

R.I.P. YGA?

By Alison Black

YGA Mag originally stood for Young Gay America Magazine. The folks at YGA pondered what the words “young”, “gay”, and “America” really meant to people, and wanted suggestions for other words that YGA could stand for. How about Young Gorgeous Alison? It has a certain ring to it, no?

YGA Mag is for LGBT youth, and is a darned good read for straight teens too. It’s an independent publication created by volunteers in someone’s living room, right here in Halifax, Nova Scotia (see, what does “America” really mean anyway?). The only thing is, I don’t know whether I should be using the past tense in these sentences, because new issues of YGA haven’t been produced since early 2006. The website (ygamag.com) still has an image of the Jan/Feb 2006 issue on the homepage, and the nice folks at Venus Envy (Halifax’s super-cool sex book/toy store) thought that YGA was having problems with its distributor. So is YGA gone for good?

You can get back issues of YGA at the Halifax Public Libraries (imagine that?) and see how great this mag is. It’s a cool-looking magazine with a clean layout and tons tons of articles. They have all the columns that should be in every good magazine, with a LGBT bent (pardon the expression): movie, music, game, and book reviews, political news, interviews with celebs, a travel column, a big advice column, and health/psych advice. YGA includes feature articles that are thorough and lengthy (but not so bad as *The Atlantic Monthly*), reader essays, and profiles of LGBT activists. My fave columns are “Shit List & Quit List” (in the Jan/Feb 2006 issue, Terrance Howard was the shit, and Alanis and snakes sucked) and “Back2Back”, where two readers face off in

a debate about various LGBT issues. The mag’s extensive “Letters” column features loads of support from LGBT and straight youth, and even one letter from a librarian (in the Jan/Feb 2006 issue). Gee, I hope that is not what caused them to go under...

What to do while waiting (probably in a delusional state—see the article on *Sassy*) for the next issue of YGA to come out? Well, I’ll start with the bad news. *Girlfriends* magazine, which was a pop-culturey, political, lifestyle, and entertainment magazine for lesbian women has also walked into the sunset (yeah, I know the phrase “lesbian women” sounds stupid—I’m talking older lesbians, not teen lesbians). *The Advocate*, the U.S. news magazines for gays and lesbians, has a monthly youth column called “GenQ,” but hardly makes up for an entire magazine. *Curve* magazine is very fun, and talks about movies and music, fashion, celebrities, pop culture and politics. It is for lesbian women, so it does not specifically address the needs of lesbian teens and might include some advanced sexual information (particularly sad when you’re not getting any), but I definitely recommend *Curve* as a good diversion from the sad fate of YGA.

