



# Continental Calendar FALL 2000

For a complete, up-to-date calendar, see our website at [www.uua.org/YRUU/](http://www.uua.org/YRUU/)

December 1-3  
YRUU Social Justice Conference Pre-site

January 10  
General Assembly & ConCon Staff Applications Due  
January 11-14  
Continental Spirituality Development Conference Pre-site

January 15  
Spring Synapse Submissions Due  
January 19-21  
UUA Board of Trustees Meeting  
January 25-28  
Steering Committee Winter Meeting

March 2-4  
General Assembly Pre-Site  
March 14  
Youth Council At-Large Applications Due  
March 15  
Fund for Unitarian Universalism Grants Due  
March 17-21  
YRUU Social Justice Conference!  
March 30-1  
ConCon Pre-site

April 1  
General Assembly Delegate Scholarship Applications Due (\$500!)  
April 5-8

Steering Committee Spring Meeting  
April 20-22  
UUA Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 30  
General Assembly Youth Scholarship Applications Due (~\$100!)

May 4-6  
Continental Spirituality Development Conference!  
May 15  
ConCon Scholarship Applications/Registrations Due  
May 18  
General Assembly Forms Due

June 21-26  
General Assembly!

July 20-26  
ConCon!  
July 28-3  
Youth Council!

## TENNIS ANYONE?

What's up? My name is Abbey (like the Catholic one) Tennis (like the game,) and I'm your cheerful and energetic new YPS!!

*What's my life story,* you wonder? I was born and raised an American mutt in good old Arlington, MA. At the tender age of 15, I attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Youth Focus General Assembly in Indianapolis, IN as a delegate from my church and got hooked on YRUU. I rapidly dove headfirst into Mass Bay district youth Steering Committee (YAC) and was soon at more cons, GAs, ConCons and Youth Councils that I thought existed! I graduated high school, went to Oberlin College, and soon found myself back in Boston for a YPS term.

So here I am! And I'm glad to be here! *What can I do for you,* you ask? Lots of things! Here at the Youth Office, we answer a lot of email and phone calls about youth stuff, including trouble-shooting, recommendation-giving, success-story-hearing, and basic question answering. We also put out this wonderful magazine that you now have in your hands, maintain our fab website, coordinate the annual continental conferences and trainings (ConCon, GA, Youth Council, the YSJC, and CLDCs, CSDCs and CATs,) develop resources, network with the UUA staff and committees and just generally support youth programming. We love to talk, so please call us with questions and/or stories!

Hasta la Bistro,  
Abbey Tennis

351s of the past, present and future, unite!



*Abbey dancing the night away at Youth Council 99.  
MBD Represent.*



## NEW INTERN

Somebody tell me (won't you tell me...) why I work hard for you!! It's because I LOVE WHAM! For my birthday my mom bought me a WHAM CD, it was the next best thing to a box of rhinestone studded queer pirates. When I hear George Michael sing wake me up before you go-go I smile so much my face hurts! So if you're feeling sad call me at the youth office, ill write you a haiku and make you smile so much your face hurts too! Or if you need a wake up call the Youth Office and tell me - I'll wake you up before you go - go. 'Cause that's just what I do.

Heart,  
Maura "I'm wicked tuff" McGill  
your youth office intern



## WHEN THE EDITOR SPEAKS, YOU LISTEN!

In Spring of '97 the theme of synapse was YRUU and racism. This issue has the same theme, essentially, but for good reason. First, Synapse has come a long way from it's 8 page newspaper format. But more importantly YRUU's vision about racism has changed. YRUU has made a commitment to anti-racism, and to making itself a safe place for people of color. YRUU went through something similar to this when it decided to create a safe space for GBLTQ people. But in all fairness to the Gay Rights movement and the anti-racism movement this a a completely different ball of wax and in some ways a much harder transition.

Anti-racism is really hard work, both emotionally, intellectually, and physically. Anti-racism isn't about trying to convince yourself that you aren't racist (or that you are for that matter), it is actively working against the racism that clearly exists in our culture. I'm not talking about "original sin" here, however being white in our culture creates certain obvious privileges, whether they be getting student loans easier, not being pulled over by the police, or being able to be in a grocery store late at night without being followed. No matter how liberal Unitarian Universalists are we are still a denomination of which the vast majority is white and middle to upper class. That is a difficult fact to get around, but

we need to look at it hard, so that we can change it.

It isn't people of color's responsibility to make us anti-racist. I, as a white person, don't feel like I can just go up to people of color and use them as a sounding board for my problems. It isn't the responsibility of people of color to represent the voice of all people of color everywhere. All that we can speak to is our own experience, but our experience is truly valuable. Everyone doing this work needs to learn to work together, but if you are a group of white people, don't feel like you need a person of color to start doing anti-racism work. You can discuss hard issues among yourselves and learn from each other. Be careful though, most people would rather be called every four letter word in the book before they would be called a racist. We are all new at this work; let's cut ourselves some slack and assume that we all have good intentions.

Another important thing we must keep in mind is that anti-racism work isn't about being colorblind, it isn't about being able to say "oh I don't even notice that she is Asian anymore." Anti-racism deals with noticing the differences between us and embracing them. So many people shoot for the goal of being color blind and while it is good to be able to see

a friend as a friend, we shouldn't ignore our differences to achieve that goal. We need to be able to appreciate diversity and accept everyone for and because of who they are.

There are a thousand different ways to move towards becoming anti-racist and the UUA "Journey Toward Wholeness anti-racism training" is just one path. It doesn't work for everyone, and if it doesn't work for you, then find another way. It's not the path that is important; it is the journey that matters. Watch movies dealing with race issues with your youth group and talk about them afterwards (the youth office actually has a resource that would help you with this very project), volunteer in a prison, start a campaign in your school district for school funding reform, Just do something!

I urge you to ensure that anti-racism doesn't just become another social justice buzzword This is insanely hard work, but it is also insanely important work that must be done. In every important social justice movement in the last hundred years the oppressed have led the fight, and we, as oppressed youth, must join together with others that are oppressed. Those with the most to lose risk the most. Keep this in mind, we are on the front lines of this and we need stay there. FIGHT THE POWER!

**-Nathan Staples**

*Senior YRUU Programs Specialist*

### 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.

*Cover Art-Stacey 'Blue' Schwindt*

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### ADVERTISING

Rates vary depending on size and type of organization. Also, non-camera-ready or odd-sized ads have special rates. Advertisements are not 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.

Normal rates are...  
1/4 pg \$150    1/2 pg \$250  
full pg \$400



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Most of the letters we got last issue had to do with the Letters to the Editor section. Here is a sampling of what they said.

## CENSORSHIP

I read in the Spring 2000 issue of Synapse, a publication of the Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, that the UUA Board concluded that the Board should not exercise control over the editorial content of that publication or other UUA-affiliated publications. The Board was responding to a complaint about the use of inappropriate language in Synapse.

The Board's decision was correct. However, that decision could easily be made on the basis of process rather than principle. Therefore, I want to convey my strong belief that the Board should explicitly encourage young members of the UUA to exercise their minds and free speech even though this will occasionally, or regularly, be offensive to many.

As a parent and an active participant in RE programs in several UU churches, I believe that there is an unavoidable tension between control of the youth and encouraging the youth to become active members of the church community, and independent adults, say, at age 18. This dictates that we support far more than protect our youth.

For our youngest children, we need to provide a structured environment that will encourage appropriate behavior. Adults must ensure that young children in church settings are physically safe and reasonably protected from

various forms of abuse. Of course, the parents and guardians of each child have the overall responsibility to ensure safety both in the church and outside the church.

Even for the oldest UUA teenagers, adult supervision is necessary to handle extreme situations (i.e., to protect both the youth and the church). But the objective should be for adults to control the youth as little as possible so that the young people can become capable of self-regulation and become the adults that we say we want them to be.

As parents, guardians, neighbors and UU adults participating in UU RE, we should be preparing children to make good decisions for themselves about how they should interact with those around them. For example, it is far better that adults working with UU youth encourage them to respect themselves and others than the adults decide what each youth should say and do to and with each other young person.

At YRUU events in my district (Joseph Priestley), there is a "No" rule, meaning that if a youth feels that behavior around him is unacceptable and he says to stop it, his peers are obligated to comply. Adult "chaperones" at youth conferences are needed because, occasionally, teen peer-pressure is too extreme for some young people to take advantage of the "no-means-no rule." Also, it is sometimes difficult for teenagers to monitor and enforce their own rules (e.g., no drugs or sexual activity at YRUU cons). However, the key point is that adults should support youth in developing rules and standards for their behavior, and then support those rules and standards.

Controversies over use of offensive language are unavoidable when we are encouraging our youth to search for truth and meaning. If we believe in our core principles, we must accept

that young UUs will offend all of us some of the time and a few of us all of the time. The associated risks and costs are worthwhile if we are serious about the goal of developing young adults capable of making good judgments and decisions for themselves.

Finally, we must accept that there are many UUA members, even ministers and DREs, who do not fully accept the UU Principles and Purposes as they apply to children and youth. Many are not comfortable with youth engaged in "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning." Some hope that a "responsible search" means not offending others from time-to-time. Unfortunately, this is not realistic.

Therefore, it is important that the Board not merely refrain from exercising editorial control over UUA-affiliated publications, including youth oriented publications, but that the Board explicitly encourage the exercise of free speech in the responsible search for truth and meaning.

MECHANICSBURGH, PA  
PETER ADAMS

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I just read the battle of words in the Spring Synapse over the censorship issue, and I wanted to express my whole hearted agreement with Nathaniel regarding Yasmin Golan's poem.

Every so often, a piece in Synapse touches me enough to save it, and that was one. It was beautiful and biting and real.

Rock on, Synapse! You are the voice for the young UU's.

OBERLIN, OH  
HEIDI LYONS



---

Dear Synapse editors,  
I've been absent from all things Unitarian since I outgrew the YRUU some years ago, but because I still receive the odd issue of Synapse I just discovered the controversy Michael Durall raised with his comments on the poetry published in Synapse. And I'd like to take issue with his argument that "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... 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 propose that it is precisely because UU youth "seek ways to rise above the vulgarities of the world" that it is possible for them to write this poetry. What was written is in no way an endorsement or celebration of vulgarity; it is a scathing indictment made possible because the authors were writing informed by an idea of something better. How else to explain the horrible brutality tangible in these poems if not as a comparison of the miserable conditions we live in to an idea of something better?

That Mr. Durall read these poems as efforts to "reflect and even intensify the worst of contemporary life" is insulting and condescending. His superficial reading overlooks the use of these poems as instruments of cultural criticism and social action. They represent attempts by youth to define the vulgarities of the world as vulgar things: these poems point out how horrible life is and invite their readers to reject what is so terribly wrong in the hopes of making something bet-

ter. Instead of rising above the troubles of our world, as Mr. Durall advocates, these poems are a call to make something better of what's here. Is this not a more noble purpose than rising above and leaving the miseries of the world intact?

I'm disappointed Mr. Durall was so quick to dismiss a critical engagement with the world as an endorsement of it strictly on the basis of the stylistic use of profanity. His severe condemnation on such superficial grounds speaks of a profound lack of trust in the ability of youth to make critical and informed judgements or to responsibly define and act upon their values.

I'm more disappointed by the effect Mr. Durall's letter (and expressions of similar sentiments) has on the YRUU. Mr. Durall's refusal to treat youth with the respect they deserve alienates the YRUU from the larger Unitarian community. This was a chance for him to talk with youth about our decidedly troubled world and offer them some support in their struggle to find meaning in it; instead he chose to unfairly condemn youth along with exactly what they are trying to understand in order to reject. Mr Durall's letter serves only to affirm that youth can not trust adult Unitarians to make the effort to understand them; and his profound lack of respect deserves a response the like of Ben Kulow's: if he won't respect youth efforts to come to terms with the world he has no right to speak on the matter.

Indeed, as a Unitarian committed to "the inherent worth and dignity of every person" and "the free and responsible search for truth and meaning" he should know better.

EDMONTON, AB CANADA  
ALAN REED

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Dear SuperEditor,

I was thrilled to learn about the outpouring of letters of support for free speech in Synapse following the challenges of editorial policy in the wake of the Censorship issue. I would love to see a section in Synapse devoted to such dialogue about the growing and changing of YRUU. Could we have those letters printed and future letters of that nature printed in the future in such a section?

Thanks and keep up the \*^%\$# good work!

In the Struggle,

Mimi Lavalley  
San Diego, California



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Would you like to have your letter printed in Synapse? Did you see something that you really liked? Did you see something that made you want to start a fire with a pile of Synapses? Well this is your chance to speak up so you better use it. If you send us something that you would like to go in this section we will most likely use it so please send use your letters to tell us what you think.

YRUU YOUTH OFFICE  
SYNAPSE: Letter to the Editor  
25 Beacon St, BOSTON, MA  
02108

The views expressed in these letters does not necessarily reflect those of the Editors, and shouldn't be interrupted as such. We reserve the right to edit letters for content and length.



# SYNAPSE: a point of contact where information and energy are exchanged

Synapse Magazine \* Fall 2000 \* Volume 18, Issue 2 \* A magazine for youth, by youth!

The UUA/YRUU Youth Office has a new phone number!

We are now available at (617) 948-4350 a.k.a. UUA extension 350!

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# ABBEY'S NOTES

When I first sat down to begin editing the articles for this Synapse issue, a couple of things struck me. First off: a great deal of the information within Synapse carries the biases of the various contributors, including the editors. I hope that this quick note will help open your eyes to some of the biases that we have missed, or mistakenly created, in our editing process. Second: there are a few terms that are mentioned again and again but are never explained. Hopefully, this will also clarify some of those terms for you.

I try to live my life according to the UU principles, which includes wearing a number of lenses in my day-to-day work; for example, I try to wear my pro-sustainability lens and my anti-racist and anti-oppressive lenses all the time. I'm far from perfect, however, and that truth hit me hard while editing these articles. Even after multiple go-overs, alterations and rewordings, there is a great deal of exclusive language and content in this issue, in that it caters to the majority of YRUUsers, but also leaves out a significant minority. Some of it is exclusive in terms of race, some in terms of class, and some in terms of nationality. The one I really noticed for the first time while editing Synapse was the anti-Canadian (or maybe pro-US) slant of the writings. Nearly all of the articles, save those written by Canadian UUs, previously said "our country" somewhere in the text. But, wait, which country was that again? Even after my slight rewording of articles to reflect that we are indeed a continental organization, the ratio of

articles written from a US perspective to articles written from a Canadian perspective is high. Many of the articles seem to reflect only US issues (for example, articles including US Prison or education statistics or laws). In any case, I hope you will keep all of your lenses on while you read this Synapse.

So what are the "Jubilee World" and the "Journey Toward Wholeness" (JTW) anyway, let alone the difference between them? Well, "Journey Toward Wholeness" is the title for the entire UUA anti-oppression initiative. The anti-racism portion is broken down into three main steps; Educating (beginning the conversation and raising awareness), Organizing (creating a team and developing a plan) and Institutionalizing (making change in our congregations and communities.) The "Creating a Jubilee World" Workshop series is the two-part workshop series that congregations, districts, committees, etc., can request from the Faith In Action department of the UUA that facilitates beginning and intermediate discussion on race issues and anti-racism. The UUA also holds JTW anti-racism trainings for continental and district staff and other leadership of the UU movement. For more information, visit [www.uua.org/faithinaction/](http://www.uua.org/faithinaction/) or call (617) 742-2100 x265.

I hope that my comments have helped give you some sort of perspective about how we try to work and live by our principles here in the youth office. We love to hear from you, so please drop us an email or letter and tell us what you thought of Synapse and how we can make it better reflect our YRUU and UU principles. We are here to serve.

Love,  
Abbey, 351.

## Cool Books you Should Read

\*A Race is a Nice Thing to Have (a guide for white people about race... or understanding the white people in your life) by Janet E. Helms

\*Lies my teacher told me by Jame Loewen

\*People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn

\*Learning to be white: Money, Race, & God In America by Thandeka

\*The Human Ape by Stidworth

\*Race Matters by Cornel West

\*Becoming American – Personal Essays by First Generation American Immigrant Women Editor: Meri Nana-Ama Danquah (Pub Hyperion, New York)

\*Deadly Persuasion –Why Women and Girls Must Fight The Addictive Power Of Advertising by Jean Kilbourne (Pub: The Free Press, New York)

\*CUNT by Inga Muscio (Seal Press, Seattle)

\*Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire. Editor: Sonia Shah

\*Eastern Standard Time: A Guide to Asian Influence On American Culture - from Astro Boy to Zen Buddhism. by

Jeff Yang, Dina Geh, Hong and Steff of A. Magazine.

\*Manifesta – Young Women, Feminism and the Future Editors: Jennifer Baumgardner & Amy Richards (Farra, Strauss and Giroux New York)

\*Savage Inequalities by Jonathan Kozol



Looking for ways to get your Congregation or Youth Group started on the Journey Toward Wholeness anti-racism programs? Look no further!

\* Borrow the Jubilee World anti-racism video series!

\* Apply for a Jubilee World Workshop!

\* Run the anti-oppression book discussion series in your youth group or congregation!

\* And much much more!!!!

For information on how to get started on the Journey Toward Wholeness, contact

Susan Gershwin

Anti-racism Program Assistant

(617) 948-4642

[sgershwin@uua.org](mailto:sgershwin@uua.org)



# Steering Committee Speaks

By Paris Brewer

Hello there to all of you YRUUers across the continent!!! If you consider yourself a Unitarian, Universalist, or both and/or a youth, you should definitely keep on reading this article. We are the 2000-2001 YRUU Steering Committee, fresh off the assembly line, and MAN are we hot this year.

"Why, what is Steering Committee?" you may ask. The Steering Committee is the executive body elected from Youth Council, meaning we make all those kick-ass continental things happen in cahoots with your Youth Council representatives and we are here for you day and night. And let me tell you that we are on the ball this year more than ever. Energy, love, and vision reigned supreme at our first meeting in early October, and I'm going to let you all in on all of it. So in the words of Snoop Dog, "What's crackalackin'?"

We have set our goals high and mighty, hoping to go further and reach out more than any other Steering Committee in YRUU. In order to become an anti-racist organization, we need the voices of youth of color to be heard fully, and so this year we created a Person of Color Advisory Council to Steering Committee, which consists of three youth elected from the People of Color Caucus at Youth Council to serve as Steering Committee

members in every way. We have a vision of forming liaisons with other anti-racist organizations. This is the real deal Steering Committee! This year we are going to help give YRUU the vision, support, resources, and love it needs. One of our goals is to be visible to the continental YRUU and larger UU body. That would include you, your church youth group, your church board, and your district. We

so well we almost died! Many wonderful ideas came out of Youth Council. This year's Youth Council's priorities include supporting small affinity groups for the School of Americas protest, working on opening up Youth Council to the public, making YRUU more known and effective globally, and basically putting the R back into YRUU! But we can't do all of this by ourselves! We need your help as well! Apply for staff

and intern openings in the Youth Office and WRITE FOR SYNAPSE! Get your voice heard! Check the new and improved website regularly and often. We are talking total revolution here, but unlike Tracy Chapman's, our revolution will not sound anything like a whisper. It will be loud and empowering, and we hope to inspire you to come with your vision of a new YRUU and bring it to our table of peace, love, and a responsible



Ann Lapidus & Paris Brewer Crackalackin'g it up at GA 2000

search for truth and meaning. So the next time someone asks you "what's crackalackin'?" you'll be able to say "YRUU is!"

have noticed that, over the years, local youth groups and district youth con-goers don't know who we are—so this year, we're going to be in your face! We are reaching out as much as we can, to whomever we can.

Youth Council was incredibly successful this year. We used a new decision-making process called Formal Consensus, which worked

and a responsible search for truth and meaning. So the next time someone asks you "what's crackalackin'?" you'll be able to say "YRUU is!"

In peace and love,

Paris Brewer  
2000—2001 YRUU Steering  
Committee

*Paris is on the People of Color Advisory  
Council to the YRUU Steering Committee*







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*\*UUA Board of Trustees  
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 832-654-1001 (Mobile)  
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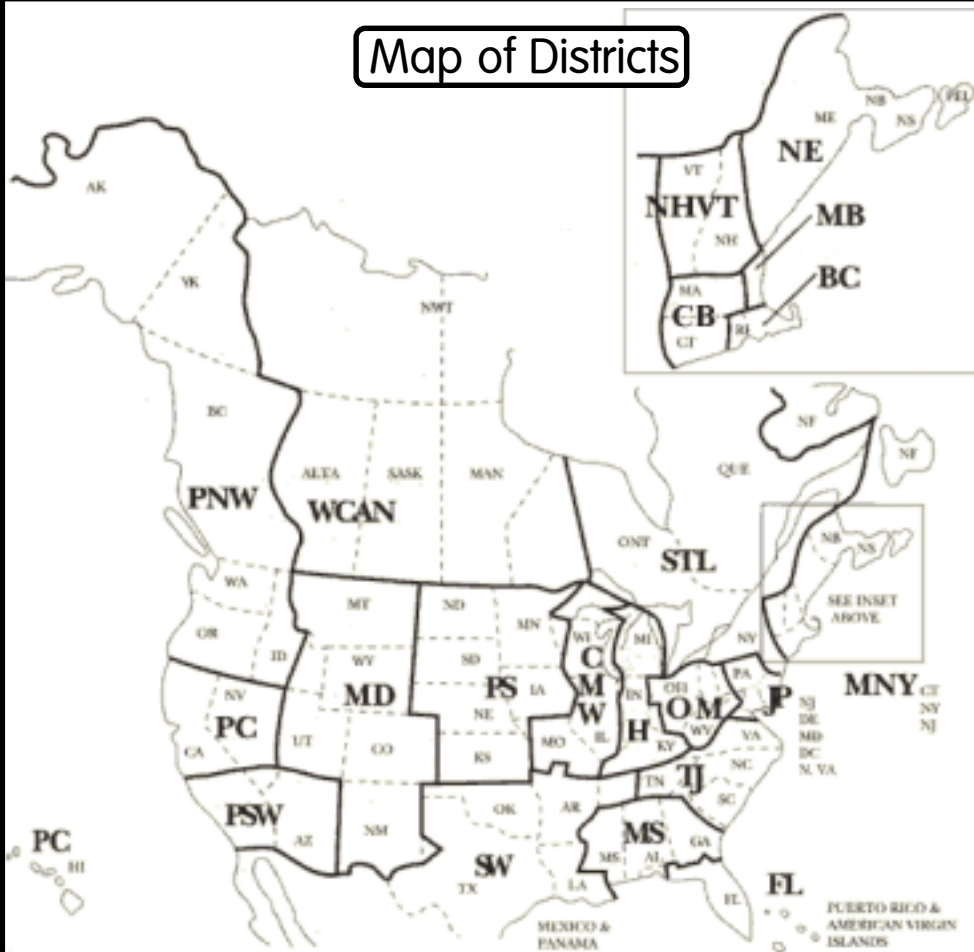
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### Map of Districts



This map online w/ more info goto <http://uua.org/DIST/distmap.html>



ARE YOU A WRITER, POET, ARTIST, YOUTH?

DO YOU WANT YOUR WORK TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO  
OVER 12,000 PEOPLE?

**SUBMIT TO SYNAPSE!**

*We accept Articles, Poetry, Lyrics, Pictures, Paintings and Drawings, year round for Synapse. And, we guarantee, you have an excellent chance of actually getting published. (Nearly ALL submissions get published)*

*You say: My stuff isn't good, though, why would they want me to submit?*

*We say: What are you talking about? You're stuff is excellent! You are the most talented YRUUer that has ever lived! You should submit today.*

*You say: Well, maybe my stuff is ok, but it doesn't have anything to do with YRUU or the next Synapse theme or anything. I just won't send it in.*

*We say: You're killing us! Your submissions don't have to have anything to do with YRUU! They don't have to have anything to do with the theme! Even if, for some <insert guiding spiritual force here>-forsaken reason, we don't publish your submission in the next issue, we do keep a running file and your stuff might be used in a future issue.*

*You say: Well, I wrote a haiku once for English class... It went like this:*

One Two Three Four Five  
Six Seven Eight Nine and Ten  
Eleven ... Haiku

*But it sucked. Who would publish that?*

*We say: We will! We just did! And you know what, we think that was the best haiku ever. Thank you for submitting.*

*You say: Well, I kind of wanted to write an article for the last issue, but I didn't know how long it should be or what font to use or how to submit it or anything, so I just didn't write it.*

*We say: Font doesn't matter! Length doesn't (usually) matter (although 700-800 words is about a one-page article in Synapse. 1-2 page articles are best...) And submitting is easy!*

*To Submit*

*Either: email [yruu@yua.org](mailto:yruu@yua.org) with your work as text or an attachment to the email with "Synapse submission" in the subject line*

*Or: mail your submission to:*

Synapse Submissions  
C/o Youth Office  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108

Spring Synapse submission  
deadline: January 15th

Heart,  
The Youth Office



## **Project Proposals and Resolutions fresh from Youth Council 2000 Reviewed and summarized by Maura McGill**

*Note:* A PROJECT PROPOSAL is a proposal from a small group of people who want input and approval on a project that they are committed to working on until it is finished.

A RESOLUTION is something that Youth Council feels is important to YRUU as a whole and therefore all Youth Council members commit to working on it until it is finished.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL TO SEND A DELEGATION OF YRUU YOUTH TO AN INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (IARF) CONFERENCE IN 2001.** The proposal's goal is to increase YRUU involvement in the international, interfaith community by sending a delegation of 4 – 10 people to the IARF. Many steps are being taken to research this project.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NECESSARY BYLAWS.** This project proposal was made to do bylaw housekeeping. The alterations in the bylaws include making efforts to have balance of first year and second year Youth Council Representatives (YCRs) at Youth Council and the process of how to select a moderator.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL: COLLECTION OF DISTRICT YOUTH ADVISOR RESOURCES.** The goal of making this youth advisor resource is to give new youth advisors easy access to lots of materials for help in all areas of YRUU advising. Ultimately, there will be an up-to-date collection of resources available to youth advisors. This will benefit YRUU by creating more prepared and better-trained advisors ready to help keep YRUU strong.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL: REVISING AND UPDATING THE YCR RESOURCE NOTEBOOK.** YCR's need to have updated information presented in an efficient and informative manner, specifically through a clear version of the YCR notebook. By updating the YCR notebooks, YCRs will have the opportunity to be more effective in their districts from the beginning of their terms.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL: MAKING TEMPLATES FOR RESOLUTIONS AND PROJECT PROPOSALS AVAILABLE ONLINE.** Right now it is hard for a non- Youth Council member YRUUer to write a resolution since one must start from scratch with-

out clear information as to how to do it. By creating a template online, youth and adults will have an easier time accessing the materials needed to write a resolution and ultimately making it possible for anyone in YRUU to write a resolution that can be passed at Youth Council.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL: YRUU DELEGATION TO UNITED NATIONS "COMBATING RACISM TOGETHER" CONFERENCE.** By sending youth to the conference, we hope to demonstrate our support of the global anti-racist movement within the UU community. Members of this delegation will be prepared to visit churches, recreate worships and make presentations about the conference upon their return to North America.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL: PLANNING OUT THE YRUU SUMMER TOUR.** The goal of this trip will be to educate youth about YRUU and help YRUU become a more powerful social justice force. This tour will benefit YRUU by teaching people about social action organizations all over the continent. There were some concerns about this project including it would be difficult for low-income youth to participate.

**RESOLUTION TO UTILIZE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS A FOURTH MEETING FOR YRUU STEERING COMMITTEE.** Steering Committee's food, housing, travel and registration would be paid for to attend GA. The long-term goal of this idea is to have steering committee, Youth Caucus at GA, Youth Council and the UUA build stronger connections through more frequent and transparent communication. This bylaw change implicit in this resolution was approved by the UUA Board.

**RESOLUTION TO FOSTER LIFE-LONG UU INVOLVEMENT: NETWORKING, EMPOWERING AND TRANSITIONS.** Often in the transition from Jr. High to



YRUU, or YRUU to UUYAN, youth are lost and do not stay active in the UU Community. The goal of this resolution is to make stronger transitional age range programming and strengthen youth empowerment in the greater UU Community. The people who made this resolution hope to connect more networking between all levels of YRUU, Jr. High Programming and UUYAN (UU Young Adult Network). Many steps will be taken to create better transitions from Jr. High to YRUU to UUYAN.

**RESOLUTION: COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHENING YRUU IN CANADA.** The goal of this resolution is to get Canadian YRUUers more active in Continental YRUU. A short-term goal is to have the numbers of Canadian YRUUers increase at GA in Cleveland and at ConCon in Canada this summer. Increasing Canadian YRUU involvement contributes to YRUU being a more inclusive community.

**RESOLUTION TO CREATE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT POLITICAL RESPONSE NETWORK.** One goal of this resolution was to form affinity groups of YRUUers with CUUYAN in resisting the School of Americas. The school of Americas protest is in Ft. Benning, GA on November 17-19 2000. Affinity groups from all over the continent have been organized to protest the infamous school (go to [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org) to find out why). This resolution also helps bridge the gap between YRUUers and CUUYAN members along social action lines. Youth Council also has decided to sponsor the participation of young adults/youth in taking action and going to the school of the Americas protest.

**RESOLUTION TO CREATE YOUTH COUNCIL AND STEERING COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING TASK FORCE.** This resolution asked for UUA Board of Trustees monetary and ideological support in creating a task force to evaluate and make recommendations on current Youth Council and Steering Committee structure and function. This idea behind this

resolution was affirmed by the UUA Board, however, no money was granted to make it happen.

**RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE YACs TO DO MORE JAHNNY DEPPs.** JAHANNY DEPP stands for Joining and Helpfully Networking Neighboring YACs District Exchange Program Packet. JAHNNY DEPP was created to have districts exchange solutions to help one another. There are JAHNNY DEPP forms that YCR's can fill out to have a district exchange with another district to better strengthen both districts.

**RESOLUTION: YOUTH ON DISTRICT AND LOCAL BOARDS OF TRUSTEES.** Youth voices need to be heard on local and district boards to trustees to promote youth empowerment and involvement in the association of congregations. This resolution encourages youth to take leadership roles in the UU movement outside of YRUU. It is a youth council goal to get youth on every board across the continent.

**RESOLUTION TO CREATE COHESIVE SOCIAL JUSTICE STRUCTURES IN YRUU.** It's goal is to get all the social action projects in continental YRUU to connect with each other and be less fragmented. The Continental Social Action Coordinator and Working Action Manager will each be a part of youth council and general assembly staff in the near future.

See <http://www.uua.org/YRUU/governance.html> for complete copies of all resolutions and project proposals ever passed at youth council.

**DO YOU WANT TO BE ON NEXT YEAR'S YOUTH COUNCIL?**

See page 18 for more details on how to apply for this great and exciting youth conference!!!!



# Why the First Amendment is first

By Tameron Josbeck

The best part of my experience in Philadelphia, protesting the GOP's (GOP = Grand Old Party- the USA's Republican political party) capitalist policies, surprisingly wasn't being at the protests. It wasn't helping a free kitchen share food with hundreds of activists and low-income Philadelphians. It wasn't making giant political puppets, nor was it being released from prison after nine days of psychological and physical abuse (many would call it torture) for nothing more than making these puppets. The best aspect of the whole adventure was what I learned about my country and the First Amendment to the US Constitution in particular.

This theological and literary masterpiece says simply that the US government won't take away people's religious freedom, free speech, free press, right to peaceful assembly, and right to redress of grievances. What makes it so important, why the "founding fathers" put it first, is that these are the rights people need in order to fight for other rights peacefully. As long as we the people can gather and make our voices heard, we can stand together for everything else we believe in—exactly what happened in Philadelphia.

The problems of police brutality, angry demonstrators, closed businesses, scared and misinformed bystanders, etc. arise when the American government acts in violation of the First Amendment. Lacking protest permits (which the city of Philadelphia has no right to demand), law-abiding citizens were harassed; had vehicles and property stolen; and were beaten, pepper-sprayed, and arrested for little or no reason by the same police force that was created to protect them (See Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution: No search, seizure, or arrest without warrants of probable cause!). As if all this were not bad enough, these citizens were then lied to by their elected officials, who also lied to the public and media about what was really going on.

After having had our constitutional and civil rights trampled (in some cases literally), our human rights were

## First Amendment to the US Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

shown no more respect. The eighty-three artists, clowns, musicians, and puppeteers I was detained with were held on three buses for more than eight hours in one hundred-degree heat with no water. Our wrist restraints were so tight that our hands turned blue and people were passing in and out of consciousness. Cries for medical help were ignored; in fact people who protested the loudest about the condition of their fellow detainees were themselves subjected to various forms of brutality. One man passed out due to dehydration and

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**“...OUR WRIST RESTRAINTS WERE SO TIGHT THAT OUR HANDS TURNED BLUE AND PEOPLE WERE PASSING IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS.”**

---

we had to chant for half an hour before a medic came. The guards then hauled him off the bus so roughly he awoke screaming in pain.

The guards acted violently, administering torture in such forms as punches, kicks, joint twisting, choking, dropping from heights, pulling out hair, and more. One man who had gone limp was pulled up into a chair by his genitals. A cellmate of mine, after being returned from a particularly complex ordeal, said of passive resistance, "It works. They didn't print me." The guards slammed me, battering ram-style, into

a steel desk and then a stone wall to get me to walk into the fingerprinting room. They also sprained my elbow. The women faced similar "compliance tactics" and twenty or so were held in a Plexiglas-walled room next to the room where the men were tortured. They were forced to watch and listen as their brothers screamed in pain.

Arraignment consisted of those who were not participating in jail solidarity giving their names and "signing out on their own recognizance" or paying a tenth of the absurd bails. The rest, who were committed, for the time being, to using political pressure and our numbers to negotiate our freedom, fired the court-appointed defender (whose only goals were to get us to break solidarity) and demanded our chosen legal counsel. We heard, for the first time, the ridiculous charges against us and the record-breaking bails, which ranged from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000 (for a "leader"). We were charged only with misdemeanors! I was charged with five unfounded misdemeanors, including obstructing a highway when I was arrested inside the puppet warehouse. Some days later I learned four more charges had been added: conspiracy to commit four of the five original charges (which, in addition to being very fishy in my opinion, included charges that were actually conflicting: conspiracy to commit disorderly conduct and conspiracy to recklessly endanger). The Eighth Amendment to the US Constitution says, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted." I am forced to wonder, have the guards, bail commissioner, and arraignment judge



studied the US Constitution? Surely American Government officials should be expected to know their constitutional amendments.

We were then transported by bus to the Curran Fromhold Correctional Facility maximum security prison where I spent seven more days before signing out by giving my name. Solitary confinement for twenty-three hours a day is not the easiest environment in which to maintain a truly democratic prisoners' rights collective but we did. Using notes passed via courier or crier when we were given time out of our cells ten at a time and singing to relay messages through walls, we maintained communication (vital) and kept our spirits high (even more vital). Most of us maintained a hunger strike against our incarceration and the union-busting strategies used against us. Eventually, a few of us were able to talk our way to the social worker to whom the handbook promised us access. She proved sympathetic enough to let us use her phone because the account pay phones in our thirty-two-cell pod had been turned off. It was quite a relief to know that people on the outside knew we were there and to hear of the outpouring of support going on around the U.S. with rallies in Boston; Washington, DC; Los Angeles; New York City; Northampton, Massachusetts; and San Francisco to name a few.

It is one thing to know of injustice. We were in Philadelphia in the first place to speak out against hunger, homelessness, police intimidation and brutality, the racist death penalty, prison privatization, censorship, environmental catastrophe, dirty politics, and other problems facing Philadelphia residents. Local issues were only the beginning. We were merely the American portion of a global movement to right the wrongs wrought by concentrations of power and luxury like the Republican Party. In whose economic interest is unchecked economic expansion? Weapons manufacturing? Police militarization? Media monopolies? We, as UUs, are called to ask these questions by our history and our common principles.

It is something else entirely to experience it. While we demanded international human rights monitoring, something occurred to me: "I thought I was supposed to be the privileged white kid who stood up for the rights of the downtrodden in faraway lands!" I was to find out later that, while I thought this, Black Women for Wages For Housework (among others) were drafting a letter in Eastern Europe calling for our immediate release without charges! With the tables turned, I understood how an injustice to one is an injustice to all.

The trials are set for late September in Philadelphia. As you may have guessed, a massive civil suit is going to be leveled against the Police Department and prison system of Philadelphia for wrongful arrest and misconduct. Their behavior was blatantly unconstitutional and we will not let them get away with it (as a matter of fact, this too is an amendment). Though the protests and demonstrations made a difference in the current political climate, I believe it could pale in comparison to the effect that winning a suit and setting a precedent for activists in court will.

Apparently the people who wrote the US Bill of Rights understood our predicament: a peaceful citizenry seeking life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness by addressing grievances with a violent government. In an attempt to avert future political dissenters from having to resort to real civil war, they said, "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government." On this the modern concept of liberty rests. That I can (still) exercise my First Amendment rights is why I don't rely on the Second Amendment to the US Constitution to protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—The Right to Bear Arms!

*Tameron is a Young Adult Political Activist studying engineering at UMASS Amherst*

## Is Your Advisor the BEST ADVISOR IN THE WORLD?

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

## The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Outstanding Advisor Award

*The advisor selected will be presented with the Outstanding Advisor Award at the General Assembly Awards Breakfast in Cleveland Ohio, June 2001. The Outstanding Advisor will have \$500 donated to their youth group in their name, in addition to much overdue recognition, celebrity status, and the undying love and support of youth everywhere.*

★  
*Recognize someone  
who's changed  
your life!!*

★  
*Simply submit a nomination  
to the Youth Office  
By April 1, 2001!*

Advisor nominations must include:

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

★  
Send Nominations to:  
Advisor of the Year  
The Youth Office  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 948-4350  
yruu@uua.org



This past July, I went to Yakima, in Eastern Washington, for a Unitarian Universalist Work Camp. Fifteen of us, ages fifteen to twenty, came from all over the U.S. to help migrant farm workers. We worked in many different situations, helping in any way we could. Sometimes we all worked together in one place, and other times we helped out individually, each of us doing our own thing.

One day we went to a "you pick" cherry farm where we "gleaned" for about three hours. *Gleaning* is picking all the cherries that aren't big enough to make the grade, which we donated to different charities. The work was amazingly hard, and afterward we were exhausted, even though we only did it for three hours! Our grand total was about six hundred pounds of cherries. We donated them to a Yakima mission and Pacific Northwest Harvest.

Another day, we all went to work at the Yakima mission, which is an old motel converted into living quarters for homeless people. The mission has facilities for dining, bathing, church services, arts and crafts, weight training, and other activities. Our group split up into separate groups to do different chores there. We cut scraps for stuffing quilts, watered plants, swept, knocked down cobwebs, and did other basic house-keeping chores.

Another day, we all went to a park, where we dug a ditch for a waterspout to drain into. This was important because the water created to mud without the drain and the Health Department wouldn't let it be used. By digging the ditch, we made it possible for the farm workers to get clean water instead of unsafe water from

# How I spent my summer vaca-

**tion:** at a Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) "Just Works" camp by Astrid Lake

the Columbia River or from irrigation hoses.

On another day, some of us went to Head Start to be trained to work with the children. That way, when there wasn't enough work for the whole group, those of us who had been trained could go help the teachers at Head Start. We felt useful despite a language barrier, and the children seemed to like us a lot!

One Sunday, we put on a worship service for the Yakima Valley Unitarian Church. While the congregation was extremely small, our service went well. After the service, a woman from the congregation gave us her business card and told us to stay in touch with her; she offered to use her

connections in the state capitol to work with the state legislature on behalf of the farm workers.

All in all, the work camp was a great way to spend my summer. If I hadn't gone, I would have spent those two weeks on the phone or at the mall, never even realizing what life was like on the other side of the mountains. This camp was a real wake-up call for me, and for the other participants. I'm going back next year, and I would strongly suggest that you consider a Unitarian Universalist work camp. The cost is somewhat high, but scholarships are available. Don't miss this opportunity to work for social justice—and have fun!

*Astrid Lake is from the Pacific Northwest District and hopes to go to another workcamp*

*It was 2AM at a YRUU Steering Committee meeting and I was conferencing with Duncan Metcalfe—former Youth Programs Specialist. We agreed about how incredibly awful the current YRUU web site was and came to the decisive conclusion that the site needed to be updated. We put the defibrillator to the computer screen to see what happened. I accepted the charge of slaying this daunting electronic beast. With the love of Peter Bowden (the Youth Office assistant), nearly two months later a new web page was born. I kicked up my heels and yelled out: "Wow, that's not too shabby!"*

## NEW WEBSITE

The **NEW WEBSITE** is broken down into 7 sections: **HOME** (where you can find resource spotlights, links to related websites and the most current and up-to-date information on conferences, staff applications, and everything that's happening in YRUU!), **RESOURCES** (a comprehensive database of resources for Youth, Advisors, and Religious Professionals), **LOCAL** (all you need to know about growing and sustaining a local youth group), **DISTRICT** (links to district webpages and information about services and opportunities available on the district level of YRUU) **CONTINENTAL**, (information about opportunities and conferences available at the continental level of YRUU) **GOVERNANCE**, (links to documents and information about the governing structure of YRUU) and **YOUTH OFFICE** (everything you need to know about the youth office's mission, services, opportunities and staff.)

All this is fancy and action-packed, but one of the greatest new functions of the new site is the information on the very first page! Here are the headlines and happenings of the day as it arrives in the Office. It's all too exciting, I know. Now sprint to your computers and go to <http://www.uua.org/YRUU/>

♥ Matt Moore





# Polite Rage of one Canadian

By Jacob Larsen

## Article 2, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, NATIONAL (*emphasis mine*) or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

*It's 2:15am. I have school today, but I can't sleep. I think about YRUU quite a bit, but never has it gotten to the point that I could not sleep. I cannot sleep because of something that has gone on far, far too long.*

I have attended continental events for about a year and a half, and there's something I'm tired of, far more tired than I will be tomorrow morning at school. In YRUU, there's blatant discrimination against Canadians. Yes, discrimination. Sometimes it's unconscious; sometimes it's not. Although it's the result of several factors, I think it can be summed it up in one word: *condescension*. It's in my lovingly being called a "Crazy Canadian," asked to repeatedly say the word *about*, or hearing the comment, "Canadians are cute." I try to turn the other cheek when genuinely asked in countless letters and emails, "How's Canada?" I don't know! How's America? It's getting harder and harder . . .

This is my family that I'm talking about, and it pains me to say these things, but they must be said. I love the people who write me and care enough to be my friends and love me back, but they just don't

understand. I want you all to understand. These are the people I love with all my heart and I feel know me better than anyone else, yet they create this invisible barrier. We all have many identities, and I know it's the "American" identity of my friends expressing these anti-Canadian sentiments. It seems as though people put their "YRUU" and



"UU" identities aside, the identities that affirm the "inherent worth and dignity" of me, and I feel that no one notices but me. Within YRUU, I feel that I will always be known as Jacob the Canadian.

There are some frightening parallels that can be drawn between this form of oppression and others, the one that comes to mind being racism—being known for what you are, instead of who you are. I hazard to make this connection, as racism is even more deep-seated in the American conscious-

ness than anti-Canadian sentiments, but its workings are frighteningly similar. Both evolved from a fear of "the outsiders" and can be traced far back through the long and violent history of America.

We are approaching a crossroads, both in the UUA and in YRUU. The most obvious example is the Canadian Unitarian Council's (CUC) decision to gradually diverge from the UUA. On a more positive note, next year's Continental Conference (ConCon) will be held in Canada and this holds lots of opportunity for growth within our organization. It's an opportunity for YRUU to be truly welcoming to first-time Canadian ConConers and rebuild my faith in YRUU, some of which I've lost.

I'm so afraid to send this essay. I'm afraid of people seeing it and not knowing what to say to me. Being so afraid they'll offend me, they'd rather endure silence than have a conversation stray anywhere near the subject of Canada. Please don't do that! I love you guys—I really do—and losing the ease and comfort with which I talk to you all is the worst situation imaginable to me. Please don't be afraid to ask me about ANYTHING—about my city, my province, Canada, my small knowledge of French. I'm super friendly and I love to answer questions!

But I really hope you all will treat this issue with the same seriousness as any other infraction of YRUU's anti-oppression policy, something that is fundamental to our first Principle, affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

*Jacob Larsen is from the St. Lawrence District and is very active in getting Canadian YRUUers organized and active in Continental YRUU.*



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

\*\*\*\*\* Then **Apply for Youth Council!** \*\*\*\*\*

### What is Youth Council?

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

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

##### **Continental Social Action Coordinator:**

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

##### **Transitional Age-Range Representative for Junior High:**

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

##### **Transitional Age-Range Representative for Post-High:**

Coordinates outreach to post-high and transitioning out youth on a continental level and liaisons with C\*UUYAN (Young Adults) about transitioning issues.

##### **Canadian Youth At-Large:**

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

##### **Adults At-Large:**

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

#### Applications should be typed and should include the following:

##### **Vital Information:**

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

##### **A Letter of Intent:**

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

##### **Anti-Racism, Multi-Culturalism, and Diversity:**

How do you define racism? What sort of education have you had on issues of racism, anti-racism, and/ or multiculturalism (describe these experiences)?

##### **Two Letters of Recommendation:**

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

##### **Send applications to:**

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

**Application  
Deadline:  
March 13,  
2001**



# The Truth about C\*UUYAN

The Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network

By Phoebe Hanshew

Here are some things you may have heard about C\*UUYAN: It's not YRUU, it's icky, it's really touchy-feely, it's dorky, it's not YRUU, it's exclusive, there aren't enforced boundaries, young women aren't safe there, it's not politically conscious, it's not fun, it's not YRUU.

So one of these things is true. All of them warrant discussion. Many are being seriously addressed by C\*UUYAN. For example, C\*UUYAN has established a Sexual Behavior Task Force, now entering its second year, to work on some of these issues. But maybe one of the hardest to come to terms with (for those of us who were

YRUUers and loved every minute of it) is the fact that C\*UUYAN is not really an extension of YRUU.

There are so many wonderful and transformative things about being part of YRUU. I know I cherished it, and when I left there was definitely a period of grieving for the community I had "lost." I wasn't looking for something to replace what was irreplaceable to me. In order to embrace C\*UUYAN, I had to make a space that honored but did not glamorize YRUU and allowed me to appreciate the unique and distinct gifts C\*UUYAN has to offer.

Sure, C\*UUYAN provides things that are similar to what YRUU provides: a liberal religious community, leadership training, campfires and circle worship, late nights, a voice at the UUA, a vehicle for social justice work, and the opportunity to connect with awesome people locally, regionally, and continentally.

Still, C\*UUYAN is not a young adult version of YRUU. It has a different structure of governance. It has a different relationship with the UUA. It has a different history and different traditions. Most importantly, C\*UUYAN encompasses a much wider age range, from eighteen to thirty-five. It provides for the spiritual needs of people in the transition to young adulthood and those starting families, going through divorces, and entering the ministry. I think this is one of the most challenging things about C\*UUYAN, and also its best quality. C\*UUYAN encompasses such a wide breadth of life experience, and that helps all of us grow, just like in YRUU.

Here are some things you may not have heard about C\*UUYAN: It's an organization in the process of redefining itself, it's growing by leaps and bounds, it has made a firm commitment to anti-racist analysis and anti-oppression action, it's exploring a variety of worship styles that appeal to young adults, it strives to encourage young adult involvement in congregational life, it's fun fun fun, and it's doing a better job of connecting and networking with YRUU.

It makes sense, for both organizations, to work to facilitate a smoother transition from YRUU to C\*UUYAN. We call it bridging, creating a link between the two communities where there has historically been a gap. Sometimes it's called the cliff—youth age out of YRUU, don't make the transition to the young adult movement for whatever reason, and often leave UUism, falling off the cliff because no bridge exists to connect the organizations. Knowing the importance of Unitarian Universalism in the lives of youth, we don't want to deny it in the lives of young adults.

One way YRUU and C\*UUYAN have decided to address the unique needs of bridgers is to establish a standing task force called the Transitional Age Range Task Force (go ahead, add TARTF to your lexicon of acronyms). The TARTF will consist of ten members, five chosen by YRUU Steering Committee and five by C\*UUYAN Steering Committee, including two to four persons of color. The TARTF will appraise the situation at hand, identify in specific ways what each organization needs to do, and implement programming to ease the transition and build the relationship between C\*UUYAN and YRUU.

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*Phoebe Hanshew is on the C\*UUYAN Steering Committee as liaison to YRUU*

## Here are some things you can do to help yourself and others bridge successfully:

\*Keep your eyes out for an application for the TARTF

\*Contact the Young Adult/Campus Ministry Office at the UUA for YA cirricula and other great resources

617.742.2100 ext. 629

\*Contact the YRUU Liason to C\*UUYAN

Ann Lapidus

330.757.9356

anna024@aol.com

and the C\*UUYAN liason to YRUU

Phoebe Hanshew

412.979.2713

phoebehanshew@hotmail.com

\*Check out the C\*UUYAN website:

www.uuyan.org

\*Attend a local young adult meeting or district conference

\*Talk to more than one young adult to get the real scoop on C\*UUYAN

\*Remember it might take a while to feel at home in C\*UUYAN

\*Bridges work both ways, and for those of you lucky enough to be between 18-20, you can be a part of two vital communities. Take advantage.



# I'M IN AND OUT

By Rev Cynthia Breen

Each Wednesday when I entered the juvenile jail and approached the first of six security checks, a sense of nervousness would set in.

Did I take all the pens (possible weapons) out of my purse? Would my belt set off the alarm? Would I be able to overlook the noise, the confinement, and the guards' scrutiny, and be fully present to the youth? The place just made me feel guilty!



*The lovely Rev. Cynthia Breen*

I always visited the girls section first. They didn't intimidate me as much as the boys. Even a 14-year old youth could project enough rage to show off any equanimity mustered for the occasion. If the cell guard was in a foul mood the greeting I received was stormy to non-existent. If she wasn't, I was handed slips of paper with the inmates name and cell number on the chaplain request form with a nod and often a few sentences describing the climate in the common space; "Watch your backside, we've had some fighting in here," Don't cut Stacey any slack, she's fixin' to start a food fast tomorrow". "Two new ones are sittin' over there, coming down hard. Let 'em be".

The girls wanting to see a chaplain were eager to leave the cellblock and go with me to the library. Even if they were "in discipline" and confined to an 8' x 8' room with a bolted door they were allowed my visit.

The library had a pre-school and early elementary

children's books section for the non-readers and slow readers.

Sometimes I started with a favorite story I would read aloud, but more often, my standard opening question was, "Have you been able to find God today?" There was always a serious response. We would talk about their boyfriends, girlfriends, fami-

lies, babies left outside. We would talk about drugs, sex, violence, and inequities in the crimi-

**"...THE ABSENCE OF WHAT'S NATURAL AND BEAUTIFUL IS OVERWHELMING."**

nal justice system; we would talk about their bodies, their dreams, and their hair. They were so diverse and also so similar. They all were hungry for hope and hungry to be listened to.

Sometimes I would cry with them. Sometimes I would pull back from being compassionate and notice how easy it is to be manipulated. "Please tell Jerry when you see him today that I love him and I'll be cool with the "hide it".

The boys and girls had separate healing circles, which I initiated. Each would hold a

candle in front of their faces illuminating singularly their loneliness, pain, and loss. Sometimes there were shared words, often a lot of silence. We meditated, prayed, and sang. My readings dealt with self-awareness, strength, courage, discipline, hurt, and yes, faith. This Little Light of Mine was a favorite song.

I believe prisons are a glimpse at hell. The kind teachers moving inmates through lessons, the food groups on the dinner tray, the clean surroundings, the ordered library shelves do not make up for the condemning attitude, the tight boundaries, the absence of family and friends. The loss of trust among the staff and the absence of what's natural and beautiful are overwhelming. Where is God in there?

Did one Unitarian Universalist chaplain visiting six hours a week make any difference? Who knows? I assume nothing for the youth I visited, but I know one thing for certain, I am changed. Their eyes are still watching mine. Their voices are still in my ears and my hands are still in their grasp.

It is said "love, like a carefully loaded ship, crosses the gulf between generations" . . . and I would add between races, between genders, and between those on the inside and those on the outside.

*Rev. Cynthia Breen is the Head of the Religious Education Department at the UUA. Cynthia worked as a part time chaplain in Seattle, WA juvenile jail for a year before coming to Boston.*





# THEME SECTION

“STOPPING THE TIDES OF RACISM”

# As Black as White

By Jordan Argus

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child a long way from home when it comes to my upbringing. I am an almost white boy who faintly hears the voices of my people singing of freedom and the alleviation of ignorance, singing songs that question the nature of humankind. Why do so many wear the mask of acceptance when their hearts are full of a different sort of vigilance? My name is Jordan Argus. I am African American, Lakota Sioux (Native American), and German. A wise man once said, "Only those who take the high road will face obstacles." I have pole vaulted over many obstacles, and others have left me on my back.

My psyche vibrates with childhood memories. I recall being picked up and thrown by a grown man into the street when I was five. His rationale for laying hands on me was that a soccer ball landed in his yard. The truth, however impalatable, is that he was afraid of me and what I would become, a proud black man. My neighbor stood at 5' 10"; he was a man who often worked out and I was a meager 3' 4" shadow of a boy. How could he fear me— someone so small and undeveloped? Was I that bad? What did I do to hurt him? I guess I was just too empathetic for five years old. That evening I took a spiritual bashing and felt the pain of realization, much like falling out of the tree of knowledge only to land on your funny bone, feeling that bizarre, definitive sting.

Societal regressions have held me captive in the iron bonds of my own doubt. I have been raised as a liberal, middle-class

citizen. It is rare for a black male is to be raised by a single, white, middle-aged woman. Quite rare. Because of this, I have none of the inherent, conventional wisdom of the African culture. I have no recollection of when my people could fly. Too many ethnic fillers have taken the place of actual contact with the 'mother race.' I can remember frequent trips to Martin Luther King memorials, watching Amistad and Driving Ms. Daisy, singing with the Afro-American Youth Choir, and participating in the Young Storytelling Group. I remember the conscious smirk on the face of a fellow black man as he saw

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**"...THEY HAVE DRAWN A STEROTYPE FROM WHICH I AM THE POLAR OPPOSITE."**

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me enter the room with a white woman. I was so intimidated by the hateful ignorance that his face emitted. What kind of man was I going to be if I bowed my head so low that I could feel my heartbeat in my chin, around my fellow African Man? Ashamed of where I come from, but proud to represent it. My skin color was not white, black, or cinnamon-honey, but instead that of eosin (an artificial dye used to stain laboratory test animals), because I have always been subjected to the microscope-like "eye of the beholder." People have always watched

my every move, taken notes on my posture, the tightness of my belt, the bagginess of my shirt, the angle of my hat. And from these they have drawn a stereotype that is the polar opposite of me. In solitude I transform into the intellectual desperado, sauntering through the decadent microcosmos of his mind.

I constantly feel as though I am in the cultural epicenter, waiting for an explosion of emotion. I question, when will all of us be able to co-exist without anyone thinking like a supremacist? When will we all start believing that we are one, like Pangaea? Color should be close to obsolete as an issue; it's the content of character that matters to me. Unfortunately not many feel the same as I do, but I suppose that's what makes me me. I am not a victim, just a player in a game set up by unseen forces. I've learned that you reap what you sow.

Despite the fear left over from my experiences, a deeper understanding has unraveled. I am not an individually wrapped unit. My soul is not packaged for individual sale. I am a walking credo for social justice. I am love, I am happiness, I am the fine line between love and hate, I am emotion, and I am empathy and I am compassion. I am as Black as White.

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*Jordan Argus is a youth from the Ohio Meadville District. Feel free to write him: jargus@hotmail.com*



# Prison Reform

By Shea Schachameyer

Since 1970, the number of men and women incarcerated in America has increased at an exorbitant rate of 500%. What is even more startling is that the cost of "corrections" for these prisoners has also grown by 1500%. In addition, the more money that goes to building and supplying "correctional facilities," the more money is taken away from homeless shelters, hospitals, drug rehab centers, crime prevention, health care, and education. As many college students and college-bound students know, tuition for a higher education in America has become overwhelming; consequently, many graduates leave college with huge debts ranging from \$15,000 to \$80,000. Having to accommodate the new growth in the prison industry, the cost of higher education has risen by 35% in New York since 1970. Similar increases can also be seen throughout the country. Not only will money be taken away from school funding, it will also be taken from crime prevention programs and rehabilitation centers. Programs like these are vital to help keep people out of prisons as well as provide resources for those already imprisoned. Furthermore, prison expansion will weaken the United States by not addressing the reasons that jails are becoming more populated.

One reason for overcrowding in prisons is that—like it or not—America is not a perfect society. Statistics show that

racism is still rampant—one-third of all African American males, ages fifteen to twenty-five, are currently incarcerated. Additionally, studies have proven that African Americans are ten times more likely, and Latinos are four times more likely, to be incarcerated than whites. This seems ludicrous given that the US federal government has found that whites are five times more likely to be drug users than African Americans; nevertheless, 62% of African Americans imprisoned are sentenced for drug use,

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**"...WHITES ARE FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE DRUG USERS THAN AFRICAN AMERICANS; NEVERTHELESS, 62% OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IMPRISONED ARE SENTENCED FOR DRUG USE, AS OPPOSED TO ONLY 36% OF WHITES."**

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as opposed to only 36% of whites. Unfortunately, racism is only one problem in the prison system. Studies clearly show biases against the disabled, the lower class, and homosexuals.

Can we stand by and continue to let these injustices occur? No—this is why YRUU has chosen prison reform as its working action issue of the year. Furthermore, at General Assembly (GA) 2001, prison reform will be one of the issues presented as a Study Action Issue, an issue in society that Unitarian Universalists—not just YRUUers—will work

to improve. Ultimately prison reform could pass as a Statement of Conscience, which means that it would be an official UUA statement supported by Unitarian Universalists everywhere according to their individual consciences, priorities, and means.

Some goals that prison reform movements hope to accomplish include eliminating racial, class, and ethnic discrimination in penal measures; promoting humane treatment of offenders; reducing the use of prisons throughout the world and replacing them with constructive alternatives; and lastly, abolishing the death penalty. At the YRUU Social Justice Conference last spring, three ways for YRUU to achieve these goals were identified: writing to legislators and getting legislation passed in America and Canada that would benefit prison reform, educating our communities about prison injustices and issues, and helping to educate and aid prisoners who are presently incarcerated. Moreover, in order to work toward our goals the YRUU Social Justice Conference's focus for 2001 will be prison reform. Here YRUUers from across the continent will be able to exercise their rights by working on prison reform through both activism and legislation. In the meantime, if you are interested in ways to get your district and community active in prison reform, contact:

*Shea Schachameyer*  
GA 2000 WAM  
1415 E Henry Clay St.  
Whitefish Bay, WI 53217  
(414) 332-6934  
wfbskier@aol.com

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*Shea Schachameyer is the General Assembly Working Action Manager and lives in the Central MidWest District*



Tell us . . .



# What must be said? What can be done?

The UUA Commission on Social Witness is helping to sponsor two contests on either of the current Study/Action Issues entitled,

*“An Alternative to the War on Drugs” or  
“Responsible Consumption as a Moral Imperative.”*

Co-sponsored by the Young  
Religious Unitarian Universalists



**\$500**USD

And have his/her essay published  
in the youth publication Synapse

Co-sponsored by the Unitarian Uni-  
versalist Ministers Association



**\$500**USD

And have the opportunity to deliver  
his/ her sermon at the 2001  
General Assembly

Mail or fax the submissions for the YRUU/CSW contest to the UUA in care of the **General Assembly Office**, and indicate that it is a YRUU/CSW contest submission. The deadline for submissions for both contests is **March 1, 2000 by 5:00 pm.**

From congregational or districts submissions, after an all congregation balloting, General Assembly (GA) delegates select a Study/Action Issue each year for two years of study and action, challenging the UUA and its member congregations to fully engage the issue. Your Commission on Social Witness is charged with administering this process. If you would like more information about the CSW or about any of the current or previous social witness issues, please contact us using one of the methods below.

[www.uua.org/csw](http://www.uua.org/csw) - [socialwitness@uua.org](mailto:socialwitness@uua.org)

25 Beacon Street - Boston, Massachusetts 02108 - 617.742.2100 - 617.742.0321 (fax)



# What is Bull Worth? Colorful vs. Colorblind

By Evan White

Upon viewing the conclusion of *Bulworth*, a witty (and, I might add, highly recommended) satire of Washington politics, I became distressed about the final message it seems to convey. *Bulworth* does an excellent job of illuminating the ways American politics is controlled by the rich, but therefore does little to address the concerns of the African-American population, and in particular the Afro-American poor. The thing that bothered me most about the film was that the solution to racism which Warren Beatty's character offers at the end of the movie. It disturbs me to my very core: color blindness.

Beatty's character says that our problems with race in America would be solved if we took it upon ourselves to all have sex until we are all the same color. This idea has always intrigued me, but it immediately leads me to wonder whether there would not be some new system of exploitation implemented in place of racism as we know it. Even without this consideration, the problem with color blindness is the very premise upon which it is based. It assumes that eliminating skin

color will eliminate discrimination. It denies any intrinsic value to a diversity of skin color or the cultural identities which have formed around racial lines. It presupposes that the process of getting to a solution



and the final implications of that solution are less important than finding a makeshift solution. I personally do not wish to eliminate all forms of difference simply to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

In addition, the very notion of color blindness is in itself preposterous. Besides the unlikely scenario which *Bulworth* puts forth, color blindness is often characterized as

a non-recognition of color. First off, the notion that a sighted person can ignore the color of another's skin is unrealistic; especially with respect to the social constructions of race which tint our perceptions of how we view people of different races. Secondly, the prospect itself seems repugnant. Why would I want someone to ignore any part of me? Especially when skin color plays — sometimes regrettably — such a large part in many people's lives. Most people are in fact very proud of their ancestry, and wish for it not only to be acknowledged, but also cherished and appreciated. Color blindness denies this appreciation in the pursuit of an unrealistic goal that may not be too appealing upon a second glance.

If you'll allow me a moment of unprecedented emotion, this question (like many others) comes down to one issue for me: What kind of world do I really want to live in? I dare not suppose that our current race situation is perfect, but I believe it is much more dangerous to lift up a world without color as our desired goal.

---

*Evan White is a former PSWD YCR and YRUU Steering Committee member. One might even say "best Steering Committee member ever."*



**WE WANT YOU TO BE A  
YRUU PROGRAM SPECIALIST!**

**DO YOU HAVE  
WHAT IT TAKES  
TO BE A YPS?!**

**ARE** you 16-22, energetic, organized and love YRUU? Do you and want to give back to YRUU to in a profound way? Well, this is the best way to do it!

**APPLY TO BE YPS!**

**Come live in beautiful Boston for a year. Work with the best and brightest Continental YRUU has to offer. Put your faith in to Action. Make a long lasting effect on YRUU and be remembered for your greatness. Learn skills and gain experience for the real-world!**

**FILL OUT THE APPLICATION ON THE NEXT PAGE AND SEND IT INTO THE YOUTH OFFICE. IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG TO APPLY BUT IT COULD PROFOUNDLY AFFECT YOUR LIFE. APPLY TODAY!**

# YPS Application

The YRUU Programs Specialist position is a one-year staff program position at the UUA headquarters in Boston for youth. The 3 YRUU Programs Specialist will work with the Youth Programs director to manage day-to-day business of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. General responsibilities for every YPS include: managing the continental YRUU office, planning and administering conferences and other youth gatherings, participating in meetings, implementing decisions of the YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee, traveling to plan continental youth events, and editing and laying out the YRUU Magazine *Synapse*.

There are 3 YPS terms beginning January 1, June 1, and September 1. The salary is \$25,000 (before taxes). Moving expenses to and from Boston are paid.

Each YPS has a specific skill set need for their term.

Term	Skill Set	Continental Event
January	Computer Skill, web design and layout guru	Youth Council and ConCon
June	Resource development and writing guru	Continental Trainings and the YRUU Social Justice Conference
September	UUA Networker and Anti-racism guru	General Assembly

The successful applicant will have an amiable personality with leadership qualities, good written and verbal communication skills, the maturity and creativity to handle an often hectic but rewarding full time job, have the freedom to live in the Boston area as well as travel and will be between the ages of 16 and 22 at the time of application.



## How to Apply

To apply, send a cover letter, the enclosed application form, and at least three letters of recommendation addressed to the YRUU Steering Committee c/o the Youth Office, 25 Beacon St. Boston, MA 02108. Please feel free to complete the application form on your own paper. The completed cover letter, application, and recommendations must be postmarked by

Start Date For Position	Application Deadline
January 1	September 15
June 1	December 15
September 1	March 15

The cover letter should briefly but thoroughly address:

- 1) *What is in it for us?* Include your visions for YRUU, your special areas of interest, your experience with leadership development and problem solving, and experiences working with different age groups.
- 2) *What is in it for you?* Include how the job will fit into your life plan, and your personal goals.
- 3) *What is your relationship to YRUU?* What does the “religious” in YRUU mean to you? What influence has YRUU had on your life, and what would you like it to have?
- 4) *What are your strengths, and where do you feel you need improvement?*

Letters of recommendation should be from people who you know well. It is good to get letters from a variety of people, such as ministers, Directors of Religious Education, youth active in YRUU, and adults with whom you’ve worked. Please make sure each recommendation includes the person’s phone number at which they may be reached during the day.

**Application Questions (all applicants must answer these questions)**  
Please answer the application questions, typewritten, on your own paper. We look forward to receiving your application!

NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE, EMAIL, DATE OF BIRTH, UU SOCIETY, UUA DISTRICT:

- 1.) Educational History
- 2.) Youth and Other UU Experience (participation and positions held).
  - A) Local UU Society/Youth Group.
  - B) YRUU district experience (conferences, district youth committees, etc.).
  - C) Continental YRUU Experience (Youth Council, Con Con, or other annual or one-time continental events or committees).
- 3.) What does anti-racism mean to you, and what experiences have you had with anti-racism? How do you think YRUU should deal with racism?
- 4.) Other Related Experience (neighborhood, local, school-related, state/provincial, national).
- 5.) What skills do you have? (experience and positions held)



- 6.) Leadership (motivating others, delegation, public speaking)
- 7.) Working with Other People (as part of a team, in an office or business environment, with other youth and with adults)
- 8.) Communication (assertiveness, cooperation, representing adult needs to youth and youth needs to adults):
- 9.) Office (being organized, meeting deadlines, typing, computer, writing) How are you at juggling multiple tasks in a busy work environment?
- 10.) Working with publications/newspapers (editing, layout, writing and production)
- 11.) Other Skills (second languages or any other cool skill you haven't mentioned):
- 12.) Employment Experience and History:

## Questions for the specific YPS Terms

Answer only the questions that are for the term for which you are applying.

January term:

- 1.) Please describe your computer and layout skills and send any examples of your work with web pages or newsletters/magazines.
- 2.) Describe your knowledge of Youth Council and Con Con or your experience organizing district conferences or events.
- 3.) Describe how you best think Youth Council Representatives can serve their districts?
- 4.) What impact do you think Youth Council can have on the rest of YRUU and the denomination at large?

June term:

- 1.) Send a sample of your writing/any resources you've developed.
- 2.) What social justice issues are important to you and how have you put your faith into action?
- 3.) Describe your experience coordinating any youth events or conferences. Specifically any training or workshop leading experience you've had.
- 4.) What resources do you think YRUU needs? What resources would you like to develop as YPS?

September term:

- 1.) Describe your experience coordinating any youth events or conferences and how those skills might apply to coordinating General Assembly Youth Caucus.
- 2.) What role should youth play in GA and in the association?
- 3.) Describe your ability to network and work with adults. What UU organizations are you currently involved with? Give examples of your ability to schmooz.
- 4.) What experience do you have working in relationship with district UU organizations like the district YAC, District RE committee, District Trustees, etc.

If you're unavailable when the decision is made, can we leave a message?

YES Please!       NO Thanks.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate calling one of the current YRUU Programs Specialists in the Youth Office at (617) 742-2100 ext. 351/352.



# In Ca-Hoots: The "War on Drugs" and Racism

By Jacob Larsen

In the United States and the world, there is a huge debate right now surrounding the "War on Drugs." There are two very different sides to this debate. Basically, there are the folks that think that drug use is bad and seek to eliminate it and the folks who don't necessarily have an opinion on drug use, per se, but acknowledge that it exists and seek to reduce the amount of damage created by the drug war. I find myself firmly on the latter side of the debate—I think that people are inherently good and deserve to live their own lives and that they should not be locked up for making personal life choices. And after receiving anti-racism training at Youth Council this year, I realized that the "War on Drugs" actually exacerbates the problem of racism in American society.

And at the same time, these "fair" politicians defend a system that perpetuates racism as it attacks individuals—most often those of color.

So where's the racism there? American federal law requires that people convicted of carrying five grams of crack cocaine receive a sentence of five years, whereas someone convicted of possession of five hundred grams of powdered cocaine would receive the same minimum sentence. Crack cocaine and powdered cocaine are different forms of the same substance, but crack cocaine tends to be more popular among

ism and drug policies are problems in our society today, but what the authorities try to hide is the fact that the two are connected. Current drug policies perpetuate racism in our society.

If you've made it this far then there's a good chance you feel the same way. Don't stand by and watch these atrocious things happen! People in the UUA have selected this issue to be studied at General Assembly and acted on during the next two years. All congregations are encouraged to examine this problem in their communities and act to help change the system. Bring this issue to the attention of your church

leaders; bring it forward for discussion in your youth group—help make the world a better place. To find the resolution on the Internet, follow the links

Do drugs really hurt us as a people? Is it drugs that do harm in our society, or the way in which we deal with them? Today, dealing with drug use for the authorities means racial profiling; it means targeting inner-city—often predominantly non-white—neighborhoods and handing out tougher sentences to people of African or Hispanic backgrounds.

From the time we're children, we are bombarded with public service announcements from Muppets and dancing vegetables to ten-second sound bites from "tough but fair" politicians telling us, "Just say 'No!'"

Arrests for Drug Offences	1980	1990	1995
White People	1 of every 272	1 of every 316	1 of every 238
People of Color	1 of every 114	1 of every 67	1 of every 57

poor, young, inner-city blacks, and powdered cocaine is often found in the predominantly white affluent parts of America. Racist policy? I think so.

As you can see from this table, there are huge discrepancies between the frequency of arrests of white people and people of color. When I read stuff like this, I don't know what to think.

It is clear that both rac-

from the General Assembly website, [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga), to the Commission on Social Witness and click on "An Alternative to the 'War on Drugs.'" Or contact Barbara Prairie at (617) 948-4207 or [bprairie@uua.org](mailto:bprairie@uua.org) and ask for the details of the "Alternative to the 'War on Drugs'" action issue.

*Jacob Larsen is an Awesome Youth Council member from the St. Lawrence District and is currently on the UUA Board of Trustees as a Youth Observer*



# Inequalities of Education

By Devin Krugman

How many of us have stepped inside an inner-city classroom? Dark, decaying, a stuffy smell filling the air. No sign that this is where kids will learn skills for their futures. But for those of you who have been to these places, have you ever looked past the room toward the children sitting behind the desks? What similarities might they have to suburban youth in a well-supplied classroom? The two most obvious differences are race and money. As a young girl from East St. Louis, Illinois (one of the poorest cities in the country), when asked why her school is lacking, states, "The two things, race and money, go so close together what's the difference?" But in public education there should be a difference.

As Jonathan Kozol argues in *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, "The government does not...assign us to our homes, summer camps, or doctors. It does assign us to our public schools. Indeed it forces us to go to them. Unless we have the wealth to pay for private education, we are compelled by law to go to public school and to the public school in our district. Thus, the state, by requiring attendance but refusing to require equality, effectively requires inequality." And it is racism that is at the heart of this inequality.

Racism has been a part of American public education since its inception. The US court case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* legally endorsed "separate but equal" institutions of public education for African Americans and Caucasians. Though they have never been equal, these institutions have always remained split. Across the U.S., school districts in which the majority of the population is white are receiving sometimes more than twice the funding of districts whose majority populations are made up of people of color. For example,

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**"...IT HAS INDEED BEEN OBVIOUS FOR YEARS THAT OUR SCHOOLS ARE PLAGUED BY RACIST FUNDING AND SUPPORT..."**

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District 10 in the Bronx, New York: The district is split into Riverdale, a wealthy white area, and a lower-income black area. While the Riverdale principal raves about his staff, the other principal just feels lucky that his staff is "still breathing." Riverdale also has twice the computer-to-student ratio of the other half of the district. In a single district, where funding is supposed to be equally split, the continuing variable is clear—race.

Though it has indeed been obvious for years that our schools are plagued by racist funding and support, there is little the government or others have done to change the situation. The Supreme Court stated in *Brown vs. The Board of Education* that segregated education is unconstitutional, but it did little more than state this fact. Attempts have been made to desegregate schools through busing programs, but this normally means crossing economic lines, and no parents with the power to object would send their children to schools with less funding. And all the while, white flight continues as families abandon segregation and city schools for the "safety" of the suburbs.

There is still no solution to the problem of racism in our public education system. But funding is only the tip of the iceberg. When was the last time any one of us studied an author, scientist, or politician of color? Even wealthy white districts are losing valuable educational opportunities to racism. I can only pray that, at some point, my children will bring home book reports on Shelby Steele instead of Teddy Roosevelt. And if you don't know who Shelby Steele is or that there were actually schools without desks or paper, then you can already see the problem.

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*Devin Krugman is a youth from the CMWD district. She has formerly served as dean for the YJJC.*



# NEW AND IMPROVED TRAINING AVAILABLE NOW!

We have just trained 12 youth and 12 adults to be our new Continental Advisor Trainers. They are eager and ready to come to your district and lead youth advisor trainings. Request one today!

There are two training schedules available. The recommended training is the 15 hour, full weekend training. We also offer a two-part 16-hour training. Both of the 8-hour training segments are necessary for advisors to complete the 16-hour training. Our Youth-Adult Teams will give advisors the training they need...

To have advisor trainings in your district follow these simple steps...

1. Pick a date and fill out an Advisor Training request form on line at [www.uua.org/YRUU](http://www.uua.org/YRUU) Fill out the form at least 3 months in advance of your training.



2. Wait for the youth office to notify you (this will happen within two weeks of the request being submitted) with the advisor trainers your training has been assigned. (The Youth

Office will also coordinate the travel arrangements for the trainers.)

3. Send the Youth Office \$650 for the travel equalization fee and publicize the training throughout your district. Recruit advisors from all the local churches to at-

## The Training Covers...

- \*Ministry with Youth
- \*Supervision and Support
- \*Liability Issues
- \*Youth Empowerment
- \*How to build a strong youth group
- \*How to create a youth friendly congregation
- \*How to worship with youth
- \*And much, much more

**NOTE: ONE DAY TRAININGS COST THE SAME AS THE FULL WEEKEND TRAINING.**





# NEW YOUTH ADVISOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM!

## CALLING ALL YOUTH GROUPS AND YOUTH ADVISORS:

Now your youth group advisor team can get the training it needs to support your congregation's commitment to ministry with youth!

- \*Certification requires 4 trainings and background check and screening process.
- \*Advisors must attend a UUA sponsored:
  - \*Leadership Development Conference
  - \*Spirituality Development Conference
  - \*Basic Youth Advisor Training
  - \*Advanced Youth Advisor Training (First Training Available July 2001 at Ferry Beach See [www.uua.org/YRUU/](http://www.uua.org/YRUU/))

## HOW TO SCHEDULE A TRAINING:

Leadership development, Spirituality development, and Basic Youth Advisor trainers can be scheduled to come to your district through the Youth Office. The Planning Guide and training request forms are available at [www.uua.org/YRUU](http://www.uua.org/YRUU)

## HOW TO BECOME A CERTIFIED ADVISOR:

Once you've completed the requirements, fill out our on-line advisor certification form @ [www.uua.org/YRUU](http://www.uua.org/YRUU)

## WHY DOES MY CHURCH NEED CERTIFIED ADVISORS?:

- \*We must support and train those who are doing the ministry with our youth.
- \*Advisor burnout and turn over can be prevented if our advisors are well trained.
- \*Advisors are on the front line of care for the future leaders of our denomination, they deserve recognition and compensation to merit the importance of their work.

GET MORE INFORMATION ON ALL OF THIS AT

[www.uua.org/YRUU](http://www.uua.org/YRUU)

Additional support for Youth Advisors is available by joining LREDA- The Liberal Religious Educators Association. Youth Advisors are now welcome to join. As a Youth Advisor member of LREDA you can utilize the Good Offices support person in your district for consultation and support. This person is trained in conflict resolution, and is there to support Religious Educators in their ministry.

See [www.uua.org/LREDA](http://www.uua.org/LREDA)



# Go to Identity Groups!

By Helen Harris

In the beginning, at the YRUU Social Justice Conference 2000, filling the role of People of Color Family Group Coordinator seemed impossible. I had a vague understanding of the purpose and history of the group, in fact there was almost no history at all. While creating a plan for the group, I asked the Youth Office what the hell was I supposed to be doing. I was told that my role was new and that I had the power to make whatever I wanted of it. Still, I was confused. Eventually I decided that I would ask the group what their needs were and what they hoped to get out of our time together. The group was free flowing. We touched base with each other and shared our life experiences.

My second experience as People of Color Identity Group Coordinator was amazing. At General Assembly youth and young adults of color caucused. Again, there was no central focus for the group. There were conversations on our experiences as people of color within Unitarian Universalism, as well as casual, social chatting. My experience with this ID group was the most valuable of the three. The intergenerational conversation, relaxed atmosphere and delicious, southern, soul food in Nashville put me on an emotional high.

I attempted to lead People of Color Identity Group a third time at Con Con 2000. This time there was a plethora of options during ID group time. Attendance at Racial Identity

Groups was very low, so I had the opportunity to talk to people one on one about what it means to be a person of color. Having tiny groups was a bit of a let down, but it gave a few youth of color a chance to talk about something that they often think about, but never talk about.

low white youth to explore their racial identity, discuss what it means to be white in society and to evaluate white culture.

The purpose of separating white and people of color for discussion is often questioned. ID groups are not segregated; they are divided to create a safe space for people to be and to speak their minds. By separating the groups, there is less fear of embarrassment or nervousness. For some it is important to have an opportunity to share stories with people that have similar experiences and feelings. Separating into white and people of color groups is done not to promote racism or prejudice, but to create a safer space to speak freely, and to avoid the awkward and polite paralysis that often comes when we try to discuss racism.

Identity groups are a key factor in creating an anti-racist YRUU. Race Identity Groups promote dialog on race, oppression, prejudice, how we can contribute to the halt of, rather than perpetuation of oppressions. Questioning race is something that many of us don't do on our own, and ID give us the opportunity to do in a group of our peers. For many attending Racial Identity groups have been meaningful, eye-opening experiences.

*Helen Harris was the People of Color Identity group leader at the YSJC, Con Con, and GA 2000*



*The oh-so-attractive Helen Harris*

Low attendance at Race Identity Groups is always disappointing to me. There are several benefits to ID groups that most people don't understand or undermined. People of Color Identity Groups are an opportunity to talk about racial oppression, our personal experiences with it and how it affects institutions including the UUA and YRUU. White Identity Groups al-



# Spotlight:

## Advisor of the Year ~ Rick Bibby

Rick Bibby is an advisor for the high school youth group at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas, in Dallas Texas. Rick has attended the church for over twelve years and has taught Religious Education classes for many years. Rick is a single parent of two and says that his children are the first priority in his life. His church and the families in it are his second priority. Kathleen D. Warner a parent and volunteer at the Dallas church says "Rick Bibby is one of the most quietly influential Unitarian Universalist lay leaders our family has experienced during our 20+ years in this denomination." Rick has been an advisor in the Dallas youth group for about three years now and he tries to stay involved in the youths' lives outside of the youth group as well, through methods like attending school events, bringing them food when parents are ill, calling them during the week to check up

on them, and just generally making sure that they know they can talk to him in and outside of youth group.

Rick says "My vision as it pertains to being a youth advisor is to take a personal, loving, and respectful interest in the youth and their families." Rick encourages parents to become involved in the spiritual development of their children and stresses spirituality in the youth group. Some of the seniors in the youth group now were in the first and second grade class when Rick taught it over a decade ago. "You might say we've grown up together. You could definitely say we've learned a lot from each other." says Rick.

Mick Lewis a former youth in the Dallas youth group who now attends Baker University, said in his letter of recommendation for Rick "So it seems that it has come full circle, and in such a short amount of time. It is I who now wants to be the teacher

and influence the lives of young ones." He goes on to say, "Rick Bibby is one of the most caring, loving, open, and respectful people I know. Motivated, committed, determined, Rick is honored to be a part of youths' lives." Rick says that "The relationships I have built with the youth of our church are as close and deep as they are because I treat them with respect and as equals, and because of the length of time we have known each other. We can have fun together and enjoy each other's company...It is really an honor to have been chosen for this award, but it really isn't about me as much as it is about the youth. They wrote the eloquent and heartfelt letters of recommendation. They inspired me to act in the manner they described, and they continue to teach me at least as much as i could ever teach them about life and how to live it well."

**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD BE ADVISOR FO THE YEAR? SEE PAGE 15 FOR MORE DETAILS!**

"What our civilization needs today as a condition for increasing human maturity and for inner renewal, is the cultivation of an exquisite sensitivity and an incomparable tenderness...these are the first lessons of parenthood: without such love, the next step, towards self-discipline and responsibility, the acceptance of the super-ego, will not be made."

*-Lewis Mumford "The Conduct of Life" (quote provided by Rick Bibby)*



# Continental Spirituality Development Conference

May 4-6, 2001; Boston, MA

*The Spirituality Development Conference (SDC) has changed! Instead of training a youth and an adult from each district to return home and run SDCs, this year, we're training a group of youth and adults at the continental level who will then be sent out to districts on request by the youth office. So apply! We want to see you here in Boston to create some of the most amazing worship experiences ever experienced!*

The Continental Spirituality Development Conference Training (CSDC) is a conference that will bring together 15 youth and 15 adults to be trained to lead Spirituality Development Conferences in districts. Trainers will learn how to plan creative worship, incorporate worship into their daily lives in meaningful ways, and lead district SDCs. The training will focus on creative youth worship, building an intergenerational faith community of youth and adults, personal spiritual practice, and borrowing appropriately from other traditions and cultures. And it'll totally be a blast.

We're looking for 15 youth and 15 adults who are great facilitators, charismatic presenters, and committed to developing creative spirituality in the context of YRUU and our congregations at large. Each applicants should have experience planning worship and be a worshipful presence who is comfortable facilitating, presenting material to, and leading large groups. We especially encourage ministers to apply.

Please send us a letter of intent describing why you want to be a Spirituality Development Conference leader, your experience planning worship services (emphasis on circle-style, but congregational-style as well) and leading large groups, trainings or workshops. Please answer the following questions as well:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Date of Birth:

UU Congregation (if any):

UUA District:

LDCs, SDCs, Advisor Trainings, etc. that you have attended:

- 1) Describe your YRUU experience:
- 2) Describe your experience with youth/adult relations:
- 3) What is Youth Empowerment to You? Example?
- 4) Why would you be especially good at *leading* district SDCs?
- 5) How do you as a Unitarian Universalist respond to racism? In a Congregation? In worship?
- 6) Describe your personal spiritual practice (reading, writing, yoga, music, running, etc.)? If you were chosen, would you be interested in leading a workshop on it at the training?
- 7) Describe a creative worship that you've helped to lead and why it was meaningful to you.
- 8) Answer A or B by outlining a worship that you would create that would be appropriate to the situation described:
  - A) Two conferees are involved in a car accident on the way to a conference/meeting. One of them is seriously injured and in the hospital. These conferees are well-known members of the community. You are in charge of planning the first night's worship.
  - B) It's the last day of a week-long conference entitled "Decision-making in today's society." You are in charge of planning a closing worship that sums up what you've discussed throughout the conference.
- 9) Describe any other relevant experience you have that you feel applies.

## To Apply:

Send letter of intent, application questions and a list of three references (name and phone number with at least one youth and one adult) to:

CSDC Application C/o Youth Office \* 25 Beacon Street \* Boston, MA 02108-2800 \* [yruu@uua.org](mailto:yruu@uua.org)



BY MARCH 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001



# 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. But we have way too much to do! That is where you come in, friends. Because YRUU is growing at such an amazing pace we are looking for an Intern and, yes, this intern could be YOU!

## Qualities Desired:

Youth Group experience, leadership experience (in YRUU or other venues), office experience and ideally, 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.

## Requirements:

The youth office interns take on tasks of their own choosing, such as a resource or personal project for YRUU. Interns also help out with basic office work such as typing, making phone calls, and sending out mailings, as the need arises.

## HEY! What's in it for me!?:

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

- \*Many Colleges/High Schools will give credit for working in the Youth Office
- \*A Great place to make connections in the UUA

The Internship is from February 1st-April 31st. Interns work approximately 12 hours a week. Also included is a stipend of \$1000! The Intern must also find living arrangements in the Boston Area. Send a Resume, 2 references (w/phone numbers) and a letter of intent to:  
INTERNSHIP/YOUTH OFFICE \* 25 BEACON ST. \* BOSTON, MA \* 02108 \* YRUU@UUA.ORG

**I CAN'T SPEND 3 MONTHS IN BOSTON BUT I STILL WANT TO HELP OUT YRUU, WHAT CAN I DO?!**

JUST IMAGINE, YOU CAN WORK IN THE YOUTH OFFICE WITHOUT PAYING US A RED CENT. WE CAN ALWAYS USE HELP WHETHER YOU CAN COME IN ONCE A WEEK, ONCE A MONTH, OR EVEN JUST ONCE! WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO HELP! GAIN EXPERIENCE WITH COMPUTERS! WORK ON A YRUU PROJECT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS! HANG OUT WITH US COOL YOUTH OFFICE STAFF WHILE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YRUU AND GAINING MARKETABLE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE!

WE ALSO HAVE WORK THAT CAN BE DONE OFF SITE. CALL THE YOUTH OFFICE AT (617) 948-4350 OR EMAIL US AT YRUU@UUA.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION!!!!!! WE LOVE YOU!

**TYPE!**

**MAKE COOL RESOURCES**

**DATA ENTRY!**

**SEND OUT MAILINGS!**

## Disclaimer:

*I was asked to offer my analysis on anti-racism and its relationship with the Unitarian Universalist Association. There are numerous ins and outs regarding this issue, and I will touch on the ones that are the most important to me. After several interactions with the UUA anti racism effort, I still am unclear about certain parts. For that reason what I have written here may be factually incorrect, but emotionally, it is my gospel. I use terms such as curriculum to refer to the information, the definitions, and the opinions that the UUA and the Journey Toward Wholeness envision every UU learning. Also, I consider the UUA and the Journey Toward Wholeness to be synonymous as far as their anti-racism work. One is affiliated with the other. The former is responsible for the creation of the latter. Both represent institutional perspectives, from what I have seen. This is my stream of thought. This is what I feel when I am the soft-spoken one in the corner, when my mind is reeling and my heart is hot. These are the experiences I have had. This is pure emotion. I hope that those who read this, especially all the youth who haven't yet encountered this work or these issues through their churches and districts, are able to understand that. Although you may not agree with me, or you may have a slick answer to each of my concerns, or you may have put all your heart and energy into this effort and feel that this is a slap in the face, nonetheless this is my interpretation. I cannot speak for others even if there are hundreds more that feel the same way that I do. I hope everyone will read this keeping in mind my inherent worth and dignity and that, in my search for free and responsible truth, these are the things that prevent me from attaining a complete comprehension of truth. Even if these things all seem petty to you, if they exist in my mind, they most likely manifest themselves as similar concerns in other peoples' thoughts. And if a multitude of people have concerns, even if they are wrong, that multitude will not unify under a common goal, and I fear that it will never be attained.*

—Justin.

## Perspective from the darkside...

...an interpretation written by Justin Alexander Whitaker I

Synapse is a reflection of the UUA. I see this publication as an opportunity to share the perspectives of youth on UUA issues, political issues, and Unitarian Universalist issues. This *Synapse* is about racism. Or is it about anti-racism? Can we bind them together for the institutional plaques and letterhead? Unfortunately, when we get to the nitty gritty, when I look at what we are learning from the institutional "trainings" and the processes through which we are learning this material, I wonder where it came from, who cre-

day is over. I will do my best to show you what I call flaws in a well-intended program. Three different conflicts have developed between what I have learned from the UUA anti-racism curricula and my personal perspective. The first is the "Journey Toward Wholeness" down a narrow road, a road that seems to turn a blind eye to some of the problems we face. Second, I feel as though the leaders of the movement have placed too much importance and pride in their personal efforts and their finite resources. We must create a movement that has momentum to carry itself rather than fall on the shoulders of an elite minority. Finally, I believe that the mentality that is being promoted through UUA anti-racism work is not the best mentality to attain our goals.



ated it, and if this is the best way to break down the oppression that we are struggling so hard to destroy.

I have found that when dealing with anti-racism, nothing seems to be plain and simple or black and white. Everything seems to be connected by another form of oppression, each point seems to be attached to another issue, and it all becomes a tangled ball of complication and emotion when the

I have often felt throughout my experience with Journey Toward Wholeness (JTW) initiatives that the anti-racism trainings are too specific. I feel that they are curricula that have been developed by a certain group of people, and that the discussions that are part of the trainings aren't supposed to touch on any points or subjects other than the ones that have been planned for. It is logical that our leaders would not want us to stray far from the path toward wholeness that they have created, but I feel that curricula should be broader and more inclusive, adaptable to the group's needs. I find that the curriculum is focused excessively on the exposure of institutional racism, and that in doing so it ignores the realities of our lives.

My largest initial disagreement with the program was with the definitions that we would be using to



learn about racism. To me, the definitions seemed to exclude a few major issues. For instance, it is provided as truth that "Power + Prejudice = Racism." Although this may be true, the anti-racism curriculum defines whites as the only ones with power in this nation. The curriculum assumes that institutional racism is perpetuated by white people because they have "the power" in our society. From an institutional perspective, this is true. But to examine racism from ONLY an institutional perspective seems to me to be denying the existence of other forms of racism. I believe that the JTW definition of racism excludes the concept of reverse racism. Looking at the problem through only an institutional perspective doesn't account for daily actions of individuals. The JTW trainings are curricula that teach people about a hard to grasp removed topic, while not addressing the 'slap you in the face' race issues in depth. For example: If I as an "angry black man" choose to pick up a gun then I have power over someone without a gun. If I shoot someone with that gun because he is white, then that is prejudice and I have committed a violent hate crime driven by racism. Of course, after the individual action, the institution will have its way with me. Institutional racism will come into affect and I will probably live the rest of my life in prison. It's even probable that my actions were a backlash from the institutional oppression that I experience daily, and some would say that the institution is to blame for the murder. Nonetheless, the act that I committed stands alone as an act of racism. The JTW curriculum never provides minorities with power, and therefore doesn't acknowledge the truth to this scenario. Furthermore, by preaching the rhetoric that minorities have no power, the "inferiority" mindset that people of color internalize, and that the training works to destroy, is perpetuated. I feel that this is a prime example of the "journey" down a narrow road. Although this road has been well paved by those that guide us, it is too narrow for all that seek wholeness to drive on.

I feel that the most severe difficulty with the anti-racism work we are doing as an institution is inherent to its current structure. Currently, anti-racism work in the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations has only been taken on by the elite leadership of the institution. This creates a situation in which the journey can not continue without these people. In YRUU we have reached a level in which people understand the way that the system works. Because new people can easily move into leadership positions, we are self-perpetuating. The anti-racism movement still rests upon the shoulders of specific people that are pushing the

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**THE ANTI-RACISM MOVEMENT STILL RESTS UPON THE SHOULDERS OF SPECIFIC PEOPLE THAT ARE PUSHING THE MOVEMENT FORWARD, AND THEY ARE DOING INCREDIBLE WORK, BUT WITHOUT THEM THE EFFORT WOULD FLOUNDER AND MOST LIKELY FAIL.**

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movement forward, and they are doing incredible work, but without them the effort would flounder, and most likely fail. These people are immeasurably valuable within their own work, but the extent of their value is finite, for eventually they will tire, and burnout. At that time the movement will slip, and we will have to rebuild it from a level below where we have already achieved. Furthermore, because of this exclusive ownership over the effort I have found that people are not willing to let others stray too far from what they had planned or wanted to convey to people. This leads to pain, anger, and frustration when things seem to be going in the wrong direction. Rather than being forced to reform the system and the way that it works, these people feel as though their individual work, time, and energy has been dissed on.

I question if the mentality that the "anti-racism" movement is pushing for is the right one to use to achieve the intended goals. From my first contact with the concept, I have felt that a class of people has been created, both people of color and whites alike, who are misguided in their interpretations of society. These people have created a mentality that criminalizes a majority of white people as well as institutions. Things that perpetuate racism have been placed in a class of ill repute, and this class is seemingly caste in our society. Reform seems to be so futile, that we simply educate people based on the existence of inherent evils, and we do very little to change the institutions or the individual racist mentalities. I grant that awareness is the first step towards change. Nonetheless, I feel as though the anti-racism movement has reached a level at which people are content to teach others about the status quo, and therefore is stagnant, with some people pleased and others simply frustrated with the direction that we are taking this Journey. This criminalizing attitude seems to me to create a small group of moderate segregationists and a large group of ignorant members of our denomination, rather than a large mass of integrationists that are pushing our vision. And although we are pushing to create that mass, I feel as though those who are in the position to create are looking through a lens that is still tinted and is still making us visualize a world beyond help. My words are none other than my own interpretations of a movement that is well-intentioned, but carried out under false pretenses, and therefore trying to achieve goals that will never be attainable through the mindset we have created for ourselves.

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*Justin Whitaker was formerly the chair of PSWD YAC, a member of the people of color caucus at Youth Council 2000 and Dean of ConCon and the first annual Youth of Color Conference.*



# PointerCount

By Mimi Lavalley

Okay, listen up. What I'm asking is a few paragraphs' worth of your attention. Maybe you know me, or you've been to a workshop I co-led, and if you do you probably think you know what I am going to say. Or maybe you don't—maybe you don't know who the Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) are, or haven't ever thought much about the tragedy of racism and oppression or the efforts of youth to change things around. Either way, I say what I always say: Hear me out, and in exchange I'll show you the same respect, anytime. Here is my agenda, up front: I want to lead a generation of youth who believe in justice, equity, and compassion toward organizing themselves to make those things possible. This became my mission partly because I am a young, urban, working-class female, so I'm bound to be pissed about something! Partly because I learned a lot about myself and about things through YRUU conferences and Jubilee World workshops. The way UU adults talked about racism at these workshops didn't change my life, but finding people who were willing to break the silence about race and class segregation in UU communities did.

So far most of my anti-racism work has been with the YRUU community. This is because I have found YRUUers to be positive thinkers who are passionate about change, as our mission statement declares. We're a massive, smart, loud and rich movement made up of people who appreciate dialogue but aren't afraid of direct action. Another reason is that I've grown up in the YRUU community, and the better you know an organization, the more you can see its potential and its hypocrisies, and the greater your

vision for its growth. My energies so far have been focused on developing anti-racism workshops and resources for youth, facilitating group dialogue and helping YRUU groups to devise collective action strategies, in collaboration with a handful of other dedicated youth and adults. But that's only the start of my plans. I want to team up with youth of other faiths and youth working on these issues without the support of a religious



community, find common ground, and take our message to the streets. And more. But so far even getting this organization to unite has been an uphill battle.

One challenge of building this movement has been expanding the nature of what we do to make room for programs that foster youth ACTIVISM and support youth and youth groups in being ACTIVISTS—

not just in the area of racism, but learning about racism gives us a framework for understanding oppression in many forms. However in many YRUU communities, we are not prepared to take on the task of dismantling oppression. We need to admit that we can't spend all of our time playing games and singing songs in a circle in some church somewhere and then say that we changed the world! We can't go to a social action conference and therefore feel absolved of responsibility for the world's problems! We have to tackle issues, teach others, GET ORGANIZED!

Another challenge is that, at every turn, YRUU leaders leading anti-racism programs receive criticism about the materials they use. People say, "That Jubilee World crap is bullshit." But that's not the kind of statement that's going to heal the centuries-deep wounds of racism. I say, put your mojo where your mouth is, put your critiques to work, and let's make anti-racism programs better!

The most important thing I learned from Unitarian Universalism was how to commit myself to a vision and to change an organization out of love and dedication to our shared principles, not out of alienation or spite. This takes patience. And lots of cooperation. I too am turned off by corny, pretentious titles like "The Journey Toward Wholeness." The Jubilee World Workshop's narrow picture of racism and inward-looking vision for change anger me. But I feel that institutions, at their roots, are most valuable as tools. And although it takes patience to learn the





most effective method of using a tool, youth can and will make the institution of Unitarian Universalism work for us—if we stick together. We are building a movement, and it is no small task. It is a process. It begins when a few people start to say things that they have been taught they should not say and that no one else is willing to bring up. YRUUs have broken that silence, and started to open up to each other about race, identity, and the privileges white people receive unearned. But a movement does not come together until we finally overcome the American obsession with individualism and realize that our own thoughts and actions can only take us so far, and collective effort is what it really takes to make a difference!

We need dialogue now—in any shape or form we can get it. We need to come together as anti-racist youth and form plans of action in our respective regions. It is too easy for privileged people to do nothing about racism, and yet it is the responsibility of the privileged people to take the initiative. I say this because the majority of people who read this magazine are privileged in some way, because they are white, or middle- to upper-class, or educated, or because they simply have access to the vast resources of the Unitarian Universalist world. Dialogue makes being anti-racist mean more than having slogans or a powerful mission statement. We need dialogue now, because people of color have and continue to express feelings of isolation, disempowerment, anger, and frustration at our own YRUU events. Because youth want and need to experience diversity but we have yet to do what it takes to make our religious communities, let alone our neighborhoods, safe for it.

I was asked to write this article in defense of UUA-sponsored anti-racism initiatives. But as far as I'm concerned, that point is relatively moot

within the big picture. From where I'm standing, the value of UUA and YRUU anti-racism work is to help us to join forces with each other in addressing the issues we claim to be about. We need to form a common understanding of racism, just as we work to foster the understanding of youth empowerment. And it doesn't matter whose words we use—whether we use the language of UUs, Christians, Jews, Aborigines, hip-hop, Sikhs, Buddhists, anarchists, atheists, or some random youth organization in some YWCA in Texas to talk about racism.

Perhaps even more than we need the Journey Toward Wholeness, they need us. They need youth leaders with an intelligent analysis of racism to take a torch to the little molehill they've labeled racism and show them the massive mountain that we know it to be. They need to recognize the complex relationships of class, gender, age, and race at their trainings, about which youth have so far been the most vocal. But we're not going to be of any help if we refuse to hear what they have to say. If we allow our mistrustful, uncooperative or critical sides to separate us from adults or each other, what will we have accomplished?

I am not going to tell you that you're a chump if you don't get up this second and go to a Jubilee World workshop. But for the love of <insert guiding spiritual force here>, get up and educate yourself somehow! Read, and talk to people who have dedicated themselves to coun-

tering their personal prejudice, the culture of racism, and the power of institutions to destroy everything through racism. Go to some other denomination's or some other organization's anti-racism programs. And then bring what you've learned and your ideas back to the communities you cherish.

Don't make excuses. We need you to be a part of this movement. Start with your youth group. Start with yourself. Start now!

*Mimi Lavalley currently rests her feet in San Diego and has led modified Anti-Racism Trainings the most recent at Youth Council*

### **Naked Woman** by Elizabeth Logan

In morbid desperation she  
Falls from her chair.  
Grotesque,  
Her lifeless fingers  
Tremble with the vehemence of need  
Of longing.

She calls out in terror  
Her hands  
Holding an invisible child that  
Her womb once carried  
Her blood once sculpted into new life.  
In her eyes spins  
The meaningless wheel  
Called deservng.

Her bony knees shake her fragile skeleton,  
Her cold, emaciated figure  
Which stands  
Awaiting some foreign visitor  
In this cave of shadows  
Where she remains  
Alone in darkness.  
Contemplating life and birth  
Colder than the metal chains binding her to the past.

Groping for  
A self  
Free from reason and  
Unbroken  
She shivers  
Dreaming of a girl  
In a brick house  
Warm by the fireside  
Sipping the sweet hot cocoa called  
Innocence.



## Interested in Continental YRUU Leadership that lasts ALL YEAR LONG???

Turn to p. 18 to find out more about applying for a Youth Council at large spot

Or

Come to General Assembly! Every year at General Assembly, a Youth Observer to the UUA Board of trustees and the Working Action Manager for GA Youth Caucus are elected and you could be next!

Call/Write the current WAM and Board observers for more information!

WAM

Shea Schachameyer  
(414) 332-6934  
WFBskier@aol.com

00-02 Board Observer

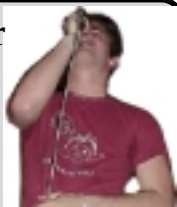
Jacob Larsen  
(416) 690-3675  
yak\_o\_mak@hotmail.com

99-01 Board Observer

Amir Fouad  
208-234-2044  
swigyptian@mail.com

## Even Still - Nato Hollister

I Close my eyes  
And see everything  
That I always wanted to be able to see  
These days I let pass by  
Mean nothing more to me  
And I'm not sure  
If I should let myself go on  
This won't be the last time I'll try  
This won't be the last time  
I'll give all I know  
And hope to see it through  
I'll try hard to show  
To give it all to you  
You stay away from what I have  
You know I will give it back to you  
I'll try  
This isn't the last time  
And I walk away  
And we fall away  
You trust all of everything that I do  
You and I  
Will walk away



Nato is in a band called Just for Today. They are from CT and play lots of shows. They are in the vein of Sunny Day Real Estate and Mineral. Very Passionate.

Just for Today's first EP will be out before the end of the year. To get one, email him [justfortoday99@hotmail.com](mailto:justfortoday99@hotmail.com), go to the website ([www.geocities.com/justfortoday\\_ct](http://www.geocities.com/justfortoday_ct)) or write him, Just for Today \* 5 Nettleton Dr. \* Woodbridge, CT \* 06525

## NOT GETTING ENOUGH E-MAIL?



### Join one of our List Serves!

The Youth Office has five different email lists that you can join which offer discussion on a variety of topics relating to youth including: Social Justice, Advising, Leadership committees, and junior high issues, as well as a standard, all-encompassing list. All are open, non-overwhelming and easy to join. Join today!!

TO SUBSCRIBE: send an email message to [Listproc@uua.org](mailto:Listproc@uua.org), leaving the subject line blank. The text of the message should be: subscribe <listname> First Name Last Name

For example: subscribe YRUU-L Abbey Tennis

YRUU-L: is your all-encompassing, all-YRUU all-the-time list-serve. The discussion ranges from cool things that youth groups do to problems that arise at district conferences to announcements about continental events and leadership and social action opportunities. It provides a way for youth and youth allies to share resources, compare programs, find support, get ideas, and create connections.

YRUUSJ: The Social Justice email list is for those wanting to discuss issues around social justice, social action, or anything of interest to activists out there. Discussion ranges from announcements about Social Justice internships and opportunities around the continent to debate about specific social justice issues that subscribers are involved in. This list also functions as a large continental social justice network so YRUUers can act fast when time-sensitive justice issues come up.

ADVISOR-L: The Advisor-L mailing list is for communication among YRUU Advisors. It provides a way for advisors to share resources, problem solve and give support to each other. Subscribers are encouraged to post announcements and share and request information about YRUU youth group advising and adult involvement with youth programming.

YRUU-YAC: This list-serve is a forum for youth and adults who are members of local and district Youth Adult Committees, Steering Committees, DYSCs or DYCs. Subscribers discuss problems and successes of their committees as well as use each other as references for different types and structures of youth groups and districts.

YRUUJRHI: This list was created for junior high/middle school aged youth, advisors who work with junior youth, transitional age representatives and outreach and bridging coordinators for large youth groups and districts. Discussion covers topics such as bridging from Jr. to Sr. High youth groups, how to run Jr. Youth Conferences, Coming of Age programs and the difference between Jr. and Sr. High youth programming.



# YRUU's CONTinental CONference Staff

"YRUU WORLD DOMINATION!" July 20-26th, 2001

**What is ConCon?** ConCon is the annual Continental Conference of YRUU. Every year 100-300 youth gather somewhere on the North American Continent to worship, go to workshops, hang out and have fun for 6 days.

**What is ConCon Staff?** ConCon staff is the group of youth and advisors that plan and facilitate all of the aspects of ConCon. The core-staff plans the "overall conference experience" at a pre-site planning meeting in March. The entire staff (except workshop leaders) arrive a day early to do final planning and team building for the conference.

**What do I pay for if I'm on staff?** Registration and Travel are paid for most staff positions. The Chaplains and workshop leaders have registration but not travel paid for. There is money available for travel scholarships, however, and applicants should state financial needs on a separate sheet from their application.

## STAFF POSITIONS:

**THE DEANS** (youth) make the agenda for and facilitate the pre-site planning meeting and the daily staff meetings at ConCon. The deans act as a liaison between the ConCon community to the site staff. Deans are also responsible for making sure that staff members (including workshop leaders) are clear about their jobs and are on task. S/he should be organized, excellent with logistics and adults, a great facilitator, comfortable with large and small groups, like coordinating meetings and be good at keeping a "big-picture" view of ConCon in mind.

**ENERGY COORDINATOR(S)** (youth) facilitate(s) meeting(s) of the Spirit Committee, which is responsible for paying attention to the overall mood of the conference community, and Energy Committee, which deals with conference infractions. S/he/they also coordinate(s) wake-up and spirit circle each morning. S/he/they should be energetic to the point of insanity, approachable, organized, charismatic and comfortable with groups of all sizes.

**THE SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR** (youth) plans all-camp activities, including events such as the Coffee House, Dance, Super-Secret All-Camp activity, etc. S/he should be absurdly energetic and comfortable with groups of all sizes.

**THE WORSHIP COORDINATOR** (youth) leads the Worship Workshop which is responsible for planning and run nightly all-camp worship services. S/he should be a worshipful presence, an excellent facilitator, and have ideas for and experience planning youth worship.

**THE TOUGH GROUP/IDENTITY GROUP COORDINATOR** (youth) recruits leaders for identity groups and touch groups. S/he organizes logistics of identity groups and facilitates identity and touch group leaders meetings. S/he should be organized, a good facilitator, comfortable discussing racism and have a clear sense of the purpose of identity groups.

**THE MUG BOOK EDITOR** (youth) runs the mug book workshop which is responsible for photographing each conference participant, photographing conference events, and editing and laying out the Mug Book, which is similar to a "yearbook" of the conference. The Mug Book is distributed to conferees on the final day of ConCon.

**THE ADULT COORDINATOR** (adult) looks out for the adults at ConCon, helping to keep them happy and well-integrated into the ConCon community by facilitating daily adult meetings and representing adults' concerns at staff meetings. This person should have a clear understanding of youth empowerment and knowledge of the appropriate role of adults as advisors.

**THE LOGISTICS COORDINATOR** (adult) is preferably from the local area. This person is responsible for coordinating transportation between the airport and the site, arranging any home hospitality needed before ConCon, and handling ConCon's finances (with the help of the Youth Office). This person also recruits or serves as the "Go-fer."

**CHAPLAINS** (youth and adult) are spiritual resource(s) for the conference community. These people do not need to be ordained UU ministers, but should have an understanding of the spiritual needs of youth. They work with the Worship workshop to plan nightly worships for the community. In the past, the Chaplains have led small gatherings such as early morning worships, dream sharing, and reflective discussion times. The chaplain should be a good listener and be available to individuals who seek counseling.

**WORKSHOP LEADERS:** Youth and adults may apply to lead Week-Long workshops at ConCon. Workshops may have two leaders, and may relate to the theme "YRUU: Youth Empowerment and World Domination" Each week-long workshop is composed of four two-hour meeting times.

### How do I Apply?

To apply, send a letter of intent including your name, address, phone number and email specifying position(s) you are interested in, including

1. Why you would be good for the position (visions and ideas for the positions as well as relevant skills and experience)
2. What does anti-racism mean to you? What work have you done with multi-culturalism and racism?

And two letters of recommendation (one from a youth, one from an adult) to:

ConCon Staff Selection  
C/o Youth Office  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108  
yruu@uua.org

Applications due January 4th

Questions? Call or email the youth office at  
(617) 948-4350, yruu@uua.org



# GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2001 YOUTH CAUCUS STAFF

## APPLY TODAY!!!

GA 2001: June 21-26, Cleveland, OH, USA

What is General Assembly (GA)? GA is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Every June, 4,000 UUs gather at a big convention center somewhere in North America to conduct the business of the Association, go to workshops, hang out, and have fun! In past years, these 4,000 UUs included over 350 youth who take part all aspects of GA.

What Is GA Youth Caucus Staff? GA Youth Caucus staff are the small group of people who make all of the youth programming happen at GA. They organize logistics, activities, business, worship, and act as chaplains and identity group leaders for the youth caucus.

What do I have to pay for if I'm on staff? Most staff positions are fully funded, including transportation, registration, housing, and a daily allowance for food. The Identity group coordinators are volunteer positions with scholarships and some training available.

### Staff Positions/Job Descriptions:

Mr. or Madame HUUPER (youth): This Hard-core UU Person, Energized and Ready serves as the dean for Youth Caucus. S/he should be organized, excellent with logistics and adults, a great facilitator, comfortable with large and small groups, like coordinating meetings and be good at keeping a "big-picture" view of GA in mind.

Pre-Site:

- Select staff of Youth Caucus in conjunction with a YRUU Steering Committee member.
- Act as liaison with all staff, answering any questions that arise and making sure that all pre-conference work is being done.
- Work with the youth office to plan and run the pre-site meeting March 2-4, 2001.

On-Site:

- Act as liaison to hotel from Youth Caucus
- Coordinate GA Youth Caucus Orientation and daily "HUUPLA"- community gathering for announcements and large group community-building
- Facilitate daily staff meetings

1<sup>st</sup>-Time GA Attendee and Special Events Coordinator (youth): This person coordinates events and activities for newcomers to GA as well as large special events throughout the week, including the youth dance, coffee house, and late-night games and parties. S/he should be energetic to the point of insanity, creative, approachable, organized, charismatic and comfortable with groups of all sizes. Previous GA experience a plus.

Pre-Site:

- Plan Special Events and Orientation/Bonding activities to take place throughout the conference.

On-Site:

- Publicize events and activities to the Youth Caucus community by posting notices in the common space and making announcements at HUUPLA.
- Coordinate events (including recruiting volunteers to help run events and organize logistics)

Worship Coordinator (youth): This person recruits volunteers to plan nightly worship (including huge all-GA worship) and facilitates daily worship planning meetings. S/he should be a worshipful presence, an excellent facilitator, and have ideas for and experience planning youth worship.

Pre-Site:

- Plan first-night's worship and recruit staff and conferee help in leading worship
- Gather resources for songs, worship rituals and readings

On-Site:

- Coordinate daily worship planning meetings (including recruiting volunteers and facilitating meetings)
- Publicize worship times and places at HUUPLA and in the common space
- Coordinate and lead nightly worship services with the planning group
- Communicate with Chaplains about energy and spirituality levels of conferees

Identity Group coordinators (1 Youth of Color, 1 White Youth): These people should have an analysis of anti-racism and of their racial identity within UUism. They must have excellent listening and facilitation skills, be able to create a safe space for people of color or white people, and be comfortable talking and facilitating discussion about race and racism.



Pre-Site:

- Research anti-racism and multi-culturalism
- Work together to create a packet of materials on leading identity groups

On-Site:

- Work together to ensure that Youth Caucus is a safe space for youth to discuss race issues and to explore their own racial and cultural identity
- Run the Person of Color and White identity groups (including facilitating discussion about racism in YRUU, UUism and society at large; exploring one's racial and cultural identity in a mostly white denomination that has committed itself to anti-racism work; and how to make YRUU a more loving anti-racist community.)

Chaplains (one youth and one adult): The GA Youth Caucus chaplains are "on-call" 24-hours a day to deal with emotional, sexual and other issues that come up for individuals throughout the week. Chaplains must be incredibly approachable, excellent listeners, sensitive to individuals' needs, comfortable with one-on-one situations and with frank conversation. Counseling or mediation experience a plus.

Pre-site:

- Research referral and crisis phone numbers, local law concerning youth (curfew, smoking, confidentiality vs. reporting), punishment and level of enforcement
- Gather safer-sex materials for distribution at GA

On-Site:

- Post and publicize emergency/crisis information in common space
- Monitor energy of community as a whole
- Be "On-Call" and available for any youth who needs someone to talk to
- Help in conflict resolution between friends/roommates/people in relationship

Sponsor Coordinator (adult): This person serves as point person for sponsors of youth caucus members at GA and carries the emergency cell-phone. S/he should be organized, calm, approachable, and have a high-tolerance for stress.

Pre-Site:

- Write letters to youth and sponsors explaining sponsor process for GA pre-packet
- Research local emergency procedure laws
- Plan mandatory sponsor training at orientation

On-Site:

- Lead mandatory sponsor orientation at orientation
- Act as liaison between sponsors and Youth Caucus staff
- Serve as emergency contact person

Logistics Coordinator/Gopher (adult or youth over 18): This person is from the area in which GA is held, goes on daily supply runs for staff, and provides information to the staff and the youth caucus about local food and entertainment venues. S/he should have a car and great organizational skills.

Pre-Site:

- Provide staff and the youth office with information about local, youth-friendly (cheap, safe and fun) entertainment and food venues

On-Site:

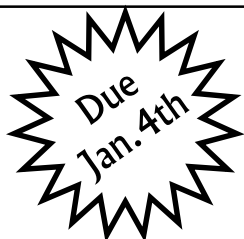
- Hold and keep track of petty cash
- Go on daily supply runs for staff

## How do I apply?

To apply, send a letter of intent specifying position(s) you are interested in by January 4th, including

1. Why you would be good for the position (visions and ideas for the positions as well as relevant skills and experience)
2. What does anti-racism mean to you? What work have you done with multi-culturalism and racism?

And two letters of recommendation (one from a youth, one from an adult) to:



GA Staff Selection  
C/o Youth Office  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108

Or email it to:

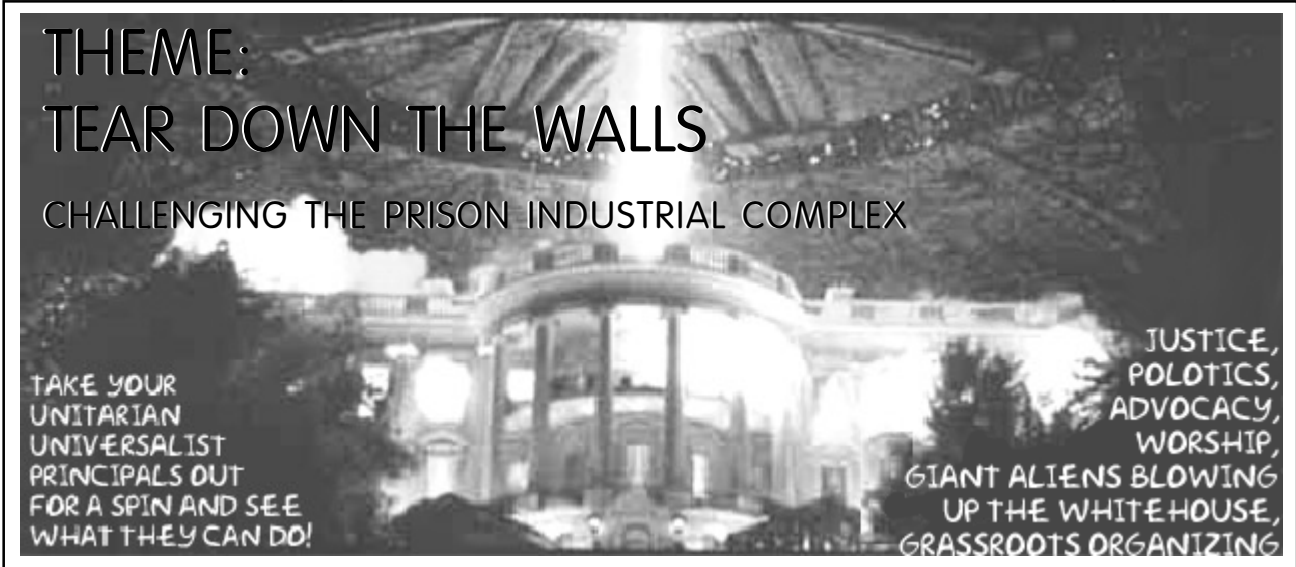
[yruu@uua.org](mailto:yruu@uua.org) and/or [atennis@uua.org](mailto:atennis@uua.org)

Questions? Call or email the youth office at (617) 948-4350, [yruu@uua.org](mailto:yruu@uua.org)



# YRUU SOCIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE

MARCH 17-21, 2001 WASHINGTON, DC



**WHAT IS IT?** The YRUU Social Justice Conference will bring together 60 youth from all across the continent to learn about social justice. This year's conference will focus on PRISON REFORM ISSUES. We will learn how to organize grassroots campaigns, lobby US congress and to work with the media. This conference is where youth can learn to put their UU faith into action. The YSJC is a joint project of the YRUU Youth Office in Boston and the UUA Washington Office for Faith in Action.

**YOU WANT ME TO GO WHERE?** The conference begins Saturday evening March 17 and ends Wednesday March 21 after lunch. Those flying in should arrive at BWI Airport before 6:00 PM Saturday and leave after 3:00 PM Wednesday. The conference site is the Grace Lutheran Church Hostel on 16th Street in Northwest Washington. Detailed directions to the site will be mailed in a pre-packet in February. Transportation from the train and bus stations will be provided.

**WHO CAN GO TO THIS SHINDIG?** Both youth (ages 14-20) and adult youth group advisors are welcome to attend. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Participation is limited to 60, so register early!

**HOW MANY CLAMS AM I PAYING?** If you register by the early/scholarship deadline - February 5th - the registration fee is \$200. We charge a late fee of \$20 past February 5th, and no registrations are accepted past March 5th. The registration cost includes housing, food, museum and exhibit admissions and all local transportation.

**TIPS FOR PAYING FOR THE CON** Many participants will get financial assistance from their youth group, congregation, district, or a community organization. Youth who pledge to share what they learn at the conference

(through running workshops when they return home) often have the best chance of receiving assistance.

**ARE THERE SCHOLARSHIPS?** Yes. To apply, write a one-page letter telling us how much you need and why we should give it to you. The range of scholarships being given is between \$100-300 dollars.

**DO I NEED EXPERIENCE DOING SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK?** We ask questions about social justice on our registration form so we can find out what issues you are passionate about, what work you have done, what skills they may have, and what organizations they may have connections with. However, experience is NOT required!

**DO I NEED EXPERIENCE WITH ANTI-RACISM?** YRUU has made a commitment to become an anti-racist, multicultural organization. Part of this effort includes finding out what youth know and what they have done on this issue. Again, experience isn't required.

**THIS IS A WORKING CON** You are going to have all sorts of fun at this conference. But you are also going to be busy most of the time. The main goal of this conference is learning so don't you forget it buster, it is not a come and hang out con!

**HOW DO I GET REGISTERED?** You can mail your registration to:  
YSJC Registration  
c/o The Youth Office  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108

Forms also available at: [www.uua.org/YRUU](http://www.uua.org/YRUU)  
Call/Email the Youth Office at: (617) 948-4350  
[yruu@uua.org](mailto:yruu@uua.org) with any questions

# 2001 YRUU SOCIAL JUSTICE REGISTRATION FORM

March 17-21 \* Washington, DC

(PLEASE PRINT!!!!!!)

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

GENDER: \_\_\_\_\_ BirthDate: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ ARE YOU OVER 18? \_\_\_\_\_ UU District \_\_\_\_\_

Are you part of a UU congregation \_\_\_\_\_ Which One? \_\_\_\_\_

I have included:

- My medical release form & info
- My rules and guidelines agreement form
- My interests and activities form
- My check for \$200 payable to the UUA if before February 5th (add \$20 after)

I AM APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP AND HAVE INCLUDED MY ONE-PAGE LETTER EXPLAINING HOW MUCH I NEED AND WHY I NEED IT.

\_\_\_\_\_ Food preference (all, veggie, vegan, other - explain)

## Medical Release Form and Medical/Insurance Information:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (please print) am the parent of legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, who will be attending the Young Religious Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Conference March 17-21, 2001, in Washington, DC, USA. 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 my consent for any necessary medical treatment, including emergency surgical care, if needed. I further understand that my daughter/son/ward will be required to follow the rules of the conference and conference site and that any breach of the rules may result in my child/ward being disallowed to participate in the remainder of the conference. I further understand that rule violations may result in my child/ward being sent home at her/his expense and prohibited from participation in future YRUU conferences or events.

Signature of Parent of Guardian (participants 18 or older may sign for themselves):

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency call (name & phone #): \_\_\_\_\_

## Insurance Info.

Name of Person with Policy: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy / Group #: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies/Medical conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last tetanus shot: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Special Health Needs (attach Separate sheet as needed): \_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTOCOPY THIS PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PLEASE**  
**YSJC PG 2 YSJC PG 2 YSJC PG 2 YSJC PG 2 YSJC PG 2**

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# RULES & GUIDELINES AGREEMENT FORM

## GUIDELINES:

1. NO DRUGS, WEAPONS, OR ALCOHOL
2. FOLLOW THE POLICY ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR
3. NO LEAVING THE CONFERENCE SITES WITHOUT PERMISSION
4. RESPECT STAFF MEMBERS, SPEAKERS, CONFERENCE SITES, AND FELLOW CONFEREES.

## NEW POLICY ON SEXUALITY AND COMMUNITY:

*Our goal is to uphold healthy communities, healthy relationships and to discourage sexual activity and harassment in the conference community.*

*Healthy relationships are based on responsibility, respect, love, and commitment. Healthy sexual relationships are respectful, consensual, pleasurable, safe, caring, developmentally appropriate, and based on mutual expectations. Sexuality is an important part of young people's lives.*

*In the conference community, youth are encouraged to express themselves in healthy ways and respect each other's boundaries. However, behavior that breaks down the community, including sexual activity and sexual harassment, is inappropriate and therefore not permitted in a conference setting.*

*It is the job of the Energy Committee to, by these standards, deem any such behavior inappropriate and to determine consequences. Parents, Guardians, and youth are encouraged to discuss this policy with each other.*

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT: X \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

## INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES FORM:

Issues or movements I am interested in learning about:

Organizations or groups I have worked with:

YRUU, community, or school leadership positions I have held:

What anti-racism is to me and my experience with anti-racism work:

Return forms to  
YSJC Registration  
c/o The Youth Office  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108



# Assimilate this...

I wrote this poem at Youth Council 2000. Everyone had a different reaction to the anti-racism work we did at Youth Council, ranging from full enthusiasm to complete internal emotional degradation. My frustration from watching what appeared to be a complete internal breakdown for some of these youth manifested itself within this poem.

-Justin

i came to learn about culture. i came for a free and responsible search for truth. i came to define race, and to deconstruct inherent institutional oppression. i sought after the place freedom would prevail, but then came the nail...

hammered deep into my soul, i realized the oppression. manifested even in these sessions, the lessons lessened my confessions, it was a digression towards depression that blessed and bludgeoned my integrity simultaneously

i couldn't sleep, tossing and turning sheep burning in non-violent dreamlike protest

this institution is plaguing its solution, perpetuating its problem.

my mind began to boil and brood brain candy? brain food. rude like oil crude. my thoughts are black.

the true embodiment of anger and hatred, my plate is full of white rice and maggots like faggots i'm left burning, on fire. higher & higher i try to climb, but my mind has run out of carribeaners

i'm left with nothing to hold onto but solid rock. stop.

falling falling falling falling

into the depths i have crept slept in hopes of curing this exhaustion, but my eyelids are heavy my brevity is weakening

like Dorothy i am seeping weeping and sleeping through opiatc dreams my mind seems too slow to know

too ill & sick i stick, i pick my battles but now I babble as i sink further into depths my breath is shortened. mind contorted & abused confused.

vulnerable i lay in the corner drooling this racist schooling has forgotten.

in this state of vulnerability, my ability to speak is weak.

for each word i quote each phrase i wrote was prepared for like a whore my efforts are simply a facade To make this institution analysis more of a reality, and not a phallisis my nemesis is beautiful.

like the sirens she attracts me, defeats of me, beats me with the spirit of the trail of tears, and the pride of years my fears are embodied in her intelligence

First peoples irreverence she seems heaven sent and i am for rent for hire I retire I am worthless

She infiltrates me, both loves and hates me. She assimilates me.

I feel beaten, broken the institutions token. Pushed, prodded and guided.

inside it, i try to hide it. but my efforts are futile. Like a child, she is my mother, she is my earth. and over her I have no power.

til the final hour til the final drop til the final stop.

we struggle and Juggle truths.

But all are lies unless they belong to this righteous institution.

My opinion differs my slippers slide like ice skates too late for I cannot battle this righteous institution.

Pollution leads to confusion and my thoughts are worthless. birthless. for i cannot fight this institution! My seed will die inside me. I bleed and die inside me.

They call this a training, but it pains me for I cannot fight this so called righteous institution.

My mind has been assimilated, obliterated, overused. Loved and hated.

forced to use their definitions forced to use their interpretations forced to use their found truths forced into conformity by this so called righteous institution.

this liberal religion and conservative mind, in rewind I find.....in retrospect i see, just what i expect to see:

Just me; assimilated by the thoughts of this righteous institution.

-Justin Alexander Whitaker

“In a world of conformity, we must to do our best to avoid assimilation.”

# The Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees's Youth Advisor Task Force



## Proposals for Change:

### *Report and Recommendations*

#### WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME?

The health of children's and youth programs within a congregation is an important marker in evaluating the health of the congregation. Our youth programs can reflect the very best things in our faith: compassion, social justice, shared leadership, intellectual and spiritual growth, welcoming, and safety. Our youth deserve adults who are intentionally selected, well-trained, supported by peers within and outside of our congregation, and who model good self-care. This document suggests a path that we can take towards becoming more whole as a faith.

#### HOW CAN I GET A COPY?

Due to UUA budget constraints, Proposals for Change will not be reprinted this fall. Copies of the report were available at General Assembly 2000, and will shortly be sent to all district presidents, district staff, and to continental ministerial and religious educator network leadership. While we hope to be able to make additional hard copies available as soon as finances allow we have made the report in its entirety available online through the Unitarian Universalist Association website address below. Please feel free to duplicate the report!

#### WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT THE REPORT?

It is critical that all of us – parents, youth, youth advisors, board members, religious educators, ministers, congregants – recognize our special role in the creation and support of healthy youth programming. It is particularly critical that YOU step up to the plate and advocate for this report given the limited availability of hard copies. Call other people you know and tell them about it. Ask your congregational board, your district religious education committee, and your youth leaders if they've read it and what they are going to do about the recommendations.

**Available online at [www.uua.org/YRUU/yatf/](http://www.uua.org/YRUU/yatf/)**

# SOAPBOX

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

What is the DEAL with the lack of respect in YRUU? Goodness, this is too much here. I mean, really. As Unitarian Universalists, our first two Principles deal with respect and compassion for one another, but I do not see a lot of this happening within the YRUU community (sometimes).

Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person is our first Principle, and probably the most well-known. When asked about our religion, people are able to spout at least this extremely poignant statement to others; many of us are even able to live our lives with this statement in our heads, governing what we do and what we say—at least in principle. But when we're talking about Christians, Gap models, or meat eaters, this statement seems to just disappear from our knowledge. I constantly find myself quoting our first line about the "inherent worth and dignity of every person" over and over again to many different UUs when this Principle has been breached.

Can you think of any times that violation of this Principle has occurred? I can; it happens over and over again when UU youth conference staff members are trying to talk to groups. I CANNOT handle it when people are trying to make announcements and other people are just sitting there and talking and not paying attention. Goodness me. See, the Principle of affirming inherent worth and dignity is meant to apply to EVERYONE, including staff who are talking to us. And I know that

many of us are handicapped with a natural immaturity, because we are, after all, teenagers. But, really here, puh-LEESE let's be nice and listen as if we were in school.

Another problem that I can think of is with the second letter in our acronym—that precious little R for Religious. Why don't our worship services seem like spiritual places when we are Young RELIGIOUS Unitarian Universalists? During a worship, one person can disrupt the whole spiritual experience for everyone by deciding to act obnoxious or be a jerkameroo. When a person cannot control him/herself, it is very rude to the people who

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**"DURING THE WORSHIP, ONE PERSON CAN DISRUPT THE WHOLE SPIRITUAL ASPECT BY DECIDING TO ACT OBNOXIOUS OR BE A JERKAMEROO."**

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are trying to worship. I don't know if people know this or not, but uh, Unitarian Universalism is a RELIGION, and many people come to district or continental events not only for the social aspects (which are important in and of themselves), but also for spiritual and religious practice. Our Unitarian Universalist Principle number three states that we affirm acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth, and we must all remember and be aware that that applies to YRUU as well. Without that little R we would just be YUU. What kind of acronym would that

be anyway?

Like I said above, when some people in our community disrespect others, they feel it is okay. They feel it is justified because we are Unitarian Universalists, and the best religion ever, and the only religion (really) that should be out there. (That sentence right there, that was an example of what we in the business call sarcasm.) Of course, no religion is better than any other; we're all just on the crazy path of (from our Principle numero quattoro) "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning" but sometimes Unitarian Universalists think they are better than others. I believe the reason is very innocent—the pure pride of our religion. Since it is so good for most of us and fits with how we feel and wish to worship, we love it greatly and feel that other religions really can't cut it next to Unitarian Universalism. Now children, that is not the mindset to have and we all need to be aware that we are just the same as every other human—So remember what I said here today, and take it to heart, just like you take our Unitarian Universalist Principles to heart everywhere you go.

*Megan Tideman is from the Central Midwest District and is normally "totally not this mean"*

## Write for SOAPBOX!

If you want to rant about something Soapbox is the way to do it, if you are interested send it (like everthing else) to...

UUA Youth Office 25 Beacon St  
Boston MA, 02108  
yruu@uua.org



# Get Synapse!

Synapse is free for all YRUUers! Why not sign up a friend? Please have them fill out this form and mail it back to:

The UUA Youth Office  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 948-4350  
Fax (617) 742-0321  
Email: [yruu@uua.org](mailto:yruu@uua.org)  
**FILL IT OUT ON-LINE AT  
[WWW.UUA.ORG/YRUU/!!!!!!](http://WWW.UUA.ORG/YRUU/!!!!!!)**

While you're at it, please check your address below and fill out the adjacent info. We are continually updating our database to better serve you.

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Positions in YRUU? (YAC member, con dean...):  
\_\_\_\_\_

My friend's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Positions in YRUU? (Youth group pres, advisor....):  
\_\_\_\_\_

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