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Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica  
A Dedicated Peace Site and Welcoming Congregation



# Bulletin

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## Special points of interest:

- *Faith in Action is the witness and advocacy program of the UUCCSM.*
- *Faith in Action speaks for the church only when the congregation has voted resoundingly to take an official position on an issue related to peace, civil liberties or social justice.*
- *The UUA Commission on Social Witness provides Study/Action Issues, Actions of Immediate Witness, and Statements of Conscience. These are important resources for our witness and advocacy program.*

## Peace and Civil Liberties in the 21st Century

This issue is devoted to international affairs. We open with an essay by Arvid Knudsen that concludes we should support the War in Iraq to help that country become a true democracy. A contrary view is then provided in a report from the Peace and Civil Liberties Committee, which is working on a new Action of Immediate Witness entitled “United States-supported torture must end.” One part of this new initiative involves participating in anti-war demonstrations.

Max Epstein writes in this issue about the growing threat of nuclear

weapons. Then Eleanor Eagan introduces a collection of articles and information about the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and how Unitarian Universalists are working to support these goals. This theme is illustrated in an article by Mark Yarnell, Senior Program Associate in the UU/UNO, and in reports by Liza Cranis and Jesse Figueroa about their trip to the United Nations to participate in an intergenerational conference sponsored by the UU/UNO.

Charles M. Haskell, Editor

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## Liberals Need to Move On



Arvid Knudsen

By Arvid Knudsen

Judging by the Speaker Series programs our Faith in Action Peace Committee has sponsored over the last year or so we have to conclude that America is a sorry land. Our government, presided over by Republican conservative right-wingers, has run amok.

The United States, practically unilaterally, invaded a nation unrelated to the horrendous 9/11

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## Liberals Need to Move On (continued from page 1)

event, the infamous terrorist attack, and brought us into a war we abhor, causing more than 1,850 American deaths and the gruesome wounding of countless thousands. We may never know how many thousands of Iraqis will have died or who will be maimed for life.

No weapons of mass destruction have been found. Our official investigative committees have concluded that our CIA and other spy agencies were “dead wrong” in their assessments of threats to our nation by Iraq. The astronomical costs of this war have deprived our nation of many basic financial needs, *i.e.*, education, infrastructure, Medicare, budget balancing, *etc.*

Yes, the Bush administration is a disaster. The current Republican domestic and foreign policy agenda has been simply atrocious. As a traditional but thoughtful liberal Democrat I sincerely believe it must ultimately be defeated. But my premise here is to suggest that we garner some perspective on U.S. history and particularly the actions of some of our recent presidents. For the last 50+ years all have resorted to military adventurism.

Back in June, 1950, President Truman sanctioned intervention and war (then euphemistically call a police action) against the North Koreans, who were being supported by Communist China. Truman's decision was very controversial at the time. The U.S. was to have more than 54,000 armed services personnel die in that bitter

struggle.

Republican General Eisenhower was subsequently elected president, at least in part on the basis that he would bring peace to Korea. Ultimate negotiations resulted in North Korea and South Korea, two separate countries, but a peace treaty was never signed. In this year of 2005, the U.S. still has 35,000 troops stationed in South Korea while still feeling threatened by North Korea's development of an atomic energy program and their suspected cache of atom bombs.

From a relatively small force of military observer/advisors sent by President Eisenhower to South Vietnam in the wake of France's armed services defeat there by Ho Chi Min's forces of the North, it was the succeeding Democratic President Kennedy who sent a substantial increase of military support to that country. This was done mainly to show that his administration would not be weak against any Communist invasion or insurgency. Kennedy's foreign policy subscribed to the domino theory that any victory for the Communists in an Asian country would mean their sweep of all southern Asia. There is much evidence that President Kennedy sanctioned the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem with the assistance of the CIA. So began the deep involvement of the United States.

Perhaps the most insidious of all falsehoods told by a president and his administration was made by President Lyndon B. Johnson when

he told the American people in a somber radio broadcast that one of our naval ships in the Bay of Tonkin had been attacked by North Vietnamese gunfire. He was to sanction in the next couple of years a force of over 500,000 American armed forces to fight in Vietnam. While the Republican President Nixon continued that war, our nation lost 58,000 lives in that debacle. The North Vietnamese lost an estimated 2,000,000 people. The war was ultimately to prove a colossal mistake--America had not been threatened. The U.S. had intruded on a civil war fought over a vision of independence versus colonial dependency.

While it seems a paradox, President Carter was to lose his chances for a second term in office in 1980 because he did not call for war when Iranian revolutionaries invaded the American Embassy and held 50+ folk hostage for almost a year. It had not mattered that no American lives were lost other than those unfortunate few military men who died in an invasive but vain helicopter rescue effort.

President Reagan involved the nation in two brief wars and two internal revolutions: Grenada, Panama, San Salvador and Nicaragua. None of these countries threatened America, but the presidential prerogative prevailed and people died.

The first President Bush rallied a United Nations force around an American decision to fight Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein and his armies in Kuwait to

## Liberals Need to Move On (continued from page 2)

protect oil interests. More than an estimated 100,000 Iraqis died in that brief conflict; about 360 Americans.

President Clinton used our armed services twice to invade other nations. One instance involved going to Haiti to depose its President Duvalier. The second involved use of our Air Force to bomb the daylight out of Yugoslavia with NATO support and to capture its Dictator President Milosevic. While no Americans died in the process, thousands of Yugoslavs may have died as a result. The Chinese embassy in Belgrade was bombed by accident killing 17 innocents. President Clinton also used cruise missile tactics to avenge terrorist attacks and murders of American personnel in the Sudan and Afghanistan succeeding in the demolition of an aspirin factory and some camp sites. The total of those killed remains unknown.

American administrations have almost always resorted to war and warlike responses to its foreign policy problems. The cold war with the former Soviet Union lasted almost 50 years. Each president and administration has always had to prove its bona fides in the fight against communism and other perceived threats by increased military budgets, all without criticism by the American public.

The world supported President Bush's attack on the Taliban elements of Afghanistan in retaliation for the 9/11 horror which killed more than 3,000 people. The Taliban were quickly routed with thou-

sands killed. But the Bush declaration of war against terrorism did not end there. To come was the invasion of Iraq and the present countdown of deaths (both American and Iraqis). What we have to accept is that Bush took the nation to war as a result of the most heinous sneak attack on Americans on their own homeland; as dastardly an attack as that on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, which provoked the U.S. into World War II.

While all evidence proves that President Bush and the neocons had our military invade Iraq primarily due to false intelligence, it is now two and more years later. The Iraqi people have been rid of a brutal dictator and his tyrannical government. The Bush administration preaches a new mantra: democracy in the Middle East. The people have voted for new officials to write a constitution and operate a general election this December. Little by little the insurgency will lose its steam. While horrendous attacks against Iraqi civilians and police still go on day after day, it is evident that the insurgents have no other cause than to disrupt and halt any democratic progress the Iraqis are making in their quest for a new government rooted in representation of the three factions of Muslims who inhabit their country: the Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis.

Whether or not the Bush foreign policy can take credit, the tides of change are shifting in the Middle East. The stirrings of revolt in Lebanon to a return to its democ-

cratic history, multiparty elections in Egypt, a semblance of free elections on the lower levels in Saudi Arabia, the newly possible peace process once again between Israel and the Palestinians, the amazing election results in the Ukraine, all signal a new day is on the horizon. It becomes the responsibility of liberals, democrats and Unitarians, to encourage and support these fresh activities and events.

Bush bashing, the disdain of the president and his administration, by us "lefties" answers nothing nor contributes to anything positive regarding this issue. The new doctrine that encourages democracy (*some form of representative government chosen by the people*) in the Middle East and around the world is a cause we can embrace. It can be a noble American cause even if, regrettably, not originated by the Democrats. Obviously, talk and slogans will not do it, but our actions will.

Let us all get behind a democratic outcome in Iraq. It should be evident that a precipitous retreat of our armed services from that land is ill advised. The U.S. owes it to the Iraqis to see them through a new constitution, a new ruling body of their own choice, and financial support until they can sustain themselves. Iraq can become a model. TV and the internet will make sure that it will.

Once again, liberals get on board! Let's move on.

## The Peace and Civil Liberties Committee is Working to Oppose Torture

By Charles Haskell, co-chair

In June 2005 at the UUA General Assembly, the assembled delegates endorsed an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW #1) entitled “United States-Sponsored Torture Must End.” This concern is also being addressed by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC).

The Peace and Civil Liberties Committee reviewed the following materials about AIW #1 at its meeting of September 7.

- A UUSC pamphlet on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

about torture.

- Information about the Call to Justice Weekend scheduled for September 24-26 in Washington, D.C. This weekend includes educational sessions, a mock trial of former CIA Director George Tenet, Attorney Alberto Gonzales and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for crimes against humanity, and visits with congressional leaders about the stop torture campaign.
- A planned demonstration organized by United for Peace and Justice to “End the War on

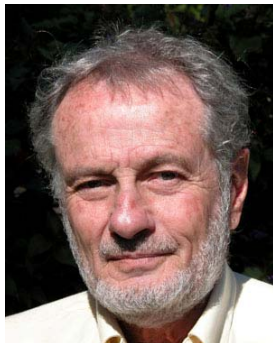
Iraq” to be held at noon, Saturday, September 24, at Olympic and Broadway in Los Angeles.

Our Peace and Civil Liberties Committee enthusiastically endorsed and agreed to work on this issue. Church members interested in joining a car pool to the demonstration in downtown Los Angeles are encouraged to contact S.J. Guidotti or Melinda Ewen for further information (310-234-8924).

Further information about this campaign is available on the UUSC web site at:

[www.uusc.org/stoptorture](http://www.uusc.org/stoptorture)

## Who’s Got the Bomb?



By Max Epstein

No question of international importance is murkier than the question of who has nuclear weapons. We don’t have a reliable list of who has the most dangerous weapon on earth, nor do we have agreement on what it means to have it.

The United States, Russia, France, England, India, Pakistan, and China acknowledge having the bomb. Then there is Israel. Everyone except Israel says that they have it. Israel does not say yes or no. They are silent on the question, probably because they do not want to talk about a nuclear-free Middle East.

There are two countries, both in Africa, which had the bomb or the capacity, then gave it up. In 1993, South Africa became the first country to build nuclear weapons and then voluntarily dismantle its program, according to Hans Blix, former Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In December of 2003, Libya announced that it was abandoning its nuclear

program, which turned out to be quite advanced. According to President Bush, Libya made that decision after it noticed what was happening in Iraq.

President Bush coined the term “Axis of Evil” to describe Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Since then, each of these three countries has chosen a very different way of dealing with the question of nuclear weapons. Before we invaded that country, Iraq said it had none, but its response to inspections raised doubts. Iraq might have thought that ambiguity would give it bargaining chips or time, but now we know it was stating a fact—it did not have nuclear weapons. Yet, this administration used that allegation as a primary reason for the invasion.

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## Who's Got the Bomb? (continued from page 4)

Iran is thought to be close to producing nuclear weapons but it denies any intention to manufacture them, claiming its nuclear program is for the purpose of generating electric power. Iran apparently fears UN sanctions or invasion by the US if it admits that its program could also be used to make weapons.

North Korea, by contrast, proudly announces that it has nuclear weapons, (though no one we trust has ever seen them). North Korea's stated strategy is to use its weapons to prevent an attack by the US.

Now, to further complicate the scene, Walter Russell Mead writes in the *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, that "...unless North Korea dismantles its nuclear program, Japan, South Korea, and even Taiwan might go nuclear in the not-so distant future." According to *National Geographic* (August, 2005), there are currently about 20 additional countries which possess the technology to build nuclear weapons. (They include North Korea and Iran).

The possession or non-possession of nuclear weapons is a

high-stakes game, in which the rules are far from clear. To protect themselves, "Axis of Evil" countries have used ambiguity, claims of no bomb, and claims of having the bomb. In other words, having the bomb may cause a country to be invaded or may prevent invasion. The game is made more unpredictable by the fact that we are not certain who, in fact, does have the bomb.

Where do we go from here? Maybe we should give more power to the UN. Who else is in a position to sort out this mess?

## The United Nations Millennium Goals

The 191 member states of the United Nations have pledged to meet the following eight development goals by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Create a global partnership for development

These goals are discussed in the UN Millennium Project's recent report, [Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals](#). For more information go to <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/>. To view the report, go to <http://unmp.forumone.com/>.

## New Directions in the Unitarian Universalist/United Nations Office



By Eleanor Eagan

Like all nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) aspiring to be more efficient and democratic, our national office is in transition. By moving their offices from the basement up to the light and brighter offices on the seventh floor, with the election of new officers combined

with changes in areas of responsibility and the addition of some new directors, the UU/UN Office has turned a major corner in revitalization.

An earlier watershed moment occurred ten years ago when Eleanor Mason, longtime Envoy Coordinator, changed the decades-old annual spring seminar into an

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## New Directions in the Unitarian Universalist/United Nations Office (continued from page 5)

intergenerational gathering. I, along with fellow SMUUCC member Carolyn Berry, attended that seminar.

As a former high school social studies teacher, I was immediately energized when we first met with the whole group, now full of teenagers. A truly defining moment for me came a little later when each of us was asked to tell what it meant to be there at the first intergenerational seminar. A jovial, completely delightful boy, who was obviously already functioning as an integral part of the new group, said "I am gay and I am not accepted by my high school peers at home."

There are not words to describe how that simple, straightforward statement affected the social

dynamic of the group. It was a transforming experience and played its small part, no doubt, in adding to the greater social dynamic of global interdependence. This year, for the first time, not only from our church but from California as a whole, an advisor and a high school student attended the intergenerational seminar. Their reactions are included in this issue of the Faith in Action Bulletin.

Another recent trailblazing effort of our national UU/UNO was participation in the Partnership Church Project, a community-based, grass roots project carried out in a developing country. The Partnership Projects were created some years ago to further the UN's eight Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) listed on page 5. The Reverend Fran Mercer, Executive Director of the UU/UN Office, worked with the Partnership Project to arrange the endless details and Mark Yarnell, the Senior Program Associate, led the team. The full story of the Arkos, Romania Partnership Project effort is available in this issue.

We are much indebted to the UU/UN Office for their diligence over the years in representing us so ably at the UN and in carrying out their part of our Principles and Purposes, all without any financial assistance from the Unitarian Universalist Association.

## Partnering in Romania: Community-Based Development in Arkos



By Mark Yarnell

As a UN-based non-governmental organization, there are two ways that the UU United Nations Office can work to support the achievement of the UN Millennium Development

Goals: 1) we can advocate at the UN and with its member states to do more, or 2) we can participate directly with other like-minded groups.

In support of MDG #8, Develop a global partnership for development, we chose the second option. This past July, on behalf of the UU United Nations Office, I traveled to Romania as part of a team working to stimulate community-driven development in the village of Arkos. Under the leadership of Professor Richard Ford of Clark University, the team consisted of myself, Cathy Cordes of the UU Partner Church Council, and six members of the

First UU Church of Houston.

As the Houston Congregation is partnered with the Arkos Unitarian Church, the local Unitarian minister hosted us. It is important to note, however, that the project was community-focused, not Unitarian focused. The Church simply served as a base from which to reach out to the whole community.

The method we used, known as Policy Analysis for Participatory Poverty Alleviation (PAPPA), is a development planning tool devised jointly by Egerton University (Kenya), Clark University (USA), and GOVA (Ghana). According to its creators, PAPPA enables com-

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## Partnering in Romania: Community-Based Development in Arkos (continued from page 6)

munity institutions to plan strategies for poverty alleviation that provide action guidelines at the village level and policy direction for regional and national planners.

PAPPA is truly a grass-roots operation. Over three days of workshops, communities themselves identify development needs, rank the needs in terms of priority, and create action plans to solve those needs. As outsiders, we came with no preconceived ideas about how the villagers should rank their needs. Our job was to facilitate the assessment process and to help connect the village with potential funding partners. Though Professor Ford has been leading PAPPA teams around the world for 35 years, this method had never before been used in Eastern Europe. This was the pilot project.

Upon arriving in Romania, we met with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) officials in Bucharest to brief them on our project and to learn about ongoing activities in the area. We learned from Thore Hansen, the Deputy Resident Representative, that the UNDP is beginning a small grants program in cooperation with the Global Environmental Fund. In addition to UNDP, we also met with the US Agency for Development, the Peace Corps, and representatives from the European Union.

We then traveled to Udvarhely to meet with local development NGOs in Transylvania. The most intriguing of these groups was the Regional Community Development Association of Szecklerland (SZEKE). We learned that they spend a year with a village doing

what we were planning to do in three days facilitate the creation of an action plan for development. To learn more about what we were doing, they agreed to come to Arkos to serve as translators for the workshops.

Once we arrived in Arkos, we met with local government officials to inform them about the project. With all appropriate parties briefed, we began the three-day assessment in Arkos on 22 July with about 40 villagers present. At the first workshop, villagers formed into four groups and produced two village maps (one done by the youth, one by the adults), an institutional map, and a chart with trend lines marking important events in village history. The groups used these tools to compile a list of community needs. Interestingly, all but the youth were fairly quiet at the first meeting. Perhaps the oppressive effects of Ceausescus regime remain.

At the next workshop, as the villagers became livelier, participants separated into three groups. Through consensus, each of these groups ranked their three top priority needs, and remarkably, each of them ended with the same results: schools, infrastructure, and jobs.

On the final night, the villagers chose clean water and the development of sewerage system as their first need. In two groups, they worked out a preliminary action plan, including what resources they could provide, as well as what outside resources and consulting were necessary. The next task of the participating villagers was to select a Village Development Committee (VDC) to implement the action plan.

Following the assessment, we returned to Bucharest and Udvarhely to report the results of the project to the government and non-government officials with whom we had met initially.

Now, the primary purpose of the project team and their respective organizations is to serve as a support network for the Arkos community members, as they work to implement their plan and build funding partners. Currently, the most promising partners appear to be the UNDP, through their small grants program, and the Romania Environmental Partnership Foundation, a local non-governmental organization.

Perhaps the most significant output of the Arkos assessment was the emergence of a youth leadership group. The energy and enthusiasm with which the young people of the village took to solving their community's needs was inspiring. They have decided to form a Youth Development Committee, and their first project is to clean up their stream. Once that project is complete, they hope to move on to other activities, such as fixing up the elementary school.

Currently, I'm working with the Global Youth Action Network based in NYC to help connect the Arkos YDC with local and global youth groups working on community development.

Mark Yarnell is a Senior Program Associate in the UU/UNO.

*Reprinted with permission from Window on the World, a publication of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, Fall 2004 (Volume 36, No. 2, pages 3-4).*

## Partnering in Romania: Community-Based Development in Arkos (continued from page 7)

Addendum by Eleanor Eagan

The Arkos people are working to get the necessary funding for their project. They report directly to the Houston Partner Congregation, who in turn report to the UU/UN Office in New York. Asked about his personal feelings about the project some two years after he accompanied the group to Arkos, Mark Yarnell replied that it was more challenging and rewarding to work directly with the people themselves in their own country seeking help in ways to help themselves (as opposed to putting the project together in offices in New York).



Photo of a workshop in Arkos provided by Mark Yarnell.

## Jesse and Liza's Trip to New York



Liza and Jesse in front of U.N.

By Liza Cranis

Stepping off the jet that carried us from the sunny shores of our beloved Los Angeles, Jesse Figueroa (one of our YRUU youth) and I were a bit apprehensive, expecting a cold and impersonal New York City. The city and its people would prove

us wrong.

Upon our arrival at 4<sup>th</sup> Unitarian Church in Manhattan, our very friendly cab driver rode along side us as we searched for the entrance. Once we found the door, he waved goodbye and we entered the place we would call home for the next three days. We were met by a group of teens and adults who had traveled from around the country to attend the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) Intergenerational Spring Seminar, held April 14-16. The seminar was entitled: "HIV/AIDS: Defusing a Biological Time Bomb." Thanks to the generosity of UUCCSM's Eleanor Eagan, Jesse and I were there to represent our congregation and to learn about the horrific effects of HIV/AIDS around the world and

what we could do to stop the spread of the disease.

On the first day of the seminar, which was held at the Church Center at 777 UN Plaza, we met Sonya Elliott, UN AIDS Liaison Officer, who spoke about the UN's response to the pandemic and the effects of the crisis. The statistics she gave us were jaw dropping and the politics involved in procuring medical help and money were even more shocking. Here are some of the statistics she shared with us:

- 9 out of 12 people infected with AIDS worldwide do NOT receive treatment.
- Young people make up 50% of the new infections worldwide, but the percentage is lower in some parts of the world (Africa 25%; South

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## Jesse and Liza's Trip to New York (continued from page 8)

America 26%; Asia 20%).

- 50% of adults living with HIV/AIDS worldwide in 2001 were women.

There is insufficient money to inform the world population about basic issues and ways the disease is spread. Issues such as prisoners having unprotected sex in jails and spreading the disease to their wives; sex workers using improper or no protection; the social and cultural mores prohibiting open discussions on sexuality and general apathy ("This disease is fatal; why talk or do anything about it?") also contribute to the rise of the disease worldwide.

In the course of the seminar we learned about the biology of AIDS/HIV, ethical aspects of the pandemic, the global hotspots, how music and film are playing a vital role in informing the world population, and how AIDS is affecting the lives of young people. Another panel discussion focused on people living with HIV/AIDS, and we discovered that one of the adults in our group was a member of that panel. This put a very human face on the disease for us. One of the more touching discussions involved the impact HIV/AIDS has on the lives of women with children.

On the final day of the seminar there was a wonderful worship service where seminar statements written by various groups were adopted. We ended with a rousing drum circle where everyone was armed with percussion instruments.

During the two-day seminar, Jesse and I were able to form

relationships with congregants from all over the country and Canada. United in learning about this devastating disease, we formed lifelong friendships in a very short time. I suppose sleeping in close quarters and not showering might have played a role! We came away from this experience with a renewed sense of being UUs and the power of a group focused on a common goal: to spread the word on how we can help those affected by HIV/AIDS.

This was truly a life changing experience. I came away from this experience knowing that our world isn't as big as we think. One person can make a difference.

By Jesse Figueroa

In mid-April of 2005 I hopped onto a plane to New York City and I was thrilled, but didn't really know what to expect. It was a trip to the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU/UNO), where we attended a conference with people from all across America. When I found out that the topic was "HIV/AIDS: Defusing a Biological Time Bomb," I was excited to see what I could do to keep it from ticking. When meeting new people we casually talked about other "cons" (conferences) and this being my first, I got a lot of "well you sure know how to pick 'em," considering we came all the way from California.

On my trip I heard probably 30+ different speakers, from AIDS patients to doctors to chemists who were working on a new microbicide for women (a cream that prevents

the spread of HIV to others). It was an unbelievable amount of information that I learned and I was shocked to hear some of the statistics that were given. Besides listening to all the different speakers, we broke up into smaller "touch groups" and discussed how we could help diminish the growing numbers. We decided that starting small and working up would be the best method.

Since my trip I've already spoken to my youth group at church and given a presentation to my history class at school on HIV/AIDS. I was surprised to find out how many kids in my class didn't know anything at all. By the end they all understood that it is a big problem. They also realized that it is EVERYBODY'S problem, not just the AIDS patients. Another thing we talked about was checking out what type of sex-ed is being taught at our schools. Luckily, living in Santa Monica, our district understands that they need to teach more than just abstinence; it just doesn't work. I also spoke to my school nurse about making condoms available to everybody and making sure that the expiration dates were still good. She seemed happy to know that I was interested and concerned.

I've signed up to talk all around my high school about the issue and will hopefully start this September. Going to New York for this conference was an incredible experience that I will never forget. I came away from it with knowledge, many new friendships, and the passion for doing what I can to pass on MY new knowledge.



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*The goal of the FIA Bulletin is to publish original stories, essays, letters, poems, photographs, and related material created by church members and friends in support of the witness and advocacy program of the UUCCSM.*

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*Charles M. Haskell, Editor*