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SYNAPSE

VOL XVIII ISSUE 1

SPRING 2000

A point of contact where information
and energy are exchanged.

by young religious unitarian universalists...
for everyone

- Inside this issue:
- ConCon & GA info and registration
 - How to make your Youth Group visible in your congregation
 - Veganism in the new millennium
 - Challenging rape culture
 - Insight into eating disorders
 - Amazing art, poetry, and photography

Continental Calendar

Winter 2000

May 2000
5-7 UUA Board
10 GA forms due

June 2000
15 ConCon forms due
2-4 Anti-Racism training for
continental conference leadership
22-26 General Assembly

July 2000
12-16 SATUURDAY con
15 Jubilee Training revision
team applications due
31 ConCon begins

August 2000
July 31-6 ConCon
5-8 ConCentric
8-13 OPUS
8-13 Youth Council

September 2000
1 Synapse submission deadline
25 Advisor Training

October 2000
5-8 Steering Committee

November 2000
9-12 Continental Advisor Training



*Nathan at the tender age of
8 or 10 or 19 or something*

Hey there YRUUers. This is your new YRUU programs specialist Nathan Staples. I am here for one reason, the money, sure some YPS's say that they really love the youth or the organization. Not me, I am in it for the cash.

But seriously I am the best YPS ever. I am an official super hero, with a sidekick and a comic book and everything. I am even in the Superheroes Union. Woo ...local 423 represent! I am also funnier than any other YPS ever,

although Alison did do a good Bill Cosby (she sure did love those jello puddin pops). They truly broke the mold when they made me, then they killed the mold maker and his family. All this... and a cute butt.

Honestly though I would really like to hear from you so that I can get an accurate idea of what the needs of youth are out there. That way the youth office can put out resources that you guys really need instead of telling you what you need and putting out resources. So don't be afraid to give me a call and tell me what your district, church youth group, etc. is having troubles with so I can help change it. Zepplin RULES!

Peace out, word to your mother,
-*"Super"* Nathan *"Rules 99"* Staples

OUR NEW INTERN

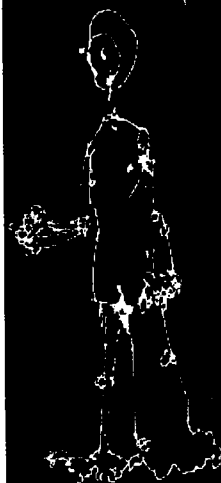
Hey YRUUers of the world,

Howdy! My name is Logan Rockefeller Harris, and I'm the intern at the Youth Office here in the lovely city of Boston. If you fly onto Boston on an airplane, you will land at an airport which happens to be named after me. Here at the Youth Office, I give the YPSs candy and otherwise distract them every chance I get. Other than that, I'm working on a resource chock full of youth curricula. It will contain all sorts of rawkin' ideas for workshops, both week long and one-shots. If you have ever participated in and/or led any totally gnarly workshops, you should call me and tell me about them. I will be totally stoked and love you forever. No, seriously, I will come to your house and serenade you and ask for your hand in marriage. Please call, it gets lonely in my cubicle, talking like a surfer can only keep me entertained for so long. Peace out.

-Logan (617) 742-2100 ext. 356



My Body Is
My Temple



Wink from the editor

We live in a media culture. It tells us what to think, what we are expected to like and dislike. YRUU tries to look outside this created world, the one handed to us on a plate of bytes, and to look at how this culture of forced images effects our lives as youth. We look at our friends in school, who dress themselves in what MTV and The Gap say are the latest fashions. YRUUers are no more immune to this then any other group of people in our society. We conform to certain beliefs and norms that our society binds us with, and our behavior is shaped by the most basic of these guides. Our culture determines what we do with our bodies, from how we decorate them to what we put in them.

One of the things that the dominant culture we live in has given us is our view of our bodies. It has shaped the way we look at everything from beauty to the food we consume. It has told our sisters and daughters that they must fit into a mold created by Tyra Banks, and pigeonholed our brothers and sons into being a carbon copy of Brad Pitt. These culturally created ideals for body type lead our generation to constantly look at our own bodies and see the deficiencies, the parts of our

bodies that are bigger, skinnier, or somehow to not fit the mold we have been handed. Such views have lead to youth using speed to control eating and use steroids to gain muscle mass. Our body tells us what is male and female, whether we feel like our sex fits our gender or not.

Our society has also told us since birth what it is we will eat. McDonald's has lured our children into eating its unhealthy food for decades. We eat foods every day that have been treated with chemicals or with radiation and our culture continues to tell us to consume that which may help to shorten our life.

The norms of our society tell us that it is a coming of age ritual to consume alcohol, cigarettes, or any number of illegal drugs. They tell us to alter the way we feel using chemicals to poison our bodies in order to produce an allergic reaction that we enjoy.

Within this issue of Synapse you will see your fellow YRUUers looking into the issues that surround our bodies in our society. Read what your fellow UUs have to say about cultural body norms, from dress to eating habits, from rape to straight-edge. Think about their thoughts on how we are shoved into a cultural box that controls our feelings and behavior about that which is most under our control.

-Duncan

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. All contributions are considered based on quality and whether they fit into our Principles, Purposes.

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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.





The last issue of Synapse included some poetry that some members of the Unitarian Universalist community found objectionable. The following is a letter written to Cynthia Breen, Director of the Religious Education Department.

Dear Cynthia,
I'm writing to you as the parent of a teenager who is in the youth group at church.

Last Spring, the Mass. Bay District Youth Newsletter carried a disgusting article about a UU minister who took a prostitute to a sleazy motel for an illegal abortion. I expressed my concern to Norma Veridan by telephone at that time.

The Fall newsletter was even worse. It carried an article that used phrases such as "Godmotherfucker," "kick their pansy ass," "go get drunk, beat up some freaks, and get someone pregnant." This article also carried a quiz to determine if you were a schoolyard slayer. One of the conclusions of the quiz was, "I guess we're just lonely, psychopathic kids who are dangers to our school and community." The author of this article wrote that if you were offended, then "suck it."

And just last week, I received the Fall issues of Synapse magazine, published by YRUU. One poem contained the phrases, "How to Fuck Animals for Their Pleasure and Yours," and "fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck it's the only word we use anymore." A second poem reads, "you're either a star or a star fucker," "she wore black leather latex gloves while fisting critics," "her books had stickier pages than Hustler," and other phrases relating to acts of sexual violence and degradation.

I am disturbed that these disgraceful publications are distributed under the auspices of the Mass Bay District and the denomination. The UUA is fortunate that none of this has been picked up by the media. I cannot imagine the irreparable harm that would be done if it were. I urge you and the UUA board to act in regard

to these youth publications as soon as possible.

I would appreciate a response to my concerns. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Michael Durall

The following is Nathaniel Klein's response to Michael. Nathaniel was the senior editor on the last issue of Synapse.

Dear Michael,
I'm writing you in response to your letter addressed to Cynthia Breen regarding the most recent issue of Synapse. I have little to no response to your concerns regarding the Mass. Bay District YRUU newsletter "\$1.49" as that is published by the Mass. Bay YRUU Steering Committee. I might suggest in regards to that that you direct your comments on "\$1.49" to the editors of the publication rather than the Programs Consultant that doesn't actually work with the editors of "\$1.49." The editors of the Mass. Bay YRUU newsletter "\$1.49" are Alex Pirozzi and Harrison Neel (I will attach contact information for you to contact them with your comments).

I will respond to your concerns regarding the Fall 1999 issue of the continental YRUU magazine Synapse, of which I was the senior editor. The theme of the issue on which you are commenting is "Art and Censorship," which I believe is significant to the comments that you have for our magazine.

My understanding is that you object to language of two of the poems in Synapse, as well as some of the content of these poems. You find it to be "disgraceful," and "disturbing." I think you will find that we as the editors of Synapse did very conscientiously choose what would be printed in this issue of Synapse, and gave a lot of thought to what responses we might receive to our selections. This is apparent on the second page of Synapse in the "Wink from the Editor" column.

We chose to publish the poem entitled "She had..." by Yasmin Golan for several reasons that we feel are important. First and foremost, the poem is very well written, easily the highest quality piece of creative writing I have seen through our office in my tenure as a YRUU Programs Specialist. Secondly this poem addresses the disgusting hypocrisy of our society, our government, and the artistic community. As someone who lived in Los Angeles (where Yasmin was living

when she wrote this poem) and was trying to be an artist at the time, I totally understand the sexism, objectification, labeling, and simple oppression that she speaks of in her poem. Yasmin's poem calls it as she sees it, in a witty and beautiful poem. I was honored as the editor to publish this fine example of poetry.

We also chose to publish the untitled poem by Natalie Knazik, again for several reasons. First off, we also felt this poem was well written and spoke to us as readers. We also chose this poem for reasons that are exactly what you seem to be alluding to in your letter to Cynthia. The poem is talking about the sorry state of affairs our societies and communities are in. We live in a place where quality is replaced by cheap, fast, desensitized, quick fixes. Where everything is plastic, and everyone is only in it for their pleasure, and expression is confined to mockery <"snicker over Da Vinci's proportions">, and obscenities <"**** * it's the only word we use anymore">, and beautiful things like making love are reduced to "How to **** Animals for Their Pleasure AND Yours." This poem is someone in our society looking around and saying, "What has the community that I live in come to?" This poem is critiquing exactly what you critique.

I understand your concern as a parent. However I think that everything that we have ever published in our magazine has upheld our UU Principles and Purposes, and beyond that challenged the status quo in our society, a status quo that is unhealthy for everyone living in it. I am proud of this last issue of Synapse, and I think you should be proud as well of the youth in our denomination, who are seeing so clearly the injustices and negative status quo that exist in our society.

Lastly I want to touch on one thing of concern for me. It causes me great grief that your letter, which is in essence a letter to the editor, was not something that you felt comfortable sending to the editors of Synapse. I understand that you are a former employee of the UUA, so I will have to assume that you know that, as the editor of Synapse, I am a YRUU Programs Specialist, and as a YRUU Programs Specialist I am either a youth or a young adult. I don't know why you felt you could not address your concerns to me or the other editors of Synapse. But working in an institution that has treated me as less than equal my entire time that I have worked for it due to my age, I am always concerned that my age is the basis for judgement calls. I don't know if my age was why you felt the need to go "over the head" of the editors of the maga-



zine that you had concerns with, but that is what it says to me, and that disheartens me about our denomination.

Thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,
Nathaniel Noel Klein
YRUU Programs Specialist at the UUA

This is Michael's response back to Nathaniel. Nathaniel no longer worked in the Youth Office when we received this letter.

Dear Nathaniel,

I'm responding to your letter about the content of *Synapse*. I'll send copies of this letter to Alex Pirrozzi, Harrison Neel, and Denny Davidoff.

Our differing views may be a matter of the generations in which we grew up. What I'm about to write may strike you as emanating from the Neanderthal era, but this was my world as a child and a teenager, much of which stays with me to this day. I hope you will find my comments helpful.

I was raised in a strict Catholic family, and religion was a serious matter. I remember as a child getting dressed up in my "Sunday best" clothes to attend Mass. Church was a place of reverence. During Mass, the priest wore vestments and robes, and in daily life a black suit and clerical collar. Nuns wore black habits. There was a mystery and awe about church being a holy place, and an inherent respect for God.

This was also the era in which many homes had framed needlepoints in the living rooms or kitchens that read, "Honor thy father and thy mother." These were usually hung next to a painting of Jesus. Many Catholic homes also had crucifixes, often in every room. Children were taught to respect and honor their elders, especially priests and nuns as people who were called by God.

When learning about God and religion in catechism classes, there was also a definite sense of right and wrong. Back then it was called sin, and if you sinned, you owed atonement to God.

Among the things that were wrong was foul language. When I was about six, my mother heard me say "God damn it," and washed my mouth out with soap. To this day, I can still recall that taste. Even in my teen years, when

my guy friends and I tended to use foul language, none of us would ever speak those words in front of a girl, and we would never have written them down, let alone publish them for others to read. I can't even begin to imagine the dire consequences if my parents or the parish priest found out I had written some of the things I saw in "\$1.49" and *Synapse*.

While this all might strike you as oppressive, the church also taught that God watched over people, and kept them safe. "The eyes of God are always upon you" is both a Christian and a Jewish tenet. Religion provided a sense of safety and security, and guidelines for daily living.

The church had strict rules, which we followed, often willingly. Yet never once did I feel censored, or unable to express my feelings or views. With all of the freedoms that our country and UU youth enjoy today, I am surprised that censorship is even a topic of discussion.

For me, the issue is what religion means. A. Powell Davies, one of our Unitarian luminaries, writes of the meaning of religion, when he says;

"We need all that can give the heart a deep and strengthening peace. We need religion with a faith and purpose. We need the touch of beauty, bringing back to life its luster and its loveliness. We need the communion of our spirits with the spirits of the highest that our earthly dust may meet and mingle with the majesty and mystery of God."

Davies' sentiment about religion calling us to our highest purpose is not what I find in "\$1.49" or *Synapse*. And it saddens me at a profoundly deep level that phrases like "fucking animals for their pleasure and yours" are considered well written and speak to your readers.

I had hoped UU Youth might seek ways to rise above the vulgarities of the world we have created for ourselves, and find new paths of religious expression. Instead, it appears that youth publications reflect and even intensify the worst of contemporary life.

I would ask youth editors to ponder what legacy they will leave those who are younger, now 11, 12, 13, and 14 years of age who will follow in their footsteps and perhaps their younger brothers and sisters. A. Powell Davies also wrote, "It is at the level of the spiritual that we are fulfilled or are defeated." My wish

for youth publications in New England and across the land is that they are beacons of hope, assisting young people in living fulfilled lives, rather than echoing the trivialities and most tasteless aspects of the society in which we live.

Thanks for hearing me out.
Sincerely,
Michael Durall

The Board of Trustees met in January to discuss a language policy for UUA publications. The Board decided that the editors have complete editorial control of their contents and the Director of RE final say on language. The following message was sent into our office when we asked members of YRUU to respond regarding the language in the last issue.

If you don't like it, don't read it. That's a right too. Just as much as saying and printing whatever we want to is a right, not having to read or listen to what anyone else says is a right too. I don't think that the language was used inappropriately. In fact, the poem on page 30 kind of suggests to me that we should widen our vocabulary a bit.

Listen up Mr. and Mrs. Censorship, if you don't want your kids reading that, fine, that's between you and them. But don't decide for me. YRUU isn't just for under-age minors. Eighteen-to-twenty-year-olds (and twenty-two in some districts) are welcome in YRUU as well, and they actually have rights. You can't censor them because they have every bit of the constitutional righteousness that you have.

Are the people protesting this UU? You can preach all day about equality and acceptance, but it all really comes down to how you raise your kids. that's the true extent of how far your beliefs go.

Ben Kulow

Preach on Brother Ben. We certainly recognize that we have a diverse readership that not only consists of old and young youth, but advisors, directors of religious education, ministers, and people who work with youth as well. We will continue to publish material that we feel falls into our UU Principles and Purposes.
-Ed.



a point of contact where information & energy are exchanged

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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: Are we ColorBlind? YRUU takes a look at Racism

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

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.



yru steering committee speaks

compass

By Evan White

Continuing the tradition of last year's YRUU Steering Committee, this year's rawking new group of leaders have renewed their dedication to the visioning process. Instead of mindlessly following the dictations of what Steering Committee has done, we are striving to find out what Steering Committee and YRUU should do. We are, after all, an organization based on our Unitarian Universalist Principles, seeking youth empowerment and social justice.

One of the first objectives of this year's Steering Committee was to develop a better system of selecting staff for YRUU conferences, which until now has been the responsibility of Steering Committee. Not only has this taken up much of the precious time of our tri-annual meetings, but this process does not enable the staff of these conferences to have ownership over what they want their conference to be.

To remedy this, we devised a system in which one Steering Committee member will work with the dean of the YRUU event to select the rest of the staff. The deans will all be selected by Steering Committee. In this way, we hope that the deans of these events will be able to construct their own vision of the conference through the staff that they select.

Another — and perhaps most exciting — direction of YRUU has been the inspiring dialogue between members of YRUU and the UUA Board

of Trustees. Largely because of a resolution passed at Youth Council, a group of YRUUers met with the board at its last meeting to discuss issues of youth empowerment including youth representation on UUA staff, committees, and most importantly the UUA Board itself.

What was the outcome? To start with, YRUU got two official observers who will attend all UUA board meetings. These people will be able to speak at the table and will have full rights excluding voting. Furthermore, this discussion sparked a growing interest in the board becoming a more effective, more representative group. Thus, beginning at General Assembly this year, a conversation will commence

to restructure the UUA Board itself!!! What this will entail is yet to be seen, but this process should be an exciting one!

Other issues under discussion are the future of the YRUU Social Justice Conference, making Youth Council open to observers, and the development of the Working Action process at General Assembly. Many of these short and long term goals slowly made us realize the necessity for the creation of a YRUU five year plan. This thrilling new idea will enable YRUU to set and achieve goals successfully. Most importantly, WE NEED YOUR INPUT to make this work!!!

So that's about all from here on the homefront. Hopefully y'all can tell us what you think because that's what it's all about! My mom always used to say that I hold the compass but she makes the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Poignant, to say the very least.



Evan White looking his best for the Humpty Dance at Con-Con '98

Evan White is currently a freshman at Vassar College and a member of Steering Committee representing 18-20 year olds. He is the former Youth Council Rep. from Pacific Southwest District.



Youth Jump-Start Board Restructuring!

By Abbey Tennis

It all started back in '97 with the Youth Council Resolution to Encourage YRUU Involvement in the UUA Board of Trustees. This resolution recommended that "the UUA Board of Trustees strongly consider creating a designated position on the Board of Trustees for a YRUU Youth Council Representative, or electing a youth as an at-large representative to the Board of Trustees." The resolution did not pass at that youth council, nor did it pass when it was revised and brought back the next year. At Youth Council '99, however, the Resolution to create a YRUU Trustee at large to the UUA Board of Trustees passed, and was brought before the board at its January meeting by a group of thirteen youth (plus the youth office) for consideration.

The meeting started off with introductions, goal setting, and covenant forming. We then broke up into three groups to discuss youth issues and programming on local, district, and continental levels. The discussions went well and some great ideas came out of the synergy. After that, we started a discussion on having a youth position on the board created. This is where the discussion grew tense. We started by going around the table saying our initial reactions to the resolution. Nearly every board member, in one way or another, said that he/she was not in favor of voting for the resolution as is but agreed with it in principle. They expressed that they would like the board to be more diverse. This set the stage for an uncomfortable, seemingly "us vs. them" meeting, contrary to the pool of commonality that we were hoping for. After about 45 minutes of tug of war, the suggestion was made that we begin discussions on restructuring the entire UUA board instead of focusing on one small change.

It was agreed, and the large group dissolved into a smaller group willing to stay up a little later. Someone grabbed some cookies, someone grabbed some soda, and someone grabbed some butcher paper and the brainstorm began. We worked until 11 PM that night and left with plans for a lunch meeting on Saturday. We met at lunch and after dinner on Saturday and, by the end, had created a preliminary proposal for the restructuring of the board. The creation of the Youth Trustee At-Large, as well as youth filling district trustee slots, are still being pursued and explored. With any luck, we'll see both by the end of next year!

So, what's happening now? Long email discussions are taking place, and following a hearing a General Assembly this year, a task force of some sort is going to be created to oversee the writing of a bylaw change to be brought to General Assembly 2001 or 2002.



ABBEY LOOKING TO THE SKY

Abbey is a freshman at Oberlin College. She is a former Youth Council Representative and she attends UUA board meetings as the YRUU observer.

How you can help!

Be a delegate at General Assembly (GA).

1) Congregations send a certain number of delegates to GA each year. Most at least partially fund their delegates, who are usually nominated and voted on. Even if your congregation can't fund you, there are scholarships available through the Youth Office and a quick "Youth Group Bake Sale to send Jane to Tennessee" usually can at least pay for your airfare.

2) At GA, you can vote and speak at pro and con microphones during business meetings and help us get a youth on the board. Yay!!!!

Go to GA as a non-delegate.

3) Non-delegates can lobby and pass out fliers as much as delegates can. This is perhaps the most important part of getting our resolution through.

Get on your congregation's board/parish committee.

4) This committee runs your congregation. Being a strong youth voice in your congregation's leadership can open new doors for youth and make congregational activities, curricula, committees, etc. more accessible to you and your youth group.

5) Ask your youth group advisor about this. Ask your parents if they attend church. Ask your minister or a random adult at coffee hour about this. Chances are that, your inquiries will be met with enthusiasm.

Get on you district's board.

6) Many districts already have designated places for youth on their boards. Find out if your district is one of them, or call your Youth Council Rep. for more details.

7) Try running as a regular at-large from your congregation, or run for a position.

8) Try board meetings out. Most districts have open board meetings. Stop by sometime. Run a workshop. Observing meetings can have a greater effect than one might think.

9) Get to know your trustee. The district representatives on the UUA Board of Trustees are awesome. Invite them to a con, ask them out to lunch, send them a box of chocolates. They love chocolate.

Call the Youth Office or myself to find out more!!!!

Abbey Tennis
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Become an Advisor Trainer!!

Come to the Continental Advisor Training!!

MISSION STATEMENT:

Promote youth empowerment through Unitarian Universalist values and create partnerships between youth and adults in order to cultivate healthy youth advisors.

COME TO THE CONTINENTAL ADVISOR TRAINING IN NEWTON, MASS!

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is an Advisor Training?

Advisor Trainings are trainings for Youth Advisors on issues that are important to them, such as liability, and how to nurture a youth group to its fullest potential.

Who can be Advisor Trainers?

We are looking for 12 adults (25+) and 12 youth (14-20) to lead a minimum of four Youth Advisor Trainings in the two years after being trained. We want both youth and adults who have leadership experience in YRUU and experience working with adults, youth, and the two groups together.

What is the cost?

The cost for the Continental Advisor Training is free to those selected to attend. The Youth Office covers travel, room, and board. The cost of the training is nothing for the people selected. The expenses are also paid for the trainings you lead.

What is expected of an Advisor Trainer?

An Advisor Trainer is expected to lead at least FOUR Advisor Trainings in the next two years. Youth/adult teams will be sent to districts for the trainings.

Do we have to organize these trainings ourselves and where do they take place?

These trainings should be organized by people in the district who are responsible for logistics. Trainers are not selected by districts but are at-large and lead trainings in district other than their own.

Are we paid to train all of these advisors?

As UUA trainers you will be compensated by an honorarium by the organizers of the conference.

To apply, type the answers to the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

What is your experience working with youth (if you are an adult) or adults (if you are a youth)?

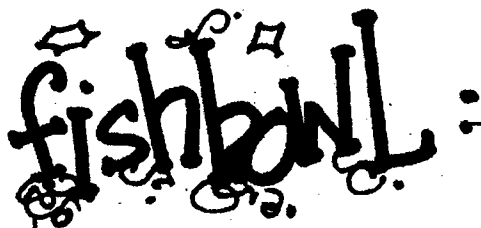
What is your experience with YRUU?

What special skills do you have to teach youth advisors?

What is your experience with anti-racism/diversity?

Send to the Youth Office by September 25

Youth Office
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108



Sexual Health Is the Goal

by Jennifer Harrison

Our goal in teaching sexuality education in our churches is to develop sexually healthy people who integrate their values and spiritual beliefs with their sexuality.

So often we think of sexuality education as like getting a vaccine. The cultural myth is that all you need is to get it once early on and then you don't need to talk about it ever again. One shot in the arm and you're set for life. Well folks that method doesn't fly. We all need to be learning information as we grow. What a kindergartner needs to know about sexuality and what a woman going through menopause needs to know are different. Our bodies and our understanding about sexuality change throughout our lives and we need to constantly be learning.

We want our Unitarian Universalist youth to become sexually healthy people. Since 1973 we have been teaching sexuality education in our churches to middle schoolers. This often was great relief for parents who wanted their children to get accurate age-appropriate information but were too uncomfortable with the subject matter to really be able to teach their children what they needed to know.

I heard a story of a UU parent who was very relieved to have trained teachers facilitating her 13-year-old daughter's *Our Whole Lives* class. This parent came up to the teacher after class one day and said, "I just really want to thank you for teaching my daughter skills she can use for life." The teacher wisely turned to her and said, "Actually what I am doing is teaching her the skills she needs for the eighth grade". Sexuality education is a lifelong process.

The new *Our Whole Lives* program that is being launched in our church has classes for kindergarten and first grade, a 4th, 5th, and 6th grade program, a jr. high program, a high school program, and an adult program. In this way we hope to provide age-appropriate materials for people through out their lives.

We want to ensure that our youth identify and live according to their values, communicate effectively and take responsibility for their behavior. We hope that the learning they glean from the *Our Whole Lives* program will help them express love and intimacy in appropriate ways and avoid exploitative or manipulative relationships. We want our youth to understand how their cultural heritage affects their understanding of families, relationships and ethics. We hope they learn to appreciate their bodies and affirm their sexual orientation and respect and affirm the bodies

and orientations of others. We hope that they learn that sexuality is not just about genitals but about the whole of the self. It encompasses attitudes, thoughts, feelings, our body awareness, and our relatedness to ourselves, to others, to the world around us, and to our understanding of the divine.

When it comes to sexual behaviors we hope our youth learn to enjoy and express their sexuality throughout their lives in a way that is in harmony with their spiritual values. That they learn that being human means we can enjoy sexual feelings without necessarily acting on them. That they seek to create a holistic view of sexuality that is life enhancing and doesn't do harm to themselves or others. And if they engage in sexual relationships that they are consensual, non-exploitative, honest, pleasurable, and protected against disease and unwanted pregnancy. We want to be sure they have the skills to communicate effectively with their families, peers, and partners.

We hope that our youth will learn to take care of themselves and get regular check-ups and do breast or testicular self-exams. That they will avoid contracting or transmitting STDs, including HIV. That they will act consistently with their values when dealing with unwanted pregnancies. We want them to be able to view their families as valuable places of support around these issues.

We also hope that our youth learn not only to be healthy sexual being but how to relate to our unhealthily sex-saturated society and culture in a way that helps others learn to be healthy and show respect for differences. We hope our youth avoid behaviors that express hate, prejudice, or bigotry and that they reject the stereotypes about the sexuality of diverse populations.

All of these hopes and wishes we have for our youth are not necessarily easy things for them to learn and they certainly cannot do it alone. They need the help of a loving community, communicative parents, supportive peers, and sexually healthy adult role models. We need to help our youth assess the impact of the messages they receive from their families, their cultures, their religion, the media, and society. We need to help them unravel the often conflicting messages as they play out in our thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors related to sexuality.

These are our great hopes. Imagine the joy if we could only attain them all. Our youth are often ahead of the curve when it comes to sexual health because of the programs in our churches. Now if we can just ensure that our UU youth stick around to become adults in our congregations we will be well on our way to building more sexually healthy faith communities.



The following are some indicators for a sexually healthy faith community. See how your youth group holds up. If you apply these same criteria to your congregation, what areas do you see that need work? What can you do to improve the situation?

Sexually Healthy Faith Communities

- Affirm sexuality as a sacred part of life
- Assure that people interact with both genders in respectful and appropriate ways
- Treat each person with dignity and self-worth
- Welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people as full participating members
- Support and affirm all people
- Value families as the primary sexuality educators of their children
- Value youth
- Offer pastoral counseling and support to those whose sexuality has been broken
- Offer support groups on a wide range of sexuality issues
- Have clergy and religious educators trained in sexuality issues
- Offer age-appropriate sexuality education throughout the lifespan
- Clearly articulate and post sexual harassment policies - clergy and congregants, adult and youth, and youth interactions
- Work for sexual justice through social action committees
- Actively support sexuality education in the public schools
- Actively support community agencies working on sexual health and sexual justice
- Periodically address sexuality issues in worship and liturgy
- Post information about community referral sources on sexuality issues
- Include sexuality issues in congregation library

Adapted from Haffner, Debra. "A Time to Speak" NY: SIECUS, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States

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 about 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."

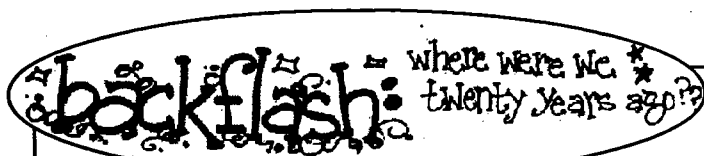
Write for more info on the Unitarian connections at Antioch and admissions information:
Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH 45387
1-800-543-9436 <http://antioch-college.edu>

LIKE BUSINESS AND FUN? Come to Con-Con 2000.

Con-Con is now before Youth Council. "What is youth council?" you ask, Youth Council is the governing body of YRVU, and it creates policies and directives for YRVU. It is composed of Youth Council Representatives and At-Larges. At Con-Con there is an Annual Meeting of YRVU, where you can lobby the Youth Council members at Con-Con about what you think needs to happen.

For more information on Con-Con, look on Con-Con page 1, after the General Assembly section.





THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

*Ripped straight from the pages of the
March 1976 Volume III, Issue IV People Soup!*

Background: Abortion Rights

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that women in this country have the constitutional right of abortion. The decision provided that up to the point of the viability of the fetus, states could not interfere with the right of choice except to insure the medical safety of the woman.

Most people believed that the Court's decision opened the way for the provision of safe and legal abortion to all American women and that in a relatively short time services would be available for all women who, as a matter of conscience, had decided to procure an abortion. Three years later, however, the Court's momentous decision has not been implemented.

Large numbers of women who seek abortions are still not able to obtain them. especially those who are poor or who are living outside large metropolitan areas have considerable difficulty obtaining abortion services. Moreover, the issue of abortion rights is the subject of raging controversy in almost every part of the United States. Far from being settled, the battle over abortion rights is being waged in the Congress, state legislature, the courts and in government agencies at both federal and state levels and it is an important issue in many federal and state selections. A review of the events of the past three years demonstrates the dimensions of this battle.

The Strategy of the Anti-Choice Forces

In June 1973, representatives of groups that had been fighting abortion reform in many states came together and formed the "National Right to Life Committee." It vowed to organize citizens in every state and to work to nullify the Supreme Court decision. The Committee established a national office in Washington, D.C. and developed a working relationship with a variety of groups opposed to abortion, including substantial segments of the Catholic Church and its affiliated organizations.

The "right to life" as this amalgam of groups most often calls itself, has been responsible for the following activities designed to deny or restrict the legal right of abortion:

*An attempt to amend the US Constitution to outlaw all abortions, or to restrict them

only to certain circumstances such as rape or incest or to return the whole matter to states to regulate. Amendments have been introduced in the House and Senate and in March, 1974 the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments started hearings on the abortion issue.

*Riders on federal legislation that would restrict abortion by cutting off funds for abortion services.

*Enactment of many kinds of state laws that "nullify" the Court decision or restrict its implementation.

*Promulgation of administrative regulations that restrict or deny abortions, such as state regulations governing the payment of Medicaid for abortion

*Harassment of physicians, clinics and other medical personnel and facilities engaged in abortion.

*Education campaign to persuade the public to support its point of view.

Results of the Anti-Choice Campaign

The sweeping campaign of anti-choice forces outlined above met with only a few successes.

In the Congress, after an initial success in enacting three anti-abortion riders to appropriation and authorization bills, seven similar decisive roll call votes against restrictive riders: the House, in June 1974, by 247 to 123, and the Senate, in April 1975, by 54 to 36. Then on September 17, 1975, the Senate Subcommittee, after 18 months of hearings, rejected all five proposed anti-abortion rights constitutional amendments - one by only a 4-4 tie vote. While this is most probably the end of the issue in the Senate for the rest of the 94th Congress, hearings on similar amendments have been scheduled for February and March of this year in the House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

In the states, there have been numerous legislative proposals which would restrict abortion, many in flagrant violation of the Supreme Court rulings. Some of these have been enacted, but with only a few exceptions they have been overturned in the courts. A number of restrictive state laws will be heard on appeal by the Supreme Court this year.

The effect of the conviction of Dr. Kenneth Edlin for performing an abortion with other medical facilities and personnel cannot yet be gauged. A number of threatened prosecutions of physicians in other parts of the country failed to materialize, but some doctors and hospitals have imposed restrictions on abortions not required by any law.

Public support of abortion rights has gradually increased. A 1975 Harris poll found such support greater than ever before, with 54% favoring legalized abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy, as compared to 42% in 1972. Catholic citizens' support of abortion has increased steadily during the same period despite the strong anti-abortion rights position of the church. Many Protestant, Jewish, and other religious groups adopted or strengthened positions supporting abortion rights and all efforts to reverse previous abortion rights positions at national meetings were defeated. Catholics for a Free Choice was organized.

As the end of 1975 neared, the fury of the abortion battle appeared to be diminishing. Abortion rights groups were looking to the possibility that the legislators, government officials, and health institutions alike would implement abortion rights more actively as they perceived the failure of "right to life" to achieve its objective of overturning the Court's decision.

Escalation of Controversy, The Catholic Bishops Plan

On November 20th, 1975, the U.S. Catholic Bishops, meeting in Washington, announced the adoption of a sweeping plan to involve the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, the 48 million Catholics, and Catholic-affiliated organizations in a campaign against abortion rights, which would focus primarily on passage of a constitutional amendment.

The plan calls for efforts in the following areas:

*Public information and education to promote respect for life and heighten public opposition to the general public and, as a long range intensive effort, to the Catholic community

*Pastoral counseling and care for women with problem pregnancies and those who have had or will have participated in an abortion

*A legislation program directed primarily to:

a) enactment of a constitutional amendment "providing protection for the unborn child to the maximum degree possible."

b) adoption of federal and state laws and administrative policies to restrict abortions.

(article continued on page 27)



The Sexual Politics of Intercourse

By Susan Goldstein

Maliciously stolen

*from the February, 1977 Vol. IV, Issue III
People Soup!*

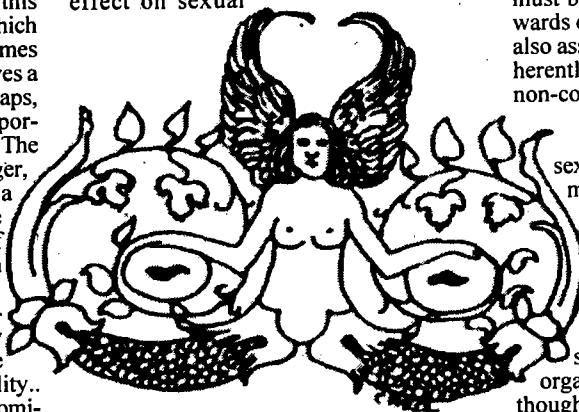
Sexual norms in this society (as in most, if not all) are male-centered and phallus-oriented. Our language relation to sex shows a phallogocentric understanding of human sexual behavior. Our potential for physical and emotional satisfaction in heterosexual relations is distorted to the extent to which we internalize these norms.

First, let's imagine a society with a very different notion of heterosexuality. Here it has been found through common practice that a male's right index finger is the most satisfying stimulator of the female's clitoris. Such stimulation is therefore the essential mode of sexual (not reproductive) behavior. Sometimes in the course of this practice a man ends up in a position in which his penis is accidentally (or even sometimes intentionally) stimulated, and he achieves a penile orgasm--and enhancement, perhaps, of the sexual act, but of peripheral importance to his digitally-oriented sexuality. The male's real organ of sexuality is his finger, and to wish for penile stimulation is a sign of immaturity. Sometimes people copulate, but that is for the purpose of reproduction and has nothing to do with sexuality...."

This society's systematic denial and perversion of female sexuality is not much less absurd than the above example in its denial of male sexuality.. Phallogocentric sexuality ignores two anatomical facts. The first is the difference between female sexual and reproductive anatomy. Male sexual and reproductive behavior are the same-- both sexual satisfaction and reproduction can be accomplished through the same act. Females, however, have separately located and separately functioning organs for the purposes of sexual satisfaction and reproduction. Human females lack an equivalent of an estrus cycle. (In other mammals, the vaginal area becomes sensitive and swollen at the time of fertility, or estrus. With few exceptions, non-human mammals copulate only during this period.) Therefore, they lack what could be scientifically called a drive to reproduce. "Though a few women report erotic sensitivity in the vagina, neurological research has failed to find a common source of such sensitivity in the vaginal interior. Thus there is no apparent physiological condition in the human female to stimulate simple, direct reproductive behavior." The implications of this are beyond the scope of this article; let it suffice to say that if women's motivation to have intercourse is not physiological, it must be psychological, cultural, and political. I will illustrate this later.

The second distinction generally ignored is that between what is properly female sexuality and what is properly male

sexuality. It is sobering to realize it took a scientific study to begin to convince us of what women, at least, should have known centuries ago, if it weren't for society's denial and distortion of female sexuality--that intercourse, on a purely physical level, is the least satisfying form of sexual activity for women. To put it more scientifically, Masters and Johnson's research has shown that intercourse has the lowest subjective and objective rating for intensity of orgasm in comparison to masturbation by self or by a partner. It would seem that this validation of women's own experiences by respected authorities would have a profound effect on sexual



practice. That it hasn't had such an effect is due to the fact that to truly legitimize "... the primary importance of the clitoris would necessitate a revolution in our sexual lives, which would entail the reversal of almost all the socializations we have had relating to male dominance over women in all aspects of our lives, not just sexual."

Men have a vested interest in continuing to confuse female sexual and reproductive anatomy in their work as marriage counselors, doctors, psychiatrists, and writers. The vagina is relevant to male sexuality. "Furthermore, since the clitoris is the center of female sexual response, the phallus is less relevant to female sexuality than is a finger or tongue, either of which is a more effective stimulator of the clitoris than a penis could possibly be. And recognition of this must, unfortunately, be seen as a threat to heterosexual men who find intercourse the greatest -- or only -- source of satisfaction because it becomes clear that women don't need men for satisfaction. We can stimulate ourselves and be stimulated by other women as well as men can stimulate us because that unique male offering, the phallus, is of peripheral importance, or may even be irrelevant, to our sexual satisfaction."

In its laws, in its science (psychology, even in its "sexual revolution" this culture has perpetrated the fallacies which make sex between men and women male-oriented, a stronghold of male privilege. Marriage between men and women must be consummated by intercourse -- "real sex" must take place -- or the marriage can be annulled in all fifty states. Can a woman sue for divorce if she hasn't had an orgasm in twenty-five years of "loving, honoring and obeying"? "The emotional and psychological satisfaction women get from intercourse must be more important than just getting off," you may object. Some women do claim that these factors are more important to them than something so petty as an orgasm. However, as we reject a phallogocentric understanding of sexuality, we become wary of such claims, because women have been socialized to believe we must be content with the non-physical rewards of intercourse. The above objection also assumes that vaginal penetration is inherently more emotionally satisfying than non-coital stimulation and caresses. As long as we are getting emotional and not physical satisfaction from our sexual experiences, we will tend to demand more commitment from sexual contacts than women generally do, in an attempt to substitute one for the other.

Another indication of how deeply ingrained phallogocentrism is in our sexual lives is the fact that an entire society could accept Freud's vaginal orgasm theory for half a century. Although this is now considered a dead myth in liberal circles, it was a pseudo-"liberating" theory at the time in that it granted women any sexuality at all. It is worth exploring for what it can teach us about our present attempts at sexual liberation within a male-dominated society.

"A man's penis and a woman's vagina are obviously different. Male orgasm is analogous to clitoral orgasm. Where, then, does vaginal orgasm come from? People say it's learned. Why should she learn vaginal orgasm? Because that's what the men want. How about a facial tic? What's the difference?"

Even the words we use for sex are political, in that they reveal a phallogocentric orientation: Sex = Intercourse. "To have sex" is to copulate, "to engage in a male-female interaction in which the sufficient conditions are vaginal penetration by a penis -- an interaction which is directed toward male sexual stimulation and orgasm, and to which female stimulation and orgasm are irrelevant."

The ACT -- screwing, fucking, balling, making love -- whatever on calls IT,

(article continued on page 22)



Antioch, UU Heritage, UU Freindly

An Interview by Cheryl Keen with Unitarian
Youth Lizzie Kucharski and Tony Romeo

Lizzie and Tony are second-year students at Antioch College. This interview was conducted last spring, before they left for their first co-op experience. Cheryl Keen is a professor at Antioch and co-author of Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World (Beacon Press, 1996).

Antioch College's long-standing association with the Unitarian church saved Antioch several times. The Unitarians first offered up Horace Mann as the first president and later headed up the appointment of Arthur Morgan as president in the 1920s. It was Morgan, a Unitarian, who was responsible for instituting our unique co-op program, thus saving the college from bankruptcy.

In the years between, Unitarians secured financial support and ensured that Antioch was a non-denominational institution. Over the course of those years, several prominent Unitarians and Universalists graduated from Antioch, including Olympia Brown in the first class. (Olympia was the first American woman to be ordained with full denominational authority and was a famed suffragette.)

There is a good-sized handful of Unitarian students on the Antioch campus who are glad for the work of their forebears. In my dialogue with Lizzie Kucharski and Tony Romeo we surfaced many lasting links between current Antioch practices and the Principles of the Unitarian covenant.

Cheryl: I sense you've felt the acceptance and encouragement for spiritual growth both here at Antioch and in your home churches.

Tony: Unitarian beliefs were complementary to my family values....There are few places in my life where I can say, "This church taught me this." I can't say it changed my life. It totally reinforced, continued the ideas. Now I am here at Antioch. It is a continual expression of my ideals.

Lizzie: I've gone to a couple UU churches. Here in the Yellow Springs church there are 75 members and no minister. It blows my mind. But people are substantially more religious than they are at all the other UU churches I've been to. And they are more spiritual too. It seems to be what I find in Unitarians, the smaller the gathering, the more in depth the conversation gets. That is something I like about UUism; it encourages discussion in general. And I like that there isn't proselytizing. Instead they sit back and let people find it. That's how I found it. A friend said, "You should go," and I didn't go for a year and a half. Last week at fellowship someone talked about paganism, solstice and the meteor shower. The congregation spoke back and no one went "Hush you aren't supposed to talk now." It is a lot like Antioch, everyone sharing their ideas and no one really telling them to be quiet.

Tony: I wonder if we Unitarians have a tendency to stick a lot of people in a room and have no one to tell us where to go, just to see what we'll do (laugh). That's very much like Antioch! It is not just the courses that you learn from here. A lot of faculty have stressed with me, almost preaching, the value of learning outside of class. My academic advisor asks me, "How is the community, how is that thing they call community going for

you?"

I don't think any one could say we have a community. We have a bunch of different people together trying to be a community. It's a goal of being a community.

Lizzie: It's a goal and we'll fight tooth and nail for it.

Tony: We trust each other to make it happen.

Lizzie: That is what stands out for me the most about Antioch - it's something that resonates with the Unitarian covenant to the right to conscience and democratic process.

Lizzie: This is the only place I've ever been where they attempt to have a real community, where community involves everyone. That is totally Antioch.

Tony: I think one of the most special things about Antioch is that it is very messy. After one challenging community meeting that didn't come to resolution, the President, Bob Devine, was saying, "Democracy is messy." People always feel that for something to be successful, you have to have a conclusion. Why do you have to have a conclusion? A lot of people heard a lot of things. Why is that not all you need? I think that here everyone hears a lot of things, you get exposed to a lot of things. What you say is actually respected and listened to and I think that everyone here basically believes that we should care about each other. There isn't one defined: "This is the way it is, this is why we are happy and lovely," because we are not. This is the real world. People get mad at each other and people love each other. There is the underlying belief that we should respect each other. I really feel comfortable here, which I didn't find at all in high school. I don't think anyone cared that I was there, although they respected me.

Cheryl: I've seen you make announcements in meeting and get affirmation.

Tony: That's always nice to be able to, given the small number of people here, get personal responses to things. The Community Meeting in itself is pretty revolutionary in terms of anything I've been exposed to. I was president of the student council last year and no one came to Student Council meetings, even the members. At Antioch's Community Meeting, everyone is welcome and everyone comes. That's a sign of community that we all get together every week. Everybody includes the faculty, administration, students, cafeteria workers, union workers, secretaries - everyone getting together and trying to communicate and establish what is happening in that week. Touching base. Like in my leadership retreat's "feelings check."

Lizzie: My high school was a lot like Antioch. We had town meeting that everyone had to go to. It is kind of nice to go here and find the same thing. Everyone comes to Community Meeting. It is nice to have personal responses. The level of response you get is, "This makes me angry, this is why, and this is what we can do about it." Getting that level of personal response it great.

Tony: I like the goal of world community with liberty and justice for all. Very Antiochian. One thing I find amusing is if there is a weird cause in the world, someone here has picked it up and is trying to do something about it.

Whether or not I think it is dumb is another story, but people are always



trying to do the right thing. No one else in the world may have even heard of this cause, but Antioch students have not only heard about it, but are trying to do something about it.

Last week many of us were involved in the School of the Americas protest. It is weird to have something that is so Antioch be so televised nationally and picked up on NPR.

Cheryl: What evidence do you see for the covenant of equity and compassion in human relationships?

Tony: I was so proud when I was visiting UCLA last week. I met my friend's "woman and literature" teacher and she said, "Don't you have that Sexual Offense Prevention Policy (SOPP)? Last year we were studying the deconstruction of the rape culture and we studied Antioch." I said, "Wow, that is so intense." That is a proud feeling right there. They are studying us because we are doing it right.

Lizzie: The SOPP also fits with the covenants of respect for the interdependent web of all existence and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

Cheryl: Go with that for a minute. That kind of language isn't in the SOPP, about why wouldn't you want to invade someone's bodily space without permission. What are the ramifications of that for you?

Tony: It's respect. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It goes beyond that too. I like that it is gender neutral. It really is. It is not just about "this is your problem because someone abused you or might abuse you." But rather, as a community, "we don't stand for this happening." Which I really like. If you get brought up on SOPP, you go to the Community Standards Board. It's like, "Hey, you violated our standards, you didn't violate one person, you violated us. How dare you come into our community and not respect us." I really like that. That is the language that is really cool.

Lizzie: I like that it is gender neutral. When you look at most legislative codes they are built for he abusing her. The SOPP realizes it can be him abusing her or she raping him. OR she abusing him.

Tony: It is everyone's problem. This is probably one of the few places I could get away with a class discussion in which I point out that it is not only men that are sexually abusive. Which is good.

Lizzie: I see the covenant of the inherent worth and dignity of every person on so many levels. You realize we have breaks in the community and everyone can get hurt. But regardless of the fact if you might disagree with them, everyone here will listen to you and will contemplate with you and sit back and and say, "Hey I don't agree with you and we'll draw it out. We realize that the other person has a cause that is just as good as ours, or will progress our own, or something will make us think.

Cheryl: How have you been stretched in this regard?

Lizzie: There is a woman student who has been bringing a strong Christ-centered, Catholic approach to pulling people together. She reminds me of the people I have protested against. I've had to step back and say, "I see your viewpoint and you see mine?" She reminds me of a girl in high school who told me I was going to go to Hell. I don't want to listen to that anymore. But here I am in community with someone who wants to tell me that. The fact is that she will also listen to my viewpoint now and understand why I don't agree with her is really great.

Cheryl: How about the free and responsible search for the truth? How does Antioch support you in this covenant?

Tony: Antioch is very free in the search. They teach responsibility very well.

Lizzie: Yes, I think we teach responsibility but it is a matter of having people find it themselves.

Tony: Yes, and I think that is how you teach responsibility. That is a lot what stuff here is about.

Lizzie: But I am having some problem with people on campus who don't understand responsibility. Part of it for me is finding the balance that you create through searching for your own truth and the truth you are taught. Lots of people create their own and try to preach it.

Cheryl: Others might say we are dominated by political correctness?

Tony: We can think outside the box here.

Lizzie: I think because we think freedom, we preach our own freedom. We play a lot of identity politics, but on the same level, Antioch doesn't want you to define yourself. It wants you to think, to play off of that. To think for yourself, to know who you are, but at the same time not to know who you are because you have to be able to explore yourself. Trying to find all that you can become.

Cheryl: What do you hope for yourself in terms of support to grow spiritually and personally in this context?

Tony: The only way to encourage anyone's growth is to encourage them to be who they are. That is really hard to do for anyone. This country is very not into letting people grow into who they are. You don't go to college to grow, but to be stamped. You go for a diploma and earn more money. To drink lots of beer. It is terrifying.

CK: Good for you for making this kind of a choice for you that you feel that more than that can happen for you. That is why Antioch alums are so incredible.

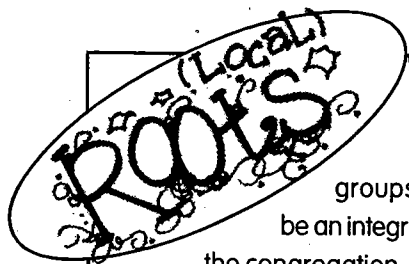
Tony: The love hate relationship people have with this place is so amazing. They can't stand being here, but they could never be anywhere else.

Lizzie: I really love being here, but "the intensity." It's a catch phrase. It is part of coming here. But I wanted to run away where I won't have any "issues," or I wouldn't have to learn something from every conversation I have with people. At the same time, I go away for a few hours and I have to ask, "What did I miss?"

You can get more information about Antioch College or the historical connections between the college and Unitarians by calling 1-800-543-9436. Check the website at www@antioch-college.edu.

Lizzie and Tony are Unitarian Universalist students who attend Antioch. Cheryl is a professor there. Isn't it nice to see an institution that shares our values?





Out of the Basement and into the Congregation

Youth Groups Becoming Part of the Congregation

Youth groups should be an integral part of the congregation. In some ways, the youth group is an equivalent to the Women's Group or the Senior's Lunch Bunch. Though they have meetings separate from the rest of the congregation, they are also a part of the congregation as a whole. The youth group should not be any different. It is beneficial to both congregation and youth group to share their different perspectives and knowledge with each other. In fact, in a denomination that believes in encouraging each other to spiritual growth, it is a must. Many of the adults say that this sharing gives them hope and encouragement to keep trying. Another benefit of closer youth/congregational relationships is more concrete. If the congregation knows and respects you, they are less likely to turn you down when you ask for money to buy curricula, furniture for your youth room, or permission to host a conference at the church.

A few years ago, the youth group of my church met at night when no one else was around. Many of the youth were friends of friends of youth members who had no adult connecting them to the congregation. We didn't know the congregation or anything about them and the congregation didn't know us. There was little interaction between the two groups. Though the youth and adults of the church rarely saw each other, rumors and stereotypes were being

spread by both groups. Several parents of entering ninth graders had heard the rumors and were concerned that the group might not be a safe place for their young teens. Some old members of the group were worried about the large number of new kids who seemed to want to change things and some other kids were staying away because the focus of the group didn't fit their needs. The disconnection became critical at a parent informational meeting which started with lots of yelling and accusation and ended with the charge to brainstorm ways out of the "disconnected youth group syndrome." Out of this



Picture taken by Ms. Morgan Fanning

brainstorming came the "Visibility Campaign." One result of the Campaign was the literal move of the youth group out of the basement to more visible quarters near the entrance to the RE building.

Other results had more to do with relationships. Since the adults were having a hard time reaching out to us, we decided to reach out to them. The following are examples of what we did and what your youth group might do.

1. Go to church on a regular

basis. If they see you there every Sunday, they will begin to recognize you. EXAMPLE: At first my youth would sit together in a big clump in the sanctuary. Because we came in mass, we weren't hard to spot and got noticed. After doing that for a while, we would spread out and get to know the adults we were sitting near. It also makes the Sunday Service Committee more likely to plan youth-friendly services.

2. Volunteer as an usher or to serve coffee. This will show that you are willing to work for the benefit of the church.

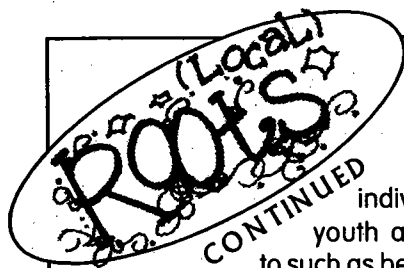
3. Light the chalice as individuals or groups. The readings you choose will demonstrate your thoughtfulness and let adults know what youth are thinking about.

4. Be visible in social hour. EXAMPLE: Not only do we mingle with other members of the church; we also do something we call Social Action Snacks. We get volunteers to make cookies or some other kind of snack then ask for a donation for them during

social hour. We often include some kind of information about current issues of social concern. We donate all the money (hundreds of dollars this year) to charitable organizations. The congregation has grown used to having a snack between services and it allows us to fund social action projects.

5. Write articles for your church newsletter. Give updates about all the awesome stuff your youth group is doing as well as articles about what





individual youth are up to such as being in a play, winning a contest, etc. This is an easy way for the congregation to get to know you.

6. Join committees. Not only does this show that you are dedicated to the functioning of the church and allow you to get to know the members of the committee, it also allows you to have a say about what goes on. EXAMPLE: We made it our goal to get at least one youth on every committee of the church. This proved to be difficult because of our busy schedules. However, we were able to be involved in many of them. After a while, the committees that didn't have a youth member felt that they were missing out. Many of them came to the youth group and asked us to join.

7. Teach in the religious education program. This bridges another age gap and builds the congregation's trust in youth.

8. Invite church members to youth functions. You can invite them to overnights or cons. You will get to know each other well and they will see the kinds of things you do. Or you could invite them as guest speakers. They will feel that you value their opinions and knowledge and hopefully, they will value yours.

9. Lead Sunday services, vespers/worship services, or a worship for the RE kids. EXAMPLE: When youth from my church did this, the adults realized that they could learn as much from us as we could learn from them. At last spring's service, "It's About

Shoes, Because They Have Soles Too," 350 pairs of used but good shoes were donated to a local shelter. Many older members expressed thanks for the lessons they learned about the economic and moral significance of their shoe purchases and the chance to perform a simple but effective social action project.

10. If your church allows it, become a member. This is proof that you want to be part of the congregation. If membership isn't allowed, lobby for a change in the bylaws. It will generate important conversations in your church about the meaning of membership.

11. Pledge. If you are able, show your support financially as well as by volunteering your services. At my church, a \$10 pledge will put you on the same list as the Board of Trustees and might encourage some non-pledging adults to change their ways!

12. Host intergenerational social events. EXAMPLE: My youth group started an intergenerational theater group. Every so often, they put on a play or have a poetry reading night. It is fun for those involved and entertaining for the rest of us. Also, we sponsor dances. At our swing dances, we get someone to teach quick, basic lessons.

That way, even the most inexperienced person can come and have a good time. The congregation is very appreciative that we make opportunities for them to have fun.

13. Go to board and congregational

meetings and be vocal. Let your opinions be known. Share your good ideas.

14. One of our dreams is to have a mentor system in which a senior adult member is paired with a youth member. We're still working on ways to get this done but as a start, we recently sponsored a geriatric/teen dessert potluck and game night. People who were over sixty or between the ages of twelve and nineteen were invited to share in the fun and middle-aged folks were invited to provide rides for both groups and to do the dishes.

These are only a few ways to integrate into the congregation. For my youth group, they brought success. We have grown and have added the junior high group to youth programming. There are now six groups meeting regularly which involve approximately 75 junior high and high school youth and 19 advisors. Some other results of our campaign include a by-law change to allow us to be members, a \$5000 budget, and the hiring of a staff person to oversee youth programming. Not only are we a part of the congregation, we are well respected. Our age gap has been bridged. I hope, yours will be too.

Kate Kidder is currently trying to claw her way out of the Mountain Desert District.

WUUKY IV!!

Are you a youth that lives west of Kansas? West of Texas? West of Ontario? Then you should come to WUUKY (Western Unitarian Universalist Karmic Youth) this summer! We will be gathering for fun, learning, and worship in the woods of central California. For more information contact:

Alana McGibeny
106 Kellogg Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301
seraphim@unbounded.com



Boy Scouts of America and UU Youth

By James Sheldon

The Boy Scouts of America has recently come under attack for its policies of discrimination against gays and atheists. What many people do not know is that they are also directing some of their attacks against UUs and specifically UU youth.

In 1998, the Boy Scouts sent a letter to the UUA withdrawing recognition of the UU Religion in Life emblem, an optional program for UU Scouts to show their involvement and dedication to their religion. The program was revised in 1992 to include a statement about the homophobia and discrimination of the Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts stated that "the reference to the trouble some Unitarians Universalists may have regarding the duty to God inappropriately incorporates doubt in an award process that is designed to forge a stronger link between a youth's Scouting values and religious life.... We note with considerable dismay that this version of Religion in Life also includes an official expression of disapproval of Boy Scouts' membership policies relating to known or avowed homosexuals. The Committee believes that this expression of disapproval has no place in a Boy Scouting/Exploring youth religious award manual." (May 1998 letter from BSA to UUA).

After meeting with the UUA extensively and the UUA revising the materials, on April 23rd, the BSA restored recognition of a revised version of the program that did not include any statements criticizing the BSA. It did, however, include supplemental materials about our support for gay rights. Upon finding this out, the BSA took back recognition: "Your letter goes on to say the following: 'The new edition of Religion in Life will be available from the UUA Bookstore this summer. Along with each copy, the Association will separately provide a letter from me, along with resources appropriate to dealing with issues of homophobia and religious discrimination.' Unfortunately, this simply reopens the entire issue of using boys as a venue to air your differences with the policies of the Boy Scouts of America" (May 7, 1999).

This is an issue that is very important for youth to be involved with. Boy Scouts of America is an organization founded for the benefit of youth. Its values—trustworthiness, loyalty, helpfulness, friendliness, courtesy, kindness, obedience, cheerfulness, thrift, bravery, cleanliness, and reverence—are similar to our own UU principles. Yet when UUs publish information about gay rights in our religious emblem pamphlets, we are accused of "using youth." I have made the argument in response that it is the youth who are "using adults."

I myself have gotten a resolution passed by General Assembly. Steven Cozza, a 14-year-old Eagle Scout (see www.scoutingforall.org) has started a nationwide petition drive. There are many opportunities for youth to get involved with this issue. The first would be—if you are a Scout, earn the Religion in Life emblem and wear it on your uniform. Sign Steven's petition whether or not you are a Scout, and get your friends to sign it. Get your youth group involved. Invite your local Boy Scout troop to community service and other activities of your youth group. Talk to your church about sponsoring its own Boy Scout troop (contact me if you want more info on how this would work...) Talk to your church and see if it has done the Welcoming Congregation program and workshop series. (see <http://www.uua.org/obgltc> for info)

If you want to earn the Religion in Life (Boy Scout) or Love and Help (Cub Scout) religious emblems, order the program materials from the UUA Bookstore. Call 1-800-215-9076. You can reach James if you have further questions at jsheldon@cats.ucsc.edu

How you can support UU Boy Scouts

Continue efforts to seek the reinstatement of the Religion in Life emblem and to offer the program and award the emblem to UU and other Scouts in the meantime.

Publicize the Religion in Life program through district newsletters and other publications that are read by UU youth.

Publicize the Religion in Life program through the World, REACH, and other publications that are read by parents and religious educators.

Continue to use all appropriate venues to communicate this information to Unitarian Universalists and others about these conflicts.

Encourage the BSA to monitor troops nationwide to be sure that all Scouts are being treated equally and fairly despite their religious beliefs or the degree to which their families may practice them.

Support UU churches that choose to continue their charters with BSA troops while they work to try to change BSA's discriminatory policies.

Support the efforts of *Scouting for All* and other groups that seek to overturn the Boy Scouts' discriminatory national policies.

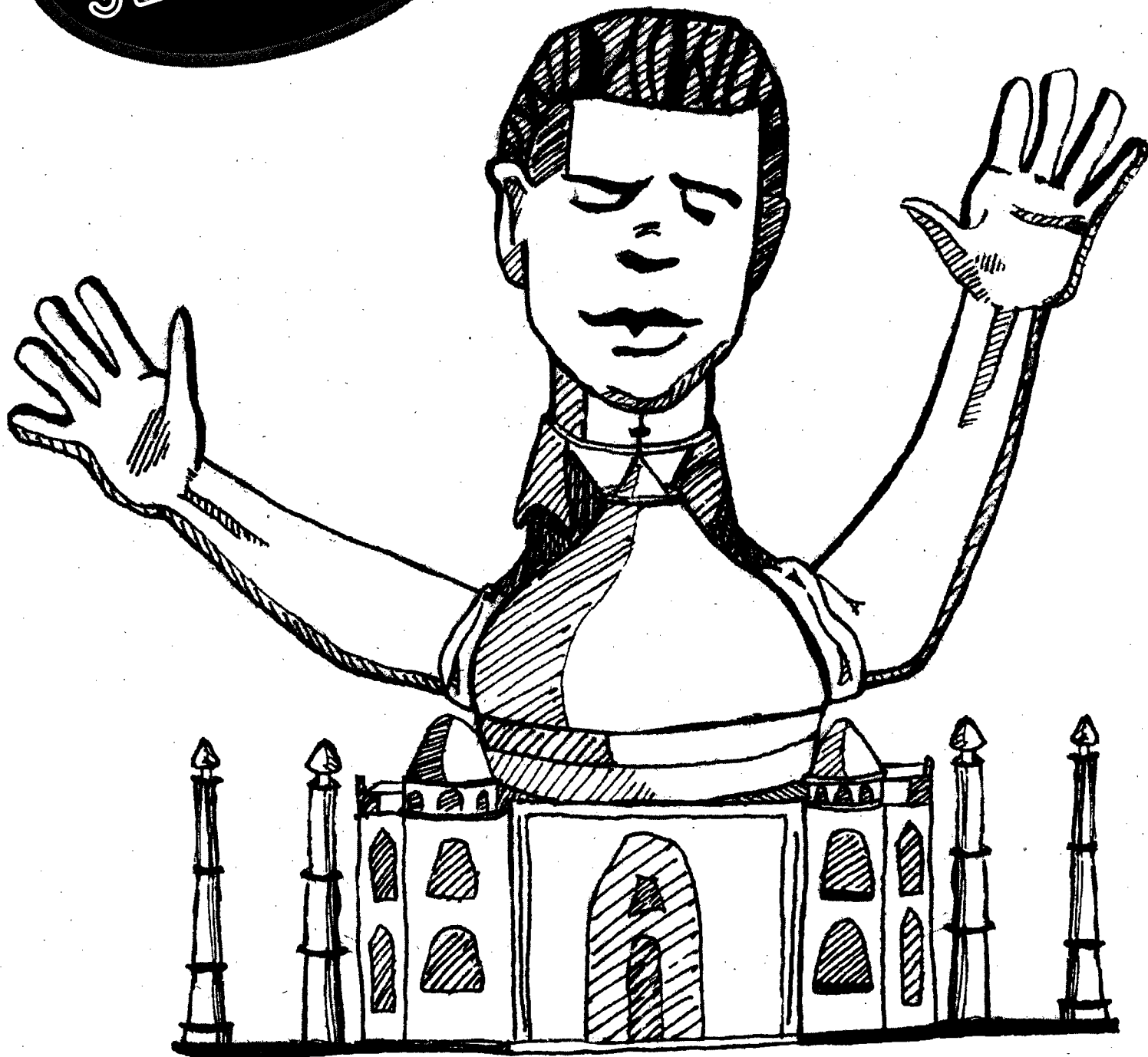
For further information, see

<http://www.uua.org>
<http://www.scoutingforall.org>
<http://boyscout.home.texas.net>
<http://www.jamessheldon.com>



THEME SECTION

My Body Is My Temple





Respect Every Body

by Julie Slater

1.3 WOMEN ARE RAPED EVERY MINUTE in the U.S. That results in 78 rapes each hour, 1872 rapes each day, 56,160 rapes each month, and 683,280 rapes each year. This does not even include every unreported rape- only 16% of rapes are ever reported to the police. These results also exclude any survivors under the age of 18, or any instance when the survivor does not consider what happened rape.

Out of 1,000 rapists, only three ever serve prison terms. Acquaintance rape accounts for about 78% of all rape in the U.S. - someone the survivor knew- a relative, co-worker, friend, boyfriend..... this is also the kind of rape that is least reported, due to the confusing circumstances- the survivor may have trusted, loved, and/or lived with the person, thus complicating the victim's conclusions about the incident.

We live in a culture of rape. Media, socialization of gender roles, and commonly held beliefs support those gender roles (such as "Boys will be boys") all feed into

the perpetuation of a cultural system, that ignores and denies the every-minute occurrence of rape; we live in a culture that supports and promotes the act of rape. This, in turn, reinforces the devastating effects that rape inflicts upon every one of us - male, female, adult, and child. The promotion and acceptance of violence against women are whispered in our ears every day. Each of you will have witnessed about 40,000 murders as portrayed in media entertainment by the time you reach your 18th birthday.

**"YOU TAKE ME SERIOUSLY
OR DON'T TAKE ME AT ALL"**

-Spitboy

EXAMINE YOUR YRUU COMMUNITY

Has anyone in your community ever spoken of being sexually assaulted?

How did the community react? (Was the survivor believed? Supported? Was she/he encouraged to report it if she/he wanted to?) If the assailant was someone within the community, how was she/he addressed and/or confronted? Was any action taken to prevent this from happening again? If you were sexually assaulted, would you feel comfortable telling someone in your community? If not, why? Make a list (anything you feel: afraid of not being believed or liked if told,

Helping a friend who has been assaulted

DO: Be a good listener. Ask your friend what she/he needs. Assist in getting the help she/he wants. This may mean providing phone numbers, information, transportation, and shelter.

DO: Assure your friend that it was not his/her fault.

DO: Assure your friend that she/he did the right thing, whatever it was. Remind her/him that cooperation does not mean consent and that during a sexual assault most victims fear for their safety.

DO: Assure your friend that you will be available to talk. Some victims need to talk a great deal about the assault.

DON'T tell him/her what he/she 'should have done.'

DON'T question your friend's judgment. Don't ask why he/she "was drinking" or "went with someone."

DON'T expect him/her to be the same as before the assault.

DON'T tell your friend that she/he "should just get over it," "move on with their life," or that he/she "should be over it by now." Healing from a sexual assault is a long process.

DON'T focus your feelings of revenge toward the assailant. This may make you feel better but it is usually not helpful for your friend.



for example). These are the issues that must be addressed in your community. YRUU should be a supportive environment in which everyone can speak out about how he/she feels the community needs to change. YRUU is a place where we can all grow spiritually, supporting one another as we search for truth- who we are, what we want to do, who we want to be. Chances are that this subject has not come up in your Sunday meetings or weekend conferences. If someone is violated (inside or outside our community), they may often tell one or two of their closest friends, but no one else. The numbers show that so many of us have experienced some sexual violation- and remain silent about it. Maybe you think you were at fault, that love hurts, that you could have prevented it somehow. But the fact is that no one ever deserves to be sexually assaulted. If you didn't want to engage in certain sexual acts and the other person made you do it anyway, that is sexual assault. Or if you were too drunk or high to know what was going on and someone had sex with you, that was rape. When we don't speak out about what has happened to us, we are protecting the perpetrators; we are supporting the culture of rape. 26%-60% of male college students admit to some likelihood of raping a woman if they could get away with it. Rape occurs so often because men know that they will not suffer consequences, that it won't be reported and they may not even be accused. When you are not telling anyone about what has happened, about how you're feeling, your fear is in charge. Girls, as long as we remain disconnected from ourselves and each other, we will remain powerless and fragmented. We must listen to and believe each other, coming together to stop sexual assault. If your YRUU community is not a safe environment- one in which sexual assault is not addressed, there are survivors of sexual assault suffering in silence. This silence hurts and saps energy. This silence effects us all. No matter where or with whom the assaults happened, whether inside or outside our community, we have a responsibility to ensure that our space is a safe one, where everyone is comfortable talking, confident they will be believed and assisted. I encourage you to bring this up with the people around you. How can you address this issue? How can you young women support each other, keep in contact, protect each other? Discuss our culture of rape- how does the media (news, movies, t.v., advertisements, billboards) support and condone the objectification of women and sexual violence against women? As a larger spiritual community made up of smaller ones, may we take this on as a call to action. We CAN eliminate sexual assault.

Want to become an Anti-Racism trainer for the UUA and work on creating a youth model?

THEN APPLY TO THE YRUU STEERING COMMITTEE TO DO IT!

The YRUU Steering Committee and the Faith In Action department of the UUA are looking for three youth to become trained to lead Jubilee World Workshops and to revise the workshop to speak to youth.

What is a Jubilee World Workshop?

A Jubilee World Workshop is a training offered by the UUA for congregations and groups to learn about how to transform congregations into being intentionally anti-racist. It is lead by UUA trained trainers who work in teams of two.

What do you mean by "revise the workshop to speak to youth?"

Currently the Jubilee World Workshop is aimed at adult congregations. Due to this it does not speak to our generation's experience with race issues. It needs to be modified so that youth can grapple with the difficult issues race brings up.

What is the commitment I would have to make?

It is a three-year commitment. There is a training to become a leader that you must go through. You must attend several meetings in Boston throughout the year. All of your expenses are payed for including your training, the meetings, and expenses when you lead trainings. In addition you will be responsible for creating a training for youth.

Okay, you have me interested, how do I apply?

To apply write an application answering the following questions:

What YRUU experience do you have?

What leadership experience do you have?

What is your definition of racism?

What is your experience with race issues?

What is white privelege?

What ideas do you have for a training that would speak to youth?

Send to:

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

Applications due on July 15th



By Charles McNulty

AS Unitarians why should our affirmation of sexuality and a shameless love for our bodies not extend to pornography? How can we swallow the mixed message that our sacred human sexuality can be somehow transformed into something lewd and profane simply by being sold at a magazine stand or a video store? If we can believe that the human body should be revered but yet not celebrated actively, we are no longer practicing a living, transforming faith but merely engaging in idol worship. The human body is of no less value for being displayed openly, and when we condemn those who aren't afraid to exhibit their bodies and flaunt their sexuality, we aren't just condemning magazine publishers or erotic dancers; we are in effect saying that all that is beautiful should remain in shadow and all that is sacred should remain high atop an altar rather than affirmed by all.

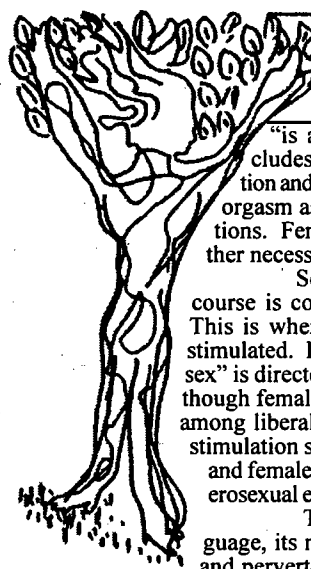
It's the same unwritten Unitarian rule of restraint and shame that keeps us from preaching our religion on the street corners and sermonizing on the hillsides. It's what allows us to exhibit more sarcasm than faith on Sunday mornings while writing it off as having a healthy irreverence for our religion. The mistaken belief that we shouldn't evangelize the Unitarian message for fear of changing someone's mind, or even sit in the front row at church, is the same misplaced modesty that allows us to demonize the selling of images of nude women and men.

While I'll grant that some men and women are exploited by the pornography industry, we are allowing the pornography to be the scapegoat for the system by placing the blame on pornography in general rather than on exploiters of men and women. To blame pictures of naked people for an exploitative industry is like blaming a McDonald's hamburger for the rape of rainforests. Furthermore, attempting to outlaw pornography will never quench the desire for erotic imagery which has existed in human society for thousands of years; it will only stunt and twist the growth of a natural love and appreciation for our sexuality. A nurturing approach to our own sexuality

means exploring all facets of our development as sexual beings and making selective decisions as to what is healthy or unhealthy rather than squelching it in its entirety with self-delusions and lies.

And the mere fact that financial profit is generated from the sale of pornography also does not necessarily denigrate the sacred into the secular. Precious little, good or bad, in this country exists outside the realm of profit, and neither pornography nor religion is exempt. Indeed, perhaps if pornography were sold on a table at General Assembly next to the chalices, just as sexuality is taught in churches to youth groups, we could see that pornography is a completely natural expression not just of our emotions of lust, but also of a much more sacred love.

Charles is a young adult living in Boston and is currently working for the UUA.



The Sexual Politics of Intercourse

Continued from pg. 11

"is an activity whose definition includes penile stimulation (by penetration and movement in the vagina) and male orgasm as necessary and sufficient conditions. Female arousal and orgasm are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions."

Sexual activity other than intercourse is considered foreplay or after-play. This is when the clitoris is supposed to be stimulated. It is "play," not "real sex." "Real sex" is directed towards male pleasure, and although female pleasure is given consideration among liberals, "it is unthinkable that clitoral stimulation should ever be the central activity and female orgasm the primary goal of a heterosexual encounter."

This society, in its laws, its language, its norms, has systematically denied and perverted female sexuality in deference to male pleasure, and now in its sexual "revolution" it is "freeing" women to participate more fully in the denial of our own sexuality, fucking whomever and whenever we please. This is not freedom. Sexual freedom is freedom from the idea that you haven't had "real sex" unless you've had intercourse. It is freedom from the idea that sex is somehow "unfinished" if you come and he doesn't. It is freedom to stay celibate, or to stay a virgin, directing your energy inward, or into other kinds of relationships. It is freedom to make love to members of your own sex, knowing that this is just as valid and real as heterosexuality. It's going to be a long time before these freedoms become widely accepted. Oppression starts in the bedroom—begin by changing what you can.

(*Ti-Grace Atkinson, *Amazon Odyssey* (Links Books, N.Y., 1974) p. 7. All other quotes—Karen P. Roitkin, *The Phallacy of Our Sexual Norms* (Rough Times, 1972))

Article edited slightly for content



Pointercount

By Rachel Wallis

Porn. While I'm certainly no expert, I'd be willing to say that I have a fairly adequate passing knowledge of the subject—everything from "Skinemax" to *Hustler* to "Dress up for Daddy" with some questionable websites in between. It was hard to stay in youth housing at GA in Rochester—where the only thing that was open past 6 was the 24-hour porn store next door—without getting some kind of introduction. And to be perfectly honest, I don't like most of what I see.

It's hard for me to look at most porn magazines without wondering what they're teaching the young boys who are often the ones reading them. There's the fact that, you're purchasing these women, or at least sexualized facsimiles of them. There's the constant association between sex and violence. There's the shaved pubes, making these women in highly sexual situations look eerily like pre-pubescent girls. There's the fact that, thanks in part to the porn industry, my Korean friend never knows whether men are genuinely attracted to her or to the exotic Asian sex mysteries that she supposedly represents.

I worry that with the exception of "niche" porn, many of the women that I love and find attractive are simply nowhere to be found. Where are the women with bellies or lush treasure trails? Where are the women with disabilities? Where are the women with shaved heads or A cups? How could you possibly try to present women and the gorgeous sexuality they embody without women like these and so many others?

Considering what I've just said, I was therefore quite surprised to find myself one of the most vocal defenders of a Wesleyan student attempting to make a porn movie on campus this semester. In light of several recent terrifying attacks against women here, he was pressured to cancel his project by a number of forces, including the university president and members of the feminist majority. The president was quoted as saying that the student's posters, which proclaimed "get paid to get laid," were creating an air of permissiveness on campus that he found unacceptable. Faced with this situation, I had to admit that my allegiance ran strongly with the porn

producer.

I was finally forced to admit that despite my numerous issues with the porn industry, I feel like giving up on porn would mean giving up on my belief that sex is something to be enjoyed. Coming from a UU background, I've got this adamant belief that sex and sexuality and nudity are things to be celebrated, not ignored or kept quiet. And while today's porn industry could certainly learn a few things about inherent worth and dignity, I can't help hoping that maybe if more porn was made on campuses like Wesleyan, I would be finding more things that affirmed the women I love. Because like it or not, porn is often the force that shapes men's expectations of women. Maybe someday that force can be used for good.

Rachel is a young adult who currently attends Wesleyan College in Massachusetts.

Theme Section:
Our Body as a Temple



and I feel nothing.

Wham! a powerful smack between my eyes

Opens them to see nothing.

Not a bare television set.

Not black.

Not snow.

Nothing at you.

You're not a friend now

Now that you aren't a lover.

You aren't an enemy

You aren't comfortable,

Like I thought you would be

You are only there.

You said once that speeding makes you think clearly

And now, speeding over the river,

Through the frightened yelps of my mother,

I don't think.

I don't even think of you.

Huh.

I'm over the river now.

I'm on the other side now.

I search for sorrow,

and I feel nothing.

By Heidi Hardt





She's out of control

by Emily Stainer

Six-hundred-ninety-nine... Seven hundred. She finished her morning crunches out of breath. The adrenaline of 200 burned calories coursed through her veins. She checked her watch, 6:50. Great—just enough time to shower, double check her homework, and catch her ride to school. She almost made it too, but the wicked witch of breakfast caught her on the way out the door with toast, dry but toast nonetheless. She deftly took the center bite out of each piece, careful to touch the food only with her teeth, dumped it in the garbage, and ran to catch Heather. School was a snap. All her assignments were perfect, she skipped lunch to catch up on some reading, and she was able to skip sixth period with Shana. Shana dumped her at ballet and she changed, stretched, and made sure to pee out the two glasses of water she drank; no one wanted to see her stomach bulge any more than it absolutely had to. Class drained her and her turns were still off due to her fat ass, but she was able to sneak in an extra hour of jumps at the end before rushing to meet the planning committee.

On the way her heart sank; she was missing her yellow and red pens. They were in Shana's car and she knew she couldn't concentrate without them. Everyone would notice she was off and she might not win the chairperson job. She pinched her thigh really hard in the soft place on the inside. If she could just keep everything together, then maybe the meeting would still be okay. Who was she kidding? She could never do it. The tears that sprung to her eyes were just another in the horrible events that spelled her stupidity. She barely spoke during the meeting and even ate three carrots more than her limit.

She sank to her bed when she got home and made a list of all the things she was bad at; it went on for two pages. She resolved to be better tomorrow, to smile

more and dance harder. She rearranged her desk, counted her pens, and crossed off the day on her calendar. After setting her alarm, she began her night exercises. Maybe tomorrow would be better . . . One . . . Two . . . Three...

Emily Stainer is a young adult currently living in South Carolina. She is the former Continental Socail Action Coordinator. She is really cool. And we love her.

Myths about eating disorders:

Myth: Only white wealthy women suffer from eating disorders.

Fact: Although the majority of people with these diseases are women, many men also suffer from eating disorders. Eating disorders affect people regardless of race or class background.

Myth: People with eating disorders just need to eat more.

Fact: Eating disorders are serious diseases that affect all aspects of a person's life and include a variety of obsessive-compulsive behaviors. Recovery requires the support of friends and family, professional therapy, and personal dedication.

Myth: People develop eating disorders because they think they are fat.

Fact: Eating disorders can be caused by a variety of reasons and usually involve issues of control and maturity. Although these diseases are often focused around body image and expresses themselves in symptoms of problematic eating, fat is not the only issue. It is control, obsession, and social problems.

GA too expensive?

Look to the end of Synapse on page GA 6 for information on scholarships and support staff to assist in building community.





MODERN DAY GATHERERS

Practical Veganism

By Lexi Staples & Mandy McCord

— Lexi Staples —

To me, my body is not the most important temple in my life. But I do feel I have respect for the bodies of all others. I think that the first time I sat down and thought about it, I realized that my lunch could once walk, feel, and bleed the same as I do. That is when I stopped eating meat. That was 7th grade. I hadn't ever taken into account that my pleasure was actually the pain of an innocent.

It makes me sick to think that we treat animals' bodies differently than we do our own. NO one would treat himself or herself that badly – but instead, we treat them as if we own them. We make them live in horrific conditions and feed them hormones. Eating them just seems wrong.

Until my sophomore year in high school, I was still a vegetarian. A friend I worked with told me a few disturbing facts about the dairy industry. She told me to read a book called A Diet for a New America, which I hadn't realized had been sitting in my room collecting dust for over a year. So, I started to read. That's when I became a Vegan. Which means absolutely no animal byproducts. I don't feel that it is my place to tell you any of the disturbing facts that I have learned about the meat and dairy industries over the past few years. Trust me there have been times when I've looked over at a hot greasy piece of cheese pizza, then looked back down at my killer tofu, and thought to myself, it must be true "ignorance is bliss." But in no way do I regret my decision. I feel better because at least I'm not contributing to the harming of the bodies of others.

— Mandy McCord —

Veganism is more than strict vegetarianism. It's a way of life. It's a promise not only to myself but to all the other living things – to exclude all animal byproducts not only from my diet, but from my wardrobe, as well. While

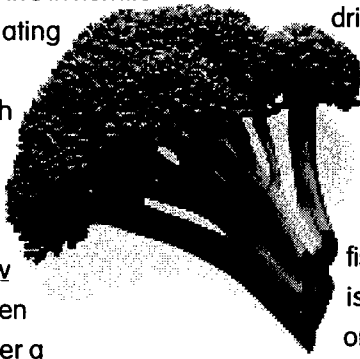
I could take pages to discuss why somebody should be a vegan for the sake of others (namely the animals they eat), I think it's more important to be a vegan for yourself.

People constantly bombard me with questions such as, "How do you get enough protein and/or calcium?" Most plant foods contain protein. If a variety of calories and foods are eaten during the day, a human body will make its own complete proteins, and most leafy greens contain calcium. Vitamins B12 and D are often found in fortified cereals and tofu products, so it's not actually that difficult to have a well-balanced diet while being a vegan. While it is sometimes frustrating to not be able to just grab a burger through the drive-thru when I'm in a hurry, the improvements made on my health are more than worth the inconvenience.

At first, I was astounded by some foods and beverages that have animal byproducts in them. Some wines and beers actually contain fish protein called isinglass, and "natural flavor" is sometimes derived from beef, poultry, fish, or dairy! Becoming vegan has made me more aware of what people put in their bodies, and through that I've become much more nutrition conscious. When you buy an artificial dairy item, more often than not, it will contain small amounts of albumin (egg white or milk, derived protein) or casein (a milk protein found in many imitation cheeses and popular items such as breads and cereals).

So, while most people would just take the package at face value, it's become second nature for me to read labels. To me, veganism is not only about embracing the lives of others, but my own as well. I think it's about time people became more informed about what they're eating and the effects it will have on their health, both now and in the long run.

Both Lexi and Mandy are currently stuck in the Ohio-Meadville District





I call myself Straight-Edge

By Matthew Moore

I was engaging in a conversation the other week—relative only to the time I am writing this article. The opposing speaker was none other than a female friend of with whom I share close age proximity and a similar faith. The difference in our ages, in my favor of course, may have given me the advantage—or maybe not. Although the setting is irrelevant, the topic was not. It was a simple question of “Why not?” without a decent retort on my part. However, I am jumping ahead of myself; I will backtrack a bit.

Let’s go back in time to my age of impressionable childhood maturity—not to say that this phase isn’t still active. I grew up in a sheltered, middle-class, white-dominated neighborhood—or region rather. So my understanding of drugs, substances, alcohol, using, dealing, etcetera came, not first-hand in my sheltered, middle-class, white-dominated region, but from health class. I was frightened from that early impressionable age. Even though my parents never presented the idea in family chitchat, they instilled their trust in the public education system. This may all be extraneous, however, maybe out of fear, or maybe ignorance, or maybe even denial, I was shaded from a world of anything other than being straight-edge.

Granted, my history and my “lack of access to substances” offered me an advantage over my peers in resisting the pressure of peers. First contact came in the summer of 8th grade. During a affluent game, I was casually asked by an unrelated someone if I “wanted a hit.” Instantaneously, I remembered the over-dramatic health movies and messages of fear. I turned down the hit with the addendum, “I don’t like it much.” Falsely implying that I had previous experience. The unrelated someone never asked again. It, of course, was for social reasons—concentrated from my early age. I’m sure the public educators would be proud. Yet, not until the past few years did I emerge from my sheltered childhood and required a new response to “Why not?”

The data were clear. Despite the public service announcements saying that it was practically nonexistent in the modern world, I knew that it was always a sweeping epidemic—maybe even a gift for coming of age, like receiving a driver’s license. It consumed some friends, but not all. It even claimed my brother. What am I supposed to say? How about the ever popular “just say no”? Nay. The sacrifices of my life without using were clear. Not being able to go to parties, not being able to relate to certain people (a.k.a. my brother), and not achieving maximum popularity. So then why?

So two weeks ago, I asked this girl of close age proximity and similar faith, “Why do you use drugs?” Maybe I could just contradict her statement and use that as my excuse. She first answered with “Why not?” My plan was a failure! I repeated the answer a few times and she repeated her reply an equal number of times. I broke first. I blurted out a response that was not premeditated. In its contents, I explained that I only wished to keep my body innocent. If I subject myself to the epidemic I destroy my body. She said she did it for the “spiritual high” it offered. I don’t want this false induced spirituality that she speaks. Not only does it seem wrong, but it also challenges my religious morality. Why should I alter my body’s chemistry to “have fun” or to gain a “spiritual high”? And then again, why should I put a substance in my body to purposely invoke change? It all just seems so wrong.

Matt Moore is from the Ballou Channing District and if you were lucky you might have caught him in “The Hobbit,” the musical

MASSive Con! **It’s HUGE!**

That is right! The Second Annual MASSive Con is happening in Grotton, MA at the Grottonwood camp. MASSive Con is a long weekend conference over Memorial Day weekend in May, and is open to all Unitarian and Universalist youth from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Come meet other YRUUers from the Northeast on this **Dan Fassett** exciting weekend.

**105 Lost Lake Dr
Grotton, MA 01450**

For information contact: **axol@ma.ultranet.com**





THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

continued from pg.10

c) support of legislation providing alternatives to abortion.

*A political program to "persuade members of Congress to vote in favor of a Constitutional amendment" and to influence Congressional elections.

How the plan will be implemented:

The educational effort within the Catholic community will be conducted by Church personnel and agencies as well as identifiably Catholic organizations. The public education, legislative and policy efforts will be implemented through "a systematic organization and allocation of the Church's resources of people, institutions, and finances at various levels."

At the state level: A pro-life coordinating committee will consist of a director, diocesan coordinators, and at least one person with practical, professional experience in contemporary political techniques. The state committee will coordinate statewide pro-life activities and will monitor political trends in the state.

At the diocesan level: supervised by a director, appointed by the bishop, the pro-life committee will consist of representatives of diocesan agencies, parish pro-life committees, and congressional districts. It will carry out educational and informational programs, will stimulate and help direct "grass roots political action organizations," and will develop close relationships with senators and representatives. Vigilance in using the public media and seeking "equal time" is called for.

At the parish level: The committee will include representatives of adult and youth parish organizations such as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Daughters of America. It will promote intensive educational programs for all Catholics in the parish-sponsored

pregnancy counseling units and provide pro-life action groups for the congressional district organization.

congressional district organization: The main political activities will be carried out by organizing in each congressional district an "identifiable, tightly knit, and well organized pro-life unit." This unit will "persuade" elected representatives to pass a constitutional amendment "pro-life" persons to party posts, set up an action telephone network, keep files on elected officials and candidates, and working for candidates supporting the amendment. It will work closely with other pro-life groups in the district.

The organization is described in the plan as a "BI-partisan, non sectarian citizens lobby," not an agency "controlled, operated, or financed by the Church."

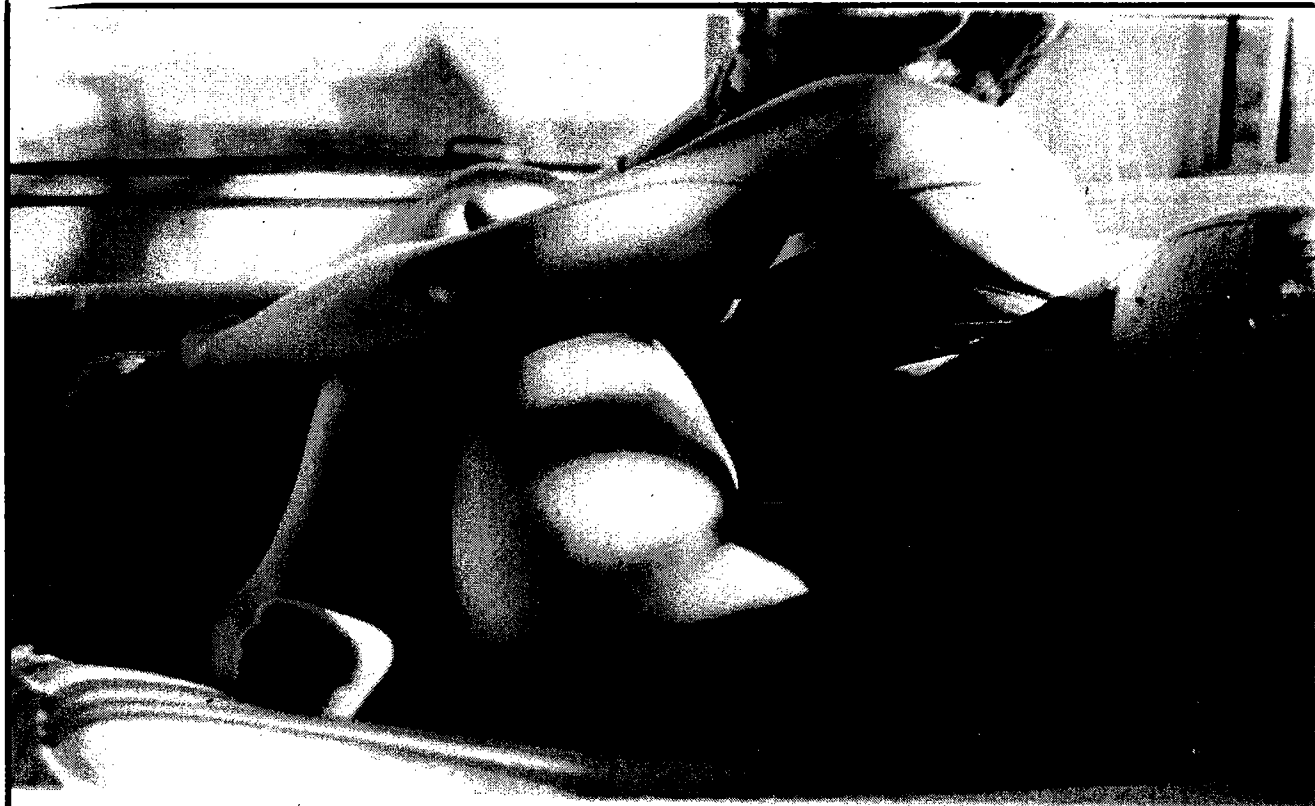
reactions to the plan - There is agreement from those on both sides of the issue that the Bishops have adopted a very effective plan to enact their views on abortion into law-- which is their right in a democratic society-- and that this will greatly accelerate the abortion controversy. Religious leaders from all denominations, including Catholics, have voiced a belief that the plan will intensify religious dissension and therefore set back the ecumenical movement. The national Catholic Reporter editorially pointed out that the bishops may have created an identifiable Catholic political party-- one which could rival the largest parties or lobbies in the United States.

To obtain the full text of the plan, contact the Catholic diocese in your area or write to the U.S. Catholic Conference, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

These articles are reprints of material put out by the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights. For more information about what you or your local group can do, write:

R.C.A.R.
Suite #401
100 Maryland Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20002
202-543-7032

*P.S. This article was written in 1976.
if you write to these people to get
information you are an idiot.*



Picture taken by the ever talented Danika Kleiber



Welcome to the General Assembly Youth Caucus!

Frequently Asked GA Questions

What is General Assembly?

General Assembly (GA) is the annual business meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Each year three to four thousand people attend, in order to discuss issues of importance, learn from the programmed workshops, hold elections, represent their congregation in the meeting, and to see old friends. It's basically a gigantic conference for UUs of all ages.

What is Youth Caucus?

Youth Caucus is a gathering of youth attending GA for various reasons. Together, members of Youth Caucus discuss issues that will be on the plenary agenda and make decisions about how to vote. Sometimes YC members create their own resolutions; sometimes they speak in favor of resolutions others have presented. Often YC presents amendments to motions that make them more accountable to the needs of youth. Youth Caucus also has the capacity to pass resolutions of its own. This year, for the first time, Youth Caucus will be electing a Working Action Manager to coordinate any business it would like to pass from this GA on to the next.

For more info on GA Youth Caucus:
Contact the Youth Office at 617-742-2100 x351 or x352,
or check in with us on-line at yruu@uua.org

Help Us Build a Bridge

If you are an older youth who feels yourself phasing out of YRUU, help us welcome you into the young adult community at the 2000 GA Bridging Ceremony. With heartfelt homilies by youth and young adults, powerful music, and a breathtaking symbolic bridging, this ceremony honors the sadness and the joy implicit in this life-changing transformation.

Please contact Donna DiSciullo, Young Adult/Campus Ministry Office, at ddisciullo@aol.com or 609-252-1412 if you are interested in participating.

Do I have to attend business meetings or other Youth Caucus events?

You can sleep in all you want at GA. GA is not a youth conference. We are attempting to create the option of a cohesive community of youth for those that desire it. And why travel hundreds of miles to sleep in?

How do I get involved in GA Youth Caucus as an adult?

Adults are welcome to take part in many of the activities of Youth Caucus. YC nightly worships and special events are open to all members of the GA community. One of the best ways to contribute to Youth Caucus is to act as a *sponsor*. All youth under 18 attending GA must have a sponsor in order to register. If you're planning on attending GA, see if there's a youth in your congregation who needs a sponsor. Adults may sponsor up to three youth to attend GA.

Can I get a scholarship?

The Youth Office does have scholarship funds available, thanks to the GA Planning Committee, the Sunday School Society, and generous GA participants. Many congregations and the GA Planning Committee have money available to those who are chosen to act as delegates. Also, check with your local or district youth boards to see if they have any scholarship money. For more info on Youth Office scholarships, check out page GA 6.

Can I lead a HUUP group?

Are there other staff positions available?

You bet your boots you can. Just send us a note saying why you'd like to lead a HUUP group and include any past YRUU leadership experience you may have. There is also a single Worship Assistant positions available. See page GA 6 for more info.

Please photocopy all forms!

GA registration form & fee must be sent to the GA office *not* to the Youth Office!!! All other GA and ConCon forms go to the Y.O.

General Assembly Registration 2000 Print to mail or fax, or use online form

Last Name _____ Rev? _____ First Name _____

UU Congregation _____ City/State _____

Send Confirmation to (address) _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____ Code _____

Phone (day) _____ E-mail _____

Birthdate (if youth) ____ / ____ / ____ Registration for Youth under 18 will not be processed without a medical release and signature of GA Sponsor.

Additional Family Member, if same address & congregation only:

Last Name _____ Rev? _____ First Name _____

Birthdate (if youth) ____ / ____ / ____ Note: Separate registration for Children's Programs (infant - 14).

Lower Registration fees apply if postmarked by May 13 or received by May 18. Advance programs will be mailed if registration received by May 5. If paying by check in Canadian funds, please add 30%.

Registration Type	Full Time		Weekend (Fri. eve - sun.)		One-Day		First Person	Add'l Person
<i>Circle appropriate Fee</i>	Rec. by May 18	After May 18	Rec. by May 18	After May 18	Rec. by May 18	After May 18	Amount Due	Amount Due
Adult	\$230	\$275	\$160	\$190	\$80**	\$100**	\$	\$
Youth (14 - 22)	\$120	\$145	\$80	\$100	\$45**	\$55**	\$	\$
*Other (see below)	\$120	\$145	\$80	\$100	\$45**	\$55**	\$	\$
Volunteer (delegate)	\$10	\$55	<i>Separate volunteer applications must be received by March 31, and approved.</i>				\$	\$
Volunteer (not delegate)	\$0	\$45					\$	\$
Awards Breakfast (Sun)	\$15						\$	\$
Youth Scholarship Fund (tax-deductible contribution) <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 <input type="checkbox"/> Other							\$	\$
<i>Sub-Total(each column)</i>							\$	\$
Total Amount Due for both columns:							\$	

***Other (please check):**
☐ Retired Minister ☐ Surviving Spouse of Min.
☐ Retired Minister's Spouse ☐ Retired Certified DRE
☐ Theological Student (current full time, registered with UUA)

****One Day: Which day(s)?**
☐ Thurs. ☐ Fri. ☐ Sat.
☐ Sun. ☐ Mon.

Method of Payment ☐ Check (pay to UUA General Assembly) ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Exp. _____
 Card # _____ Signature _____

Cancellation Fee: By May 18: \$25; after May 18: \$50. *After June 10, refunds by written request only.*

☐ **Accessibility Services:** Please attach a written description of the particular accommodations you require (including wheelchair rental, mobility or hearing assistance and large print program).

☐ **Will bring own wheelchair.**

☐ Please send information regarding **Young Adult (ages 18-35)** programming.

Visit our website or contact the GA Office at (617) 742-2100 x209 or gaoffice@uua.org to obtain forms for:

☒ Housing (send to Nashville by mid-May) ☒ Youth Medical ☒ Children's Programs ☒ Tours

☒ Financial Aid (available to all registrants)

Send to: UUA GA Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. Fax (617) 725-4979 *only* if using Credit Card. If faxing, do not mail original. **Do not mail after June 8.** Register at GA.

Use this form for Youth Housing or Young Adult Housing

Youth Housing (ages 14-20)

Youth Caucus is a gathering focus for UU youth who wish to participate in GA. Adults who work with Youth Caucus are not supervisors but act as a resource to the youth. Youth registered for GA full-time who participate in Youth Caucus will be assigned up to 3 roommates in the Downtown Sheraton-Nashville. Hotel room cost is \$245 for all five nights. Youth may stay with parents or sponsors and still participate in Youth Caucus activities.

YOUTH MUST SIGN THIS STATEMENT

I have registered for GA full-time and wish to stay in Youth housing. If I am under 18, during GA I will have regular communication with my parent/sponsor who is attending GA. I will abide by all state and local laws and will not take part in any illegal behaviors while attending the General Assembly. If I do, I understand that I will be asked to leave GA at my own expense, and my parents and my sponsor will be informed.

Youth Signature: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN of Youth Under 18 MUST SIGN THIS STATEMENT

I understand that my daughter/son will stay with other UU Youth at GA. I understand that he/she must have a parent or other adult sponsor attending GA who is responsible for the youth. I will sign a medical release prior to GA.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Send this Housing Registration form and a check (payable to UUA), to the: **UUA Youth Office,**
25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108

Housing registration cost per participant is \$245

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Deadline for receipt: May 10, 2000.

Late housing registrations will be accepted until **May 16th, with an additional \$25 late fee.**

General Assembly registration is separate.

For additional information on Youth Caucus & Housing, call the UUA Youth Office at 617-742-2100, x351. Email: yruu@uua.org

Young Adult Housing (ages 18-35)

The Continental UU Young Adult Network (C*UUYAN) will reserve rooms at a downtown hotel and will assign roommates for any young adults who would like to stay together during GA. It is not necessary to stay in young adult housing in order to participate in young adult activities, and young adults may reserve their own hotel room using the GA Housing form. If you would like to stay in Young Adult housing, mail this form and a check for \$155 (made out to C*UUYAN) to:

Alison Miller
All Souls Church
1157 Lexington Ave.
NY, NY 10021
Ph#: 212-535-5530
email: amiller96@aol.com

Housing Registration Form:

For: ___ Youth or ___ Young Adult

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

ZIP/Postal Code: _____

Phone (day): _____

(eve): _____

Birthdate: ___/___/___ Gender: _____

Roommate request: (Up to 3 Names)

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Complete Youth Caucus registration requires:

___ GA Registration (send to GA Office)

___ Housing registration

___ Sponsor/Medical Release Form

___ Code of Ethics

optional:

___ Scholarship and/or Staff Applications

Please photocopy this form! Please photocopy this form!

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING G.A. MUST FILL OUT THIS FORM.

IF YOU ARE 18 OR OLDER JUST FILL OUT THE QUESTIONS WITH *ASTERISKS. IF YOU ARE UNDER 18 FILL OUT ALL THE INFORMATION.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S CONSENT and MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

I, (please print) _____ am the parent or legal guardian of _____ . I give my consent for him/her to attend General Assembly in Nashville from June 22-26, 2000. I understand that my child/ward is attending General Assembly as a participant and will not be enrolled in a structured supervised program such as Young Fun. I give my consent and authority for the General Assembly staff or designated adult to take action to help insure the safety, health and welfare of my son/daughter/ward. I understand that if s/he breaks any state or local laws, s/he will be asked to leave the General Assembly and I will be informed. I also give my consent for any medical treatment, including emergency surgical care if necessary, and for transport in the event of an emergency.

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

*Health Insurance Agency: _____

*Policy # /Group #: _____

*Medications currently taking: _____

*Allergies/Medical conditions: _____

_____ I will attend GA and will act as my child/ward's sponsor.

_____ I will not attend GA. _____ will act as my child/ward's sponsor.
(sponsor's name)

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Phone Number(s) June 22-26

(day)(_____) (eve.)(_____) _____

* I am / am not 18 or older (print name) _____

All youth under the age of 18, regardless of where they stay, must have a sponsor who is attending General Assembly.

ADULT SPONSOR

I am attending the 2000 General Assembly in Nashville, Tennessee and will sponsor this youth. Sponsorship means that I take responsibility for the well-being, safety, and best interests of this youth at GA. I understand that the UUA Youth Office does not provide adult supervision for the week (although there will be several adults working with the Youth Caucus and available for support and assistance). **I agree to attend a training for sponsors to take place during General Assembly.** I understand that Youth Caucus is not a youth conference, but rather an opportunity for UU Youth who want to participate in the General Assembly to be able to gather and address specific youth concerns. I will work out a system of communication with this youth during the week of GA which is mutually satisfying. I recognize that this youth has agreed to abide by all state and local laws while attending General Assembly, and has signed a Code of Ethics that s/he is responsible for his/her own behavior. If the youth does not act accordingly, I understand there will be consequences for his/her actions, which may include him/her being restricted from Youth Caucus events, being asked to leave Youth Housing, or being asked to leave General Assembly. The youth I am sponsoring and I will be responsible for organizing new housing and travel arrangements if necessary. I am not sponsoring more than three youth total at GA.

Sponsor's Name and Signature: _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Sponsor's residence during GA: _____

Relationship to youth: _____

RETURN by May 16, 2000 to the Youth Office, UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108.

For additional information on Youth Caucus, contact the UUA Youth Office at

(617) 742-2100 x350, 351, 352, 355, or yruu@uua.org.

Please photocopy this form! Please photocopy this form!

CODE OF ETHICS

I am attending the 2000 General Assembly in Nashville, Tennessee. I understand my behavior will affect the Youth Caucus community. While attending GA I will

- act in ways that encourage the well-being, safety, and best interests of the youth and all those attending GA.
- respect my roommates.
- respect the larger GA community.
- respect those in the hotel who are not part of the GA community.
- follow all city, state, and federal laws.
- *(for those under 18)* understand that the UUA Youth Office does not provide adult supervision for the week and therefore I will work out a system of communication with my sponsor during the week of GA that is mutually satisfying.
- *(for those over 18)* understand that the UUA Youth Office does not provide adult supervision for the week
- understand that General Assembly is not a youth conference, which means that
 - youth are responsible for managing their own time.
 - youth are not required to stay on site.
 - sponsors act as legal guardians for youth under age 18.

If I do not act accordingly, I understand there will be consequences for my actions, which may include being restricted from Youth Caucus events, being asked to leave Youth Housing, or being asked to leave General Assembly. (My sponsor and) I will be responsible for organizing new housing and travel arrangements if necessary.

Youth's Signature: _____

Youth Office, UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA
02108.

For additional information on Youth Caucus, contact
the UUA Youth Office at
(617) 742-2100 x350, 351, 352, 355, or
yruu@uua.org

General Assembly Youth Caucus Core Staff

Congratulations to the folks who will be creating a wonderful program for the 27th annual GA Youth Caucus

Core Staff:

Mr. HUUPER: Brian Richichi

Youth Caucus Business Manager: Liz Martin

Red Light Event Coordinator: Ann Lapidus

Spirituality Coordinator: Matt Moore

Chaplain Core:

Greg Buckland

Megan Dowdell

Darcy Laine

Rick Roehlk

Sponsor Coordinator: Tom Cranston

Support Staff:

Youth of Color Faliy Group Coord:

Helen Harris

All GA Youth Extravaganza Special Event

Guru: Deseree Roffers

All GA Youth Social Justice Activism Guru:

Alexis Harper

All GA Youth Worship Guru:

Shannon Betker

By Laura Douglas

*and in his hello,
I inhale him
I can almost taste him,
Like when the next door neighbor is grilling
outside,
And you can taste it
In the air.*

*I try to remember where I left my mind
And I ask him
And that noise that long-distance phone
calls make sounded loudly.
A sort of crackling silence.
I know he knows.*

Please photocopy this form! Please photocopy this form!
GA5

GA Staff Possitions and Scholarship Information!

This year, we are asking youth volunteers to help the Youth Caucus Core Staff plan events, facilitate meetings, and create a caring community of youth at General Assembly.

To apply, send in:

- * This form
- * A letter detailing your intent and experience
- * Two references, with phone numbers and relationship (preferably one youth and one adult)

Check Staff Positions of Interest to You:

☐ Worship Assistant (we need *one*)

I will help the worship coordinator with planning meetings, getting supplies, and putting on the nightly youth worships and youth all-GA worships.

☐ HUUPster (we need *30-40*)

I will lead daily meetings of a HUUP group (a closer community of about 8 youth), and meet with and assist Mr. HUUPER, the HUUP group coordinator.

General Assembly Youth Caucus Volunteer Staff & Scholarship Application Forms

Any youth staying in Youth Caucus Housing is eligible to apply for scholarship funding and/or staff positions. Youth attending General Assembly but not staying in Youth Caucus Housing are eligible for scholarships. We are trying to become a diverse community of youth from different racial and multicultural backgrounds. As part of this process, we strongly urge youth of color to apply for staff positions and scholarship funding.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City|State/Province|ZIP/Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

Congregation: _____

Birthdate: _____

optional:

☐ I am a youth of color.

Scholarship funding is provided by generous support from the members of the General Assembly community. Scholarships will be awarded on a rolling basis, and do not generally exceed \$100. Applicants with special circumstances are encouraged to contact the Youth Office. Applicants who meet the following criteria will be given precedence:

- * Interest in contributing to the Youth Caucus community (volunteering for a staff position, desire to participate in worship/events planning or Youth Caucus business meetings, etc.)
- * First time GA attendees
- * Youth who are General Assembly delegates
- * Youth of color
- * Financial need

To apply, please answer the following on a seperate peice of paper:

* Why do you want to come to General Assembly?

* Please describe your financial situation, including any other sources of funding that will help you get to GA.

☐ This is my first General Assembly.

☐ I am serving as a delegate from my congregation.

Staff and Scholarship Applications must be received by May 10, 2000, at 5:00 p.m.

Send this form to:

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

Please photocopy this form! Please photocopy this form!

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"I LIKE NONSENSE. IT WAKES UP THE BRAIN CELLS. FANTASY IS A NECESSARY INGREDIENT IN LIVING. IT'S A WAY OF LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE WRONG END OF A TELESCOPE. WHICH IS WHAT I DO. AND THAT ENABLES YOU TO LAUGH, AT LIFE'S REALITIES."
-DR. SEUSS

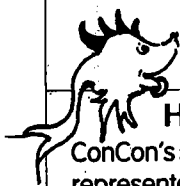
*Just when you wished it would go away
ConCon is back!*

Seussisms: One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, ConCon

July 31- August 6th, 2000 *

Emory and Henry College, Emory, Virginia

ConCon is open to youth aged 14-20 and to adult advisors aged 25 and above. If you wish to attend ConCon and don't fit into these categories, please contact the Youth Office.



How does this registration thing work?

ConCon's size is limited. To allow for a wide geographical representation among participants, there will be a limited number permitted to register from each district. If we receive your registration after your district has reached its limit, your name will be placed on the waiting list. If ConCon is not filled by June 15th, names will be taken from the waiting list in the order they were received. ConCon has been very popular recently and we encourage you to reserve your space PRONTO.

Make travel plans only after receiving a letter confirming your registration!!

What if I want to attend ConCon as an adult advisor?

Adults wishing to attend ConCon must include a brief letter of intent stating why you are interested in being an advisor for ConCon with your registration and two reference names (one youth and one adult) and their phone numbers. Adult registrants for ConCon will be screened in order to better ensure a safe conference community. Also, non-staff adult participants are required to pay the full ConCon registration fee. For ideas on how to offset the costs of ConCon as an adult, contact the Youth Office.

How can I get a scholarship to attend?

There are a limited number of financial need-based scholarships to ConCon. To apply send a letter to the Youth Office with your registration form stating your specific financial need situation. Include a letter from your minister, advisor, or an involved UU youth describing your circumstances. Scholarship applications must be postmarked by May 15, recipients will be informed by June 1st. You need not send a deposit if you include a completed scholarship application to hold your place. If you are not awarded a scholarship, we must receive your deposit by June 15th to continue to hold a space for you.

Frequently Asked ConCon Questions

Can I lead a workshop?

What are "week-longs" and "one-shots"?

Week-long workshops allow for more involved projects or deeper explorations in their topics. They are chosen by Steering Committee in January. There is also *one-shot workshop* time scheduled at ConCon. Do you have skills, talents, or knowledge that you would like to share with others in the form of a two-hour afternoon workshop? Then you have what it takes to lead a one-shot workshop! Include a brief description of the one-shot workshop you'd like to do with this form. Workshop Coordinator Bryan Beck will be in touch with you!

What's a touch group? How can I lead one?

A touch group is a small youth-led group within the larger conference community. Each conferee is assigned to a touch group, which meets daily throughout the conference. Through games, activities and sharing, touch groups create a comfortable, trusting atmosphere which helps incorporate the individual into the community. Are you interested in leading a touch group? Write why you're interested in leading a touch group and mail it in with your registration. Shannon Betker, the Touch Group Coordinator, will contact you.

Why do you ask about "youth of color"?

YRUU is attempting to become a multi-cultural, anti-racist organization. Part of this effort is to encourage youth of color to take on leadership roles and to apply for scholarship funding when appropriate.

What if I have more questions?

How do I contact the Youth Office?

Call the Youth Office: (617) 742-2100, ext. 352 or 351 and ask for Nathan Staples or Duncan Metcalfe. Or email us at: yruu@uua.org. A pre-packet with more detailed information regarding Con Con will be mailed to conferees in July.

concon 2 concon 2 concon 2 concon 2 concon 2

ConCon Registration Form:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone (day): _____

(eve): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

(ZIP/Postal Code) & Country: _____

Birthdate: ____/____/____ Gender: _____

UU Congregation: _____

UUA District: _____

I have attended Con Con _____ time(s).

Dietary Options:

____ VEGETARIAN (no meat, yes dairy, yes eggs)

____ VEGAN (no animal products)

____ LACTOSE INTOLERANT (no dairy)

____ OMNIVOROUS (yes meat)

Specify any other food needs, including allergies:



I am also including:

(for more information, see "Frequently Asked ConCon Questions" page ConCon 1)

Required:

____ My consent and medical info form (p. ConCon 4)

____ My rules agreement form (page ConCon 5)

____ My July '99 Mailing Address (if different)

Optional:

____ A letter explaining why I would like to be a touch group leader

____ A description of my one-shot workshop idea

____ A letter requesting a scholarship

Special Categories:

____ I am a youth of color (optional)

____ I am a ConCon staff member and am including my signed Code of Ethics (page ConCon 5)

____ I am a week-long workshop leader and am including my signed Code of Ethics

____ I am a member of Youth Council or Steering Committee and am including my signed Code of Ethics

____ I am an adult advisor and am including a letter of intent to be an adult advisor at ConCon and two reference contacts (one youth, one adult) and my signed code of ethics

Please make checks payable to:
"Unitarian Universalist Association"
for: \$75.00 *Non-Refundable* Deposit
or \$315.00 Full Registration Fee

A strict \$35.00 late fee will be charged
on registrations postmarked after
June 15, 2000.

Please send checks in US funds. We require the nonrefundable \$75.00 deposit to process registration. The remaining \$195.00 must be postmarked by July 10th or be paid upon arrival.

Please send all registration forms
and a check to:

YRUU ConCon Registration
c/o UUA Youth Office
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108

concon 3 concon 3 concon 3 concon 3 concon 3

Consent and Medical Release

I, _____ (please print), am the parent or legal guardian of

_____, who will be attending the 2000 Continental Conference of the Young Religious Unitarian Universalists at Emory and Henry College. 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 6th, 2000, 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: _____

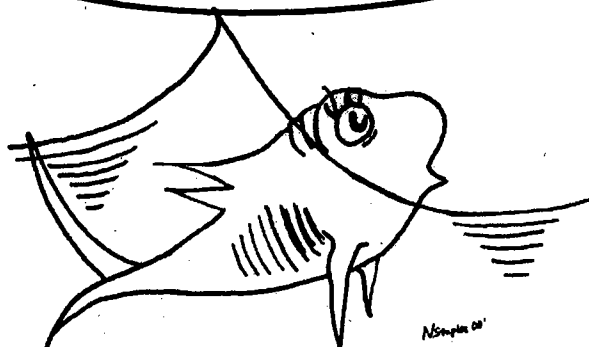
*Allergies/Medical conditions: _____

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

*Do you have any special health needs? _____

ConCon Staff

Congratulations to the folks who will be staffing YRUU's 17th annual con con



Deans:

Justin Whitaker and NATO Hollister

Core Staff:

Co-Energy Coordinators:

Megan Selby & Megan Tideman

Workshop Coordinator:

Sarah Halperin

Touch Group Coordinator:

Shannon Belker

Worship Coordinator:

Ryan McPartland

Special Events Coordinator:

Phillip Kirschen-Clark

Adult Coordinator:

Rick Roehlk

What is a One-Shot Workshop? A one-shot workshop is a workshop that happens one time (thus the name). It can be about anything: *Gary Coleman collectables, the sage-like wisdom of Allen Keyes, etc.*

I Want to lead a One-Shot Workshop. ■

The name of your workshop is and it is about _____

concon 4 concon 4 concon 4 concon 4 concon 4

Rules, Consequences, and Conference Community

Approved by the 1999-00 YRUU Steering Committee

Guidelines

- No drugs, weapons, or alcohol.
- No pets.
- No leaving the conference site.
- No violating the policy on sexual behavior.
- Adults must remain in the role of advisor at all times.
- All participants must have a signed a medical release.
- Participants must follow the ConCon site rules.
- ConCon Staff, Adults, Youth Council Representatives and Steering Committee will review and sign the Code of Ethics.
- No laptop computers or gameboys.

Spirit Committee & Energy Committee

The **Spirit Committee** consists of representatives from each touch group. It will be attentive to conference problems and moods, acting as the "eyes and ears" of the conference and will share any concerns with the Energy Coordinator, who chairs the Spirit Committee. This bunch of bright-eyed early birds is also responsible for waking up the conference.

The **Energy Committee** deals with serious problems and rule infractions. Its members are the Energy Coordinator, one ConCon Dean, the Youth Programs Director, three elected Spirit Committee members, the Touch Group Coordinator, and a Chaplain. The Energy Committee reserves the right to define behavior as inappropriate. The Energy Committee only meets when serious concerns are brought forth by the Spirit Committee.

Policy on Sexual Behavior for All Conferees

Sexuality is a healthy and important part of young people's lives. Conferences are an opportunity for youth to express themselves in healthy ways. Exclusive relationships detract from the community. All members of the community must respect each other's physical boundaries. Inappropriate behavior (i.e. sexual intercourse or sexual harassment) is not permitted. The Energy Committee reserves the right to deem any behavior inappropriate. Parents/guardians are invited to discuss this policy with youth.

I, _____ (participant),
have read and understood the Con Con Guidelines and the Policy on Sexual Behavior. I agree to abide by these guidelines for the duration of Con Con 2000. I understand that, if I break this agreement, the Energy Committee reserves the right to take appropriate action which may include requiring me to leave the conference at my own expense and prohibiting me from attending future continental YRUU events. In addition, I certify that all of the information stated on my registration form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Participant:

X

Date: _____

If you are a:

- Con Con staff member
- Adult Advisor
- Youth Council member
- YRUU Steering Committee member

You must review and sign this additional Code of Ethics in order to attend ConCon.

Code of Ethics:

Adults

Adults are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that adults be qualified to nurture and provide the special care and support that will enable youth to develop a positive sense of self and responsibility. The relationship between young people and adults must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized.

There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that youth and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with a person in their care; therefore, adults will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. Adults shall be informed of the Code of Ethics and agree to it before assuming their roles. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

Youth in Leadership Positions

Youth in leadership positions are uniquely visible and influential in any conference community. They should recognize that power imbalances exist in their interactions with other conferees. Inappropriate sexual behavior is never acceptable; additionally, youth leaders should remain aware of the impact of their actions and behave accordingly. Youth who abuse their roles as leaders, consciously or not, can damage individuals and the community. Youth leaders are expected to use their influence in a positive manner.

I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics for Adults and Youth in Leadership Positions.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Know a lot about YRUU and
Computers? Then 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: Focusing on upkeep of the web page, our Access Database, and managing the list-serves; being the point person and administer for ConCon, Youth Council (including finding the sites for future years), and YRUU Steering Committee meetings; 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*; 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: HTML and Access familiarity, 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 September 1, 2000.

Terms of employment: This position is a one-year commitment, beginning January 1, 2001, and ending December 31, 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 intern is expected to find her or his own living accommodations and pay for all living expenses while in Boston.

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 Summer and another to help out this Fall. It's 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.

Internships are from June 1st-August 31st and October 1st - December 31 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 the address below

For a YPS application: Write to the Youth Office,
25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108;

~~For Internships, send information to address above,~~
Deadlines: Fall - September 1st

**YPS Applications must be postmarked or received by
September, 15th 2000.**

FOR MORE INFO CALL (617) 742-2100 x350, 351, 352, OR EMAIL

YRUU

MERCHANDISE

Blessing To All Beings
edited by Kathy Daneman
An anthology of spiritual writings by
and about YRUUers. \$7.00

Deep Fun:
The YRUU Games book
edited by Sienna Baskin

An exciting compendium of games arranged in the "Five Steps to Building Community." Includes most traditional YRUU games, some brand new ones, and some flashbacks to the days of LRY. \$5.00

Send a check made out to YRUU to:

Youth Office
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA
02108

Att: Merchandise

Sorry we cannot accept credit cards

How to Start, Nurture and Grow a YRUU youth group
An instructional video hosted by Austin Putman. Learn Adult/Youth co-leadership, community building, fundraising, youth group planning, and MORE! \$10.00

Temporary YRUU & Chalice Tattoos

Only for the most rockinest YRUUer. Both Chalice and the YRUU symbol are available \$\$.50 a piece.

The YRUU Songs Tape:

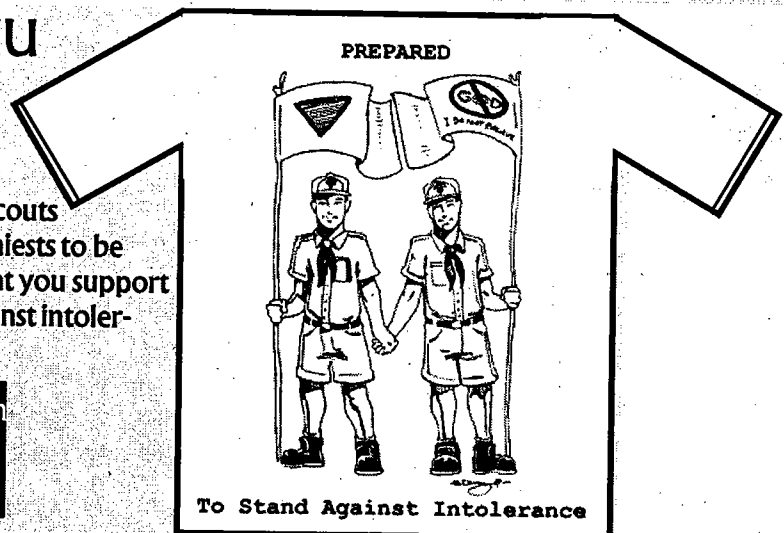
Feel left out when you're the only one who doesn't know the monotonous chant that everyone is singing? This tape is the perfect intro to the most popular songs sung in YRUU.
recorded in Ware, MA in 1997 @ ConCon
\$5.00

BUY THE NEWEST YRUU T-SHIRT

The newest YRUU T-Shirt was drawn by Ben Dewey and addresses the issue of the "Boy Scouts of America" not allowing homosexuals or atheists to be scouts or leaders. Wearing this shirt shows that you support UU scouts and leaders and that you fight against intolerance.

Available in all your Favorite Sizes, Both medium and large.

Shirts are \$10 + \$3 S&H

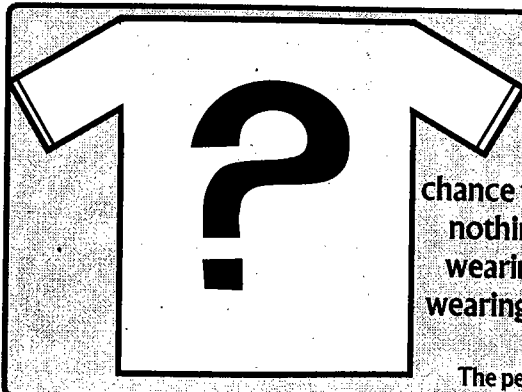


Pg. 46 of the Boy Scout Handbook - You should Protect and Defend the rights of all people.

Your Drawing could be the next YRUU T-Shirt

We are looking for the Design of the next YRUU T-Shirt. It can either be a YRUU symbol or a Drawing that addresses a social justice issue. You have a much better chance than you think you do, so send us your drawing. There is nothing cooler than to be able to point at the T-Shirt you are wearing and say "I drew that." Unless you were the Fonzie and wearing a T-Shirt you drew. Man the Fonzie was cool. Send your drawings to the Youth Office.

The person whose drawing is chosen will receive a free T-Shirt and a \$100 stipend



Parting Shots

By Justin Whitaker

I wrote this after I toured the D.C. Monuments during the YRUU Social Justice Conference. I had an amazing rush of powerful energy when I arrived in D.C. just to think about how powerful this place was. To know that people all over the whole world were affected by the decisions that these people make daily. I couldn't handle it. There are quite a few references to Vietnam. That's because my father fought there, and I was the first in my family to see the memorial wall there. All those names really moved me, it made me think that anyone of those names could be my dad. And then I would be dead. damn. Washington D.C. is really a powerful and scary place.

As rainy nights turn to traffic lights; red.
hundreds, millions dead;

for democracy or hypocrisy to me with its a mockery of our society

to ignore the truthless and ruthless Capitol Hill.

These ills bring capital

cash
money
funds bank
bills
and dinero

you know, like cultural imperialism
and cheap labor
or a favor,
done by Disney Incorporated.
this is my experience
this is my reality

THIS IS MY SLAM POETRY!!

this is my release, from the pain
and starving streets.

as metaphoric legislation changes
radio stations to country from
funk;
this nation smells of swamplands
and cunts.

like dirty senatorial decisions
and slimy fish,

like rhythms these vibes are
reverberated from inside the eyes
of political walls and as Clinton
drops balls on policies educational,
environmental, and instrumental to
the progress and simultaneously
distress that I feel

as capitalistic pigs squeal; for one
more meal of welfare slop, Social
Security slop, and cosmic slop; and
shit drops from their teeth

like Christmas schemes
making economic dreams a facade
compiled of metaphysical -lyrical-
prose.

So it goes here in D.C. Do you
see me trying to change the fame
based on
names? my brain feels pain like 16
shots inoculations in my veins but
there are no antidotes or vaccines
vaccines or antidotes

nope.
it's a trap.
like the caves of bats,

but only I am my own super hero
but none of them received a
hero's welcome
none of them.
none of them.

after a yearlong draft tours
through triple canopy rain forests,
you could run like forest but
where? Who cares?
If you're gone like Cacciato;
stuck in a rut.
you can't go- you can't go- you
can't go-

you can move your feet until your
out of breath out of Energy, but
the energy I've put into my goals
is out-of-control.

like mind control from shiftty
shitty school curriculums perpen-
dicular to extracurricular activities
that please me

please be, some hope for the
future. Some hope for the past.
my mind blasts as injustices
explode; from Supreme Court
justices, web-toed because they
have not yet evolved from the
overt racism and covert catechism
that seems to be so well planned
like s.s. minnows or ships un-
manned

we are sinking into
budget deficits and World Trade
organization's

things seem sticky and shady like-
female masturbation
but maybe these things are taboo
and who
am I



to decide why China can't
circumsize their wives or kill their
babies we do it abortion maybe or
is it just right; religious like, Pats
and Robertsons

these are the sons of robbers
of thieves
of men who believed

in the trail of tears
the beating of queers and
the sale of beers or
maybe more influential mind
killing drugs.
Television.

like thugs, Jesus, pushers, and
hoodlums;
they rest their heads in the
bosoms of prostitutes;
Black White Mary or Lewinsky

but to me the penalties are just
slaps on wrists and I'm pissed

what if, it were different; not so
fucked up
what if, mumia were free
and Stacey kuhn was locked up,
if Reginald Denny hadn't been
beat,
if black man weren't dragged on
streets and,
Matthew Shepherd could still eat
and compete or complete the
things he
finds neat.

IF JUSTICE COULD BE
SERVED!!!

It's absurd, I stand here as Justin
Alexander Whitaker;
one lone soldier and in this fucked
up world

where governments are shifty like
tectonics or ill planned like
Reaganomics, it makes me vomit,
my spiritual nausea causes me to
climb the
highest peak, or swim the deepest
sea, to stop the institutional ills
and
sickness that I see

but I have not reached the top of
these rocky mountains I am
simply
tumbling
down
down
down
tumbling
down
down
down
down

America is failing, falling;
like raindrops monumental on the
steps of monumental monuments

where 18 ft. Thomas Jefferson's
stand offering political slavery
and
constitutional Bible quotes

like Wall Street stock quotes
he was an economic Man

who laid foundations and for my
father to be shot at by
north Vietnam, gooks, slants, or
freedom fighters called Viet cong

but his name lasted lost
its not yet over like 11 minutes
songs by the doors. The end.
The wall.

It wouldn't be opening minds or
mental thought or be getting so hot
if all
the world leaders..... were not
they've got to practice what they
preach
so we can reach more democratic
diplomatic levels

and stop being little Red White
and Blue Devils proud
of money stolen;

from those who gave their lives to
black engraved names.
Blacks enslaved in chains.

Ask yourself if you feel this pain?

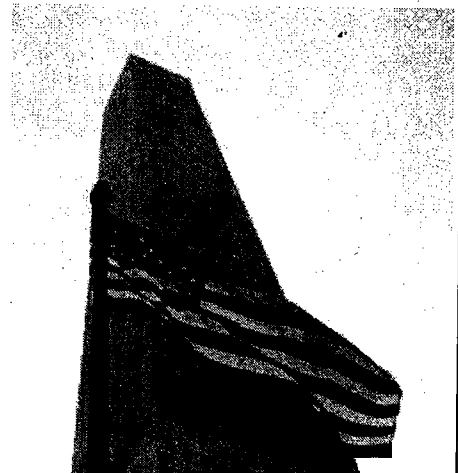
Is this OK?

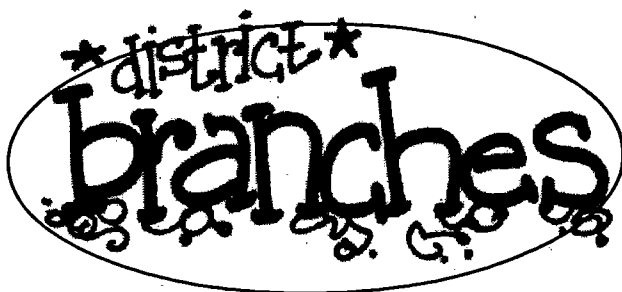
IS THIS OK?

IS THIS OK?

No not at all.

*Justin Whitaker is a youth from the Pacific
Southwest District. There he is the chair of
the district governing body. He is also this
summers Con-Con Co-dean, and in February
he was part of the Unitarian Universalist
Associations delegation to India for the
100th anniversary of the Unitarian faith
there.*





A Furry Creature From a Galaxy Far, Far Away Teaches YRUUers About the Benefits of Multi-District Conferences.

By Alana McGibeny

The WUUKY (Western Unitarian Universalist Karmic Youth) legacy stretches back to before my day. It started out as a Pacific Central District weeklong con thrown together kinda hastily in '95. no one thought back then that it would turn into the multi-district monster it has today. The dream of getting the rest of the west involved started at WUUKY II in '97 where a few kids from the surrounding districts came, but it was still a PCD con. For WUUKY III though, the con was planned, staffed, and attended by all the districts involved, the Pacific Northwest, Pacific Central, Pacific Southwest, and Mountain Desert Districts.

One of the best parts of this conference wasn't so much the con itself, which rocked hard-core, but the planning phases. Pulling leadership from four districts meant there were four different ways of doing things that needed to be blended and compromised to leave everyone happy. Some of the conversations surrounding policies and rules were tense and long, especially surrounding touchy subjects like smoking and age range (PCD's is 12-22), but everyone took the time to get where everyone else was coming from and came to great compromises. Sometimes things would come up and people would realize they didn't necessarily think their district did things the best way, and they weren't tied to making this conference just like their district. WUUKY was something new and undefined and we were all in the process of figuring out what it would be. All the leadership involved in making WUUKY III happen learned a lot from each other. It's good to get that kick in the face that reminds you that other people do things differently and your way might not be the right way. Heck, not just the leadership learned a lot. I was playing silent football (a group game. For the rules get the game book from the Youth Office) at the con we had right after WUUKY and they all picked up some screwy new rules I still don't get.

WUUKY III really left all of us with a better sense of the fact that there was a whole lot of YRUU outside of our districts, and there's no need to be scared of it. Here in PCD

people seem a lot less scared of continental YRUU now that they've gotten a taste of what's outside the district. There's also a lot less fear going into the planning for WUUKY IV, now that we all know it'll all work out great.

So, you're saying, "Yeah, other districts probably are pretty cool, let's try to get something together" then great, get on the phone and get crackin', but I'm not that convincing of a writer. Don't be afraid to start smaller than the whole west coast, do a joint con with one other district or inviting people from a neighboring district to attend on of yours, then you'll fall in love with the idea of getting your whole damned region together.. Look at the neighboring districts on the map further on in Synapse for districts near to you, and call their Youth Council Representatives (YCR) about starting a regional conference in your neck of the woods.

(shamelessplug start now) Anyone who lives west of Kansas who wants to get involved in planning WUUKY IV for the summer of 2000, get a hold of your district YCR and check your mail for more information.

Alana is a Youth Council Representative from Pacific Central District. For more info on WUUKY, look above.

by Jana McKinley

*I pinned a rainbow to my bag
as a statement
a billiard for all their eyes to see
even what they fail to understand
but then you noticed
then dared to share your hidden
rainbow
with me
you chose me
an odd cloud foreign
to the majority you still swim with
well, its pouring sunshine.
your colors are free
and I promiss your rainbow will
always be safe with me*



Building a healthy YRUU



by Elizabeth Capone-Newton

I was happy to hear that the body would be the theme of this issue of Synapse because I think we have a lot to take care of right now in our own bodies and the larger body of YRUU. We are at a point in our growth as an organization where we are making a serious commitment to anti-racism and working hard to be fully included in the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association). One of the most important things we can do in this process is to talk about our personal and institutional health—to recognize what our bodies are struggling with and help each other feel better.

It's truly awesome that we've challenged the UUA Board of Trustees to strengthen its body by including youth in its membership. The participation of YRUUers from around the continent in the January board meeting raised the larger question of how the Board of Trustees should be restructured to be more democratic, inclusive and diverse. Youth and adults worked late into the night to develop a way to make the board smaller by creating an alternative set of districts and at the same time increasing at-large representation. I'm proud that we were so influential in starting this change and I hope we will be influential in making sure it gets attention at General Assembly and throughout the year. I'm equally excited by the possibility that we can ask the same questions about our own structure. How effective is Youth Council currently? What about our size, district divisions, and at-large reps? Now that we have asked the UUA to restructure its leadership, we need to ask ourselves: How could the governing body of YRUU be more democratic, inclusive and diverse?

Often in YRUU and in all of Unitarian Universalism we talk about other people's problems in the world. It's a wonderful thing that so many UU youth have such a social awareness. But just as we work to reform not only the UUA's governing body but also our own, we need to think about issues not just in terms of how they effect others but how they affect our lives. Our anti-oppression work is a great example of this. If anti-racism is going to be effective

in YRUU, all youth need to consider their racial identity and its meaning. The task of making racism personal and recreating an anti-racist YRUU will be difficult—my recent trip to the NH/VT district with Mimi LaValley to lead an anti-racism training both confirmed how far we have to go and reassured me that we are on our way. I believe our commitment to anti-racism will grow as more YRUUers discuss how it affects their lives.

Tackling the issue of the body is a great step toward personalizing social issues in YRUU. Not only our race, but our gender, sexual orientation, and many other identities are tied to our bodies. Synapse is one positive medium through which to deal with those issues. It's also great that our churches teach comprehensive sexuality education and that some YRUUers have spent the past year researching YRUU's Working Action Issue, an alternative to the war on drugs. But magazine articles, religious education curricula, and information about political inequalities only go so far in supporting our bodies and our health. While that knowledge is important, it doesn't prevent us from having to deal with those same difficult issues. Many of us come to YRUU gatherings struggling with our health and survival. But how often do we talk with each other honestly about our sexuality? At Cons are we able to share openly about the good and bad aspects of using drugs? Do we talk to each other about how our mental health affects our choices? Are youth group meetings a place where we get resources that will help us take care of our bodies? YRUU is already a safe place that lots of us come to so that we can share, but I think we need to be even more intentional about creating a supportive community. Too often it's assumed that because we're UUs we never question our own worth and dignity. But there are youth among us who need places where they can talk about depression, alcoholism, and coming out to their families.

There's a big bad world out there, racist and homophobic—and it's inside us, too. Let's continue to make YRUU a place where conversations about the world are always connected to our bodies.

Elizabeth Capone-Newton is a former Youth Council Representative from the Northeast District. She is now working as a Legislative Assistant at the UUA's Washington Office for Faith in Action.

★ 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

Nonprofit Organization
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