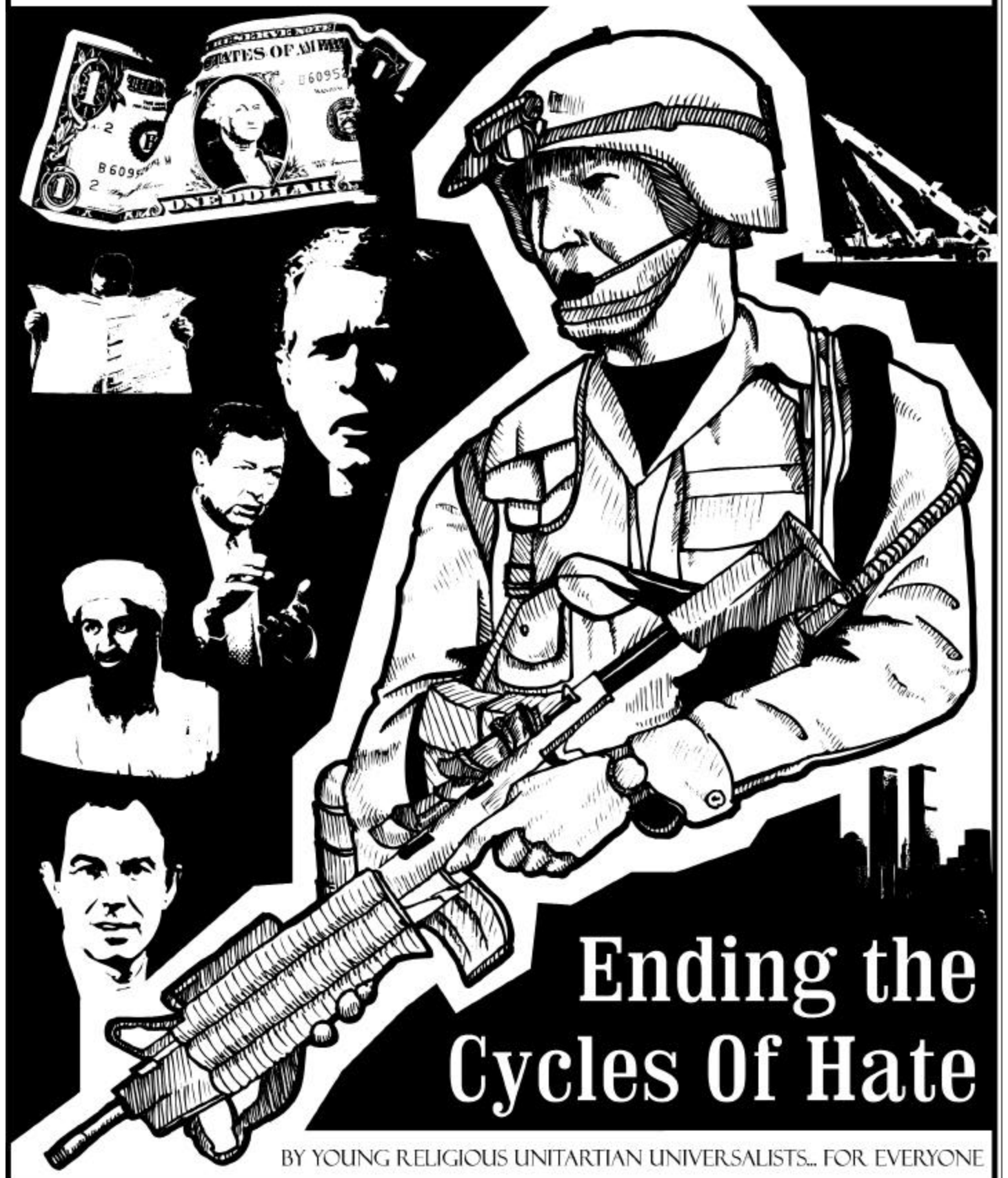


SYNAPSE WINTER 2001

VOLUME XIX ISSUE 2

A POINT OF CONTACT WHERE INFORMATION AND ENERGY ARE EXCHANGED



Ending the Cycles Of Hate

BY YOUNG RELIGIOUS UNITARTIAN UNIVERSALISTS... FOR EVERYONE

Continental Calendar Fall 2001

January 11

General Assembly & ConCon
Staff Applications Due

January 15

Spring Synapse Submissions
Due

January 15

YRUU Social Justice
Conference Staff Applications
Due

January 17-19

Youth and Young Adult Anti-
Racism Project Meeting

January 18-20

UUA Board of Trustees
Meeting

January 24-27

Steering Committee Winter
Meeting

February 4

YRUU Social Justice
Conference Scholarships
Applications Due

February 20

YRUU Social Justice
Conference Registration Due

March 1

Beginning of General
Assembly Registration
through GA Office

March 14-18

YRUU Social Justice
Conference

March 15

Youth Council At-Large
Applications Due

March 15

Fund for Unitarian
Universalism Grant
Applications Due

March 15

September YRUU Program
Specialist Application Due

April 6-8

YRUU Steering Committee
Spring Meeting

Mid-April

General Assembly Delegate
Scholarship Applications Due

April 19-21

UUA Board of Trustees
Meeting

May 2-5

DRUUM Youth of Color
Conference

May 15

ConCon Scholarship
Applications Due

May 15

General Assembly Youth
Caucus Forms Due

May 15

General Assembly Youth
Scholarship Applications Due

June 18

ConCon Registration Due

June 20-24

General Assembly!!!

June 20-24

UUA Board of Trustees
Meeting

Aug 9-12

ConCentric

Aug 12-18

ConCon!!

Aug 13-18

Opus

Aug 20-26

Youth Council!!!

The Youth Office is composed of three YRUU Program Specialists, one Youth Office Director, and one Youth Office Assistant. There are two relatively new YPS's in the Youth Office, here they are introducing each other:



Paula Nett has joined the Youth Office all the way from Portland, OR. As "September YPS" she keeps track of knowing everyone at the UUA; coordinates Youth Caucus at General Assembly; and focuses on YRUU's mission to become an anti-racist organization. Not only that, but Paula is super rad and the best dancer on this here coast. Paula says her favorite part about working in the Youth Office is "doing something that I am really passionate about, namely anti-racism and youth empowerment work. Also, being able to learn and work for an organization that's done so much for me." She adds, "I love breaking it down at Robin's impromptu 4 p.m. dance parties."

Paula's superhero skills are massage therapy (she is soon to be licensed), booty shaking, super organizing of UU Service Committee work camps, and teaching others how to drive standard gear cars. Paula's favorite word is luscious.



Ms. Robin Scott Lea has recently joined (June 6) our youth office team. She was selected for her keen skills in social justice organizing, vegan cooking, quilting, biking, photography, and, her most impressive skill, Radical Cheerleading Cheerleading. Her main responsibilities in our operation here in Boston, MA, are coordinating the SACs (Social Action Coordinators) in each district with the C*SAC (Continental Social Action Coordinator); keeping abreast of all social action events going on continentally; and organizing the continental trainings of trainers and sending those trainers out to the districts. Resources are also Robin's domain. She inspires people to volunteer to rewrite and update the resources that are helpful to YRUUs everywhere.

Quick facts about Robin Scott Lea
She seems to only wear navy blue and black
She has short black hair
Her favorite word is acclimate

New YRUU Program Specialist s!!!





Wink from the editor

Originally, the theme for this Synapse was going to be "No More Prisons>" That theme was going to be one piece in a larger picture of social justice work being done within and outside of YRUU. But then September 11th happened. After such a tragedy prison reform just didn't seem nearly as important.

In the aftermath, many people stopped to ask, "Why?" Just as many people probably skipped that question, believing that they already knew why. The answers ranged from blind jingoism to a socio-economic analysis of the U.S.'s foreign policy. I do not profess to have the correct answer, but I do lean more towards the latter of those two answers. However, I do feel that one simple answer can sum it up; hatred.

The next question to be asked is, "Where did this hatred come from?" So once again I must profess to not know the answer to the question. I am sure that something created this hatred, though. President Bush claimed that this attack was because, "...because we are the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world..." I disagree. September 11th happened not because America is the "land of free" but because for some reason there was intense hatred against the United

States. Hatred of such magnitude doesn't spring forth fully formed from nothing. America had to do something, somewhere, to someone in order to create it.

The odds are that to whomever America did this action had done something to goad the U.S. into doing that action. The odds are still high that whatever this goading was had been created by another action by someone else, who might or might not have been the U.S.

To be honest, I have no idea how accurate the model I just described really is. Those last several paragraphs were just an attempt at describing the system that may or may not have led up to September 11th. It's a cycle. A cycle of hatred. So now that I'm sort of proven that there this system of hatred probably exists, what are you or I going to do about it? That's what this issue of Synapse is about. A lot of that work is just understanding what exactly it is that's going on. But that's not enough. You can have the best analysis in the world, but that's not going to stop someone from being killed or feed a starving person. So after you get done reading Synapse go out and find out how you can do something helpful.

-Graham Baas-

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 and Purposes.

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Advertising:

Rates vary depending on size and type of organization. UUA affiliate and associate organizations are given preference by the editors. Also, non-camera-ready or odd-sized ads have special rates. Advertisements should not be construed as endorsements by the Youth Office, YRUU, or the UUA. The editors reserve the right to refuse any advertisement. Contact the Youth Office for specific rates for your organization.



spill the basket

Nomenclature

Having discussed with many people, I have come to this conclusion about the word anti-racist. It means different things in different ways. As an adjective, saying "I am anti-racist," means that I am against racists. (I do not interpret the principles and purposes to say respect everyone's inherent worth and dignity- hate racists, I do not hate racists but rather racism.) As a noun "I am seeking to become an anti-racist" this means I am seeking to become the opposite of a racist. A person who practices racism is a racist and a person who practices anti-racism is an anti-racist."

Chris Weber
uuin2004@hotmail.com

to see what the heck Chris is yappin' about check out the last issue of Synapse p.5. and i'm glad that Chris has "seen the light" - g-luv

I'm Ok, You're OK

Hello Youth Office,

When I first heard about the plane crashes coming out of Boston immediately thought of Youth Office for some reason. I don't know why. But I am just writing to make sure that every one is safe and sound. I know that it is very nerve racking to just be in the shadow of a major West Coast city. I cannot fathom how it must be like to be in a key port on the Eastern Seaboard. I would

just like to let you all know that all of PSWD YRUU is keeping you in our hearts and minds. Keep doing those great things you do.

Love,
Alex Winnett
uuceltiX@yahoo.com

i guess you could say the youth office is fine. Paula had to cancel a trip home to see her family and we were all living in fear of airplanes, but physically we were all unharmed, thanks for checking up on us. - g-luv

Close and Lucky

hey all,

as MNY ycr, I thought maybe i'd tell you guys a little about what it feels like to be living in the metro new york area after the attacks. Maybe I should have sent something like this out a little earlier but I've had so many other things on my mind. Basically, this has been the worst week of my life- On Tuesday we were told in school about the attacks and I pretty much freaked out. My dad worked in tower one -on the top floors. I was so worried, I tried calling him and my mom (who works on fifth ave-and saw the towers going down) but i couldn't get through- almost no one could call into the city that day because the lines were so tied up. Thank god my dad was ok, he decided to stay home that day. He picked me up from school just in time for us to get

home and see on the news the second tower crumbling. We had been talking (via long range walkie talkie) to people inside and outside of the tower minutes before it crumbled! We lost so many people we knew in those towers- almost all of my dad's co workers were there. Everyone where we live has lost someone they knew. Even though my dad is in so much pain, he has to work this week, trying to put up another tv transmitter (like the one lost on tower one) so people can get tv again (if you don't have cable all you see on tv is snow). In fact he was working in the Empire state building, the day after the attacks, and there was a bomb threat. It was pretty clear that it wasn't true but when I heard it on the radio my heart nearly stopped. Almost losing your father twice in a period of less than 48 hours takes a lot out of you. So that's my story,my family is alright but we were the lucky ones. Almost every one around here has lost someone they knew. its a painful time to be living in.

Lindsay Bater
NJBATERS@msn.com

i can't think of anything to say to this other than thank god. everything else sounds rather banal in comparison to almost losing your father twice. i just want to ask everybody who reads this to go and tell the people in your life how important they are to you. - g-luv.

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



Table Of Contents

every issue

Calendar of Events	2
Wink	3
Letters to the Editor	4
Steering Committee Speaks	6
Anti-Racism Resources	14
Advisor of the Year	21
GA Youth Housing Info	24
Youth Council contact info	32
The Spark	33
A Moral What?	34
Resolutions Passed 2001	38
Soap Box	39

features

Peace the Nations Madness Grace	7
Discrimination in the Media	9
It is Simple. Not so Simple	10
Backlash	12
Resources to Stop the Cycles of Hate	15
Patriotism Today	25
To Repair the Web	36

NEW! CHECK THEM OUT!

applications

YSJC Staff Applications	18
Youth of Color Grant Application	21
GA Youth Caucus Staff Application	22
Con Con Staff Application	23
Youth Council At-large	26
Youth of Color Caucus Application	27
YRUU Program Specialist Application	28
Youth of Color Con Registration	30
Internship Opportunities in DC	38

Submissions Policy:

Each submission must have the submittor's name and address attached. Multiple submissions are accepted. When submitting photographs, please include the name of the person who took the photo to provide proper credit. Submissions not used will be kept on file for possible use in future issues. Name may be withheld upon request. If you wish to be notified prior to publication, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Editorial Policy:

Articles for Synapse are chosen from among those submitted by Unitarian Universalist youth, adults working with youth, and other interested parties. Articles are chosen on the basis of content and quality, with some preference given to new authors. All written materials are subject to editing before publication, and graphics may be enhanced. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editors or the majority readership.

Synapse cover
design by
Matt Moore



You could design the next cover of Synapse. Send your submissions to the Youth Office.



Steering Committee Speaks

By Greg Dubow, 2001-2002 Steering Committee

Arrr matey. Steering committee has been sailing the seven principled seas drinking seaweed grog until we pass out and it is time for us to speak. We are all doing well and the wife and kids are starting to get over that whole incident with the cat. We sent a letter to PETA but we aren't proud of our selves. Our rations disappeared a few days ago and everyone is on edge: they have all been eyeing me funny. The ship is starting to feel too much like home and my eye patch is starting to hurt. Man, it's cool to be a pirate. Arrrr.

Anyway, we just attended the Journey Towards Wholeness (JTW) Anti-Racism training and it was a very interesting experience. Their focus was the systemic aspects of racism and the concepts of racial superiority. They had a lot of intriguing material and Steering Committee found out that racism is a big scary foot and it has the power to destroy us all. JTW's training is not very youth oriented but the program is still evolving. JTW is the UUA's Anti-Racism task force and you should expect to hear good things from them in the future. We're really excited about our Anti-Racism workshop that is going to happen

at Youth Council and it should be fun... well not fun but you get the point.

We are testing out ways to make Youth Council more Anti-Racism focused and things seem to be working out pretty well. As a group we want to make anti-racism work in YRUU more of a grassroots process. We need to equip our self with the



Steering Committee plundering at their last meeting

right tools to teach people about racism and how they can fight it. Don't be afraid to proselytize every once and a while. Our message is a good one and we shouldn't keep it away from people that want to jump into the fray. As Unitarian Universalist youth I think that we are obligated to dedicate ourselves to Anti-Racism work. It speaks to

the heart of our humanitarian principles of equality. If the moral, social, political, and religious aspects of this whole dilemma haven't stirred up your inner activist – it looks good on college applications.

You should notice that somewhere in this issue of Synapse is information on the brand spanking new housing policies for General Assembly (GA). They should be read, loved and obeyed. Housing will be a little different but variety is the spice of life. GA is going to be nifty keen and we'll be in Canada... we love Canada. If you can come as a delegate for your district you will get extra punk rock points and might even be allowed to sit at the big kids table for dinner. Dinner will consist of vegan string-cheese and bacon bits. Tell people in your district about GA and bother them until they come.

Well kids, the wind is picking back up again so we need to head out back to sea. Just remember that we as Steering Committee are accountable to you. Feel free to use the contact information in this issue and write us whenever you can. Raise the cat... err... the flag. It's time to get our pirate on. Arrrr.

Greg Dubow, when he is not practicing his pirate skills is the Youth Council Representative from Mid South District. He can be reached at greg@ihateclowns.com



Peace the Nations' Madness

Grace

By Jacob Larsen

The recent attacks on the U.S. have shocked me and cut a deep well of sorrow for the people aboard those airplanes and in their offices, and for a world that will never be the same again. Reverberations from this attack spread, touching family, friends, lovers, and colleagues of all those who perished. We struggle for answers, we find none; we feel helpless. As the World Trade Center crumbled and collapsed--the replays of news footage forever etched on our memories--so too did our sense of security. Our first impulse is to lash out. After all, the desire to have a safe home is one of our most primal instincts, and now we feel infinitely vulnerable.

At times like this, we must all search within ourselves to find our highest values--be they religious, philosophical, or moral--that compel us to act with kindness toward others. Acts of vengeance will not bring back our loved ones or our sense of security, nor will it answer our most desperate question: Why!? The only answers are forgiveness, understanding, and empathy. I believe we can understand the causes of this attack without excusing them, for clearly there is no excuse. To begin to empathize we must accept a certain duplicity, the ability to mourn but not to hate. In order to understand, we need to ask the question the mainstream media refuses to: Why did this happen?

While nothing justifies the murder of thousands, something must explain it. If the motivation behind these attacks really is an act of jihad--the Islamic fundamentalist holy war--then we need to understand the Middle East and the role

U.S. foreign policy has played in it since the Second World War. Palestine, inhabited by Arabs for thousands of years, experienced an influx of Jewish settlers following the Holocaust in Europe. With strong connections in the U.S., the Jewish settlers were able to start a police force for their communities--still only 10% of Palestine's population. During Israel's War of Independence (1949) and the Six-Day War (1967), the world stood by as U.S. financial and military support made the expropriation of Palestinian homeland possible. This turned the country of Palestine into

"The more lives lost at the hands of the United States, the more martyrs and more bereaved family members there will be with nothing left to live for except revenge."

occupied territories a tenth its former size. Images of Palestinians celebrating in the wake of the World Trade Center attack infuriated North Americans, but few bothered to realize that these celebrations took place in refugee camps where entire generations of displaced Palestinians are born and live in squalor.

The U.S. has regularly and ruthlessly bombed Iraq since the beginning of the Gulf War. Initially, images of cruise missiles exploding into Baghdad homes and hospitals came through onto North American television sets, but they were quickly replaced by Defense Department press conferences about "surgical strikes." Since U.S. sanctions began,

hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have died from hunger. While we are paralyzed with grief at the indiscriminate attack on American lives, we have an icy military term for the loss of foreign civilians: collateral damage. Truly, nothing justifies attack on innocent civilians, but we must remember that half a dozen countries in the Middle Eastern countries have lost thousands upon thousands of lives due to U.S. military or economic attacks. And now, in the wake of September 11, the U.S. prepares to go to war. Its target is Afghanistan, a country plagued by 20 years of violence at the hands of the Soviets, the Americans, and a bloody civil war that claimed 1 million lives and left one-third of the population refugees.

The more lives lost at the hands of the United States, the more martyrs and more bereaved family members there will be with nothing left to live for except revenge.

We need to do everything in our power to encourage those in power to find a peaceful solution to this tragedy. Be in contact with and offer support to Arab communities in your area, as many have already faced racist revenge attacks. Organize antiwar demonstrations in your community and call for a reexamination of U.S. foreign policy. Please, commit yourself to peace and compassion in a time when others call for blood.

What is true of individual s is true of nations. One cannot forgive too much. The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. --Mahatma Gandhi

Jacob Larsen is a radical YRUUer from Toronto, ON. He is also one of the current youth observers to the board of trustees. He can be reached at yak_o_mak@hotmail.com



got training?

All over the continent districts are hosting conferences to help youth become stronger leaders, help congregations better their community-led worships, and help advisors be prepared for the acrobatics of advising youth groups. At the heart of all these conferences is a focus on understanding and promoting youth empowerment. There are three different conferences districts request from the Youth Office:

Leadership Development Conference (LDC)	Spirituality Development Conference (SDC)	Basic Advisor Training
<p>Does your youth group want to take initiative but feel it is lacking the skills? Are you bursting with energy but not sure which direction to go? Are you struggling just to get enough people to show up to meetings? If you answered yes to any of these, this is the conference for you! LDCs are by far our most requested Youth Office training, and we have a newly trained batch of LDC trainers anxious to go out and help your district create youth leaders. LDC's are attended by youth and their sponsors and cover topics like the meaning of leadership, group facilitation and consensus, five steps to building community, creating a Youth/Adult Committee, Icebreakers and more.</p>	<p>This conference is for both youth and empowering adults. Set up like a cookbook, SDC's teaches participants about the nuts and bolts of circle worship, making sure to include all the important elements especially the "meat" or "tofu." SDC's also helps folks search for the sacred in the ordinary and encourages individuals to work on developing their own personal spiritual practices.</p> <p>These conferences are here to promote the "R" in YRUU. Bring what you learn back to the whole congregation, lead Sunday worship for the whole church!</p>	<p>Here you are a new youth advisor, trying to build a good relationship with your youth group and your congregation, and what the heck is this youth empowerment thing everyone's talking about anyway? Attend a Basic Advisor Training, learn about the five steps to community building, the 5 components of a balanced youth group, skills to build youth friendly congregations, and how to cope when everything seems to be going wrong. On top of that, come hang out with other advisors who find themselves in the same place you are, share knowledge and skills, and just have a darn good time. Advisors old and new should all attend Advisor Training!</p>
<p>Are you a Business Geek?? Do you care about governing structures?? Do you think that Anti-Racism is the bee's knees? Want to meet amazing youth and adults from all over North America?? Do you breath oxygen??</p> <p>If you answered yes to any of these questions, or even for a moment thought that you might consider answering "maybe" to any of these check out pages 26&27 to find out more about the wonderous event known as YOUTH COUNCIL</p>		<p>Are you going to GA?</p> <p>Then you need to know that General Assembly Housing has Changed!!!!</p> <p>Check out page 24 to get more information!!.</p>

Think JAHNNY DEPP is only some actor who has scissors for hands and kills headless horsemen? Get yourself to a Leadership Development Conference and make sense of the excessive acronyms of YRUU!



Discrimination in the Media

by Kat Shiffler

Mainstream media in the United States has become infamous for inadequately representing the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East. Recently journalists have been trying to clean up their acts by using equally sensitive language when referring to the opposing forces. Beyond the visible war in Israel, we as a country have a pre-established image of terrorism that encompasses both xenophobia and racism. The people who are adversely affected by these stereotypes are Arab Americans.

This should concern young impressionable American youths because these media tactics can only further our country's discrimination against people of Arab descent. After the recent terrorist attacks in New York there have been many cases of threats to Islamic groups and Arab American citizens in this country. This is completely intolerable, and an obvious result of anti-Arab sentiment in current news coverage. Our country's racial profiling of Arab Americans is an upsetting sign of institutional racism that I, as a white person, have the luxury of ignoring.

People of Arab descent living in this country are often unfairly stereotyped as terrorists and judged harshly because of the "rogue" status of their home countries in world policy.

Young people must come to the realization that

racism goes beyond traditional black and white boundaries. Even the leaders of this country have ceased to acknowledge racism as a part of the conflict in the Middle East. This was demonstrated in the U.S. government's boycotting of the U.N.'s Anti-Racism summit in South Africa this September.

There are many reliable news sources for those who care to be well informed about

"... 'terrorist' used about only one set of antagonists was racist as well as biased..."

current events in the Middle East. In a recent article by British journalist Robert Fisk entitled, "Murder is Murder" on ZNet, Fisk makes the point that the word "terrorist" is a term that has been greatly misused within reporting. "Over the years, even CNN began to realize that 'terrorist' used about only one set of antagonists was racist as well as biased."

The power of words seems key in inadvertently swaying public opinion in this situation. Words like: brutal,

savage, barbaric, murder, lynching and terrorism intentionally produce powerful reactions, but they are not always equal in their usage and context. This could potentially make people question other events and conflicts in history, and the effect that media coverage has had on our conclusions. To be mindful of the intentions and realities of word usage is fundamental in the journey to anti-racism.

We have a duty to look at what is really going on in the Middle East, and to take into consideration the interests of the United States when we read, hear or see continued coverage of this conflict. We have too much to lose by discriminating against Arab Americans.

Good Media Related Websites:

The Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)
www.merip.org

Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)

rawa.hackmare.com

Israel Indy Media

www.indymedia.org.il

uk.indymedia.org

Z Magazine

www.zmag.org

Ariga

www.ariga.com

Alternative News

www.alternativenews.org

Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting

www.fair.org

Kat Shiffler is the YCR from Prairie Star District. She can be reached at mizatkizat@hotmail.com



It's simple, really. A terrible crime is being committed in our name. Millions of dollars worth of bombs are raining down on an already decimated country. Beyond the military terror and destruction, the terror of starvation almost surely awaits millions of Afghans unless the bombing stops and a full-scale aid program gets food in place for the winter. This is a calculated crime against humanity that differs from September 11th only in scale; that is: it is many times larger.

That the U.S. is taking part in the killing of innocent people is not new. What's new is that people are paying attention. Before September 11th, I tried talking to people about the 500,000 Iraqi children dead due to the U.S. economic embargo. And people's eyes glazed over. But during these last few weeks, as I've staffed an information table on the main street that runs through my town, I've noticed something else during my conversations with people about the war in Afghanistan, the certainty of mass starvation unless our current trajectory in that country is reversed, the principles of international law, the idea that escalating violence is exactly that and not a form of justice, and the importance of the rule of law over the muscle of vigilantism.

People's eyes are opened to the world in a way they weren't before. People are bringing questioning minds to the problem of terrorism and the U.S. role in the Middle East and elsewhere. People are filled with grief, awed by the courage of the rescuers, stunned by what it means to turn a commercial jetliner full of innocent people into a living, breathing bomb. People are curious -- and I mean that -- about exactly how the U.S. has abused its power around the globe, and they are reflecting on the consequences of that abuse.

Many conversations are not that hard. Sometimes, just listening to the words pouring out of someone's mouth helps him or her listen to those words, too, for the first time. Sometimes re-phrasing what you hear, without necessarily making a speech complete with historical facts and figures, is enough to put a crack in the confident parroting of

It's Simple, It's Not So Simple

by Cynthia Peters

the war defense. Sometimes, just being out on the street with "Justice Not War" flyers is enough to reach the cynic who already understands the misuse of U.S. power but believes there's no point in contesting it. But not every conversation is so easy. I don't feel good about having some guy towering over me, jabbing the air with his finger, spitting out his passionate belief that, yes, we should kill as many Afghans as possible. It's not just that it's personally threatening, or that it's ethically in line with Osama bin

“...put millions
of Afghans at
risk of starvation
in order to possi-
bly catch one
man...”

Laden. It's also that it's painful to come face to face with this particular kind of human being.

Heartless retaliation is not limited to this war-mongering type. Consider the educated guy in the corporate suit who speaks in soft tones and has a pained expression on his face as he shrugs off the possibility of millions of starving Afghans with, "Well, we have to get Osama bin Laden somehow, don't we?"

Rather than scream my disbelief back at him, I try calmly repeating his own logic back to him. "So you think it's okay to put millions of Afghans at risk of starvation in order to possibly catch one man?" Then I try to let the pause be. I try not to fill up the silence with more words. I try to let him hear what he's saying. But this is hard to do. I feel a sort of a panic rising up. He is a thinking person, yet he articulated his accord with an obscene and murderous set of poli-

cies. I hold down the panic. He backs off a little from his argument. The interaction ends.

Unlike protesters in many countries, I'm not at risk of being killed or imprisoned when I put up my card table on Centre Street. I'm not worried about getting hurt, and I have a thick enough skin to deal with the hecklers. But dissent has its challenges, such as having reasonable conversations with privileged people who have access to power and knowledge, but who nonetheless are aligning themselves with points of view that will almost surely result in mass murder.

This is where it becomes not so simple. I don't like talking to people like that man in the suit. But talking is what we absolutely need to be doing right now. It is the only way to prevent mass murder. In a one-superpower world, the citizens of the superpower are the only force that can control the superpower. It's up to us.

Talking has the added benefit of being the only antidote to the sick feeling. For all the corporate suits, there are many more thoughtful people who pause, look me in the eye, nod their agreement that violence begets violence, say things like, "Thank you for being out here." "I realize I've never quite thought about it that way." "Do you have more information?" "Can I come to your meeting?" "Will you speak at my church?" "Where can I learn more?"

Many people I've met in the last few weeks don't need to hear my analysis. They already know. And they have a lot to teach if we listen. The Vietnam vet challenges me on how we should pressure our government when it is corporations that seem to have so much control. The firefighter tells me that all he hears at work is that the killing should stop. The Haitian man wonders how international legal channels could be made more independent and less influenced by the United States. The three women carrying bibles talk for a long time, first with



me and then amongst themselves. The teenager starts off protesting that her parents would disagree with me, but winds up voicing her own views.

Late one night, someone calls from a nearby town. He has our flyer inviting people to a neighborhood anti-war meeting, and he's shocked that I risked putting my name and number out publicly. I get the feeling he's calling partly to see if I'm real, thus making him a little bit less alone. He and his small group are planning on marching the next day in a community-based parade featuring marching bands and civic organizations. They will carry a banner that says, "Our Cry of Grief is not a Cry for War." He is nervous but inspired to hear what we have accomplished so far in our town. The next day, they participate in the parade. "At least a few people cheered on each block," they reported to me later. There are plans now for cross-town pot lucks and meetings.

It's not hard to grasp the potentially genocidal consequences of current U.S. policy. But it is a bit harder to integrate that understanding into your daily life, and let it affect your actions. How will this knowledge change you? What will it make you question about how you spend your time, what you do with your money, whether you are doing everything in your power to reduce the horror. Maybe before, when you sheltered yourself from this knowledge, you never wondered if it was okay to spend time watching the Yankees' game. Now you are wondering.

And you are looking around at the peace activists and realizing that working in coalition with people to stop a major atrocity can mean aligning yourself with people you don't agree with -- or even who you find personally threatening. Some of the people fighting this war might be the same ones that, in another forum, would be your boss, deny you a living wage and ensure more privileges for the already privileged. Some of your fellow peace activists would be horrified by your sexuality, find you perverse, or wish you out of existence. They may have

never learned to listen to women or take people of color seriously. You survey the growing legions of peace activists and wonder if they're the same people who are gentrifying your neighborhood, planting tulips in the park but letting affordable housing go down the drain, never showing up to protest police violence or the gutting of welfare. Working with these people can be alienating, disheartening, down right soul-killing.

To answer that question, keep in mind that there are ways to ease this necessary work of talking and listening, putting us face-to-face with brutal, merciless or just plain petty thinking, and risking fragile coalitions.

1. Pick the community you can work



best in. There is a growing peace movement, but if that is not your political "home," then work elsewhere -- in your neighborhood, your union, your place of worship, your community organization. Don't stop doing the political work you were doing before, but do look for new connections. Now is the time.

2. We should appropriately acknowledge the frustration and alarm that will be part and parcel of organizing work, but we should also be careful not to overstate it. No matter how alarmed we might be by people's denial, people's rejection of a moral stance, people's downright selfishness, nothing compares to the alarm of those at the receiving end of U.S. bombs and U.S. orchestrated starvation. Keep your frustration in perspective.

3. Join others for solidarity, support, shared inspiration, venting opportunities, perspective, and retreat from the challenges. Know that organizing is

painstaking work, and you need to create conditions that will allow you to do it for a long time.

4. Know when to walk away. You don't have to talk to everyone. Don't waste time and energy engaging with the person who is going ballistic, but use your energy instead for the many sensible people that have their hearts in the right place but who lack information or support for entertaining alternative points of view.

5. Don't judge every interaction. It may feel like you failed to reach someone, but people's growing consciousness doesn't follow a linear path. They may ignore you, but later privately read the literature you hand out, and this may affect how they read the newspaper the next day. Each step is exactly that, and with others adding their efforts, each step matters more.

6. Finally, pick the work you can do most effectively. If a two-hour tabling stint on your main street leaves you feeling drained, despairing or frightened, then do something else. Write an emergency grant to help pay for all the leaflets and posters. Volunteer to manage the database for your organization. Set up the web site,

collate the articles, moderate the list serve, host the house parties, bring food to the meetings, design the banners, or take part in any of the numerous background activities that are essential to movement building. Sound simple? It is and it isn't. Each of us, individually, has a responsibility to figure out how we can negotiate the organizing challenges and moral imperatives of the current crisis. Together, our job is to knit our individual abilities into a mass movement that pressures our government to back off from its bloodletting. The not-so-simple problem with this mandate is that it won't be easy. The simple fact, however, is that we must do it anyway.

Cynthia Peters is a freelance editor and writer, and political activist. She can be reached at cppk@email.msn.com.



A backflash: where were we, * a twenty years ago??

Originally published in People Soup (the newspaper of Liberal Religious Youth) Volume 5, Issue 1; November, 1977

Do you turn off the sound of the ten o'clock news, and laugh at the pictures? Do you cherish a secret distrust of your local newspaper? If you do, no doubt you are aware of two things: that the news is routinely distorted, and that you are interested enough to tune in anyway. We're stuck with mass media for the news. So let's get serious, turn the sound back on, pick up the paper, and ask a few basic questions about what we see.

In any TV newscast or daily paper, some stories, facts and points of view get covered better than others. After all there is only one front page. Decisions have to be made. But what are the values behind these judgments?

For example, in 1972, Richard Nixon ordered an attack on civilian children's hospitals. Yet for years the press hardly discussed this, but instead has belabored Nixon's possible ties to a burglary at Democratic Headquarters. How can we make sense of this?

Even within a story someone must decide which facts are important. In an interview with David Frost, Nixon defended ordering the CIA to weaken and help overthrow Chile's democratically elected leftist government; he said it was better for the US security to have a right wing dictatorship there than a left-wing democracy. The paper I read concentrated its story on Nixon's agony over Watergate, and briefly mentioned the Chile policy on the back page.

Think about these words, "Communism" is used to connote "dictatorship", while "free world" (free for US corporation to invest in, that is) included police states like South

Africa where the black majority can't vote, Chile where political parties are outlawed, and at least fifty military dictatorships receiving military aid from the U.S. For all their content, half the time, "moderate" and extremist" might as well be "good guys". "Illegal alien" sounds like a Martian. And then there's that beloved word "terrorist". Bombing children's hospitals to intimidate the Vietnamese at



the peace talks is official and legitimate, while protesting the war with a bomb in a White House toilet is "terrorist". Because these words are used routinely, they appear "objective". Actually, they suggest how people should think about events.

Or consider the parts of the political spectrum left out. Some dangerous groups may understandably be denied a forum, but when was the last time you read a mass media columnist who opposed our economic sys-

tem? Or saw a documentary or newscaster who was left or moderately liberal? Meanwhile, Milton Friedman, economic advisor to the fascist Chilean Junta, gets a column in Newsweek, and solidly conservative William F. Buckley, Jr. is a regular in newspapers and TV.

Omitting one or two facts or quoting someone's lie can really warp the news. So it's good to question where media get their information. The AP and UPI wire services provide about 75% of the news we read and hear. These wire services in turn tend to take the work of dubious sources. The New York News featured a story of the Attica prison rebellion under the headline: "I saw seven throats cut." UPI, the New York Times, and other news agencies carried similar reports; only one named sources. But within a day a medical exam proved that the hostages had not died of slashed throats but of shots fired by the state police. The source of the original story was prison officials. How wide spread is this press practice of asking the wolf to count the sheep? A Columbia University survey found 40-60% of the news in the daily and weekly press comes from public relations sources and the government!

These outrageous facts imply news coverage has a general bias towards corporations and certain government policies. Media take "business as usual" for granted. But to only criticize content would miss a second important point: with even the best of content, the very way news gets brought to us undermines our understanding of it.

This undermining reaches its zenith with TV. Now one can tell us what happened today all over the world in the twenty-two minute



newscast. TV news is reduced, as the executive producer of NBC news put it, to "basically just a headline service"

But another type of undermining affects all mass media. "News" is brought to us isolated stories about sudden events. Chronic problems, such as the millions of young people, especially blacks, who can't find jobs, and what it means, are not covered well. But when a statistic changes we see headlines, seemingly from out of the blue: "Unemployment now 7%." After scratching our heads awhile about such headlines, we tend to simply forget them. How many readers understand why jobs are so scarce? Or what's been going on for the past three years in the united Mineworkers Union? Do you remember the April 3, 1976 abortion-rights demonstration of 100,000 women in Rome, Italy? Yet consider the depth in which the media covered the Patricia Hearts story, and our memories of that. Without context and background information the news appears haphazard and absurd, and sorting through even accurate facts is frustrating and confusing. Perhaps this is one reason people are often apathetic.

How do we explain these common, typical-for-all-media news distractions? Why do reporters for top-quality papers, who have no intentions of lying, ask only prison officials what happened at a prison rebellion? Are they just crazy? Here's what I think based on partly on talking with folks in the Biz.

"Editors and publishers," a 1941 Senate Committee concluded, "are owners and managers of big business enterprises, and their papers inevitably reflect, at least to some degree, their economic interest." Who said love makes the world go 'round?

Media owners have ties and investments with other businesses, plus their own stockholders to please. Eleven banks have voting rights to 38% of the common stock in CBS.

Frank Stanton, the president of CBS from 1946-71, sits on the boards of directors of CBS, Atlantic Richfield, Pan Am, Electric Power Co., New York Life Insurance, New Perspective Fund Inc., and is a trustee of the Rand Corporation.

Newspaper and TV managers select editors who believe, or at least follow, the "party line". (The news editor of the New York Post told journalist James Aronson why he was not promoted to assistant editor: "...because your political views are at variance with those held by the managers of this enterprise and therefore no acceptable to them"--his views had become socialist.) Needless to say, this discourages those who don't like the "party line" from even going through the training.

Editors see their interests as being aligned with the owners and other businessmen. Thus, whether liberal or conservative, their question is not whether U.S. corporations can continue to exploit the rest of the world, but how. Their papers discuss how much the energy conglomerates should be allowed to extort from us, but never the more fundamental issue of whether any resource as basic to human needs as energy should be privately owned at all.

Media are structured in such a way that reporters have little say over what gets aired or published. Reporters know that certain subjects or points of view will be "edited out", and that trying to report them may endanger their jobs. So they do as they've been trained: ask authorities for the facts and be conduits of "expert" opinions. Their imaginations are stifled.

Media, as big businesses, like to squash news unfavorable to other big businesses, but they also have an immediate incentive. For to offend a big advertiser, when it could be avoided, would risk losing support and money. In fact, as of 1969, ABC news let its main sponsors pick the topics for documentaries, as well as make

changes in the scripts.

But media also have to keep their credibility with the public. In 1969 the well-documented My-Lai massacre story, a torn in the side of the war effort, was rejected by one network, Life, Look, Newsweek, Harpers, UPI, AP and others. But when some newspapers finally decided to print it, nearly every news agency, including those who had rejected it, gave the story prominent coverage.

Competition for profit leads to some high quality news coverage. But it also leads to playing a crime and disaster, and skimming important issues. For example, the details of looting during the New York City blackout were amply reported--what was looted, the number arrested, and the color of their skin. But few considered the main story to be (the less sensational) "Why?" What is the significance of people walking out of stores carrying a TV set under each arm singing "Merry Christmas"? What is happening to our cities? They tell us little. (They seem to assume blacks, by nature, will loot if you don't have order, and select the facts to illustrate that idea.) The news is packaged to sell, to be titillating, to appeal to our human interests, but not particularly to inform us about the forces that shape our lives.

To fill out this sketch could take a book; things are not simple, and no doubt you've found exceptions to what I've said. But my point is that the mass media do not primarily inform the public, as they might if things were don't rationally, but compete for profit and protect the long-term interests of "free enterprise"; that's why the ten o'clock news inevitably slants towards corporations and certain government policies; that's why that newspaper is a catalog of fires, murders, and interesting but disjointed events.

this article was written by the mysterious and unknown liv. If you know who liv is, please contact us.



Have you heard all this talk about anti-racism? Don't know what people mean when they say white privilege, internalized racism, institutional racism? Have people looked at you funny when you say "why can't we all just get along" If any of these things are true for you then you should read or look into some of these.

Anti-Racism Resources

Books

People of Color History: Reality and Resistance

Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong by James Loewen

There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America by Vincent Harding

Occupied America: A History of Chicanos by Rodolfo Acuña

The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization and Resistance by M. Annette Jaimes

Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans by Ronald Takaki

Whiteness Studies

White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness by Ruth Frankenberg

Racism and Anti-Racism: Analysis and Organizing
Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990's by Kimberley Bobo

Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism by Carol Brunson Phillips and Louise Derman-Sparks

Confronting Racism: The Problem and the Response by Jennifer Eberhardt and Susan Fiske

Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Radical Justice by Paul Kivel

Institutional Racism in America by Louis L. Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt

A People's History of the United States :1492 -Present by Howard Zinn

From the UUA

Films for the Journey Towards Wholeness: an anti-racism oppression guide to popular films

Anti-Racism Movie Guide

Mi Familia

Overview/Description:

"Mi Familia" is the story of the Sanchez family's experience of life in the United States. Spanning three generations, this film shows the various relationships that each family member has toward their cultural identities and their desire to become "Americans."

Set in East Los Angeles from 1920 to the present, "Mi Familia" traces the immigration policies, police brutality, and cultural ostracism that mark the experiences of the Sanchez family.

In "Mi Familia", we find a complex understanding of how identity and systemic oppression shape individual and community life. The first generation of the Sanchez family, who immigrate from Mexico, desire both to hold on to their cultural traditions and values, as well as succeed in the American Dream. The second generation, the children of the Sanchez family, find that this ideal is impossible. They are faced with the choice of becoming either Mexican or American (which means Anglo) in their identities, while the outside institutions continue to define them.

Things to think about:

All people who immigrated to the United States faced these issues to a certain degree. While watching this movie, think about your own family's heritage(s) and it's history in America.

Discussion Questions:

What is your cultural heritage? What does that mean to you? Have members of your own family faced cultural assimilation here in the United States? How did your family deal with that assimilation? What was their means of survival? What did you gain and what did you lose through that means of survival?

What are some examples of institutional racism in this movie? What are some examples of cultural racism in this movie? How do these examples impact the Sanchez family?

What do you think are the defining characteristics of Anglo American culture? What part of the Sanchez's family's culture does not fit with American Anglo culture? What part does?

What makes it difficult for the Sanchez family to assimilate into American Anglo culture? Why do some of the children resist assimilating? What is the experience like for those who do assimilate?

*Check out this group of discussion guides to great, not hard to find movies (like American History X) that you can use with your youth group or at a conference/rally. Call/email Pam Bachman, 617.948.4642, pbachman@uua.org to get a copy.

Check out the YRUU website

www.uua.org/YRUU for more recommended resources and possible racial justice projects for youth groups.



Resources to Stop the Cycles of Hate

Anti-War Resources

War Resisters League
www.warresisters.org

National War Tax Resistance
www.nwtrcc.org

School of the Americas Watch
www.soaw.org

Starhawk's Homepage
www.starhawk.org

Wage Peace Now
www.wagepeacenow.org

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund
www.peacetax.com

Peace Action
www.peace-action.org

Nevada Desert Experience
www.nevadadesertexperience.org

The Sikh Coalition
www.sikh.org

Other Organizing Resources

Independent Media Center
www.indymedia.org

Adbusters
www.adbusters.org

Global Exchange
www.globalexchange.org

Prison Activist Resource Center
www.prisonactivist.org

Critical Resistance
www.criticalresistance.org

Colours of Resistance
www.tao.ca/~colours

Mexico Solidarity Network
www.mexicosolidarity.org

EZLN (Zapatista)
www.ezln.org

Center for Third World Organizing
www.ctwo.org

United for a Fair Economy
www.ufenet.org

National Lawyers Guild
www.nlg.org

The Just Cause Law Collective
www.lawcollective.org

Ruckus Society
www.ruckus.org

Protest.net
www.protest.net

ZNET
www.zmag.org



Are you a writer, poet, artist, youth? Do you want your work to be distributed to nearly 15,000 people?

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). We want to see the creative, opinionated, strong, articulate, beautiful work that YRUUer's are creating. If you don't think your stuff will go along with the theme of Synapse send it in anyway, we always keep submissions because they may be useful in a future Synapse. We are especially in need for art, and pho-

Spring starting
January 14, 2002
Fall starting
September 15, 2002

SEND SUBMISSIONS
TO:
C/O Youth Office
95 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108



Youth Funding for Unitarian Universalist Development Grant Application

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

Who should apply for a Y*FUUD grant?

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

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

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

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

Local, district, or continental project name:

Budget for your Project:

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

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

Primary Point Person for the Project:

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

Youth name, address, email, phone

Adult name, address, email, phone *

Intent of Project:

UU or YRUU Principle represented by your project: *

What is the general intent of your project?

Who will your project serve?

Project Timeline:

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

Timeline for project during first year:

Steps to achieve/ Person assigned/ Date due

Timeline for project after first year if applicable:

steps to achieve/ person assigned/ estimated date due

Project Evaluation Process:

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

Project History:

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

If so, from where did you get your funding?

Long-term Future of Project:

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

If so, how will it be funded next time?

Y*FUUD Guidelines:

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

For multi-year projects, YFUUD must receive another application and progress report for your project. Funding received must be used during same fiscal year or must be returned to YFUUD.

*Items with asterisks are suggested but not required.

Your grant application should be typed.

Get this application online at:

<http://uaa.org/YRUU/youthoffice/pdfs/yfuud.pdf>

For Information or to Apply for a Grant:

Y*FUUD c/o Youth Office

25 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02108

617.948.4350

fax: 617.742.0321

yruu@uaa.org





YRUU Social Justice Conference

March 14-18, 2002

A Training of Youth Organizers

The annual YRUU Social Justice Conference (YSJC) is an annual conference youth interested in social justice work. Every year, Unitarian Universalist youth from all over the United States and Canada come together to learn about grassroots organizing and connect with others who are putting their faith into action. This year the conference has moved from Washington, DC, to Harvard, Massachusetts and will focus on training youth to organize and empower their communities. Workshops will focus on creating and implementing social justice campaigns in districts, churches, and local communities. We will also concentrate on combining art and spirituality with social justice work. All youth are welcome to attend, as well as a limited amount of adults (including young adults). We highly encourage districts to send their Social Action Coordinators.

Registration to attend the YSJC is \$150 and will cover the expense of food, housing, and supplies. Participants are responsible for transportation to and from Boston, Massachusetts. Many participants have received financial assistance from their youth groups, congregations or districts, often by pledging to share what they learn at the conference when they get home. Scholarships are also available through the Youth Office; to apply please write a one-page letter telling us how much you need and why we should give it to you. Scholarships range from \$50-\$150.

Youth Staff Work-Exchange Positions

We are currently accepting applications for three youth staff positions, youth who are selected for these positions will have their registration expense paid for by the Youth Office.

Worship Coordinator: coordinates and empowers participants to plan daily worships; co-coordinates "Spirituality and Social Justice" workshop.

Identity Group Leaders (one people of color identity group leader & one white identity group leader): coordinate small caucusing groups that meet daily to discuss what it means to be a) a white person, or b) a person of color.

To apply, please answer the following questions and send them to the Youth Office, UUA, 25 Beacon St, Boston, MA, 02108. Include 3 references:

What experience and skills do you bring that would make you good for this position?

What does anti-racism mean to you?

How do you connect spirituality and social justice work?

Important Information

Dates:

March 14-18th, 2002

Location:

Harvard, Massachusetts

Expense:

\$150, plus travel

Staff Application Deadline:

January 15, 2002

Scholarship Deadline:

February 4, 2002

Registration Deadline:

February 20, 2002

Workshops:

Campaign Planning
Media Skills
Community Organizing
Group Facilitation
Consensus
Spirituality and Social Justice
Street Theater & Art
Anti-oppression
Anti-racism
Challenging the Prison Industrial Complex



Yruu Social Justice Conference Registration

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

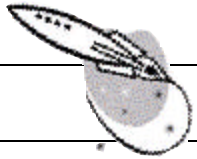
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Birthday: _____ Are you over 18? _____

UU District: _____

Are you part of a UU Congregation? _____ Which one? _____



I am:
(check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> my district's Social Action Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> a minister
<input type="checkbox"/> female	<input type="checkbox"/> a youth advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> involved with anti-racism work
<input type="checkbox"/> transgendered	<input type="checkbox"/> involved with a social justice campaign in my community, church, school (circle)
<input type="checkbox"/> Canadian	<input type="checkbox"/> a student (circle: highschool, unschool, college, divinity school, other: _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> a US resident	<input type="checkbox"/> vegan
<input type="checkbox"/> a person of color	<input type="checkbox"/> vegetarian
<input type="checkbox"/> biracial	<input type="checkbox"/> omnivore
<input type="checkbox"/> white/european-american	<input type="checkbox"/> allergic to: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> a youth	<input type="checkbox"/> a Unitarian Universalist
<input type="checkbox"/> a young adult	
<input type="checkbox"/> an adult	

I have included my registration fee, a signed Medical Release form and my Rules & Guidelines Agreement

I am applying for a scholarship and have included my request with my registration!

I am applying for a staff position and have included my application with my registration!



Last Name _____ First Name: _____

Medical Release Form:

I, _____ (please print), am the parent or legal guardian of _____, who will be attending the YRUU Social Justice Conference, March 14-18, 2002, in Harvard, Massachusetts. 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: _____

Medical info:

Name of person with insurance policy (print): _____

Health insurance agency: _____

Policy/ group #: _____

Current medications: _____

Allergies/ medical conditions: _____

Date of last tetanus shot: __/__/__

Special health needs: _____

Guidelines:

*** No drugs, weapons or alcohol**

***Follow the Policy on Sexual Behavior**

***No leaving the conference site without permission**

***Respect staff members, speakers, conference site and fellow participants**

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.

I, _____ will abide by this policy while attending the YRUU Social Justice Conference.

Signature _____ Date _____

**Send your completed Registration, Medical Release Form and Rules and Guidelines Agreement to:
YSJC Registration. c/o Youth Office. 25 Beacon St. Boston. MA. 02108**

Empowerment Through Visibility and Participation for People of Colour

This past summer at Youth Council in Ontario, Canada, Youth Funding for UU Development (YFUUD) awarded a \$4900 grant to develop funding for youth of color representation at continental events. This grant money was awarded to increase the visibility of youth of color at continental activities, increase awareness of diversity, and create opportunities for youth of color to rise to leadership positions within YRUU.

If you: identify as a youth of color, will be between the ages of 14 and 20 by January 1, 2002, and have a passion for YRUU--WE WANT YOU to apply for YFUUD money to fund your participation in continental events for 2002!

You MUST include in your application:

1) **VITAL INFO:**

name, address, phone number (if applicable), email address (if applicable), date of birth, home church or fellowship, and UUA district.

2) **LETTER OR INTENT:**

your vision for YRUU, how you plan to use your experience to actualize your vision, any leadership experience, what YRUU issues concern you, and how your background and experiences will help you contribute

to YRUU. HEY! Feel free to include any other comments/pictures/personal works (not necessary but it will help the selection committee understand you more!)

3) **RESPONSES TO THESE 3 ?'S:** A) How do you define racism? B) What sort of racism, anti-racism, and/or multi-culturalism education (if any) have you had?

4) **SPECIFY WHAT ACTIVITY/EVENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND.**

Upcoming activities/events are (but not limited to!)

*GA! June 20-24, 2002!

*Con Con !dates to be announced!

*Social Justice Conference March 14-18, 2002

Send your COMPLETE application to:

YFUUD Grant Applications c/o Jennifer Tsoi

1555 Broadway #217

Boulder CO 80302

*no later than January 15, 2002

*award amounts will depend on number of applicants and may vary

Advisor of the Year Rick Roehl

Rick Roehl is the Youth Advisor at the People's Church in Cedar Rapids, IA. He has served on his church board, his districts' YAC and been a member of Youth Council. Rick has been on the staff for both General Assembly Youth Caucus and ConCon. The fact that Rick has done all this has made him one of graham baas's personal heroes. Way to go Rick!!!



Do you know an amazing advisor who deserves more attention? Nominate them for the Advisor of the Year. The lucky recipient will get a **free breakfast** and receive an award at General Assembly 2002 in Quebec.

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 all nominations to the Youth Office.



General Assembly Youth Caucus 2002 Staff Positions

Madame or Mr. HUUPER (youth)
Hard-core UU Person Energized and Ready (the Youth Caucus dean). S/He should be organized, excellent with logistics and adults, a great facilitator, comfortable with large

and small groups, must be good at keeping a "big-picture" of GA in mind. Madame or Mr. HUUPER is in charge of running the daily community meetings, and facilitating both the core-staff pre-site in March as well as daily core-staff meetings. S/He, with the help of a Steering committee member will select the Youth Caucus staff from the pool of applications for each position. They act as the liaison to the hostel from Youth Caucus.

1st Time attendee/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 in the all night youth caucus space. 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.

Worship/Spirituality Coordinator (youth)

This person recruits volunteers of people interested in planning the nightly worship and the huge, all GA worship. S/He should have a worshipful presence, be an excellent facilitator, and have ideas and experience for planning youth worship.

Chaplain Core

There are four chaplains, two youth (one male, one female) and two adults (one male, one female). Chaplains are available to youth 24 hours a day, for counseling on emotional, sexual, and other issues that come up during 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. Being a Minister is a plus. There will be Chaplain Core

What is general Assembly (GA)?

GA is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Every June, 4,000 UUs gather to conduct the business of the association, go to workshops, hang out, and have fun. In past years we have had about 450 youth at GA who take part in all parts of GA.

What is youth caucus staff?

GA youth caucus staff is a small group of people who make all of the youth programming happen at GA. They organize logistics, activities, business, worship, act as chaplains, and identity group coordinators

What do I pay for if I am staff?

Most Staff positions are fully funded, including transportation, registration, housing, and a daily allowance for food.

Meetings once a day and one chaplain will attend core staff meetings each day.

Sponsor Coordinator (adult)

The Sponsor Coordinator writes a letter to go along with every sponsor form describing their role at GA and a letter to youth explaining sponsorship. They lead the Mandatory Sponsor Training at Youth Caucus Orientation with a youth member of core staff. They will act as a liaison between sponsors and core staff during the week; assist in locating youth, and listen to concerns. Most importantly this person is the emergency contact person, on call 24 hours a day, carrying a cell phone and emergency medical release and contact information in case of an emergency. This person should be organized, calm, approachable, and have a high tolerance for stress.

Logistics/Gopher (youth or adult)

They live in or near Quebec City and can do work before GA, scouting out the area surrounding the Youth Caucus hostel for youth-friendly (i.e. cheap, safe, and fun) entertainment and food-venues, and creates a resource on these venues for all of Youth Caucus.

This person manages the Youth Caucus petty cash and does daily supply runs for the staff. This person should be very organized and have access to a car for the week of GA.

**Apply
for Youth Caucus
staff today!**

How to apply:

To apply, send a letter of intent specifying what position(s) you are interested in, including

- 1) Why you would be good for the position (visions for the position 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?

You need two letters of recommendations (one from a youth and one from an adult.

GA staff staff selection

c/o Youth Office

25 Beacon St

Boston, MA 02108

or email it to pnett@uua.org

apply by January 11th

Questions?

Call or email
Paula Nett in the
Youth Office.
617.948.4351
pnett@uua.org

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 facilitating skills, be comfortable talking about race and racism and able to create a safe space for others in those conversations. The white ID group leader will have to recruit volunteers before GA to help lead white break off groups.

Working group Coordinator

This person will be organizing groups of youth and sponsors to help set up for events and generally support the core staff on a daily basis. S/He should be outgoing, friendly, highly organized, and comfortable with different types of groups.

Create your own position (youth)

Have you been to GA and feel like there is a staff position that is missing? Be creative, send us your vision of the missing position.



YRUU'S CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE STAFF

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.

The Dean (youth) makes the agenda for and facilitate the pre-site planning meeting and the daily staff meetings at ConCon. The dean acts as a liaison between the ConCon community to the site staff. Dean is 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 (youth) facilitates meetings 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 also coordinates wake-up and spirit circle each morning. S/he 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 Touch 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/older youth) 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. 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@uaa.org

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

APPLICATIONS DUE JANUARY 11TH, 2002



General Assembly Housing 2002

June 20-24th
Quebec City, Quebec
CANADA

Get housing as
soon as possible
Call the Hostel Today!

**Cheapest
Youth
Housing
Ever**

Important Dates to Remember For people who are going to Attend GA 2002

Jan 11 2002 GA staff Applications Due
March 1st start registering for GA
Mid April GA Delegate scholarships
April 30 GA youth Scholarship
late April 15 GA forms Due
May 15 GA youth Caucus forms Due

**Some of these dates are not finalized
please check the GA web page or contact
the youth office for more info**

same hotel as my sponsor?

A: Yes, this year we are asking that youth and sponsors stay in the same hotel, but if you stay in the hostel it will be cheaper for everyone. One of the themes at this year's GA is a focus on families and intergenerational activities.

Q: I am super excited about going to GA this year, how do I register?

A: You can start registering for Youth Caucus soon, we will have forms online, and in the spring Synapse. Youth Caucus participants also need to register with the GA office as a regular participant as well. You will be able to find those forms starting March 1st 2002. You will be able to find them in the World, on the UUA's Web page, and in the spring Synapse.

Q: Can I get youth housing through the youth office this year?

A: NO, things are different this year and the youth office isn't organizing a block of rooms in a hotel like we have in the past. We are suggesting that youth and their sponsors stay in the **Hosteling International Hostel** in Quebec City.

That is where the youth staff for GA will be staying. Another thing that is different is that if you are under 18 you need to stay in the same housing as your sponsor. That doesn't mean you have to stay in the same room, but the same hotel, or hostel. GA has never been an intentionally intergenerational experience and we are trying to make it more like that this year.

Q: I know that people in Quebec City speak French as their first language, but I don't know any French, will that be a problem?

A: No, most people in Quebec City also speak English.

Q: What do you mean this is the cheapest youth housing ever?

A: If you register now, and get a space at the hostel, it only costs \$18.00 a night, in Canadian dollars.

Q: I want to go to GA but I don't know any other youth who are going to be there, what do I do?

A: We'll start getting youth from your church and district excited about GA in Quebec City. But don't worry if you come to GA, you will meet tons of people from all over the continent and it won't matter that there isn't anyone there from your youth group.

Q: If I am under 18 do I really have to stay in the

**IMPORTANT
INFORMATION IF
YOU WANT TO
ATTEND GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 2002**

**How to
register for
youth housing.**

You will need to contact:
Centre International de Sejour de Quebec.

In Quebec City, Quebec

They can be reached by phone at

418.694.0755

check out their website at

www.hihostels.ca

This is the only HI hostel in Quebec City,
Quebec.

LEARN ABOUT:

French Canadian Culture

<http://frenchculture.about.com>

About Quebec City

<http://quebecregion.com>

Quebec City Convention Center

<http://www.convention.qc.ca/INDEX.HTM>



Patriotism Today

by Jason Lydon & Erin Goldberger

I have never been much of a patriot. Even as the events of September 11 ordered thousands to buy

I pledge allegiance to the flag and...you know the rest of it. On the first day of first grade I was instructed to learn this patriotic psalm, as were about a million other kids in this country. As we were taught we were also told to put our right hands over our hearts, and that was it. There was no explanation, it was just what we would do every morning for the next twelve years.

Lately, all we see across our towns and on the bumpers of cars and on backpacks is blatant patriotic propaganda. Before September 11, only veterans and a few other people had bumper stickers of U.S. flags or God Bless America. Now flags hang out of all of the houses on North Pleasant Street in Amherst, MA, and about 60% of all cars have patriotic stickers on them. Is this surge of national pride due to a celebration of our country or is it just a reactionary celebration of revenge? As for me, I continue to drive around with my antiviolence, antigovernment bumper stickers, welcoming the honks and finger gestures I receive on the way.

The rise of superficial patriotism must raise the question, what are we getting ready for, war or a football game? People parade around with hoots of U.S.A!, U.S.A.!, U.S.A! as though we were at a high school pep rally before the homecoming game. People seem to forget that war means loss of life.

We suffered a great tragedy on September 11; there is no denying that. Our loss and tragedy, however, does not give us the right to inflict a similar loss of life upon another nation. As our country sponsors a war upon a country where more than half of its citizens have little to no rights, our fellow country people are running around demanding more so-called justice.

It is our duty as Young Religious Unitarian Universalists to stand up, now more than ever, for our belief in nonviolence and commitment to affirming the inherent worth and dignity of all people. We need to raise our voices as one, louder than all the war-seeking cheerleaders, and demand an end to the masochistic rape of our beautiful earth and Her citizens.

*Jason Lydon is a former GA Youth Caucus Mr. HUU-
PER and his favorite word is "respect". He can be
reached at Lysondu18@aol.com*

ordered thousands to buy flags and red, white, and blue attire, I still wasn't proud to be an American. I was sad to be an American. I sympathized with the many countries that have felt the lashing of an attack like I had just felt for the first time, the countries I never gave much thought to before.

As I heard more stories of missing neighbors, had numerous discussions in history class, and heard many of my peers repeatedly saying, "nuke 'em," was just pushing my feelings further back. Did I have to want revenge to be patriotic? After a week of this, I was glad to know that a retreat with my Youth Group would take some of my grief away.

While listening to Mike's CD mixes and getting lost, it was a usual van ride, except for the fact that we were all pretending like nothing happened that Tuesday. It was like we all knew the same secret, but no one wanted to gossip about it. If the tragedy was brought up at all, it was shunned away just as fast.

The retreat didn't last long enough, and we soon had to go home to reality, to where our country had been attacked, where there were no games of Wink to help us vent. On the way home in the van there was a massive amount of motorcycles on the other side of the highway. A gang!? No, it was not a gang, it was a rally. The longer we drove, the more we saw. They stretched for miles. There were so many; little ones, big ones, red ones, blue ones. (I knew that Dr. Seuss would come in handy.) They all had waving flags on the back of them too, forming a sea of flags, but this time it didn't bother me.

We noticed cars parked to watch the endless stream of the cycles. We parked too and soon we were standing there, leaning over the concrete barrier, finally understanding what it means to be patriotic. As the beeps of the motorcycles rang through our ears and the peace signs flashed, I realized you didn't have to agree with or do everything your country decides to do to be patriotic. That day, on the highway, standing with people I could relate to most, realized that with strength and hope like this I wasn't sad to be an American any more.

Erin Goldberger is a member of the youth group at the Summit, NJ UU church. She can be reached at Eggnj@aol.com



How Can I Be a Part of Youth Council?

Do you see holes in the way that 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 leadership structure to change the world?

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
or email them to
yruu@uua.org

If you have any questions call
the youth office at 617.948.4350

Application
Deadline
March 15,
2002



YOUTH COUNCIL PEOPLE OF COLOR CAUCUS APPLICATION

What is the People of Color Caucus?

The People of Color Caucus (PoCC) will be made up of youth of Color who are interested and invested in becoming leaders in YRUU and helping to govern the organization. Adults of Color are also part of the POCC and are there to support and empower youth. At Youth Council, the caucus will participate in the same activities as the other members of Youth Council.

The PoCC was first started at Youth Council 2000 as a step toward making YRUU an anti-racist organization. The PoCC was created out of a resolution at youth council 1999, called "It is time to do something about racism in YRUU". It involves youth of color in the leadership and decision making of YRUU. The POCC is an institutional step to YRUU becoming an Anti-racist organization.

Applications 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, what you feel you can offer to the position, what you feel you can offer to the group, 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 Street
Boston, MA 02108
yruu@uua.org



We want you to be a YRUU Programs Specialist!

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

ARE you 16-22, energetic, organized and love YRUU? Do you 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 into Action. Make a long lasting affect on YRUU and be remembered for your greatness.
Learn skills and gain experience for the real-world!

Check out the job description on the next page to see if this position is right for you! Then get the application online at: <http://www.uua.org/YRUU/youthoffice/pdfs/ypsapp.pdf>
If you have any problems at all getting this form, call the Youth Office at 617.948.4350 and we'll get you those forms.
Oh yes, yes we will.



Fall 2001 updated Job Description

YRUU Programs Specialist
 Department: Religious Education
 Reports to: Youth Programs Director
 (YPS are program staff)

Basic Responsibilities: To design and implement YRUU programs and publications of religious growth for Unitarian Universalist youth and act as a field consultant to districts and local congregations regarding YRUU programs.

Principal Responsibilities:

1. UUA/RE Dept.

Works in dual association with the Religious Education Department and Young Religious Unitarian Universalists with major responsibilities to both. Acts as liaison from Continental YRUU to the UUA Staff and serves as an active "youth presence" at Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters and at UUA meetings and events.

2. Programs/Events

Plans, designs, and implements YRUU programs of religious growth for Unitarian Universalist youth. Serves as a logistical resource and coordinator for Continental YRUU conferences, meetings and trainings. Edits Synapse, YRUU's Continental Youth Magazine. Writes Grants and coordinates fundraising for areas where funding is not sufficient.

3. Consultations and Liaisons

Acts as a YRUU consultant to the UUA at large, to districts, to congregations; acts as a field consultant regarding YRUU programs; assists congregations in the formation and promotion of new YRUU youth groups; plans, designs, and conducts workshops, trainings and leadership development seminars for and with youth and adults. Develops and maintains relationships with key committees, affiliates and departments as needed.

4. YRUU Governing Organizations

Administers YRUU Programs; in consultation with the YRUU Steering Committee and YRUU Youth Council, and Youth Programs Director to ascertain needs, identifies trends and issues, and evaluates the effectiveness of current youth programs and services; Coordinates the ongoing business of Steering Committee. Supports the decisions of the Youth Council and Steering Committee. Reports to Youth Council and Steering Committee.

7. Additional Responsibilities

Assumes additional responsibilities as requested by Youth Programs Director, Religious Education Department Director, the UUA President, Executive Vice President, or Financial Vice President.

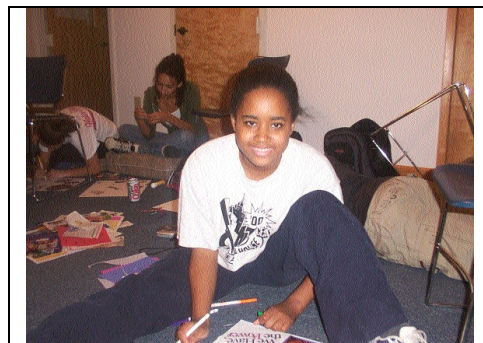
Qualifications: Knowledge of youth ages 14-20 and their religious development; experience and expertise with youth, experience and expertise with YRUU Programming at the local, district, and continental levels; leadership ability and experience with both youth and adults; broad acquaintance with Unitarian Universalism and the Association; good office, computer and organizational skills, willingness to travel. Good written and verbal communication skills, the maturity and creativity to handle a busy fulltime job, have the freedom to live in the Boston area and will be between the ages of 16 and 22 at the time of application.

Term	Skill set	Continental Event	Start Date	Application Deadline
January	Web Design and Layout	Youth Council and ConCon	January 1	September 15
June	Resource Development and Social Justice	Continental Trainings and the YSJC	June 1	December 15
September	UUA Networking and Anti-Racism	General Assembly	September 1	March 15



Youth & Young Adults of Color Conference

May 2-5, 2002 + Third Unitarian Church of Chicago



About the Conference: This is the 2nd Annual Conference sponsored by the UUA People of Color organization called DRUUMM which stands for Diverse & Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries as well as C*UUYAN the Continental UU Young Adult Network and YRUU, Young Religious UU. We have received financial support from each of these organizations in addition to the Fund for Unitarian Universalism and the UUA Faith in Action Department. The conference is lay-led, with a planning team of youth and young adults supported by adult advisors. DRUUMM has fostered the development of this conference in order to strengthen the ties of youth and young adults of color to Unitarian Universalism, to build a network of support for youth and young adults of color, and to give youth and young adults of color an opportunity to explore their identity, religion and faith community.

About Identity: This conference is for individuals who identify as people of color, and we leave it up to each participant to self-identify. Youth who have attended in the past have been multiracial or biracial, adopted, fostered, as well as youth of color from the African-American/Black, Chicano/a/Latino/a/Hispanic, Asian-American, Indian/Native American, Arab-American, and Pacific Islander communities for example. There is interest in a parallel White Youth & Young Adults Identity Conference, and if you are interested in this please contact Joseph Lyons at (503)288-6464 or jlyons@uua.org. Learn more about DRUUMM at www.druumm.org or email info@druumm.org.

Youth & Young Adults of Color: This conference is by and for you, young people of color in the Unitarian Universalist Association. What to expect? 50+ Youth and Young Adults of Color from across North America for a long weekend of community building, making new connections and deepening your spiritual and religious identity. We'll be mixing workshops, small groups, talent show, field trips and plenty of good food and new friends. This is an experience we hope you will bring home with you, sharing your experience at church.

Parents of Youth: This conference requires your parental/guardian consent if your youth is under age 18. In addition, we hope that you would encourage a connection between your youth and their congregation regarding financial scholarships and bringing the conference experience home. Ideas or questions, contact Paula Cole Jones our Adult Coordinator at actualizetoday@worldnet.att.net or (202)526-3404.

UU Leaders: We appreciate all the support we have received from ministers, directors of religious education, youth advisors and district leaders. We are calling on each UUA district to consider setting up a fund of \$500 or more to help send youth of color to this conference, as well as help with publicity to local congregations. If you have questions or need more publicity information please contact Joseph Lyons at (503)288-6464 or jlyons@uua.org.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

SPOKEN WORD & POETRY:
PHILADELPHIA'S WALIDAH IMARISHA

MUSICAL GUESTS:
CHICAGO'S OWN FUNK-FUSION
MARVIN TATE'S D-DESETTLEMENT

HANDS ON ART:
DC AREA'S MICHELLE SANTOS
PLUS
MOVEMENT & DANCE
WORSHIP & SPIRITUALITY
TALK ABOUT RACE & CLASS AND A
VISIT TO CHICAGO

Youth & Young Adults of Color

May 2-5, 2002 Conference Registration

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.DRUUMM.ORG

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

UU Congregation: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Birthdate: _____

Medical Release:

I, _____, am the parent or legal guardian of _____, who will be attending the Youth & Young Adults of Color Conference, May 2-5, 2002 in Chicago IL. 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 that any breach of the rules may result in my child/ward being disallowed to participate in the remainder of the conference.

Signature of Parent or Guardian (18 and older may sign for themselves) X _____

In case of Emergency call: _____

Medical Info (attach paper if necessary):

Name of person with insurance: _____

Health Insurance: _____

Policy/Group #: _____

Medications: _____

Allergies/Medical Conditions: _____

Date of last tetanus shot: _____

Guidelines:

- *No drugs, weapons or alcohol
- *No leaving the site without permission
- *Respect staff members, speakers, conference site and fellow participants

Travel:

Arrive Thursday May 2 by 8pm to any of Chicago Airports, Bus or Train Stations and we will pick you up. Depart Sunday May 5 after 2pm and we will drop you off. Please provide us information below by April 30, 2002 or contact Joy Kane at joyusa@aol.com or 708-848-7941.

I am arriving by: () Plane/Train/Bus () Car

Travel Info, Flight #, Times, Airline: _____

Cost:

\$50.00 USD by April 1, 2002

\$60.00 USD after April 1, 2002

Check payable to UUA

Send registration to:

Paula Nett

YRUU

25 Beacon St

Boston, MA 02108

(617)742-2100x351

pnett@uua.org

Conference Contact Info:

Co-Dean/Outreach: **Helen Harris**

rnbowbrite1982@aol.com

Co-Dean/Local Logistics: **Joy Kane**

joyusa@aol.com (708)848-7941

Workshops: **Natalie Nguyen**

revolution@yahoo.com (773)507-4776

Adult Coordinator: **Paula Cole Jones**

actualizetoday@worldnet.att.net (202)526-3404

DRUUMM/UUA Contact: **Joseph Lyons**

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Contact your YCR to find out about amazing opportunities happening near you!!!



The Spark

By Kathryn Mareci

Last year at Youth Council 2000, I was a first-year, naïve, and aloof (not to say it's any different now) Youth Council Representative (YCR) from the Florida District. My first Youth Council Meeting was the second year that Youth Council (YC) went through Anti-Racism (AR) training. With the help of the People of Color Caucus, Youth Council worked on identifying the racism inside of ourselves (a journey that most of us will never finish, it's painful, hard, and frustrating, but extremely necessary). This past summer, Youth Council 2001 met again to take part in Anti-Racism training, but it seemed that dealing with the racism inside ourselves was not enough this year.

Youth Council is the governing body of YRUU. We meet once a year to write up project proposals and resolutions to enrich YRUU. This past July in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, Youth Council not only worked on identifying the racism inside each of us, but also began looking at the racism within YRUU. We deeply questioned how we could continue to pass resolutions and project proposals when they confirmed and supported our racist system. YC debated not doing agenda items and focused on something that perhaps needed more attention and is more important, anti-racism work. So Youth Council

members turned to each other and to the group and discussed their concerns. Everyone was forced to question who they were accountable to and what their job at Youth Council was. As a YCR I thought about my accountability to my district, my job as liaison between my district and the continent, my accountability to Youth Council and each of its members, and my job as a youth of color advo-

“Youth Council not only worked on identifying the racism inside ourselves but also began looking at the racism within YRUU”

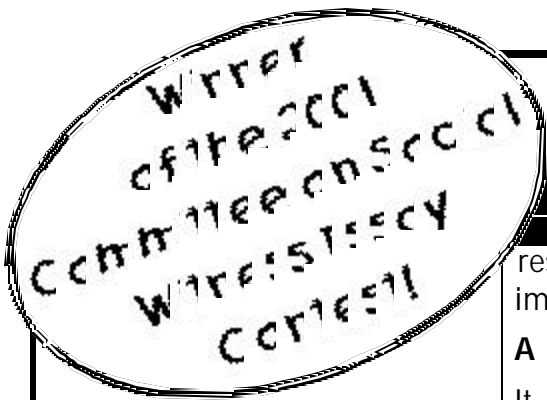
cate. There were concerns about whether we were capable of going through agenda items with an anti-racism lens and, that by going forth with the agenda items, we were being compliant with a racist system and process. One member of youth council expressed how I felt perfectly. He explained that his anti-racism lens was not finished, it was scratched, bubbled, uneven, and it sucked to look through it--but he was never going to have a complete

lens. He said that the job of Youth Council is to govern YRUU, and that we would be doing a disservice to our organization by not passing resolutions and project proposals to enrich YRUU as a whole, and that resolutions passed could possibly help change the racist system we were working within. So it was decided, after much thought and with a clearer perspective on what we were doing and why we were there, that we continue. We selected only the extremely important agenda items to go over (we had money and time restraints). All the ones passed are extremely interesting, I urge you to read them, either by getting them from your YCR or looking online at www.uua.org/YRUU.

It felt good to see YRUU and Youth Council going in a new direction, realizing the problems with our own system and trying to seriously better ourselves. This summer contained a spark, a vision, and a reaffirmed belief in the ideas we hold as truths with continental Youth Council. The Anti-Racism training we're doing now on a continental scale is the future of our country, of the world, and, hopefully, soon a point of interest within our districts. If you're interested in developing Anti-Racism training in your district contact your YCR or the Youth Office. Get passionate about something and make a difference.

Kathryn Mareci is the current YCR from the Florida District, she can be reached at theLibraAngel@aol.com





A Moral What?

by Justin Whitaker

We live in a society that has lost its morals to the daily attractions of political manipulation. We live in a society that has lost sight of the democratic process, and has now begun to use its democratic theories to push corporations, political capitalism, consumerism, and consumption into our schools and our media. Now those theories have begun to permeate into all tiers of our society. But as ethernet and internet cables carry these theories throughout our planet and into our skyscrapers and business proposals, the earth's population seems to be screaming at me to buy and sell. Get this toothbrush that can be used once and then thrown away! The undertone whispers in my ear to pack everything in its own plastic container to ensure cleanliness, completely depleting our environment at the same time. As all this chaos plagues my thoughts and eats away at my morals, there is a voice that calls me. It calls with a voice that is pleasant to my ears and calls my name. This voice is embodied by the Unitarian Universalist Association. As a minority in the battle for responsible consumption, we must stand as a creator of change, we must do our best to stand tall and

respond strong to our moral imperative.

A Moral What?

It is an imperative. It is our obligation to respond. Webster defines imperative as one issue not to be evaded, peremptory. These are words that leave us no option. They provide us with no choice in our actions; but rather they require something of us. They call for an imperative. It is something that

“...used near enough plastic to make a rain parka for a homeless person in the pacific northwest...”

we must act on now, but how can we do it? Where do we start? How can we act on this imperative? First question: Do we act on issues within our own control or do we address the problem in our community and society? I advocate that change must originate from within. For example, the one time I attended a UUA Board of Trustees meeting my colleagues and I were provided with boxed lunches courtesy of the UUA. Inside of the box everything was wrapped in plastic wrap, and under that wrap each dish was in its own plastic container. I'm sure that either one of these protective coverings would have been

sufficient on its own. Nonetheless, two salads, a sandwich, and a fruitbowl all were wrapped separately. My guess is that the 10 lunches provided used near enough plastic to make a rain parka for a homeless person in the Pacific Northwest, and maybe even a matching hat.

It's an imperative. Think about it. Think about the last piece of trash that you threw away, and then think about if there had been a better option for that "trash." I think about it everyday. In fact, the rough draft of this essay was on the back of an old report I wrote. But does that make me some sort of Super Moral Responsible Consumer, simply because I take notes on recycled paper? Am I now the almighty moral consumer? No. Never. Why? Because the word imperative has implications much larger than our actions. By adopting this goal as an imperative, we must do our best to overcome decades of poor teachings, thoughtless actions, and societal degradation on the part of the education system, the government, and the media. Where can we go to change the big things, the mindset that creates irresponsible consumption? How do we affect the way a person thinks?

Philosopher Martin Heidegger asked the same questions when he examined the way people think. He classified thoughts into two types



of thinking, calculative and meditative. It is calculative thoughts that dominate our society, that calculates constant addition and use, construction of one thing to the next without analyzing the effects. Calculative thinking promotes incessant use of products simply because we have them, but not necessarily because we need them. Meditative thinking contrasts the calculative theories. Meditative thoughts are content with the current status, or often promote a digression to a previous societal state. Most important, meditative thoughts promote analysis and understanding of overall implications prior to action. It is this mindset that must be sought. The mindset that Heidegger promoted is the one that we must attempt to create throughout our society.

In 1997, John Berger, author of *Charging Ahead* and analyst of the U.S. energy grid, predicted a forthcoming energy crisis. California is currently experiencing this crisis. In this millennium things are no different from what was written in the original "Study Action Issue": "We are [still] caught up in a consumption treadmill that is morally questionable and that is not sustainable..." Although our nation has been struggling to improve this condition, I feel as though we have only further entrenched ourselves into the crisis. This crisis is one that also must be

addressed by our imperative. It is our role as Unitarian Universalists to take our imperative to an international community. Whether through the WTO or through day-to-day use of CFCs and aerosol cans, our environment is being destroyed. Our consumption has reached levels that are no longer acceptable. What can we do? Where can we go? How can we take our imperative to an international level? These are the questions that must be answered, these are the imperative questions.

It is the calling of our culture, it is the calling of my religion, and it is the calling of my morals to step up to our imperatives. We must understand the implications of our goals, we must remember that the value of starting our efforts with ourselves and our own actions, in no way can compare with the value of ending our efforts on a global scale. We must remember that we have agreed to take this issue as an imperative. By embodying this imperative through both social and mental changes, we will achieve our goal. We will answer to our morals and we will be able to answer to our moral imperative--our imperative of responsible consumption.

Just Whitaker currently is living in the Portland, OR area. He can be reached at DaFaze@aol.com

WHO LOVES E-MAIL?

THE YOUTH OFFICE
HERE IN BOSTON HAS A
GRIP OF LISTSERVS TO
CHOOSE FROM

SIGN ON BY GOING TO
WWW.UUA.ORG AND SELECTING THE
"E-MAIL LISTS" SHORTCUT.

- advisor-L** -Discussion resource for YRUU group advisors
- FDYRUU-L** - Communication for Florida District youth and their advisors
- MYRUUYAC** -Communication for District of Michigan youth and their advisors
- PSDYRUU-L** - Communication for Youth of the Prairie Star District and adults who work with youth. Announcements, discussions, problem solving and philosophy.
- PSWD-ADVISOR-L** -Communication for Pacific Southwest District youth advisors and adults who work with youth, to begin building a community among district youth advisors and spread information about events.
- PSWD-YRUU** - Communication for Pacific Southwest District youth & their advisors
- SLD-YRUU** - Communication for YRUUs in the St. Lawrence Dist.
- TJD-YRUU** - YRUU members and friend in the Thomas Jefferson District
- WCD-YRUU** - Communication for Western Canada Districts youth and their advisors
- YRUU-L** - A resource for UU youth programs, run by the YRUU
- YRUUJrHi** - For Junior High Liaisons and Outreach Coordinators
- YRUUSJ** - YRUUer discussion of social action and social justice



To Repair the Web

by Rev. Dr. Kristen Lee Harper

The Diary of Anne Frank, July 15, 1944: "It's difficult times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals; they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet, I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart. It is utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness; I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too. I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquility will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold onto my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realize them."

It is times like these that we hear the approaching thunder. We watch bombs being dropped on Afghanistan. We hear about our young people being called up with their reserve units to prepare for battle. We listen to the President of the United States warn us of possible additional terrorists attacks. We hear of the growing number of anthrax

virus detections, prop plane use in chemical warfare, the closing of businesses, layoffs, armed guards at the airports, and market downturns. As the fear that we hoped would pass continues, it is a wonder we haven't abandoned all our ideals.

Our interconnection with humanity has never been more evident. The interdependent web of all existence, our seventh prin-

"It is easy to hold onto ideals when everything is going right"

ciple, has come alive in our souls and is on fire. We do not need to know the names or to see the faces of those who have died and those who grieve for loved ones lost. We feel the fracture and the anguish of life lost too soon in our diaphragms as we fight for breath in confusion and horror. Truly now, we have a felt sense of the prophetic words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

As I struggle to come to terms not only with the destruction

but with the steps toward healing, I am reminded of a quote from the movie *Contender*, "It is easy to hold onto ideals when everything is going right." So, what are my ideals?

The interdependent web of all existence is a challenge during the best of times. Webster's New World Collegiate Dictionary defines interdependence as "dependence on each other or one another; mutual dependence." To be dependent on another means to be influenced or controlled by or to rely on for support or aid. To be interdependent implies a mutual influence, mutual control, and mutual support. It has been a struggle for many of us to acknowledge our own connection to the natural world and become accountable to that connection. It is even more difficult when we speak of people, unknown and known, and our accountability to them.

Sure, we feel a connection to the Unitarian Universalists who lost loved ones. We feel connected to those who live and work in New York City. We may even feel connected to the countries around the world that lost citizens. We are connected to the pain, the



fear, the anguish, the anger, the courage, the hope, and the perseverance of the precious human community of which we are a link—at least the part of the human community around us, those we know, those we can relate to, and those we wish to acknowledge. But the web does not stop here.

Whether or not we wish to believe or acknowledge it, the Taliban, not just the "oppressed" women and children of Afghanistan, is a part of our web. It is a link. It is much harder to hold onto our ideals when we are forced to acknowledge our interdependence with "the enemy." Where is the mutual influence, control, support? Where is our connection? Yes, what they did had an impact on us but what was our impact upon them? And what will our current actions do to foster greater connection, a stronger link?

Part of my understanding of the interdependent web is the realization that the human and natural community's fate are one. We thrive together. We are saved together. We hurt together and we are destroyed together.

A member of the congregation I serve said, "They have severed their ties to the web." I am not sure that is possible; how-

ever, perhaps it is where we need to begin. If we are to end the cycles of hate that contribute to the terror around the world and in our own hearts, we have to repair the strands that have been broken—both by the actions we have called "hateful" and the actions that we intentionally and unintentionally have permitted through our lack of accountability. We have to be willing to teach compassion, love, and commitment to humanity's reformation. We can't expect others to

"we are forced to acknowledge our interdependence with 'the enemy'"

behave as we do simply because we have a bigger stick. We have to be willing to share our wealth and freedom for the benefit of all, not just so we can become wealthier. We have to be willing to reach out and build relationships with people and communities on the basis of mutual respect and need, not just to create allies in our best interest.

If we want a different world we have to be willing to acknowledge where we have caused fracturing in the web. We have to find hope, not only in the sky, but in one another. Dr. King implored, "We must pursue

peaceful ends through peaceful means. We shall hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope."

I believe there is great hope—hope in our reaching out to one another to find comfort and healing, to rebuild our broken symbols, and to recreate how those symbols are seen in the world. There is hope in our reaching beyond lines of citizenship, ethnicity, religions, and political ideology, giving aid and compassion to those directly victimized and to those who need a community of love and support. There is hope that in our awakening we might rethink our foreign policy and see ourselves as part of a larger global community inextricably linked in our reformation. There is hope in our reaching out to our neighbors in the North and South and building healthy economic, cultural, and scientific exchanges. There is hope in our teaching acceptance of one another and interdependence as both a spiritual discipline and as a global ethic. And there is hope that we can go on seeing the goodness in humanity and striving to realize our dreams.

Kristen Harper is currently serving at the UU Society of the Daytona Beach Area. She can be reached at KLJewett@aol.com



INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES IN DC!!

For the past few years, the office that represents Unitarian Universalism in U.S. politics has been working to expand the opportunities it offers young UUs. In recent history the office has either had no interns or just one, but that's about to change: One of the Rev. Bill Sinkford's first actions as the new President of the Unitarian Universalist Association was to flash a bright green light to the Washington Office to develop an extensive internship program.

"I'm really psyched that this is happening," says Rob Cavanaugh, Legislative Director for the Washington Office and a recent YRUU leader. "I think there's a real lack of opportunities for UU young adults who want to do UU-centered justice work on a long-term basis. Additionally, many of the Americorps-type programs are just about service, not advocacy. We want to connect the two."

Adds the Rev. Meg Riley, Director of the Office, "Each intern will focus on a particular issue or constellation of issues. For instance, one might focus on gender/ sexual identity issues. That intern would join coalitions that work on public policy in these areas, as well as doing hands-on work in a local environment -for instance, facilitating drop-in groups for GLBTQ teens or volunteering in a battered women's shelter. Interns will also be partnered with local mentors who work in their field of interest. Reflection about

what all of this has to do with faith and Unitarian Universalism will be an integral part of the experience."

The first three internships, which will run January-June of 2002, will help to design the program. Applications for the next round, which will run from mid-May to late August, will be due in late February. Formal 10-month internships may begin as early as Fall 2002.

"We'll pay just about enough to live on, but the experience will be priceless!" says Riley. "We may also design intentional interfaith community housing as part of this experience, if the planets align in that direction for us. Also, most colleges and seminaries will allow students to get credit for these internships."

As a Unitarian Universalist, I originally just thought of my religion as a "show up or don't show up, believe or don't believe, at least you have a label to claim" religion. I was wrong. My summer experience at the Washington Office has altered my view, not only on my faith, but my world and myself.

--Caty Price, Summer 2001 intern in the Unitarian Universalist Association Washington Office.

Because the Washington Office works within the U.S. political systems, these internships are only available to U.S. citizens. For liability reasons, interns must be 18 by the start of their term. For more information, please contact Rob Cavanaugh at Rcavanaugh@uua.org; (202) 296-4672 x15; or check out the Washington Office website at <http://www.uua.org/uuawo>. To keep up with what the office is working on, what you can do, and the latest internship announcements, sign up for the office's email alert.

Resolutions Passed at Youth Council | 2001 a summary

Resolution to reaffirm YRUU's continental nature and improve accountability to Canadian UU youth.

Individually, we have only that which we ourselves possess. We gather into community to share our unique gifts and increase our knowledge, collective experience and resources. Canadian and Americans have different national experiences and together our experiences in our communities give us the perspective to speak to the pain in the world and build a world community of love.

Resolution to change the election process of the general assembly youth caucus business manager

Because the youth caucus business manager is elected from first-year youth council representatives at youth council, the electee may not have even attended general assembly, and thus may not have sufficient knowledge of youth caucus business structure.

Resolution to Conduct a YRUU Long-Range Planning Meeting

The Youth-designated program money expected under the Mind the Gap fundraising program has already begun to arrive, but how it will be spent and who will control it is unclear. YRUU needs to build alliances and coalitions within the UUA power structure, both to obtain their perspective and solicit their endorsement of YRUU's plans and structure. Also, YRUU's last overall visioning and evaluation process was the 15-year review, conducted principally by adults. We believe the YRUU community should have a greater voice in its own evaluation.

A Taskforce to Explore the Creation of a Federation between Massachusetts Bay District and Ballou Channing District

Within the BCD and MBD YRUU communities there has been a loss of unity and strength. BCD YRUU has had a rocky history over the past 4 generations of YRUU with inconsistent support for district programming and youth empowerment. MBD YRUU is growing rapidly and needs help steering the direction of how to keep intentionality and purpose in the community with this fluctuation of size. There is a need for change to sustain youth empowerment and to continue to have an environment in MBD and BCD which reflects our YRUU/UU Principles and Purposes.

Resolution to Create Partnerships in Strategies for Action

This resolution calls attention to the lack of YRUU & the UUA's relevance in anti-racism work to larger communities outside of the faith community. YRUU's work in social justice and anti-racism focuses too much within, and needs to become more relevant to our societies by joining a larger movement working for our similar values, in the way that the School of the Americas mobilization did.

Resolution to Restructure the YRUU Social Justice Conference (YSJC)

As is, there is no way for district social action coordinators (SACs) to effectively communicate and network with each other. Additionally, there is no set structure in which a super working action team (SWAT) is established. These factors contribute to the lack of accountability within the YRUU social justice movement. The YSJC currently operates as an informational conference rather than a training guide for social justice leaders and activists.



Soap Box

by Marissa Gutierrez

For fourteen or fifteen years of my life I considered myself Catholic. As a Catholic, I was oblivious to the words, "Youth Empowerment." Not that only certain religious denominations can or cannot have youth empowerment in their church communities, but I think that my knowledge of it first started when I entered the Unitarian Universalist community. It was then that a whole world opened up in front of my very eyes. I was drawn in when I learned that an awesome group of teenagers my age were fighting against the Alameda County "super prison" (my favorite example of youth empowerment). I knew that I was reeled in. It fascinated me that people my own age could go up in front of an adult board, speak out against what they thought was wrong in such a professional manner, and, most astonishing of all, be LISTENED to. Teenagers were actually being RESPECTED for their beliefs. ADULTS and YOUTH working TOGETHER. (I didn't know that these words could be put in the same sentence together.)

As a youth, I realize that it is difficult for many adults to take us seriously. Youth are seen as unruly, immature, irresponsible, and loud-mouthed. For this reason, they are constantly oppressed, whether it be the ever-popular example of being forced to take off the backpack in the supermarket, the occasional "break it up" while standing in a group that even looks semithreatening at the mall, or in my case (which still makes me bitter), of not being able to walk into a museum for fear of me stealing something. It works both ways however. Adults aren't seen in a positive light either. The youth see them as old-fashioned, criticizing, interfering, and senile. They are the curfew police, the couch commandos, the ones out to smack youth with their canes, and cover their eyes from naughty sex scenes in movies. For many youth, adults simply refuse to

trust them or simply listen to them. That is where Youth Empowerment comes in.

I consider myself still a student of Youth Empowerment. Recently, however, I was able to have some training with a group of wonderful youth and adults for a weekend in Boston (for the Leadership Development Conference). Yes, it's true for you who are reading this--ADULTS AND YOUTH spent the weekend TOGETHER! Even more so, they GOT ALONG! It was really quite



the effervescent Marissa

astonishing. For two moons and three suns, adults and youth worked together--doing community building activities, planning worship, even singing songs and eating meals. I think at the conference we also tackled some popular misconceptions about each other as well as about Youth Empowerment.

When I think of Youth Empowerment, a comment my friend made always sticks out in my mind. When describing his youth group he mentioned how the adult advisors in his congregation would give the youth freedom to whatever they want, without paying any attention to them. My friend told us that even though it was a major change from not letting the youth group make any decisions for themselves, he believed that that "wasn't Youth Empowerment either." I think that is a very important point, letting the youth "do whatever they want" is most definitely a myth that many have. Y o u t h

Empowerment is the idea that adults and youth can work together, side by side, on a healthy, productive, creative, and emotional level. Each group has its own responsibilities as well. I feel that the responsibility of the youth in YRUU is to genuinely and democratically protect the power and all the personal rights and freedoms that all youth throughout YRUU are entitled to. Adults have responsibilities as well, for they are obligated to have a positive, respectful, and understanding relationship with all youth as well as adults in YRUU. I feel that adult advisors are there to give their support to all youth in any projects they undertake, lead by not leading, helping solve the problems by not solving the problem. Adults should let the youth decide their own decisions, but be there to give constructive criticism when needed. The adult members must not deprive the youth of being able to demonstrate their own power. Both youth and adults must understand they must respect one another and, most important, be willing to listen to all ideas and to respect the wishes of each other, as well realize that they cannot fully function without the understanding and cooperation of each other. To me, this is the true essence of Youth Empowerment.

My favorite quote that represents Youth Empowerment is Kevin Arnold's (Fred Savage) from the *Wonder Years*. He said, "You're not too old enough yet to leave home, but you're not too young to fall in love." That, I think, is true. Although the youth have intelligence and the capability to make responsible decisions, they are still indeed youth and are entitled to follow certain rules and regulation. Youth Empowerment is there to make the transition from adolescence to adulthood oh-so-much healthier. It is a struggle for the voice of the youth to be listened to and to be taken seriously in today's ever changing society. It is the belief that adults and youth can work together in a *Marrisa Gutierrez is the Pacific Southwest District's Social Action Coordinator. She can be reached at: olbrownshu@yahoo.com*



Keep us in the know!!!

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

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: _____
Email: _____
Birthdate: _____
Congregation: _____
Positions in YRUU? (YAC member, con dean...): _____

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

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