

Prairie UU Society, 2010 Whenona Drive, Madison WI 53711-4843  
(608) 271-8218 prairieu@execpc.com  
Located off the south frontage road (West Beltline Hwy Rd.) near the Seminole Hwy exit.



# PRAIRIE FIRE

"As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world and with one another." Bond of Union)

**February 20, 2004**

*Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. The two most recent issues may be seen at <http://www.prairie.madison.uua.org>*

President: Ken Skog; (608) 273-4813

Editor: Dan Proud, prairieu@execpc.com; (608) 661-0776

## **PRAIRIE CALENDAR**

### **Friday, February 20**

7:00 p.m. Human Rights Film Series at First Unitarian Society: "The Farm – Life Inside Angola Prison." Showing in the West Living Room of the main building. Refreshments, discussion follow.

### **Sunday, February 22**

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. Cindy Haq, "The Health of Women and Children in Afghanistan."

11:45 a.m. Religious Education committee meeting.

### **Sunday, February 29**

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. Al Nettleton, "The Living Tradition-III," third in his series about the UU Hymnal.

11:45 a.m. Potluck lunch and a session for greeter training.

### **Sunday, March 7**

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. "Reconstructing Eden: Hope for the Iraqi Marshland," presented by Richard Beilfus.

☞ 11:45 a.m. Book Club at Prairie discusses *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides.

☞ = *Details follow in this issue.*

**Next Prairie Fire deadline is**

**Sunday, February 29, 2004**

### **Sunday, March 14**

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. "Strengthening the United Nations: Firsthand Stories from Prairie Members."

☞ 11:45 a.m. Potluck meal and a special parish meeting on building sites.

### **Sunday, March 21**

12:00 noon. Annual Prairie Auction

### **Saturday, March 27**

7:00 p.m. Playreading at the home of Paula Pachciarz and Carl Wacker. Intergenerational reading of Lynda Barry's *The Good Times Are Killing Me*.

## **DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Sunday, February 22**

Prairie's Cynthia Haq is a family physician and a Professor of Family Medicine at the UW. She has helped the health services in a number of developing countries and talked to Prairie previously about her experiences in Pakistan. Cindy didn't think security would make it possible for her to visit Afghanistan, but she succeeded in doing so recently, and she will discuss her observations about the health of women and children in that country.

### **Sunday, February 29**

In "The Living Tradition-III," Al Nettleton will continue his Lay Ministry series on the UU hymnal. *(continued)*

This program will explore two contemporary composers, Shelly Jackson Denham and Carolyn McDade. They clearly express UU principles with their wonderful music, transcending mystery and wonder.

## OUR SOCIETY

### PRAIRIE FIRE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Online, what does that mean? It means you can read something or print something, like the *Prairie Fire*, from a Web site, as opposed to getting it in the U.S. Mail. Recently many readers began opting to forego the costs to Prairie of printing and mailing their issues (about \$20 per family per year). Instead, they receive an e-mail announcing that the issue is online, and by clicking a link in the message, they open the Web site and read all the information that would come by mail.

One question a reader asked was, "Is it possible to print out some of the pages but not others?" Yes, you definitely can print *Prairie Fire* pages selectively. Select **File-> Print** rather than click the printer icon on the toolbar. Then you can specify ranges of pages or individual pages.

There are two formats to choose from:

- The .pdf format looks almost exactly like the paper copy, and it prints the same.
- The .htm format may be faster to open than .pdf, but page breaks are a bit different, and some formatting looks slightly different.

You can read *Prairie Fire* on [www.prairie.madison.uua.org](http://www.prairie.madison.uua.org). To start receiving *Prairie Fire* online, saving us all a tree and Prairie some money, contact the Editor at [prouds@tds.net](mailto:prouds@tds.net) or [prairieu@execpc.com](mailto:prairieu@execpc.com).

### THREE MORE FOR THE BOOK CLUB

The Prairie Book Club has chosen books for the next three months and has decided to keep its meetings on Sundays after the service for the convenience of the most frequent attendees. Here are upcoming selections and discussion dates:

Sunday, March 7 – *Middlesex* is Jeffrey Eugenides' Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about 3 generations of a Greek-American family. You'll get a taste of

history, both Greek and American-- Detroit in the Prohibition era, during its glory days as Motor City, during the 1967 race riots, and then out to the suburbs, and of a personal odyssey since the narrator is a hermaphrodite. Several Prairie people have read and recommended this book. 529 pages.

Sunday, April 18 – *Fireweed, A Political*

*Autobiography* is by Gerda Lerner, who taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a professor of History and Women's Studies and has made presentations at Prairie in the past. Born into a well-to-do Viennese Jewish family, she escaped to America in 1939 after being imprisoned by the Nazis. She sets her life into the history of the time. 377 pages.

Sunday, May 16 – *The Secret Life of Bees*, a novel by Sue Monk Kidd, is set in South Carolina in 1964. More about this book in a later issue.

Anyone who has an interest in the current books is welcome to join us at any meeting. It's best to have read the book, but having an interest in the subject or having seen a related movie is reason enough to visit and join the discussion. We each bring a snack to share during the meeting.

These books can be purchased at Borders on University Avenue at a 20% discount if you mention they are Prairie Book Club selections.

Mary Mullen

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### SECRET FRIENDS

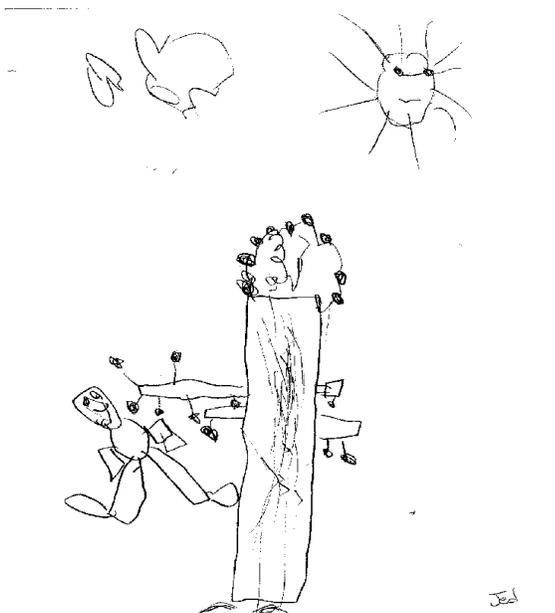
*"I so liked Spring last year  
Because you were here;--  
The thrushes too--  
Because it was these you so liked to hear--  
I so liked you. . . ."*

-- Charlotte Mew

These lines from a poem could well be describing the bond that Prairie children and adults often make when they become Secret Friends. We will continue the tradition this year of matching one adult with one RE child so that they can exchange letters, notes, pictures, emails, confidences, etc. at least once a week for a month. The "secret" comes in because the adult is not told the name of his/her RE correspondent. That's up to the adult to figure out.

All will be revealed in an unveiling and party on Sunday, March 28, after the service.

Sign-ups for participating in Secret Friends will be on February 22 and 29 and the letter exchange will begin in March (or possibly earlier). Secret Friends traditionally exchange letters on Sunday but may wish to do so more often. Being a Secret Friend means committing to writing at least once a week and being present for the March 28 party. At the party all the Secret Friends' identities are revealed and the paired-up friends eat together and do some greatly cool activities. To sign up, look for the sheet on Sunday, or contact Paula Pachciarz of the RE Committee.



*Drawing by Jed*

Five Alaska UU fellowships invite other UUs from "outside" for our seventh year of UU eco-spirituality tours in June, July & August. See the REAL Alaska! Stay in UU homes, enjoy parties with Alaskans, and see whales, see otters, sea lions, bears, caribou, puffins, eagles and other animals in the wild from the Arctic Ocean to the Inside Passage in the south, Denali's Mt. McKinley and Kenai's fjords and glaciers, cruises and spectacular train trips, native arts, story-telling, dancing and totem poles. Come before or after the UUA-GA to cut travel expenses to Alaska.

Visit our website [www.wuurlid.org](http://www.wuurlid.org), e-mail [infor@wuurlid.org](mailto:infor@wuurlid.org) or phone Toll-free 1-888-9-WUURLD (998-8753) for a brochure.

Reservations due by April 1.

Rev. Dick and Mary Weston-Jones, guides.

## **LONG RANGE PLANNING**

### **SECOND OFFICIAL NOTICE OF PARISH MEETING**

There will be a special parish meeting on March 14, 2004, after the Sunday service and a potluck. The Board has approved the following resolution as a basis for discussion at the meeting. Amendments or substitute resolutions germane to the topic of relocating Prairie's meeting house will be in order, but should if at all possible be circulated in written form in advance of the meeting. If any member has any other business for discussion, please notify the Secretary on or before February 29, 2004.

WHEREAS, Prairie has engaged in a four-year process of considering options for growth, including the adoption of a resolution outlining a five-year growth plan on April 24, 2003; and

WHEREAS, during this process the Fitchburg Center has emerged as a feasible site to which Prairie can relocate; and

WHEREAS, a specific plan is needed in order to raise funds for relocation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Board, or such other person(s) or committee(s) as the Board may designate, shall negotiate a tentative agreement for the construction of a new meeting house at Fitchburg Center, and, with the assistance of a building/planning consultant, shall choose an architect for the design and construction of a new meeting house at Fitchburg Center; and that
2. The Board may authorize the expenditure of such monies from the Growth Fund as may be needed for the development of a building program and a preliminary architectural design for a new meeting house at Fitchburg Center; and that
3. The Board shall present the tentative agreement, and the preliminary design for a new meeting house, for consideration by the congregation at a general or special parish meeting no later than November 30, 2004; and that
4. Nothing in this resolution shall preclude consideration of any other site.

#### **Prairie Web Sites**

**Prairie UU:** <http://my.execpc.com/~prairieu/>

**PrairieNews Group:**  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/>

**PrairieViews Group:**  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/>

**Social Action:** <http://socialaction.homestead.com>

## PROGRAM

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE: A UU APPROACH TO THE CRISIS

[Ed.—This excerpt is from Sarah Lord's presentation on Sunday, February 8, in her talk, "Criminal Justice: A UU Approach to the Crisis." It struck me as particularly powerful affirmation of UU principles in the context of a complex subject.]

In thinking about this question over the past several weeks, I have reflected quite a bit on our UU principles—particularly the first and second principles—and how they speak to this issue....

Like a good Unitarian, I will only presume to tell you what [our first principle] means to me, and why I think it's important. I believe that affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person means that every person belongs to the human community *no matter what*. Even if they've never done anything worthy, even if they've committed the most heinous of crimes, *every* person deserves to be treated humanely, with dignity and respect. It also means that as UU's, we have a responsibility to try to see people as whole humans, and not as criminals, or drug addicts, or gangsters—labels which define people by only one attribute, and which deny them their full humanity.

With regard to the crisis in the criminal justice system, our first principle counsels that we must not write off people who have been incarcerated. We cannot see them as outside our circle. We cannot let easy labels like "addict" and "felon" be our excuse for failing to care or failing to serve.

And, we simply cannot accept a system which incarcerates minorities at vastly higher rates than it incarcerates whites. The system is only allowed to do this because our *society*, despite its protestations to the contrary, does not see minorities as equally possessing inherent worth and dignity.

Furthermore, and finally, I believe that if we truly affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person, it means that we cannot see anyone as beyond hope. As UU Minister, Rev. Linda Hoddy insists, "Where there is life, there is always the possibility of redemption."

Our second principle, that we affirm justice, equity

and compassion in human relations, is clearly also relevant to the crisis before us this morning. Starr-King student Sally White...asks, "What do we mean by 'justice'? And why is it that so much of the talk of 'bringing someone to justice' sounds to me more like a threat than a promise?"

Her question, I think, illustrates the fact that we have in our culture many different understandings of 'justice.' One of them is justice as retribution and vengeance, and this is, I think, the central conception guiding our criminal justice system today. Justice as fairness is an alternative understanding, and one which I think is central to the UU definition of justice. Another component of my UU understanding of justice involves being in right relationship with other human beings. It is this understanding of what justice means—combined with a commitment to equity and compassion—that allows me to see rehabilitation, restitution, restoration, and redemption as possibilities of the justice process.

## DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

### WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT TO HAVE A PRAIRIE UU WINNER?

Guidelines for the 2004 Dana McLean Greeley Memorial Address

(Established by the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office) **Deadline: March 1**

You are invited to submit the text of your original sermon or address on a subject dealing with "the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all" (the Sixth UU Principle). This address may be one that you have already prepared or one that you create with this competition in mind. Adaptations of existing papers and talks are acceptable.

**ELIGIBILITY:** All members of Unitarian Universalist Societies as well as UU ministers and seminary students who are candidates for the UU ministry, as well as others who consider themselves Unitarian or Universalist, are eligible to submit an original sermon or address.

**THEME:** Within the words and meaning of the Sixth Principle, there is latitude for diverse themes and subject matter, and a variety of approaches— both

theological and social—are possible. We expect that the theme or subject of the address should speak variously to Unitarian Universalists' concerns for world peace, democratic governance, economic justice, human rights, and sustainable development.

Preference will be given to those addresses that relate to the purposes and activities of the United Nations. Broader philosophical and religious approaches as well as delineation of a particular social, cultural, economic, or political issue will be appropriate. Those interested in addressing one of the study and action issues of the UU UNO are invited to inquire. Among the human rights concerns, for example, currently emphasized by the Office are the rights of children at risk, and the struggle against world racism.

**FORMAT:** The address should be suitable for presentation at (1) the UUA General Assembly and (2) Sunday Services at UU congregations. Therefore, the length of the address presented should be approximately 20 minutes.

The submitted text should be printed out (preferably in 12 point) on one side of the paper. No name or other identifying information should appear on the pages of the text. Instead, a separate cover sheet with name, congregation, address, phone, e-mail, and date should be placed (not stapled) on top of the text. An identifying code will be used to keep track of the submissions without revealing the author's identities.

**DUE:** March 1, 2004. Please mail or e-mail your submission of your sermon to:

UU United Nations Office, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017  
Email: [global\\_info@uu-uno.org](mailto:global_info@uu-uno.org)  
Phone: (212) 986 5165

**Prairie Office Administrator Office Hours**

Mondays 7–9 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon

**Shaarei Shamayim Calendar**

Tues. 3:45–6:15 p.m. & Sat. 8:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.

Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249–5933  
[CelestialR@charter.net](mailto:CelestialR@charter.net)

**FEBRUARY 22 ISLAMIC HOLIDAY**

The first of Muharram (first month of the Islamic year 1425) celebrates the Hijra (migration) of Muhammad and his followers in 622 CE, from Mecca to Medina, where they established the first Islamic community.  
—*Multifaith Calendar 2004*

**OPPORTUNITY FOR AN ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK!**

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is excited to extend an invitation for young activists (ages 16 and older) to join us in Orlando, Fla., for a week-long conference on March 8-13 in conjunction with the League of Conservation Voters and Project Democracy. This conference is sure to increase your passion for social justice and gives you the opportunity to put your values into action, as you inspire others to do likewise.

During this conference you will:

- Receive training on grassroots outreach.
- Learn how to mobilize young people to get involved in politics.
- Participate in massive voter registration drives.
- Discuss issues that matter to young voters.

All you have to do is tell us a little about yourself, why you want to go, and what you will do with the knowledge/skills you learn from this opportunity in 250 to 500 words!

UUSC will pay for your food, ground transportation from the Orlando airport, conference attendance, materials, meals and housing. You are responsible for getting to the Orlando airport or to the conference center\*. Plan to arrive no later than 9 a.m. on March 8 so we can coordinate rides.

The training sessions are from 9 a.m.- 7 p.m. and the evenings are free. Transportation will be provided in the evenings to organized outings, as well as to community organizing events. In addition, there are two concerts scheduled during that week that will be free of charge to participants.

Since space is limited, we must hear from you by February 20. Act now! For more information or to send your essay, contact us at [justworks@uusc.org](mailto:justworks@uusc.org) or call us at 800-388-3920 ext. 227 or ext. 201.

\*Limited travel scholarships may be available from League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

## **UUSC HOLIDAY CARD DESIGN CONTEST**

You are invited to participate in the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Holiday Card Design Contest 2004. Creative UUs of all ages are urged to submit designs for next year's UUSC holiday cards. The sale of UUSC holiday cards help us continue our vital human rights work worldwide.

In 2003, two of the cards were designed by contest winner Carolyn Planakis of the UU Congregation of Marin, California. Visit us online to view last year's cards at <http://www.uusc.org/info/holiday03.pdf>.

The winning card designers' names and congregations will be printed on their cards, which will be purchased and shared by UUs nationwide during the 2004 holiday season.

Submissions must be received by UUSC on or before April 15, 2004. Be sure to view our submission guidelines, or call 617 868-6600 to request a copy. You can read more about the contest at

[www.uusc.org/info/holidaycardcontest2004.html](http://www.uusc.org/info/holidaycardcontest2004.html)

Mail submissions to: UUSC Holiday Card Contest, 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139-1845

E-mail submissions to: [volunteerservices@uusc.org](mailto:volunteerservices@uusc.org)

Next year, one of the cards could be designed by you!

*Rachel M. Binderman  
Associate for Member Development  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee*

## **UU INFIDELS PUBLISHING NEWSLETTER**

The UUI, Unitarian Universalist Infidels is a UUA-related organization whose purpose is to support and work to maintain a place at the UU table for atheist, agnostic, skeptic, and secular humanist UUs. This spring it will publish the first issue of a semiannual (twice yearly) newsletter that will provide a voice for viewpoints and opinions not usually represented in *UU World* magazine.

You can order this year's spring and fall UUI newsletters by sending your name and address and a check for \$3.00 to UUI, 16265-D Dahlgren Road, King George, VA, 22485. (If you care to send more, it will go toward the fee for the booth we are going to have a General Assembly.)

We plan to include a section titled "Talkback to UU World" and invite your comments. The *UUI Newsletter* will also be published online at [www.uu-infidels.org](http://www.uu-infidels.org), and, if you wish, you can join the UUI discussion group by sending an email to [uui-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:uui-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

## **LETTERS**

### **TYSON FAMILIES DONATIONS DELIVERED**

Warren and I delivered Prairie's "gifts from the heart" to union Local 538's Madison office today. The two people working there were very appreciative.

Our total contributions were \$311 plus five boxes of personal items. If you have children in your family, please tell them their valentines are on the way to Tyson families. The decorated boxes really brightened up the union office.

If I told you face to face how good it made me feel I'd get all teary eyed.

Thanks.  
*Doleta*

### **UU HOUSE CONCERT INVITATION**

Hi, this is your invitation to join the fun at Janesville Unitarian Roxanne Neat's House Concert, at the Meitzel home, in Madison, Saturday, February 21, at 7 p.m.

\$5 donation to Roxanne. Appetizers and beverages provided. Limited seating. Comfy, cozy setting.

Must RSVP the Meitzels for seating reservations and location details: 608-698-4110.

Come and bring family and friends. Feel free to forward this to friends you know who enjoy delightful folk (and maybe a little rock) music.

I hope to see you there.  
*Reid Miller*

## **SOCIAL ACTION**

### **INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK TRAINING IN 2004**

Prairie regularly volunteers for the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) program. To sign up or find out more about IHN may contact Paula Pachciarz (pachwack@sbcglobal.net or 273-4806).

Upcoming training sessions:

- March 17, Wednesday 7–9 p.m. Day Center
- April 1, Thursday 7–9 p.m. Day Center
- May 3, Monday 7–9 p.m. Day Center

### **PUBLIC ISSUES ANNOUNCEMENT LISTSERVE**

The First Unitarian Society of Madison announces its new public issues announcement listserve. This weekly review of important legislative issues in Wisconsin exists to respond to the concerns of UUs in Wisconsin and to provide the tools for activism, while respecting our free thought tradition.

Subscribers receive a weekly e-mail that includes a brief description of legislative and other policy issues pending in the state, including where the issue is in the legislative or administrative process and whom to contact (and by when) to express an opinion. What is said is entirely up to you.

First Unitarian Society welcomes information about local initiatives that will be of interest regionally.

To subscribe, please send a blank e-mail to [join-fus-socialjustice@lists.fusmadison.org](mailto:join-fus-socialjustice@lists.fusmadison.org), or send an e-mail to Wendy Cooper at First Unitarian Society (wendyc@fusmadison.org) indicating that you would like to be a subscriber.

*Wendy Cooper, Social Justice Coordinator  
First Unitarian Society of Madison*

### **GET OUT THE VOTE!**

Madison UU congregations are joining other organizations and the League of Women Voters to increase voter turnout in this year's elections. An organizing meeting was held at First Unitarian Society on January 7 to form the Get Out the Vote Coalition, and monthly meetings have also started at FUS with the Peace and Justice Task Force of the Social Justice Committee.

Specific actions that the Coalition will undertake include:

- Developing voter information materials explaining why it is important to vote
- Delivering voter materials door to door
- Registering citizens to vote and providing polling information
- Calling registered voters to remind them to vote
- Driving needy voters to the polls
- Poll-watching and observing

Upcoming election dates in Wisconsin:

- April 6: Non-partisan election, referenda
- September 14: Fall primary, referenda
- November 2: Fall general election

Coalition members are determined to raise the awareness of the registration and voting processes and to reach people who have not been voting.

If you would like to help in any of the areas listed above, please contact Dan Proud (661-0776 or [prouds@tds.net](mailto:prouds@tds.net)).

## **JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS \*\*\*\*\* NEWS! \*\*\*\*\***

*A cyber newsletter bringing you news from UUA's Journey Toward Wholeness anti-oppression, anti-racist, multicultural initiative*

*From the January 2004 issue:*

### **Unitarian Universalist Youth and Young Adult Groups Leading the Way on the Journey Towards Wholeness**

*By Mimi LaValley, Youth Program Specialist, UUA*

What if UU churches were places where people of all backgrounds, ages, and walks of life could come together to discover new and useful ways to build authentic relationships? What if our churches were a community resource to those struggling to dismantle systems of oppression in the world, a clearinghouse of practical tools for doing so? What if UU churches were a place of inter-generational, multicultural collectives conspiring to change the world together?

UU youth and young adults are asking these questions of each other and of their communities. Anti-racist activism is springing up like bursting bottle rockets in the Young Religious UUs (YRUU) and Continental UU Young Adult Network (C\*UUYAN) skyline. Here is one of my favorite examples of the work young UU's are doing:

The youth group at University Unitarian Church in Seattle has a special subset called SPAG (the Social and Political Activism Group). Last year, SPAG chose to work with racism as its focus issue. They invited a group called Youth Undoing Institutional Racism to lead a workshop with the youth group on white privilege. They read articles, had discussions, then planned a cluster conference on the issue of racism. As our country was in the throes of the war on terrorism at that point, the theme of the conference was STRaW or "Stop this Racist War."

The focus of the conference was to write a script, build a simple set and costumes, and put on a street theater piece about the racial profiling and civil liberty violations that were happening post-9/11. "It was a lot of work," Amanda Ayling, the Youth Program Coordinator told me, "but it turned out quite well and a lot of our congregation came downstairs to see it on Sunday morning."

The project sets an example UU's everywhere can follow. When we team up, young and old, church to church, church to community, "upstairs" to "downstairs", and outside the congregation walls, we can accomplish a great deal.

There are challenges for local groups who want to get involved with the Journey Towards Wholeness for youth and young adults. Right now most of the network and structure exists mainly on the continental and district level.

What are youth and young adults up to in your local church basement, back room, attic, or veranda? What kind of support and allies do they need?

## "Bringing It Back" to the District

*By Amy Leyenberger, Youth Council Representative for the SW District*

Racism is like an automatic moving sidewalk, like the kind seen in airports. Only this sidewalk moves in the direction of oppression and destruction. Some people are actively racist, meaning they are moving in the same direction as the sidewalk and will arrive at the destination before everyone else. Others are standing still, not actively racist but not anti-racist either. Therefore, by standing still, they are nevertheless moving in the direction of racism. And then there are those that are actively anti-racist. To achieve anti-racism one has to be moving in the opposite direction at a faster, more rigorous pace than the people moving towards oppression.

This analogy is borrowed from the book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And other Conversations on Race*, by Beverly Daniel Tatum, and has become a core part of my beliefs as a UU youth. Through my work in YRUU with anti-racism, my life and my future have been altered, and now one of the most important goals in my life is to be moving powerfully in the opposite

direction of racism. I believe it can be done, but not without the strong support and passionate help of many other adults and youth committed to anti-racism.

I am a youth from the Southwest District (SWD) of the UUA, and anti-racism is a relatively new passion in my life. My involvement began two years ago when I was elected as the Youth Council Representative (YCR) for the SWD. In August 2002, I headed off to Seattle WA for my first Youth Council, the annual weeklong meeting of the governing body for YRUU.

In 1999 Youth Council passed a resolution to commit YRUU to becoming an anti-racist organization. Since then, Youth Council has been restructured to include an intensive anti-racism training. In that one week I learned more about racism and anti-racism than I had in my entire life, and my passion for this work was ignited.

During my second Youth Council this past August, I started brainstorming about how I was going to bring this work back to the SWD. We needed to have a conference focused entirely on anti-racism so that the youth in the district would get excited about this work and strive to include it in future events. Also, by "bringing it back" to the district level, it would hopefully be included in local youth programming eventually as well and continue to spread throughout YRUU. To fund the conference, two other youth from the SWD and I applied for a YFUUD (Youth Funding for UU Development) grant. We were awarded the grant and this made it possible to plan for the first ever SWD YRUU anti-racism conference happening in April.

My time in SWD YRUU is coming to an end very soon. Hopefully my efforts and passion for anti-racism will be recognized by the youth in my district and the work will be continued where I leave off. In the Fall I will be attending Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH. I plan to continue my work there, and learn how to organize more effectively. I am hoping to apply what I have learned to begin to work in alliance with the People of Color organization BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), and possibly help start up a White Allies group. Within YRUU and CUUYAN I plan to help with the development of a standard anti-racism training to be available for every district, much like the Spirituality Development Conference or the Leadership Development Conference offered by the Youth Office.

In a few years I will come back to YRUU as an adult and continue to help and support youth in organizing around anti-racism. No one can do this work alone. Without encouragement from both youth and adults, I would have stepped away from this work a long time ago. With the help of adult and youth anti-racist allies, the question is no longer how can I do this work, but how can I not? Be an ally. Be a resource to whoever needs it in any way possible. Young people are a powerful force, in need of lots of support, as we change the world!