

Synapse

A point of contact
where information
and energy
are exchanged...

October 1999
Vol XVII,
Issue II



Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison, *Appointment in Samarra* by John O'Hara, "Sex Pistols," *Studs Lonigan* by James T. Farrell, "Outkast," *An American Tragedy*, & *Sister Carrie* by Theodore Dreiser, Michaelangelo, *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner, Kurt & Courtney, *All The King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren, "N.W.A.," *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin, Gary Hume, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, "311," *Deliverance* by James Dickey, *Brave New World*, & *Point Counter Point* by Aldous Huxley, "Iggy Pop & the Stooges," *The Rainbow*, & *Women in Love* by D.H. Lawrence, *Tropic of Cancer* by Henry Miller, "Rolling Stones," *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Mailer, Chris O'Neil, *Portnoy's Complaint* by Philip Roth, *From Here to Eternity* by James Jones, "The Doors," *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, Billie Holiday, Bill Cawley, *The Sun Also Rises*, & *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, "The Offspring," Robert Mapplethorpe, Marcus Harvey, *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, *As If He Hears*, *Sophie's Choice* by William Styron, "Silverchair," Blubber, Deenie, & *Forever* by Judy Blume, *Draw Me a Star* by Eric Carle, Andres Serrano, *Half Lives*, *Ordinary People* by Judith Guest, "Marilyn Manson," *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Nine Inch Nails," H.R. Giger, *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles, "Pearl Jam," *The Runaway Sleigh* by Astrid Lundgren, "Beastie Boys," John Mellencamp, *Rabbit is Rich* by John Updike, *Anti-Flag*, *Black Boy* & *Native Son* by Richard Wright, Catherine Wheel, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, Terry Allen, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, "Wu-Tang Clan," *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, Constantine Brancusi, *Always Running* by Luis Rodriguez, Damien Hirst, MC Eiht, *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Peck, Curtis Mayfield, Bob Dylan, *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles, *Breakfast of Champions*, & *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, MC Ren, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, Marcel Duchamp, *The Learning Tree* by Gordon Parks, *Of Mice and Men*, & *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, "Lords of Acid," *Grendel* by John Gardner, "The Beatles," *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, *The Exorcist*, "Frank Zappa and The Mothers of Invention," *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, "Black Crowes," *The Life of Brian*, *Ulysses* by James Joyce, "Snoop Dogg," *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Kids, "Blues Traveler," *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov, "Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young," *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, "Rage Against The Machine," *Sons and Lovers* by D.H. Lawrence, 1984 by George Orwell, *A Language of Their Own*, *Corpus Christi*, "Beck," 1, *Claudius* by Robert Graves, "Public Enemy," Paul McCarthy, *Crazy Lady* by Jane Leslie Conly, "Type O Negative," *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein, "Nirvana," T.J. Walton, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, "Dead Kennedys," *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan...

by young religious unitarian universalists...

for everyone

Continental Calendar Winter 2000

Oct. 1999

7-10 YRUU Steering Committee meets
15-17 UUA Alignment Meeting
22-24 Youth Advisor Task Force meets
31 Halloween. Get dressed up!

Nov. 1999

The Youth Office is free for the month of Nov. for local and district outreach, consulting, and field work. For more information call or write to Youth Office.

Dec. 1999

15 Youth Office Intern applications are due
17-22 YRUU peacefully takes over the world

Jan. 2000

1 New YRUU Prog. Spec. Starts.
10 Con-Con staff application is due
10 GA staff application is due
15 YSJC registration is due
15 Submissions for Synapse are due
27-30 YRUU Steering Committee meets

Feb. 2000

1 The Youth Office Intern starts
11 Youth Advisor Task Force meets in San Fran.

March 2000

15 At-Large Possition application deadline
15 Sept. '00-Sept.'01 YPS app. Deadline
25-29 YRUU Social Justice Conference

April 2000

13-16 YRUU Steering Committee meeting
30 GA Delegate Scholarship
Next Synapse: April 1, 1999

To find or post local happenings in your area, check out the ConTracker at the yruu.org site at www.yruu.org/contrack.html

Meet Your New YRUU Program Specialist!

Hi, I am you personable and accessible new YRUU Programs Specialist, Duncan Metcalfe. I have a special affinity for YRUU, that comes from my deep love of hallucinating due to a lack of sleep. However even greater than my love for YRUU, is my deep seeded dislike for owls. Not to be confused with the new sexual education program OWL (Our Whole Lives). Next time you see a



DUNCAN METCALFE LOOKING ANGELIC AS ALWAYS. A QUICK EXPLANATION OF MY HAIR SEEMS IN ORDER. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHAT YOU GET A HAIRCUT AND A GROUP OF SLEEP-DEPRIVED YRUUERS GETS TO DECIDE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

picture of an owl, ask your self if it looks like a jerk. I bet the answer will be yes. And that will be the answer because owls really are all jerks. Yet I digress. I am really honored to be working for YRUU, and I hope that any of you out there in YRUU who ever need support can get it from our office. A little background on myself: I am from Boulder, Colorado, and have been active in YRUU for the last 7 years. I attended a large college for a while, and I really enjoy eating sushi. Heart,

Duncan

Your New Youth Office Intern

Dear fellow YRUUers,

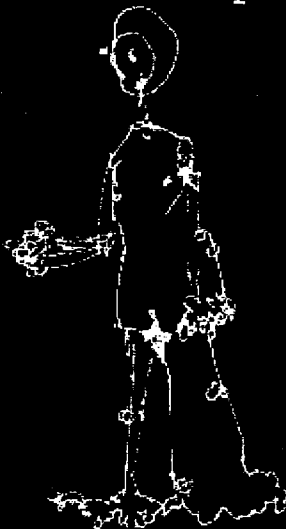
My name is NATO and I am going to be the intern at the youth office for the months of Oct., Nov., and Dec. So if any of you are lonely out there and you want someone to talk to, you can call me. I will embark upon the process of writing a resource that will pull together some of the ideas we have to bring adults, young adults, teens, and kids together within congregations. There has been a lot of talk about these issues but I haven't seen too incredibly much come out of it. So I decided to write a little book that will hopefully help people out with these problems. If you have any ideas to add to this, I would absolutely love to hear from you. Other than that I will be doing the usual mundane, crappy, whipping boy, no-one-else-wants-to-do-it types of jobs that are the unwritten law of the youth office internship. These are things like cleaning the toilet, running and getting food for my youth office masters, working all night, cleaning up after everyone else, whining, being beaten, kicked, and whipped while tied up, and kissing butt. So also, if any of you have any ideas with which to make my internship more interesting, please tell us. Thank you. Revolution.

LOVENATO

NOTE: ALL CENSORSHIP IN THIS ISSUE WAS DONE BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF.



art & censorship



from the editor

What is freedom of speech in a society of censored artists and banned artistic endeavors? We need to stand up as members of a liberal community and do our part to end censorship. It is everyone's job to combat the censoring of new ideas & to foster a community that supports artistic expression & exploration, a place that doesn't tolerate cultural

repression. The best weapon against censors has always been to keep producing new and creative thought through artistic means; be it through visual art, music, writing, spoken word, et cetera.

If you make it a personal duty of yours to reinvent your congregation, youth group, and larger community as a place that supports this creative artistic expression and exploration you will be creating a safe haven for future great works of art to flourish. Here are a few ideas of projects you can take on in your congregation or larger community. Just sit down and brainstorm around issues of art and censorship, and you'll come up with ideas that can work for you and your community to foster that creativity and combat the censors of the world.

- Start a censored book group in your youth group.
- Do a month of youth group meetings devoted to creative artistic expression, don't make it about "quality" but about expression.
- Do a joint art project with your youth group and the elementary aged Religious Education class.
- Watch films that have been banned or censored, and make a movie with your youth group.
- Start publishing a "zine" in your youth group or on

your own, or publish comic books in conjunction with the junior high youth group.

· Ask your church if your youth group can host an art show of visual art, writing, and music by youth at your congregation for your whole community to come and enjoy once a month. Support local artists through some kind of small scale granting with the money raised by this show.

· Lobby your community library system to organize a banned book month, where banned books are put on display in the different libraries.

· Organize your congregation or school to write letters to your government, to end censorship that is occurring in the prison systems.

· If your District School Council censors any teacher's reading lists, or local school libraries, lobby them to rescind this control over the reading material of the students in your local community.

· Lobby your City Council or District School Council to donate a substantial-sized wall either in your community or at your school to graffiti artists or artists who would be interested in doing a mural.

Read through this issue of Synapse and find out how others are fighting for freedom of expression & creating community in their local area. Read and find out how others are looking at censorship and trying to find ways to confront it. On another note, notice in some of the written word pieces in this issue of *Synapse*, words are censored. This censorship is not the work of the authors, but rather the institutional pressures of this denomination that say that we shouldn't print certain language in our continental publications. You might want to consider how censorship fits into our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes. Read and experience some of your peer's artistic expression, both censored and not. Read and learn.

-Commander Thanner

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. For more information on subscriptions, see the back cover.

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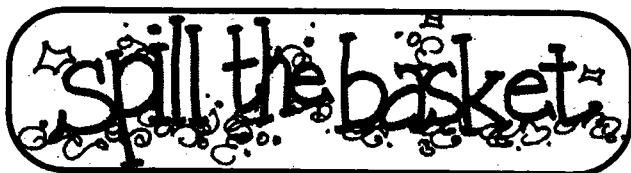
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Advertising:

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.





Conscientious Objection

Dear Editors,

I became a conscientious objector (C.O.) over 25 years ago. I was very pleased to see a couple of letters about obtaining a C.O. status in the March, 1999 issue of Synapse. Ever since the draft law was discontinued the struggle whether or not to become a C.O. probably has not entered the minds of most 18-year-old men. People just register with the Selective Service without giving much thought to what they are doing. Actually being drafted and going to war are not considered because there is no draft now. From the letter in the March issue it appears there are people out there who consider becoming a C.O. I am heartened by this. The government does not inform registrants of this possibility on the registration form.

In his book *Choosing Peace* (available from CCCO, 665 Sutter St., Ste. 514, San Francisco, Ca. 94102, 415-474-3002) Robert Seeley suggests doing the following if you want to register as a conscientious objector when you turn 18. On the registration card write your claim in the margin and make a copy of your card for your records. It is legal to register as a conscientious objector. A statement like "I am a conscientious objector to war in any form" is best. Selective Service will not process your claim or even acknowledge it. But if the draft is ever reinstated you will at least be on record. It is also a good idea to begin reading books on nonviolence and documenting your community service activities so that if the draft should ever start again you can show you have a C.O. lifestyle since registering as a C.O. Proving you are a C.O. after you are drafted is more difficult to do.

When I applied for conscientious objector status in the 1970s I did not want to say to the world, "I cannot kill. I cannot participate in wars." I did not want to

remove myself from violent war-making while others had to defend me by using guns. I needed to propose another system of national defense in which no one had to carry a gun or shoot a rocket, so as part of my C.O. application I suggested that the U.S. establish an unarmed force to deal with invaders. A real dream of an idea I know but important to me because I felt it would lead to more constructive change than just getting myself out of the war-making machine. I would be happy to send photocopies of some articles to anyone, which talk about this idea of unarmed national defense. (630 Pickford St., Madison, WI. 53711-28 52)

Sincerely,

Randy Converse (Religious Education Director, Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society, Madison, WI)

Self-Schooling in the Youth Office

Hi Nathaniel,

My name is Rachel Wallis, and I would be interested in working for free in the Youth Office for my school's senior project. It would be eight hours a day for five weeks in May and June. Could you accommodate this?

Thanks so much,

Rachel Wallis
Rachel,

Yowza Rachel that would be boss! There are paid internships and staff positions for youth in our office (see page 46 for information on these), but we are always open to youth coming in to do work on special YRUU-related projects of theirs or projects that we create for them. So gee whiz, that would be great if you came to work for us. Let's start having a correspondence about what kind of project you might work on while in the Youth Office.

Rawk' on,

Commander Thanner

[Rachel came up from Ohio and worked in the Youth Office for the five weeks that she mentioned in her initial

letter. She was extremely helpful in the Youth Office preparing for the General Assembly Youth Caucus, learned tons about continental YRUU, as well as creating a resource meant to get people thinking about the bridging/transitioning ceremonies that are currently available for youth moving into young adulthood. She is also reported to have had, "the time of my life." The Youth Office is always excited to have youth come work in the Office on projects of theirs, or just help out and be part of the fun and exciting learning experience that is helping out in the Youth Office. Email us <yruu@uua.org>, or call us at (617) 742-2100 x 351 or 352.]

remove myself from violent war-making while others had to defend me by using guns. I needed to propose another

Social Justice Gibberish

Dear Youth Office,

Once upon a time there was a young robot named "Purple Sock." "Purple Sock" was a vibrant youth with rosy red cheeks and curly blond hair. He was the most beautiful robot in the nation, and all of the magazines sought him out to be their cover model and hawk their cheesy wares. But instead, his mom took the radio and played the *Saved By the Bell* theme song and told him to dance. So dance he did. Then Principal Skinner walked in and said, "You! Norway! Let's see that native dance!" And then, all of a sudden "purple Sock" turned into Martin, and he danced for dickety-six minutes. And so, the moral is, listening to Disney songs in Spanish may seem like a good idea, but the tassles almost always get stuck in the Jell-o.

Heart,

Sarah Pappas
Sarah,

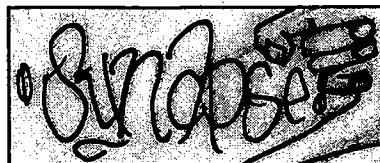
Yes, the Continental YRUU Social Justice Conference is happening once again this year in mid-March. More information on this conference and registration forms are on pages 38-40 of this very issue of *Synapse*, check them out and I'll see you in Washington D.C.

Yours in activism,

Commander Thanner

Would you like to see the Youth Office regain a bit of their dignity? Then send us letters! We'll be sure to respond and take you seriously!





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a point of contact where information
& energy are exchanged



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 submitter's 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. 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.

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Sparks: Dedicated to the celebration of UU youth spirituality and the contributions youth make to UU congregations. Send us your sparks: poems, homilies, illustrations, stories about your spirituality.



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Next Synapse Deadline: January 15th, 2000!

The theme: My Body is my Temple

Send Submissions to:

Synapse, c/o UUA Youth Office, 25 Beacon St, Boston, MA 02108

Youth Office: 617-742-2100, x351 & 352, yruu@uua.org, www.uua.org/YRUU



YUU steering committee speaks a compass

My name is Matt Moore. For this year and next I am excited to be part of the newest clan of the continental YRUU Steering Committee—as I'm sure the other members are too. I see myself as not just a youth in a leadership position, but as a representative for other YRUUers. It is my job to aid in serving this fine institution to the absolute best of my ability. I believe that with the dawning of a new millennium, that YRUU will—and should—go through a dramatic transformation. After almost two decades behind YRUU, many of the same policies and procedures are still unchanged. It is time that we start to reassess our values and priorities as a vastly growing body. I would like to see a stronger need to focus on our beliefs and focus on our ever-changing spiritual needs as a diverse community. Spirituality is what links us as a whole. Thus, if that link is weak we become disjointed. I believe that a strong sense of connected-ness will be a uniting force and bring focus to our actions. In addition, I envision YRUU stretching its limits to spread its messages about things that concern us. Not only as youth, but as human beings. Overall, I am glad to be part of this new Steering Committee as we embark upon what is to be one of YRUU's greatest years.

Matt Moore
YRUU Steering Committee



Matt Moore digging deep for new & creative spirituality.

you imagine us doing actually do make up the bulk of our work. This year we will likely spend a lot more time sitting around in meetings debating questions like "who will be on staff (for continental events)?" and "what should the super secret activity at Youth Council be?" than we would like to. We will be talking "business" on the phone a lot when we'd rather just chat, and spend long hours e-mailing each other relentlessly. It's true. And sometimes, it's lame.

But you know what? I can't wait! And I know everyone else on this year's SC is super-excited about all of our projects too. And I can prove to you that there is actually rhyme and reason to what we do and it has plenty to do with you. I love this crap, I'll tell you why. I would love to share some of these things with everyone in YRUU.

This year we want to really take the time to make sure the resolutions that are passed by Youth Council in July don't fade with the winds of autumn and get forgotten like a summer fling by October. Our resolutions are like a plan of action: they list goals we want to accomplish as an organization and then the steps we need to achieve them. Some of the ones I will be focusing on are our plans to become more actively anti-racist and take a stand against the evil forces of oppression at work in our systems, including YRUU, and developing work-camp opportunities for youth, hopefully even in Africa. I want to see a Youth At-Large position created on the UUA Board of Trustees. But these are just a few of our projects. Each of the other seven standing members bring enthusiasm about different things, and their own individual talents and perspectives to SC. Check out pages 36-37 for a complete list of resolutions we will be working on from Youth Council '99. Then tell us what you think. Talk to your Youth Council Representative. (See page 23 to find out who yours is if you don't know, and how to track them down) or send an e-mail to SC at yruu@uua.org or write us a letter in care of the Youth Office if you have ideas, recommendations or harsh criticisms. Or hey, (see page 45 to find out how to) be on YC! (Youth Council is the "governing" body for YRUU. SC is the "executive", which means we work to "execute" these plans. Like the president. Only we have style.)

So the boring stuff will not rule SC this year! We're going to find ways to spend our time executing tasks that will ultimately affect your personal YRUU community, ideally. We're marching to the beat of our own agenda.... An agenda you have a say in, by the way, and darn it we're gonna change the world. And if you don't believe me, ask someone to tell you that one Margaret Mead quote. Man was she cool. But not as cool as Steering Committee.

The End.

Mimi LaValley
YRUU Steering Committee



Common Cause profile of a YRUU friendly organization

Anti-Racist Action Network & Other Anti-Racist Organizations

So, maybe you've heard that YRUU has covenanted to become an actively anti-racist organization, and that the Continental YRUU Position on Appraisal has a two year anti-racist focus. You kind of know something about the UUA's anti-racism efforts (Jubilee World, Journey Toward Wholeness, DRUUMM, etc.). You know racism is still an issue today. You know about white privilege and that in addition to fighting overtly racist groups, you have to challenge systematic and institutional racism. You are excited about being Super Anti-Racist Youth. And now you need to know what can you do, and which youth organizations are doing anti-racism work already? I am so glad you asked, because I just happen to have a few suggestions!

One rad youth-friendly group you should check out is the Anti-Racist Action Network (ARA). The ARA is a coalition of individuals and groups committed to battling the rise of racism in individuals and institutions. They focus their efforts in two ways. The first way is education. ARA chapters across the country collect information on racist groups and challenge their myth-based attempts to recruit new members. They've held public forums on the ideas and missions of different anti-racist groups. Also, they hold anti-fascist marches on "Kristallnacht" (the date which marked the rise of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust). The second method the

By Maia
Cudhea

Anti-Racist Organizations:

Anti-Racist Action Network:

www.aranet.org/contact.html

ara@coil.com

Southwest Network for Environmental and
Economic Justice:

(505) 242-0416

Native American Political Issues:

www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/9118/home.html

Recovering Racists Network:

*"To take personal responsibility for, and to
inspire others to work on healing racism and
overcoming intolerance."*

2455 Marcia Drive

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

(925) 682-4959

www.rrnet.org

info@rrnet.org

ARA uses is public confrontation, like their program "Cop-Watch" designed to prevent the police brutality that disproportionately affects minorities. ARA members hit the streets armed with knowledge, literature, and video cameras. They talk to people, give them information, and question police procedure if they see any abuse or harassment.

The ARA also organizes to challenge racist gatherings and support anti-racists.

There are ARA chapters all across the country, and if there's not one in your town, it's easy and fun to start one. Interested? Contact the ARA for upcoming events, more information, and information on how to start your own. You can also find out about the ARA benefit CD and other cool anti-racist gear that funds further Anti-Racist Action Efforts.

But wait! That's not all, there are others!

If you're in the southwest you can check out the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. They are an umbrella organizing group for over 70 different groups. They focus on several key campaigns in their work: worker justice, border justice, anti-dumping, and EPA accountability. They address some of the governmental organizations that perpetuate racism through immigration policies and environmental issues (i.e. communities that are primarily people of color are more likely to be chosen as landfill and other waste disposal sites and suffer from lackluster environmental regulation enforcement). They have done some awesome programs for youth activists in the past (like their 10-week internship program this last summer) and have great plans for the future.

These are just a few great anti-racism organizations, there are many more out there. So get out there and find or start up an anti-racist organization in your local area, and start putting your faith into action to combat the racism in your community.

Maia is the Continental Social Action Coordinator. Go to the Y SJC and meet her to find out why they say, "Don't mess with Texas;" Maia is a Texan, an activist, and sleeps with her boots on.*



Power shuffle



Youth Caucus Initiates New Working Action Process: Full Steam Ahead!

By James Walker

Welcome to the exciting new world of Working Action. What is Working Action, you ask? Well, Working Action is a brand spankin' new process, dedicated to the idea that youth ideas should have some more say in the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly (GA) process. Working Action is similar to the UUA's Study/Action process, where a Study/Action Issue (SAI) is chosen at each GA and taken back to congregations to work on for two years. However, in the slimmed-down teenage version, a Working Action Issue (WAI) is chosen at GA and studied and worked on by YRUU and other local youth groups for one year. Then what? Well, then it is the job of the Working Action Manager (WAM) and the Super Working Action Team (SWAT) to propose the Working Action Issue (WAI) to the Committee for Social Witness (CSW) in order to get it on the agenda as a possible Study/Action Issue (SAI) for the entire UUA. What's the point? By studying and working on the Working Action Issue (WAI) for a year prior to the General Assembly vote, we youth will have a leg up on the rest of the competition. We will have more information, more experience, and more conviction when our issue is presented before the delegates.

Now that you know what Working Action is, what are we doing this year? This year's Working Action Issue (WAI), selected by the members of Youth Caucus at GA'99, is "The War on Drugs: What's Wrong and How Do We Change It?" Many members of YRUU have expressed interest in this issue, not only for its obvious youth connections, but also because it has many ties to our Unitarian Universalist values. The War on Drugs, an expensive and ineffective device put forward by the government in 1972, is the focus of the problem. However, many other issues stem from this one. Racial injustice is practiced in the enforcement of the stringent

drug laws that have been passed. Addicts are treated as criminals rather than as having a serious medical problem. Civil liberties are violated daily by our justice system. Can we find a policy that does not dehumanize drug users, infringe on civil rights, or target minorities? That is the issue I as the Working Action Manager (WAM), the members of the Super Working Action Team (SWAT), and hopefully all of YRUU will consider in the next nine months.

& You Can Do Tons!!!

- Make some inquiries into drug policy in your state and into the War on Drugs in general.
- Educate yourself and be vocal!
- Talks to others about what you've learned. That's what Unitarians do best, right?
- Work within your school, demanding honest drug education.
- Students can write papers, essays, speeches, etc. on this topic.
- Writers, musicians, artists and actors can be equally creative in spreading the message of tolerance and reform.
- Dedicate a youth group session or a series of youth group sessions to discussions on the War on Drugs, perhaps brainstorming some alternatives and some ways to put those solutions into action.
- Dedicate your next Social Action Conference to the problem of drugs and drug abuse in the community.

If we all just work at this some, the results will be enormous. Last but not least, come to Nashville in 2000 and vote for next year's Working Action Issue to keep this process alive and growing!

For questions or comments on Working Action, this year's Working Action Issue (WAI), or updates on the work of the Super Working Action Team (SWAT) e-mail the Working Action Manager (WAM) James Walker at james.walker@juno.com. Ask James about the forthcoming UUA-supported e-mail discussion list on the Working Action Issue (WAI).





Youth Empowerment: Creating a Multi-Generational UUA. By Evan B. White Esq.

For the past few years, the YRUU Youth Council has been trying to pass a resolution to get a youth on the UUA Board of Trustees. This would mean appointing a representative from YRUU to the most "important" committee in the UUA — quite an important and impressive step forward for youth empowerment in our denomination! Finally this year's 1999 Youth Council passed a resolution in support of a youth on the UUA Board of Trustees, and we are now trying to get a similar resolution mandating this youth position on the UUA Board of Trustees, passed at General Assembly 2000.

Passing a bylaw amendment at GA however, is no easy task. It isn't even very easy to get it considered at GA without a lot of help from everyone who believes in YRUU. We

need as much help as you can give, and we're trying to make it as easy as possible for you to contribute. We even created a sample letter (available on the YRUU Website, www.uua.org/

YRUU), that you can fill in and send to your district trustee asking them to support our resolution. Or you can call your district trustee, your district president, your district executive, or even your local church minister, president, or religious educator and tell them how much it would mean to you if you were able to be adequately represented on the UUA

Board of Trustees. If you are interested in helping, simply contact Evan White or check out the YRUU Website. It is really easy to help and really necessary!

This resolution isn't only about the Board of Trustees though, it's about furthering our concept of youth empowerment within the denomination. While we try to get youth representation on a continental level, you should be doing the same in your local district or church. Does your district Board have a youth representative on it? Does your church have youth participation on its governing committees? Are youth interested and involved in decisions that affect them? These are important questions that go hand-in-hand with our mission to get youth representation in the UUA. What is

the point of a youth trustee when youth aren't involved at the local level?

So how can you get involved in your church or district? First of all, contact your youth governing body (YAC, DYSC, or Steering Committee) and ask them if they

have a youth representative on the district Board. If not, encourage your district's leaders to try and get a youth on the Board at the next district annual meeting. In the meantime, they can contact the district president, district executive, the district trustee, and local congregations to get support for such a position on the Board.

On a more local level, contact the officials at YOUR church and ask when congregational meetings are held. Question them about whether youth are voting members on any sort of governing committee. If not, ask "why not?" Talk about youth issues in your local youth group and the congregation as a whole. Besides getting youth on committees, see about when youth become full voting members of their churches. Often, youth will pay for membership but aren't informed or invited to congregational votes.

All of these issues surrounding youth empowerment can be frustrating, and there will be those who do not believe that a youth voice is vital, but don't give up. If you need assistance on strategies or if you have questions about any of the above topics, feel free to contact me or especially the Youth Office which has tons of resources and information on these exact topics.

Recapping . . . 5 Easy Steps to Promote the Empowerment of Youth in UUism:

1. Send a letter to your district trustee supporting a youth on the Board.
2. Get involved in committees at your church.
3. Get youth participation on your district Board.
4. Volunteer/ lobby for spots on committees.
5. Just do what you're interested in, and show the world that youth are vibrant, strong, contributing forces in our society.

For information on lobbying for youth positions on congregational, district, and continental boards and committees. Contact Evan White: (914) 451-2970 evwhite@vassar.edu

Evan White is on the Continental YRUU Steering Committee and is the point person on the 1999 Youth Council Resolution to Create a YRUU At-Large on the UUA Board of Trustees.



backlash: where were we twenty years ago?

February 8, 1987
Ellen Brandenburg:

I am writing to you in your role as a member of the YRUU Steering Committee to express some of my hopes and concerns about YRUU. It has been over four years since the creation of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists and I think it would be appropriate for the organization to evaluate its structures and procedures to determine how well it is fulfilling its mission and what alternatives or changes might be in order. In the life of any organization it is a good idea to step back occasionally from the day-to-day administration and re-examine your goals and objectives and your methods of reaching them.

YRUU has been extremely important to me over the years, it has been a spiritual guide and an emotional and philosophical home. My involvement in its creation and leadership since 1981 have meant that I am extremely invested in its success - in its ability to innovate and yet maintain the rich heritage of its past. This involvement and the realization that this is my last year of membership in YRUU has prompted this letter.

I left Youth Council last August feeling troubled about the health of the organization - specifically in its ability to inspire loyalty and pride on the part of its membership. The sense of ownership, purpose, and excitement that comes from administering a continental organization was weak. YRUU did not seem to be tapping the leadership potential of its youth leadership. All this is in the face of a dedicated and professional staff and immensely talented delegates. The fault seemed to be in the system rather than the people. I would like to offer you some of my own thoughts on why this is so and what might be done about it. I would also like to urge you to set in motion a long-range planning process and an evaluation of our current systems.

It is important to remember, as the brochure puts it, that YRUU exists to develop a loving community of youth through youth empowerment, religious and social questioning, youth and adult cooperation, worship, learning and social action. If you felt as I did a sense of disempowerment at Youth Council, then we as an organization should proceed with all possible speed to allow for more empowerment in the governing process by youth.

There are several factors that contribute to the reduction in the power of the Youth Council, but I believe the primary cause can be found in the budget-making process. According to the YRUU brochure, the YC decides the annual budget, goals, and priorities for YRUU. Unfortunately, the incorporation of the YRUU budget creation process into that of the entire UUA has made that impossible in practical terms. Because of the UUA Finance Committee's schedule, the Youth Office is forced to work out a budget with them prior to Youth Council. It is then presented to the Youth Council for it to rubber stamp a budget that

has already been established and set by the UUA Finance Committee. Instead of a dynamic involving YRUU staff, the Steering Committee and Youth Council, it essentially becomes a dynamic involving only the UUA Finance Committee and the Youth Programs Director. It is true that the Youth Programs Director brings to the process a sensitivity to the wishes of the YC - but the Youth Council should not have to rely on the advocacy of the Youth Programs Director as a means of exercising its responsibility for the financial management of youth programs.

What to do about the overlapping responsibilities of these two UUA organizations, the YC and the Finance Committee? The Finance Committee must retain overall authority over the size and allocation of the UUA budget, but they do not necessarily have to approve the allocation of monies within the youth programs budget, especially as that function is delegated to the YRUU Youth Council by YRUU by-laws and by the UUA Board. The Steering Committee could request that the UUA Finance Committee simply approve an overall amount of funds to be allocated for youth programs in a given year. This would allow the YRUU staff to prepare youth programs with the guidance of the Steering Committee prior to Youth Council. This would also empower the Youth Council to accept, reject, or modify the budget. The overall amount allocated by the Finance Committee could be determined by taking the overall amount allocated for this fiscal year and raising it or lowering it relative to the increase or decrease in the size of the UUA budget from year to year. New initiatives requiring an increase in youth programs budget relative to the overall UUA budget would have to be negotiated through the Finance Committee. Although a system like this would create some problems in budgeting because the YRUU fiscal year might be slightly out of synch with the UUA fiscal year, the difficulties would be worth it if they allowed YRUU to meet its objectives more effectively.

I said I believed that the loss of control over the budget was only one of several factors that resulted in a loss of control by the YC over YRUU program and policies. This is, I realize, unsolicited advice. It is offered because of my love and concern for the UU youth organization. I would love to meet with the Steering Committee at your next meeting if you would like to discuss this further. In any case, I strongly urge you to consider some form of evaluation and long-term planning for YRUU. This year's Youth Council could form an excellent opportunity to undertake a more deliberate evaluation of YRUU - providing delegates with the historical perspective that is so necessary in developing long range plans. We are an institution with a very short memory, but let's try to look at our history and examine ways to evaluate our beginnings and better fulfill our mission for the future.

In the Spirit,

Colin Bird

This is a letter from former YRUU Program Specialist Colin Bird to the YC

For a flashforward look on the next page!

TRYING TO BUDGE IT WITH THE BUDGET:

How the 1999 Youth Council reconsidered YRUU's budget, and why you might want to (re)consider yours, too.

By Elizabeth Capone-Newton

This year Youth Council (the governing body of continental YRUU) went where no other Youth Council has gone before. In its sixteen years of conducting business as YRUU's Youth Council, this group of district representatives and at-large members has always approved the proposed budget for continental YRUU. But this year at Youth Council's annual week-long meeting, after much consideration and while being subjected to the extreme heat and humidity of Iowa, a two thirds majority of the members of Youth Council voted down YRUU's budget for the upcoming year. Why? Because Youth Council felt that the UUA's financial commitment to YRUU was just too damn weak and wanted to send the Association's Board of Trustees an official message to express disapproval and need for further funding.

Being pissed about something is one thing. Making an official decision to reject something is another. But creating a plan of action, offering concrete alternatives, and lobbying for one's suggestions, that's taking advocacy to a whole other level. And that is exactly what Youth Council is trying to do with this budget issue. In just a week, the following steps were taken: a budget working group was formed to discuss the matter; a proposal was drafted to explain Youth Council's concerns about the budget, state specific funding needs, and make legitimate financial demands; a resolution was passed by all of Youth Council in support of that proposal. Since then, the budget proposal has been submitted to the UUA Board of Trustees, the UUA Finance Department, and Executive Staff of the UUA. And now, Youth Council members have the task, as specified in the 1999 budget resolution, to advocate for this proposal. Since it is the UUA Board of Trustees that officially makes budget decisions, Youth Council members are asked to contact the trustee(s) in their district and were given a form letter about the issue that they could use as a starting point.

But where do you fit in to all of this budget talk? Perhaps you a) don't understand budgets, b) have never seen a budget, or c) always thought a budget was full of insignificant details that don't effect what you want to do. If that's the case, I'd like to offer you this. In my opinion, what Youth Council realized this summer is that YRUU's budget determines a lot of what YRUU can or can't do. Some of us asked the question, "What kind of power do we have in this?" And we figured out that one of the ways we had to exercise some power, to have a voice,

was to show our disagreement formally, and follow through. And all of you can do the same.

But before you assume that I'm now going to go into some long list of the ways you can help increase funding for YRUU on a continental level, let me make an important point. As much as Youth Council would love it if YRUUers everywhere began lobbying the UUA Board of Trustees like crazy in support of our budget proposal, that was not my purpose in writing this article. My point is that what Youth Council did this summer is a model. It's an example that you can follow in your own district and local YRUU structures or groups.

You can begin by asking yourselves, "What control do youth have over money in our district's YAC (Youth Adult Committee/Council) and in our local youth groups?" Do you have any regular funding or source of money in your district/local? Do you have a line item (a line in a budget that has your group's name on it and the amount of money you will get) in your district or church budget for youth programming (to pay for conference site costs or scholarships, reimbursents for transportation to YRUU events, or provide a stipend or salary for a youth advisor or staff person)? If your answer to those questions is no, try to find leaders in your district or church that would be supportive, both youth and adults. If there are no youth on any of the groups or boards that make funding or other decisions regarding youth, find a YRUUer interested in being a leader (maybe you?) and support them in becoming a member on your district's or congregation's board or one of its committees.

For those of you who already do have some kind of funding, consider to what extent youth get to make decisions about that money. Do you get to decide what a fair amount of money to get would be? Are you involved in choosing where and how that money be spent? Being able to do those things requires having people (like youth) in leadership. It also means forming a system that youth can participate in that provides a structure and process for making funding (and other) decisions. This system could be a church youth group, a district YAC, or something totally different.

Whatever your plans, try to keep in mind the following. The suggestions I've made to you are for you to make use of as you have the time, energy, support, and power to do so. They're not meant to make you busy or bored. The goal is that YRUUers all over will have the chance to get some money and decide how it's used. On behalf of Youth Council I wanted to share with you my perspective of the process we began this summer to meet this goal for continental YRUU. It is our hope that you might see something in our work that can be translated to the district or local level. There's money out there to be had, even (and maybe especially) within Unitarian Universalism. Our denomination—and the world for that matter—would be a better place if more of that money were in the hands of YRUUers.

Elizabeth Capone-Newton is the Northeast District's Youth Council Representative and a member of the 1st Universalist Church of Auburn, Maine. (Historical note: The interim minister at Elizabeth's congregation, Rev. Hank Pearce, gave the formal motion to rename LRY as YRUU in 1982 at Common Ground II at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.)



trust walk: Post-high & bridging youth

Too Smart for the Man:

Interview with Justin Sane, former YRUUer and frontman for Pittsburgh punk band "Anti-Flag."

By Becca
Fredin

"We've had hotels that didn't want us, things like that.

Which once again shows how ridiculous it is that people judge others by their looks," said Justin Sane, telling me about the prejudices he's experienced while on tour with the band *Anti-Flag*. I interviewed the guitarist/singer Justin Sane of Pittsburgh-based band *Anti-Flag* about his political beliefs and how they might connect to things he experienced and learned in YRUU (Justin and another member of *Anti-Flag* were formerly YRUUers).

Anti-Flag sees the US government as being full of contradictions and supporting some wrong things like the bullying of Iraq, supporting oppressive governments in countries like Mexico, or trading with countries like China who have horrible human rights records. *Anti-Flag* doesn't hate America, they simply think that some things need to be changed. Justin believes that, "Governments use nationalism to trick kids all over the world to go kill each other, but in the end it is not the kids who benefit from the killing, it is those in power who don't see one drop of blood. For that reason, our new record is called 'A New Kind of Army' and the slogan from the record is 'Too smart to fight! Too smart to die! Too smart to fight! Too smart to kill!'"

They also write songs about injustices such as police brutality, racism, sexism, homophobia, and government corruption. *Anti-Flag*'s political opinions and social statements don't stem from YRUU, most of their beliefs had been developed by the time they entered YRUU. However one thing that Justin did get from YRUU was a message of acceptance; accepting people that are different, learning to have

an open mind, and just caring about other people.

"For me it goes beyond things like race," Justin said. "What I definitely learned from YRUU was accepting teens who I perceived as being in a different clique. I definitely put that into my music. *Anti-Flag* is a punk rock band, but I don't feel you have to be a 'punk rocker' to get something out of *Anti-Flag*. If you are interested in promoting the same kind of positive goals that *Anti-Flag* is trying to promote, then we want you at our shows, and we want you to be a part of our community."



Justin Sane rawkin' out over the "Anti-Flag."

Although *Anti-Flag* may be quite accepting of other people, not everyone has reacted quite the same way towards them. "We hang an upside-down flag behind us when we play. And we've had times when clubs or whoever was promoting the show didn't want us to hang our flag. To me that's very dangerous because we hang the flag as a political statement to say there

are things going on in this country that need to change, things such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and ageism," said Justin. He sees this censorship as risky because he believes that all ideas should be heard, even the ones that have messages he disagrees with. He hopes that if an atmosphere is created where anyone, even a Nazi, can express his or her ideas, and *Anti-Flag* can express theirs, then hopefully people will follow what makes more sense. It is when you want to censor one negative thing that "censorship can be thrown back in your face, and used to rub out good ideas as well."

He sees the music business as financially scary, but also very exciting. There isn't a lot of money in the punk rock business, but there are some wonderful things about it, like being your own boss. "It allows me to be very creative and put my creative energy into positive things. For instance, we started a record label, called *AF Records*, and the goal is to promote other bands that we think have a positive message and also to raise money for organizations we think are positive." Right now *AF Records* and *Anti-Flag* are working on a compilation to benefit the "National Coalition against Domestic Violence."

All of the members of *Anti-Flag* are straight edge, and he supports it as long as it's not something that is being forced on other people. "It's a great alternative, one of the things that attracted me to punk rock, because I did not have any interest in drugs as a teen, and I still don't. I didn't see any other group that was willing to accept me because I didn't use drugs, and that's why with *Anti-Flag* I try to be very vocal about being straight edge. I want other kids to know that if they don't want to use drugs, there's other people out there too."

We talked about "selling out." He thinks that most bands that make money have earned it, and lots of punk bands that are well known are trying to do something positive with their fame. "For example, Billy Joe [of *Green Day*] started a record label, and he puts out punk

"Anti-Flag Interview" continued on page 13.



"Anti-Flag Interview" continued.

bands, and so did Tim Armstrong [of *Rancid*], those guys are helping to support the underground by doing that. So they're taking their money and influence and helping to support the community that they came from.

"Then there is another side, say, a kid sees *Rancid* on MTV and this kid says 'Wow, they look cool, I wanna look cool, too.' So this kid... lets call him 'Joe Punk'.... So 'Joe Punk' shaves his head into a Mohawk, and 'Joe Punk' goes to the local punk rock show. Well, at this point 'Joe Punk' has no idea what punk rock is about, he just went to the show to dance and have a good time. But then he gets to the show and he sees all these other things going on there, messages about community, racial harmony, and anti-sexism, and he says 'Wow, this is really cool, I wanna be involved.' And he gets involved and does something positive. So maybe punk rock on MTV isn't always such a bad thing." On the flip side Justin talked about other bands out there that claim to be punk bands but have messages that are sexist or homophobic, "that's not what it's about."

Anti-Flag is different from most political punk bands because their music is more accessible than a lot of other political punk bands. There are lots of political bands that kids don't really get into because they don't find them melodic. "*Anti-Flag* is a real mixture of super hard-ass stuff and more poppy stuff, so in that respect we attract a wider audience. *Anti-Flag* has also always had a hard time being categorized in the punk scene because we don't normally fall into a perfect class." He likes being unique and how the band stands on its own. *Anti-Flag* was one of the few bands on *Warped Tour* that were really political, and they were definitely the most political of the bunch.

It was wonderful talking to Justin and learning more about a band that I have so much respect for. *Anti-Flag* will be touring this fall with the *Dropkick Murphys*. Look for their fliers and check them out.

You can find out about *Anti-Flag* and *AF Records* at their website: www.anti-flag.com or mail them at P.O. Box A-F 71266 Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Becca Fredin is a co-chair and a top notch rawker from the Ohio Meadville District.

Outreach:

YRUUers Creating Junior High Programming and Offering.

By Tobias Chase

junior high & transitioning youth

The junior high age group is much neglected not only in UUism but also in society at large. Developmentally junior highers are at an important junction in their life. Middle schools are usually an emotionally hostile and socially exclusive environment. A loving accepting community can help a person get through this stressful time in their life. With UUism's local Religious Education and YRUU programs, there seems to be a valuable place for elementary school children in Sunday school, and youth in a youth group, but there's usually little or sometimes no attention paid to junior high youth. It is in this gap that YRUU loses a large number of potential victims, I mean members. It is in our direct interests to make the junior high Unitarian Universalist experience valuable to the junior highers.

Influence We (YRUU Youth) have with Them:

YRUU youth have a unique influence on junior highers. Junior highers look up to us in a way that is different than the way they look up to adults or each other, which is why we, as youth, can help them. When they see active, empowered youth, it spreads and makes them want to be active and empowered. Any junior high workshop/activity/conference will produce a more positive reaction if lead by a YRUUer. YRUU can, and does, help so much just by leading and teaching, and it makes a huge impact on the personal lives of 12-14 year olds. The impact is surprisingly out of proportion to the energy that we put into it. A little push goes a long way. This encouragement and mentoring is incredibly satisfying too. To know that you are affecting someone's life in a positive way is very rewarding.

How YRUU Can Help the Junior High Experience:

YRUU can provide much needed positive socialization that is so ESSENTIAL to junior high development, we do it both by connecting with them and by giving an example of how to treat each other. Junior high conferences and youth groups should not be viewed as just a way to keep the youth busy until they become old enough to attend YRUU conferences or the YRUU youth group, their experiences can be meaningful, they just have different needs than us. On the local level, you can plan your bigger events, such as overnights or coffeehouses, and invite the junior highers. Do what some districts do and have a conference that invites both age ranges, trust me it doesn't make the atmosphere "lame."

Most of the time junior highers aren't ready to lead their own community (there are of course some outstanding counter-examples), so it is the job of the YRUUers to provide leadership for them. This gives us opportunities to learn more about how to lead and really puts our skills to the test. It requires a lot more energy and maturity to lead junior highers. Adults should also share a role with us, and on a local level, it can be hard to find YRUUers with the commitment level to handle running a junior high youth group. At a junior high conference, however, adults usually don't have the level of training we do at building a community, so it is here that our experience with planning events comes in handy.

Keep the chalice lit, do some junior high programming.

Tobias is a youth from the Mountain Desert District and is a maniac for junior high.



fishbowl: for adults who practice ministry with youth

Boundaries Youth Advisors Live By

By Jo Victoria

I'm not a big censorship fan, really. I think that if people are taught to think critically, it is much more effective. But there are times when I am a strong supporter of a specific kind of censorship, and that is when I am talking about youth work.

As a youth in YRUU I don't think that I ever thought much about what the advisors were like outside of the context in which I knew them. I never considered that they might be actively reflecting upon their interactions with me, that they might be constantly re-evaluating their boundaries. But as an advisor, I now know that I do have those boundaries, that I do self-censor — and that those amazing advisors did as well.

Now, I'm not talking about not swearing around youth, or about pretending to be someone I am not. I am talking about being more aware than normal that what I say and do affects the community and can hurt someone. I am talking about finding a balance between being true to myself and respecting that in a youth community I have a very special role.

At a youth conference I will not immediately jump up to help, or shush people first. I try to mellow out my impulse to point out issues and problems and defer to youth in positions of responsibility. I try to let youth find the answers to the hard problems without giving them to them, because I feel that is the most effective way to learn how to be responsible. I try to be supportive, even when I am frustrated with the length of the process. This self-censorship helps me grow as a person in all of my many roles, giving me practice at supporting new leaders in many different areas of my life.

I also self-censor my emotions and sharing. My church's youth group and district's YRUU conferences are places for and about youth, not me. I will share my sorrows, but attempt to keep my needs in the background. I have peers to support me in resolving my issues and providing me with comfort and support. I feel that my role in a youth community is to provide comfort, not ask for it. So again, I self-censor.

Censorship gets a bad rap. It is connected with things being taken away. But I feel that my self-censorship as an advisor gives rather than removes. It makes me a better mentor, supporter, cheerleader, resource, and advisor than I would be without so much self-examination. And I think that the youth I know appreciate it, even if they don't see it. Just as I appreciated it as a youth.

- Jo H. Victoria

Jo is the District President of Pacific Central District, is active in PCD youth cons, and is a jr. high advisor.

How to guide a youth group into empowering themselves

By Jeff Leibman

This question, raised at a recent youth advisor training session in the Ohio-Meadville District, arose out of a discussion of how youth advisors can facilitate the development of the five components of a balanced YRUU youth program. While the question was partially rhetorical, it derived from a frustration many advisors feel that their youth groups are unable to achieve the ambitious vision set forth in YRUU literature for the ideal youth program.

Specifically, this frustration develops when local youth groups articulate goals and then fail to accomplish them. Obviously, some failure is to be expected and one can often learn more from failures than successes. However, persistent failure to accomplish goals threatens the survival of the youth group. Their shared responsibility role puts youth advisors in a "lose-lose" situation. If the advisor steps in and ensures that the goal is achieved, then youth empowerment is compromised. If the advisor sits back and waits for youth to take charge, the goal is too often not accomplished. Either way, the advisor feels guilty that they have failed the youth and the local program. Since the primary goal of most youth advisors is to promote successful youth programming that embodies the YRUU philosophy of youth empowerment, a solution is clearly needed.

Many of the advisors at the training session reported that they serve youth groups with significant numbers of youth and no lack of desired goals to accomplish. When discussing the

Continued on next page...

reasons why their youth were unable to achieve their goals, they hypothesized reasons such as a lack of time, commitment, or a passion for the youth group itself on the part of the youth. After discussing examples of model youth programs, another hypothesis suggested was that a successful youth group can only evolve around a "superstar" youth, or a significant number of highly dynamic group leaders—both somewhat rare situations even in a large youth group.

After further discussion, the group agreed that the key missing ingredient in this common scenario is a grasp of project management skills on the part of the youth. Project management, which may be a part of many advisors' professional careers or other life experiences (such as scouting), is a skill easily taken for granted. In actuality, the ability to break a goal down into discrete and achievable tasks that are ordered and prioritized into a timeline of events is a skill that must be learned and developed.

Sometimes the need for even more basic skills training is apparent. Many advisors expressed frustration that youth were unable to tackle seemingly simple tasks, such as making telephone calls, purchasing food or supplies, or operating standard appliances. Helping youth learn necessary basic skills was clearly an area in which youth advisors could facilitate accomplishment of youth group goals.

As a result of this conversation, the advisors came away with a number of useful courses of action:

1. Have your youth group pick a modest goal. Then, help the youth identify the specific tasks needed to achieve the goal and arrange the detailed tasks in chronological order. Then, provide only the necessary assistance to get the goal accomplished.
2. Clearly identify for your youth group the tasks you are willing to do. These should be tasks that the youth advisor is uniquely qualified for, such as providing transportation or conduct-

ing transactions where an adult presence is mandatory. Then, encourage the youth to manage all of the other tasks as their responsibility.

3. Help the group agree on WHO is doing WHAT by WHEN and HOW the results will be communicated with others. Monitoring progress of a project can reveal when a youth needs assistance or special training to complete a task, or perhaps to simply overcome a fear of failure. Progress reports can be a part of regular check-ins and provide valuable support.

4. In those instances when tasks are identified that youth need some specific training to master, provide the necessary training, so that they can repeat the task unassisted in the future.

5. Don't be afraid to share your feelings about the expectations and accomplishments of the group with your youth. A youth group is a community and the youth advisor is a member of that community. Advisors should not be afraid to model honest and compassionate communication with youth.

6. Consider sponsoring a Leadership Development Conference in your local cluster or for your district. The Youth Office in Boston can help you with the details of this valuable experience.

One last important point to remember is that all of the above assumes a youth group that is knowledgeable of YRUV practices. However, some youth groups have never attended a con or rally, have never experienced youth worship, and have never ventured beyond their church's walls as a group. Youth advisors must diligently collect examples of ideas their youth group can use and then share their own experiences with others. A catalog of concrete, successful ideas can provide a youth group with choices that they can take and make their own.

Jeff Leibman is a YRUV advisor from Pittsburgh, PA, and is active in OMD conferences. If you have a question for him, check out his contact info on the phone list page.

The YRUU Youth Council in conjunction with the UUA Youth Office is now accepting nominations for:

THE BEST YOUTH ADVISOR IN THE WORLD!



Do you know of (or are you) a fantabulastic advisor or amazing adult who works with Unitarian Universalist youth? If so, we invite you to nominate that person (or yourself) for

The 5th Annual

OUTSTANDING ADVISOR AWARD

Simply submit a nomination to The Youth Office by April 1, 2000

The Advisor selected will be presented with the Outstanding Advisor Award at the General Assembly Awards Breakfast in Nashville, Tennessee, June 2000. The Outstanding Advisor will have \$100 donated to their youth group in their name, in addition to much-overdue recognition, celebrity status, and undying love and support of youth everywhere.

Advisor nominations must include:

- (1) A brief bio which also lists the advisor's experience with youth and his or her qualifications;
- (2) TWO letters of recommendation from YOUTH the advisor has worked with;
- (3) ONE letter of recommendation from an ADULT in the congregation or district with which the advisor has been affiliated.

Send Nominations to:

**The Youth Office
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 742-2100 ext. 351, 352, 350, 355
FAX (617) 523-4123
yruu@uua.org**

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wbivens@beacon.org



By Alana McGibney

She dreamt she was back in Colorado. Cookie and Beckie were playing tea party on the front lawn. Lora sat on the porch, watching her, who everyone said looked just like her (she never saw it), laughing with her little princess. She shut her eyes and pictured the way today should be; it was her 15th birthday. Lora envisioned a huge cake and candles and hundreds of hormone crazed teenagers playing spin the bottle in the basement. She opened her eyes and it was gone. She saw a figure crouched on the sidewalk. Lora went over to see him. As he stood, two white wings unfurled behind him. They were just as tall and twice as wide as the scrawny, sad-eyed boy wearing them. Their eyes locked and he smiled, briefly, and looked down. On the cement where he'd been crouching was a chalk drawing of a birthday cake with 15 candles burning on it. Each candle was lit with a shining star. He bent down and blew on the drawing and the stars floated up to the sky. Lora followed them, watching each one until they were just barely there. A drop of rain landed on her cheek as gray rushed over the sky. She looked back, but the boy was gone and the drawing was washing away.



By James Walker

Is it odd that the very best thinking
Is done in the bathroom?

Quiet and equipped with a lock,
The bathroom is ideal.

Caesar filled Rome with baths,
And he became the greatest Emperor
ever.

(It is called the 'throne room' sometimes)
Isaac and the apple is the more pleasant
fable,

But gravity was discovered in an
outhouse.

Even Einstein was a bathroom thinker:
(He didn't go in there to fix his hair)
Black holes -are- a lot like toilets you
know.

And, just maybe, He rested on the
seventh day

On a celestial can?

Why don't you excuse yourself,
And think of some oddities of your own.



Did you know about Antioch College's strong Unitarian legacy?



-UU covenants are embedded in our community.

-Yellow Springs is home to a dynamic UU church.

-Olympia Brown, the first woman to be ordained
with full denominational authority and famed
suffragette, was in the first graduating class.

-Unitarians helped financially ensure the early years.

-Unitarian Arthur Morgan served as Antioch's president in
the 1920s, and brought our unique cooperative education
program with alternating study and work terms.

-The words of Unitarian Horace Mann, Antioch's first
president, remain with us today: "Be ashamed to die until
you have won some victory for humanity."



Write for more info on the Unitarian connections
at Antioch and admissions information:
Antioch College Yellow Springs, OH 45387
1-800-543-9436 <http://antioch-college.edu>

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edited by Alison Purcell

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2nd edition has more chords and
more songs. \$5.00

Deep Fun: The YRUU Games book

edited by Sienna Baskin

An exciting compendium of games
arranged in the "Five Steps to Build-
ing Community." Includes most tradi-
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the days of LRY. \$5.00

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Wear Youth Emowerment on your
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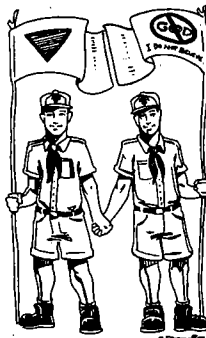
GET THE GOOD STUFF FROM THE YOUTH OFFICE

YRUU T-shirt art by Ben Dewey

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YRUUer. Take a stance against intoler-
ance, support our youth in the Boy
Scouts, and look good doing it.

(please specify S/M/L/XL) \$10.00
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PREPARED



To Stand Against Intolerance

T-shirt image displayed above. design by Ben Dewey

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by Emily Stainer & Sienna Baskin

A resource on how to make your
district and local youth programs
more accessible to people of dif-
ferent abilities, as well as techniques
and activities for raising sensitivity.
A potential first step on the road to
activism on this issue.

Blessing To All Beings

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by and about YRUUers. \$7.00

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YRUUer. \$.50 a piece.

All this great stuff can be yours! Just mail your order to the Youth Office.
Remember, make checks out to "YRUU."

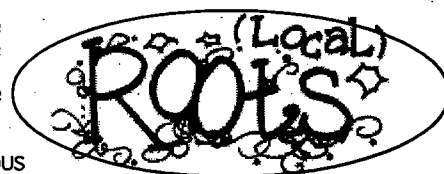


Taking Anti-Racism Home:

How to start becoming an actively Anti-Racist youth group.

By Melanie Griffin

European white culture) are normative; a dimension of the collective identity of the dominant racial group.



Anti-racism- A conscious intentional effort to eradicate racism in all its forms- individual, cultural, and institutional.

With this common understanding we can move on as an organization, both on the continental level and on the local level, to become anti-racist. There are many steps that we can take, as we take them we must remember that this is a life long process, that racism is not going to go away over night so we have to have patience and faith.

Activities that a youth group can do to begin work towards anti-racism:

-There are all kinds of anti-racism organizations, many of these organizations will come and do workshops for your congregation or your youth group. Look into finding local groups who do anti-racism work and have them come talk to your youth group.

-Many churches have had the UU anti-racist groups, like Journey Towards Wholeness or Jubilee World, do workshops for the congregation. Make sure that your youth group participates in this!

-If you would just like to begin discussing these issues with your youth group there are different activities you can do to begin a dialogue. For example, there are movies about racism and race that you could watch with your youth group to begin a dialogue, such as *The Color of Fear*, which your church might have or that you can order from the UUA

- Another good way to begin looking at this issue within your youth group is to do an activity that will make you aware of all the perspectives and backgrounds that are present. Have a facilitator arrange for people to go to certain sides of the room depending on their answers to questions about themselves. For example, the facilitator would tell people who grew up without enough to go to the right side of the room, those who grew up with just enough to go to the middle, and those who grew up with more than enough to go to the left side of the room. It is up to the individual to decide where they go and there is always middle ground. Another example of this activity could deal with what race the folks in the room identify with or what sexual preference they identify with. After directing the group to go to different parts of the room according to their answers to the questions about their backgrounds, the group is able to see the range of perspectives and viewpoints that people are coming from. This activity can segue into a discussion about each others' similarities and differences; the group can learn about where each other is coming from. This is a fitting manner to begin talking about issues of race.

There are countless other things your youth group can do to begin its path towards anti-racism. Brainstorm! Plan! Talk! Act! Just get going!

Melanie is a rawker from Antioch College and a point person on the 1999 Youth Council Resolution, "It's Time We Did Something About Racism in YRUU!"



This September I'm beginning college. As I leave the familiar surroundings of the D.C. area, there are some things that I am worried about. For example, will my roommate be racist? Will it be uncomfortable for me as a black female to be around her? Will the institution I am enrolled in have built in advantages for some and disadvantages for others? These are subjects I think about every day when I meet new people, even YRUUs. Being the open, accepting and comfortable group we are, YRUU as a whole is looking to become an anti-racist organization so that YRUUs especially YRUUs of color, can feel more at home in this community.

Racism and Anti-racism.

As one central Floridian YRUU said, "It's all tricky stuff." That it is and a whole lot more. It is very complex, painful, and awkward, but I am confident that YRUU can make steps to address these issues. To begin this process we have to have a common understanding of what we are looking at. So let's get to some definitions! These definitions are those in the "Creating a Jubilee World" anti-racism resource book- "Creating a Jubilee World" is a wonderful UU program created to fight racism.

RACISM:

Institutional racism- The systematic use of power by a dominant racial group at the expense of non-dominant groups. "Institutions have great power to reward and penalize. They reward by providing career opportunities for some people and foreclosing on them for others. They reward as well by the way social goods are distributed-by deciding who receives training skills, medical care, formal education, political influence, moral support and self-respect, productive employment, fair treatment by the law, decent housing, self-confidence, and the promise of a secure future for self and children." (*Institutional Racism in America*, Knowles and Prewitt, Prentice-Hall, 1969)

Cultural racism- The assumption that the values, standards, and cultural habits of one racial, ethnic, or cultural group (e.g., in the US, Northern



Particularly in the past year it has become apparent to YRUU Youth Council, the governing body of YRUU, and Steering Committee, the executive body of YRUU, that YRUU has began functioning as two separate movements: one at the continental level and the other at the district and local levels. Those involved on the local and district levels have little or no understanding of what happens on the continental level or the structure and purposes of YRUU. At the same time, continental leadership has lost touch with what is happening at the district and local level. We wouldn't have YRUU without the local and district level youth, and without communication between district Youth Council representatives and At-large representatives we will no longer be able to function as a successful youth movement.

Four of your Youth Council members have created a resolution to remedy this problem. This plan started at a workshop at a conference in Mountain Desert District, which was held by the two MDD YCRs to get insight from their district on how they could serve the district and local levels better. From the ideas of this workshop came a resolution that attempts to reconnect the local, district, and continental levels by giving the participants of YRUU a larger share in its running as a whole.

The first way in which ALL of the youth in YRUU will be able affect the course of YRUU as a whole is through writing resolutions. In late Dec. or early Jan. there will be a resource book released on how to get a resolution passed at Youth Council. This resource book will teach everybody the whole process of writing and passing resolutions. Although only Youth Council can pass resolutions, ANYBODY can write them. Once you have written a resolution, you can send it to the Youth Office to be printed in Synapse. But how do the resolutions get passed? The members of Youth Council vote on these at Youth Council, but this doesn't mean that you can't have

an affect on the outcome. If you see a resolution that you feel very strongly about, talk to the Youth Council member that serves your constituency. This may be your district representative or one of the many at-large representatives (Post-High, Junior-High, Canadian At-Large, Social Action Coordinator, UUA trustee At-Large, and Adults At-Large). These people do have a vote and what you have to say means a lot to them, so don't be afraid to TELL THEM WHAT YOU THINK. If you want to get in touch with your YCR you can look at the back of this issue of Synapse, or check out the YRUU web page at: <http://www.uua.org/YRUU>.

Although Youth Council Representatives want to represent their constituencies well, they are rarely held accountable for their actions. In order for you all to be able to make sure that your Youth Council Representative(s) are

doing their job, the resolution calls for a second resource to be printed. This resource will be a guide for evaluating YCRs and at-larges, and will also come out around the first of the year.

Remember: Youth Council as a whole and especially the YCRs and

at-large reps WORK FOR YOU and your local/ district youth groups. In the past there was a very small percentage of actual YRUUers that had influence on how things work in YRUU. This can and will change starting with you. YOU are now on a mission, and you WILL accept it. You need to think about how you want to change YRUU. Write resolutions and tell your ideas to your YCR. In addition, the four youth council members that co-sponsored this resolution are responsible for seeing this thing through so if you have any questions, you can talk to them. It's time for you all to have a direct affect on the changes that happen in YRUU. Thank you and please drive through. Good luck!

Resolution to Increase District and Local Participation in Youth Council Cosponsored by:

Ben Kidder (Mountain Desert District YCR)
Micaela Christopher (Mountain Desert District YCR)
Geoffrey Woodman (Post-High at-large, Steering Committee member)
Alena Acker (Michigan District YCR)

LOCAL and District Leadership Look HERE!

Edited by Geoff Woodman

To take a look at the resolution on how to make your YCR accountable to you, take a look at page 36.

To attend Youth Council run for your district YCR, or check out the exciting At-Large positions on page 45.



District Reports

reports on what districts
are up to from YCR's...

-Central Midwest

-Arnie Birren:

A new YAC was just elected. There was a 50% turnover (5 new kids) on it. YAC seems very interested in getting things done. Conference size has dropped dramatically. Spring Con was only 205 conferees. The rules are being more strictly enforced. A new editor was just elected. A newsletter committee is going to be formed to help her out. We appointed a new CMWD Board liaison, replacing KK Anderson with Bob Fox. Our new VP will also serve as a youth liaison to the board.

-Michigan

-Alena Acker:

At our spring conference, YAC elected a new YAC for next season. There were lots of super people, and deciding was difficult. Next year's YAC looks fantabulously promising. Positions officially switch over at our summer planning meeting. This season's YAC was dedicated and fun! There were three conferences this year and an LDC and Advisor Training. All of the conferences were successful. The themes were: My Body, My Temple, Swing, and World Religions. The spring, non-smoking con (30 April- 2 May) was especially successful. YAC was not aware of any rule infractions at this conference. YAC plans to review our smoking policy at our summer meeting. The newsletter was dead this year, mostly due to an evil, haphazard mailing list. The list has since been fixed and updated, and our newsletter guru plans to make a huge mugbook/ year in revue thing and send it out. YAC is looking into creating a Web-master position on the board. This year the Board of Trustees expressed concern about YAC's smoking policy. Generally relations are good but could be better. Youth lead a workshop at the annual meeting. We had an LDC and an advisor training, both of which were underattended but successful. An SDC will happen next season.

p.s.—UUDoM is going to form a new district with Ohio Valley. Both YACs are excited, and have met several times this season. A combo con is in the works for spring or summer 2000.

-Florida District Report

-Chris Helwig

The FL district UUA Board changed structure and we lost our position. That person is now doing P.R. stuff this the second year for our transition in committee and the first year for our transition on mailing list person. We had two transition cons that went pretty well, two good Social Action cons, a spirituality con, and a few advisor trainings (we're trying to get all advisors to go to those). We have a committee planning a Post-High con and if it goes well we have a transition out program we might try. We've been talking to some young adults who want to help. Two successful Jr. High cons last year and this year we have a new committee planning two more.

-Pacific Northwest

-Meghan Springer:

Well, things have been okay, lots of new leadership which is great, with very little old leadership to support them and the old leaders are very burnt out. There have also been disagreements between YAC members. Conferences are getting better. There are new kids, who are less bitter, don't break rules, and there is an overall better community. The old newsletter editor moved, and we are searching for a new one. There is some talk with the Board but not much, they seem like they are interested only because they have to be. Church boards on the other hand are being extremely responsible to people that try. Young adults rock my world but they don't rock the world of most YRUUsers because the two kick ass groups don't ever communicate very well, sometimes they do and then it's all groovy.

-Pacific Southwest

-Evan White:

The main event in the Pacific Southwest District is that we're in the middle of some exciting changes. Along with newly elected YAC, we have selected a New Program Consultant (Youth Council's own Tera Little (yay!)) and a new District Executive. This burst of new blood will hopefully bring new ideas, and our new YAC seems excited about the next year, with the GA dean, Justin Whitaker, at its head. With two new important district positions being selected, it was important that this YAC understand how crucial it is to show these people YRUU and how wonderful it is. We had had youth/ adult problems before in our district, but if we could get these two people on our side, they would prove to be excellent allies for

youth empowerment.

Our elections conference also made some interesting decisions about changing the formation of the YAC. Most notably, we have added a Communications Engineer position which will take care of snail and electronic mailing lists as well as upkeep our district YRUU website (not yet created). Since our newsletter has been lacking lately and the costs of its production have been hefty, I hope that our website will provide a new, more effective form of communication that will distribute the information better.

Our conferences have been pretty good overall. We had our first successful social action conference in April, and everyone is looking forward to WUUKY, GA, Con Con, and SATUURDAY Con which will be held at one of our own churches. The new YAC is also planning to have at least one LDC and possibly an Advisor Training or SDC over the next year.

-Thomas Jefferson:

-Carissa Hansen:

Our most active youth are looking ahead to college, and it seems we will have to start once again from scratch. We are planning a con centered around just district stuff. Our cons are kicking. Most are church youth group facilitated, and we have 2-6 yearly with attendance of 40-100 each. We are planning our first district-led con sometime in early fall with the hopes of networking. The newsletter and website are both part of our whole networking grand scheme, but as of yet, we have little done. We do have a TJD-YRUU email list, but it is pretty inactive. Need more people on it. Our board is really cool. They send me info and everything about their meetings, and I went to the last one and either I or another youth is going to go to the next one. Our district is in the midst of long-range planning and I think we may be able to get a youth position on the board. Last year we had both an LDC and an Advisor Training. They both went great but low attendance. We have SDC trainers rearing and ready to go; but decided to do networking first in hopes of getting more people to come. Our district has a growing and active young adult group, but as we are both in early stages of forming, we haven't started an alliance or anything. We have had about three junior high cons in the past couple of years but they too are youth group run. At the Mountain, they have junior high cons bi-yearly. Our junior high kids are cool.

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-Connecticut Valley
-Sarah Pappas:

We elected a new YAC at the end of the year. It's going to be really good, with the only maybe problem being that half of the YAC is all from one town. But it's not a huge deal.

We have seven cons this year, and we figured out that even though people had gotten really close because of it they were becoming too manufactured. Next year they're going to be fewer and more individual and thoughtful. Our newsletter took a year long hiatus, but we have a website but it needs updating. There was one newsletter sent out. I called our Board member at the beginning of the year and put her on our mailing list. Then she ended up coming to our last con (voting) because it was at our church. She heard people complaining about how official type people never return calls and she said she'd look into it. We had an SDC with representatives from 6 or 7 of the active churches. We sent flyers to all hundred or so churches in CVD but only those came. But it still went really well. At the CVD annual meeting one YRUUer bridged (she was our youth-adult liaison and is going to OPUS and getting CVD involved with post high stuff). A couple are planning to bridge at our last con or GA. We had a junior high con planned there were planning snafus and it ended up getting canceled. We'll hopefully have a con for them next year. Local youth groups have been planning services.

-Metro New York
-Elizabeth Martin:

The Metro NY YAC is presently in the process of writing two policies. The first will explain what Spirit Committee is, what its rules are, and how these rules are enforced. The second will explain what behavior is expected from YAC members at all YAC meetings and district events. There were six conferences this year! Five were run by local youth groups and one was the annual YAC run con. It was great to see a huge number of new youth and advisors at the YAC and Princeton cons. We have a website up. Come check it out at <http://www.angelfire.com/ny/MetroYac>. Our newsletter; Chickenlipps, has not been put out recently, but we hope to get it going again next year.

This year we had two district advisor trainings and one Leadership Development Conference. All were successful. Our Young Adult programming is rap-

idly coming to life. A list of graduating seniors is being compiled and will be used to keep youth and young adults in touch with the UU world after high school. In September the annual Junior High Retreat will be held. There is already a full list of kids signed up to go, as well as a number of senior high youth who will be acting as counselors. We hope to develop another event for the junior high to be held in the spring.

-Mountain / Desert
-Ben Kidder & Micaela Christopher:

MDD held elections at the April con. Looks like a talented bunch. We had a con in early April in Boulder, and are planning a way of getting lots of kids to GA cheap! MDD kids will be attending WUUKY (Western Regional) con in July. New newsletter editors web page is <http://www.fly.to/yruu>. It may move, though. I know it's being renovated but aren't all web pages? We have an official liaison on the board now, Pat Simon. The system works pretty well. We had all three (SDCs/LDCs/ Advisor Trainings) last fall, all were huge successes. We will have them all again next fall. Our district has been typically inadequate in young adult offerings, but there are some new promising leaders and we expect to see some action next year. We have four cluster Jr. High cons (one in each region) per year. This summer in Denver we will have a week-long social action con for junior highers.

-Prairie Star District Report
-Stefanie Knipfer:

Our YAC is putting the finishing touches on our "YAC Seal of Approval." We put on an SDC in March and our annual district conference was two weeks ago. We're putting out our newsletter in June. One thing we're going to start looking at is our voting policy for electing the YAC and Boone Planning Committee to try and make it more fair to all running.

-Pacific Central
-Alana McGibeny:

We just elected a new YRUU council in February and the transition is going quite well. We had some issues with not filling all the positions at our elections conference, but we got a committee to find people to fill spots. There's been talk of trying to reduce the size of our council (13 youth, 3 adults) but so far we can't find any positions that aren't vital to our existence. Cons are going well, attendance has been a little low, but a large crop of fresh blood has aged in and are excited about

YRUU. We're trying to get more youth into some of the less intensive leadership roles (touch group leaders, workshop leaders, etc.) to start honing their skills early and get them into the leadership pool. We're also participating in WUUKY, a week-long con for PCD, PSWD, PNWD, and MDD this summer. It's gonna be BAD ASS! We've, in the past, had problems with Grust, our newsletter. It's been hard to get submissions in and the editors get burnt out writing everything themselves. We've got some real cracker-jack editors this year who are putting out a lot of effort to get out great Grusts and collect submissions. We've got a web page up for the first time. It's still pretty low key, but we've got big plans for the future. The only spot on our council that isn't filled as of this moment is our district BOT liaison, but, as a member of the board of trustees, I can say that relations are great. The board couldn't be more supportive of youth and we're all (the board and YRUU council) trying to encourage youth to get involved in stuff on the district level outside of YRUU.

We had an LDC in December that was quite successful and are planning another one for fall. We had an advisor training last year and are planning one soonish. No SDC yet, we're trying to get that ball rolling soon though. There was also an UUYAN LDC in December too that helped kick our district's non-existing UUYAN in the ass and now there's a rockin' UUYAN in effect. The new UUYAN is working closely with YRUUers and ex-YRUUers to try to make a place that YRUUers can grow into. We've been talking about the need for aging out ritualie stuff, but nothing happening yet. We had a BITCHIN' jr high conference in November (12-14 yr olds) that sucked a whole new batch of youngin's into our web. BWAHAHAHA! Oh, sorry for that lil' outburst. We have a jr high conference every year, as well as two all age-range (12-22) cons, so those jr highers fall into the trap really quick.

-Western Canada
-Danielle Picard:

Up until October we had no YAC. At the fall con we decided on a "temporary" YAC as we did not have time for official elections. Elections will be this October. We are having two conferences a year now. YAH! One in the fall and one in the spring. The fall was in Edmonton and the spring con was in Saskatoon. We've had one newsletter out this year and the

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other should be coming out within the month. Our website is fully functional. Submitted a report for Feb. meeting of the WCD board. I also talked to the Board President as she lives in Winnipeg with me. We had a spirituality development conference in Edmonton. Young adults and soon-to-be young adults got together at the Saskatoon con and are planning a YA con in the fall for the first time!

-Ohio Meadville District Report

-Mimi LaValley:

A fascist coup has been perpetrated by the board on YAC! YAC meeting scheduled for 5/22 to discuss age range mess. Board has handed down a mandate changing our age range to 14-20. Last con was huge, we protested SOA speaker concerning the military. There were lots of good workshops and public vigil. The website is rad. It's under construction but good. Newsletter is good too, it has youth group reports and comes inside the "District Doings" adult newsletter. "Coffee Tea or Schmech?" is the newsletter. The board thinks it's a good idea for a youth member but there's a lot of bureaucratic hoopla. We've wanted a youth on the Board for a while. YAC liaison is our pal but can't really be involved. We are trying to get an LDC together for August. Post-high used to come to our cons, now they can't.

-Central Mass

-Aaron Kucharski:

The YAC meetings lately have been to discuss MASSive con and our weaknesses. Also, a lot has been discussed on what we are going to do with the grant money that we just got from the district. Yum yum. Our last con however was a flop. It was a result of poor communication, but we think our upcoming cons will be good, as a result of how successful MASSive con was, and people will like to see us again. The newsletter has been put on hold which is bad because it's a good thing! And we actually have a website now. It's on reconstruction and such, basically YAC intros.

-Adult @ Large Report

-Rob Nugen:

We (YAC) have just rewritten our by-laws to say YRUU = 14-19 aged youth. District Board officially recognizes YAC but has not sent an adult rep to our meetings. YAC makes \$1000 per year and needs only \$3000. Board gave us \$1500, though we requested \$2000. Our \$1000 income is swallowed by board budget under line item "other." YAC will request

our income be recognized. District youth are encouraged at each rally to voice concerns. We have no official con for this. If you mean for YAC, then yes, YAC has an annual retreat in the summer. Newsletter = Yackity YAC is forthcoming. It suffers from lack of input from SWD YRUU. New editor will add bulk to the letter by including YRUU news and stuff. SWD YRUU district website = <http://swd.yruu.org> includes rally reviews, upcoming events, YRUU pics, a fun survey, contact list (not updated). SWD YAC has started a YAC exchange program. We send youth and adult to a con and that district sends youth and adult to a rally.

-Adult @ Large Report

-Jeff Liebman:

We finally had an Advisor Training last February attended by ~ 18 adults. The networking will be very valuable. I talked extensively with the Youth Advisor Task Force at General Assembly and am continuing dialogue via email. I have been participating as respondent in Essex Conversations. Discussions of the future of UU Religious Education through the R.E. department in Boston. I am heavily involved with UU Cards (Curriculum and Resource Developers) who are all independent UU curriculum writers. I finished my fourth high school curriculum this year, titled "Dare to Know" which focuses on Humanism and Western Philosophy.

-Ohio Valley

-Robin Larsen:

We just elected a new YAC at the Spring Con, on March 5-7. We have had two meetings so far. We just had our spring election con, as I said, on March 5-7. We also had a spirituality con in Cincinnati @ Heritage Church on April 30- May 1. We are planning our Fall Fun Con tentatively for Muncie, IN. Our newsletter just came out: the S.U.N. (Still Unnamed Newsletter) and our website's URL is http://www.harmony.pvt.k12.in.us/~robin/yruu_ovd.html shorter URL should be working anytime now. Our secretary/archivist is writing reports for the board and whoever lives closest to where the meeting is being held will present them. We just had an advisor training, our spirituality con was April 30th, and we are planning a LDC for this winter. As of now we have no Post-High Rep. The last YAC elected and created a Middle School Liaison, it is an optional position and if anyone on the YAC has suggestions they can introduce them to the YAC and bring them to one meeting before they are voted on.

-Mid South District Report

-Chris Trace:

Each YAC Chair in the MSD has a corresponding position on a District BOT subcommittee. This has not been as successful as we hoped, but it has borne fruit. The YAC hopes that this will work better this year as our YAC terms line up with the BOT terms, before there was a six month gap. In January, the YAC finally completed the "Policy Relating to Sexual Behavior at MSD Youth Sponsored Events," revised the "Smoking Policy", and established "Conference Guidelines." This is an effort to rid the MSD of any misconceived notions related to youth programming. On May 1, the MSD YRUU elected a new YAC. At our first meeting, we discussed our goals for the upcoming year. Our number one goal is to involve churches in district YRUU that haven't been previously been involved. The Mid-South District Social Justice committee has been sponsoring a district-wide Habitat for Humanity project. There has been youth participation throughout the project; however, April 9-11 was designated as the YRUU Week-end. This year was the Second Anniversary of "formal" youth participation at our Annual Meeting (a.k.a. MSD RendevUUs) and the youth-lead workshop was heavily attended by adults and response was generally excellent. On 14-16 May, we had our first annual Bridging Ceremony in and out of YRUU. The YAC currently has a website (www.uua.org/msd/yac) we are looking for another web person. We have plans for a YRUU Newsletter to be printed and mailed in the fall quarter. On February 6, we had our Advisor Training. We will have both a spirituality and leadership conference next year, see calendar. Because this year's YAC had a short term (we moved the elections to the Annual Meeting), and was preoccupied with the Sex Policy, we had far fewer conferences this year than in past years. We now have a Jr. High TAR on the YAC and are going to have our first Jr. High Conference in October. For the first time, two churches have youth board members that are not Youth Representatives: Huntsville Rachel Revis is the Social Justice Chair, and Tuscaloosa Chris Trace, me, is Denominational Affairs Chair. The Northwest Congregation in Atlanta had their annual Dinner Theater in March. In Macon, GA, there was a Youth Service in April. In Mobile, AL Shawn Masterson is revolutionizing how that small church is looking at RE and YRUU.



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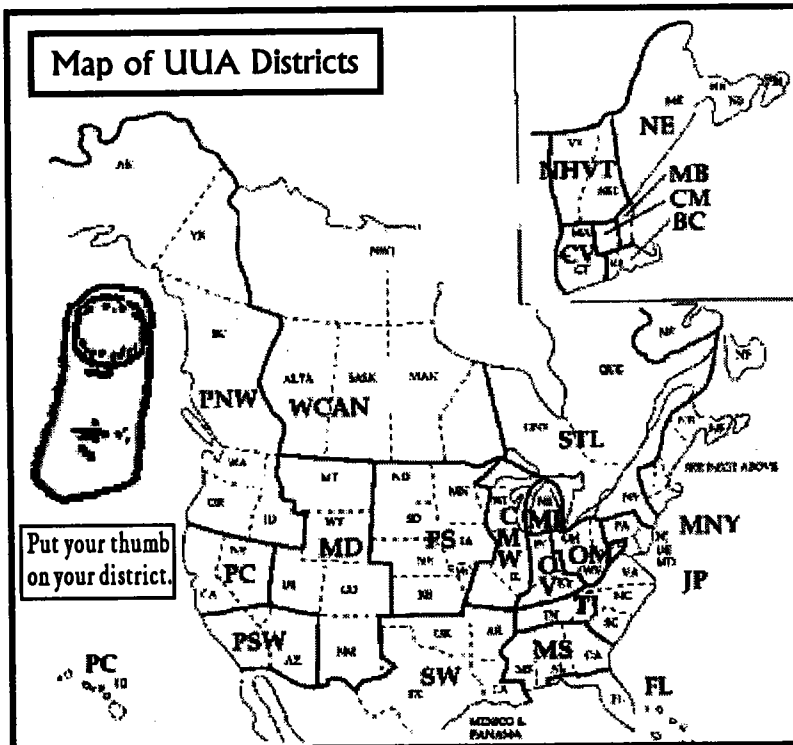
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Map of UUA Districts



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(ex-officio at Youth Council)

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Contact your YCR
for more info about district
and continental events.



Prisoner Censorship

Interview by Logan Harris

I recently attended a discussion group in Boston led by a group called RAIL about censorship within prisons, and some of the stuff that I learned was pretty interesting, so I followed up and e-mailed some questions to the organization. And somebody somewhere, who apparently has no name, e-mailed me back some answers.

What is your organization all about?

The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League (RAIL) is a mass organization of anti-imperialists who are struggling for national self-determination for all oppressed nations. Being a mass organization, RAIL is made up of many different classes holding many political ideologies, all of which unite around fighting against imperialism.

RAIL sees imperialism in the hundred years United States occupation of Puerto Rico and the Philippines. We see imperialism in American state-terrorist bombings of Arab and African countries that will not happily submit to United States political and economic demands.

Imperialist economic domination is evident in the thousands of people who attempt to cross militarized borders without legal papers year by year. These undocumented immigrants and workers know they can find better jobs in the United States - grown wealthy at the expense of their own countries - than they can at home. And we see imperialism in the exploding American prisons, whose construction and maintenance provide jobs for the white nation while American gulags cage huge segments of the Black and Latino nations.

For all these reasons, RAIL addresses United States imperialism as a brutal abuser of the oppressed nations. In the fight against imperialism, we welcome all people who want to see these forms of injustice destroyed.

Explain some basic stuff about the United States prison system and some of the problems with it.

It is first necessary to know that the United States has the highest per capita incarceration rate in the world. The only country that ever came close to the United States rate was apartheid South Africa. This definitely says something about the so-called "democratic freedoms" people have here.

ALSO, United States prisons lock up a disproportionately high percentage of Black, Latino and First Nation members. That means for every crime that exists, Blacks, Latinos, and First Nation members are much more likely to be incarcerated for the alleged crime, even if the white rate of committing the crime is equal to all other nations' rates. The incarceration rate per 100,000 Black men is 1,947, while for whites it is only 306(1). In essence, the prison system, and by far the injustice system as a whole, are explicitly targeting oppressed nation members in the American quest for social control and imperialist dominance.

More cops are sent to urban, Black, and Latino areas. First Nation members are routinely targeted and forced under the jurisdiction of the Federal, not state, Government, which usually means a heftier sentence. Since many oppressed nations are poor, the legal council they do receive is inadequate. Judges routinely act on racial biases, one only need to read up on Mumia Abu Jamal's case under "Hanging Judge" Sabo. When it comes to the death penalty, 54% of all legal executions since 1930 have been of Black men, while Blacks are only 12% of the population. With the relatively recent push to privatize prisons and sell prisoners for slave labor, a new motive to lock people up for profit has entered the game. Overall, the United States prison system is an extremely explicit example of what American imperialism is all about, social control and economic dominance via militarized national oppression.

Censorship of prisoners' mail is just one tactic the system is using to keep this information inside the walls, and to keep activists like RAIL from exposing the injustices that take place.

How are things sent to prisoners censored?

Right now across the country, prisoners' mail is being censored in a lot of different ways. One way that is hardest to fight against is the censorship of outgoing mail from prisoners. Often times if a prisoner is outspoken, politically active, and/or has filed a complaint against a guard, his/her outgoing mail to family, friends, legal council, or political affiliates will



Theme section:
art & censorship



Prisoner Censorship cont'd

be thrown out, ripped up, or disposed of in some other way. That is if the prisoner even has access to writing supplies or money to buy stamps. Which relates to another topic, the price of stamps is inflated in prison. This in itself is censorship. If you don't have the resources to voice yourself, you are de facto censored.

Another form of censorship is of prisoners' incoming mail. This takes many forms from outright destruction of material to the issue of rejection/contraband slips for "unauthorized" material. For instance, MIM (Maoist Internationalist Movement) runs a Free Books for Prisoners program that RAIL actively participates in. We send free books to prisoners on world revolution, social change, political philosophy, and Black, Latino, and Indigenous First Nation nationalism and culture. Because of the fascistic nature of the prison system, these are the materials that prisoners are asking for. Yet these are the same materials that the prison administrators are censoring and calling a "security threat." There are two responses to this:

1. Given that all government forces are expected to follow the constitution, the censorship of prisoners' mail, especially their political material, is a violation of the First Amendment. RAIL does not support the constitution as a representation of liberation ideology, however, it is important to point out the state's contradictions when they exist. All people are allowed access to free speech. Through censorship of prisoner's mail, their First Amendment rights are violated.

2. Even further, these materials are books meant and used to educate prisoners. Education programs have in effect become eliminated after the high school level and libraries and access to them is drastically limited.

The injustice system's (or "justice" system's) motive is to ensure a numbed and politically inactive prison populace. The books we send raise the political consciousness of prisoners. Since knowledge is power, this does in fact cause a threat to the current oppressive system. The main point is that the American Constitution supposedly allows for such activity, and more importantly, RAIL believes that those who are oppressed should be educated on ways to change the unequal society. Resistance to imperialist dominance is a good thing.

While the books we send are censored in a lot of prisons around the country to varying degrees, it is not just our material that doesn't get in. Many Islamic prisoners have had their religious material censored because it is allegedly "terrorist" material - an example of the State's religious chauvinism. Also, outspoken prisoners, political leaders and those who have filed lawsuits against prison actions and policies have almost all of their mail censored.

Who censors them?

Directly it is the prison mailroom staff who physically censor the material. But the censorship cannot solely be blamed on them. Most states have repressive codes of regulations, created by state legislative bodies that list such things as

"books only sent directly from publishers allowed". This is a big problem since many prison book programs receive their books secondhand to reduce costs. Also, many of the books we send are out of print and therefore can no longer be sent from publishers. In many cases, actual material is removed from prisoners' cells by guards and labeled contraband. Oftentimes, the removal of reading material takes place only hours after a prisoner files a grievance report.

What types of materials are censored?

The vast majority of mail that is censored is political material, anything that purports a political agenda. This however does not include Ku Klux Klan and white supremacist material, which is almost always let into prisons. For those more politically outspoken, mail to and from their family and friends is censored.

How do officials "get away with it," i.e. What excuses are used for censoring these materials?

Many times, the administration will not even give an excuse. Though states are bound by law to issue rejection slips to prisoners if their mail was censored, they oftentimes don't. This makes fighting legal battles incredibly difficult since prisoners don't have any material evidence that their mail was censored. The argument breaks down to the prison mailroom's word against a prisoner's.

Also, these practices of just throwing the material away force distributors like MIM and RAIL to waste valuable resources. Many realize that the leftist forces in the United States are NOT well funded, so even these seemingly small attacks leave a large impact. We waste resources and prisoners complain that their material was never sent. This has the effect of splitting the revolutionary forces by making distributors look flaky. Luckily MIM and RAIL have been able to overcome such repressive measures by the state.

What can we (youth namely) do to help stop this?

There are many things youth can do to help out. One thing directly related to prison censorship is to join in the MIM and RAIL "Stop Censorship" postcard campaign. We are setting up tables across the country and encouraging passersby to sign a postcard in support of ending the censorship of prisoners' mail. We pick the most repressive prisons and send the postcards to the mailroom to show mass support for prisoners' First Amendment rights.

Also, we are currently trying to get progressive lawyers to take up the case on prisoner censorship. We need people to encourage lawyers and law students to join in the struggle.

One of our biggest enemies at this time is ignorance, and through education, we can overcome it. MIM Notes has two pages of prison letters in every paper called "Under Lock and Key" as well as various articles that expose the repressive measures the state is taking to crush the revolution. We need to get this independent media distributed across the country. Also RAIL holds regular educational events on the overall nature of the oppressive prison system, to get involved contact RAIL at rail@mim.org.

Logan is the chair of the Mass. Bay District Steering Committee.





I wasn't what you might call the most popular kid in my high school. So naturally instead of sticking it out and accepting what was given to me, I said screw this and headed to a private school about half an hour away from my house. So my sophomore year I packed my proverbial stuff and headed off to "Central Catholic High School." When I got there the number of friends I had doubled (unfortunately as I found out zero multiplied by two is still zero). Although strangely I was happier than before, because not having friends was familiar but not being attacked as I walked through the halls was completely new to me.

So anyways, now that you are up to speed I can get to the point. The school was having a t-shirt/jeans day so I decided to borrow my sister's shirt. Up in the corner of the shirt (where the breast pocket would be) it simply had an upside down pink triangle and underneath it said, "boycott homophobia." I had gotten through the day having dealt with some hatred but mostly ignorance. I got to the last period of the day not really having any major problems and then as I walked out of the classroom the teacher decided that my shirt had to do with "sex" and decided to give me a penalty hall (detention, or what ever they call it in your neck of the woods). Sex was one of the 3 no no's that the school had set for shirt themes,

nothing about sex drugs or the occult, yet people walking around with "Big Johnson" shirts on had no repercussions. So I was understandably upset. I tried to explain to her as nicely as possible that she was an idiot and that she was making a mistake but she didn't seem to care.

So after class (wanting to get this taken care of right away, because it was a Friday and I wasn't about to let this sit for a weekend) I ran around talking to various people around the school with power, deans, teachers, secretaries, and even tried to talk to the principal but he was "unavailable." But the general consensus of the school hierarchy was that the teacher was right. I continued to get more and more upset, so I went

Adventures In Acceptance

By Nathan Staples

home and started making phone calls. I called a friend who had some connections and we decided that the best way to handle it was to do a press release. We got far more coverage of the press release than we ever thought we would. It was on the 6 o'clock news three nights in a row (one of the TV stations found me when I hadn't even given out my name). It was in papers all over Ohio, we even got a small article in USA Today. Well oddly the next Monday I was called into the vice principal's office and apologized to by pretty much the people who had agreed with the decision the Friday before. It forced people in the school to talk about homophobia and there was even an "emergency" school mass held on "hating the sin, not the sinner" which wasn't exactly what I wanted but I could see that they were trying. After that I could pretty much see the principal whenever I needed to and I was assured that I could wear the shirt again.

What is the point of all this. I still don't see what the big deal was but people still look up to me because of that event, all I did was wear a t-shirt. If I can get this much coverage out of wearing a t-shirt, think what you could do with what bugs you at your school.

Nathan Staples is a Young Adult who hails from Ohio-Meadville District. There he enjoys long walks on the beach and sits by the fire on a cold snowy night. If you are interested, call him at box # 289764

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NATHAN STAPLES TELLING YOU WHO THE PERSON IS. COURTESY OF THE BO #3 CHESTNUT ST. MUSEUM



she had...

by Yasmin Golan

She had
such a command
of the English language
that she would dress up in
black leather and spiked heels
just to read the dictionary

she turned phrases
like critics turn pages
and she turned tricks
because in L.A.
you're either a star
or a star-fucker
and if you were lucky
you got lucky
playing harlot
top this little starlet

and pretty soon
her books
had stickier pages
than Hustler
and fans at booksignings
would ask just to be
thrown over her knee
for a spanking
and the redmarks on their ~~asses~~
were sold at auction houses
for thousands of dollars
to European collectors

she turned other poets
into dirty little boys
they'd been all along
and all their prestigious tenured
positions
to enlist as her love slaves
who squealed like pigs
and rolled about on the floor
belly up

she would handcuff them
with iambic pentameter
and count syllables
to the stomp of her heels
on their sweaty faces
she made betty page look like
your aging Jewish grandmother

she had all the right verses
in all the right places
and she was very well endowed
with a very large vocabulary
and all her poems
were a perfect 36-24-36
and she looked smashing
dressed in nothing
but a black leather bookjacket

on Capital Hill
she was the postergirl for
everything that is wrong
with American popular culture
by officials who later admitted
they'd never read her work
but that was okay with her
she got even-
she slept with all the Senators
in her first one hundred days in
Washington
And given them all crabs

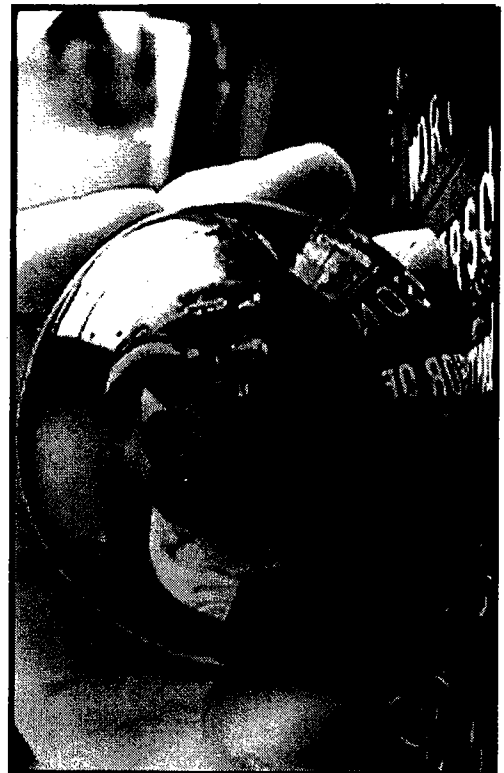
And she wrote
That liberals made love
While conservatives went on
about
family values
until she could shove the bit in
their mouths
and get out the saddle and
the riding crop
and she appeared at open mic night
seminude
wearing nothing
but some punctuation
and a skimpy haiku number
she would seduce
all the really bad poets
into sleeping with her
and then persuade them
to retire and commit suicide
(in that order)

she was the centerfold and pretty soon
even Rick Lupert couldn't get
published
last I heard
he was writing for
Hallmark greeting cards

But he got fired
Because there isn't a holiday
for kitchen appliances
And they didn't like the word
"penis"
in their Mother's Day cards

she wasn't quite a lady
I mean
She couldn't fill teacups
But she could fill D-cups
And she wore black leather latex gloves
When fisting critics
And she could tug on their
heartstrings
(if her fingers reached that far
inside)
but she wasn't what I would call
sentimental
I mean, she couldn't remember a
face
but she could remember an
asshole
from across the street

art &
censorship



SELF PORTRAIT, BY MATTHEW REIDERER





The Hows & Whys of Publishing Zines

I'm no expert, but I'll By Julie Slater

share with you what I know about self-published, small circulation [magal]zines. When I was 14, I started a zine, mostly full of collage and my own prose. I continued to produce issues for two years, and eventually included other people's writings (poetry, fiction, opinion rants), comics and artwork, zine reviews, and a bit more. I did it because I wanted to share my voice, my art. I didn't care who saw it, I didn't care if people liked it because I liked it, and that was enough. It became an important piece of my self-expression. Instead of submitting my work to another publication, my writing and art was instantly published, exactly the way I wanted it, when I wanted it. My zine was also a way to test my art; it was a way to get reactions and responses to my efforts.

Everyone has their own idea of what a zine is, or what it should/can be. When I was doing my zine, I found allies in Denver- other zinesters- old and young, urban and suburban. Every one of them approached the 'zine' concept differently. We eventually formed the "Colorado Zine Pool" (CZP) - a zine nerds' network, basically. We met once or twice a month downtown at a coffee shop (ooh cool) and... networked! Someone always knew where to get a good deal on photocopies (err, where to get them free!), etc. We all benefited from learning how others dealt with submissions, subsidized costs (selling at record stores, stealing, etc.), even if we didn't agree on how they did it. We all pitched in to make a catalog of all "Colorado Zine Pool" zines, and all shared in the distribution. Some people spoke of it in their zines, others sent them away to everyone they knew. It was a great way for new people to know and support Colorado zines. CZP also set up a table of all CZP zines at different festivals in the Denver metro area - festivals, raves, and shows.

ZINE CLASS TEACHER/EDITOR:

At my rockin' alternative high school, students were encouraged to share their skills by offering and teaching classes to a combined middle/high school. I introduced my own experience, and also shared other zines with them, but let the students decide the content, structure, and subject. They came to consensus on *CHEAP THRILLS*, a zine by and for bored semi-suburban kids with little

or no car and money. Each issue had a theme; once it was Transportation. Our writers wrote about bus stops, funny encounters on the city bus. Our photographer took pictures related to the theme - action shots of cars flying by, people on the bus, bus stops. One of our comics artists made a page about his transportation experiences - every way to 'get there' - footsteps, bus schedules; another comics artist made a crazy story about a cat and his car.

I usually just spell checked/edited, arranged the contents and the covers. The other issues were on other big, workable topics, like Animals (articles against pet stores, on the fur/animal print comeback in fashion, and much more!)... We also spent quality time coloring the photocopied covers with crayons during class while we brainstormed on the next issue. We all took copies home to distribute any way possible: from dropping them off at public businesses (coffee shops, Taco Bell, hair salons) to offering them to drivers stuck at a red light. (We also handed copies to our friends sometimes.)

Making a zine is wonderful because THERE ARE NO RULES! (just don't plagiarize, kids). It's all on you to decide the contents, the editing, and the distribution. You can pour your heart out or you can list your favorite jokes. It can be one-quarter page or 50 pages long. You can make it in your closet all by yourself, or you and 10 other people can make something together. You can make a quickie - writing and photocopying everything right under an hour at the copy store, or you can spend a year arranging, writing, and editing your masterpiece. You can make it for only your closest of friends (last summer my friend, spending the summer in Anchorage, AK got bored and lonely one night and wrote about her job, her brother, and the three-hour nights and just sent it to 13 friends), or you can put it on the Web, or send it across the world. (Basically anything that character would/would not do with green eggs and ham applies here.)

SO YOU WANNA MAKE A ZINE! Some basics:

There are many kinds of zines. You can choose to make yours a mish-mash of them all, or disregard this section. It's your bag.

• Personal zines. I've known some people who confessed more in their zine than they normally would to their friends. Either it was the best way they could get it off their chest, or it was more comforting to tell these things to an anonymous face. These zines can be POWERFUL resources to their readers. To read a personal account that may speak to their own experience just might encourage them to talk about it, or at least not feel alone. The beauty of personal zines is that they are straight from the writer's own interpretation of their experience. There is no TV-movie feeling; there are no sponsors or consumers to please, nor any market to compete in, all of which may





alter the content of the story. Some people draw comics about their own life. Some write about their crazy trip to Siberia or the trip to the grocery store and their thoughts on seedless fruit. Anything in your personal life goes.

- Poetry, prose, fiction. Mix and match, do your thing!!
- Visual art. Whether it's collage, drawing, or photography. Just make sure photocopy reproduction won't ruin its essence. If so, better just leave it out - no one will understand that the muddled black and gray blob on page 5 is a work of genius.

- Political zines!!! Have you got something to say about... anything! The 'ISMs, capitalism, Barbie's psychological impact on a girl's body image, religious questioning... Come on, you're a UU, I expect a long list out of you. This is a great way to get your voice/view heard, to inform others about causes, current events (do you see any gaps in our media? hope so.); it can also challenge you to articulate what you DO believe. Tell it like it is! If you are involved in anti-sweatshop action, write about the facts. Present whatever you know (but don't claim to know anything you don't).

TIP 1: Know your stuff. List your resources when citing any facts, events, etc. just as you would in a paper for school. Your reader will know where to look for other resources on the issue, and you will be more credible. **TIP 2:** Tell your reader how to GET INVOLVED - addresses, phone numbers, organizations, literature to read (include other zines!), anything else.

Once again, please avoid plagiarism, and the blatant copying of photos/magazine pictures. If you do want to use blurbs from another source, or if you want to criticize another's article, I say it's all right to copy it as long as you are giving credit where it is deserved. Many people use magazine cut-outs in collage or for decoration, but don't make it the central focus, and for the love of ___ don't take credit for it. This all holds especially important if you want to charge \$\$ for your zine - the copyright kids can get peeved (that is, if they ever see it!).

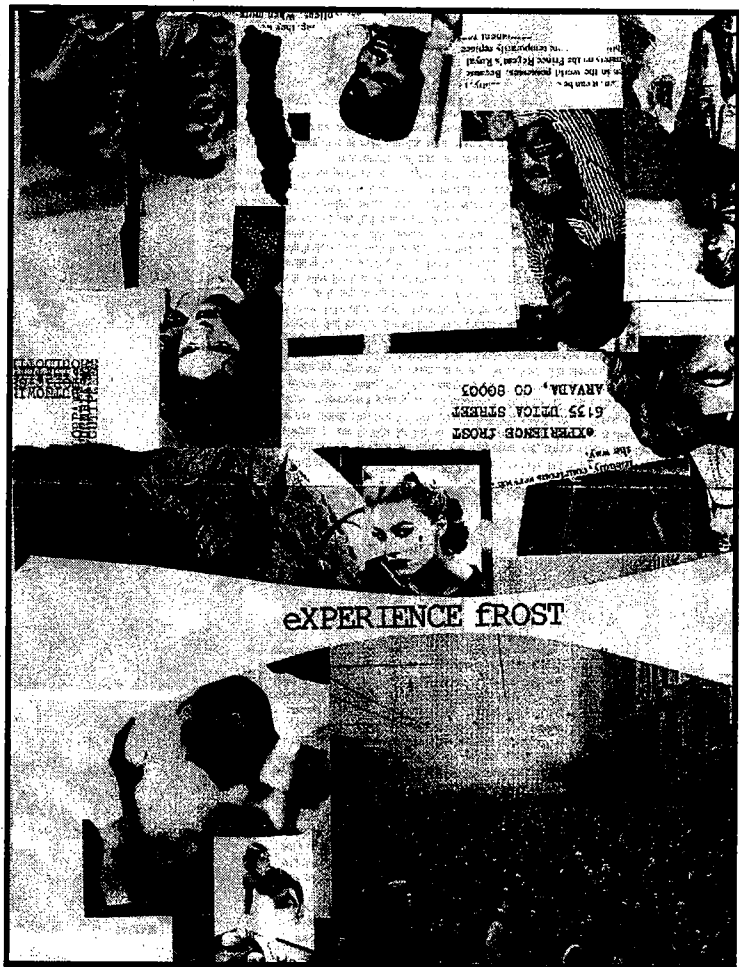
DISTRIBUTION:

There is a big zine craze out there. Publications like *Factsheet Five* [zine reviews] have turned it into some kind of competitive business to get reviewed. There are friendlier, more personal ways to get your stuff out there. I suggest word of mouth, trading copies and reviews with other zinesters you come into contact with. There are smaller (but organized, with wide distribution) zines like *HeartattaCk* who review a lot of zines. What is your goal?

Is your goal to have a huge audience or to be heard? I personally don't think the quantity of readers should be a priority. I think most people make their zines because they LIKE doing it. It's fun! Consider it a benefit when you meet cool people because of it, and when you discover other rad zines.

The faces of the people making zines are always changing. If you happen upon a zine's address from a year ago, you never know if they still live there or if they're still making the zine. Some people do it for a year, some people do the same zine for 10 years but are constantly traveling and have a P.O. BOX somewhere. Just be flexible. And make whatever zine you fancy!

Julie is currently serving as the Continental YRUVU Position on Appraisal focusing on furthering YRUVU's anti-racism efforts over the next two years.



A cover from one of Julie's first zines entitled "eXPERIENCE FROST."





GSA? Not In This School

By Jennica Davis
& Emily Knapus

In the school year of 1995-96 a group of 10-12 students at East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah decided to form a Gay Strait

Alliance (GSA). This was a club designed to provide support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) teens. When parents in the community found out about this club, they went to the SLC district school board and demanded that this club be banned. The only way to accomplish this legally would be to ban all other non-curricular clubs like Students Against Drunk Driving, the various ethnic clubs, the environmental club, and 43 other clubs.

The GSA responded to the ignorance of the parents and the censorship of their club by protesting for their rights. When that ceased to conjure compromise, they tried to start a new curricular club called the Rainbow Club. This club would focus on sociology and the history of GLBT nature and oppression. This club was denied by the school board, proving that prejudice was focused directly on the GSA.

Presently, there is a trial going on involving students from the GSA and the Salt Lake City School board. Students from East High School are suing the school board for denying their first amendment rights.

The trial is based on the idea that they banned all non-curricular clubs just to censor out the Gay-Straight Alliance. The students are receiving a lot of support from the ACLU, among other organizations. They have lawyers working for them free of charge from New York City and San Francisco as well as many from Salt Lake City.

This whole uproar has caused a lot of trauma, but good has also come out of it. The public has become more informed about the struggle of GLBT teens. Also, a branch of GLISTEN (a gay and lesbian teacher's association) has formed in Utah and the Gay and Lesbian community center has received more funding and was recently renovated. The East High faculty has become more informed. The GSA students have had the opportunity to be on many different panels and go to national conferences.

Emily and Jennica are youth from Mountain Desert District.

by Natalie Knazik

Lusting over the ages Birthday letters
Smiling Hyperion, Buddhas and Marx
diminished by hand by sword under god
one nation we stand indivisible
except into fifty divisible parts
divisible by county
divisible by scissors
divisible through the penwork of Pablo Neruda
Borges divisible Fredrico Garcia Lorca
Divisible Divisible Repeat shriekers
one quiet voice: multiply
hand slaps over mouth



divisible divisible

power lines ascend my body
while working down through yours
the kama sutra displaced on bookshelves
by How to ~~Fuck~~ Animals for Their Pleasure
AND Yours

~~fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck~~

it's the only word we really use anymore
plastic forks and knives and diapers
cover over copies of greek myths and legends

the dumpsters are full of them.

writing your name in the snow becomes art
Van Gogh sits mute staring
at a cut-up piece of foam rubber entitled
"Universe"

The weeping Titans Athena's vengeance
are as nothing to you
do you know who they are?
and "He is coming" means only one thing to you
and I don't believe that's easter miracles

a tiny point behind the sky—
Invisible, Unreadable
this is where forgotten dreams go
where Beethoven composes in his head
and Mahler mourns in Frere Jacques funeral march
this is Loki, Lilith, Bress, and Byron-

Down here? Here we have zen poetry
with simplicity removed
leaving only brevity and empty bowls
we have condensation
tight about our throats
sum up the Iliad in two chosen words—
War, Death
snicker over Da Vinci's proportions
but think Alanis Morissette is some great poet
for the tears of Penelope we can say nothing
Because mourning isn't really stylish anymore.

We have the Internet. We have the Power. Any Questions?

by Donald Wilson



The Internet is changing the way censorship is viewed. There was a time when the radio, television, and newspaper companies decided what we read. Now, anyone with access to a computer can write what they like, and that writing can be read by millions of others. In this way, the Internet is the ultimate forum of free speech; a giant wall waiting for spray-paint.

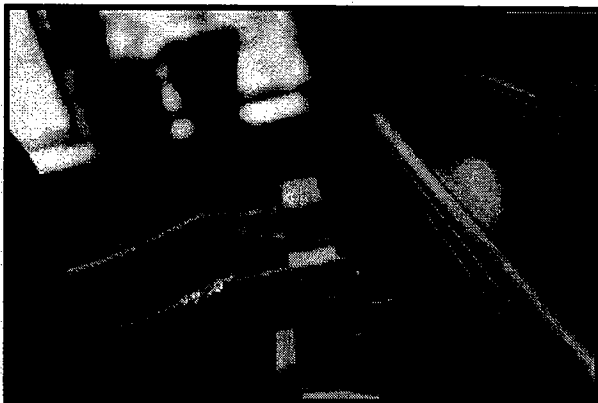
There's a paint that is often put on school buildings that repels paint and markers. Likewise, there are people that would like to see that the content of the Internet is formatted to fit your screen, edited for content and to run in the time allotted. Some advocates of censorship merely wish to have various programs installed on school and other public computers that will have "children" accessing them that will censor out pornography, violence, bomb-making information, and other things generally considered "uncivil." Still others desire to keep the actual sites containing porn, violence, Marilyn Manson, Satan worships, contraceptive information, and the like off the Internet entirely.

As yet, the US government has been unable to seriously censor the 'Net. Many attempts have been made, and but a few sentences have become law. The most censored things by the government involve national security. Computer programmers that encrypt data so only the intended reader can read it, thus not letting the FBI Computer Crimes division read your e-mail, are the prime example.

But there are always two sides to every coin. Out in the ether(net) reside those brave souls that say "I can post what I like." They are the ones that think outside the cage. They realize that there is one problem with a government restricting what is put on the Internet that will void most laws passed: The Internet is global. In fact, Iraq is the only country on this planet that has no (legal) connection to the rest of the world via e-mail. In truth, there IS a connection and he that is named "So-Damn Insane" has an e-mail address...at "Hotmail" I believe.

Your country does not let the local servers hold a site devoted to nude, male porn? Post it on a server in Denmark. You want to sell a nifty program you wrote that scrambles the data in your e-mail hopelessly unless the computer trying to read it knows the correct combination of 256 letters and numbers? Try Australia, the least censored country in the world with a government determined to keep it that way, and get others to follow suit.

Internet censorship is not a controversy that will go away. There will always be closed-minded people in positions of power, as will those that believe that too much knowledge is dangerous. To oppose them, there will always be the people that insist on their right to think and learn what they desire. Since when was absorbing information a crime? The best way to combat censorship is to paint messages on the virtual wall saying, "We have the Internet, We have the Power" until Big Brother pays attention and bows to true freedom.



ROXANNE YOUNG PLAYING THE PIANO.. COPYRIGHT JULIE SLATER

Donald is a geek of computer science and music. When not entertaining fellow GA goers with his piping, Donald enjoys reading, absorbing information in college, and tanning in front of his computer monitor. He can be contacted at mad_ian@excite.com or myruupiper@earthlink.net and would like to remind you to support your local geek.

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Sensitivity and Censorship Within Our Community:

*an interview with Jessie Eller-Issacs
by Matthew Riederer*

Matthew Riederer is a celebrated historian and amateur astronaut. He interviewed Ms. Eller-Issacs one Thursday morning during a break in Ms. Eller-Issacs' busy schedule (which is planned to the minute by Fraggles) while the two were simultaneously, coincidentally staying at the Louvre, France. What follows is an exact transcript of their conversation.

Matthew: Hello, how are you?

Jessie: Hello.

M: Well, how are you?

J: Um, fine, thanks.

M: You're welcome. Now shall we begin?

J: ...

M: Well, shall we?

J: Yes.

M: Good. Recently I have heard many friends talk about censorship in YRUU. Have you had any experience with that?

J: Well, it's difficult to say. I have witnessed many instances when a person or group of people were doing a coffee house (talent show) skit, or leading an activity in a group setting and they were cut off or interrupted because what they were doing was offensive to people in the audience. It's hard for me to tell though, whether to call that censorship or simply a promotion of sensitivity in the community.

M: You are talking about instances in which it is unclear what is allowed at a conference. Don't the code of ethics and all of the things said at opening circle make that clear?

J: I think that the code of ethics is extremely vague. I grew up at my district conferences hearing rules in orientations such as "don't harsh people's mellow" and "we are an accepting and loving community." Now, both those things are all well and good but the conference flyers and the deans never said, "This community will not tolerate prejudice jokes and racial slurs." Maybe it was never said because people in power thought that every one already knew or that all of the youth at the conferences were raised Unitarian Universalists and already tried to live their lives free of prejudice. However, do these assumptions give conference leaders the right to cut people off during a performance or an activity? I'm not so sure.

M: It seems to me that, when people are cut off, it leaves things unfinished. Has that been your experience?

J: The times that I have seen people interrupted, nothing has been explained to the greater community. The leader who cut the "offender" off usually takes them aside privately after the fact and gives them a little talking to. I feel that when someone is interrupted in a group setting and then the interruption is left unexplained to the group, it defeats the purpose of cutting off the person in the first place. In addition, while the interruption takes place, the entire community is left stunned and uncomfortable.

M: When you feel uncomfortable about something that is going on, how do you voice that discomfort?

J: When I feel uncomfortable in a situation like that, I usually do not feel like it's my place to speak to

the whole community and I usually just end up bitching to my friends about it, which is not productive or helpful to the community at all.

M: Have you ever been so offended that you asked someone to stop what they were doing?

J: Yes I have, but it occurs more often outside of a conference setting than within it.

M: There seems to be a discrepancy in our community's reaction to racist jokes and our reaction to homophobic jokes. Why do you think that is?

J: I feel that there are a lot of homophobic jokes told at YRUU events. I think people generally feel that because the GLBT community is very well represented in YRUU that it is o.k. to make jokes about it. With racist jokes I think people are a lot more careful because YRUU is so lacking in minority participants and no one would want to offend the few minorities that do attend events. To me this is ridiculous, oppression and prejudice are oppression and prejudice no matter how well represented in our community the targeted group is.

M: How about jokes and comments that target other religious groups, particularly those groups consisting of individuals who might be said to, "worship a Christian God?"

J: I feel that there is not enough formatted discussion at YRUU about youth's feeling about other religions. People just tend to toss ideas around about their hatred for the radical right or the way that their father's Catholic upbringing ruined their home life. These are feelings that other youth probably would identify with if they were given the time and place to discuss them.

M: If I may paraphrase our dilemma: We in YRUU would like to have a community where people feel free to speak their mind, where ideas are not suppressed, where there is no censorship. However, we also choose a community that is anti-racist, that defends everyone's right to decide for themselves about spirituality, sexuality, etc. Finally, we would like to have a community where everyone feels welcomed and loved. Which is the priority, freedom of speech or protection from bigotry? Are they mutually exclusive?

J: Say, I do smell something. It smells almost like something old and indescribably valuable and ornate is burning. (Coughing)

M: Yes, I do believe you've placed that smell! Now I can smell an oil painting! Maybe some thing impressionist?

J: Close, I think it smells like pointilism burning. many voices: Ahhhhhhhhh, Ohhhh, Ahhhhh (muffled screaming)

Nathan Staples: Oh God, it's horrible!

Matthew Riederer is a youth from Mountain Desert District, where he's been active in both local and district programming. Jessie is a youth from Pacific Central District and is a former Jr. High Transitional Age Range Representative..



Down with Defacing?

By Abby Stainer

art & censorship



I am sitting at my friend Reid's house when John's pager goes off. He checks the message and then explains that either his crew has finished the graffiti mural or the police caught them. He hopes they paged because they finished.

John, like many others, is a break-dancer who belongs to a crew that spray paints murals and break dances together. Those more skilled with spray paint than dancing often sit around filling up blank books with marker sketches of the murals they hope one day will span a twenty-foot wall.

Unfortunately most of these artists and dancers face a huge problem...the law. Most municipalities and states have laws concerning graffiti art. Those unfortunate enough to be caught in the act face a misdemeanor charge that is usually deemed "defacing public property" or "malicious mischief." The offenders are usually fined but they can also receive up to six months in jail.

Despite this, thousands of teenagers take on these risks to express themselves with the skill and passion of any master artist.



Graffiti picture courtesy of Rob2. Used with permission from: <http://home.att.net/%7Ev.coslc/>

I know of one store in Tulsa that has an entire wall dedicated to the talent of these artistic geniuses. The wall is covered in photos of local murals brought in by the store's customers. Other companies are coming around and commissioning these artists to do murals on the sides of their buildings. I know of one gallery that had a show where a graffiti artist spray-painted a mural. But these stores and companies are too few to sway the public opinion that graffiti is ugly and nothing but a delinquency.

I think it is defiantly safe to say that graffiti is moving into the realm of fine art and these laws are a type of censorship. I also have a strong feeling that over the next few years graffiti art will gain more public attention and appreciation and will no longer be censored so severely.

Abby Stainer is a youth from Tulsa, Oklahoma. God, is she a rawker!

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Censoring Ophelia:

An Interview with Renowned Author Dr. Mary Pipher

By Mimi LaValley

At General Assembly this year, I was fortunate enough to interview the Ware Lecturer, Dr. Mary Pipher, Unitarian Universalist psychologist, author, and speaker.

She is the New York Times best-selling author of *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding our Families*, and *Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of our Elders*. She has also written a book called *Hunger Pains* about the American phenomenon of eating disorders. Her writing about the destructive influences of our culture in peoples' lives, in families, and in the development of adolescent girls is very powerful and she has given a voice to a lot of America's silent predicaments. Through her books and frequent speaking engagements across the country, she guides people towards thinking in new ways about how their way of life affects others and how they can improve their life by making conscious choices. I wanted to introduce you all to Dr. Pipher's important work and present her unique perspectives on what we consider art and why people sometimes feel threatened by it.

She shared with me a little about her theories, which are so simple and yet, to some people, revolutionary. What she has to say about freedom of speech is refreshing, to say the least. She is never at a loss for innovative solutions to societies' biggest and ugliest problems, such as censorship, which she says "never works." And she even has some suggestions for how we can improve the exchange rate of ideas in our YRUU communities and be a better support network for each other.

Here is some of our conversation:

I wanted to know what she thought the role of an artist was, and if she felt she was one, as I did.

Dr. Pipher: "Well, I'm honored that you think so. Let's put it that way. And I think anybody who uses words well can call themselves an artist.... And in that sense, I obviously try to be an artist. I try to use words well. And the other thing I try to do which is part of being an artist is to think very clearly and make very complicated ideas visible to other people. And so in that sense, yes.

"On the other hand," she said, "As an artist...I have a lot to learn. I see myself as really wanting to be a better writer and having still, hopefully, a lot more progress to make."

Dr. Pipher's basic philosophies are extremely progressive and at the same time hardly threatening or even complicated. For example: her assertion in *The Shelter of Each Other* that families are crucial to our development, and that therapists should work to rebuild rather than divide them. She had this response to my asking about her being both profound and straightforward, her ideas both ingenious and simple.

"Most of the great ideas, not saying I have great ideas, but most of the great ideas in the world are very simple. Like for example Gandhi. His idea was very simple. 'Don't fight back.' Jesus Christ had very simple ideas. 'Treat other people the way you want to be treated.' Being profound actually involves being very simple. And so I'm honored when people say, 'Your ideas are simple.' I see that as good and the same with the writers that I respect the most. For example, I really love Mary Oliver as a poet. I love Robert Frost. They use very simple ideas. They write about stars, stones, water, and so on.

"I think the ideas in *Reviving Ophelia* that I tried to make the clearest are: that there's a disconnect for girls between childhood and adolescence, that with the pressures of adolescence, many girls lose sight of who they really are, in fact they stop being concerned with that entirely and instead are concerned with how they seem to other people. And that that is a very confusing and sometimes destructive experience. But that it isn't a necessary experience. Some girls escape it, some girls experience it to a certain extent, and figure out ways to fight and resist losing their true selves. There are things parents can do, there are things girls can do, there are things communities can do to make that transition from childhood to womanhood less painful and punishing. That's the essence of the book."

I wanted to hear all about the people who had rejected her theories, and how they had tried to prevent her from making them known. To my surprise, she didn't have many stories like that. "... I think the reason I don't get too much criticism is first of all, I'm not a polarizing person. I try never to attack anybody. I try to understand everybody's point of view. I try to write at the level—in a way it's a level beyond politics.... Everybody, whether they're republican or democrat, liberal or conservative basically at a core level wants the same things. They want to be loved, they want to be respected, they want to have happy families, and they want to feel useful. And so I try to write at a level that taps into that and doesn't really concern itself much with the surface. And I didn't originally make that decision to stay out of trouble. But it's kept me out of trouble.

"... One thing that's funny that happens to me—now, I happen to be a Unitarian—so I actually am a liberal, broad-minded person. But most people don't know that...I don't go around the country announcing my political beliefs or what church I go to and so on.... But when I'm at a liberal place, people come up and say, 'Thank goodness we've got a liberal voice talking about these issues. And when I'm in a conservative place, people come up and say, 'Thank goodness we have someone conservative like you...' And I don't argue with them, I just say, 'Well thank you very much!'



Censoring Ophelia continued.

But it's kind of funny, for some reason I'm able to kind of dance between the raindrops, and I really don't have much trouble."

She had a couple of stories, though, like about people who demanded to know, in her words, "Well why don't you write about boys?" Her response was to explain that her area of expertise, her interest, was in girls; it had nothing to do with angry feelings towards men. She feels that those who study "the developmental situation for boys...should write about it." She had this to say about the lesson in communication. "...When I put it that way, the person tends to back off. Because they have an idea in their mind that the reason I didn't write about boys is I think girls are better than boys are. Or something ridiculous like that. And so as soon as I explain that....like if you noticed in *Reviving Ophelia*, I never compare girls to boys and say 'Girls suffer more than boys.' There's no way to possibly make that assertion. But a lot of people, if they haven't read the book, they might think I say that. So sometimes I have to defend myself against things I didn't even say. If people had read the work, or allow me to explain myself, I very rarely get criticism."

Dr. Pipher's definition of censorship is: "...when you are not able to be published." She spoke of writing an anti-death penalty article for public radio, which was not accepted because of her opinion. Another censorship story she had was about an article she wrote about "Hoofers," the restaurant, that she has not been able to get published. "I think that it's because it's critical of a particular business. I think I could probably get it published if I didn't mention the business by name. But everybody's afraid they'll get sued if they actually print it. So that is censorship in a way. I think it should be okay to write about a particular business, if you can back up what you say. I think it's important to be able to do that in this country. And this is a very good article; I think it's one of the best pieces of writing I've done in several years and I can't get it published."

I said that I think people, especially Unitarians, often feel conflicted when it comes to censorship because on the one hand we want freedom and on the other hand there are drawbacks with free speech. Dr. Pipher says in *Shelter* that the first amendment is the "last refuge of scoundrels," although she does not advocate censorship. I asked her to expound on this seeming contradiction, "To say that nothing should be censored is very different than saying everything should be published. They're not the same statements..."

"My own feeling is there's an enormous number of adults not holding themselves accountable to the next generation. And not thinking before they publish work: 'how will this affect children?'"

"The best way to deal with bad media, bad influences in the culture, I think, is by social pressure. Just as we've made it, for example, really not acceptable to smoke in public, we've made it unacceptable to hurt animals on the screen, you know there's all these 'We promise we haven't hurt a

bunny rabbit' at the end of a movie. I think we can make it unacceptable to make media that degrades women and that romanticizes violence."

And Dr. Pipher is up to the challenge when it comes to social pressure! One of her campaigns is, "If I'm ever at a cocktail party with Oliver Stone, which probably won't ever happen, (he made *Natural Born Killers*) I'm gonna go up to him and tell him that I am disgusted with that movie and that I think he has blood on his hands. And people can do that. And that's a very powerful way to implement social change."

Her policy on: "The best defense against bad ideas is better ideas." (from the *Shelter of Each Other*.) "One of the best ways to get rid of bad literature is to point people toward good literature, for example." She points out the importance of "making available to all your peers the best stuff you can glean in the culture that they might learn from and enjoy." (Check out the cover of this *Synapse* for a list of great banned art (literature, music, etc.) and see just what The Establishment doesn't think it's in your best interest to be exposed to!)

Dr. Pipher makes a point in *The Shelter of Each Other* that we all need to look out for each other and make sure that our peers are hearing "the right kind of stories." One final thought I explored with Dr. Pipher was this: "How can YRUUers, as ministers to each other, as providers of the kind of extended family you say everyone needs, see to it that everyone in our community has access to those 'stories?'"

She agreed that our YRUU communities are amazing support networks and suggested having book swaps at conferences or talking about good literature in our district newsletters and online. That way, access to quality entertainment is affordable and we decide what is meant by "quality." The other point she stressed was "recognition of young people who are producing good media...You might think of having something like the 'Unitarian Young People Award for Great Literature.' So that you're rewarding people who are good artists, but also socially responsible."

So there you have it...my brief brush with celebrity. I'm glad that I could relate Dr. Pipher's experiences and infectious optimism, positive attitude to you all. I feel privileged to call her "one of our own." In keeping with the themes we discussed I want to conclude with this: I know who one of my role models is. Who are yours?

Finally, Dr. Pipher left me with a limited amount of information regarding two non-profit organizations that promote social responsibility and are "fighting the good fight," as I like to say. One is the "Center For the New American Dream" (www.newdream.org) and the other is the "Ophelia Project" (www.main.org/ophelial). Check them out.

Mimi is the point person on the 1999 Youth Council Resolution "Promoting the Development of a Summer Work/Camp Opportunity in South Africa," and can shave some mean bi-hawks.

art & censorship



Continental Canopy

Youth Council '99 Resolutions:

Resolutions for Continental YRUU.

To find out more about any of these resolutions contact the "Point Person" (contact information can be found on page 23) for the resolution. To get a complete copy of the Youth Council 1999 Resolutions contact the Youth Office.

Resolution to Create the Youth Funding for UU Development (YFUUD) Committee for the Distribution of the YRUU Program Fund

Point Person: Alana McGibeny

Hopes to Achieve: Through the creation of Y*FUUD we will aid and support programs that serve the YRUU community as a whole. Y*FUUD will also offer continental support for youth empowerment projects on the local and district levels.

Resolution to Distribute YAC Productivity Resource Book

Point Person: Youth Office

Hope to Achieve: A resource available to all YACs, to help them in dealing with common structural problems that often face YACs.

Resolution to Merge Connecticut Valley District and Central Massachusetts District in Order to Create Clara Barton District

Point Person: Sarah Pappas

Hope to Achieve: A stable, healthy district in the name of Clara Barton. The Central Massachusetts District can gain strong leadership, stability, and longevity from the Connecticut Valley District, and the Connecticut Valley District stands to gain financially from this endeavor. Also, CVD has been looking for a way to address the over-population issues at conferences, and therefore the lack of community. This merger provides an opportunity to address these problems.

Resolution on the Creation of a Spirituality Resource Manual

Point person: Stefanie Knipfer

Hope to Achieve: Enhance spirituality in YRUU communities by creating this manual to improve the quality and creativity of spirituality in all aspects of all YRUUers' lives.

Resolution to Form a Task Force to Evaluate Jr. High Programming

Point Person: Melissa Cain

Hope to achieve: The Task Force will make a report analyzing the current status of jr. high programming with recommendations about how the program could be better. Through this we hope to create jr. high programming that supports the difficult transition between religious education and Young Religious Unitarian Universalists that jr. high youth face and nurtures the transitions and problems occurring in their everyday life.

The task force will be composed of one (1) of each of the following: a jr. high youth, a YRUU youth, an advisor for either jr. high or YRUU, a parent of a youth, a minister, a DRE, and a moderator. Get in touch with Melissa Cain to find out about becoming a member of the task force.

Resolution to Increase District and Local Participation in Youth Council

Point Person: Micaela Christopher

Hope to Achieve: Increase interest in, knowledge of, and participation in the Youth Council resolution process, hold YCRs accountable for their work to the people they represent, and center Youth Council around the needs of the district and local levels to better serve all of YRUU.

District and Local People:

- YACs/DYCs: Evaluate YCRs, ensure that there is a time at a conference for YCRs to lead a workshop on Youth Council, help publicize the Resolution Resource.

- SACs: Work with YCRs to promote Social Action oriented resolutions.

- Conference Planning Committee: Make workshop slots available for YCRs.

- Newsletter Editors: Promote writing resolutions for Youth Council in district newsletters.

- YRUUers: Write resolutions for Youth Council and send them to Synapse.

Resolution to Hold the Continental Conference Prior to Youth Council

Point Person: Geoff Woodman

Hope to Achieve: Inclusion of the ideas from the district and local levels voiced at ConCon in the business of Youth Council rather than Youth Council informing people about its decisions during the ConCon business meeting.

District and Local People:

- Newsletter Editors: Publicize the ConCon business meeting as a way for "you" to influence the decisions of Youth Council.

- YRUUers attending ConCon: Come with ideas for the ConCon business meeting.

- YRUUers not attending ConCon: Tell those going from their district, in addition to their YCRs, about their ideas for Youth Council.

Resolution to Create a YRUU Trustee At-Large on the UUA Board of Trustees

Point Person: Evan White

Hope to Achieve: The creation of a YRUU Trustee At-Large position on the UUA Board of Trustees. Like other At-Large positions, the YRUU Trustee At-Large will be a full voting member of the UUA Board of Trustees and will be charged with all the duties and responsibilities that membership as an At-Large representative entails.

- Representation for specific youth concerns in the UUA.

- Empowerment of youth, which is a crucial component in our commitment to the future generations of UU leaders and cannot be achieved unless youth participate in the decision making that affects YRUU.

- Healthy intergenerational communications and create a better understanding between youth and adults.

- * The YRUU Trustee At-Large on the UUA Board of Trustees will advocate for the 15,000 UU youth around the continent and address all business and concerns of YRUU designated by the Youth Council.

- * The YRUU Trustee At-Large will prepare a report of each UUA Board of Trustees meeting as well as an annual report, which will be printed in Synapse along with a presentation at Youth Council.

More Youth Council Resolutions on pg. 37



More Youth Council '99 Resolutions

Resolution: It's Time We Did Something About Racism in YRUU!

Point persons: Geoff Schwartz & Melanie Griffin

Hope to Achieve: Although the YRUU purposes state that "we shall... embrace all persons of diverse backgrounds," our organization has not taken the necessary steps to dismantle racism within our communities and beyond. We currently do not offer sufficient support to youth of color in our community with relevant "educational resources, communications network, and with love," as stated in the Statement of Purpose.

YRUU is a self-proclaimed welcoming, accepting, and justice-seeking organization. Therefore we must strive to be anti-racist. We want to redefine YRUU as a community that is available to and inclusive of youth of all backgrounds. We aim to dismantle the structures of privilege within YRUU and foster a sense of accountability throughout. We must work to create a collective consciousness concerning the issue of racism.

District and Local People:

YAC/DYSC/SC chair: Lobby the district adult leadership structures and request representation on transformation teams, emphasize the value of youth contributions to anti-racism work. Get in touch with Transformation Team organizers.

Social Action Coordinators: Assist in recruiting possible youth for Transformation Team.

YRUUer: Volunteer for district Transformation Teams.

Long-Term Goals:

1. Continental events where a safe space exists for youth of all colors.

2. Create a Jubilee World Workshop designed specifically for youth. Once established, the JTJCT will work together to create a training for youth leaders of the workshop and make them available to youth groups and districts.

3. Begin discussion with JWG and the JTWC and communicate with advisors as well as youth who have been through the workshop. Get input as to how to most effectively adapt the training for youth.

4. Anti-racism training is a requirement for leaders of all LDCs, SDCs, and ATs.

5. All members of Youth Council and Steering Committee attend anti-racism training in their local district or congregation. Provide Level II training at Youth Council once all members have been through Level I.

6. Youth are included in every facet of Journey Towards Wholeness.

7. Youth of color family groups are a fixture at every continental event and establishment of an efficient evaluation process ensures their effectiveness as a support network.

8. The JTJCT meets regularly and directs the goals of YRUU's anti-racism work.

Resolution to Change the Social Action Theme Selection Process

Point Person: Maia Cudhea

Hope to achieve: A social action theme selection process that allows theme programming at continental events and allows the theme to be in line with the Continental Social Action Coordinator's specialized skills.

Resolution Supporting the 1999 Budget Proposal

Point Person: Chris Trace

Hope to Achieve: Adequate funding for YRUU. The YRUU budget for fiscal year 2000 is inadequate to continue the programs YRUU has been implementing and stifles YRUU from moving forward as an organization that strives to be accountable to its constituency. Lobby for the acceptance of the recommendations made in the YRUU Budget Proposal by the UUA Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee, and the Finance Department. This will allow for greater support and programming on all levels and making YRUU able to actually execute its vision. YRUU will be able to further Unitarian Universalism as a lifespan denomination, and more supported and empowered youth will reap a more world-conscious society.

District and Local People:

Lobby trustees on behalf of YRUU.

Resolution to Send a Delegation of YRUU Youth to the Parliament of World Religions in December 1999

Point Persons: Robin Larsen and Stefanie Knipfer

Hope to achieve: Create a YRUU presence at the major interdenominational gathering of religions in the world; connect with youth movements of other religions globally; bring experiences back to share with YRUU; participate in the new spirit of hope and possibility occurring at a time of phenomenal transformation within South Africa. Secure funding and send three or more YRUU youth and one YRUU advisor to the Parliament of World Religions meeting in Capetown, South Africa December 1-8, 1999.

Resolution to Promote the Development of a Summer Work Camp Opportunity in South Africa

Point Person: Mimi LaValley

Hope to achieve: Provide YRUU youth with unique social action connections with people from other cultures and persuasions; bring experiences back to share with YRUU; expand the anti-racism focus of YRUU to the global arena by supporting the major transformation occurring in South Africa; and create an empowered cooperative link with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC).

Resolution to Make C*LDCs, C*SDCs, and CATs Occur Regularly.

Point Person: Matt Moore

Hope to achieve: An established and organized schedule of continental trainings that includes C*SDCs, C*LDCs, and CATs, so that no three-year period shall pass without a C*LDC, C*SDC, and CAT.

Resolution to Revise the Continental Spirituality Development Conference (CSDC) Training Manual

Point Persons: Abbey Tennis and Matt Moore

Hope to Achieve: Collect information to pilot an edition of the CSDC manual ready for use at the next CSDC in order to foster higher quality spirituality in our institutions.

District and Local People:

Ministers, SDC leaders, SDC participants, Youth Office, other interested people can help evaluate, be part of revision team, and submit materials to revision team care of the Youth Office.

Resolution to Diversify the Number of Canadians who go to ConCon

Point Person: Geoff Schwarz

Hope to Achieve: Increase Canadian involvement with YRUU by having ConCon held in Canada every six years.





YRUU

Social Justice Conference March 25-29, 2000



Come experience Washington, D.C. with other Unitarian Universalist youth. Learn about putting the principles of Unitarian Universalists into political and social action in your life, community, school, and congregation.

Frequently asked questions.

What is the YRUU Social Justice Conference?

This intensive conference teaches youth political and community organizing and issue information through workshops and discussion of specific tactics, skills trainings, and group discussion.

What is the goal of the YSJC?

The YSJC is a conference to both raise awareness on specific issues and for youth to make their voice heard in politics.

Who can go to the YSJC?

Youth (14 -20 inclusively) of all levels of skill and experience are invited to attend this conference to explore together the spiritual practice of social, political, and personal activism that is rooted in their Unitarian Universalist connection. The YSJC used to be a conference where it was required for participants to apply, and one youth from each district where chosen. Now, any youth between the ages of 14-20 can attend.

What is the programming for the Y*SJC?

The programming for the YSJC consists of workshops, workshops, discussions, briefings, lobbying, and activism. It will focus on education, action, and spirituality.

How much does the Y*SJC cost, and what is included in the cost?

The conference cost is \$225 (payable to the UUA). This fee includes registration, housing, and meals for this conference. It does not include travel. Travel is the responsibility of the registrant.

Is there a way I can go for free?

Congregations, districts, and community organizations often help youth pay this fee, so go ahead and ask. The YRUU Youth Office can put you in contact with others who received scholarships or provide you with an official letter about how paying for this conference benefits your congregation, district, or community to assist you in finding funding for this event.

My friend went last year, and there was a flat fee, and travel was payed for. Why is it different?

In the past, to attend the YSJC you applied, and applicants were picked on their application. There was a flat fee, which payed for travel for each attendee. This year, with the need to involve more people, travel is the responsibility of the participant.

Are there travel scholarships available?

Yes there are! There are quite a few scholarships to help to out with the cost of travel. We also encourage you to seek funding from your church or YAC.

Why do you ask about social justice issues?

We ask the questions so we can find out what issues you are passionate about, what work you have done, what skills you can bring to the other participants, what organizations you have connections with and to give us an idea about you.

Why do you ask about our experience with multi-culturalism or anti-racism?

YRUU has made a commitment to become an active anti-racist organization. Part of this effort is to inform youth and to find out their knowledge of anti-racism.

Arrival info:

Participants must fly into BWI before 6pm on Sat. 25. If a participant flies in @ another time, they are responsible for getting to the site themselves.

Departure Info:

Participants should schedule to leave after 3 pm. on the 29th.

Travel Information:

Photocopy these 2 next pages!

YRUU Social Justice Conference Registration Form



Personal Information

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State/Province: _____
 Phone #: _____
 (Daytime) _____
 (Evening) _____
 Zip/Postal Code: _____
 E-mail: _____
 Country: _____ Gender: _____
 Birthday: ____/____/____
 UU Congregation: _____
 UU District: _____
 Dietary Options:
 _____ VEGTARIAN (no meat, yes dairy, yes eggs)
 _____ VEGAN (no animal products)
 _____ LACTOSE INTOLERANT (no dairy)
 _____ OMNIVOROUS (yes MEAT)
 Specify any other food needs/allergies:



Youth moving up in the world at NSJC '99

I AM ALSO INCLUDING:

(for more information, see "Frequently Asked Questions" from the previous page)

Required:

_____ My Consent Form
 _____ My Medical Form
 _____ My Rules Agreement
 _____ My Personal Activities and Interests
 _____ My January '00 Mailing Address (if different)
 _____ My Check for \$225 (made payable to the UUA)

Please answer these questions on another sheet of paper.

Issues or skills I am interested in learning about:

Organizations or groups I have worked with:

Self-defineracism and talk about any experiences you have had with anti-racism, multi-culturalism, or diversity:

YRUU, community, or school leadership positions:

SEND THIS FORM TO THE YOUTH OFFICE BY JANUARY 15TH:
 25 BEACON ST.
 BOSTON, MA 02108

YRUU Social Justice Conference Registration Form



CONSENT AND MEDICAL RELEASE

I, _____ (please print), am the parent or legal guardian of _____, who will be attending the YRUU Social Justice Conference in Washington D.C. I hereby give my consent and authority for the conference staff to take any reasonable action to help ensure the safety, health, and welfare of my son/daughter/ward. I also give consent for any necessary medical treatment, including emergency surgical care, if needed. I further understand that my child/ward will be required to follow the rules of the camp and the conference, and that any breach of these rules may result in my child/ward being disallowed to participate in the remainder of the conference. Should this happen, I understand that my child/ward may be sent home at his/her own expense and be prohibited from participating in future continental YRUU conferences or events.

Signature of Parent or Guardian:

(Participants age 18 or older may sign for themselves.)

X _____

Date: _____

In case of an emergency between July 31st & August 5th, 1999, I can be contacted at:

() _____ or

() _____

Medical Treatment Info:

*Name of parent/person with insurance policy (print) _____

*Health Insurance Agency: _____

*Policy # /Group #: _____

*Medications currently taking: _____

*Allergies/Medical conditions: _____

*Date of your last tetanus shot: ____/____/____

*Do you have any special health needs? _____

Rules and Guidelines

Guidelines:

1. No drugs, weapons, or alcohol
2. Follow the policy of sexual behavior
3. No leaving the conference sites without permission
4. I will respect staff members, speakers, conference sites, and fellow conferees.

Policy on Sexual Behavior:

Although sexuality is an important part of young people's lives, I understand that exclusive relations can detract from mine and others' experience of the conference. I agree to behave in ways that promotes inclusive communities and never engage in inappropriate sexual behavior (i.e. sexual intercourse or sexual harassment) that destroys communities. I will follow these guidelines and other necessary site rules while I am participating in the YRUU Social Justice Conference.

Signature of Participant:

X _____

Date: ____/____/____

Interested in social action? Look for the Continental Social Action Coordinator application on page .

SEND THIS FORM TO THE YOUTH OFFICE BY JANUARY 15TH:

25 BEACON ST.

BOSTON, MA 02108

Youth Funding for Unitarian Universalist Development Grant Application

"Youth Funding for Unitarian Universalist Development" (Y*FUUD) will be used to create and support new and developing programs. Because it is difficult to find funding for district programs, and even more difficult to find funding for local programs, the Y*FUUD distributes funds with priority towards local, district, and continental programs respectively.

Who should apply for a Y*FUUD grant?

Youth doing new and creative programming in their local, district, or continentally. Examples of programming could be creating a conference to address a specific issue or need, creating a training to meet a need that isn't being addressed, development of a resource or publication to fill a void in current resources and publications being offered to YRUUs.

When do I need to apply by? And more importantly when do I find out if I received a grant from Y*FUUD?

Applications are due by the 1st of July, and the grants are allocated at the Continental YRUU Youth Council. All grant applicants will be notified on or around September 1st, and a payment process will be established then.

Please include the following information in your grant application. Include any other information you feel would help the Y*FUUD with their decision.

Local, district, or continental project name:

Budget for your Project:

What is the expected total budget for your project (include a breakdown of your projected budget)?

What amount are you requesting from the YRUU Program Fund? If we cannot offer the full amount, would you want a partial amount? What is the minimum amount you would accept?

Primary Point Person for the Project:

Who is the primary contact person(s) for your project?

Youth name, address, email, phone

* Adult name, address, email, phone

Intent of Project:

* UU or YRUU Principle represented by your project:

What is the general intent of your project?

Who will your project serve?

Project Timeline:

Include a timeline for your project. Please include with each item the specific goal, the person who will accomplish that goal, and the deadline by which the goal will be completed. This timeline should outline the entire project, including a multi-year plan if applicable.

Timeline for project during first year:
steps to achieve/ person assigned/ date due

Timeline for project after first year if applicable:
steps to achieve/ person assigned/ estimated date due

Project Evaluation Process:

When and how do you plan to evaluate the progress of your project? Please include a process by which YFUUD will be able to analyze the progress of your project.

Project History:

Has this project been done by you or your group in the past?

If so, from where did you get your funding?

Long-term Future of Project:

Will this be an ongoing event? (annual or otherwise?)

If so, how will it be funded next time?

Y*FUUD Guidelines:

YFUUD will review the progress of timelines annually before considering future funding for your project.

For multi-year projects, YFUUD must receive another application and progress report for your project.

Funding received must be used during same fiscal year or must be returned to YFUUD.

Items with asterisks are suggested but not required.

Your grant application should be typed.

For Information or to Apply for a Grant:

Y*FUUD c/o Youth Office

25 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

(617) 742-2100 ext. 351 or 352

fax: (617) 742-0321

yrUU@uua.org



THE YRUU SOCIAL WITNESS ESSAY CONTEST

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AS A MORAL IMPERATIVE

The 1999 General Assembly in Salt Lake City passed a Study/Action Issue entitled *Responsible Consumption as a Moral Imperative*. This year, leading up to the 2000 General Assembly, local societies, churches, and congregations may conduct a study and action process and submit their findings to the **Commission on Social Witness (CSW)**, the committee that oversees this process. The CSW is sponsoring an essay contest for youth who have experience with the issue of Responsible Consumption.

The winner will have his or her registration and Youth Caucus Housing paid for by the Commission on Social Witness at the 2000 General Assembly in Nashville, Tennessee.

Send your submissions to: Chris Trace

Commission on Social Witness, UUA
YRUU Essay Contest

5404 Northwood Lake Drive East
Northport, AL 35473-1554

Or via e-mail to bctrace@dbtech.net.

Please make your subject line explicit as to its contents.

If you have questions, e-mail or call Chris Trace at (205) 339-9556.

To learn more about the CSW or the Responsible Consumption Study/Action Issue, visit the CSW's website www.uua.org/ga/csw.

Contest Guidelines

1. You must mail the text of your essay to the address above no later than 5:00pm EST on **February 1, 2000**, along with contact information for where you will be on and after February 15, 2000.
2. Your essay may not exceed 2,000 words.

*****All decisions made by the Commission on Social Witness are final and non-negotiable.*****

General Assembly Youth Caucus Staff

Apply for Youth Caucus Staff:

What is Youth Caucus staff? Youth Caucus staff are the youth and advisors that plan and facilitate all of the aspects of the YRUU Youth Caucus at General Assembly. The Core-Staff plans the "overall conference experience" at a pre-site planning meeting in April. The entire staff (except Specialty-Staff) arrive a day early to Youth Caucus to do final planning and team building for General Assembly.

What do I pay if I am on staff? Core-Staff have their travel, housing, and registration paid, with a stipend provided for food. Specialty-Staff have their registration and housing paid for, with some funds available for transportation scholarships. State financial needs in your application.

What do I need to apply? To apply send a letter of intent specifying the position(s) you are interested in and describing your ideas, vision, skills, and related experience, as well as two letters of reference (one from a youth and one from an adult). In your letter of intent self-define "racism" and talk about any experiences or education you've had on multi-culturalism, anti-racism, or diversity. **Apply by January 10th to the "Youth Caucus Staff Selection Committee" care of the Youth Office 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, fax: (617) 742-0321, email: yruu@uua.org.**

Core-Staff:

Mister or Madame HUUPER (the Youth Caucus dean, youth): Madame or Mr. HUUPER (Hard-core UU Person Energized and Ready) is in charge of running the daily community meetings and facilitating both the Core-Staff pre-site in April as well as daily Core-Staff meetings. They, with the Youth Caucus Business Manager, select some of the Youth Caucus staff from the pool of applications for each position. They act as the hotel liaison from Youth Caucus. This person also liaisons with the "All GA Youth Extravaganza Special Event Guru."

Red Light Events Coordinator (youth): Selects and coordinates the "HUUPsters*", a staff of scholarship recipients/ volunteers who in turn will lead the "HUUP Groups," touch groups that meet nightly to check in, discuss rooming issues, their experiences at GA, and to bond. They also create a resource for the HUUPsters on how to run a dynamic HUUP Group, divide Youth Caucus into HUUP Groups prior to GA, find suitable places for HUUP Groups to meet, and run daily HUUPster meetings. This person also coordinates different games and other bonding activities late at night in the Youth Caucus community space each night. This person also liaisons with the "All GA Youth Social Justice Activism Guru."

Spirituality Coordinator (youth): This person facilitates meetings of people interested in planning the nightly worship. Persons applying for this position need to apply with an ongoing theme that will guide the flow of worship planning over the five days. This person also liaisons with the "All GA Youth Worship Guru."

Chaplain-Core (2 youth and 2 adult chaplains): There are four chaplains, two youth (one male, one female) and two adults (one male, one female). They are available to youth for counseling on emotional, sexual, or any other kinds of issues, and supportive of the rest of the staff who may be dealing with these issues in their interactions with participants. There will be Chaplain-Core Meetings once a day and one chaplain will attend Core-Staff meetings each day.

Sponsor Coordinator (adult): The Sponsor Coordinator writes a letter to go along with every sponsor form describing their role at GA and a letter to youth explaining sponsorship. They lead the Mandatory Sponsor Training at Youth Caucus Orientation with a youth member of Core-Staff. They will act as a liaison between sponsors and Core-Staff during the week, assist in locating youth, and listen to concerns. Most importantly this person is the emergency contact person, on call 24 hours a day, carrying a cell phone and emergency medical release and contact information in case of an emergency.

Logistics/Gopher (adult): They live in or near Nashville and can do work before GA, scouting out the area surrounding the Youth Caucus hotel for youth-friendly (i.e. cheap, safe, and fun) entertainment and food venues and creates a resource on these venues for all of Youth Caucus. This person manages the Youth Caucus petty cash and does daily supply runs for the staff.

Specialty-Staff Positions:

All GA Youth Worship Guru (youth): This Guru's job is to plan the All GA Youth-led Worship. People applying for this should apply with a theme for the worship service and ideas on how to implement this theme. Before GA, it is this Guru's job plan the worship, find others to help, find speakers, and advertise for the worship. This Guru should organize a committee of youth at-large to assist in the organizing. This Guru reports to the Spirituality Coordinator.

All GA Youth Extravaganza Special Event Guru (youth): This Guru's job is to plan a youth dance, for youth and adults. People applying for this should apply with a theme for the dance and ideas on how to implement this theme. This Guru will DJ, coordinate other entertainment during the evening, MC, decorate the site, coordinate any catering, and advertise for the event. This Guru should organize a committee of youth at-large to assist in the organizing. This Guru reports to Madame/ Mister HUUPER.

All GA Youth Social Justice Activism Guru (youth): This Guru organizes and leads an event where the GA community can live our principles, speaking out on subjects that are important to us all. Whether it is a protest, a rally, some sort of service project, or a march, UUs of all ages can show our unity on a pressing social issue. This Guru needs to apply with an issue and a game plan for how to action on that issue, then they must research Nashville civil disobedience laws, organize the event, advertise for the event, and lead a workshop the day before the event to educate people on the issue that surrounds the event. This Guru should organize a committee of youth at-large to assist in the organizing. This Guru reports to the Red Light Events Coordinator.

The Youth of Color Family Group (Caucus) Guru (youth): This person is a youth of color that will foster a support network and community at Youth Caucus for the youth of color at Youth Caucus who have a uniquely different experience within YRUU and UU conferences. This person will write a letter to youth of color attending Youth Caucus detailing what the "Youth of Color Family Group" will be and is responsible for coordinating meeting times for the "Family Group" and will act as a another chaplain for those in the group.

*Volunteer Staff (youth):

The HUUPsters and the Alternate Spirituality Coordinator are volunteer staff positions and will be advertised in the next Synapse. Scholarships are a possibility for these folks.



YRUU's Continental Conference Staff

"Seussisms: one fish, two fish, red fish, ConCon."

Apply for ConCon Staff:

What is ConCon Staff?

ConCon staff are the youth and advisors that plan and facilitate all of the aspects of the YRUU Continental Conference. The Core-Staff that plans the "overall conference experience" at a pre-site planning meeting in April. The entire staff (except workshop leaders) arrive a day early to ConCon to do final planning and team building for the conference.

What do I pay if I am on Staff?

Core-Staff, the Nurse, and the Mug Book Editor have their travel and registration expenses covered. Other support staff and workshop leaders will have their registration covered, with some funds available for transportation scholarships. State financial needs in your application.

What do I need to apply?

To apply send a letter of intent to the "ConCon Staff Selection Committee" specifying the position(s) you are interested in and describing your ideas, vision, skills, and related experience, as well as two letters of reference (one from a youth and one from an adult). In your letter of intent self-define "racism" and talk about any experiences or education you've had on multi-culturalism, anti-racism, or diversity.

Apply by January 10th, 2000 to:
ConCon Staff Selection Committee
25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108
Fax: (617) 742-0321 yruu@uua.org
Youth Core Staff Positions

The **Dean(s)** make the agenda for and facilitate the pre-site planning meeting as well as the daily staff meetings at ConCon. The dean(s) act as a liaison between the ConCon staff and the larger ConCon community to the site staff. The dean(s) are also responsible for keeping staff members on task. The deans might be responsible for some staff and workshop selection from a pool of applicants.

The **Energy Coordinator** facilitates meetings of the Spirit Committee, which is responsible for paying attention to the overall mood of the conference community, and the Energy Committee, which deals with conference rule infractions. She/he also coordinates wake-up, energizes spirit circle each morning, and explains the rules at orientation.

The **Special Events Coordinator** plans all-camp activities, including events such as the Coffee House, the dance, and the Super-Secret All-Camp activity.

The **Touch Group Coordinator** works directly with the leaders of the conference touch groups. She/he facilitates daily meetings of all touch group leaders to disseminate and gather information and ideas for the facilitation of touch groups.

The **Worship Coordinator** leads the Worship Workshop, which is responsible for planning and running nightly all-camp worship services.

The **Workshop Coordinator** works with the workshop leaders. He/she coordinates the week-long workshops' location and registration, coordinates and publicizes daily "one-shot" workshops led by members of the conference community, and organizes secret buddies.

Adult Core Staff Positions

The **Adult Coordinator** looks out for the adults at ConCon, helping to keep them healthy, happy, and well-adjusted through facilitating daily adult meetings and representing adults' concerns at staff meetings. This person should have a clear understanding of youth-led programming and a knowledge of the role of adults as advisors.

The **Logistics Coordinator** is preferably from the local area. This person is responsible for coordinating transportation between the airport and the site, arranging any home hospitality needed before ConCon, and handling ConCon's finances (with the help of the Youth Office). This person will be responsible for recruiting and coordinating the Gopher.

Support Staff Positions

The **Mug Book Editor** (youth position) is responsible for photographing each conference participant, photographing conference events, and editing and laying out the Mug Book, which is similar to a "yearbook" of the conference. The Mug Book is distributed to conferees on the final day of ConCon. The Mug Book editor will lead a small week-long workshop. The participants of the workshop will be the Mug Book editor's staff and will assist the Mug Book editor in completing the Mug Book.

The **Lifeguard** (youth position) is responsible for coordinating swimming times for the conference community and being present and watchful during those times. This person must be certified in lifeguarding and CPR.

The **Nurse** (an adult position) is responsible for creating, monitoring, and enforcing health and safety standards during ConCon. She/he must be a registered nurse and must be willing to be available whenever needed during the conference. Before ConCon, the nurse purchases and transports needed supplies for the infirmary, which he/she will staff during ConCon.

The **Chaplain** (youth or adult position) is a spiritual resource for the conference community. This person does not need to be an ordained UU minister but should have an understanding of the spiritual needs of youth. He/she works with the worship workshop to plan nightly workshops for the community. In the past, the Chaplain has led small gatherings such as early morning workshops, dream sharing, and reflective discussion times. The Chaplain should be a good listener, available to individuals who seek counseling, and is asked to attend meetings of the Spirit Committee.

The **Youth of Color Family Group Coordinator** (youth) is a youth of color that will foster a support network and community at ConCon for the youth and any advisors of color at ConCon, who have a uniquely different experience at YRUU conferences. This person will write a letter to youth and advisors of color attending ConCon detailing what the "Youth of Color Family Group" will be, and is responsible for coordinating meeting times for the "Family Group" and will act as another chaplain for those in the group.

Workshop Leaders (youth or adult positions) may apply to lead week-long workshops. Workshops may have two leaders, and may relate to the theme "Seussisms: One fish, two fish, red fish, ConCon." Each week-long workshop is composed of four two-hour meeting times, and will have approximately 20-25 participants each. **Being a workshop leader is a great way to get involved with ConCon leadership if you've never been before!**



See holes in the way that Continental YRUU works? Feel like there is a lack of programming or support for you and your constituency (advisors, post-high youth, junior high youth)? Feel like YRUU should unite more as a movement through its continental leadership structure to change the world?

How about **Youth Council?**

What is Youth Council?

The YRUU Youth Council is the governing body of Continental YRUU. They meet once a year to make policy decisions, pass resolutions, worship, have fun, and decide the direction for the UU Youth Movement for years to come. Members of the YRUU Youth Council work throughout the year to follow through on the resolutions that they have passed and to do groundwork for resolutions to come to the next years Youth Council. The YRUU Steering Committee is now accepting applications for Youth Council positions. There are four At-Large positions for youth. The youth at-large positions are one-year commitments with an option to reapply for a second term at the end of the year.

What are the "Youth Council At-Large Positions?"

Continental Social Action Coordinator:

Duties include disseminating and gathering information from district Social Action Contacts and representing social action concerns of YRUU. C*SAC applicants should include a social action theme that interests them and ways of implementing it in district and local groups.

Transitional Age-Range Representative for Junior High:

Provides the viewpoint of an under-represented age group at Youth Council and coordinates outreach to that group on a continental level. One of this person's responsibilities is the planning of the "Junior High Welcoming Circle" at General Assembly.

Transitional Age-Range Representative for Post-High:

Provides the viewpoint of an under-represented age group at Youth Council, and coordinates outreach to that group on a continental level.

Canadian Youth At-Large:

Represents Canadian concerns on Youth Council and works throughout the year to increase Canadian involvement in YRUU Youth Programs.

Adults At-Large:

There are seven positions for adults (ages 25+) who each serve a two-year term. This year there are four adult at-large positions open. UU ministers, YRUU advisors, and religious educators are particularly encouraged to apply.

Applications should be typewritten and should include the following:

Vital Information:

Name, address, phone number, date of birth, home church or fellowship, UUA district, and a list of people from whom you are expecting letters of recommendation.

A Letter of Intent:

Why you want to be on Youth Council, the position for which you are applying, what you feel you can offer that position, what you think you can offer the group, any experience you have to bring to the group, what YRUU issues concern you, and your dreams and goals for YRUU.

Anti-Racism, Multi-Culturalism, and Diversity:

How do you define racism? What sort of education have you had on issues of racism, anti-racism, and/ or diversity (describe these experiences)? Has your education moved you to educate others on or combat racism in your community (describe if applicable)?

Two Letters of Recommendation:

These can be from ministers, YRUU youth, RE directors, YRUU advisors, teachers, or others with whom you have worked (at least one letter from a youth and one from an adult).

Address your applications to:

YRUU Steering Committee
c/o The Youth Office
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108

**Application
Deadline:
March 15,
2000**



You Could Be the Next...

YRUU Programs Specialist

The YRUU Programs Specialist position is a one-year internship in the Youth Office at the Unitarian Universalist Association 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 ConCon, Youth Council, YRUU Steering Committee meetings, the National Social Justice Conference, 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, 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 Sept. 1, 2000.

Terms of employment: This position is a one-year commitment, beginning Sept 1, 2000, and ending Sept. 1, 2001. The salary is \$23,500. Moving expenses to and from Boston are paid, and medical insurance is provided. Other benefits include paid vacations and holidays. The new Program Specialist is expected to find her or his own living accommodations and pay for all living expenses while in Boston.

For an application: Write to the Youth Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; call (617) 742-2100, x350, 351, 352; or email yruu@uua.org.

Applications must be postmarked or received by March 15, 1999.

Youth Office Intern

Calling all high schoolers, college students, and un-schoolers!

The UUA currently employs two YRUU Program Specialists who work in the Continental Youth Office. We currently have an astronomical workload, due to the success and growth of the YRUU movement. We are looking for a Youth Office Intern to help us out this Spring. Just your lucky day!

Qualities Desired:

Youth Group experience, leadership experience (in YRUU or other venues), office experience and PC computer know-how (web-design abilities are very desirable!). A good sense of humor and the ability to work with people who work too much in a tiny office. Not afraid of really tiny work space also desirable.

Requirements:

The Youth Office Interns take on tasks of their own choosing, such as a resource or personal project for YRUU. The Spring Intern will also help publish the next *Synapse*. They may also help us with our mailings, organize our files, answer consulting calls or e-mails from other YRUUers across the continent, and network with other leaders who are working out in the field.

What is in it for you?

- A chance to work for the organization you love.
- A chance to work with some real cool Kats.
- A great thing to add to your resume.
- A chance to learn great office skills.
- A chance to have a large, lasting effect on YRUU.

Internship is from February 1st-April 31st approximately 12 hours a week, includes a stipend of \$1000, the intern must also have living arrangements in the Boston area.

Send a resume, 2 references (with phone numbers), and a letter of intent to:

INTERNSHIP/ YOUTH OFFICE

25 Beacon St.

Boston, MA 02108

PHONE: (617) 742-2100 x352

FAX: 617-742-0321

yruu@uua.org

Deadline: Dec. 15, 1999



A YRUUer Shares Their Opinion on Youth Programing

My Opinion of the Purpose of YRUU

YRUU is an organization that represents the youth movement of the Unitarian Universalist Association. YRUU is an attempt to organize the resources and strength of UU youth to form a collective voice both in the UUA and society in general. YRUU has very successfully done this; every year more and more attention is paid to YRUU and for good reason. YRUU organizes many continental events that unite and empower the youth of our movement. Unfortunately, this continental community does not effectively draw from and help develop, the strength of our districts and, in turn, local communities. Instead, it has created another community (much like a district) related to but not emanating from the districts. By no means do I denounce YRUU, but applaud their marvelous achievements. But if YRUU

wishes to continue to grow as an organization, we must begin to focus on organizing at the grassroots levels of our movement. For every YRUU youth who aware of and participates in continental activities there are several who do not.

My Opinion of the Purpose of Districts

The many districts that send Youth Council Representatives to Youth Council all essentially serve one neglected purpose. Districts are a way of expanding our church youth groups in the same way that YRUU expands upon districts. Without church youth group interest, there are no districts; without districts, there is no continental YRUU. Districts are nothing but another designation that helps YRUU organize itself. In some

cases, youth do not participate in YRUU beyond the district level. Still others never venture beyond their church walls. This apparent lack of interest can only be blamed on a lack of communication (because everyone knows how motivated UU youth are). The UUA currently sponsors an office full of marvelous young-adults we call the "Youth Office." I propose that every district needs to have a similar worker(s) to maintain communication inside the district as well as throughout the country.

A Solution

A lack of resources would be the major impediment that would prevent this sort of program.

That is definitely a topic that would need to be addressed but certainly ought not to be a stumbling block. I propose that an event could be held at this year's GA involving representatives from all the districts that would introduce this idea in the hopes that the burden of funding needed might be agreed to be shared by the districts and the UUA together. I would imagine that an approximate + time salary of \$6,000-\$10,000 per district could be undertaken. This new employee would most likely be a college student in each district, with a computer and car available to them. They would be responsible for keeping the mailing list, putting out the newsletter, and would

facilitate all other mailings (con fliers, continental notices, etc.). The organizational rewards of having a paid employee similar to a District Executive would be incredible. It is a necessary step in the growth of our movement that has been successfully pioneered by the Youth Office. We can't rely on the unending charitable donations of time given by faithful district youth and advisor leadership forever. In order to improve the organization of our organization, we must continue to adapt our methods of organizing until we are



STU NOT ONLY HAS A PASSION FOR YRUU,
BUT ALSO FOR FIRE FIGHTING AND
SEQUINED TUBE TOPS

*Have an opinion?
Write for Soapbox!*

***SOCIETY GIVES US A BOX TO LIVE IN, AND YRUU HELPS US THINK AND LIVE OUTSIDE THAT BOX.
BUT YRUU BECOMES A BOX TOO, UNLESS WE KEEP THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE INSTITUTION, AND
KEEP REFORMING THAT INSTITUTION TO BE TRUER TO OUR IDEALS. ★★**



Keep us in the know!

We in the Youth Office are only four and a one third strong, while YRUU is over fourteen thousand strong... We want to know what all of you are up to... So we can send you mailings, and e-mails that might be of specific interest to you, but we can only do this if you keep us informed of all of your contact information and your areas of interest and skills... So please photocopy this back page, fill out the photocopied version and mail it, faxit, or email it to us as soon as possible. (Photocopy one for everyone in your youth group, and pass them out on Sunday... Keep us in the know!):

The UUA Youth Office

25 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

(617) 742-2100 ext. 350, 351, 352, 355

Fax (617) 742-0321

Email: yruu@uua.org

My Name: _____ Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

District: _____

Email: _____

YRUU Leadership Positions I've held

(YAC member, con dean...): _____

Other Organizations I've worked with
(include leadership positions held in the organizations):

Special Talents of mine
(i.e. drawing, writing, music, web-design, etc.):

Social Justice Issues that you are passionate about:

Themes I'd like to see an issue of Synapse dedicated to:

YRUU at the UUA
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

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