

---

---

# ALUMNI LINK

A PUBLICATION OF THE YFU-USA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Volume 5, Issue 1

Winter 2002

---

## Happy New Year!

With 2001 over we leave behind a very difficult year. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of those who were affected by the terrible events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. As we begin the New Year it is time to look ahead at the opportunities that we have to improve our world. As YFU alumni we have learned to understand and accept other cultures. Now is the perfect time to share that knowledge with others and give back to our communities and the world in which we live.

A great way to get involved is to volunteer with YFU locally and/or nationally. To volunteer locally call 1-800-872-0200 and you will be connected to your nearest District office. To volunteer nationally and help steer the development of alumni efforts around the country and the world, become a part of the National Alumni Council. To find out about the NAC's most recent activities read the article below from our Executive Committee. Also this month, we are pleased to have an article from an alumnus who has come full circle.

## National Alumni Council Executive Committee Update

In an effort by the Executive Committee to share more information and updates about what the NAC is doing, we will be including an update in all future editions of the *Alumni Link*.

To help with the financial situation of YFU-USA, the National Alumni Council (NAC) postponed its semi-annual in-person fall meeting. However, a "meeting" was essential to continue the momentum of various aspects of the NAC, so on November 4, 2001 a conference call was held with most council members participating. Although the main NAC business was conducted during the conference call, a great deal of work was completed by email and online chats prior to and following the conference call.

The NAC reviewed its current projects and programs, reassigned projects, added some new projects, and elected a new Executive Committee. Highlights include:

- The NAC is currently halfway through its three-year grant from the ICDF and will continue the

*Continued on Page 2*

## National Alumni Council Elections

**Five seats on the NAC are up for election. We are looking for dedicated volunteers who are willing to devote their time and energy to helping solidify our efforts to establish a strong association of YFU alumni in the US.**

**For additional information, or to nominate someone, please fill out the NAC Interest Form on the Internet:**  
[www.yfu.org/us/alumni/about/nacinterestform.html](http://www.yfu.org/us/alumni/about/nacinterestform.html)  
or email Adrienne Sheffield at  
[metropeppers@hotmail.com](mailto:metropeppers@hotmail.com)

**The election will be held during the last week of February. Nominations are due February 11, 2002.**

## Going Full Circle – Thanks YFU!

The best thing about a YFU exchange is that it can have a tremendous impact on your life without you even realizing it.

In 1996, after I had just turned 16, I spent a summer as a YFU exchange student in Kristiansund, Norway. I had written a report on Norway for a high school geography class and felt that it'd be a pretty nice place to visit. Back then, I never thought about it as a learning experience or as a matter of cultural exchange. Such ideas were still too sophisticated for my teenage mind. I was in it to have fun, to see the world -- and to this 16 year old, the world started with the fjords and pretty girls that were sure to be found in Norway.

Needless to say, that summer was the best summer of my life and I really got more than I had bargained for. My host family took me to see just about all of northern and central Norway. I met and enjoyed the company of all of my host family: parents, brother, sister, grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles. I went to a Norwegian wedding and got to dance with the bride. My host brother and I fished together often in his little boat and got to know each other very well. The natural, "one-with-nature" way of life of the Norwegian people suited me wonderfully.

I learned a lot of things from that summer that I will always keep with me. My most important lesson was the idea that perspective is important, especially when you are young. Before I left for my exchange experience, I lived in my own little world in the

*Continued on Page 2*

Continued from Page 1

## NAC Update Cont'd.

implementation of the "Universal Post-Program Reconnection" (UPPR) grant as planned. While some plans and projects need to be redefined due to changes in YFU-USA structure, the overall UPPR goals are needed now more than ever.

- The [District Facilitator position](#) was redefined, moving towards more of a mentoring role for the Alumni Coordinators. A new position description has been drafted and is available to Alumni Coordinators and Field Directors from the District Facilitators. The current District Facilitators are:

- Susan Cook – Founders [soo@juno.com](mailto:soo@juno.com)
- Lisa Chinnery – Heartland [lmnocean@aol.com](mailto:lmnocean@aol.com)
- Scott Atherton – Northeast [mailto:kangayop@aol.com](mailto:mailto:kangayop@aol.com)
- Adrienne Sheffield – Southern Tier [metropeppers@hotmail.com](mailto:metropeppers@hotmail.com)

- Fundraising and Grant Research has become a priority project.
- Each year during the fall meeting, the Vice Chair assumes the role of NAC Chair. As the new NAC Chair, Lisa (Newland) Chinnery from Colorado, brings a history of YFU leadership and a broad understanding of the current issues facing the NAC. David Jones from Iowa was elected Vice-Chair and Adrienne Sheffield from Texas was elected Secretary.

As we progress into the New Year, we would like to express to each of you our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your dedication. At times like these, seeing beyond our own daily lives and extending your our reach to a greater goal is much needed.

We look forward to working with and for you throughout the coming year.

Any questions or comments should be directed to the NAC Secretary, Adrienne Sheffield, at:

[metropeppers@hotmail.com](mailto:metropeppers@hotmail.com).

*Lisa, David and Adrienne*



## Going Full Circle – Con't.

Midwest and thought that everyone else my age lived more or less the same way I did. Going overseas really opened my eyes to the fact that in other parts of the world, people lived very different lives. I realized different didn't mean better or worse, but just another perspective on living in this world. This realization made my everyday teenage troubles seem trivial all of a sudden, and I knew that I had matured.

While I was in Norway, I also learned to love ships. From my host brother's little boat, to my host father's larger motor boat, to the Norwegian Coastal Express luxurious new cruise ships, this Midwestern boy found his sea-legs in Norway. However, I didn't think too much about it back then and dismissed this new discovery as another childish hobby.

After returning home and completing high school, I ended up attending the University of Michigan on a whim. Michigan was far from my first choice and only after having already committed myself did I discover that it had one of the top Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering departments in the country. Talk about your brilliant strokes of luck!

After putting in some hard time and enjoying lots of good times, I am now a graduate of the University of Michigan with a B.S. degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. This past fall, I returned to Norway on a Fulbright Scholarship for a year and a half to study for a graduate degree in Marine Technology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway. Trondheim is less than one hour away from Kristiansund.

I never would have imagined the way in which my exchange experience has influenced and directed my life. I have completed a full circle and returned to Norway after 5 years. I had promised my host brother that I would come back to see him someday and I am now able to fulfill this promise. I never knew it back then, but YFU opened the door for me and my future as I know it now. Thanks YFU!

*Bin Wang  
Norway, Summer 1996*