

SYNAPSE.

A POINT OF CONTACT WHERE ENERGY AND INFORMATION ARE EXCHANGED
THE CONTINENTAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YOUNG RELIGIOUS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS
VOLUME XIII, ISSUE 1, SPRING 1995. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



BY: Tyson Weiss
1-3-95

Howdy! Please take a moment to fill out this form and help us clean out our files. Make sure we get your birthdate! Thanks!!

TRIM IT!

☐

Woah! I don't need two copies of Synapse! Please send my **one** copy to the address below. Thanks.

ADD IT!

☐

Why, yes, I would like to receive Synapse. Here's my name, address, and birthdate for your mailing list. Add me on!

I've Moved!

☐

I no longer reside at the address printed on this cover. I have written my new address in the space below. Please make a note of it.

My District Is:

TRASH IT!

☐

Bye, bye Synapse. I no longer wish to receive this wonderful publication. Please remove me from your mailing list.

CHANGE IT!

☐

I sure would like the correct information on my mailing label. Please note the corrections I have made to the right and enter them into your database. Namaste!

I LOVE IT!

☐

Things just couldn't be better. I have mailed this back to you just for the hell of it. Have a nice day!!



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Boston, MA 02108



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Letters to the Editors

Dear Synapse,

Hi. I am a YRUU 9th grader in Minnesota. I've just barely begun to get exposed to all of this YRUU stuff. I mean the newsletters and "cons." (What are they?) It all sounds really great and I'm very interested in being a religiously involved UU. (I already am, to some extent.) But I just don't understand anything in the papers. I've been to one camp that is for people in my area (Prairie Star District) twice, and it was so great. I'm getting *Visions*—a newsletter for the Prairie Star District, and I just got *Synapse*. (I don't know why I got it or how.) My parents get *World* magazine. Anyway, my point is that I don't get any of the stuff in them. I can relate to someone who wrote in to *Synapse* about how she reads all of these personal notes and poems and hears (from afar) about all of these great things, but doesn't feel like a part of the group (that person, by coincidence, lives very near me). I'd be much obliged if you could possibly fill me in on things. What is General Assembly? Tell me about the camps. I don't know if I'm asking the right person, but if you could help I'd really appreciate it!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Love, Jessie

Dear Jessie,

General Assembly is the annual gathering and business meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Congregations from all over the US and Canada send representative delegates to attend workshops, events and meetings, and to take part in the decision-making processes that affect denominations throughout the UUA. The event is held in a different city each year, usually at a convention center. Typically approximately 2,000 to 3,000 UUs attend. At GA there is a Youth Caucus which is open to the participation of all youth ages 14-20 that attend GA. The Youth Caucus stays together in a hotel, and meets to discuss the business of the General Assembly. Members of the Youth Caucus often speak in front of the assembly on various issues. They are well-respected and listened to by the GA community.

A "Con" is a typical abbreviation for a conference. YRUU conferences vary in size and programs from district to district. A typical district YRUU conference is a weekend-long event, beginning on Friday night, and ending on Sunday morning. They take place at churches, at camps, or at conference centers. Various workshops are offered on anything from social action to creative writing to finger-painting. Youth lead worship services which usually take place at night. Youth are responsible for the leadership of the conference, and comprise the majority of the staff. Adult advisors attend conferences to offer support. Conferences are well-known for providing a supportive, accepting, nurturing atmosphere in which youth can learn, grow and explore their religious faith. Conferences are also a great way to bring new energy and ideas into local youth groups. If you are interested in getting information on conferences in your district, contact your Youth Council representative. Their addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 11 of this newsletter.

There are many UU camps with teen programs. For more information on attending UU-owned and UU-run camps, see page 10 of this issue. Your name may have appeared on the *Synapse* mailing list because your church or district sent your name and address to *Synapse*. I hope that we've answered the questions that you and many others share. Thanks for asking!

Dear Synapse,

I became a UU at the tender age of 12. Since then, I can think of only a few decisions that have thrilled me more. I spent the summers of '89 and '90 at The Mountain and met wonderful people I plan on keeping as life-long friends.

The summer of '92, when I was 18, I moved to the time island village of Ocracoke off the coast of North Carolina. There, too, I met people that have forever changed my life.

In '93, I moved back to my home state of Florida and on May 1, 1994, my 20th birthday, I had a baby boy, Samuel Wilkes Pryor.

These three events, spread over a period of five years, have left me with very cherished memories. However, there are a few people I wish to share these memories with that have somehow slipped by me.

Lisa Stevenson, Westchester, PA

Laura Smith, Greenville, SC

Tamara Curran, Boca Raton, FL

Hillary Smith ?, Alabama

Marcus ?, Atlanta, GA

Mark and Dennis (twins) ??

There are so many more. If any of you see this, write soon. I miss and love all of you!

—Adria (Andi) Wekenman

1107 Gulf Oaks Dr.

Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

Dearest Darling *Synapse* people,

I have tried to think of something to write in this letter. Something meaningful, that everyone would understand and appreciate. One of my friends told me that, "If you don't appreciate what you do... what's the point of doing it?" So I am going to appreciate myself by appreciating *Synapse* by asking a question.

I live in a small hick town of Willmar, where, if you aren't a cowboy, a homeboy, a Christian, or a cow, you're weird and no one will ever like you. I have friends who keep asking me what my religion is and what it is about, and I have trouble answering them. I try to tell them what I believe because I don't know what everyone in my religion believes. There isn't any certain guideline (that I know of) that everybody has to live by. Everyone here is starting to confuse me. I need your help in stating the YRUU beliefs...

Arone Dyer

P.S. I am not a hick, a cowboy, a Christian, or a cow.

P.P.S. Please try to put this in the next edition. I am sure that there are many other YRUUs in my position.

Dear Arone,

We understand how difficult it can be to explain Unitarian Universalism to people who are unfamiliar with our faith. There are certain guidelines that all UU congregations have agreed to. These guidelines are called the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes. Because this issue of *Synapse* has the theme of spirituality, we have chosen to publish the Principles and Purposes on page 6 of this issue. The UUA has also put out many pamphlets that further explain our common beliefs in more simple terms. The pocket-sized pamphlet "What Do Unitarian Universalists Believe?" explains our beliefs in 10 simple points. Many churches and fellowships have copies of this pamphlet available. It can also be purchased from the UUA Bookstore, (800) 215-9076.

Dear Synapse,

I'd like to send word to all my Mountain friends—Caitlin, Ramon, all you wonderful beautiful people... I miss you and

I love you very much. Hail to you, darling Eden, for your letter last issue. No one could have said it better. You are as much a part of The Mountain as it is of you now. The Mountain is more my home than anywhere else. Sacred place—sacred people. I can't possibly address personally all the incredible friends I've made there over the years, but you should know who you are... and to each one of you: I love you. I miss you. You are always in my thoughts and my heart.

Yours forever,

Ivy Little

3200 Milton

Dallas, TX 75205

Dear Synapse,

Hi, my name's Vanessa. I just read the new issue of *Synapse* and would like to subscribe. I read it tonight (2/15) at our YRUU weekly meeting and really enjoyed it. I'm very glad that our group leader showed it to us because I've been wanting to read a good UU publication for teenagers for quite a while now.

Thank you for the articles on sexuality in public schools. It's always reassuring to know that this world does have accepting people. I will be taking another sex ed course next semester and really doubt that tolerance of my sexuality will be taught. I don't know what I can do to educate my peers except to voice my opinion when I think things are wrong, such as the ever-present use of the word "fag." It seems to have helped with a couple of people.

Our youth group leader has been asked by several members of our congregation to teach UU versions of sexuality education. I would appreciate it if this would be done, but so far it hasn't actually happened.

I'm a poet and a writer, so maybe I'll send some of my work into *Synapse* soon. Thanks for your time. Bye.

—Vanessa Walker

—Oh! One more thing... have you thought about having a YRUU home page on the Web? Is there one out there that I've missed? Just a suggestion.

Dear Vanessa,

Thanks for contacting us! You can tell your youth group advisor about About Your Sexuality, the sexuality education curriculum that is currently used by many UU congregations. To lead AYS, adults must be trained as facilitators for the program. The UUA, in conjunction with the United Church of Christ, is currently developing a new sexuality education curriculum to replace AYS. The new curriculum should be available by 1998. To find out more about the UUA and sexuality education, contact Jory Agate at (617) 742-2100, ext. 350.

In response to your question on "the Web": The World Wide Web is a relatively new feature on the Internet, available to people with specialized computer software and modems who subscribe to an Internet carrier with World Wide Web capabilities. The Web is continually increasing in popularity and usage, and many organizations have a "home page" on the Web, from which users can access information about the organization. The Unitarian Universalist Association is currently working on developing a home page, which would include a section on YRUU. Until then, information on YRUU, the Youth Office and our resources can be obtained the old fashioned ways—by telephone (617/742-2100 ext. 350, 351, 352) and by mail (UUA Youth Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108). We can also answer specific questions and take information requests by e-mail at YRUU@UUA.ORG.

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: Sarah Gibb, Jenny Axel, Jory Agate, and Anne Fleming, with special assistance from Jennifer Martin.

Mechanicals: Proofreading, edits and layout by Youth Office staff.

Editorial policy: Articles for *Synapse* are chosen from among those submitted by Unitarian Universalist youth, 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. When submitting photographs, please include the name of the person who took the photo to provide proper credit. 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

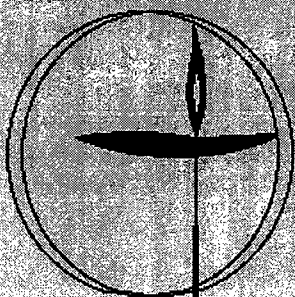
Personals: Two per issue, up to 50 words each.

Graphics / Photographs: 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 are given preference by the editors. 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. Contact the Youth Office for specific rates for your organization.

Submission and Advertising Due Date for Next Issue:
October 15, 1995.



How Do I Get That YRUU Spirit? (or "What's In It For Me?")

by Lisa Rubin, Director of Religious Education
First UU Society, Burlington, Vermont

"Synapse is just for youth who are involved at the continental level, so why should the people in my youth group even bother reading it?"

"Our youth group doesn't go to conferences. We can't relate to *Synapse*!"

"Our youth group knows nothing about Continental structure and doesn't care about it."

These are the kind of comments I sometimes hear at the training modules I lead for directors of religious education and youth advisors. These people are missing out by not reading *Synapse*. I've found that youth groups can explore much of what YRUU has to offer by reading *Synapse* together. Advisors can open a copy and go through it with their youth groups. Articles in *Synapse* can be wonderful aids for group discussion.

Sometimes members of a youth group don't want to devote themselves to a long-term curriculum. Using *Synapse* as a short-term curriculum is a way to involve everyone at her or his own level of interest, work together as a group, and generate involvement with YRUU. Many of the subjects of the articles can provide inspiration for hours of discussion.

Synapse is written by youth, for youth. New authors are always encouraged for articles. Contributions of original poetry, social action stories, short stories,

photography, artwork and graphics by youth are constantly being sought. A youth group could spend some time during its meetings writing articles or poetry for publication.

Synapse announces numerous opportunities for youth and adults. This issue advertises camps, conferences, an internship, a UU community service program, and more. These opportunities are available to everyone. Don't be afraid to explore what's out there.

So how can you get that YRUU spirit? What's in it for you? Plenty, all you have to do is open up *Synapse* and read it, share it, and discuss what's in it. Support youth by contributing to *Synapse* and getting involved with YRUU. I look forward to reading the next issue and learning more about what UU youth think, feel and experience.

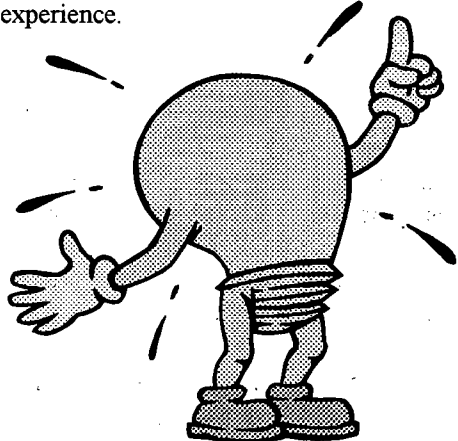


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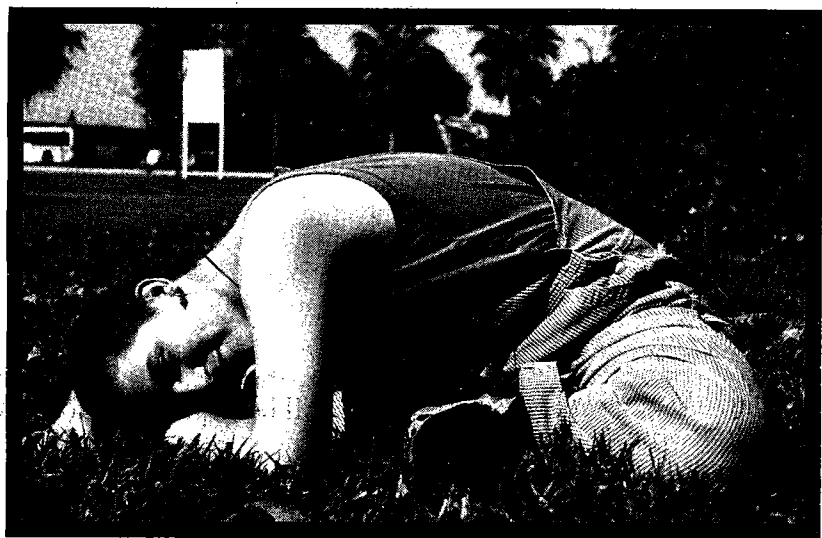
MORE SPIRITUALITY FOR THE QUESTIONING MIND

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CONTINENTAL SUMMER CALENDAR
YRUU AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
UU-UNITED NATIONS OFFICE CONFERENCE
SYNAPSE SUBMISSIONS SOLICITATION
YRUU YOUTH COUNCIL AND STEERING COMMITTEE

Introducing TWO new Youth Office staff!

YRUU Programs Specialist Jenny Axel was unable to complete her term in the Youth Office due to unforeseen circumstances. As a result, Steering Committee has selected not one, but two YRUU Programs Specialists. Rob will work in the office from May-December 1995, and Rachel from September 1995-August 1996. We are pleased to introduce Rachel and Rob!



Rachel Reed enjoying a beautiful California day

ROB CAVENAUGH

Hello! I love you. Won't you tell me your name? I'm Rob Cavanaugh, the latest addition to the Youth Office. I come from ever-radiant Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and I've just spent a year at the American University in Washington, D.C. I have been just YRUU-wild these past few years in the Joseph Priestly District and everywhere else I can get myself. Now I can go wild in Boston! Yippee! In the spare time that I don't have, I enjoy mountain biking and water sports. Road-tripping to see concerts is also a favorite pastime. Anyway, I'm psyched to be in Boston working for all of you.

YRUUrocksmyworld- Rob



RACHEL REED

Hi YRUUers far and yon! My name is Rachel Reed and I am ever so excited to be your next YPS intern in Boston. To tell you a little bit about myself... I am originally from Arizona (PSWD!), but have been at Mills College in Oakland, CA for the past two years.

Some things I don't like: organic chemistry lab write-ups, meat, running for any reason other than someone is chasing me, processed cheese-type food that comes in holiday gift baskets, not having email messages, and white upper-class racist/sexist/heterosexist conservative politicians who think they represent me.

Some things I do like: split pea soup, overalls, butterfly kisses, music (from Ani DiFranco to Blues Traveler to Tracy Chapman to Digable Planets to Indigo Girls to Rage Against the Machine to jazz and the list goes on...), licking off the stuck-on pieces of chocolate inside a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup wrapper on Halloween, camping, and waking up on cold mornings in warm and yummy flannel sheets.

So there's an inkling of who I am. I hope to see y'all at GA and Con-Con or sometime in the next amazing year...

Peas,



Rob Cavanaugh salutes the sun atop a giant toe in Washington, D.C.

What Divinity School Didn't Teach Me!

The spiritual in my life

To take a deep breath, to close my eyes, to smile in spite of it all, these are spiritual moments. To look into the face of a stranger, to walk and feel the sidewalk beneath my shoes, to take in the expanse of a towering building, to watch a laborer at work, these are spiritual moments. To read a leaf of Whitman, to run and run and run and run, to pray a prayer from ancient days, to hear the drone of a lone bagpipe, to finger the beads of a rosary bought from a tourist trap on top of St. Peter's in Rome, to listen to the crisp juiciness of a green apple as I take an indulgent bite, to stop and listen to the cry of a baby, to be refreshed by a cool glass of water, these are spiritual moments. To

be taught a lesson by a wise soul, to see a good movie while munching popcorn and MilkDuds, to listen to the finale of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, to sing a good ol' Baptist hymn like *In the Garden*, to recite Shakespeare, to go to solemn mass, to help a friend through a difficulty (one tear at a time), these are spiritual moments. To take a long hot bath surrounded by soft candlelight, to read and re-read a letter from a distant, achingly close friend, to dance a two-step to Mary Chapin Carpenter, to call home and hear about the weather, to swing on the swing set in my old grade school yard, to read *Siddhartha* again, to see a Van Gogh—any Van Gogh, to stroke the forehead of someone I know to be slowly and painfully dying, to eat a pint of ice cream, to wonder aloud or alone whether anything in this life is worth the sorrow, to sit in silence with a friend, to remember I have loved and been loved, to reverberate with the ever-present chuckle of God, to realize that there is ever more spirit, these are spiritual moments, indeed. - D. V. McFarland



i. in cascading visions i have known one petite femme who laughs and twirls, skipping across that endless void we call our sky. she giggles, childlike, and i stand on a lonely shore with frigid water nipping at me, all to feel her pervasive and inspiring on wind driven foggy hills of sand, the moonlight draws her in. i watch them dance together in eternal creation.

ii. shining grace is to me known in the deepest, darkest byways of the mind. always fading, always fraying edges render it in ambiguous light of soft lines and misted views. strangers i have known, have known it, and also a close few. dreamers subsist there. monsters survive there. and images, half drawn lives, grow and expand, pulsing and fading, pulsing and fading, pulsing and fading.

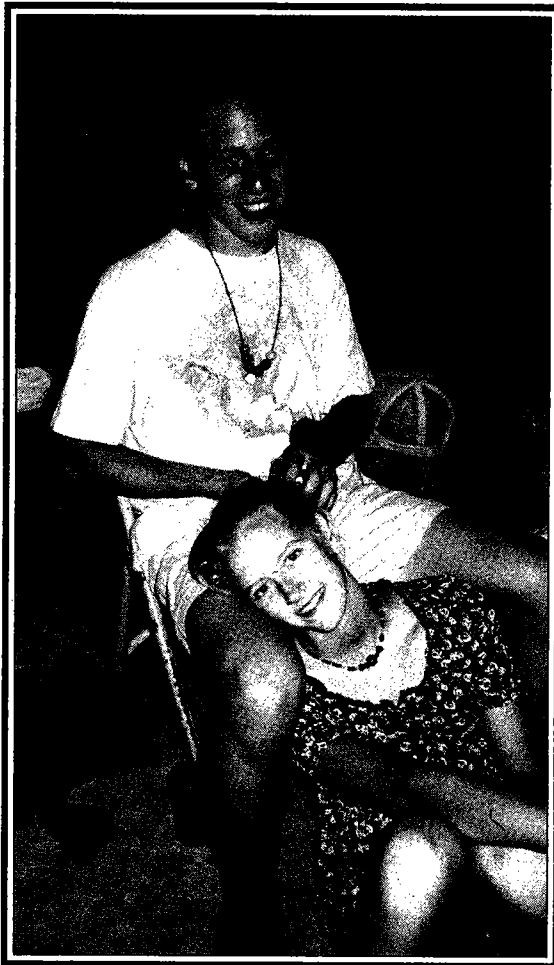
iii. i look with a certain amount of outrage, a certain amount of scorn on the mainstream view of teenage sex, adolescent irresponsibility, and the general lack of maturity perceived in those kids who think they know it all.

body moving, arms flying, legs bouncing, in the midst of booming sound and flashing lights, i do know it all...all that i need to be me, to experience the divine, to exist at that moment. limbs tangled with lovers, held close, and fatigued...i am happy, i am blissful, i do know what it is to be. hands on keyboard, information flowing in front of my eyes. snowflakes glistening in red curls. palms blushed from frigid wet ice, breath misting frosty air. words gallantly cascading from my plain blue pen...in all of this i do know who i am, what solace i seek, and the dreams that i am raising. in all of this i am aware.

i am 18. 18 years i have inhabited this murky blue, listing, little girl planet. 18 years my consciousness has risen. 18 years my physical body has grown. 18 years my eyes have existed stormy sea blue. and in 18 years i have gained a precocious understanding of life, of love, of ambition, of me.

-Heidi Jo Brandenburg

The Art...



Ben Montgomery and Alison Purcell smiling despite the harsh Texas heat.

Taken from *The Beacon Book of Quotations by Women* (Beacon Press)

Spirituality promotes passivity when the domain of spirit is defined as outside the world. When this world is the terrain of the spirit, we ourselves become actors in the story, and this world becomes the realm in which the sacred must be honored and freedom created.

I think that we may find that the goddess lives within us, each and every one of us, and yet is also something more. And it is in that more, that realization that there is more to our lives than we frequently think, that births hope, and compassion, and love.

Ram, Mary, Jesus, Gaia, the interdependent web all are names we use for the great welling we find rising within us like life-giving waters rushing out of a spring. All very unsettling, uncomfortable, difficult and yet also containing hope for new creation, and transformation, and becoming. Who knows where such an image as Gaia may lead us on our pilgrimage? Perhaps to the very center of our hearts.

from "Gaia Without Tears" sermon by Rev. James Ishmael Ford

CURE FOR THE EVERY DAY PAIN

Written in the soul—

Written in the words—

Written in the world—

I can tell you a cure for the pain you feel every-day—

Listen to music—

Talk to friends—

Make new friends

Talk to family—(if you have any)—Make a family—

—Then go out to See the World—(so big and full of surprises)

—And remember you're-only-you—(and that is Beautiful!)

When you are done or down on your luck—write it down—Write about those sunsets, those lovely kisses, and those times when you're all alone for-every-one-feels-that, every-once-in-a-while—(don't we all?)

write it down from the soul—

Write it in words—

Write it to the world!—

And then the PAIN that you FEEL EVERY-DAY might just Fade—Away—

by Ian C. Russel

of Spirituality



"The Awakening" photo by Sarah Gibb



Roots That Wish to Become Wings - Jennifer Martin

I see people all around me; ministers, teachers, friends, and the like who are very proud of their spirituality. Have they truly found that which I find essential - the balance between the personal and the political? Every day, we and people that we love struggle for survival in a culture that wants us dead. Why is it that capable, intelligent, amazing women starve themselves to establish "control" in their lives? Why do black men get scapegoated for nine out of ten crimes committed in this country? Why are children being raped at staggering rates by the men who claim to love them? Why do I think about these things and want to jump off a bridge? What stops me? My belief in humanity stops me. A smile stops me. A kind word stops me. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. That is why life is a struggle. For every Newt Gingrich there rises to meet him a Jesse Jackson or an Andrea Dworkin. This is what stops me. It is the struggle that I find sacred, profound, and meaningful. This is my spirituality.

Spirituality is also the balance between my roots and my wings. But what does being rootless really mean? Being rootless means in a sense to be mutable, to be changeable, to be contestable. It means to be political. It means to be flexible in our political alliances as well. Gloria Anzaldua, author of *Borderlands*, believes that contradictory alliances change our expectations about political loyalty. It can affect one's impression of a given political landscape. What an empowering notion to think that we live and grow and change. The potential for action is overwhelming.

If we are political beings in essence, then doesn't it make perfect sense that we, ourselves, should be the battleground for political action, for political battle? It is this space that I choose to occupy; the border, the battleground. For me, it is the only way I can survive. Thankfully I did survive. However, it is terrifying to cross those borders out there in the world. It is inevitable that I will change. How can I cross the border from woman to something else? What is that something else? Is it man? Is it a third or fourth or fifth gender? I have existed in a climate that has always acknowledged me as a woman. This label of "woman" has been the source of great oppression, but also of great opportunity. I have found a niche for myself in the grand mansion of the women's movement. I am on the second floor with my friends who are like me. I look around and smile at our similarities. They are young, educated, lesbian and bisexual women. How did this happen?

Fortunately, I have come to understand that they are not my only family. This is where my challenge shows its face. There exists grave danger in familiarity. I must move into discomfort. I must leave home. It is no longer safe now that I know my possibility for change. My identity is constantly changing; it moves along with my location at every moment in every day. We are not organic. We are political. We are therefore subject to change.

Unfortunately, wanting to change, no matter how intensely, does not guarantee that you will be able to get up right now and run to the borderlands. There are, as in my case, people or pressures, prohibiting you from taking a step toward this life-giving journey. Vital to this journey is refusing to stand still; to be planted as if a tree into the ground. We must try a new way of being. Gloria Anzaldua, like many of us, stumbled upon many obstacles, but when she was able to make the trip, to cross over, what she found inside herself was alienating. She realized that her language as well as a new class consciousness separated her from her family. In her case change was inevitable. She even welcomed it. But at what cost?

The cost can not be totaled. It becomes a mute point. She did not lose a home altogether, she simply moved it into a wider neighborhood. With curious eyes I follow her there.

It looks like a border, this place. I see Anzaldua here. She lives here now, on the border itself. But she is not alone. Others have come here too. I suppose in attempts to find meaning - substance in a world that seems not to care. Me, I came because my spirit begged me to. I have finally found a place to call home. For the border is a place on which to act. Act now. Act loudly. Act upon yourself. Act up. Do not take sides. Be the conflict.

Be a crossroads. It may be one salvation. It was mine. I am very seldom bound to who I am or how others choose to perceive me. I have stepped out of my identity. I am now free to roam the many plains of existence, no matter where they may be. It is this new self that I am getting to know. She is from who I gain strength. However, I no longer ask the question "who am I?" only the question "who is it that I can become?" This is my spirituality. *as*

⊗ SPIRITUALITY is the sacred center out of which all life comes, including Mondays and Tuesdays and rainy Saturday afternoons in all their mundane and glorious detail... The spiritual journey is the soul's life mingling with ordinary life.

— CHRISTINA BALDWIN

⊗ Taken from *The Beacon Book of Quotations by Women* (Beacon Press)



photo by Sarah Gibb

To live in the Borderlands means you look in the mirror every time you pass unsure who you will see standing there trapped between the pages of a life unfolding crushing pieces and parts unrecognizable to both natives and newly found "friends."

To live in the Borderlands means knowing you are hollow - transparent - vacant even - naked before all eyes you are forbidden to run from - only to the place that you are dying to become.

When you live on the Border beds transform into pits - of fire singeing strand after strand of screaming hair off a head pounding with questions. And you pray loudly and fervently that today you will not again be beaten or tormented.

To live on the Borderlands means to mistake your mother for your friend yet still refuse to become her. rip away at your history. construct a new one. love the woman for her passion and the man for his tenderness. love them both. ignore those who say you can't. you can... you must...

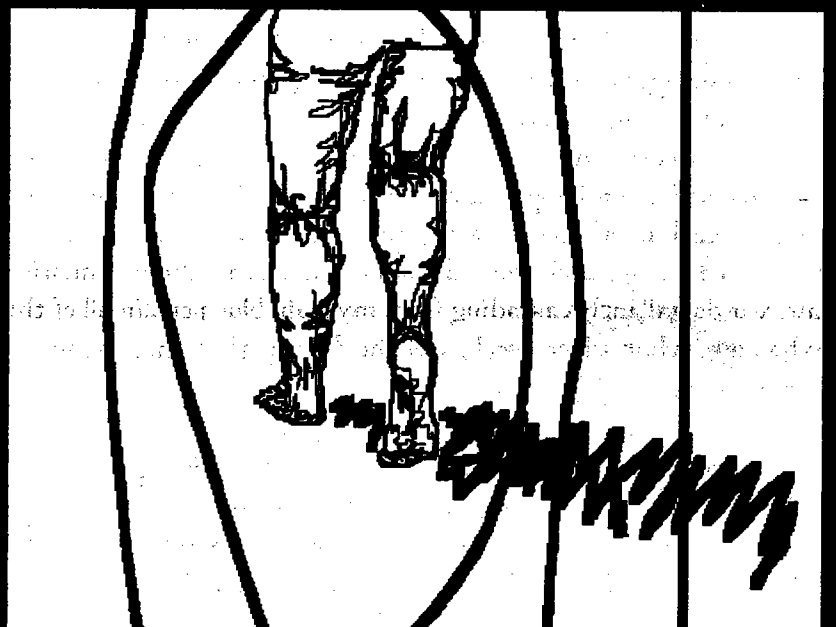
Living in the Borderlands means you fight adamantly to keep from drowning in a tea cup full of hot water full of her blood full of his semen full of your tears overflowing with regret.

In the Borderlands you tear open your chest you let them look; long and hard at your scars and your endless stretch marks you do not avert your gaze; bravely ignoring your terror and wait... like a stoic for the war over land rights to come and go.

To live in the Borderlands means fragile-like you battle against the shackles that tie you down. your roots wish to become wings. "they" are ignorant. you are the wise one. you are the storm trooper, the rebel rouser, the baby. you taste like wine. you smell like roses and privately, you screw their minds.

- Jennifer Martin 12-22-94

*Written with the form of *To Live in the Borderlands* by Gloria Anzaldua



"Escapee" by Serena Smallin

We,

THE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS

*of the Unitarian Universalist Association
covenant to affirm and promote:*

*The inherent worth and dignity
of every person;*

*Justice, equity and compassion
in human relations;*

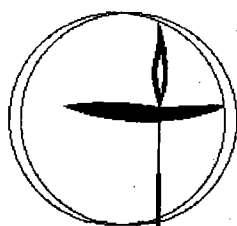
*Acceptance of one another and
encouragement to spiritual growth
in our congregations;*

*A free and responsible search
for truth and meaning;*

*The right of conscience and the use
of the democratic process
within our congregations and
in society at large;*

*The goal of world community with
peace, liberty and justice for all;*

*Respect for the interdependent
web of all existence,
of which we are a part.*



*The living tradition we share draws
from many sources:*

*Direct experience of that
transcending mystery and wonder,
affirmed in all cultures, which moves
us to a renewal of the spirit and an
openness to the forces which create
and uphold life;*

*Words and deeds of prophetic women
and men which challenge us to
confront powers and structures of evil
with justice, compassion and the
transforming power of love;*

*Wisdom from the world's religions
which inspires us in our ethical and
spiritual life;*

*Jewish and Christian teachings which
call us to respond to God's love by
loving our neighbors as ourselves;*

*Humanist teachings which counsel us
to heed the guidance of reason and
the results of science, and warn us
against the idolatries of the mind and
spirit.*

Grateful for the religious pluralism
which enriches and ennobles our faith, we
are inspired to deepen our
understanding and expand our vision.
As free congregations we enter into this
covenant, promising to one another our
mutual trust and support.

THE BUILDING THAT SITS AT 2120 North Fee Lane in Bloomington, Indiana does not make me feel close to nature, is not my home, is not a place I have known all my life, but it is familiar. It is one of the only places I have ever felt completely safe. I don't worry about mass murderers here; I don't jump at shadows or strange noises; I am not afraid to climb up and down stairs; I do not fear the dark. Now I don't hear the tiny whispers of fairies in this building as I do in my secret nature places; I am not made one with the stream, river, ocean; I can't taste the salt on my skin; I can't feel the wind living in me. But I am safe. I walk through this place in my stocking feet, shuffling, feeling my way with my fingers, made blind by the dark that welcomes me. This building lives many different lives; sometimes so silent I forget to listen to the creaking of floors and pipes and the whirring of appliances; sometimes so busy and full I lose myself in the crowd but am always drawn out by some voice, some smile. I watch the walls, the rosy v's of

wood glowing with the radiance of all the faces that have ever looked upon them. They are lighted up by the sun streaming in through glass. Sometimes I think that the sun will leave an imprint on these walls—that I will come in the dark and the heat, the glow will still be there, branded into the wood. I am brought out of this world by the rising of voices together. The combination of those who have perfect pitch and those who are not even close singing *We Shall Overcome*—the beauty of it startles me and I never seem to be able to finish a song. I think it is amazing that even after the people are gone, I can still feel the love that fills this place. The spirit is nearly tangible, always reachable. I want to have that moment when the person you are hugging hugs you back and holds on for that extra second or when someone presses your shoulder and then is gone before you can tell who it was—I want that moment whenever I need it, on automatic

"I see the realness of this place and realize why I love it...."

playback. In a different room, filled with giveaway couches, walls covered with personalized messages that all cry Remember Me! I slip across a tattered and torn rug. I come so close to falling that I am almost graceful in my repeated clumsiness. I sink into the worn cushions that invite me, used by families whose children are grown, whose playrooms have been transformed into studies, and lean my head back acknowledging my weariness, welcoming the velvety texture of the material on my cheek and the hands that usually need a bribe to massage my back. I mumble a promise to return the favor. Then I notice the mustiness creeping up from behind the couch—the pile of mice pillows. My eyes catch the bits of wax tinkled everywhere in the room, the seared grey edges of holes burnt in the rug from continual candle disasters, the set of books called *Man and Woman* from the seventies that seem so progressive and

straightforward that it makes me wonder if our society has regressed since the time these neon volumes were published. Through the door I can see the miniature toilets; I know up the hall is a finger painted mural that says "Spring is Here" (even though it's January); I know there is a felt picture of a happy frog with the word "peace" above it; that upstairs is a quilt with trees growing from it—the thing that brought me here. I see the realness of this place and realize why I love it; why I have chosen it over a grove of trees by my favorite stream, over the bed of roots that fits my body perfectly, and the endless fields of bachelor's buttons, sunflowers, and zinnias that I spend summers in. Those places bring me closer to nature, here brings me through fading of my fears and through the emergence of real safeness and through the love that like the scent of magnolias, hangs heavy in the air—closer to myself than I have ever been, closer to the self that I want to be.

—by Phoebe Hanshew



A Definition of Spirituality

by Jenny Axel

Spirituality is my consciousness. It is my ability to believe my own perceptions. It is my assuredness that my world will be as I wish it to be—that I have the power to make it exactly that.

I do not need to search for truth. I know truth. I do not need to find the answer. I am the answer and the question. I know what I am capable of in my lifetime. And I know that I will do what I know I should—with no dependence on others and no tolerance for weakness in myself.



Spirituality is my ability to think with the simple beauty of logic—to weigh each option and each answer. I do not do anything because I "feel" it. Feelings are a product of my mind. They are decisions carefully thought out in the complexities of the brain. I will feel and love because I have decided that a person is worthy of my love and has earned it. And I will be loved only because I deserve that love.

I am a spiritual being because I live—because I can touch and hear and see and taste, because I can dance and sing and run—and because I know what these abilities are worth.

I do not know what will happen when I die or if I will be born again. I do not know and I do not care. I am alive now. And I will live my life with no directives from others and with no search for a higher purpose. Life is the higher purpose. To live life for its own sake is my aim.

And I will watch my spirit rise. I will see it ascend to the peaks of the highest mountains and soar far above the clouds. And I will hear my voice ring loud and true as I sing my glory to the world. And I will be strong. And I will be free. And my life will be my own.

Hold me. Converse with me. Where are you now?
I will reveal everything. I will veil nothing.
When I was young, my mother read me a story about a runaway bunny, I lay hidden under my covers:
a little bunny: I wanted to be with my mother and I hurt myself riding my bike, and I was told it would be okay.

Oh, get to recognize me. I do not feel lighthearted. I will be ambiguous:
Now I am imagining birds flying high into the heavens, one is making music, and arms are around me, protecting me.

Changes... by Elizabeth Hess

Hold me. Converse with me. Where are you now?
When I was eleven, I was loving. Graceful: and my insightful uncle had me read to him about a Giving Tree and he lowered his head down to his rugged hands, and cried.
I want now to be close to you.
I would connect the seconds of my days together, somehow, to your days.

I am not lighthearted. I will reveal everything. I have liked warm fires in evenings and silent moments.
Now I am fourteen, I feel my body changing. I yearn for the little girl that I am no longer. Each month I am reminded that I am different now, my dreams must change, my plans, my goals.

Listen. I will reveal everything: I feel he doesn't love me.
He loves another life, a different kind than mine: roller coaster rides of good times and bad and an uncertain future that is to come.
He tells me with a happy voice, I love you.
Get to recognize me.

Where are you now: If we could see each other, If these our discrete selves could come to grips, put together like a jigsaw puzzle...
I once stood in a crowded place that was filled with people, yet no one spoke a word, and the sun was bright.
Get to recognize me.

“WHAT IS THIS ‘SPIRITUALITY’ STUFF— AND WHERE CAN I GET SOME, CHEAP?”

by John Buehrens, UUA President

Last summer YRUU Youth Council decided to put a major emphasis this year on deeper spirituality in YRUU. I was so impressed that I offered to write a few words on the topic. For one thing, I found the Youth Council actually ‘walking their talk.’ Let me explain.

It was August. I’d just stepped off the plane in Grand Rapids, MI, to meet with the Youth Council. A message was waiting. In Pensacola, FL, two men had been killed and a woman wounded outside a women’s clinic. One man was a doctor. The other two people were both UU volunteers. The UUA staff had acted immediately. I was to leave the following day to speak at an interfaith, community-wide service in Pensacola. My task would be to help a whole community channel their shock and grief by re-committing themselves to the use of non-violence in resolving differences.

Members of the Youth Council helped me, not by telling me what to say, but by simply being supportive without being too intrusive. Best of all, they modeled in their meetings respect for differences and caring for others. They got me to lighten up and take myself (if not my impending task) a bit less seriously.

Some people think spirituality has no dimension of humor. I say, “phooey!” Spirituality is the authentic core of religious living. It isn’t afraid of tears or of laughter. Both can be sacred. Both can help us re-achieve balance and perspective.

Other people think spirituality is the opposite of rationality, or the opposite of social action. Neither idea could be further from the truth. All great spiritual leaders—Jesus, Gandhi, Dorothy Day, and many others—have been both very rational and very engaged.

I would define spirituality as a dimension of authentic living which re-connects us—to the self, to the other, and to the common horizon of all our lives. In that sense, spirituality cuts through all of the dimensions in which we commonly analyze life. The need to re-connect to larger sources of meaning is constant.

Over the centuries, human beings have developed spiritual practices and disciplines aimed at helping with this process. They are

varied, not only by culture, but because they emphasize different dimensions of life. Some disciplines, like yoga, tai-chi, exercise, and fasting, emphasize the physical. Other disciplines, like meditation, journal writing, devotional reading, and some forms of prayer, are more mental and reflective. Service, reconciliation, and praying for those from whom we are alienated are disciplines that better connect us to other people. Through rights of passage, communal worship, and social action, the life of religious communities connects us beyond the horizon of here and now.

Each of us has spiritual needs, whether we admit them or not. We each have a need for integrity. Integrity means “being one.” And it isn’t easy for any of us to be just one person—body, mind, heart, and soul. We are often distracted and divided. We find our inner lives filled with different voices—our parents’, our friends’, our own. Sometimes we tend to one voice, sometimes to another. Sometimes we pretend to be more

“together” than we really are. Becoming spiritually mature isn’t a matter of being perfect. It is a matter of being authentically and really yourself—your best self. “When you die you will not be asked why you have not been Moses,” said the rabbi to his student, Zusya. “You will be asked, Why have you been Zusya?”

Having a soul, I believe, is having an inner life marked by both rich complexity and basic integrity; a life in which the self is relating properly to the self, as Kierkegaard put it. People who strike us as having no soul are those who are satisfied to live on the surface of life. You’d never know they had an inner, reflective, moral life. In fact, all too often they are satisfied to use and be used.

Often our relationships with others are mechanical and functional. We treat others (and are treated by them) chiefly as objects of some need or utility. This isn’t always evil. It’s just a fact. We serve someone a burger politely (or are served by them), but we don’t have a soulful exchange.

Spiritual disciplines help us to stay open and concerned for the quality of our relationships.

Finally, we all have the need to feel connected and related beyond the horizon of this moment, this place. That’s why you can’t have real spirituality without imagination! The methods we use to nurture it may vary. Reading, ritual, contemplation and social action are all important to me, personally. A sense of the horizon helps to keep me from thinking I know it all or can do it all. It also keeps me connected to others, across space and time.

Authentic spirituality, then, doesn’t come cheap. It comes through integrity, both personal and relational, and efforts to make a thoughtful, practical connection to others. This is the kind of spirituality that matters. It is this kind that our Unitarian Universalist heritage keeps passing on, across the horizon of the generations.

Eggnosticism

by Marc Loustau

Eggnosticism: A treatise dealing with one person’s doubt of the Great Chicken.

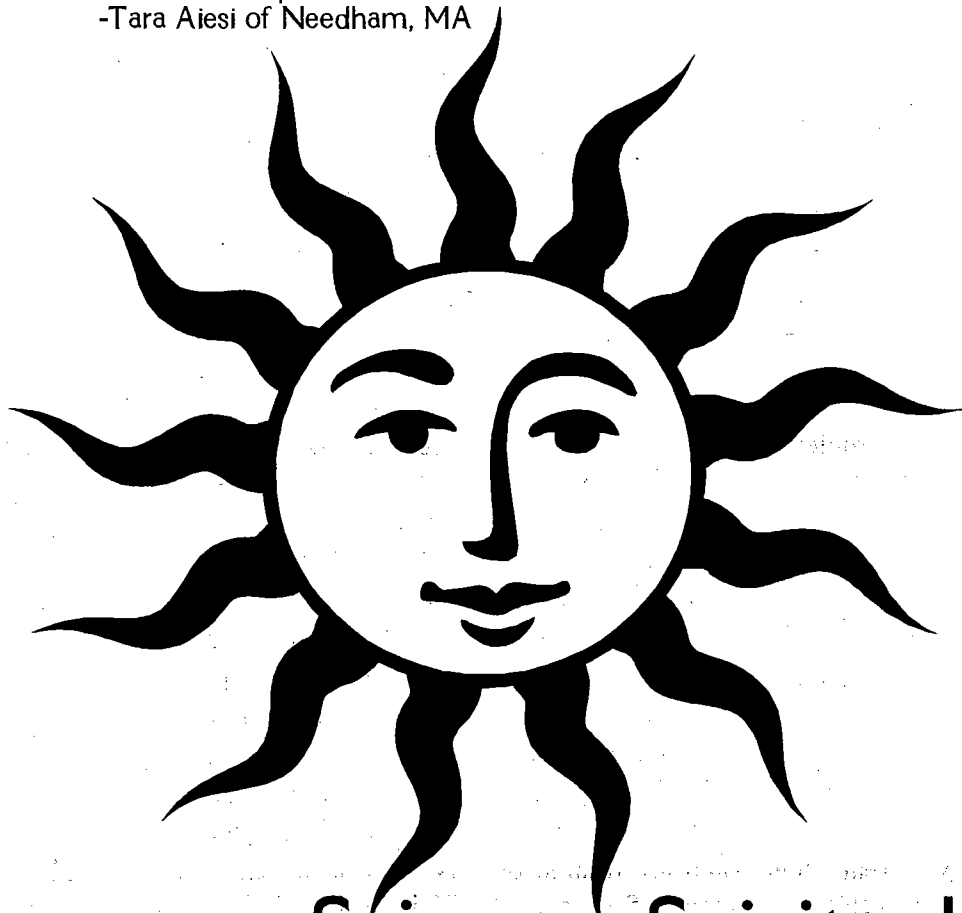
Sometimes I really wish I believed in God. Lately I’ve found myself thinking this increasingly often. Maybe if I believed in God it would be a whole lot easier. Whatever happens, I would know that God has some reason to cause it to happen. Don’t get me wrong—I hold a great respect for those who believe in a god, goddess, or any other type of greater being. I’ve tried my darndest to believe, but there is always something that holds me back. I tend to think that I am this way because I grew up in a UU family filled with professors and intellectuals. I was taught to trust science over spirituality and to shy away from the biblical God and His believers.

I tend to believe that no one can give anyone else spirituality, it’s a solely personal process. I found myself coming to church more and more often as I entered my teenage years and became involved with YRUU, not because of any kind of spirituality that my church or YRUU gave me, but because of the community I found there. This is why my favorite part of the service is hanging out with everyone else during coffee hour. This is why I enjoy the communal aspect of YRUU worship—a chant, a song, or a spiral dance. Spirituality, for many people, is an inherently personal matter. They often don’t go to conferences or church services looking for it. I have found YRUU to be a haven for many of these people, who, after finding no other place so warm, open, and accepting, find comfort in the community YRUU provides.

So when someone asks me what I believe in, for now I just tell them I am Eggnostic. Eggnosticism is a belief system of my own invention. It is something that is waiting to be born, incubating patiently, waiting to be discovered. When I do discover it, I will start on the journey to find out what to do with this newfound spirituality.

She sits in the dimly lit room with not a care in the world; surrounded by all those with a common bond which ties them together. She so badly wants to share with her closely made friend what is gnawing at her brain—the knowledge stirring around in her mind. A time for thought and reflection with candles to set the mood—the small trembling creature startles herself with thoughts. This is her place of safety where, when the utmost attainable atmosphere is reached, her diversity and individuality is encouraged and accepted for its worth. This is her place where tolerance, communication, and freedom are nurtured—a place of true acceptance, love, and communication, a special feeling she can get from nowhere else. She joins with this harmony, a true sense of unity—no judgements or harshing—an escape from her real world where she becomes her true self. No imaginations trapped—she makes friends with uncertainty and freedom. Her beauty unleashes itself to its unknown as she lets her hair flow down while joining in the circle of worship.

-Tara Aiesi of Needham, MA



Science, Spirituality, and Ourselves

by Sarah Gibb

The following text was delivered as a sermon at a chapel service at the Unitarian Universalist Association on May 16, 1995.

In the April 23, 1995 Sunday paper, Bill Watterson's Calvin and his tiger Hobbes stood in their backyard, staring at the star-filled night sky. "Look at all the stars," Calvin said to Hobbes, "the universe just goes out forever and ever." Hobbes, still gazing toward the sky marveled, "Kind of makes you wonder why man considers himself such a big screaming deal." In the next frame, Calvin, as he sat indoors on an easy chair in front of the television, answered, "That's why we stay inside with our appliances."

We stay inside with our appliances. The natural world is dangerous. In it we are vulnerable. We are small. And we build ourselves up with our own creations.

Science and religion were born when people began to look to the heavens, to wonder, and to dream. Have you ever experienced the joy of lying on your back in the cool, crisp night air, gazing up at the turning universe, staring intently at one star, or outlining the craters of the moon? It makes me wonder. Why am I here? Why are we here? And *what* does it all mean?

For years, lying awake in my bed at night, I would ponder the forbidden. What if life on earth has no meaning? What if we have no purpose? We humans represent a small fraction of life on this Earth. And the Earth is but a tiny fragment of the universe. Yet it means everything to us. My life, my tiny minuscule life, my everyday routines—they are everything to me. All that I hold sacred, all that is so important, suddenly lacked meaning when I grasped at comprehension of exactly how vast the universe is. It all seemed ridiculous. We all think that we're such a "big screaming deal."

That's where the role of the appliances come in. Our machines. Our technology. We have made ourselves large. We are important. We have to be...

I love science. It explains so much. Studying physics in college has enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the universe. Everyday situations can be expressed with simple mathematical formulae. If I were to throw a soccer ball out of the window of the Youth Office, just by knowing the weight of the ball, I could estimate at exactly what time and at what speed the ball would bounce off the roof of the trolley full of tourists passing below. The scientific approach to problems has enabled us to discover so much about this world, to gain a deeper understanding of its complexities, to make what once seemed magic seem almost commonplace. What traditional science education fails to teach, though, is indeed how magic, how beautiful, and how marvelous is life.

Traditional science, the kind of science that Descartes is credited with founding, does not deal within the spiritual realm. The spiritual is left to religion, and the physical is given to science. This division, I have come to realize, does not reflect our everyday experience. This division puts science and religion at odds. A spirituality encompassing science and a science encompassing the spirit would more fully meet our everyday needs.

In science class, we learn that the earth rotates around the sun. So do many

THE STREAM OF LIFE

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and death, in ebb and flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of aged dancing in my blood this moment.

—Rabindranath Tagore, from Singing the Living Tradition, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1993.



A Quest for Identity by Jennie Seeg

A quest for identity,
A grave leap of faith.
Daring the morals, damning
the ethics,
Lash out left, right, and
forward.
Dominate your fear,
Relinquish all prejudice
toward the living
and the dead.
Allow beliefs to act as
intuition.
Unleash instinct and
emotion.
Live your imagination
and dream the ultimate
reality.

*Dancing before me with
the magic of its burning
depths
fire*

*Toss my spirit in,
let it burn, char
blacken with the smoke
that's touched so
many others
twist and distort it
until it is whole again*

*flame lit faces
fire dancing in their eyes
those who will leave so soon
those already gone
those who never were*

*Intently they stare
their ever changing eyes
grind me down, below
the earth where I stand
to where I still have yet to be
some dance with laughter
some flooded with tears*

*Silently, we are
for a moment
Nothing is alive
except the gentle
flames
Together, we are
all of us*

*and I remove my spirit,
leave a little piece of me
and
say
good-bye*

Tara Aiesi

other planets. The Earth travels around the sun once each year. We turn 360 degrees on our axis every 24 hours.

In social studies class, we learn that people on this planet are divided. We don't all respect each other, or get along. We too often don't respect the earth on which we live, or the animals and plants which share this planet with us.

By separating the two disciplines, we lose the big picture. Bosnians, Ukrainians, Brazilians, Ugandans, Bostonians, Jews, Episcopalians, tigers, rivers, snakes, shrubs, sand and moths, we are all traveling around the sun, swinging out a gigantic arc in the solar system, returning each year to the same place. Spinning, spinning together through the galaxy. Everyone knows that going on a road trip is a bonding experience. Well, we are on a long, long road trip. Why haven't we bonded?

The theory of evolution is often presented as a theory empty of values. "This is how some people believe we came to be," science teachers tell us. It seems so unromantic that we evolved from slime, or from apes. By presenting evolution in this way, teachers imply that the romance and the magic is contained only in the religious creation stories. But by this they are doing the theory of evolution a great injustice. Evolution can be presented as a unifying theory with great spiritual depth. Naturalist Loren Eiseley states: "We today know the result of Darwin's endeavors—the knitting together of the vast web of life until it is seen like the legendary tree of Igdrasil, reaching

endlessly up through the dead geological strata with living and related branches still glowing in the sun. Bird is no longer bird but can be made to leap magically backward into reptile; man is hidden in the lemur, lemur in the tree shrew, tree shrew in reptile; reptile is finally precipitated into fish." As the Lakota religion teaches, we are all related. Evolution can teach us this also. All life is sacred and interconnected.

The separation of science from religion does us another injustice. Science without the spirit breeds a culture of materialism. If science can't prove it, then it doesn't exist, we're taught. That's why we spend time looking for the remains of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat or searching for Jesus' shroud to prove the validity of Christianity. That is why we look towards the material to satisfy our insecurities. We buy fancy cars to feel powerful, buy new shoes to feel popular, or buy computers to feel smart. We judge people by their faces, the measurements of their busts, waists and hips, and the size of their muscles. When science teaches us to only trust the tangible, we live hollow lives, neglecting the spirit.

An empty science seems to have prevailed. As we enter the information age, we are being replaced by machines. As we are laid off from our jobs in favor of a computer, a robot, or an automatic teller machine, we wonder. As we are sent off to war to become just another statistic, as we oppress and are oppressed, as we destroy the Earth, we wonder. Are we just complex machines? If the only valid reality is the physical, then we are no better than machines. But when our view of reality encompasses the intangible—thoughts, feelings, energy, love, mystery and wonder—life becomes holy. People become sacred. And the universe has meaning.

**Everyone knows that
going on a road trip is a
bonding experience.
Well, we are on a long,
long road trip. Why
haven't we bonded?**

CONTINENTAL YRUU

YRUU in DC

by Rob Cavanaugh and Sarah Gibb

The 19th annual Unitarian Universalist National Conference for Social Justice: "A Religious Response to the Radical Right" took place in Washington, D.C., April 1-4. This year's conference included 23 YRUUers, the largest youth contingent ever. The group included American youth from as close as the suburbs of Washington D.C., to as far away as Colorado and Wisconsin. Some had never attended a YRUU event, and some were regular YRUU conference-goers. Despite these differences, the group immediately bonded. In our four days together in Washington, we saw the sights, lobbied on Capitol Hill, and learned how to challenge the Radical Right. Our nights were spent at the UU church in Silver Spring, Maryland, playing games, spending much too much time at the Safeway supermarket, and constructing somewhat co-

hesive sentences with the sayings on conversation heart candies. The conference's workshops were outstanding, including a presentation by June Barret, whose husband Jim was killed at a women's health clinic in Pensacola, Florida, last year. We were fully engaged in the conference from the beginning to the end. Many of the issues that are at the top of the Radical Religious Right's agenda directly affect young people. These issues include sexuality education, prayer in schools, school voucher systems, abortion, and sexual orientation. Many of us have seen ideological battles waged over these

issues in our schools and communities.

Lobbying gave us an excellent chance to tell our senators and representatives the kinds of things we learned at the conference, and the kinds of issues that were on our minds. Most youth lobbied along with adult conference participants from their states. The groups spoke face to face with aides who inform the decision-making of the politicians. This was initially very intimidating, but many of



photo by Sarah Gibb

(L to R) Allison Vanderslice, Ellen Morrow, Ben Wellemeyer, Morgan Lynn, Phoebe Hanshaw, Annalisa Hultberg, and Lucy Grinnell pose in front of the US Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

us overcame our fears and had a positive experience, even if we didn't immediately change many minds. But we did make a difference. We expressed our ideas and our feelings. We took part in the democratic process. We learned and taught.

If you're interested in social justice, keep this conference in mind. Next year may see the elimination of the National Conference in favor of several regional conferences, so look for one in your area. To learn how to express your Unitarian Universalist views to the United States government, contact the UUA Washington Office, (202) 547-0254.

Peace It Together

The 16th Annual YRUU/UU-UNO Youth Conference at The United Nations, New York City

November 16-19th, 1995

Meet representatives from the United Nations and UN Missions

Learn about Peace-making from a global perspective

Work with like-minded young people

Share techniques and ideas for effective action on Social Justice issues

See New York City

\$350 covers travel, room and board. To apply, you must be between the ages of 15 and 17. To obtain an application, contact the Youth Office at the UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108, (617) 742-2100, ext. 351 or 352. The application must be completed and postmarked by September 26, 1995.

CONTINENTAL SUMMER CALENDAR

A sampling of summer events from around the continent...

Events sponsored by Continental YRUU:

YRUU Youth Council, July 25-30, Atlanta, Georgia
YRUU Con Con, July 31-Aug 6, Highlands, North Carolina.

Events sponsored by district YRUU organizations:

Pacific Central District "WUUKY" (Western UU Karmic Youth), Northern California, June 16-23.

Mountain Desert District "Are You UU" (RUUU) Con, Allenspark, Colorado, July 21-26.

Central Midwest District YRUU Leadership Development Conference, Madison, Wisconsin, June 16-18.

Camps and conferences for teens held by members of the Council of UU Camps and Conference Centers (CU2C2). These are not sponsored by YRUU:

Rowe Camp, Rowe, MA: Junior High Camp, July 2-22 and Senior High Camp, July 30-August 19.

The Mountain, Highlands, North Carolina: Senior High Camp, July 16-29, Build & Adventure Camp July 16-29.

Unirondak, Lowville, New York: Senior High Camps, Ballou I & II, August 6-12 and August 13-19.

deBenneville Pines, Angelus Oaks, California: Junior High Camp, July 23-29, and Senior High Camp, July 30-August 5.

Ferry Beach, Saco, Maine: Teen Life Issues Camp, August 13-19.

CU2C2 camps and conferences for all ages, with a youth component:

Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SUUSI), Blacksburg, Virginia, July 23-29.

Southwest UU District Summer Institute (SWUUSI), Lake Texoma, Okla., July 30-August 4.

Lake Geneva Summer Assembly, Williams Bay, Wisconsin, July 2-8.

Ohio Meadville Summer Institute (OMSI), Bethany College, West Virginia, July 2-8.

This is in no way a comprehensive listing of UU camps for teens. For more information regarding UU camps, please contact CU2C2, c/o Reid Swanson, 7421 Foxleigh Way, Alexandria, VA 22310 (703) 922-0206. For information regarding YRUU events, contact the Youth Office at the UUA, (617) 742-2100, ext. 351 and 352.

The Youth Office e-mail address has changed!

yruu@uua.org

SYNAPSE SOLICITS SUBMISSIONS!

We are searching for your writing on...

Violence and Intolerance

News reports and statistics are constantly telling us that our society is becoming increasingly violent, and that young people are the population most affected by this culture of violence.

Synapse wants to know...

Is society really becoming more violent? Are young people? Is it all just media hype?

What can be done to effectively curb violence?

Is non-violent action effective?

How are we affected by intolerance?

How can we, as UU youth, promote peace, justice, and tolerance?

Let YRUU know what's on your mind, and in your heart.

Speak from your experience. Send us your photographs, your poetry, your writing.

Synapse

c/o Youth Office at the UUA

25 Beacon St.

Boston, MA 02108

e-mail: yruu@uua.org

fax: 617/523-4123

Deadline:

October 15, 1995

NEWS AND

EVENTS



Youth Council Representatives



What does Youth Council do?

Youth Council is the governing body of Continental YRUU. They meet for a week each summer to work towards improving YRUU and putting its purposes into action. They report on what is happening in their districts and local youth groups, discuss what they would like to see happening, and take action towards meeting their greatest visions for YRUU. If you have an idea, a joy, or a concern that you would like to see raised at Youth Council 1995, please contact the Youth Council Representative from your district, or an at-large representative.

Who are these "At-Large" representatives?

Each at-large representative has an area of specialty. The transitional age-range representative has been designated this year to represent youth who are undergoing the transition out of junior high and into YRUU. The Continental Social Action Coordinator represents social justice concerns to Youth Council. The General Assembly Youth Caucus Business Manager will facilitate the Youth Caucus business meetings at General Assembly this June, as well as represent General Assembly and Youth Caucus to Youth Council. The Adults At-Large are ministers, religious educators, and youth group advisors who represent adult needs to Youth Council, as well as provide support as advisors for the conference. At-Large Representatives represent people in all districts.

How can I contact these people?

Please see the Youth Council Representative address list in the column to the left. To have your ideas represented at Youth Council this summer, contact your representative before July 25th. I'm sure your representative will be happy to hear from you! Youth Council will be happening from July 25-30th in Atlanta, Georgia, this summer.

How can I get involved in Youth Council?

Most district YRUU organizations democratically elect their Youth Council Representative, and other districts have a YCR application procedure. Get involved in the government of your district YRUU! YRUU Steering Committee selects the Youth and Adults At-Large every spring. Those positions will be advertised in the fall issue of *Synapse*.

You can influence the direction of YRUU! It's easy. Call or write your Youth Council Representatives. Let them know your ideas. It can really make a difference.

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

What has your Steering Committee done for you lately? Well, let me tell you. Steering Committee is a sub-committee of YRUU Youth Council, which is the governing body of Continental YRUU. Youth Council is comprised of At-Large representatives as well as representatives from each district of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Members of Youth Council elect members of Steering Committee to carry out the tasks outlined in the resolutions that Youth Council passes at its meeting each summer.

At YRUU Steering Committee's spring meeting, members of Steering Committee reported on and discussed some of the issues that are on the minds of YRUUers everywhere—reaching out to non YRUUers, easing individual transitions into YRUU, establishing positive relations between youth, advisors, and Directors of Religious Education, setting up guidelines for developing conference rules, building an effective system of social action, supporting local youth groups, and increasing YRUU spirituality.

Before Steering Committee met, individual members spoke to the Youth Council Representative from each district. Steering Committee discussed thoroughly many of the problems and challenges that representatives brought up in these conversations.

Steering Committee has been hard at work following through with the directives in the resolutions passed by Youth Council 1994. Members of Steering Committee have completed a draft of a "First-Time Attendee Packet," which is intended to serve as a guide for orientation of new-comers to YRUU conferences. They have been developing ways to foster spirituality in YRUU, working to increase communication between American and Canadian YRUU, setting a schedule for planning youth events at General Assembly 1996, and working on a "Guidelines for Developing Rules Pamphlet."

In addition, this spring Steering Committee selected two YRUU Programs Specialists to serve in the Youth Office, and three youth and four adults to serve as at-large representatives on Youth Council. Now Steering Committee is planning for Youth Council!



photo by Jory Agate

Steering Committee hangs out after the fall 1994 meeting. R to L: Derek McTaggart, Marc Loustau, Sarah Gibb, Heidi Jo Brandenburg, Dan Ross, Ashley Sveen, Jonah Eller-Isaacs, Paul Wardlow, David McFarland. Not Pictured: Erv Miller, Jory Agate

YRUU INTERNSHIP IN BOSTON!

You or someone you know can apply to be a YRUU Programs Specialist!

The YRUU Programs Specialist position is a one-year internship in the Youth Office at the Unitarian Universalist Association's headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts.

Responsibilities include: Working with the Youth Programs Director and the other YRUU Programs Specialist to manage the business of the Youth Office; editing and laying out the newspaper *Synapse*; helping to plan and administer conferences and youth gatherings, including Con Con, Youth Council, YRUU Steering Committee meetings, and Youth Caucus at General Assembly; interacting with other employees of the UUA; participating in business meetings; implementing decisions of the YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee; and traveling to events all over the continent.

Qualifications: Ability to relate well with youth and adults, past YRUU experience, leadership experience, good organizational skills, the ability to communicate well through speaking and writing, a sense of humor, and a strong commitment to YRUU and the principles upon which it is based. The applicant must be between the ages of 16 and 20, inclusively, upon application. (The age range for the position may be changed to 16-22, pending a decision of the 1995 Youth Council.)

Terms of employment: This position is a one-year commitment, beginning January 1, 1996 and ending December 31, 1996. The salary is \$20,100. Moving expenses to and from Boston are paid, and medical insurance is provided. Other benefits include paid vacations and holidays. The new intern is expected to find her or his own living accommodations and pay for all living expenses while in Boston.

How to apply: Please write, call, or e-mail YRUU Steering Committee at the Youth Office for an application kit.

YRUU Steering Committee
c/o The Youth Office—UUA
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108
617/742-2100, ext. 350, 351, 352
yruu@uua.org

Applications must be postmarked by **September 15, 1995** to be considered.

Ballou Channing
Lucy Grinnell
38 Cedar
Duxbury, MA 02332
(617) 934-4669

Central Mass.
Tom Innis
267 Pleasant St.
Paxton, MA 01512
(508) 753-4950

Central Midwest
Dylan McConaghy
W163 S7958 Bay Lane Pl.
Muskego, WI 53150
(414) 422-1896

Connecticut Valley
Ben Wellemeyer
135 Green Rd.
Manchester, CT 06040
(203) 649-1051

Desert
Cody Saxton
1310 Las Lomas Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
(505) 244-1607

Florida
Sarah Hinds
1417 NW 6th PL
Gainesville, FL 32603
(904) 377-1352

Joseph Priestley
Morgan "Cid" Lynn
22600 Aquasco Rd.
Aquia, MD 20608
(301) 888-1018

Mass. Bay
Eva Owens
18 Baker PL
Newton Lower Falls, MA 02162
(617) 244-6229

Metro NY
Sandy Schneider
271 Eccleston PL
Maywood, NJ 07607
(201) 843-1678

Michigan
Elissa Trumbull
U of Michigan
4116-2 Couzens
1200 E. Ann St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(313) 764-5874

Mid-South
To be announced

Mountain
Maureen Turnbull
1516 W. Lake St.
Fort Collins, CO 80521
(303) 493-0787

New Hampshire/Vermont
To Be Announced

Northeast
Jon-Jon Lander
P.O. Box 170
Alfred, ME 04002
(207) 324-3143

Ohio-Meadville
Andrea Field
230 Halligan Ave.
Worthington, OH 43085
(614) 436-7269

Ohio Valley
Phoebe Hanshaw
2012 E. Hillside Dr.
Bloomington, IN 47401
(812) 334-0540

Pacific Central
Malcolm Pullinger
2209 Westmoreland Ct.
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(510) 939-6560

Pacific Northwest
Erica Boberg
10660 SW North Dakota
Tigard, OR 97223
(503) 639-2342

Pacific Southwest
Lexie Aliotti
4211 Middlesex Dr.
San Diego, CA 92116
(619) 281-3848

Prairie Star
To be announced

Saint Lawrence
Melissa Laferla-Steel
50 Golfwood Dr.
Hamilton, ONT, CANADA
L9C 6W3
(905) 574-8987

Southwest
Josh Batschelet
3915 Star Hill
San Antonio, TX 78218
(210) 655-5646

Thomas Jefferson
Vanessa King
103 Shale Place
Charlottesville, VA 22902
(804) 977-0542

Western Canada
To Be Announced

YRUU Steering Committee

(terms end July 30, 1995)

Heidi Jo Brandenburg
2130 E. Bradford #7
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T2V 4G9
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Marc Loustau
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Westport, CT 06880
(203) 222-7023

Paul DeaconWardlow
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(603) 673-6415

Phyllis Daniel
UUA Board of Trustees
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(714) 527-7001

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Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 247-3612

Adults At-Large

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Somerville, MA 02144
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Princeton, NJ 08540
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V9A 6L6
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Arlington, MA 02174
(617) 646-9618

Jerry Winsett
1039 Kenwood St.
Burbank, CA 91505
(818) 842-7801

Edith Parker
1735 Woodland Ave. #68
E. Palo Alto, CA 94303
415/322-4339

Youth At-Large

C*SAC
Ellen Sale
1502 Hampton Rd.
Charleston, WV 25314
(304) 344-3701

GA Youth Caucus Business Manager

Carl Cade
2934 Ford St. #9
Oakland, CA 94601
(510) 532-3545
(415) 647-3549

Transitional Age-Range Rep.

Dore Mendelsberg
380 Plaza Road N.
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
(201) 794-7871



The following are advertisements for events not sponsored by YRUU or the UUA Youth Office.

Just Works

Working Justice

A Service Opportunity Program from the UUSC

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee seeks volunteers, interns, and students to work in support of the UUSC as well as grass roots organizations in local communities and abroad.

Earn valuable experience while helping others through "Working Justice."

For more information, contact:

Jose Ballester
UUSC Just Works
130 Prospect St.
Cambridge, MA 02139-1845
(617) 868-6600 ext. 141
justworks@aol.com

The UUSC is an independent, voluntary organization associated with the UUA. We affirm the worth, dignity and human rights of every person and the interdependence of all life. For over fifty years we have worked to advance the cause of justice throughout the world.

Do you have world class dreams?

Join young people from more than twenty different countries for a summer adventure in Virginia. Focus on cross-cultural communication, leadership, conflict resolution, and group facilitation. Three week program includes skill building workshops, recreational activities and a beautiful country setting. For more information contact:

Mary Helmig, Legacy International
Route 4
Box 265
Bedford, Virginia 24523
(703) 297-5982

Attention New England UU Youth!

Coming this fall: the New England UU gathering, November 10-12, 1995 in Worcester, MA. It will be a unique collaboration of six New England UU districts coming together to celebrate the larger family of New England UUs. There will be a banner procession, singing, and celebration. John Buehrens, UUA president, will attend to give the worship. This will be a great opportunity for New England YRUUers who have been to General Assembly or have never been to General Assembly to get together with a larger group of UUs. There will be workshops and exhibits, some of which will have a youth focus. Talk to your minister or RE director for more information, or contact:

Lisa Rubin
c/o First UU Society
152 Pearl St.
Burlington, VT 05401

802-862-0251 day/802-862-4571 evenings.

OPUS!!!

The Pacific Central District UU Young Adult Network and the Continental UU Young Adult Network invite you to the first pre-Opus 18-25 conference
August 11-12 and
Opus X: Work in Progress
August 12-18
at The Quaker Center, Ben Lomond, California

Opus is a gathering of UU young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 in a temporary community which shares worship, workshops, small groups and the annual business meeting of the Continental UU Young Adult Network. This year's site is in the Santa Cruz mountains south of San Francisco. Opus provides an opportunity to meet young adults from across the continent, create and share community, and enjoy a playful week of fun!

Younger young adults (aged 18-25) will gather at the same site before Opus itself begins. The "spring chickens" will form a smaller community, hold a one-day conference, and prepare a welcoming ceremony for the opening of the site to the larger Opus community. This first-ever event springs from a commitment to welcoming younger UU young adults into UUYAN.

For more information contact the Opus Hotline at 415/864-OPUS or Jo Victoria, Registrar, at 29 Pearl, San Francisco, CA 94103-1108.

Volunteers for Peace International Workcamps

The 1995 INTERNATIONAL WORKCAMP DIRECTORY (\$12 first-class postage paid) is an annual booklet (120 pp.) listing over 800 opportunities for creative travel throughout Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, North and West Africa, Asia and the Americas. Workcamps are inexpensive ways that Americans of all ages can promote international goodwill through community service projects in 50 countries. 2-3 week programs are \$150. Please call or write for the 1995 Directory (Visa and MasterCard accepted) or for a FREE copy of our newsletter. Contact: **Volunteers For Peace, Inc International Workcamps 43 Tiffany Rd. Belmont, Vermont 05730 Tel: (802) 259-2759.**



UUs marching for choice at General Assembly 1994 in Fort Worth, TX.
Photo by David Iannavelli

The Pensacola UU Fellowship is working on a project called The White Ribbon Project. They are asking people in the pro-choice community to support their struggle in Pensacola by sending white ribbons. Write a message of support of a woman's right to choose on a white ribbon and send it to:

The White Ribbon Project
PO Box 2957
Pensacola, FL 32513-2957

Your ribbon will be joined with others to form a chain of solidarity that will be displayed outside around the clinics to send the message, "we won't back down to anti-abortion terrorism."