

Busking On the Causeway

The Newsletter for
Canadian U*U Youth
Summer~Autumn 2003

www.cuc.ca/youth • www.uua.org/YRUU
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CanUUdle III

CanUUdle III took place May 16 to 19 in Winnipeg, MB. It was a blast with nearly 70 youth attending. Much fun stuff happened, from webweaving to business meetings. Workshops on activism and environmentalism took place, and we even made shampoo and toothpaste. The shampoo smelled nice after you washed it out, I swear! (it was green) We also passed a resolution to improve the way future CanUUdles are organized and run, and ratified Myda's appointment as this year's Youth Observer to the Board (YOB). Rock on!



Here's everyone! (Photo courtesy of Art Kilgour and www.cuc.ca)

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The Out-Going YOB Report: an Explanation

By Stephen Turnbull

“YOB?!?!? What?!?!?!? What the is a YOB anyway? What does a YOB do? Why do we have a YOB? And most importantly why wasn't I consulted when that YOB person was chosen anyway?”

If any of those questions have ever entered your mind, feel not alone. Most of those I thought myself (By the by, I'm the outgoing YOB or Youth Observer to the Board for some context). Now that I've finished my term, I finally feel like I have some of the expertise to answer some of those questions.

I suppose I'll start in the middle, seeing as it also could be seen as the start. “Why is there a Youth Observer? And what does the YOB observe?”

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The Canadian Unitarian Council (the governing organization for the Canadian UU movement), when it took over all regional services, also acquired responsibility for youth programming. And since they were making decisions on the youth's behalf, they thought it would be a good idea to have some youth making sure some of it made sense (to us). With that in mind the Youth Observer to the Board position was born.

"Ok, so it's all well and nice to watch, but what did the YOB DO!?!?!?"

I (as the YOB) assisted in forming some/many of the youth service's infrastructure as well as representing youth at some events. The YOB sits on the newly formed Youth Advisory Group, which acts as a cross country checkup and information gathering session for Youth leaders and the Director of Lifespan learning and in the upcoming year will be responsible for organization of CanUuddle (Youth portion of the CUC's Annual General Meeting). The YOB presents the youth document, and does other increasingly "official" work.

Myself as the Youth Observer tried to get better youth programming not as an end goal but rather having youth and youth programming as a means to meet board goals. It would have been great if one of the goals of the CUC was to commit to having 500 youth in Canadian UU Youth Groups by 2008 (made up on the spot with no reflection on any existing policy or Goal) but personally I would have preferred to see a goal of having youth involved as equals in all aspects of CUC programming (even the intensely boring stuff).

So I've delayed as long as I can, but the time has come, I must explain why you weren't consulted (yet again). I was the first official Youth Observer to the Board and I got my position through appointment. Which, all things considered, was not ALL that democratic . . . I hope I did a reasonable job regardless. As for this upcoming year, my personal feeling is that the Ends were once again placed before the Means in importance and for a moment the Board forgot that sometimes the process can be more important than the product. But don't fear, as best I can remember we've (that's the we excluding the speaker because I have no more say in the issue) all promised that we'll (same we) do it better next year.

Thanks for reading this my last YOB report,
Stephen Turnbull

P.S. My Job has been REALLY cool, and I've REALLY enjoyed it. And I STRESS to the best of my ability that each of you reading this, SHOULD consider strongly casting your ballot to be the Youth Observer to the Board for the May 2004 -2005 term and beyond, it's a wonderful and rewarding experience.

The DLL Goes To Youth Council 2003

By Sylvia Bass West

My work as Director of Lifespan Learning offers me many opportunities to learn and grow professionally in order to better serve the CUC in this role and for this I am most grateful.

My experience as an Adult-at-Large representative with YRUU Youth Council this August was one I will never forget. It was an amazing, inspiring, youth-lead event. Our time together included 5 days of anti-racism work, YRUU resolution information sessions and decision making, District and Regional updates, Y-FUUD grant decision making, by-law changes, UUA Youth Office updates, bonding and stretching and deep sharing activities, great meals, games, a coffee house and nightly worship. I was honoured to be accepted as an Adult-at-Large representative by Steering Committee. I feel like I gained so much more than I gave.

This year's event was set in a 600 acre very rustic girl guide camp about * hour outside Buffalo, NY. We had a lovely large wooden "lodge" for business and meals ...and although it was quite a stretch on the creature comfort scale with outhouses and tents, plus it poured rain part of almost every day... it was a beautiful setting and certainly conducive to letting the rest of reality go and focusing on the moments at hand.

4 incredible Canadian youth leaders, Asha Philar (Canadian-at-large), Dale Brydon (QuOM YCR), Rachele Rickards (Western RRYSC YCR) and Alicia Gladman (BC YAC YCR) were all there as Canadian Youth Council Representatives (YCRs). How wonderful it was to share this time with them. I got a

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much clearer sense of how we “fit” into the larger YRUU continental picture. I hope the youth bring back renewed enthusiasm and commitment to their regions and to YRUU in Canada. I certainly did. I also believe that the Youth Advisory Group will benefit from the knowledge several of its members in attendance gained while there. Our YAG functions in a similar way to Steering Committee of Youth Council so there were many parallels from which to compare and learn. By the way, Asha Philar was elected to YRUU Steering Committee. Jark on Asha! I give you the “Super-Committed Canadian UU Youth of the Year” award!

Our anti-racism work included daily intensive whole group workshops and smaller identity group discussions. Our facilitators, Chris and Claire, took us through a series of exercises focused on “Anti-Racism for Liberation”: how anti-racism work can be transformative; not guilt ridden, but educative. And educative it was! We looked at some of the systems of oppression in our world; patriarchy, heterosexism, gender binary system, capitalism, the “state”. We looked at white supremacy, manifest destiny, enslaved and exploited labour, and theft of land and resources. We looked at issues of institutional racism in areas of health and social services, housing, education, the military, the media and the criminal justice systems. We talked about the fact that the “history” of racism in North America is always with us, and that “internalized racial superiority” always enters a room or a conversation around racism. All of this deep, difficult, thought-provoking, commitment-inspiring stuff was brought full-circle as being all about developing and holding healthy relationships. Our learning to be white allies is a continuing process of personal growth and struggle, change and building trust.

I came home knowing that there are UU anti-racism awareness packets, resources and trainers out there in our midst for us to access and a network of competent, committed, social justice-oriented youth to connect with. The CUC has seven social responsibility monitoring groups (choice in dying; environment; economic justice; gender and sexual diversity; globalization; peace; justice for first nations) and are forming an 8th addressing anti-racism.

I look forward to continued learning both personally and professionally and to working with you in lifespan

learning toward eliminating injustices and oppression here in Canada.

Youth and Social Responsibility

By Mary Bennet

CUC has seven social responsibility monitoring groups (choice in dying; environment; economic justice; gender and sexual diversity; globalization; peace; justice for first nations) and are forming an 8th—anti-racism. This one follows the resolution debated and discussed at the May annual meeting. We also have two “study groups” who will bring resolutions to the 2004 meeting (on Peace) and the 2005 meeting (on Democracy). ALL of these groups can have youth members (or members of any age for that matter) and several are actively seeking additional people.

As well as following along general discussion and drafting of statements on the issues, I hope that youth members will specifically offer ideas on how youth—in groups or not—might be active in these areas. And here’s some very good news: No need to “age out”. The groups are open to people of any age.

We have been experimenting with this since last year and I’m currently thinking MORE youth would be better—perhaps one youth to be on the monitoring group and then 3 additional youth from the other three regions to form a Youth Network.

I’ll be at three of the regional gatherings, and if any of you wanted to talk with me about these opportunities, please just send me a note. (While I won’t be at the Western Region gathering, I can probably find a “delegate” who’s on one of the groups to talk with anyone who’d like to know more.)

While “youth” is Lifespan Learning portfolio, social responsibility (regardless of age) remains with the executive director, so if you want to comment or get involved, just send a note to mary@cuc.ca.

People Helping People

By Sarah Mae Baxter

In this little old town of North Hatley, where the most exciting things to expect are tourists, bike rides, and swimming in the lake, wonderful, terrifying, adventurous things have been taking place these past few weeks, concealed inside a little white church, protected by its warm red doors.

The most exciting thing that has happened for me this summer, and no doubt the rest of my congregation at the Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley, was the arrival of two Colombian refugees in the middle of the night on June 25th. (Illegally, as an expulsion order took effect on the morning of the 26th, I might add.) German and Doris entered our church as a last hope to stay in Canada. We are and will continue to provide sanctuary to them from the law, as we believe their story that they would no doubt be returning to their deaths, or worse, if forced back into Columbia.

It's been on the news; television, radio and newspapers have been covering the story, at least in this part of the country, and communities have been lending support from many places, especially Montreal, (thanks) where German and Doris came from, and where they have been living.

My father, Keith Baxter, says that's what we need, support. (He has somehow managed to get very involved in this business, he is one of the main contacts and representative of our congregation for media, politicians and whoever else might be seeking information for some reason.

The church has been full of visitors these days: Lucie Craft our Coordinator has been there nearly everyday to check up on them and offer some companionship. Rev. Carole Martignacco, our minister, has also spent time there with them and is often to be found at the church seeing as she has recently moved into the parsonage, next door. Reporters and media pop by every now and then to see if there's any new information. And many members of the congregation take it upon themselves to be the friends German and Doris need, dropping by every now and then for a visit.

Of course everyone expects, wants and has the youth's

support, but something seems wrong in sitting around, being supportive, in my eyes. I'm very proud of everyone, of course, for helping these people, labeled "criminals" for refusing to return to their home to be killed, but isn't there anything more proactive I could be doing? That is why I took it upon myself to write this article. This is my way of telling people what's happening.

German and Doris need help. They are very optimistic and intent on staying in Canada. They've even become accustomed to the church and Doris was talking, the other day, about maybe moving away from the city of Montreal, and out to our quieter section of the country.

I guess the strongest point to remember, for us: the youth who have no political power and no standing on legal issues, is it's our support that goes straight to these people so they can hear about the outside world and how we're enjoying our summer vacation. German and Doris are my friends. I have gotten to know them over the past month and they are wonderful people. If this situation had not been dropped in our laps, maybe I would have spent my entire life not ever running into them, but that would have been my loss. I no longer think of them as the refugees in sanctuary, I think of them as people who happen to be living in our church. Up close, they're just as real as you or I.

Walking the Plank

By Marie Zahradnik

After puberty people stop talking about "changes" and "growing up" so much. You start to believe you'll be etched in the void that is high school forever, that youth group and good leadership will always be around, leading you the right way. Then comes grade 12, a year that is supposed to be the greatest, your utmost in scholastic achievement AND partying. My grade 12 was nothing so phenomenal. It felt like anything I had to say was a cliché said too many times already in that high school graduation movie. While all this jazz about school and life was hitting me like a two-by-four I found my youth group being pulled out from me like a rug. "Sorry, you're too old now, be on your way, bye!" My question is, where? What way am I supposed to go? Did you really mean to ditch me at the curb? There is no young adult

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group at my church in Vancouver, BC. I went from highly involved to not at all involved with no support. Sounds to me like a really good way to lose a kid. My best friend who went through the same thing along with me came up with the most accurate term for what we did. We walked the plank. At a time in our lives when support would have been one of the most cherished things; our church sent us down to a watery slap in the face. And i think it's wrong. So beware fellow youth, keep your friends close and your youth group closer because you're sure going to miss it when it's gone.

OPUS - definition: a) small or minor work, b) a musical composition, c) a rockin' young adult conference at UNICamp!

By Stephen Turnbull

Out of the frying pan, and into the fire, the frying pan and fire of UU loving. Yehaw! Con Con to OPUS, youth to young adult. BANG! welcome to a new world. . . or at least that*s what it may seem, and to some extent it was.

Con Con and OPUS are different animals to be sure, but none of the changes are scary or frightful, simply. . . different. OPUS was a blast, just as Con Con was, and there is a lot of energy going into young adult programming right now from continental events to Campus Ministry. The UU young adult world is on fire with places to go things to do and ways to get involved.

As Jeff Baily (a young adult staff working with the UU movement in Canada) noted, it*s interesting that vocabulary has changed from “Aging Out” to “Bridging Out” since he was in YG. I would now tend to agree more with the Bridging Out philosophy, since I see OPUS as a growing community which is, as best I could tell, working hard to build that bridge to YRUU.

I did notice one thing at OPUS though, there were very few Born-and/or-Raised-UU*s. Where are we all? One thing is for sure, OPUS needs YOU, if your reading this, then you probably should go to OPUS when you first get your chance.

I don*t know what more I can say.

I*m standing in the middle of this Bridge between youth and young adult, thought I*d just call back and tell you, the other side is every bit as green.

History Hot on our Heels

By Samantha Magnus

Most of us know the story of Moses bringing the Ten Commandments to the Jewish people after a chat with God on a mountain. Few of us know how our own “commandments,” our seven principles, came to be. All of us ought to know how those principles might come to change in the future.

The UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) got their first official statement of principles way back in 1961. They have a lot in common with our current seven, but we don’t need to hire Sherlock to sniff out a few crucial differences. To begin, try counting them:

The members of the Unitarian Universalist Association, dedicated to the principles of a free faith, unite in seeking:

1. To strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of our religious fellowship;
2. To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man;
3. To affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of every human personality, the dignity of man, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships;
4. To implement our vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice and peace;
5. To serve the needs of member churches and fellowships, to organize new churches and fellowships, and to extend and strengthen liberal religion;
6. To encourage cooperation with men of good will in every land.

Another quick skim will reveal some alarm-bell words. I can think of a few Unitarian*Universalists who would wince at “God,” “man,” or “brotherhood” as if the name
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Voldemort was splayed out across the page. Since when do we acknowledge “Judeo-Christian heritage” and what is “men of good will” supposed to mean, exactly? The underlying ideas might be the same but the frills and polka dots seem way out of date and frankly, I’m quite glad that they are different today.

Over the last forty years, different people have changed, spoken, and been heard. Adaptation is to U*Uism, as the Jedi are to Star Wars. Our religion and its principles grow with our congregations. Everything boils down to us – the people; like our own Mecca. In the eighties, the feminists among us made sure that the principles were free of gender-specific words, and for the seventh principal (probably one of the ones you can actually name), we have the environmentalists to thank. Instead of repeatedly jamming ourselves into a box that doesn’t fit, it’s like we hammer until it fits us instead. The second “half” to our principles, the sources (often written underneath the principles like roots), have also been altered. In 1985 they read,

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.

As recently as 1995, however, another source was added:

- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

So our principles are really more like a Mr Potato-Head

than a Buddhist statue or a crucifix; we are flexible, but still know that most moustaches look better below the eyes. On Canada Day, 2002, the CUC (Canadian Unitarian Council) officially became “the main association and service provider for Unitarians and Universalists in Canada.” With this change in focus, the suggestion that came into light was that there ought to be a statement of principles to uniquely represent Canadians.

A task force has already been put together explore this possibility (I’m the youth representative, could you guess?). The whole project is still in its baby steps. We’ve run several pilot workshops to get some initial reactions. To cover a couple FAQs: No, we will not impose any new set of principles without a democratic process involving as many Unitarian*Universalists as humanly possible (yes, you too will have a say!) and no, we will not be leaving the UUA principles to rot. It actually looks like in a few years we might have a parallel statement of principles, not a replacement (meaning new business cards, but no book-burning).

You may be wondering how any other group of words could possibly describe us better than the collection we’ve already adopted. It’s not my job to answer that for you. Still, I suggest that you think of the rant on the “I Am Canadian” ad, the Arrogant Worms and other Canadian bands, Rick Mercer’s “Talking to Canadians,” and maybe some of those pro-Canadian (or anti-American) chain letters that are making the rounds.

More importantly, take some time to try to answer two questions: “What does it mean to live in Canada?” and, “What does it mean to be a Unitarian*Universalist?” Then re-read the seven principles. No one is asking for an earthquake to shatter something set in stone. It’s already been proven that we can change history with our minds. Ask, “What is really bending?” Think, “There is no spoon.”

P.S. No prophetic stones were smashed in the making of this article.

P.P.S. You should check out: <http://www.cuc.ca/sptf/> (it says stuff better than I do).

P.P.P.S. Still have questions? You can e-mail me at samantha_magnus@hotmail.com, or the task force at statement@cuc.ca. (continues on page 7)

P.P.P.P.S. What's up with the stars? The * means "and/or" (we don't want to exclude those who define themselves as just Unitarian or just Universalist).

Thank You Kitchen Helpers at CanUudle III!

We'd like to send a huge **thank you!** to the kitchen help who woke up so early to feed a bunch of overtired teenagers breakfast at 7:30 am. You are incredible.



Making cheese bread for dinner. Thank you so much! (Photo courtesy of Art Kilgour and www.cuc.ca.)

Listserve Listing

cuc-youth@yahoogroups.com. This listserve for ALL Canadian youth. So if you're a youth and Canadian (or if you're not), sign up! To do so, send a blank email to cuc-youth-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

quom-youth@yahoogroups.com. The listserve for the QuOM region (Quebec, Ontario, Maritimes). To subscribe, send a blank email to quom-youth-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

wcd-yruu@uaa.org. The listserve for the Western Canada region (formerly Western Canada District). To

sign on, go to <http://www.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/wcd-yruu>. For more information, go to <http://www.uua.org/lists/mailman.html>.

cuc-sr-youth@yahoogroups.com. The listserve for youth involved in the Social Responsibility committees and interested in social responsibility in general. To subscribe, send a blank email to cuc-sr-youth-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Upcoming Events

YSJC - The Youth Social Justice Conference is happening this fall. For more info and to apply, go to www.uua.org/YRUU/events.

SATUURDAY - A gay/lesbian/bisexual/transsexual (...) Conference happening sometime soon. Information was unavailable. Contact the Youth Office at yruu@uaa.org.

Western Canada's RRYSC/Fall Con - October 3 to 5, 2003, in Regina, at the same time as the Fall Gathering and the Advisor Training (see below).

Western Canada's Advisor Training! - October 3 to 5, 2003, in Regina, concurrent with the youth RRYSC Con and the Fall Gathering. Registration fees are \$70. Presents core issues, philosophies and skills needed to advise and empower youth. New and seasoned advisors welcome. For more info, contact Sylvia Bass West at 519-472-7073 or sylvia@cuc.ca.

BC Region's LDC - November 7 to 9, concurrent with their Fall Gathering on November 8. This Leadership Development Conference is open to youth and adults alike from across Canada and the PNWD. Registration is \$55 CDN or \$50 USD. For more info, contact Samaya Oakley at oakleyfam@shaw.ca.

LDC Trainer Training - February 5 to 8. Learn how to run an LDC. More info and applications at www.uua.org/YRUU/new. Applications due November 14.