

PACIFIC CURRENTS

National Youth

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near and dear to their hearts. A long line of teens came to the mike to express their concerns for lack of adequate health care, poverty, racism, homophobia, ageism, homelessness, world hunger and many other topics.

"One young man reminded us all that we needed to pray and then vote for candidates that would serve others (not themselves) and do the most good for all of humanity, not just who would be best for ourselves or our communities. There were a lot of comments against the war in Iraq and their concerns for others their age who are serving in the military. Their voices were heard and applauded by many. It was very inspirational.

"I was very energized being around so many awesome young people. They were focused on helping one another, rather than themselves, and they were willing to come home and ask their own church families to get involved in the issues they felt needed to be addressed.

"I realized that I, too, would be required to ask something of my church family, and I will! God is still speaking in our community and definitely through the voices of our youth!"

Kenna Lehmann of Sierra Arden, Sacramento, summed up her experience of NYE this way:

"Camp has always been a second home to me; one of my favorite places in the world with some



All these NCNC youth, and some not pictured, joined 3500 other UCC youth at National Youth Event in Knoxville July 22-26. Pastoral leadership of the group included Rev. Tara Barber, Community UCC, Sebastopol, seated front row left; Rev. Rolf Hansen, Community UCC, San Carlos, back row left; Rev. Laura Barnes, Congregational UCC, Danville, on the ground far right; and Rev. Carol Barriger, First UCC, Redwood City, right in the middle.

of my favorite people. I have always jumped at the chance to attend any UCC event where those people might attend.

"I went into National Youth Event thinking 'Ok this is going to be fun. So-and-so and so-and-

so will be there and we're going to have a great time as usual.' As predicted, they were there but somewhere in that 'great time as usual' something unpredicted took place.

"As we sat worshipping with

somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 other teenagers, raised our voices in song, gave our input in workshops and met complete strangers from across the continent, I felt our connection through God.

"I came to realize that it is not camp that is my second home but the United Church of Christ."

Thanks to Laura Barnes for much of this report and the photo.

Surprise bequest to OCWM from member in Redding

The NCNC received a surprise gift of \$7,800 for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) in July from the estate of Joan Lyerly, a member of First, Redding.

When Lyerly drew up her will she left the bulk of her estate to her church.

In a letter to the church, she specified that 10 percent of the estate should go to local charities she had supported for years; the HIV/AIDS Food Bank and the Help Hotline where she volunteered, right up until she was 90.

She also specified that 10 percent should go directly to OCWM.

After she died at age 93 in 2001, it took her executor a few years to settle the estate.

Imagine the surprise at the Conference office when a check arrived this summer for \$7,800 for OCWM.

"It just showed up," said office manager Joy Davis. "We depend so much on the generosity of churches and individuals. We are

grateful Ms. Lyerly knew about OCWM from her church and specified this gift."

Lyerly's pastor, Rev. Anne Lougee, says that she was born in England, came to the U.S. as a young woman, worked as a nurse and was widowed early. She was one of the real "oldtime hard-core liberals" who was committed to social justice and outreach.

"Joan had specifically said that she did not want a memorial service, so, at her suggestion, we had a memorial potluck dinner instead," said Lougee.

"She also didn't want people singing sad songs, but she allowed as how we could sing a chorus of 'When the Saints Go Marchin' In,' so we did. She closed her letter by saying it would 'be nice if somewhere someone would plant a tree,' which is being done here on the church grounds.

"I hope the story of her gift to OCWM will inspire others to make similar arrangements."

Bicyclists

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year. It's a good cause and lots of fun."

Welcoming churches along the way were Little Brown, Sunol; Community, Pittsburg; Congregational, Suisun-Fairfield; United, Petaluma; St. John's, San Francisco; Community, Pescadero, and of course, First, Palo Alto.

Riders and supporters included Mike Davis, Susan Davis, Bryan

Furlong with sons Adam and Daniel, Shirley Gruber, Betsy and Janet Penick, Nancy Peters, Art Reichert, Abby Stanley, Russ and Sheila Stevens, Maurice and Marsha Stevenson.

Russ said the ride's highlights included beautiful views, like crossing the Dumbarton, Antioch and Golden Gate bridges, taking the 30-mile "Iron Horse" bike path between Sunol and Pittsburgh, picnic lunches in Rio Vista and Napa (complete with brie and wine),

warm showers and beds in people's homes in Petaluma.

At the potluck dinner at Petaluma, Rev. Gayle Madison encouraged more gifts to OCWM and \$400 was raised on the spot. Russ was moved by Madison's words of welcome and affirmation to the riders.

"All of us are the resurrected body of Christ. That means that no matter where we travel, we always have a home with the other members of that body."

Founded August 1, 1851
Northern California Nevada
Conference edition

UNITED CHURCH NEWS
Published monthly, except for January and August.
Northern California
Nevada Conference, UCC
21425 Birch Street
Hayward CA 94541-2131
510-247-8990
www.ncnccucc.org
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Conference Minister;
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