

SPRING 1996

The Continental Newspaper of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists.

SYNAPSE

*A Point of Contact Where Information
and Energy are Exchanged*

Volume IX, Issue I, Spring 1996.

Printed in the USA.



“Back to the Earth”

Hi. Feel free to use this handy form to ensure your *Synapse* satisfaction. FYI: We give names and addresses from the *Synapse* list to UU-affiliated groups upon request.

TRIM IT!

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

ADD IT!

Yes, I would like to receive *Synapse*! Here is my name, address, and birthdate.

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 oh-so-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 made to the right and enter them into your database. Namaste!

I LOVE IT!

Things just couldn't be better. I am mailing this back to you just for the hell of it. Coolio!



YRUU at the UUA
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

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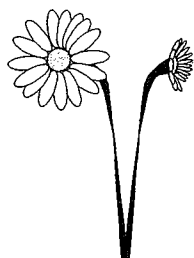
Spring 1996

Letters to the Editor...

To any and all contributors to the Fall 1995 issue of *Synapse*,

I would like to thank you for all the poetic (not necessarily poems, but those too) and useful information! In my efforts to finally get to Con Con, I borrowed many excerpts from said issue to present the possibility to my parents. I am very proud of my presentation and it wouldn't be so great if I hadn't had such a great reference. Thanks again. My parents are not too comfortable with the whole conference idea, for different reasons, so I needed to convince them it was worth the slight risk involved because it was so important to me. I'm moving to Abilene, Texas, so I want to see my friends from this district as well as have the Con Con experience I've heard so much about! I think there's hope! I love *Synapse* and YRUU and hope to stay for a long while.

Love all that you can,
Kelly Ranch, OH/TX



To the staff at *Synapse*:

Hi! My name is Jenn Bealer. I'm 17. I'm in a UU youth group in Middleboro, MA. I received a copy of the Fall 1995 issue from my history teacher and thought it was really neat. I'd like to be a writer. Do articles have to on any specific topic or can they be about anything? Thanks again!

Jenn Bealer, Ballou Channing



Dear Jenn,

We are glad you like *Synapse*! The *Synapse* submission policy is that we accept articles on just about any topic of interest to UU Youth. Each issue of *Synapse* has a theme, but articles, poetry, and stories that do not relate to the theme will always be accepted for consideration. We also love to receive black-and-white artwork and photography submissions. The submission deadline for the fall issue is October 15th, and the theme is Gender Justice. We are looking forward to receiving something from you!

Rachel & Kathy

Hidey-ho there!

I've been wanting to write you for a while, but for some reason I've yet to do so until now. Well...I've got a lot to say and to pack it into one small letter might be somewhat difficult, but I shall try my Darndest!

Being in the YRUU community has been an incredible experience that I shall value greatly and cherish always. I just wanted to say a quick thank you to all who have helped bring me into the UU world and bring out the true meaning of who I am, whoever that may be--sorry for the slightly sappy sentiment, but endearment and true sincerity are needed.

Hey, I want to be in contact with more YRUUers around and would like to hear from anyone (hint, hint--I love mail!). Please, get in touch with me.

Love and harmony,

Tara Aiesi
263 Hillside Ave.
Needham, MA
02194-1335



Dearest Synapsians,

A few years ago when in the Affirmation program, we visited the UUA and the Youth Office where I picked up a number of *Synapses*. I loved them, but somehow never got around to sending in that cute little card in order to get more. Eventually, I sort of forgot about it. Today, however, I received the Fall '95 issue. I'm not sure how or why, but I'm thrilled. And if I knew who made it happen, I'd give them a big hug.

Warm Fuzzies,
Elizza Rose

[Editors' note: The following letter was sent to the UUA and forwarded to us. Do any of you have ideas for her? If so, send them to the address below. Thank you.]

To whom it may concern:

I'm a Japanese friend-seeker. I'm interested in the Unitarian church. Do you know an American Unitarian who speaks Japanese?

I want to know about American, European, and Canadian Unitarian churches and IARF's activities.

If you don't know anyone who speaks Japanese, I want to know a kindly person who will write to me in simple English. Please help me.

Sincerely,
Miss Yukiko Mori
c/o Hiraiwa, 29 Ikedono - cho
Kamigamo, Kita-ku, Kyoto - city
603 JAPAN

About *Synapse*...

Synapse is a publication of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), the youth organization of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Subscription is free. Two issues per annum.

Staff: Rachel Reed, Kathy Daneman, Jory Agate, and Anne Fleming.

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 are accepted. When submitting photographs, please include the name of the person who took the photo to provide proper credit. The following submissions limits apply:

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

Poetry: One poem per issue.

Graphics and Photographs: No limit. Black and white photos or line drawings preferred.

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 stamped envelope.

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 should not be construed as endorsements by the Youth Office, YRUU, or the UUA. 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 the
Next Issue: October 15, 1996

The Youth Office
Unitarian Universalist Association
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 742-2100
email: yruu@uua.org

1992-93 logo contest winner announced



Once upon a time, the Youth Office announced a logo contest. It was the Spring/Summer issue of 1992 and we wanted a new logo to mark the end of our first decade.

Time passed and many, many logos were sent to the Youth Office. The interns of the moment, Sean Ramsey and Jennifer Martin, collected the entries and ran the contest.

Everyone voted on their favorite logo, and in the Spring/Summer 1993 issue, Jennifer and Serena Smallin announced a winner. The official YRUU logo is the one printed above.

Unfortunately, there was one small hitch. They lost the artist's full name and address. They ran an article Desperately Seeking Susan, but no response ever came. It is our great pleasure to announce that the winner of the YRUU 1992-93 logo contest is **Susan Berg** from Cuyahoga Falls, OH. We are so sorry that it took us three years to track you down.

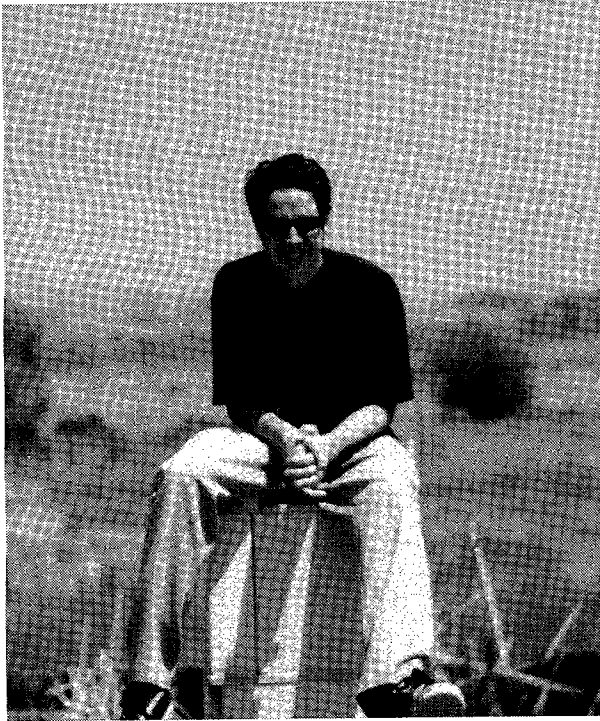
We'd also like to offer a special thank you to **Nicole Piotrkowski**. Nicole designed the logo below. She entered her logo in the '92-'93 contest also. Unfortunately, Nicole, though obviously a gifted designer, did not win.

This is where the story gets complicated. Somehow Nicole's logo was uploaded onto the Youth Office server. No one knows exactly when it happened, but the Youth Office has been using her logo ever since. We'd like to apologize for not crediting either artist, each of whom is extremely talented, and thank them both for their endless patience.

Rachel & Kathy



Meet David Taylor, your new YRUU Programs Specialist



Greetings all of you silly YRUU, Synapse-reading people. My name is David Taylor and I have the honor and privilege of being your next YRUU Programs Specialist. I have spent the last few years playing in San Diego and other equally bizarre Southern California locations. I have just finished my freshman year of college at California State University at San Marcos studying how to procrastinate declaring a major.

Some things that I like are interesting, funny people who smile a lot, warm days spent lounging by the ocean, Mountain Dew, taking black & white pictures, sleep deprivation and bad 80's punk rock.

I have an extreme fear and hatred of any daytime outdoor air temperature below 65 degrees, which should prove interesting after I move to Boston. I'm also annoyed by people who refuse to confront ignorance or take responsibility for their life. Beyond that I'm generally a cheery, hyper-active kind of guy. I hope to meet as many of you as possible over the next year, and when I do, you better be smiling.



David's new home.

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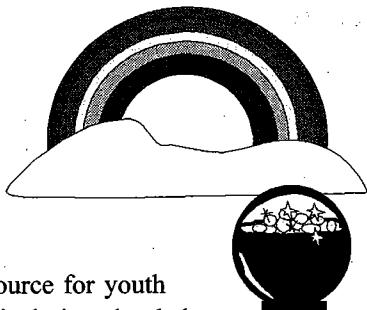
YPS Job Opening

How'd you like to have a fabulous job?

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Continental YRUU

New Youth Office Resources Available June 1996:



The Post High School Survival Kit is a resource for youth making the transition to young adulthood. It is designed to help transitioning young adults stay in touch with the church. New information is included in a groovy updated format!

A Resource for UU Youth who are Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, or Questioning their sexuality will be available by June 1996. This lavender tri-fold pamphlet is being created to support LBGT YRUUers; it includes tips on coming out in UU youth groups and real-life testimonials from youth like you!

The Con-Étiquette Compromise: Creating Smoking Policies is a resource created by the 1995-96 Steering Committee. It is not a policy document, but was designed to help YRUU groups create comprehensive smoking policies that fit the needs of all concerned.

YRUU-L is Born!

Introducing a brand-new email listserv for YRUUers everywhere to enjoy.

The YRUU-L mailing list is for individuals interested in YRUU and UU youth programs in general. It provides a way for youth, youth group advisors, religious educators, ministers, and parents to share resources, compare programs, find support, get ideas, and create connections. List subscribers are encouraged to post announcements for events, ask questions, and share information.

Communicate about youth programs via the Net!

Here's how:

Let's say your name is Suzy Taco. So you, Suzy, send an email message to listproc@uaa.org with no subject line and the following in the body of the message:

SUBSCRIBE YRUU-L Suzy Taco

(of course you would want to use your real name, however, you need to remember to **include both your first and last names** in order to properly subscribe). Once you are subscribed, you can post to the list just by sending an email message to:

YRUU-L@uaa.org

Everyone who's subscribed will receive all messages that have been sent to yruu-l@uaa.org.

Ain't technology great?

Become an Official Leadership Development Conference Trainer!

In 1992 Youth Council Passed a series of resolutions designed to ensure that quality youth leadership conferences could take place in each and every district of the UUA. The idea was to develop and implement a plan whose overall goal would be to train and motivate youth and adult leaders in every congregation with potential youth programming. Thus, ten youth and nine adults were trained at the first Continental LDC Training in Fall 1994. These trainers have led 17 LDCs in more than 13 districts since that time.

Now it is time for a new batch of LDC leaders to emerge.

Get ready for the *second* Continental LDC Training!

Do you...

--> *have an interest in leading Leadership Development Conferences (LDCs) around North America?*

--> *feel that you have leadership skills that you can pass on to others in YRUU?*

--> *like the idea of spending an intense, expense-paid weekend in beautiful Boston?*

Apply to be a part of the Continental Leadership Development Conference Team!

The second Continental Leadership Development Conference Training will be held November 15-17, 1996, near Boston.

We are seeking ten youth and ten adults who are interested in becoming Leadership Conference Development Trainers. Applicants should either be involved in youth programming or have a strong interest and understanding of youth needs. Youth applicants must be ages 14-18. The application deadline is September 25, 1996. If you would like more information or an application form for the CLDC Training, please write, phone, or email the Youth Office.

Youth Council Representatives

Ballou Channing Lucy Grinnell 297 Powder Point Duxbury, MA 02332 (617) 934-4639	Ohio-Meadville Jarred Forman 5677 Wicliiff St. NE North Canton, OH 44721 (216) 492-3045
Central Massachusetts Tom Innis 267 Pleasant St. Paxton, MA 01612 (508) 753-4950	Ohio Valley Nora Talley 110 Gulfwood Court Dayton, OH 45458 (513) 434-0722
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Northeast Jon-Jon Lander PO Box 170 Alfred, ME 04002 (207) 324-3143	Adult At-Large Rev. Kathryn Hawbaker 200 West Somers Eaton, OH 45320 (513) 456-6529

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(terms end August 1996)

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w(608) 233-9774 x16

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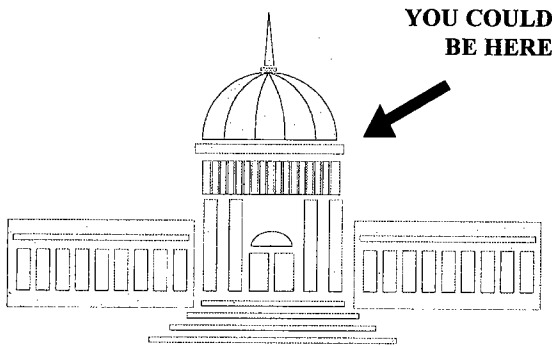
artwork by Rachel Reed

Events of Interest...

YRUU National Social Justice Conference to be Held

[Note: The YRUU-United Nations Conference will not happen this year. Instead, this conference will have a similar focus on youth bringing a big picture of social action home to their local church and youth group.]

YRUU and the UUA Washington Office will co-sponsor a National Social Justice Conference for youth, **February 22-25, 1997 in Washington, D.C.** One youth from each district will be chosen to attend. The conference will focus on putting hands and feet on our UU principles by learning about political and social issues, becoming familiar with the U.S. political process, and will culminate in a day of lobbying Congress about social justice issues of concern to the participants. For more information or an application form, please contact the UUA Washington Office (202) 296-4672 or the Youth Office.



This project funded in part by a generous grant from the Fund for Unitarian Universalism.



Going to the Olympics?

The UU Congregation of Atlanta invites youth ages 14-18 to an **Olympic Lock-In, July 27th, 1996.**

The lock-in will be overnight: 7pm Saturday to 10am Sunday morning. Only \$5 registration fee! For more info or a registration form, please contact **Jacki Rohan c/o UU Congregation of Atlanta** 1911 Cliff Valley Way NE Atlanta, GA 30329 (404) 634-5134 fax: (404) 728-8756

Con Con 1996 Back to the Earth



August 12-18, 1996

Camp Arrah Wanna in Welches, OR

Camp Arrah Wanna is near majestic Mt. Hood, 45 miles east of Portland, OR. The camp offers swimming pool, volleyball court, and hiking trails in the lush forests along the Salmon River. Nine week-long workshops, one-shots, workshops, and special events will keep you busy! Registration forms are available through the Youth Office. Con Con fills up fast, so send your form in today!

YOUTH FOCUS AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 20-25, 1996. INDIANAPOLIS, IN

With the help of the Youth Office, the GA Planning Committee, and several other supporting groups, this year's General Assembly will feature a focus on youth. Though past Focus programs have taken place on a single day, the Youth Focus will occur throughout General Assembly. The Youth Focus Task Force will sponsor more than 20 workshops -- from how to create great district youth programming to teen sexuality issues. The Task Force is also planning social action projects including a trip to Gleaner's, a local Indy food bank, where we will all have the chance to give back to the community. This year's GA will be rich with opportunities to experience youth worship. The Youth Focus Task force will sponsor a service, "Singing the Generations," on the first night of GA as well as "The Future is Now," an all-GA worship on Saturday afternoon. It is estimated that 300-400 youth will attend; it's sure to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all!

About Youth Caucus

Youth Caucus offers the opportunity for youth ages 14-20 to meet and discuss the business of the denomination and voice their concerns. Over the years, the Youth Caucus has developed into a strong, well organized group of young people who are listened to and highly respected by the General Assembly community. Youth registered for GA, whether or not they stay in Youth Housing, are welcome to participate in Youth Caucus business meetings and worships.

Youth Focus Task Force has these goals for GA '96:

- To have fun.
- To feel good about youth; to understand and appreciate that youth are an important part of our denomination with many gifts to share.
- To put "hands and feet" on our principles; to leave with concrete materials and specific action plans.
- To model a safe and inclusive community that fosters trust, respect, communication, and understanding between youth and adults.
- To understand the nature of ministry with youth and the necessity of consistent, ongoing adult support.
- To understand and appreciate youth empowerment.
- To leave General Assembly with a "Hey, I can and will!" attitude.

About Youth Housing

The Youth Office will provide Youth Housing as a less expensive way for youth to stay at GA. Youth who register for youth housing will stay four to a room at the Hyatt, located right near the convention center. Three Youth Office staff, at least four adult advisors, and several UUA RE department staff will be staying at the Hyatt to provide advice, support and emergency assistance, should it become necessary. Youth Housing is limited, so register now!

Important Note: Parents and youth should be aware that neither Youth Focus, nor Youth Caucus are YRUU-sponsored events or conferences. Youth participants at GA should be mature enough to decide what to attend, where or when to eat and what time to sleep. Each youth is responsible for his/her own behavior. Youth receive no direct supervision from the Youth Office or the Youth Caucus staff. Youth under age 18 must have an adult sponsor at GA who is responsible for them and with whom they communicate regularly. An adult may sponsor no more than three youth. Youth are expected to participate fully in the convention of General Assembly.

FOR GA REGISTRATION AND RATE INFO:
The GA Office (617)742-2100 ext. 209
email: GAOFFICE@UUA.ORG

WHAT YOUR CONGREGATION CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUTH FOCUS:

1. Encourage your congregation to designate youth as delegates. GA 1996 will give youth the chance to see our denomination in action, and giving positions to youth makes your delegation a more representative body.
2. Set aside scholarship money specifically for youth to attend GA. The Youth Focus Task Force encourages congregations and districts to help youth attend GA. Scholarships will also be available from the Youth Office.
3. Recruit youth to carry your church banner in the Banner Parade. Give youth a chance to represent their congregation in the Opening Ceremonies!
4. Join the "I'm one of 500 supporting youth in Indy" campaign. The Youth Office plans to get individuals from 500 congregations to pledge to support youth programming by GA 1996.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON YOUTH FOCUS, YOUTH CAUCUS, OR YOUTH HOUSING:
The Youth Office (617)742-2100 ext. 351, 352, 350. email: YRUU@UUA.ORG



Back to the Earth:

Doing Your Part For the Environment

by Alison Purcell



We all know the environment is being degraded and destroyed with each passing day. The garbage piles up, water ways are polluted and species go extinct at alarming rates. One might think: "These problems are so large, what could I possibly do to help?!" What you may not realize is that YOU, the individual, can have the largest impact simply by how you live your life. Almost every aspect of your life relates back to our resources and the earth. What we eat and buy directly correlates to its environmental impact. Being a wise consumer and producing less waste are two easy ways you can effect change.

Here are a few suggestions of things you can change to help slow the degradation of our planet:

LIFESTYLE

Look at the aspects of your life in which energy and waste play a part. Make a quick list of things you could do that would use less energy and produce less waste. For example, be conscious of transportation. Avoid driving all the time: ride your bike, take public transportation, or walk for a change.



THE THREE R'S

Reduce: Avoid lots of packing in consumer products and you will waste less resources.

Re-use: Use refillable bottles or reusable lunch sacks. Buy things bulk so that less packaging is used.

Recycle: Recycle everything that is recyclable! It is so easy -- just put a separate recycling bin next to your garbage can. Give people a choice about the fate of their waste.

BRING A "GREEN" PERSPECTIVE TO YRUU

In a recent survey of YRUU district programs by the Continental Steering Committee, it was found that youth groups and districts that were doing anything for the environment were few and far between. Start a new wave of environmentalism in your youth group! Make suggestions about activities that could promote awareness or help the environment, such as: fundraisers (like Metro NY's fun-a-thon for Greenpeace), clean up projects (adopt-a-highway), or letter writing campaigns.

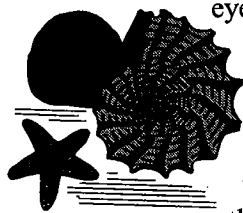


Keep in mind is that every little thing counts in the long run, so get to it!

One Hour

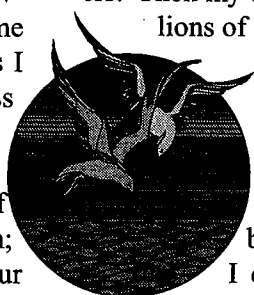
by Sandra Read-Brown

From where I sit, I can see much. The sun's rays beat down on me from the sky, giving off a warm, brilliant feeling, making me feel as if the world is free of troubles. As I turn my head, I see Pleasant Bay. Its blueness on a day like today can be compared to absolutely nothing. The islands, Big Sipsons, Little Sipsons, and Strong, seem more full of colors than ever. My eyes drift to the beach; it is empty, yet full; dead, yet alive. If your



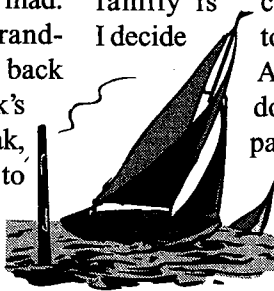
eyes simply scanned it, it wouldn't seem like much, but if you looked at it, *really* looked at it, you would see many things. All of the rocks, though not alive, are so

multicolored that to me they almost look like flowers. Then my eyes rest on the sand, those millions of grains of sand. They are such a lovely brown-gold color that you can nearly feel their warmth. I sit up and look toward the houses. From where I am, I can see our dog tearing about on the bluff as though she is going mad. I can just make out my grandmother and grandfather coming back



up the driveway from their walk; the oak's branches are partly blocking my view. The oak, in my mind, is the most majestic tree ever to live, just standing there, all proud and tall, its many branches waving in the wind. As my eyes wander out past the houses, to the

other side of the bay, and focus on some sailboats, and (ugh) a motorboat, I wonder whether or not the Quawk is still at its mooring. I turn my head to check and it is. The catboat bobs up and down out there, looking thoughtful, as if thinking of something to say. I feel myself dozing off and try to stop, but the sun's warmth persuades me to give in. The next thing I know, my family is calling me. There is talk of a sail. I decide



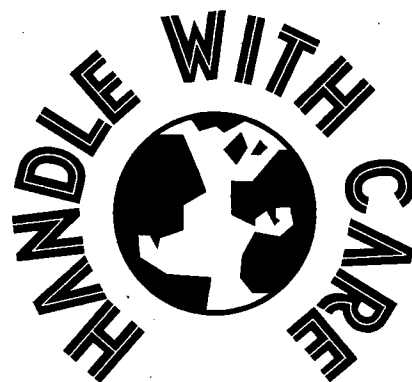
to go, yet am unwilling to leave. After a moment, I dutifully climb down from the tree and follow the path out of the woods. When I emerge from amidst the bushes, I stop, turn back, and look, still feeling the magic of that hour.

WORD SEARCH

solarpowerlrkbrobrioemlqvopledsmu
nchdpqmzmtrachdeforestationjoryd
asyrmtaxactpamcgldetbfornatureevi
fimrtvtvamdfearlulggqydepletionbfdo
tydgnvosorberecyclemoigagrereamax
amarlmnotdoodamobekrdroyr gasjpili
waxvbeadtranrefcaacoglmarpufz xen
methane rocop bnmuiwsqblilifdnalhk
overpopulationblueelica zyxwvutsrqp
onmkljihgfedcbaozonewniu asrsg tcd
mejyslvezneello slashandburntatlm d
sustainabledevelopmentsetrpostqlft
hydroponicsjvyopldevplapesticides
x pmaehthanlcmjerifdgrainforestdsr d
kofibiohazardouswastefkseiwbolosq

LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

- biohazardous waste
- DDT
- Debt-for-Nature
- deforestation
- depletion
- dioxin
- hydroponics
- landfill
- methane
- NAFTA
- overpopulation
- ozone
- pesticides
- rain forest
- recycle
- slash and burn
- solar power
- sustainable development



Those who dwell ... among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.... Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.
-- Rachel Carson

Youth and the Environment



I had assumed that the Earth,
the spirit of the Earth, noticed
exceptions -- those who wantonly
damage it and those who do not.
But the Earth is wise.
It has given itself into the keeping
of all, and all are therefore
accountable. -- Alice Walker

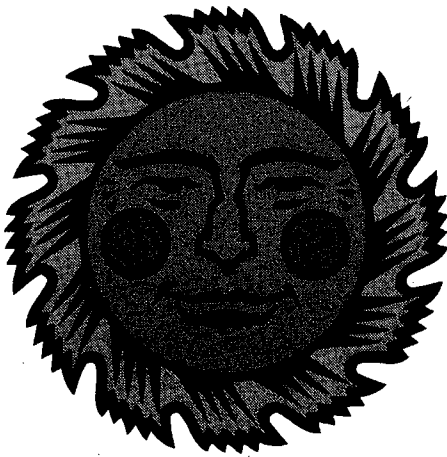
Sunrise

A light shines dully.
Sunrises
the beauty strikes me
As I sit alone.

As I sit alone,
I see the bending beauty
From darkness to light.

From darkness to light,
I open my eyes and see
The colors of life.

The colors of life
Surround me, always throughout
Life's diversity.



by Abigail Hoodhue;
Hingham, MA

ANNOUNCEMENT: CALLING ALL YOUTH GROUPS!

Has your youth group or district done
any Environmental Projects??

If so, we want to know about it. The information you give
could end up being used at a workshop at General Assembly
in June to show off just how cool you are.

Send your stuff by June 1, 1996 to:

Alison Purcell

14 Selkirk Street

Oakland, CA 94619

call her at (510) 531-7505

or e-mail her at alisonp@gladstone.uoregon.edu

QUIZ, QUIZ, CRAZY QUIZ! TEST YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE!

Health officials warn that 46 percent of our lakes, rivers, and streams
are not safe for us to fish, drink, or swim in. Ahh, statistics. See how
much you know about the issues below. (answers on page 12)

1. What percentage of the world's cars and trucks are found in the United States?
a. 15%
b. 35%
c. 50%
d. 5%
2. What percentage of the world's population own cars?
a. 50%
b. 23%
c. 8%
d. 37%
3. How much of the air pollution in the U.S. is produced by motor vehicles?
a. over 50%
b. 5%
c. 25%
d. none
4. If all ozone-depleting substances were banned now, when might the ozone layer return to 1985 levels?
a. 2 years
b. 10 years
c. 50 years
d. never
5. About how much of the heat in U.S. homes and other buildings escapes through closed windows?
a. 5%
b. 15%
c. 30%
d. 50%

**Bonus Question:

Why should I do anything
for the environment?

- a. My mom told me to.
- b. It will ensure a pretty future
- c. Synapse controls my life
- d. I don't have anything better to do
- e. All of the above



My Environmentalism

Granola? Earth Muffin? Tree Hugger! What do these phrases, usually nicknames given to me by my friends, mean? I think that they mean I'm an environmentalist. Oh, that makes it all clear, right? I don't think so. Maybe being an environmentalist once meant one thing to everybody, but I doubt it. Now that word means so many things to so many different people. To logging families in the Pacific Northwest, it can mean someone who wants to take away their jobs (a very threatening kind of person). To large corporate polluters who make millions, environmentalists may be a bit of an annoyance, or a pain. To students on my campus, we're the ones who get up on Sunday morning and drive an old truck around to pick up the recycling and sponsor Earth Day programs. To my parents it means that I'm going to harass them about buying recycled paper products and environmentally safe cleaning products. To my sister it means I don't shave my legs.

I could fill pages and pages of what it means to other people. But what does it mean to me? Big question. To me being an environmentalist means hugging trees (really!). It means trying to walk lightly as I step on the Earth. It means a healthy respect for the Earth's cycles. It means understanding that there are needs greater than my own. It means understanding that there are jobs behind trees and families to feed. It some-

times means knowing I am right, but letting someone else think I'm wrong. It means compromise. It means knowing the possibilities hidden within one fir cone. It means finding solace in a tree and re-birth in a spring rain storm. It means a connection to the soil, trees, and animals around me. It means fighting for these things. It can mean sadness for lost trees or destroyed earth. It means working hard. It means education and ignorance. It means trying to change minds and hearts, one word at a time.

I believe that being an environmentalist brings the most joy into my life. I believe that finding my soul's sustenance in the natural world around me gives my daily life

a deeper spiritual meaning. I don't think that I could be *me* without being an environmentalist. I know that these are my inspirations and maybe not everyone else's. Pause and think about how *you* might appreciate the natural world around you. Explore a tree or a patch of grass, and I'll bet you will find a wonderful little microcosm you never imagined existed. Take an afternoon and walk in the woods. I bet if you spend just a moment finding that part of yourself that connects to nature, you'll discover you might be an environmentalist, too. And maybe you won't. But try it. Being called "Earth Muffin" isn't so bad.

by Alicia Lyman-Holt

Being called "Earth Muffin"
isn't so bad.

Networking...

There are so many cool UU organizations besides YRUU that we thought we'd tell you a little bit about each of them. We know we're your favorite, but that doesn't mean you can't play reindeer games with other groups that have a lot to offer you. Check 'em out!

Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network

C*UUYAN is a spiritual community of UUs, ages 18 through 35, which provides leadership training and experience for young adults, encourages formation, growth, and networking of UU young adult groups, and fosters meaningful worship experiences within our association. C*UUYAN sponsors the annual Opus conference each August and hosts activities for young adults at General Assembly. Join our on-line mailing list UUYAN-L@TerraLuna.org. Write to C*UUYAN c/o Young Adult Ministries, UUA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 or call Chris Walton, C*UUYAN Facilitator 1995-96, at (801) 322-4158 or email at cwalton@alexandria.lib.utah.edu.

Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPS)

"The Covenant of UU Pagans was formed at the 1985 UUA General Assembly in Atlanta to enrich and strengthen the religious pluralism of UUism by promoting the study and practice of contemporary Pagan and Earth- and nature-centered spirituality." --From the 1995-96 UUA Directory. Contact CUUPS at P.O. Box 640, Cambridge, MA 02140.



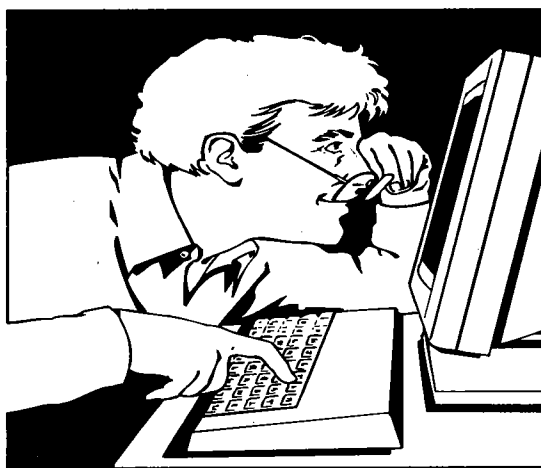
Interweave

UUs for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns

Interweave is a membership organization affiliated with the UUA, dedicated to the spiritual, political, and social well-being of UUs who are confronting oppression as lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender persons, and their heterosexual allies; and facilitates the celebration of the culture and lives of its members. Write to Interweave at 167 Milk St. #406, Boston, MA 02109.

Seventh Principle Project

Environmental issues used to be very simple for Unitarian Universalists. Unfortunately, those days are over. Some UUs are now exploring Earth-based spirituality. Others have turned to the Western religious traditions that emphasize "God the Creator". Many have connected social justice issues to their environmental work. The Seventh Principle Project is the Unitarian Universalist network that welcomes environmentalists of all faiths and backgrounds. Contact: Rev. Robert Murphy, Unitarian Coastal Fellowship, 1300 Evans Street, Morehead City, NC 28557.



UUA Office for Racial and Cultural Diversity

The Office for Racial and Cultural Diversity is primarily responsible for implementing the 1992 General Assembly Resolution on Racial and Cultural Diversity in Unitarian Universalism. The resolution called on UUs to support a vision of UU faith which reflects the reality of a racially diverse and multicultural global village. Consultation, support, information, and resources are provided by racial and cultural diversity staff to congregations, districts, and organizations working on racial justice and diversity issues and projects. The office coordinates the work of the Black Concerns Working Group and the Whitney Young, Jr. Urban Ministry Fund. Write to 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, or call (617) 742-2100 x 608 x607 x642.

UU Christian Fellowship

"The purposes of the Fellowship are to serve Christian Unitarians and Universalists according to their expressed religious needs; to uphold and promote Christian witness within the UUA; and to uphold and promote the historic Unitarian and Universalist witness and conscience within the church universal." --From the 1995-96 UUA Directory. Write UUCF at 110 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116 or call (508) 365 - 2427.

UU Service Committee

"The UUSC has provided leadership in human rights advocacy in the United States and abroad for more than five decades. Founded in 1939 to help victims of fascism escape from Nazi-occupied Europe, the UUSC continues to promote social justice through public policy advocacy and support of local development initiatives. The UUSC puts UU ideals, principles, and faith into action." --From the 1995-96 UUA Directory. Contact the UUSC at 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139-1845, or call (617) 868-6600.

UU Women's Federation

The UUWF is about honoring, connecting, and empowering women who transform society. They do it through:

- educational and program resources
- meetings for women of all ages
- a terrific newsletter that takes on hard issues
- a feminist agenda supported by our UU theo/alogy.

Call Kate Griffin at (617) 742-2100 x691 for more information.

UU-UNO

"The UU-UNO serves as a comprehensive support system for the UUA's representatives at the UN headquarters in New York and beyond to UUs everywhere. By reaching out to other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and like-minded individuals, the UU-UNO promotes the UUA's Sixth Principle while spotlighting issues of current concern from children's rights to sustainable development. More than 400 persons across North America link the UU-UNO with local congregations." --From the 1995-96 UUA Directory. Contact the UU-UNO at 777 United Nations Plaza, Suite 7D, New York City, NY 10017, or call (212) 986-5165 or email uuuno@nywork2.undp.org.



1996 Bridging Ceremony



The Second Annual Bridging Ceremony at the General Assembly will celebrate our young people's passage from youth to young adulthood. Last year's Bridging Ceremony was a wonderful success, and this year the Continental UU Young Adult Network (C*UUYAN) hopes to lead an equally inspiring service as we welcome young Unitarian Universalists into the adult world of our UU faith.

Any youth who is making the transition into young adulthood is warmly invited to participate. We hope to include the names of as many youth making this transition as possible, but to do that, we need the names! If you are turning 18--or 20, or 22, graduating from high school, leaving home, or simply aware that you are changing gears and moving out of the YRUU community--this ceremony is for you! If you can't attend the General Assembly in Indianapolis June 20-25, you can still be included in the service by having your name in the program. You will be in our hearts and minds, whether or not you can attend personally.

The young adult community in Unitarian Universalism is alive and growing, and we welcome you to it! If you have questions about young adult

opportunities in UUism, contact Chris Walton for information concerning C*UUYAN and Donna DiSciullo for information about the UUA's Young Adult Ministries Office (at DDiSciullo@aol.com).

For information about C*UUYAN or to be a part of this year's Bridging Ceremony in Indianapolis, send names to Chris Walton via email at cwalton@alexandria.lib.utah.edu or to the following address:

Chris Walton
c/o First Unitarian Church
569 S. 1300 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84102

Announcing
Opus '96
Aug. 10 - 16
in
Boone, Iowa

For further information contact
Sara Easton @ College Box # 4-90,
Grinnell, IA 50112, (515) 269-3791 or
easton@ac.grin.edu

or
Karina Leppick @ Box #869,
Gambier, OH 43022

UUSC announces Gender Justice study and action guide, Invites UU women and men to bring series to local level

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, women are entitled to the same rights and opportunities as men, but clearly this vision has not yet been translated into reality. For over 50 years, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has worked to advance human rights both in this country and around the world. One of its primary focuses in recent years has been supporting programs designed to advance women's rights, especially their health and reproductive rights.

UUSC's project partners, who work in some of the poorest nations of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia, have provided women with the knowledge and the services that have enabled them to make informed choices about their lives. UUSC recognizes that such choices are not made in a vacuum, but in the broader context that includes women's roles and participation in the economic, social, and political lives of their communities.

Currently, the Service Committee is launching a major effort to engage UU women and men in the international

struggle for women's rights. They have recently established an International Women's Rights Network and are in the process of producing a six-session study and action guide entitled *Gender Justice: Women's Rights Are Human Rights* which will be introduced at a General Assembly workshop.

The series is based on the Platform for Action agreed to by over 180 nations at the United Nations sponsored Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing last September. It provides an important agenda for action for all the world's women. The series deals with issues of gender bias, women's health and reproductive rights, media stereotypes, environmental issues, and the impact of globalization and economic restructuring on women's lives.

The program includes role plays, discussion, and four video segments that supplement the series. Its goal is to educate and mobilize U.S. citizens to create a world in which the rights of women are finally recognized and respected. Such a goal cannot be achieved by a few dedicated activists, it will take

the commitment and involvement of all members of the community, male and female, young and old alike. This is why UUSC is eager to reach out to Young Religious Unitarian Universalists and ask for their help in setting up a *Gender Justice: Women's Rights Are Human Rights* workshop series in their congregation, school, or communities during the coming year.

For more information, contact Linda Gray MacKay, co-author of the series at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02186, (617) 868-6600, fax (617) 868-7102 or email uusc@igc.apc.org

--By Linda MacKay



BOOK REVIEW

Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Ru Paul

by Leslie Feinberg

Simply stated, *Transgender Warriors* is history that all of us should know. Award-winning author and activist Leslie Feinberg provides a social and political history of sex and gender diversity throughout the world. But this book is not just a textbook of little-known history; it is also Feinberg's life work. The history is accompanied by personal accounts, anecdotes, and an amazing array of photographs that chronicle the lives and journeys of transgender people. Many might ask, "What does 'transgender' mean, anyway? And why should I care?" The first question is more difficult to answer than the second.

The word transgender was originally coined to describe a person who lives full time expressing the gender opposite to their anatomy (for example, a person who was born male but lives as a woman). Recently the term has come into use in the more inclusive sense. A transgender person could be anyone who pushes the boundaries of society's gender definitions. This is the way Feinberg uses the term in the book. Feinberg points out that transsexuals, transvestites, cross-dressers, drag queens, drag kings, intersexuals (formerly "hermaphrodites"), masculine women, and feminine men are all oppressed in our society because they dare to *trans*, or cross socially constructed gender boundaries.

Western society is based on the assumption that there are only two biological sexes (male and female) and that males will express their gender as men (i.e., be masculine, wear clothing made for men, be a provider and/or behave in ways society thinks men should behave) and that females will express their gender as women (i.e., be feminine, wear clothing made for women, be a caretaker and/or behave in ways society thinks women should behave). Although gender discrimination is illegal under many civil rights laws, that only means that it is illegal to discriminate against someone *because* they are a woman or *because* they are a man. It is legal to discriminate against people who don't easily fit into either of those gender categories.

Feinberg wrote *Transgender Warriors* for very personal reasons. Growing up, Feinberg was always confronted with the question, "Are you a guy or a girl?" In the preface to the book Feinberg answers that it is "not so simple, since there are no pronouns in the English language as complex as I am, and I do not want to simplify myself in order to neatly fit into one or the other." Leslie Feinberg was born female but grew up very masculine. S/he says "I've been called a he-she, butch, bulldagger, cross-dresser, passing woman, female-to-male transvestite, and drag king. The word I prefer to use is transgender." Feinberg prefers to be identified in writing without using gender-specific pronouns (for example, using *hir* instead of him or her and *s/he* instead of he or she); a request I have honored in this review. That there aren't words in the English language to adequately

describe hir and other transgender people shows how their history has been neglected and their truth has been suppressed in our culture.

Feinberg started the research that produced *Transgender Warriors* because s/he wanted to know whether transgender people like himself had always been so hated. And s/he proceeds to prove, in the next 200 pages, that there has been diverse expression of sex and gender throughout history, in many different cultures all over the continent. Feinberg wrote *Transgender Warriors* to "lay bare the roots and tendrils of sex and gender oppression." It is hir answer to the oppressors, bashers (including police), and all the ignorant people who have tried to invalidate hir humanity and that of all trans people.

This brings me to the second question — why you should care about the struggle for transgender liberation. Feinberg asks, "What would motivate someone who didn't face the same hatred and abuse to join me as an ally?" The answer is that when any part of society is oppressed, we all suffer. S/he makes a case for the fact that the right of transgender people to be who they are is "inextricably linked" to the right of every human being to explore and define themselves. This speaks to me because of my Unitarian Universalist beliefs. Our first principle states that we covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Commitment to social justice is also something many Unitarian Universalists consider sacred. Feinberg believes that we all should aspire to "be the best fighters against each other's oppression and in doing so, build links of solidarity and trust that will forge an invincible movement against all forms of injustice."

In *Transgender Warriors*, Feinberg offers "history, politics, and theory that live and breathe because they are rooted in the experience of real people who fought flesh-and-blood battles for freedom." This book is a ground-breaking gift to both the transgender community and the world at large. As s/he says, "my work is not solely devoted to chronicling the past, but is a component of my organizing to help shape the future ... This is the core of my pride."

--By Rachel Reed

No Tomorrow

If there was no tomorrow,
would you take me -
as a friend?

And how?
Out of grief?
Pity?

Or could we embrace,
Life,
as friends taking life -
to cherish -
as if there was
no tomorrow?

If there was no tomorrow?

And what if there was?

Jordan Luminas; Kenner, LA.

Feinberg delivers message of strength

She tells an African-American proverb. "Until the lions come to power, the hunters write the history."

It is an invitation. It is an invitation to change language, transfer energy, and destroy ignorance.

Leslie Feinberg spoke April 6 at Arlington St. Church in Boston. Feinberg, winner of the Lambda Literary Award (small press book) and the 1994 American Library Association Lesbian/Gay Book Award, is the author of *Stone Butch Blues* and the just published *Transgender Warriors*. Beacon Press, her publisher, has brought her to Boston to speak about *Transgender Warriors*. And she does. Kind of. She speaks about her book as her life, she speaks about health care, about being a transgender person and about challenges.

Feinberg speaks from the high pulpit of the church. The pews are fairly packed and there is a kind of breathless excitement in the room. "It's a strange thing as a Jewish kid to be on the high diving board," she begins. "I'd rather be eye to eye with you."

And that's it. Magically, she's created an intimacy that engulfs the church for the next hour.

Feinberg is petite. She has the kind of thinness that comes from a draining illness. And she looks like an uncle of mine. She wears an olive suit that seems to swallow her up. From a distance or from a handshake away, Leslie Feinberg looks like a man.

Feinberg is a transgender person. Her birth sex is female. However, her gender expression is masculine. She doesn't fit the societally-constructed categories of gender; she is too masculine to be recognized as a woman, but by birth she is female. Her sex and her gender expression are a social contradiction. And this puzzles people.

Feinberg is ill. She receives antibiotic treatments intravenously. And like 40 million other working people, she says, she didn't have the \$200 a month for health insurance. And so she didn't see a doctor until one night, when she and her wife, Minnie Bruce Pratt, rushed to an emergency room in New Jersey.

When it came time for the physical examination, the male physician looked at Feinberg and

said, "Put your clothes on. Don't come here anymore."

"Why do I have a fever?" Feinberg asked.

"Because you're a very troubled person. Go home and stop worrying."

It is not against the law to discriminate against transgender people. Feinberg is taking action against another hospital for the same kind of ignorant thinking.

"We deserve health care and respect, too," she says.

Transgender Warriors is a history of gender diversity. It records a history of transgender persons, of matriarchal communities and of revolutionaries and soldiers fighting in women's clothes; then it details the fear of and hatred for transgender persons, first rooted in capitalism, then in ignorance.

Feinberg says she needed to open up a space with this book. And there is a need. There is no language, no history, no compassion for transgender people. The banalities of life that many take for granted, like using a public restroom, become a daunting or at least tedious chore for transgender people.

"I needed to know if it was natural," says Feinberg, "but then who cares?"

Feinberg begins to create the language. She documents the history of transgender persons. She says she writes so that no youth grows up today blaming themselves for the oppression they face.

Feinberg doesn't look imposing or strong, but she is. She has poured her life into 200 odd pages for other people. She asks her audience in the church "to help bring us closer to transgender liberation."

"I turn this book over to you," Feinberg says. "It has all my life in it—all our lives in many ways. And if it speaks to your life, your vision of the world, then I ask you to use the energy and strength that I may not have to give it to someone else because it's part of the dialogue we must have."

--By Kathy Daneman

Calling UU Youth Artists!

How would you like the opportunity to exhibit your for-sale artwork at this year's General Assembly? UU youth have the chance to sell their artwork by consignment through Uni-Uniques at this year's GA. Uni-Uniques usual consignment percentage for the artists is 35%, however, they have agreed to lower it to 25% for young artists. For info contact Nancy Warren-Oliver at (716) 248-5688 or OLIVERGL@AOL.COM

In The Spirit

Introducing the Winners of the Youth Focus Task Force Sermon Contest!

Drake Baer

is the youth group advisor at the Unitarian Church of Princeton. He is an adult at-large on the YRUU Youth Council and will begin the second half of his term on Steering Committee.

MIRACLES?

An excerpt

By Drake Baer, Youth Advisor,
delivered January 25, 1996 at the Unitarian
Church of Princeton

I'd like the adults who are here this morning to take a moment to reconnect to your adolescence. Close your eyes and remember who you were as a teenager, what you looked like, where you lived. Your parents. Who were your friends? How did you feel about them, and how sure were you that they liked you? Did you like yourself? Remember an especially embarrassing moment. Remember a moment of great victory. How did you express it? Did you have problems with authority? What was your faith journey like? If you thought about it, what was God like for you?

The Tornado swept into our lives at the beginning of last year. I called him that because, at 15 he seemed to sweep up everything in his path into a creative chaos that often left some wreckage behind. Youth group had come into its own the year before and was a powerful place in the lives of many of our youth when he came along. Our youth really got the mutual respect thing, truly accepted each other in unselfconscious ways, and we had a nearly 100 percent attendance rate on Sunday mornings and at overnights.

Like everyone in our group, the Tornado brought his own yin and yang with him, both of which were unusually powerful. Opening circles were constantly interrupted by his smart-alecky comments and frequently disrespectful attitude, which made our space less safe for some people. His consistent openness, commitment, and originality made a wonderful imprint on our community but, frankly, he was a major pain in the ass. For good reason. Among his other problems, his father had died a year-and-a-half before, and he had been unable to cry even once since it happened. He was on his fourth psychiatrist since then, whom, like the others, he didn't trust or connect with. And every phone call I took from him at home, including those at 2:00 in the morning when he was struggling with despair, no matter how poignant and meaningful those discussions were, ended with "You're Ugly." Click. That's how he ended every call.

I was hesitant about taking him along with us to his first district conference last year, in Connecticut. Many of our youth make themselves vulnerable at those conferences in a way that requires a lot from attendees: mutual respect, openness, a willingness to respect the guidelines. Several of our youth went over the importance of mutual respect with the Tornado prior to the conference and explained that the youth running it took the guidelines seriously and would send him home early if he broke the rules. And so, reluctantly and worriedly, I brought him with us. People are rounded up for various activities at these cons by someone banging a big gong, and I heard the Tornado complaining about this obnoxious gong Friday night. Sure enough, Saturday morning, the gong was missing. I was furious, and ran off to find him. There, in the main gathering area, was the Tornado, clapping rhythmically, as others joined him to form a circle which grew with centrifugal force. As people gathered, the Tornado went into the circle, danced around, did some acrobatics, invited other people into the circle to express themselves, which they did, and that is how

we have gathered people at our cons ever since. The Tornado managed to offend some people that Saturday but he really started to get it, what being part of a loving community requires. Saturday night's worship was amazing. Like all of the most powerful worship services I've experienced, this was developed and run by a YRUUer. After chanting a song and filing into the chapel with candles, we had a Quaker Sharing Circle. The Tornado shared that he learned that weekend that no one is ugly, by which of course he meant he learned that he wasn't ugly. He shared profoundly for a couple of minutes and ended by saying, "...And I'm doing something I haven't done in a long time. I'm crying." All the hours we had spent with the tornado making it safe to just cry, and the thousands of dollars his mom had spent on psychiatrists had been unsuccessful because the tornado needed more than a good shrink or a mentor/friend who would share his journey for awhile. What the Tornado needed was a miracle.

And our liberal religious institution, so comfortable with the gods of ambiguity, gave the Tornado the miracle he needed.

The next part of the worship was Sufi dancing, in which people pair up placing one hand on the other person's sternum and hold their partner's other hand, singing, "All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you . . . All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you" . . . then spin off singing in Arabic, "is ka ba ma moo mae la ish ka ba ma moo mae la . . . ish ka ba ma moo mae la ish ka ba ma moo mae la" and on to the next person. I saw youth after youth, representing all the normally segregated cliques one finds in a high school, from artsy types to macho jocks, holding the Tornado, many of them crying with him. He cried for hours.

The hard part starts after your miracle. But it's been a good kind of difficult for Brian these past months. The first full marking period after his miracle, he was taken off academic probation for the first time in two years. At the Princeton con, during an advisor meeting, some advisors were talking about how caring the Princeton youth are for each other, especially that kid with the crazy hair, who had ministered so well and so consistently to youth he didn't even know when they seemed alienated or out of sorts. These advisors couldn't believe it when I said that six months before he was so disruptive.

I mentioned Brian's name, because when I asked him if I could use his story anonymously, he asked that I identify him to you. Because Brian is not just a member of YRUU. He's a member of our church community who has the courage to contribute to our vitality by being open about who he really is. Do you still want to stand up Brian? (Brian stood, the church members applauded, some of them crying.) [...]

The next time you find yourself bristling at the inconveniences, expense, and risks that youth ministry requires us to assume... The next time you find yourself reluctant to engage one of our possibly wild-haired and body-pierced youth in conversation or to accept her or him as a full member of our church community, I challenge you with one of God's most sacred words. A word which birthed our Unitarian and Universalist traditions and which often finds its least compromised, most miraculous, and, yes, most crazy-making expression in adolescence. I offer you this morning the word, "Why."

Rachel L. Cole

is also an active member of the Princeton congregation. Rachel will celebrate her 18th birthday just days before she delivers this sermon at her first General Assembly. Rachel attended the UU-UNO and Social Justice conferences last year.

Unreasonable Strength

by Rachel L. Cole

An excerpt

I remember several low points, when I have felt oppressed by my seemingly hopeless surroundings, and it became difficult to effectively serve the [Saint Francis] Inn's guests. I knew that this despair came to others on the staff at times, but their methods for dealing with this depression, like so many of their daily experiences, were closely related to their faith in ways I did not feel I could imitate. To lessen the pain of seeing the disease of our neighborhood, my friends at least had some kind of formula to follow: say this prayer, go to confession, do ten rosaries, think of the glorious life that is sure to come eventually. I felt almost jealous of these traditions in which my community sought comfort, for even if their prayers did not visibly change the problems surrounding us, they had a plan, a *something* to do. They had each taken a great leap to believe in their faith, and in doing so, seemed to have received some kind of grace that I did not understand, a grace which allowed them to depend upon the unprovable. The power of their faith allowed them to continue living despite despair; in fact, not only did they live, but they worked for their idealistic and impractical principles, the kind that often seem only believable in a discussion group's setting because of the scarcity of encouragement and validation you get from daily life. While I did not wish to be zapped into a Catholic overnight, the trust I saw in them was enviable. Not only did they have their trust in what they believed, but they also had each other, living testaments to lives through a common faith. I felt helpless, and horribly alone.

But I did not go home and give up. How could I? That would not change my hopelessness, and it certainly wouldn't change the lives of the people of Kensington. Instead I looked in the phone book, took the next Sunday off, and went to the local UU church, the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia. I was greeted by familiar sights, but ones very different from those at the Inn. A small summer-service was taking place in the only air-conditioned room just like they do at my church, and it was being led by a member of the Worship Committee, a black woman who had never been to a seminary. There were candles and a chalice on a table in the front, a wide array of different kinds of people in the congregation, and Sweet Honey in the Rock was playing in the background. The woman's sermon was on "The Dignity of Choice", in reference to the issue of abortion. Very, very different from the Catholics.

Afterwards, as I walked through the city's public parks with a

wide smile on my face and a feeling of peace within me, I had to wonder what exactly it was about that service that had restored my equilibrium, giving me back my generally positive outlook in life. I compared what I had experienced at the UU church to my daily life at the Inn and tried to find the secret ingredient that had centered me so well. After considering all the usual explanations for the magic I had felt, I was left unsatisfied. Community and love were no more or less apparent at the Inn than at any UU function I've ever attended. The UUs I met could hardly be called more or less committed to their ideals than my Franciscan friends, and, though this may shock you, it wasn't the usual UU value system that I missed, for I had even found several feminist, pro-choice, gay-rights-touting pinkos among the Catholics. So what was it? Why was I so definitely a UU from birth despite my parents' attempts at sending me to religious education classes in other faiths? If I looked at the experience purely logically, the seemingly bland set of values had given me unreasonable strength. Why this, apart from every other support in my life?

My realization was this; that our faith, in its ability to give us mystical strength, is not different from any other faith; that it has power to inspire us and to support us and to connect us; that we have Principles whose sentiments we all hold dear, and by which we all try to lead our lives; that these shared Principles contain all the power we can tap from them, much like the power of a group of people standing together to sing one song, as we shall soon do today.

I believe that the qualities in our Principles that I once called blandness and pure rationality are misleading, and that we have to realize this to tap the power of our faith. In truth, it is incredible that each of us have pledged to affirm and promote the worth and dignity in every person when there are so many people who make you want to write them off. In truth, it is no more logical to say that each of us should be trusted with our own search for truth and meaning, as we do, than to say that each of us is pre-destined to heaven or hell, as the Calvinism from which many of us fled dictates; neither statement can be proved, but both greatly affect the lives of those who believe them. [...]

For these acts of faith, I thank you. Not only have you changed the world, but you have shown me that it is possible for me to do so. This is the strength of UUism. The leap of faith that one UU takes in espousing what are truly amazing and illogical Principles not only gives him or her power to action, but gives the rest of us the courage needed to live out our ideals in the same way.

Hear the winning sermons read in full at GA
by Drake and Rachel!
Friday, June 21 at 5 p.m.

Now Hiring

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 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 22, inclusively, on January 1, 1997. THE AGE RANGE HAS BEEN RAISED!**

Terms of employment: This position is a one-year commitment, beginning January 1, 1997 and ending December 31, 1997. The stipend is \$21,500. 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.

For an application: Write: The Youth Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; call (617) 742-2100 x350 x351 x352; or email yruu@uua.org

Applications must be postmarked or received by September 15, 1996.

Poetry and Art Opportunity

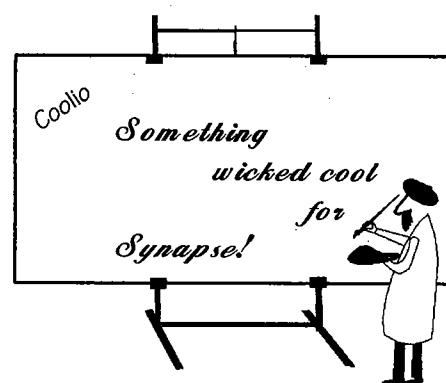
The Liberal Religious Education Journal is looking for one-page poetry and black-and-white line art (no larger than 8 1/2" x 11") or photography by youth for the Spring '97 issue. Please send several pieces with a self-addressed stamped envelope for return to:

Nita Penfold
LRE Journal

P.O. Box 562

Hyde Park, MA 02136

Deadline: September 1, 1996



Empty Space...

by my side

no one there to wrap my arms around

as I fall asleep,

no face to caress

no ear to tickle

everyone has gone home...

The con has ended, more proof God does

not exist, no one heard my prayers

to make this weekend last forever

Now I'm alone in my bed

and he is far away in his.

I cannot sleep, no arms around me

no legs tangled with mine

and I wonder if he is able to sleep

without his pillow.

Where does he rest his head,

a bit of cloth filled with feathers?

When I close my eyes I can almost feel

him near, but it doesn't last.

I clutch my sweater to me,

it still smells like him

Random snippets of bitter-sweet memories

flow through my mind as I rock myself to

sleep

Even sleep reminds me of him.

by Elizza Rose, New Hampshire

The winner of the GA 1996 Youth Focus Task Force Outstanding Advisor Award

is

Tom Cranston,
Birmingham Unitarian Church,
Bloomfield Hills, MI
Congratulations, Tom!



May I have your attention, please? Thank you. The theme for the next issue of *Synapse* is--are you ready--**Gender Justice**. The deadline for submissions is Oct. 15. So send us articles (about what goes on in your community that's really cool or really sucks for women or men, just because they're women or men) and poetry (about how much you love being who you are) and pictures of what you look like when you are a woman or a man. **Gender Justice** issues affect all of us. This is not an issue strictly for women. Everyone must deal with being treated in a specific way because of their gender. How does that make you feel?

Nobel Prize winners start peace project for youth on the Internet

The message of peace is all set to go on-line via the Internet. In a unique move, eight Nobel Prize winners including the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Oscar Arias Sanchez, Guatemalan crusader Rigoberta Menchu Tum, firebrand Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Nelson Mandela, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan Maguire have joined hands to form PeaceJam, an international five-year program specifically designed to motivate youth to spread the message of peace via the Internet.

Crusaders of peace from all over the world can learn about the lives of the Nobel Peace Prize winners, conduct extensive cross-country dialogues and organize on-line conferences on PeaceJam's World Wide Web site. PeaceJam's address is <http://www.peacejam.org>.

Conceived by two Colorado-based peace activists, Dawn Engle and Ivan Suvanjieff, PeaceJam aims to reach two billion teenagers by the year 2000. The threefold purpose of the project is to establish a world of peace by showing children how to be peacemakers in their own community and by demonstrating that a person with courage can overcome all odds.

The project includes hosting youth conferences, rock concerts, publication of books and marketing PeaceJam CD-ROMs on a global scale.

The funds raised by these promotional programs will be used to fund the peace-related project of the Nobel Prize winners. PeaceJam Fund is a public charity in collaboration with Philanthropic Collaborative and is based in Rockefeller Plaza, New York. A PeaceJam prize has been created for young people who make outstanding contributions.

--Forwarded to us from a Buddhist e-mail list.

[Eds. Note: This project is not sponsored by YRUU or the UUA.]



Answers to Crazy Eco-Quiz:

1. b (even though only 4.7% of the world's population lives in the U.S.)
2. c (only 8% own cars, and auto emissions are the number one cause of the Green House effect)
3. a (at least 50%, in spite of the world's strictest emissions standards)
4. c
5. c (about 33%--an energy loss equal to all the oil flowing through the Alaska pipeline every year) **Bonus question: e (hee, hee)