepted. The editors observe the following limits when possible for each author's submission:

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

Poems: One per issue

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

Graphics: No limit

The above limits do not apply to letters to the editor. Submissions not used will be kept on file for possible use in future issues. 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 vary depending on size and type of organization. UUA affiliate and associate organizations and events sponsored by these and UUA committees or an organization's committee receive special rates. Also, non camera ready, or odd-sized ads have special rates. Advertisements are not endorsed by the Youth Office, the UUA, or YRUU. The editors reserve the right to refuse any advertisement.

listen to Prince ©

Submission and Advertising Due Date for Next Issue: March 15, 1993.



Photo of
Vanita
Goonker and
Neil Ekengren
at the Syracuse, New York
Youth
Conference
April 1992

So, You Want To Place an Ad in This Groovy Newspaper... Eh?

Rates for camera ready for Unitarian Universalist Association related groups are:

Standard

\$10 per (2.25") column inch

\$45 eighth of a page

\$90 quarter of a page

Special

\$13 per (3.25") column inch

\$65 sixth of a page

\$130 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, 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.

"You must be a Prince before you become king, anyway" ©

Sufferin' Succotash

It's the Presidential Issue

The Synapse submission deadline is just around the corner. The theme will be the UU Presidential elections. Yahoo! We need poetry, expressions, prose, graphics, articles, info on district happenings, personals, random thoughts, comics, photos of fellow YRUUers, and whatever nifty things you find underneath your bed. Also, if any of you are involved in the UUA Presidential elections or if you know the candidates personally, write an article for us...please! If each of you beautiful spirits sent us something, the next Synapse will be one cosmic issue. Best of all it will make the next editors smile. ☺ The submission deadline for the Synapse Spring issue is MARCH 15, 1993.

YRUU Youth Office Resources

Synapse - The continental YRUU newspaper, written by youth and advisors from across the continent and edited and published by the Youth Office. Subscription is free and may be obtained by sending the Youth Office your name, address, phone number, and date of birth. Two issues are published per year.

Spider - Produced bimonthly by the YRUU Programs Specialists, the *Spider* provides a communication network for the members of the YRUU Youth Council. It contains reports from Youth Council Representatives from each district, leadership "how-to" articles, and some programming ideas. You can contact your Youth Council Rep. for a copy.

Local Youth Group Program Handbook - A resource for local youth groups covering such topics as organization, fund-raising, games and worship. This handbook is available from the UUA Bookstore for \$4.95.

Youth Advisor's Handbook - A guide for advisors, the *Youth Advisor's Handbook* addresses the many facets of the adult's unique role in working with youth. This handbook is available from the UUA Bookstore for \$7.95.

How to be a Con Artist - A resource for local youth groups and district youth organizations, this publication was produced by the Youth Office. It discusses the steps involved in planning any type of youth conference, from the preplanning stages to the cleaning up of the facilities on Sunday morning. This is an invaluable tool for any youth organization, and is now available from the UUA Bookstore for \$14.95.

YRUU Pamphlet - A short, readable introduction to the spirit and structure of YRUU, including the YRUU Statement of Purpose and Goals, and a concise diagram of the structure of the continental organization. Local groups, churches, and district organizations may want to have a supply of these to distribute. Available from the UUA Bookstore \$9.00 for a set of 25.

YRUU Policies and Procedures - A guide to the intricate workings of YRUU on the continental level, containing all policy decisions made by the YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee since YRUU's inception. Available from the Youth Office on request.

YRUU Continental Conference (Con Con) - Con Con is the annual week-long conference for all of YRUU and is held in a different location around North America each August. This long-standing tradition of the YRUU movement is an opportunity for youth and adults from across the continent to play, worship, learn, grow, and love.

Youth Caucus at General Assembly - Each year, at the UUA's General Assembly (GA), the youth contingent gathers daily to caucus, discuss issues, and have fun. This event is facilitated by the YRUU Programs Specialists, and housing, as well as scholarships, are available through the Youth Office for Youth Caucus participants. This is not a YRUU conference; each youth in attendance must have a parent or sponsor at the General Assembly. Contact the Youth Office or the GA Office for more information.

Youth Conference on Disarmament - Co-organized by the UU United Nations Office and the Youth Office, this event is held each November in New York City and is limited to 25 participants between the ages of 15 and 17, geographically representative of the continent. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about the United Nations and the UU-UN Office, learn to view disarmament from a global perspective, and share techniques for effective action. Contact the Youth Office or the UU United Nations Office for more information.

National Workshop on Social Justice - The Youth Office is one of several UU Offices and organizations which participates in this annual conference for youth and adults. The conference is held in the spring in Washington, D.C., and includes a chance to lobby Congress members. Contact the Youth Office or the UU Social Justice Office in Washington, D.C., for more information.

Leadership Development Conferences - Members of the Youth Office Staff are available by request to attend district conferences and facilitate leadership development workshops. These workshops are generally for both youth and adults, and address the roles of youth leaders and adult advisors in youth programs. We are only available to run a limited number of such workshops each year and request the sponsoring districts pay travel expenses.

Letter and Phone Consultation - The Youth Office Staff are available at any time to consult about any aspect of UU youth activities. If you have problems, questions, or ideas, feel free to write or call us in the office.

Mailing Lists and Labels - The Youth Office can print out an address list of youth and advisors in your district or a list grouped by age and/or zip code. Addresses can be printed on paper or on mailing labels. Lists cost \$5.00 per district or \$20.00 for four lists or more. Labels cost an additional three cents per label. Lists will be mailed 3rd class unless otherwise requested (for an additional charge).

Your New Steering Committee

The 1992-93 Steering Committee, the executive body of YRUU, was selected at Youth Council this past August in Portland, Maine. The people representing you this year are:

Tanja Steinberg Post High Box 0890 Hampshire College Amherst, MA 01002

Fiona Thomson C*SAC 6001 1st Ave. Sacramento, CA 95817

Jeanna Steele Post High Rm 433 Gardner Hall 3925 University St. Montreal, Quebec, CAN H3A 2B7

Laura Peterson Senior High 3832 Cottage Grove Des Moines, IA 50311

Joey Lyons Post High 942 E. 18th Suite 12 Eugene, OR 97403

Mike Figueroa Junior High 10953 SW 70th Terrace Miami, FL 33173

Richard Foote Adult 2570 Walnut Blvd. Suite 16 Walnut Creek, CA 94956

Erv Miller Board of Trustees Liason 921 3rd Ave. SE Rochester, MN 55904

Publications

Events

Services



Serena's Special Day: a brief synopsis of the YPS selection syndrome

I woke up Saturday morning. I got out my chalice and put it on for good luck. Today I would find out if I was going to Boston.

After I ate lunch I sat in the hall lounge and waited for Steering Committee to call me. The phone rang. I jumped up, but it was just someone's mother. Darn!



I waited and waited, and finally Fiona called. She said I was the new YRUU Programs Specialist, and then everyone on Steering Committee said hello to me - I felt so loved!

That afternoon I climbed a mountain and camped out with my dog. - just to ponder it all. I was very content. Mmm...



I'll be starting in the office in January. Hope you're all as pleased with this as I am!
- Serena Smallin

Confessions of a Unitarian Universalist



PERSONALS



To all of the people at the Rockford Con, I would like to say: I Love You All!!!
-Goon-Brian

Hail, all ye groovy #9ers (that means you too, April) and the Food Queen! Love ya forever! Listen, listen, listen...remember that sunrise? We're gonna miss you two old people who are leaving us.

To Whitney: God's Great Bowl Movement?

To Elizabeth: Groove on, Youth Rep Type -Person

Love, Super-Duper-Happy-Fun-Time-Cabin-Rep Type Person

To those who survived Wrath of Con: As Tate informed me, I didn't feel like "Dean" because I didn't have to kick anybody's butt! Thank you all for making Tulsa Rally '92 one for the record books. I'm gonna miss you guys. Keep the spirit alive! Love, "Charles Angel" Katie Laughlin (Dean for short)

To Amanda, how's your neck? N.C. is the big reunion. I'll see ya there. Erica, I think someone's parakeet is thirsty. Kealy, never forget Stephan and Troy. I know they'll always remember us. Cereal Box Man, you're sooooo cool. All the girls say so. Sean, thanks. You do your job well. Mr. President, I miss you and hope we dance again. Do you still have your animals? Joey, I want to thank you for all your hard work and dedication to PNWD. To all my other PNWD friends, I miss you and will see you soon.
- Jen Lindsay

Ameila, I have not forgotten you, lovely, out there in the middle of the ocean. I miss you, I miss you, I miss you. Chocolate covered espresso beans, daisy chains, train station roses, 10,000 maniacs, folgers (he he)... The city is evil and I love you. You must write. Sierra



Hey! The Phantom of New Milford, CT. I know who You are. Remember Channing '89? Are you still a Big Beefy Burrito? Played Dare or Spin the Flip-Flop with Tim's on the screened-in porch lately? Zigmund Park will live forever. Even if the Phantom and his old flame aren't there. Write me in Synapse or at home. Can you guess who I am? Write to:

Debbie Gibson's Ex-fan
215 Birchwood Blvd.

Baldwinsville, NY 13027

P.S. Tell Ellen I said "Hi!"

Dear YRUU,

I would like to take the chance now to thank YRUU and all the friends I made in it. YRUU for me has been by far the most influential force in growth into adulthood. I first entered the YRUU scene in the Winter of 1986. I started going to my local youth group my seventh grade year. It wasn't until the Summer of 1987 that I attended my first con. Summer's End '87' was an incredible experience for me. I met so many people and fell in love with all of them. I have been to every con I could since the first one in the mountains of West Stockridge. Unfortunately, my plans for the future have made it almost impossible for me to finish out my final 4 years of conferences. I would now like to thank Tamatha and Amber Gaumnitz, my sisters who introduced me to this wonderful organization. I can not thank them enough. I want to thank Nathaniel Clark and Paul Brenner, the first friends I made in YRUU. I want to say thanks to all of Joseph Priestly district and to Laura Christian, Diane Damour, Johanna Bates, Galen Gibson, Sara Kennedy, Arlo Neuman, Kim Nichols, Luke Murphy, Cathy Ramsey, Elizabeth Ross, Julie Rosenberg, Chris Scanlon, Don Shoenwolf, Brad Colten, Jed Stafanowitz, Pippin Roe, Paul Notzold, Rob McKenny, Broox Gibson, Nate Longcope, Walter Gilmore, Trey Brocht, Phaedra, Kelly Lafferty, Kara Jessen, Katie Leonard, Stacy Farr, Chris Kowalchuck, Sarah and Margaret Ladner, Jeanna Buttcheek, and Cynthia Freeman. I want to thank everyone at Pittsfield '87, Star '89, Star '91, and Summer's End '92. A special thanks to anyone I may have forgotten. I love you all.

Love,

John Bastian Gaumnitz

John requested that we include his personal in this issue of Synapse, and because of the tone of the personal we decided to make an exception and include it. However, it is the policy of the Youth Office to not include personals which are over 50 words in length. We also reserve the right to edit any material which we deem as inappropriate and have a limit of two personals per person. However...

If there someone out there you'd like to contact?

Send it to: Youth Office 25 Beacon St. Boston, MA 02108

To 1992 LGUUSA Meyer Lodge- I had a great time and I can't wait to see ya next summer! Remember everyone: Write or call me! Ben you promised! Miss ya all: Ben, Anne, Pam, Kate, Cortney, Emilie, Katie, Kim, Biz, Laura, Aaron, Cass, Lisa, Tracy, Grant, and everyone I forgot! I love you all! Peace and love always and forever!
- Kari from Appleton

To the Big dippa' (aka Katie Spero):

Yes you, you awesome touch group leader! I miss you too much, please don't be a stranger. Howz it going?

-CIAO, Kim

Brian & Shannon-

Will someone please tell me a blond joke? I need one now! I miss our fire-side chats.

- Caitlin



Big warm fuzzies to all that were at GA-Hilary, Tim, Jan, Bear, Brett, Patrick (my tall friend), Allyson, Kai, Leela, and Chris. May Chocolate Graham Bears guard and protect you doorways forever! Extra special thanks to those in room 805 for giving me a place to stay. I love and miss you all. Write:

Shannon Romanyshyn
9807 - 145st

Edmonton, AB, Canada
T5N 2X2

PS. Tim I need your address.

To Cabin 9 (April, Kelly, Diana, Whitney, Charmille, Keridwyn, Elizabeth, Kathy, and Susan): I miss you and can't wait till next year.

To Ben, Colin, Bill, Laura, Matt, Stephanie, Fred, Mike, Joel, and Greg: I miss you, I love you.

To Alex: I love you. Don't ever change.

-Cynthia

To everyone in YRUU;

Pay attention, that means you, too:

If you send a letter to me, I promise I'll write back to thee.

- Sparrowhawk

6473 Westchester Circle
Golden Valley, MN 55427

Long live crummy muffins/hacky sacs, Mac's stores with limos parked out front... hmmm... and Disney cartoons with monotone announcers! - the cloaked one.

Hello! I'm nearly 18 and I still haven't found the meaning of life. I live in a kibbutz in Israel and I would like to find a twin soul (or a penpal) out there in the USA. My main subjects of interest are photography and 60's and 70's pop/rock music. Waiting for you, Barak. by air mail:

Barak Harwitz
Kibbutz Dalia
Israel



Tree Sloth, Can't you see I am suffering. Oh Mondrian swallow me. You stole enough already, why can't you send me my letters? If I were you I wouldn't want to remember. But then again, I hate Steinbeck. You stole my poetry, I want it back.
-Lady Jane

Who wrote: "It was twelve feet long until the parrot got a hold of the end. Now it has orange spots and it barks out the time every six minutes" at the OKC rally?
-Mona

Ghost, Lets get together and shave heads, go to the Lost Horizon, and listen to the Femmes for an eternity. We can dance like mini pearls and eat fudge banana swirls! You punk rock girl! Lylas, The Babester of Baldwinsville, NY
P.S. Down with all J-D-B -- s!! Yee Haw!!

Christopher Fietz,

How the heck have you been? When are you going to come by and visit? By the way, have you seen many branches lately? Hope to hear from you soon. Love you, Nicky
PS. Water Ho!

Hey Joy, my lover of the Third Kind!! I need to get your address if I am ever to hear from you again! Write me. Love, Amber
5 Tsienneto Rd. # 74
Derry, NH 05038

To YRUUers Everywhere:

Eat Ben & Jerry's, but at least try Toffuti. Listen to Prince.

- from Sean & Jennifer

My love to you all!! Especially Dave and his sexy toes!!! Love always, the Santanic Chicken

To everybody out there in YRUU land, a short message: Love the sun and wind for those are the only eternal things. Love nature and man-kind for those are short-lived and their beauty is all the more precious for its delicacy. Harm nothing, for in that act you deny its beauty. Harm nothing, for the harm will return to you.

Hannah, You moved., I was in the midst of writing you a letter, really, I'm not kidding. I have witnesses! I need your new address so I can write you. My address is:

Nicole Piotrkowski
14012-85 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5R348

I look forward to hearing from ya. - Me

PS. If anyone else feels the urge to write someone in Canada, you can write to me. I don't mind. I like mail.

Aryn Oldham, Guess what I had for dinner the night I came home from Atlanta? Thai food!!! Fortunately no noodles were involved. Parsely doesn't work. If it did, everyone and their mother would be buying it right now. Try nutmeg instead. Love you and miss you lots! Happy trails, Abby-Babby-

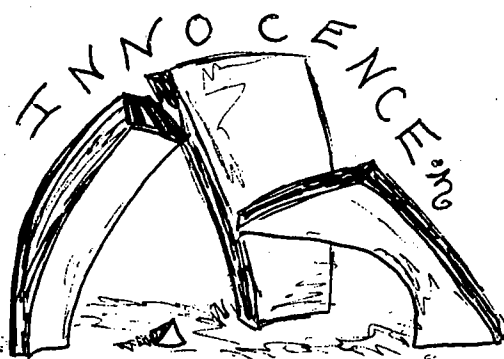


To Ben: My dear free hangin' bud, please write to your friend in Maryland (not Mass)! I miss U!! From, Kim

Hanna B. and Laura C. Do you get this mag? Christie C. is groovy. Good luck to Anne and Allision! Hi Sara Ladner! (aren't these personals so much fun?) BIG JOY! Love- Diana Greenberg (White Plains, NY)

Dear Annod, You are a very cool person and great friend. Thanks for everything, and as you ride the MARTA to little 5 or whatever your destination, sing "Lucky Ball and Chain" and think of me. Love ya lots, Yibba

Hello! I'm a deranged, atheistic, long-haired zine editor interested in cartooning, poetry, film, reality construction, obscurity, and all the world's secrets. If you share these interests, or just want to get bizarre & happenin' letters from a fellow UU, write me! Jeremy P. Bushnell, LSU N. Complex PO Box 5150 SH 112 Philadelphia. PA 19141



Continentially Speaking



Michael Figuera proudly models his new pair of Ben & Jerry's boxers for Youth Council 1992

RESOLUTIONS from YOUTH COUNCIL 1992

- ❖ Distribution of the Post High Survival Kit
- ❖ Enactment of the Social Action Network of Districts
- ❖ Statement of the Purpose of the Social Action Network of Districts
- ❖ Ensuring Leadership Development Training in Districts
- ❖ Promoting Effective District Leadership Training
- ❖ Youth At-Large Term*
- ❖ Create Specific Roles for Adult At-Larges on Youth Council*
- ❖ Create a New At-Large Structure for Youth*
- ❖ Implementation of the Bylaw Change, Article II Section 3*
- ❖ The Statment of Belief and Process for the Implementation of Long-Range Planning - "Document X"
- ❖ Implementation of Yearly Planning Groups
- ❖ Continental Advisor Training
- ❖ Freeing Youth Council from Consideration of the Age Range Criteria Until Such Time as They Can Realistically Be Met
- ❖ Proposing the Youth Council Social Action Theme of LBG Issues for 1992-1993
- ❖ Researching the Feasibility and Implementation of a Continental Leadership Development Conference
- ❖ Further Defining the Role of District Social Action Contacts (SACs)
- ❖ Bill & Ted's Excellent Resolution

* indicates a by-law change

If you would like copies of these resolutions or would like to work on or get information about any of the above issues, please contact the Youth Office or your Youth Council District Representative.

What's a YAM?

The office of Young Adult Ministry (YAM) at the UUA wishes to encourage and facilitate the personal growth and discovery of 18-35 year old UUs. The mission of the YAM office is to increase the awareness of young adults and work to create a more welcoming church communities which can meet the diverse needs of energetic 18-35 year olds.

If you are already in this age range look to see if your congregation has a young adult group. If so, get involved! If not, think about starting one. With a little imagination there's no telling what you might dream up. If you find yourself going off to college, check for campus ministry programs; you might be surprised with what you find.

Most importantly, the Young Adult Ministries office at the UUA is here to help. If you have any questions don't hesitate to call us (617-742-2100 ext. 251). Remember, we want to work with you towards greater young adult involvement in our congregations and the larger Unitarian Universalist movement. The YAM's office is available to you as a resource: We can answer questions, brainstorm ideas, and help with problem solving if you run across difficult situations.

Let your 18th birthday be a new beginning. Stay involved and live your dreams.

SWUUST 1992

by: Ben Stallings
Bartlesville, OK

The world should have seen us
we had love without sex
we had mind-expansion without drugs
we had peace without weapons
we had justice without bureaucracy
Bill had to lay down the law.
We all had to lay down the law.
Out of 75 we lost 14 to burglary, butts, bible burning, and beer
amputate the limb or the whole body dies
in severing it, we loved it all the more.
They were crimes only because we loved both the criminals and the victims.
We gave sentence because we loved the guilty.
We accepted the sentence because we loved the innocent.
The world should have been watching
but it was only there in six-foot effigy
part of group camp
just as group camp is part of the world.
The world is just like group camp
only there are more than three rules
only more people break the rules
only no one cares enough to get up for meetings at 5 a.m.
If we can show that world that teenagers can behave
If we can show that community can work without
sex
drugs
weapons
bureaucracy

Revving Up the Continent for Advisors Support

Richard Foote • PCD

This year's Youth Council created a network of support for advisors. It is call the Continental Youth Advisors Network, and is headed by the adult member of the **ADVISOR** Steering Committee. **INFO** Each district will appoint/elect/chose one adult advisor (Youth Advisor Networker) that will be the channel for information, support and ideas including the new newsletter that will be out this fall. The Youth Advisor's Newsletter is about to be revived (courtesy of this Youth Council and Jory's hard work). It will have some great tips and info on recruiting advisors, advisor training, and tips to improve the quality and quantity of advisors. And if your advisor's names are on the list, they'll get the next issue later this fall, with all kinds of stuff that will help them become even better advisors, which means better conferences and youth groups which means a better YRUU which means a

better UUA which means a better planet which means - just mo' betta. In the meantime, while getting those names together, try these: 1. Network with advisors in the district; 2. Have a potluck; 3. Have an Adviso-Con; 4. Have an advisor workshop; 5. Have an Adult Open; 6. House Afternoon at a district con —or a local group event. 7. Do Lunch.

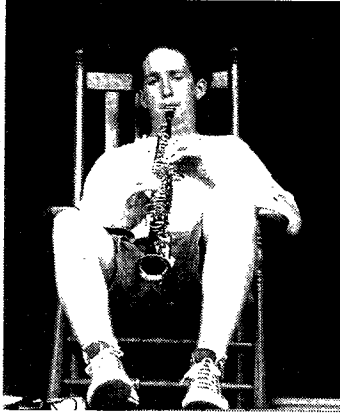
The greatest thing is that advisors aren't alone anymore. In addition to the info resources available, Advisors now can call the Continental Youth Advisor Networker for information, ideas and support. And let us know what you needs and desires are — we'll do what we can to get you what you need. Of course, you can always call the Youth Office anytime.

Keep those advisor lists, names, cards and letters coming to the Youth Office or to:

Richard Foote
Continental Youth Advisor
Networker
2570 Walnut Blvd., Ste. 16
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(510) 943-6575 (home)
(510) 256-6331 (work)
(510) 256-6588 (fax)

CON CON 1992

It was an Experiment in B a d Food, Sleep Deprivation and



Geoff Brouhard on the porch at Con Con 1992 - photo by Miranda Murray

Tons o' FUN! It was held August 17-22 at Camp Kingsley Pines in Raymond, ME. Did you miss it? Well, let us tell you about it. Con Con is the Continental Conference of YRUU and is held every August in different regions of the continent. Last year it was in the Northeast. In fact it was at Camp Kingsley Pines in Raymond, ME. Sounds good, eh? But what is

it? Well, it's a week full of diverse workshops, exciting special events (such as a dance, a banquet, a renaissance festival, and a coffeehouse), spiritually inclusive worship services, and games (like the ones rudolph couldn't play in). Yes, it was great. In fact, a few of the participants thought it was better than an R.E.M. song...Hmm. Well even so, it was a great event

a n d g u e s s what...it's going to happen a g a i n next year, but you'll have to turn to page 12 to see when it's going to be...



Justina Prenatt, Alyssa Leavens, & Mike Rehder at Con Con 1992 - photo by Miranda Murray

Are You 18-25 Years OLD?

Not sure what to do after YRUU?

Afraid that the only UU frontier left open to you is to become a "respected" member of your congregation and have to act your age?

.....
Fear Not! There is UU life after high school, and you don't have to be thirty to enjoy it! For the first time in the history of our denomination, the younger half of the "young adults" are getting their act together... and we're doing it ourselves! A bunch of us post-high types got together at G.A. this summer and decided that it was time for us to take control of our own destiny. That's right... 18-25 year old UUs are no longer just souls wandering aimless through life... we're lost souls creating our own *continental network*!!! Just think what we could do... local groups, conferences, newsletters... why do you think older UUs need chiropractors? Because they stop getting backrubs when they leave high school! Avoid such a heinous fate and be part of something BIG! If you are 18-25, send your name, address[es] -- home address, college address, e-mail address, phone number or anything else you can think of, and your birthdate to:

Kevin McCulloch
Continental Contact Person for Something Happening!
Haverford College
Haverford, PA 19041

Perspectives by: 3 YRUU Women

Part One

I knew I liked girls as soon as I knew I liked boys. It was never an issue to me. As I got older I started to understand a little more about what sexual orientation means and the battles some people have to fight because of who they love. But it never stopped me from being me. Fortunately, my parents were mostly very supportive when, at 16, I told them I was bisexual. I know a lot of people whose parents weren't so supportive. Several of my friends were disowned because of their sexual orientation. When one of my friends told her mom she was a lesbian, her mom broke every dish in the house. I'm glad I've always felt confident and supported enough to explore my feelings. I hadn't thought of this before, but the supportive and "queer friendly" environment in YRUU has been part of the support system that allowed me to explore who I was becoming. These days I don't think I could put a label on myself as far as my orientation goes. I've always said I was bisexual because I knew I liked girls and because I was supposed to like boys. But now I'm not so sure. I have close male friends, but I don't know if I could ever be in love with a man. I kiss men, I've had sex with men, but I don't know if I'll ever be satisfied with a man. I'm just glad I trust myself enough to experiment and keep learning. ✂

Gay and Seventeen

by: Melinda Sue Hutchings

Out of a simple need for acceptance and desire to meet others with mutual concerns, a group of gay and lesbian teenagers was started at the First Unitarian Church in Houston, TX, in May, 1987. The request was simple enough- a place to meet once a week where gay and lesbian teens could talk to one another and find friends. The Board of Trustees developed a plan it was willing to support on behalf of the church that included a day of the week, a room, and a list of adult volunteers who would be able to meet with the teenagers and be on hand to lend legitimacy and protection to the gathering. The teenagers named their new group the Houston Area Teen Coalition for Homosexuality (HATCH). I was one of the adult hosts, attending nearly every week.

Eventually word spread quietly, and people began to come in increasing numbers until by midsummer there were 20 to 25 present on any given evening. One of the first orders of business was to change the night from Friday to Saturday. Interesting, I thought- there is so much going on for teenagers on Saturday nights- but for these young people, Saturday was the loneliest night.

The stories the teenagers shared as they began getting to know one another were poignant and painful. It occurred to me that being gay and 17 was a "Catch 22" situation- peer acceptance was paramount and it required being just like everyone else. But being gay automatically sets you apart, and finding friends you could trust is very difficult. These teens told of feeling terrified at "coming out" to their parents for fear of rejection. Some who had "come out" confirmed others' worst fears by telling of rejection and of being thrown out of the house. I ached every time I heard this story. But the sad fact is, reality is tough, and hard decisions must be made.

A format, loose but recognizable, has begun to unfold. The first Saturday of the month is "HATCH-Out," a night when a particular adult facilitates a more focused discussion on a previously agreed upon topic. One Saturday is set aside for guest speakers. We had a volunteer from the Houston AIDS Foundation discuss AIDS to help dispel myths about the disease, a lawyer speak about being gay and successful in his law practice, and a gay therapist talk about "coming out." On other nights the teenagers just start talking to one another, and someone's personal struggle often becomes the evening's focus. The listeners may offer suggestions from personal experience, or ideas for solutions may be discussed until a consensus develops. One of the boys once asked for advice on how to tell a friend who was becoming too close that he wasn't ready for an intimate relationship but wanted to keep the friendship intact. The others suggested a forthright approach and role-played the situation so that he could practice and feel comfortable dealing with it. Another time a girl was anticipating running away

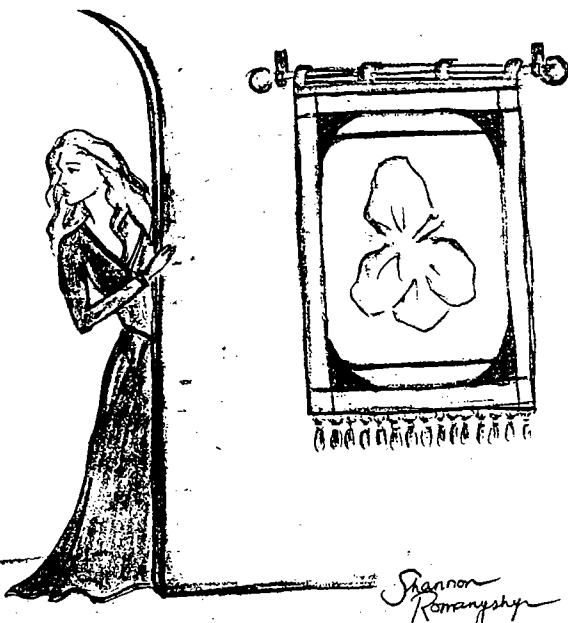
from home. The advice? "Stay home and communicate. It's better than having no home at all." This isn't just a UU group, so another particularly tough problem is, "My religious upbringing has taught me that I'm no good and will be doomed to a life in hell if I continue to identify myself as gay. How do I make my feelings compatible with that?" I'm continually struck by the wisdom and depth of compassion the group members offer one another.

If you ask any of the teenagers why HATCH is so important to them, they reply immediately, "For the support." It's the only place during their entire week where they can gather and know that they won't be judged and rejected. One time a girl, who habitually dominated the group time and created a great deal of dissension, was discussed at length in her absence. The question was whether she should be allowed to continue coming. The solution: She should keep coming as long as she wants to because she needs to be there!

I wonder at HATCH members' resilience, determination, and ingenuity. Their indomitable spirit is their greatest ally. When I urged them to look beyond their own concerns and see the need for involvement in the community, they responded by befriending a young AIDS patient bereft of friends and family, and by networking with young runaways, making sure they were safe and had places to stay. The HATCH agenda includes becoming a recognizable force in the community so that more people like themselves can join HATCH and find support.

Whenever I am asked to address a group to tell our story, the response from those in the audience who are gay is always the same- "I just wish there had been such a group when I was growing up!" Our church is the only place in Houston where a group of teenagers concerned about their sexual preference and the life course they are maneuvering through is supported and respected. It is an idea whose time is long overdue. Our church, our adults, and the teens who attend are in the vanguard of something unique and our pride in succeeding is exceeded only by the value of the goal- to ensure that the inherent worth and dignity of these young people searching for their identity is nurtured.

Reprinted here from the Jan/Feb 1990 issue of The World.



Lesbian/Bisexual

Perspective

I'm not gay. If I were then I'd be a lesbian love artichokes and hate cooked carrots. They don't believe in ghosts, reincarnation, music and Blue Velvet couldn't be the fantasies about men or crave the kind of penetration.

Lesbians have short hair, wear music with radical feminist messages and possibly like romantic mushy movies or paintings. These images of who I am and society's I've always thought of myself as an opera in which I grew up, my ideas were radically surrounded. As liberal as I believed myself things. Although I am being completely facceptions always seemed to have some kind. Homosexuality was something that I was exaggerated situations. Situations depicted (as how I was not allowed to watch because it was forbidden) conceptions.

What I learned from general allowed me to explore homosexuality. I continue as a realm I could understand. As a "liberal," of course, apprehending sex with another concept that was I could never feel "that" way. The strange and inaccurate couldn't understand life because it so many of my conceptions the world worked inings operated. Now that I've years I've a bisexual and bisexual environment of tolerance by the lesbian members off my nity allowed me to them and, in turn, Just a few months bian experience. When it little freaked out but I an experience and tried not to month later I had another experience- was a little harder to dismiss after ing to realize that I did not want to dismiss through because, after all, being hit on the have to deal with. It felt good to be able myself.

Our society does not encourage healthy day, especially when they involve lesbian or immoral. I felt for the first time that disgusting or wrong, but beautiful and common. I have a strong dislike for labels. I feel a category in which there are no exceptions female. Although I identify most with bisexual constantly changing. Today I am completely tomorrow I may meet a woman I am attracted to choose a label, for if I did I would be dead. I am a sexual being just as we all are. a woman, a man, or both, or with ourselves all. Sexuality requires no explanation or equally as beautiful when shared with another when appreciated in the privacy of our own

Equal/Gay Issues

by: 3 YRUU women

and lesbians aren't 5'4" tall. Lesbians don't get sunburned at the drop of a hat. They don't love classical music. Lesbians don't love their favorite movie. They don't have sexual satisfaction you could only get by

le shirts, are pushy and listen to folk music. They don't like the annihilation of men. They couldn't do it without their fingernails.

perceived images of lesbians just don't fit. They're not the kind of minded individual. Because of the rural area I grew up in, I was and still am, ignorant about many things. In the above descriptions, the misconceptions of absurd truth to them in my child's mind. I was not exposed to except in funny, ridiculously bad on horrible sit-coms like *Three's Company* but did all the more, of course, which served to feed my mis-



YRUU about sexuality in exploring the reality of how we are used to regard lesbian-never completely universal" adolescent I appreciate gay men but, other woman was a for "other" people. love for a woman in lesbians I met were possible. I just stand their way of seemed to violateceptions of how and how my feel-within that world. been in YRUU for 4 quired many les-friends. The envi-ance for my igno-bian, bisexual, and conference commu-learn more about about myself. ago I had my first les-first happened I was a eventually dismissed it as think too much about it. A ence with the same woman. It the second time but I was also com-I gave myself a lot of time to think things ad with you sexuality is a powerful thing to xpress myself sexually and be honest with

uality. The images we're struck with every sexual women, are almost always "dirty" or experiencing someone else's body was not sly right for me at that instance in my life. they force people to put themselves into I am not a lesbian nor am I a heterosexual ty, I hesitate to label myself because I am sexual, yesterday I fantasized about a man, o both physically and mentally. I don't have t for everyone except myself. ie of us may choose to express that with me of us may choose not to express it at fication. It is our gift to ourselves and is of the same gender, opposite gender, or ng. ✕

We're Killing Ourselves

Statistics on Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide

According to a study by Bell and Weinberg...

... 25 percent of lesbians had attempted suicide

... 20 percent of gay men had attempted suicide

... gay males are 6 times more likely to make an attempt on their lives than heterosexual males

... lesbians are more than twice as likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual females

... a majority of the suicide attempts by homosexuals took place at age 20 or younger with nearly one third occurring before age 17

These statistics were published in the book *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women* by Bell and Weinberg in 1978.

How much would you like to bet they're higher now?

The Office of Lesbian and Gay Concerns

Unitarian Universalist Association

25 Beacon Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02108

(617) 742-2100

Extension 250

The creation of an Office of Lesbian and Gay Concerns was mandated by the General Assembly in 1973 and achieved in 1974. The mission of the office is to foster acceptance, understanding, and equality for gay, lesbian and bisexual persons — within the UUA and in society at large.

Meg A. Riley

Director, Office of Lesbian and Gay Concerns

Director, AIDS Action and Information Program

AIDS and Your Religious Community: A Hands on Guide for Local Programs, by Warren Blumenfeld and Scott Alexander, copyright 1991 by the Unitarian Universalist Association. This book is a joint project of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the AIDS National Interfaith Network. This resource book includes 27 proven models of congregational programs to address the needs of people suffering with AIDS. Also includes: Resource Guide, Volunteer Orientation Materials, Assessment Tools for your Congregation, Getting Involved in the Political Process, AIDS Ministry Support Networks. Available at the UUA Bookstore, \$13.95

The Welcoming Congregation: Resources for Affirming Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Persons, edited by Scott Alexander, copyright 1990 by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

This resource book provides starting places for congregations that wish to be inclusive of people from diverse sexual orientations. Includes: Program Foundations, Workshop Series, Program Ideas, Christian Worship Materials, Resource Guide. Available at the UUA Bookstore, \$24.95.

Each district houses two resource people to help with leadership training and implementation of *The Welcoming Congregation*.

An Insight into Welcoming Congregations

Way back in 1970 the General Assembly passed its first of 10 resolutions to end discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals. We have been working as a denomination for the ending of institutionalized oppression. In 1975 the doors of the Office of Gay Affairs swung open. They had the insight to change the name to the Office of Gay Concerns pretty darn quick.

In 1989 GA passed a business resolution to adopt the Welcoming Congregations program "to combat homophobia in UU congregations and individual UUs."

All of this brings us to me. I was one of the eight youth chosen to attend the Welcoming Congregations Trainers conference. In addition to youth there were also two adults and a religious educator from each district. We spent a busy weekend in western Massachusetts with people 15-65 plus learning how to lead workshops.

The whole experience was fabulous and frustrating in the same breath. We spent time in smaller groups running through the actual "hoop tee do" of running a workshop. Because the group was so diverse and we were being so sensitive to everyone's comfort level, it took a long time to establish clear communication.

I appreciated being part of the larger group, but I learned more from the older youth. We affirmed and supported each other and we all learned the fine game of silent

football. The discussions we had were honest, raw, and insightful. There is enormous opportunity for us as a youth movement. If we all made the personal commitment to combat prejudice on all levels we could send a tremor throughout the world.

The social action theme for this year is Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual issues. Run workshops, write articles for your district newsletter, keep your ears open for heterosexist language, and just treat each other well. It would be a gigantic project, but a Welcoming Congregation training weekend just for youth could push us the ultimate goal of Unitarian Universalism, the recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of all people.

by Leslie Rosen- Northeast YCR

If you are intersted in learning more about the Welcoming Congregation Program call the Office of Lesbian and Gay Concerns or the Youth Office.

Perspectives by: 3 YRUU women

When I was young, anything more than a mother and father occupying the same bed was horrifying and inconceivable to me. That probably explains why I would cross the street to avoid walking next to a group of gay protestors, or stick out my tongue disgusted at the thought that a woman could love another woman the same way she loved a man. Around 4th grade, the same time I became a UU, my grandmother told my brother and me that my uncle lived with another man. He was gay. My brother and I looked at each other with eyes nearly popping out of our heads. But, the more we talked about it the more interesting the idea seemed to us. Our uncle was gay, yet still fun to be with and listen to, and still human.

All of this seems silly to me now. It's hard to admit that when I was young I was homophobic. It was only after understanding homosexuality that I could understand my own sexuality. Today I feel heterosexual. I don't think I could really be sexually happy with another woman. I've asked myself about experimentation a lot. I've almost tried to pushed myself to but, I think that would be as bad as a homosexual never coming out. It wouldn't be me, and knowing who you are and what you are comfortable with is the most important aspect of sexuality.

I am happy to be straight and not have to deal with an attraction to two sexes (in the case of bisexuals), because I have enough trouble with one. I am happy to be straight, and enjoy a woman's company and friendship in a way that's not physical. I am happy when I fall in love with a man who gives me the balance I need. But it makes me just as happy to see a woman friend holding the hand of her female lover, knowing she has discovered her own sexuality. ✕

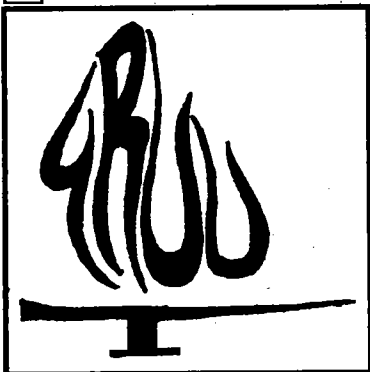
the logo contest

We Want Your Humble Opinion!

Okay, here's the scoop. As you

probably recall from the last issue of Synapse we are looking for a new YRUU logo because we're beginning a new decade in the life of YRUU starting January 1, 1993- YRUU's 10th anniversary. We had so many entries that when it came down to the final Department just couldn't bare making the decision ourselves thing to do was to narrow it down to four finalists and have which one would you like to see as the new YRUU logo? pleasing, should symbolize the spirit of YRUU, and should

A

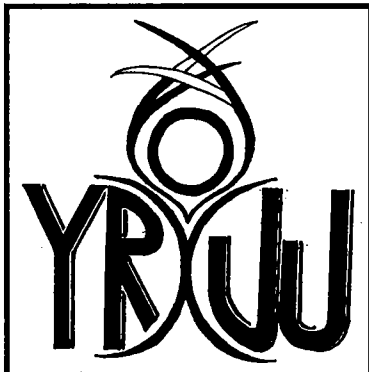


to represent your organization for the next ten years). If become the official logo of a postcard or letter to the Youth Office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 designating which one of the four you there participates, otherwise democracy in the midst of you wouldn't want to be as-you? So get out your post-VOTE!

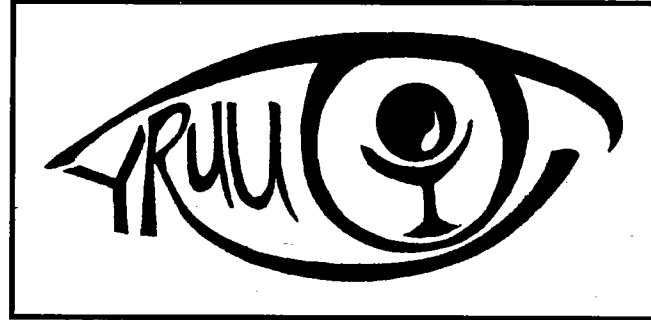
The winning entry, as voted will be published in the next all other fabulous entries. The winner of the YRUU logo name credited in the next issue of Synapse. We hope to hear

B

Out of these four logos which one would you like to see as the new YRUU logo?



C



We are happy to say that we got tons of response! In fact decision, we in the Youth Office and the Religious Education - it was just too big a task. We decided then that the only fair a vote. So tell us what you think! Out of these four logos Remember the logo that is selected should be aesthetically have staying power (meaning it will be the logo that you want you have an opinion about this, which you should since it will your organization, then send like. We hope everyone out we'll just be another failed other failed democracies- and sociated with that not would card, pens, and stamps, and

by the members of YRUU, issue of Synapse along with contest will receive a free YRUU t-shirt and have his/her from you all soon! Thanks!

D



prose garden

Now that's Entertainment!

Laura Peterson PSD

Okay, let's face it. Church, especially on Easter Sunday, is extremely boring. I'm not trying to offend or complain, please don't misunderstand. Sermons about the power structure of the Vatican and its relation to the feminist movement (or something like that), as interesting as it may be, just doesn't appeal to me. So, for all you UU's who experience this same dilemma, here's a simple list of entertaining things to do while attending the service.

1. The never failing "bring a book." Church services are the best time to catch up on those readings for AP English. Currently I am working on *The Brothers Karamazov* which seems even more appropriate for church reading.
2. Fall asleep. This is for those days when you were dragged out of bed and want to get your mother or father back. This can spontaneously happen if the chairs are comfortable or the thermostat is kicked up to 90 degrees. It's like a cozy incubator.
3. If you have a slanted seating area then you can roll stuff down the floor. As entertaining as this can be, it is often short-lived. The fruits of one's efforts cannot be seen very well, for the front row is often empty or too far away to see the reaction of its occupants. A good game to play with this is trying to hit someone's shoes. Be careful that you don't mess with someone mean.
4. Call Sean Ramsey at the Youth Office and ask him to teach you how to blow bubbles off your tongue. Last Sunday I was accused of making faces at the minister (my father) when I did this. People

behind you may think it's cute and give you money. Mostly, this is a spectator sport. One should play it for the entertainment of others only. If no one is around to see you, then you should probably pick another game.

5. Our church has this beautiful chalice which is adorned with a flame from a can of Sterno. In order to make the flame visible, salt is added to the mixture. Try mixing in other chemicals and see what color flame comes out.
6. Easter Sunday two members of the youth group had skipped church and sat in the senior high room making candle sculptures. Melted wax has always been a favorite at UU churches. All ages have enjoyed its warm, gooey effects. I have seen the most amazing candle-type things made at Christmas time.
7. We have these giant windows in my church, and I've always wanted to take a sticky octopus, get it really gooey, and chunk it up to the top and watch it slowly crawl down. Don't do this if it will fall on some old lady though.
8. Bring a pen and draw all over your order of service or yourself. If you're careful, it's easy to make the art look like a real tattoo.
9. Bring a candy bar and eat it as noiselessly as you can. This should take up the whole time.
10. Play games with your eyes by staring at the "what the hell is that" banner behind the podium. UU's like to use orange and green burlap with accenting gold stars. If you can stare hard, the image could achieve 3-D ness.

Well, here's my list. Don't be too anxious and try all of them in the same service. For those of you who still have some intelligence left and haven't been infected with a thirty minute attention span, the

service might be of interest to you so go ahead and listen. For the rest of us, it seems hopeless. There is still one fool proof way not to be bored. (Other than not going.) Participate. Maybe offer to read one of the readings or put on a youth service. Once you do that and realize how much thought and energy goes into each service you may grow to enjoy them more.



A Prayer to the Virgin Mary

Tyna Hickerson Claremont, CA

"Hail Mary, full of grace..." — that's all she knew, the little girl, Jewish in 1940, in Poland, and she murmured the rest, praying the others would not notice.

Kneeling in the Polish cathedral, I think of her.

I am all alone in this place made for hundreds, except for one other soul. If my thoughts of the moment took human incarnation they would resemble her; small, ancient, old-fashioned, with a white raisin face, and all dressed in black and a tattered grey scarf of lonely, forgotten faith.

I find it strange perhaps that I, a Jew, seek out a church for comfort, if only from the sun and tired feet. I feel no particular guilt — I suppose my ecumenical upbringing as a UU has inured me — but old stories of hurts and warnings sit beside me, silently shaking their heads at the extravagantly gory crucified man hanging from the gold gilt ceiling.

The dark wooden benches are not meant to be overly comfortable, but I am hot and tired from sight-seeing and shopping, and it feels good to sit inside where it's cool.

After a little while, rested a bit, I rise and circulate the cathedral, all adorned with pillars of marble, and life-size statues, and angel-winged ceilings, and gold, and candles, and colored windows.

The church is built in the shape of a cross. Small chapels are in the wings, each dedicated to a saint,

pictured rolling pious eyes to heaven. The very back, the pinnacle of the cross, is a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Here the old Polish woman genuflects and then kneels. And here also I am drawn.

The Virgin stands alone, on a pedestal with flowers at her feet. Her white face is serene and mild, an ever so slight smile on her lips. I've read in feminist literature that she is the Goddess stripped of all power but that of compassion. But looking at her now, she reminds me of Buddha, somehow sad and happy at the same time, and yet content.

"Hail Mary, full of grace," I murmur, sadly, ironically. Like her, I do not know the rest. I rest my head on my hands — folded in the Christian manner, as though in prayer — and stare at the Virgin intently.

Perhaps she was in a church like this (not difficult — they all look pretty much like that), kneeling as I, peering at the gleaming white form of the chaste Christian Queen of Heaven. What thought hounded her on that occasion? Guilt, fear, a wish to be accepted? Did she think of it as idolatry, or did she secretly, guiltily, wish she could believe? Was she torn between two faiths, or was all her faith of any type shred in the jaws of the Shoah? Did she see any connection between the hidden feminine face of God, the *Shekina* of Judaism, and Christianity's modestly dressed Mother of God?

But, no, she found no unity, no salvation, not even the refuge she sought in that church, or in which she masked herself. Fourteen years after being hidden by nuns, thus saved from the gas chambers, she took her own life; leaving only the bitter realization of the irony which forced her too hide from anti-semitism in the religion which popularized it. ('His blood is upon you and your children,' she was told when admitted.)

When my mother joined a UU church (the result of having married a Gentile?) My grandmother warned her, "so you want your

daughter to commit suicide when she's nineteen? (Her age when she took her life in '54, after graduating high school as Valedictorian). My mother defended her decision to raise me in the UU church: Only not being told who she has to be, but can learn who she is.

I am nineteen now. This trip to Europe is my high school graduation present. (No — I wasn't Valedictorian, not even close.)

Thinking of her unexpectedly brings tears to my eyes. It doesn't last long; I am so surprised by the fat, gushy tear on my cheek that I lose my concentration on my depressing thought and stop crying. But, I let the single tear slide, unimpeded, all the way down my cheek, even though it tickles.

Mother Mary, I think at the statue, the feminists are right, you're a wimp! Why didn't you comfort her, if you're such a bundle of maternal compassion? Why didn't you remind her that you were a Jewish girl, just like her?

Mary just smiles at me, a little sadly, a little joyously, a little too calmly.

But I'm not going to let her off that easily.

Account for yourself, woman! I order her. (Lack of humility in dealing with divinity is no doubt another consequence of my liberal religious upbringing.)

She looks me right in the eye and replies, but what could I tell her? For perhaps I too am split between the people of my birth, and their cousins who have raised me on a pedestal and put flowers at my feet. I have not even the powers due to me; how then am I to do ought, but mourn if they kill each other in my babies name, who was himself a victim of religious intolerance?

Why are you smiling like a fool then? I demand.

In Heaven there are no divisions between religions, she smiles.

Always the promise of heaven, I sneer. Why not something a little more useful, here and now?

Who are you to say when or

cont'd on page 10

Social Action

Priorities

by: Katie Barclay
Lilburn, GA

We get every single thing we ever ask for.
We have everything we need, yet still want more.

We are spoiled rotten by the things we get.
We spend money on junk that we haven't used yet.

We throw away and waste good food that we've bought.
We never give our trendy clothes a moments second thought.

We do feel some pity for those who have less.
We think, "Why get involved in that homeless mess?"

We won't look near the streets where children lie.
We simply close our eyes and drive on by.

We want to help, but say, "There's too much to do."
We tell our children, "Those people aren't like me and you."

We all need to change our world's fate.
We need to change quickly before it's too late.

☺☺☺

The National Workshop on Social Justice

May 2-4, 1993
at the Howard Inn
Washington D.C.
For more information contact:
Oriole Saah
UU Washington Office
100 Maryland Avenue NE
Washington D.C. 20002
*will give partial travel subsidies

It's a Simple Matter of Justice

The 1993
March on Washington
for Lesbian, Gay and
Bisexual Equal Rights
and Liberation

April 25, 1993

If you are interested in
staying at the Mt. Vernon
Unitarian Church in Alexan-
dria, Virginia the night
before and marching under
the YRUU banner with other
UU youth, contact the
Youth Office for more
information.



drawing by: Jeremy P. Bushnell

Youth Environmental Summit



April 15-18, 1993
Estes Park, Colorado
Co-sponsored by:
the United Nations' University
for Peace in Costa Rica
Objectives:
Each summit participant will...
...become educated on current issues facing Earth which will be
required of those citizens who wish to bring about change in local and
global policy.
For more information contact:
Chris Fontana
Youth Environmental Summit
Niles West High School
Oakton at Edens Expressway
Skokie, IL 60077
(708) 966-3800



graphic by: Susan Blake

The New Continental
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You can find her at
1830 48th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94122
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The Shape of Justice

Spiritual Roots of our Commitment
Continental Convocation in Los Angeles
March 25-28, 1993

An action- oriented conference sponsored by
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community

Focus:

Ecology and Economic Justice: A UU Response

Workshops:

Liberal Religion and Economic Justice
Economic and Enviornmental Justice
Classism, Racism, Gender in Economic Justice
Scholarships and travel assistance (grant request pending)

Made possible by a
planning grant from
The Fund for UU
Social Responsibility
in cooperation with the
First Unitarian Church
of Los Angeles



For further informa-
tion contact:
Deborah Holder
7 Carter St.
Berlin, MA 01503
(508) 838-2470

I Am Proud

by: Taj Moore

today I realized
all around me
are people that hate
me
because i am black
they hate me
they do not know me
they refuse
they hate me
how can i love them

i do not understand
racism
i can not love it
racism
does not make sense
racism
makes
hate
makes
waste
camel spit
pabulum
gomick
works of nothing
that mean everything
racism is violence
i lay and die
learn to fight

i saw a racist
on television
he does not believe
in education
ignorance is bliss
i don't know
i don't want to know
i don't whisper hate
hate knowledge\ hate
ignorance
hate me
hate racism

i do not understand
they want to rule
the world
they want to be the
only ones
am i a nazi
are they nazis
who am i
do they really know
i do not

today i realize
people think i am
black
i am black
people think i am
white
i am white
people think i am
indian
i am indian
people think i am
arab
i am arab
what am i
i am proud
what am i
i
am
proud

"Verbal compositions having the suggestive power to engage feelings and imaginations, typically through the highly structured patterning and movement of sound, rhythm, and meaning characteristic of verse."
- the American Heritage Dictionary

cont'd from page 8
where heaven might be found?
she retorts (with perhaps a little
of that old Goddess spirit revital-
izing her).

I do not believe in heaven, or
hell, or reincarnation, or an after-
life, or supernatural justice.

But there are times when I like
to think that perhaps Eternity,
Heaven, Nirvana are all terms
used to describe a different time-
ness. "Dreamtime" to borrow an
Australian term. It's long been
pointed out that in addition to our
forward - backward, past - future
time line, there is another circular
dimension of time, present -
eternity. Perhaps across this we
can reach souls of the tortured

**"there are times when I
like to think that perhaps
Eternity, Heaven, and
Nirvana are all terms used
to describe time-ness."**

past, and they us. And whether it
is so or not, in that moment I
touch that little girl of 1940, who
became that suicidal nineteen
year old of 1954; and she joins
us, the Virgin Mary and I, in the
primordial temple of the mind.

We three smile at each other,
half smiles, half this and half
that. Then we hug a three way
hug; and we don't murmur any
hail Marys, but we say, *Hey, it's
alright, it's alright*, over and over
again, like a mommy says to a
daughter awakened from a night-
mare; and somehow it is.

The little old woman notices
me crying, and she comes over to
me and pats me on the back and
speaks soothingly to me in a for-
eign language; probably *Hey, it's
alright, it's alright* in Polish.

I smile at her, and she smiles
back. She pats me on the back
again. She gives me a small red
candle, pressing it into my hands
with her white, wrinkly ones.
Then she shuffles out of the
church.

Surprised and touched, I light
the candle on the little stand be-
fore the Virgin Mary. I dedicate
it in my mind to *her*, trying to
remember a prayer in Hebrew.

"Baruch ata adonai..." is all I
can remember. I know it as well
as 'Hail Mary.' So I add a song
from camp;

*"Dear friends, dear friends,
let me tell you how I feel;*

*You have given me your trea-
sures, I love you so."*

I leave the church with a feel-
ing of peace, and there is a little,
half melancholy smile on my
lips. Outside, the Old City Square
of Warsaw bustles with activity.
Not far from the church door-
steps are three or four Hari
Krishna's, the men in saffron
robes, the women in badly draped
sari's; the fall of communism has
allowed them to step up
proselytization in Eastern Eu-
rope. The Summer sunshine is
warm on my face, and I listen
with contentment to their chant-
ing as I walk by.

I stubbed my brain

I stubbed my brain.
For a while it throbbed an swelled
and
shrank away, but
As soon as it could
move again
I went back to see
What I had stubbed my
darling on.
(I am more protective of my brain
than my toes)
I didn't find the corner of an
Oddly shaped room, or a splinter of
The baseboard
As you might expect.
I didn't find anything
Until I stubbed it again, and found
I was up against
The corner of an oddly shaped
world,
A splinter of reality.
My heart and soul
ganged up on my
Wimpy brain
And now
I'm precariously perched
On that splinter,
happily trying
to stub
you too.

Miriam Axel-Lute
South Orange, NJ

The darkness is my home

The darkness is my home - where I have always lived
I must seek my soul and the answer to my life here - here where I
was born
The darkness is a seperate life, a place where I can go to be complete
As I greet the darkness, she wraps her arms around me and kisses
me with the kiss of a sister -she loves me
She hides me from pain and pressure, not oppressing me, but sheilding
me
She asks nothing of me but my presence, and in return she gives me
love and the gift of her beauty
With her, I am not afraid to be alone, for I am never lonely but always
fulfilled
I know that sometimes I must leave her, but I will always return and
she will always be there, greeting me with the same
warm embrace



Leah Grossman, Derek McTaggart, Topher Finley, and Maureen
Egan performing the sacrificial lamb dance at Con Con 1992

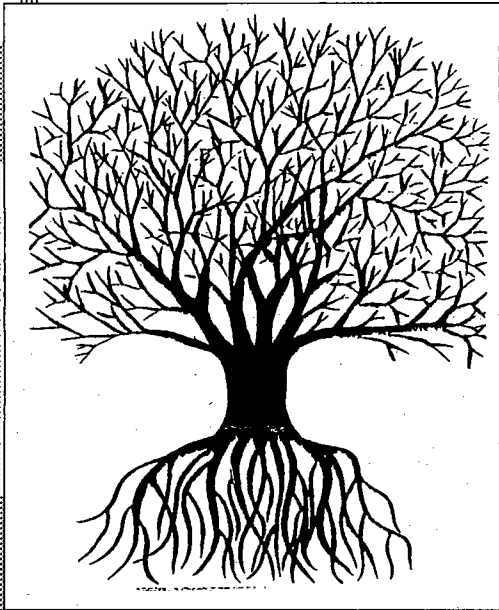
They say i'm crazy when I walk by.
Their hallway whispers bring tears to my eyes.
I don't see my life as a jest.
I take myself seriously- perhaps too seriously

I walk around in a world- knowing that's it's a facade.
Distant friends fill the air with a happy, empty chatter.
And smile for me- or so I tell myself.

But sometimes (if I don't work too hard at my lies)
I see through this
Carefully fabricated costume for my life.
Friends are strangers their words - meaningless.
They smile past my cheek as
They say I'm crazy.

Are they right?
Am I crazy to
Walk in the wood, the sun on my hair
Converse with people- existing only in my mind.
I know there must be others.
But I also know
That they say I'm crazy.

- Samira Mehta
Woodbridge, CT



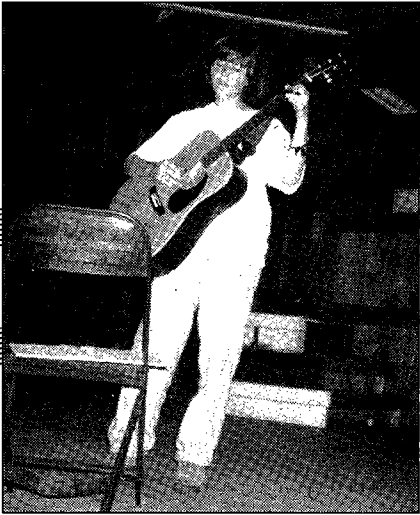
graphic by Jessica Carfagnini

theologies

by: Jeremy P. Bushnell
Philadelphia, PA

believing in God is like
receiving an open-mouthed kiss
from a stranger in the dark;
like making love to someone
when you don't even know their name;
like merrying yourself to
an empty dress, yards of silk and lace
with nothing inside.
it is sensual but terrifying.

not believing in God is like
driving a car through fog-congealed avenues
with the headlights off
until you accordion yourself into a brick wall.
it is deadly
but unquestionably real.



Caroline Schnieders lip syncing to
Milli Vanilli at Con Con 1992

a single rose upon the altar

a single rose upon the altar
Burning in flames of hatred.
The vision fades,
Obscured by tears of emptiness.
My weary eyes close,
Dismissing the loneliness of reality,
And setting me aflight
With the freedom of my dreams.
An enchanted forest,
The dwelling of my inner self;
Beautiful and delicate,
Like the voice of a harp.
Still the wood, in all its intimacy,
As is for the harper's song,
Within it lies a power
Defeating that of any sword.
Each and every leaf or note
Can strike your heart,
And make you believe.

In my magical forest was she,
And there she still waits.
The ruler of my heart,
Though a being of my dreams.
One kiss
Would dry the tears
And melt the pain.
All my thoughts are killed
By the desire for her reality.
I am in love,
Yet not shall ever see her face.

A dream is not forever.
Not all smile upon the dawn.
I awaken each day,
As the grief slowly kills my happiness.
Sorrow rules my spirit,
As an enchanted forest fades away,
And I can see nothing
But the ashes of a rose.

by: Sparrowhawk

Nature Break

by: Ramona Baker
Ft. Worth, TX

i love nature!!!!
the gentle breeze blows through my hair,
oh! this is the life!
the butterflies dance their own unique
concerto
to the music of the wind:
the bubbling brook gives rhythm to a
strange fish tango.
the flowers sway with a romantic effect
to help a young lightning bug win over a
dashing ladybug's heart
the soft pitter-patter of an evening Spring
rain
is the song to which frogs croak
their baritone and alto voices.
the falling leaf from an autumn maple is
hang gliding for a lone spider.
the picnic in the field is a safari for a troop
of ants with colonel eetalotte at the head.
of yes, i do say,
this is life!!

Inside

by: Anonymous

I cry inside
but I can't make the tears
go to the outside
I've never been so alone
among so many people.

I've never been so alone.

What I want is
to have people to love
who love me.
I want so much
to fall in love.

I've never been so alone.

I can't even touch
people any more;
people don't touch
me anymore;
maybe I don't let them.

I've never been so alone.

I cry inside,
but I can't make the tears
go to the outside.
I don't want to drown.
I've never been so alone
among so many people.

Writer's Block

by: Abby Bass

cold, black,
empty box.
I grasp this smooth slab
of nothingness
with crumbling
fingers,
and realize-
it's my head.

Let me hold the sky for a day

Let me hold the sky for a day
And let me touch the sky,
And I will see the light is real,
And know that I'm not in my world of "pretend."

For colour
Is melting together
And I am screaming
But I don't know why...

Just show me the light,
The light of the pale sun,
That sphere of fire burning,
In the void too big to comprehend.

For my body
Is melting and I am numb
And the light is fading
And I am afraid, so I cry.

Shannon Penamyshtyn
Edmonton, Alberta



Rolande Baker, Fiona Thomson, Justina Prenatt, Tanja Steinberg, Jesse Jaeger, Sarah Gibb, Mike Weaver, Laura Peterson, and Mandy Marchesani explain the native South American Chartruse Buzzard mating call at Youth Council 1992.

Harmony II

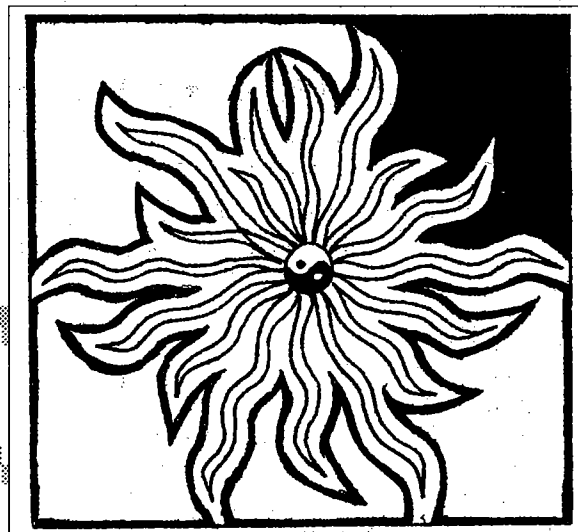
by: Nicole Piotrkowski
Edmonton, Alberta

Leaves of Autumn
tumbling down the street
like little children
running through a wheat field.

Why can't all children
have this freedom
to run where they choose
instead of only behind barbed-wired fences.

All the other children
run free, laughing
the shrieking,
the pain eternalized in their faces.

If we could be half fenced, half free,
maybe we could live together
without worry
in harmony.



graphic by Susan Blake

January Tree

i saw before me
a January tree
naked and bald branches
tempting
with cries for help
and i was drawn
but deep within a coral black within
a seed tilted on the edge of explosion
blazed and engulfed you...
emerged a discovery, and rejoicing
you stretched into light
and i was left,
standing in a grey alone
needing but not needed
and so i turned away.

Jenn King
Columbia, MD

Portrait of a Japanese Shadow

by: Jeremy P. Bushnell
Philadelphia, PA

After six years, it all ignited
the rising sun obliterating as it spread

I stood intricate in my garden that morning
and the sun ate the earth
bleaching bone-white the wall behind me,
leaving an outline where my shadow perched.
(and it survived me, for I blew apart then
a paper crane disintegrating in the air)

The wall still stands, unpainted, forty-odd years later
my shadow remains as well, and waits for news.

I exist now only as a memory
an idea
a negative space.

I exist as a gray raindrop in a parched white sky.

Jennifer Martin, Jory Agate and Sean Ramsey, the editors of this lovely piece o' art, say
Greetings and wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season!



Gathering Place

by: Sarah Easton, Mary Rapkin, and Rachel Schuett • Lincoln, NE

Hello, hello, and greetings from the middle of the highway. Where exactly this highway is located — well, not on our map! But we know we're heading somewhere and we hope it's in the general direction of home.

We've officially visited every Casey's General Store in Iowa. And caught several hundred monarch butterflies in our car grill. And sung (loudly) "We come from the Mountain" (and lots of other places!) at every gas station and rest stop we've been at. Thus, we gave thousands of Iowans stories to tell their grandchildren. The trip home has been so eventful that it's hard to remember anything about Boone, other than it was fun! But we'll try...



Three of us were elected to the PSD Youth Steering Committee: Rachel Schuett and Beryl Maitland are co-chairs and Mary Rapkin is the local outreach person for

the conference were meeting many new people, all UU's, and seeing our ol' pals from past conferences. The oh-so joyous theme - "A New Beginning" - fit well due to all the first timers who attended.

We enjoyed many cool workshops as well. Some examples are: fishing, scruples, cooper tooling, a challenge course, massage, and leadership/worship planning. During those hours of free time we entertained ourselves with the ultimate UU ritual... Tie Dye!

We also read poetry, played volleyball and earthball, and basically just hung out. But back to the road trip home... To sum it up, Mary picked bugs out of Beryl's teeth, we all ate Hydrox and Dr. Pepper, got detoured twice, saw 2-3 fires, some nifty scenery, listened to music... just too much to tell!

our cluster. Lincoln was well represented with 10 youth and 3 adults attending the election.

What we gained in inspiration definitely made up for what we lost in perspiration. And the spiral dances made up for the spiral drives (driving in circles that is) that came on the way home. We all agree that the highlights of

To close our cool, groovy, awesome Con-story, we'd like to thank the adults who drove and took part in the Con (Alene Anderson-Swinehart, Cyan Monohon, and Beryl). We want you to know that we love the fact that you got involved with the youth. It shows not only courage, but dedication to the church.



Random Thoughts

by Miranda Murray

So anyway, I was sitting on the floor, coloring over black construction paper with a silver crayon for an art project and I thought of Con Con. I started college two days after Con Con, which was a culture shock - hell, so was going home to pack. From happy peacefulness to frantic activity to a new life. I don't know what happened that week. It seems so long ago. Con Con was the most wonderful send-off into this new world. For orientation, I wore my nifty new YRUU t-shirt which raised questions. At this point, I've almost formulated an answer (that is under a half hour) to "What do UU's believe?" It is interesting that people here now know more about my personal theology than they do anything else about me. Between battling the ant colony under my bed and explaining what exactly takes place at conferences, my moments are filled. But, I still call bathrooms BIFFYs, I still shy away from too much starch. I still sing the "Good Morning Song." I still drink bad coffee and eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches at strange times. I still have my name tag, just in case I forget who I am or where I came from...

Have you ever taken, taught, or been a trainer for About Your Sexuality (AYS)?

The UUA is working with the United Church of Christ to develop a new sexuality curriculum, but we would like to get feedback from all of you who have been involved with AYS. If you would be willing to fill out a survey regarding your experience with AYS, then please fill out the form below and return it to: Debra Anderson, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108. The survey will be sent out in the Fall. Thank you for your help.

Name _____ Birthdate ____/____/____
Address _____
I have taken AYS _____ taught AYS _____ trained AYS _____
Dates taken, taught, or trained AYS (to the best of your memory) _____
Place taken, taught, or trained: _____

THANK YOU,
Thank You,
thank you!!

The Youth Office and YRUUers everywhere would like to thank all those wonderful people out there that helped SAVE SYNAPSE. With all the contributions we were able to include a two page Synapse spread in the September/October issue of The World magazine. We are also able to announce that we now have almost enough money in our budget to either have two issues of Synapse a year plus a spread in The World (like we did this time), or to try for three issues of Synapse a year. We are not quite monetarily able to afford three issues, but the Board of Trustees and the Administration are hearing our cries for one more issue and they are slowly, but surely, increasing our Synapse budget to allow this to happen.

So we thank you all for your wonderful and much appreciated generosity, your contributions have indeed helped SAVE SYNAPSE. - from the editors

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CON CON 1993

the end of the beginning

August 14th to the 21st
Camp Osceola in the San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California

For more information, write to:



Youth Office/Con Con 1993
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 742-2100 ext. 350, 351, 352

NEW
YRUU
T-Shirts



still

Available!

If you like what you see and want to have one for your very own, or your youth group would like some for a fundraiser, call or write to the Youth Office and we'll tell you where you can find such a stylin' t-shirt.

The beautifully designed t-shirt logo was drawn by a Margaret

Ladner a YRUUer from Ijamsville, Maryland and it celebrates the tenth anniversary of YRUU, which became an official organization on January 1, 1983.

All shirts are available in either black or white 100% cotton t-shirts and they come in Lrg. and X-Lrg. sizes only.

LOOKING 4 A NEW
YRUU PROGRAMS SPECIALIST

Job Description:

The YRUU Programs Specialist position is a one year internship for youth to work at the UUA headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts. The new YRUU Programs Specialist will work with the other intern, the Youth Programs Assistant, and the Youth Programs Director to manage the day to day business of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. Responsibilities include: editing and layout of the YRUU newspaper Synapse; managing the continental YRUU office at 53 Beacon St., Boston; planning and administering conferences and youth gatherings; participating in UUA staff and Religious Education meetings in Boston, as well as other UU Committee meetings which may be of interest to youth; implementing the decisions of the YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee; travelling to district and local groups for outreach and Leadership development.

The position is a one year term beginning September 1, 1993 and ending August 31, 1994. The stipend is \$16,000 for the year. Moving expenses to and from Boston are paid, but the intern is expected to find living accommodations, as well as pay for all living expenses while in Boston.

To apply, please write to the Youth Office at: 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 for an application kit.

Applications must be postmarked
be March 1, 1993 to be
considered.

Contact the Youth Office at (617) 742-2100 if there are any questions concerning the application process.

Take Charge... Apply for At-Large

The YRUU Youth Council is the governing body of YRUU, and meets annually to make policy decisions, pass resolutions, worship, and decide the direction for the UU youth movement for the upcoming year. There are three At-Large positions for youth (jr. high, 12-15; sr. high, 15-18; & post high, 18-20), and seven positions for adults (25+) with three of them being vacant this year. The youth at-large positions are one year commitments, and the adult term is two years. This year's meeting is in August and will be in Pacific Palisades, CA. All travel and expenses for At-Large members are paid for by the U.U.A. If you are interested in being a part of this council call the Youth Office.