

P. O. Box 4037
Madison, Wisconsin

221-1065

Vol. 3, No. 10
Jan. 27, 1971

January 31 - "Therefore a Stripe Painted Horse is not a Zebra"
- Glenn Cox

February 7 - "Cities"
- Steve Friedman

February 14 - "O Men, O Women!"
- words and music with the Koehls, Peters, Parrishes, and Friedmans

February 21 - "The Lodi Commune"
- members of the Commune

THE POSITIVE VALUE OF FAILURE

I have extremely mixed feelings about failure. On the one hand, I hate and fear that I might fail. I'm upset by the thought of it. I sometimes find myself trying to do something (perhaps work on a service or write one of these columns), yet unable to really act on it because I might not do as well as I want, I might not succeed. I know I'm not alone in this syndrome of success and failure. In one way or another many of us feel these anxieties, though perhaps our goals for success and our standards for failure differ in many ways. But I said that I had mixed feelings about failure; I've only mentioned the negative ones. Though I have a hard time accepting them, I know that there are real, positive values to failure. Two of these I think are particularly important:

First, out of failure, though painful in the extreme, growth may emerge. I have known times when I've invested a good deal of time and personality into a project, only to have the whole thing disintegrate. The first reaction is profound disappointment and plenty of anger (generally vague in its direction). But if I can keep a firm enough hold on my desire to be honest with myself and to know and understand things as they really are, I often discover my own responsibility in the failure at hand. If I can own this responsibility, figure out why I did what I did, and how I might do otherwise, I may be able to grow enough to avoid similar failures in the future. Once I establish my own responsibility in such situations, I can also see where other people were partially responsible, or where circumstances interfered. Such perception is both comfort and instruction. This whole process of accepting and understanding failure has often helped me and I'm sure many others not only to do better next time, but also to be stronger persons more able to see and be honest with and about ourselves; to know ourselves better. This growth is in more than information or comprehension, it's character.

The second positive value to failure which I want to write a little about is difficult to find a term for. Some failure must be accepted, even embraced if we are to experiment and take risks in new things. Any action which is truly experimental has a pretty fair chance at failure. That's imply the nature of experiment. If we don't affirm the value of trying new things to the point of saying, "We don't mind a number of failures, for without them some new success is impossible," then life would be horribly dull. Life would be unchanging and immobilized. Just the kind of frustrated inaction, I mentioned in the first paragraph. When I encounter this frustrated inaction, I have to remind myself that if I don't do anything, I certainly don't succeed at anything. To live is to fail -- and to succeed, too. L'Chaim!.

1/27/71

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There will be a meeting of the RE committee on Monday, Feb. 15 at 7:45 p.m. at Pat Cautley's, 4805 Regent St. Next year's program will be discussed. All those interested are welcome.

Grades Kindergarten through 5 Clay molding and glazing projects will be the special activity on Feb. 28 and Mar. 7. This will replace the previously scheduled special activities of Feb. 14 and 21. The spring session will begin on Mar. 14.

High School Youth Group Come to the Nettletons' -- Sunday, January 31, 7 to 9 p.m. (1556 Simpson St. #8) The American Indian

CAN AND BOTTLE PICKUP REMINDER

This Sunday, January 31 is bottle and can pickup at church. Everybody bring your cans and bottles to the parking lot of the Fondue Chalet at the corner of Mifflin and Webster streets between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. We will have receptacles there for separating cans and bottles.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a meeting of the Evening Alliance in the First Society hearthroom on Thurs. Feb. 4. Following a 6:30 supper, Miss Helen Hawkins will show a film and discuss her experiences as camp counselor at Camp Oscha in northern Wisconsin. All women of the Prairie Society are welcome and may phone Mrs. Crocker at 256-4616 for reservations.

The Do-Si-Do Davidsons (alias Charlie and Hermine) will host a Prairie folk dance party. Promenading and squaring sets will begin at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 6. This exiting evening is for both dancers and non-dancers (you can learn the dances or just socialize). The Davidsons' dancing home is at 2210 Waunona Way. 75¢ is asked from all in order to defray refreshment costs. Y'all come. See you there!

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

There will be a meeting of the executive board of the Prairie Society on Thursday, Feb. 4 at 8:00 p.m. at Karen Peters' 3817 Council Crest.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the next newsletter is Sunday, February 7.