The Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society of Madison
Vol. 4, No. 6
NEWSLETTER November 17, 1971

Upcoming Programs:

November 21 - William Gorham Rice, Professor Emeritus of Law and specialist in civil rights - some reflections; open discussion of civil liberties.

November 28 - "Death and Dying", coordinated by Melinda Rosnoy

December 5 - "A Tribute to Mikis Theodorakis, composer of "Zorba the Greek" - by George Calden

December 12 - Program by Dave Meyer

December 19 - Family Christmas Program

December 26 - No meeting

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PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET 1971-72

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THANKSGIVING ACTIVITIES—TAKE YOUR PICK

Prairie and First Society Unitarians and friends are gathering together for Thanksgiving dinner and a family service from around 5 to 7 Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25, at the Hearth Room of the First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive. Dinner will be on a potluck basis, and the signup—organization sheet will be available next Sunday on the coffee table.

If you can't travel to New Guinea, Indonesia, Iceland or Chile, you can have the fun of sharing your turkey and cranberry sauce with a native of Ghana, Japan, India, or Finland. The Madison Friends of International Students hope that residents of Madison and their neighboring communities will make it possible for all foreign students who wish to do so to enjoy the hospitality of a meal in an American home at Thanksgiving or Christmas. Anyone interested should call Mrs. Robert H. Burris, 238-5359, or write her at 1015 University Bay Drive (53705).

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RIC MASTON IS COMING!

The folksinger-troubador-minister Ric Maston from California is coming to Madison on Dec. 4 and 5. Ric will be doing a concert at the University, the Sunday morning service at the First Society, and a performance—sum-service with us at Prairie. We are extremely lucky to be able to have Ric with us at the time that we begin our residence at the Portal-Foster Center. Final arrangements have not been completed, so we cannot say at this time whether he will be with us to help celebrate our move as well as just to share with us himself and his songs. Watch the Newsletter for details.

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LSD HELPS KILL PAIN FOR DYING CANCER PATIENTS

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP)—The administration of LSD to persons dying of cancer can produce more tolerance to pain and a calm acceptance of inevitable death, a psychiatric researcher reports.

Dr. Stanislav Grof, chief of the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, said 13 of 36 terminal cancer patients who have participated in an experimental LSD program showed "dramatic improvement", 13 showed moderate improvement, seven were unimproved, and three were worse.

He said of the three rated worse, the difference was negligible in two of them and considerable in the third.

"As the patient approaches death, he usually experiences, in addition to the physical pain associated with his illness, also various degrees of depression, anxiety and psychological isolation," Grof said.

Grof said many dying cancer patients are on a high dosage of pain-killing drugs, yet high dosages don't always control pain.

But he said there has been a dramatic reduction of pain in many patients in the LSD program.

The researcher said it is not known whether LSD has some inherent pain-killing property or whether it has psychological effects that influence the tolerance of pain.

"The terminal patient will focus on his pain—it is his way of life," Grof said. "He cannot pay attention to anything else. What you can see after an LSD session is that all of a sudden he is interested in all kinds of things—watching TV programs, listening to music, asking questions about things at home.

There was a very sensible reduction in the narcotics that the patients required after successful LSD sessions. They were less bothered by insomnia."

Grof also said patients generally showed improvement in depressed attitudes.
AN OPINION ABOUT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND THE FEAR OF DEATH

by Orle Loucks

The irrational fear of dying shown by our society is making all of us subject to the conventional wisdom that we should all give generously to fight the major causes of death.

We rationalize this thinking on the grounds that sometimes young people get cancer and sometimes heart disease. Nevertheless, we are having to prepare now for the population growth that will take place in the next 50 years due to an increased average life-span of 80 to 90 years.

Our taxes go heavily to cancer research and other allegedly desirable scientific goals. New programs to end cancer cannot be opposed by any politician as evidenced by this week's appropriation by Congress for more cancer research. Most of us cannot bring ourselves to refuse support for T, B, seals and other appeals that take advantage of our fear of death.

Melinda Roznoy is coordinating the program about death, which the Prairie Society is conducting at 10:00 a.m. November 28, at the downtown YWCA. Here she offers some observations based on Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's On Death and Dying (MacMillan: paperback).

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross subtitles her book "What the dying have to teach doctors, nurses, clergy, and their own families.

Probably it is the families which are in the best position to help and support the dying. Dr. Ross learned from many interviews with terminally ill patients that what they wanted most was someone to talk to. Who is better able to do that for the dying person than the family?

Why has the discussion of death and dying suddenly become such a big issue? After all, we should be experts on dying. It is the one thing that has been with mankind as long as man himself. Death has always been a fearful thing. We have a hard time conceiving of our own death. In our unconscious mind we rejoice when death comes to "the other guy" instead of to ourselves. We are a nation dedicated to the denial of death.

The stages of grief and mourning are found in the dying person. The first reaction is usually, "No, not me--it's a big mistake!"

This temporary defense of denial is later replaced by a partial acceptance and consequent self-isolation. The logical next question is, "Why me? Why not somebody else?"

The third, and usually brief stage is one of bargaining. This reaction requires rewards for good behavior, promises, bargains with God to dedicate one's life to the Church in exchange for a little extra time. When all the defenses have disintegrated, numbness, anger, and stoicism are replaced with overwhelming depression.

Financial problems, last dreams, becoming a "burden on society", result in guilt and hopelessness. Finally, if the dying person has had sufficient time, he may arrive at a stage of acceptance. This is not necessarily a happy period; rather it is almost empty of any emotion. The person needs a compassionate, quiet, supportive presence--it's the comfort of having someone that counts.

In this age of sophisticated life-saving equipment, we face many moral questions. Undeniably we are concerned for the quality of life. However, we frequently become involved with the simplistic preservation and elongation of all life, regardless of quality.
A MEDICAL DOCTOR AND A SOCIAL WORKER DISCUSS THE ETHICS OF DEATH

Vivian Wood, professor of social work at the University of Wisconsin, thinks the medical profession is erring by unnecessarily prolonging life.

Dr. Mike McCann, Prairie Society member and pediatrician, says it's a myth that his profession is a "depersonalized science in the service of prolonging life."

Prof. Wood said, "A doctor's job is much easier if he is only concerned about prolonging life."

"Doctors—everyone—must face serious ethical questions:

"Does a human being have a right to die; to choose his own time to die?"

After becoming a vegetable in the hands of the medical profession, what happens to the patient? Who has the right to make the life-death decision—the doctor, the family, the state?"

Mike McCann, who recently set up his private practice at 7129 Hubbard Ave. in Middleton, Wisconsin, said, "It's a big myth that doctors unnecessarily prolong life."

"Most doctors don't talk about it, but they do let their terminally ill patients die when that time arrives."

"The death-decision is much more difficult to make with young babies than it is with old timers," McCann said.

"The potential for recovering is greater with youngsters; their bodies are so resilient," he explained.

"Once we had a little baby who died. She had been hooked up to a variety of instruments to monitor her condition. Almost an hour later we noticed her body was still capable of registering impulses on the instruments. The little body was still capable of responding after more than 45 minutes without oxygen, but her brain was completely destroyed. She had died, but her body still had strength. That's why it is so hard to make such decision with babies."

Prof. Wood commented that Eric Erickson may well be right:

"Death is only a bad thing if you fear life; if you live life in a way that you are satisfied, then death is only a natural climax.

"Most old people do not mind talking about their funeral, talking about getting their things in order; but it disturbs the young, so old people do not talk as much about it."

"Old people much prefer being told when they are going to die."

"Which is better—shorter life in your own way, or longer life in the hands of others," Prof. Wood asked.

She said there are studies which indicate "for certain people, the dramatic change produced by being placed in an institution changes the death rate."

Prof. Wood, who recently served on the White House Conference on Aging, said young people today are asking more questions about death.

"Perhaps young people have a little different attitude toward life."

"Young people are very much concerned that there be a great respect for life—that's why they reject the Vietnam war, because it lacks a respect for life."

"If you change your attitude toward life, as these young people have, then your attitude toward death changes."

She explained that young people's attitude toward death was part of their respect for life.
AN APPEAL ... FROM THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Daily in Dane County in the field of human needs there is always a group of people who are:

1. Starving
2. Ineligible for bureaucratic remedies

Knowing this, the Prairie Social Action Committee set up a fund, The Prairie Emergency Fund, to aid desperate people referred to us by social workers. For a while our phone rang constantly, then suddenly stopped ringing, not because the need for money vanished but because our funds did.

What to do? We know that whatever all members of Prairie might be willing to contribute, the need is so great that we would feel not only inadequate but also incompetent as what to do with limited funds.

Fortunately there is a fund run by Robert Shaw of St. Andrews Episcopal Church, through which monies are administered exactly in the area we want. The Shaw Fund also provides many free services to people who need them---furniture, transportation... read for yourself in the attached sheet entitled Crisis in Madison 1970 (71).

All Prairie members may not be interested in all of those activities, but some may enjoy driving, fixing up clothing and furniture, etc. There is enough to the Shaw program to offer some physical contribution by all Prairie members and friends.

In any case, money is needed, and we intend to raise $50 per month as a minimum goal. Will you help?

--Ted Clark (238-3531)

SA COMMITTEE OPPOSES PROPOSED HIGHWAY PLAN

Most of you may already be aware of the proposal for an Outer Beltline through Dane County by the Wisconsin Division of Highways. The SA Committee has submitted the following statement in its name. Individuals are also urged to write to the Division, Hill Farms State Office Building, Madison, 53705 to express your opinions.

Also, please write to Gov. Lucey and to Norman Clapp, Sec'y., Dept. of Transportation, Hill Farms State Office Bldg., to voice your opinions.

Any such highway will of course use prime farm land, as well as encroach on valuable wetlands and areas which the Parks Commission is interested in preserving. The Dane County Regional Planning Commission is working to develop a land-use plan, but this is not yet ready. However, we feel the most important argument is that we need alternative forms of mass transportation, and that the time to develop them is now.

Since the Division of Highways automatically receives all the revenues from gasoline taxes (referred to as "aggregated funds") they need to be urged to devote a portion of these funds to long-range solutions.

To: Wisconsin Division of Highways

This statement is being filed on behalf of the Social Action Committee of the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society.

We, the members of the above group, are very concerned about the proposed plans for an Outer Beltline from eastern Dane County to Roxbury. Regardless of the particular alternative route which might be selected for this highway, we have very serious doubts about the ultimate desirability of such plans.

We seriously question the apparent assumption by the Highway Commission that the only solution to transportation problems and needs is to build more highways to serve more automobiles. There would seem to be sufficient evidence already that such a policy is self-defeating in the long run and cannot be expected to provide a satisfactory long-range solution to the problem of crowded highways and more cars.

November 10, 1971
Sunday Services at the YWCA on the square at 10:30 a.m.
David Meyer, Minister

PRaIRiE SOCIETY MOVES

December 5

to 1806 Westlawn, Madison

NEW TIME: 10:00 a.m.

(continued from page 5)

Therefore, until and unless a change is made in the statutory allocation of gasoline tax revenues, we urge the Highway Commission to devote a substantial portion of the segregated highway funds to the study and development of alternative means of mass transportation throughout the state.

We urge the Wisconsin Division of Highways to recommend against building any new freeway in Dane County.

cc: Dane County Regional Planning Commission

Jane Hammett, Chmn., Avis Parrish, Patricia Caufley, Sydney Mannering, Roudaba Lau, W. T. Clark, Orie Loucks, Rachel Siegfried, Betty French.

IT'S OUR NEW HOME....

On Friday, Saturday, Sunday, November 26-28, all able-bodied friends and members of Prairie Society are invited to a continuous work-party. Ted Clark will be supervising the spray-painting of our new meeting room. Help if you can. Call Fran Remiska (645-7292) if you have any questions. If you can't physically help, maybe you could help anyway - give Fran a call.

...IT NEEDS LOVE AND CARE.