New lay ministers announced: Dan and Barbara Willard, Bruce Dashore, Bob Koehl

Prairie Society's special way of running itself—having three different lay ministers serve as the group's leader for separate three-month periods—is ready to be tried out.

Dan and Barbara Willard, members of Prairie Society, will serve as lay ministers from September through November.

Bruce Dashore, who gave the address at the first formal meeting of Prairie Society in the late 1960s, will return to Prairie Society as its lay minister for the months of December, January and February.

For the last three months of next year's meetings and activities, Bob Koehl, a member of the Society, will serve as lay minister.

The new lay ministers are free to focus the group's attention on whatever topic or activity they choose—they have a free rein to act as leaders. Each lay minister will coordinate plans with the Program Committee, which has responsibility for the Sunday morning programs; however, the lay ministers will be presenting as many Sunday morning programs as they wish.

The lay ministers receive $100 a month, and they have a $500 budget for their three-month term.

Each of the lay ministers has a special orientation. Dan and Barbara Willard have an ecology orientation. Bruce Dashore (pronounced bay-shore), a psychiatric social worker and former ordained minister, is concerned with basic values focused on one-to-one relationships. Bob Koehl is oriented toward individual sensitivity, making people aware of their own and others feelings.

Needless to say, the new lay ministers are many faceted beings with many other orientations that they will share with Prairie Society.

Charlie Davidson, who headed up the search committee which recommended these lay ministers, said they purposely wanted two Prairie Society members and one person from outside the group to serve as lay ministers. He pointed out that next year, if this system of running Prairie Society is continued, another mix of individuals is possible and would probably be desirable.

At the July board meeting which unanimously approved the search committee's recommendations, Pat Werner commented:

"The lay minister idea has such a wide range of possibilities. It is still possible for future lay ministers to have much different ideas and orientations than those we have selected this year. The most important point to stress about the lay minister approach to running our group is its diversity."
FINAL ACTIVITY OF SUMMER TO BE SPECIAL ONE: AN ADULT'S WEEKEND RETREAT

From Friday, August 25, through Sunday, August 27, members and friends of Prairie Society are invited to attend a special adult-oriented weekend retreat at St. Benedict Center, located on the northwest edge of Lake Mendota, on Fox Bluff, Middleton.

The theme for the various small group meetings and activities will be "Joy, awareness and engagement are essential to life." Bob Koehl is program director. Everyone 18 years of age and older is invited to a weekend full of plays, discussions, T-group experiences and other activities intended for adults.

St. Benedict Center has more than 100 beds, with linens provided, a dozen conference rooms, recreation hall, library, auditorium, tennis courts, TV, radio, and workshop areas, and lots of park grounds overlooking Lake Mendota. They also serve delicious food--so good, Bill Caldwell claims it is cuisine.

Five meals will be served during the Prairie Society's special adult weekend retreat: three meals Saturday, and two meals Sunday.

Tentative schedule of events: Friday night, opening program at 8 p.m., singing, dancing, and bull-sessions; Saturday morning, T-group experience and discussion of awareness; Saturday afternoon, a discussion about drugs and alcohol as a base for inquiring into the nature and problems of pleasure, joy and ecstasy; Saturday night, a serious discussion or debate about engagement, probably relating to the art of the possible in local and national politics; late Saturday night, more recreational groups and bull-sessions; Sunday morning, a dramatic skit aimed at inspiration and impact, with closing lunch at noon.

Cost: $21.50 per person, includes two overnight lodging and five meals.

Make your reservation by August 15 to Betsy Roberts, 238-6030 (if no answer, call Mark McElreath, 238-1692). Make checks payable to St. Benedict Center.

For more information, contact Bob Koehl, Mark McElreath, or Betsy Roberts.

RESERVATIONS FOR PRAIRIE SOCIETY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS HAS BEEN SET FOR SEPTEMBER 29--OCTOBER 1 FOR A FAMILY-ORIENTED WEEKEND RETREAT TO THE WOODS.

In the past, Prairie Society has gone to Camp Upham Woods. This year, the group will go to Camp Anokijig, a 300-acre YMCA camp with 40-acre lake, huge main dining hall, canoes, boating, equestrian trails, swimming area, and the possibility of horses; also, a half dozen tent site areas with large, standing tents suitable for six, each with steel beds and mattresses; several roomy lodges that can accommodate two to three dozen people each. Dan and Barbara Willard will be conducting the program for the weekend. Cost is comparable if not less than Upham Woods; details to be announced later. Camp Anokijig is 2 1/2 hours from Madison, west of Sheboygan, near Plymouth, Wisc. Five meals will be served: three Saturday, and two Sunday. Bring your own bedding, and be prepared to wash a few dishes (someone will have to do it); otherwise, everything else is taken care of...just plan to have some fun and good times. Many more details will be announced in future newsletter. Mark your calendars.
Over the past 43 years, Druce Bashore has changed his interests, but his focus has remained: he loves people. He has served as a United Church of Christ minister in Battle Creek, Michigan, specializing in teacher-training, youth work, and community organizations. He has taught philosophy, English and theology at a small college in Poona, India. He has worked closely with young people at Madison's First Unitarian Society, where as ministerial assistant he also led the informal Friday night group. At Wisconsin's Mendota State Hospital, he has been a psychiatric social worker. Now, he is working as a field course instructor with the University of Wisconsin School of Social Work.

Beginning in December, he will serve for three months as the lay minister for Prairie Society.

Remembering the time Druce spent at First Society, Max Gaebler commented about the Phi Delta Kappa native of Antwerp, Ohio: "He's at his best on a one-to-one basis. Druce has great skill with people: he's perceptive, gentle and very supportive."

I first met Druce Bashore over coffee at a university eating spot. We talked for an hour or so, and I was impressed. He speaks quietly, willingly and honestly, his eyes looking at you with understanding.

Right now, Druce is concerned with coordinating training activities aimed at increasing social worker's awareness of problems relating to unwanted pregnancies. Madison's abortion clinic, the Midwest Medical Center, gave $15,000 to the School of Social Work for this purpose, and Druce is supervising the funds and working with a half dozen students involved with local social agencies. Our conversation began with Druce talking about the eroding stigma but remaining problems of the "unwed mother."

"Times has changed, and today many pregnant women who are not married are electing to keep their babies...they are not afraid to be unwed mothers. From the social agency point of view, the single parent family is a workable reality. More and more, adoption agencies are placing children with single people. And more and more, women are keeping their babies born out of wedlock.

"As an official state policy, Wisconsin recognizes a single person and a child as a family." As an example, he said an 18-year-old with a baby is qualified for ADC welfare.

"There are major problems with this growing acceptance of single-parent families. Young girls think it is "in" to keep their new little baby and raise it alone. But they don't realize the responsibilities that go with the baby. Often relatives are brought into the picture to serve as parents because the girls find that having a baby is not all fun. There is more to preventing unwanted pregnancies than giving out information about contraceptives; we must make adolescents aware of the responsibilities for child rearing."

Ann Dashore, Bruce's wife, is the counsellor in charge of teenage programs conducted by the Midwest Medical Center. They have been married 20 years and have four boys: Cary, 18; Parr, 16; Grant, 11; and Mark, 8. They live at 2530 Marshall Parkway (256-2261).
Now Bruce says he wants to change his professional focus, to concentrate on the animal instincts of man. He said he wants to reexamine "human history in terms of our animal history." He wants to research the impact of animal characteristics on human behavior. For instance, he pointed out that animals have a need for territory: "What's the impact of territoriality on the needs of apartment dwellers? How much communal space is needed? Space and crowding factors in cities and apartment complexes are factors that relate to man's basic animalistic nature, and I want to know more about such matters."

Broadening his conversation to ecological issues, he said, "Considering man superior to other animals is a mistake. Faith in technology is almost irrelevant. We must slow up the pace of exploitation on this planet. Our traditional philosophies say we must exert our influence over nature—but this is falacious. St. Francis was a heretic for his time, but he was right: we are brothers and sisters to all animals."

Our coffee gone, I asked Bruce some trivia questions. Who on the American scene did he most admire? He could not think of any one, "except possibly George McGovern if he becomes president and does what he says he will." What book would he read if suddenly told to sit down and read a book? Future Shock, he said; and, if he had time, a rereading of African Genesis.

Bruce and I talked a little while longer. He said he would be coming to more and more Prairie events. He said he was looking forward to getting involved as a lay minister, but he really wasn't interested in going back into the ministry as a career. And he recalled the fact that he was the person who gave the Sunday morning address when Prairie Society formally met for the first time in the fall of 1968.

We parted with a firm handshake and thoughts of peace for each other. --Mark McElreath

RETURN BOOKS TO FIRST SOCIETY: They want 'em back: Epic of Unitarianism, by Park; The Hunter Heretic, vol. #1. And tell someone on Prairie RE committee when you do it.

WORK CREWS NEEDED, Contact Frank French, Al Nettleton. PAINTERS WANTED. Let's get the place spruced up for the new year.

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