

PRAIRIE FIRE

Newsletter of the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

SAT
15 MARCH 5:15 PM THEATER PARTY AND DINNER

SUN
16 MARCH 10 AM MUSIC: ALIVE AND KICKING: A service on the joys of performing music, led by Geo. Calden

SUN
23 MARCH 10 AM DEATH AND DYING: THE DEAD AND THE BEREAVED.
Led by the Ceremonies Committee, part of the the program will give members a chance to contribute their feelings about what the Society can and should do in the way of providing funerals and/or memorial services and helping the dying and bereaved in other ways.

TUES
25 MARCH 8 PM DEADLINE for the April 1st newsletter.

SUN
30 MARCH 10 AM PRAIRIE, WE SING TO THEE, PRAIRIE. A family dedication service in which those who wish to be dedicated become a firmer part of Prairie, and Prairie, in turn, dedicates itself to these special people. See insert below.

SAT
5 APRIL 8 PM FOLK DANCING at First Society

SUN
6 APRIL 10 AM VIETNAM: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE, led by Charles Harris

MON
7 APRIL 7:30 PM PROGRAM COMMITTEE meets at Plum's, Keewatin Trail, Route 1, Verona. Phone: 836-5547

TUES
08 APRIL 12 Noon DEADLINE for April 15th newsletter.

SUN 13 APRIL 7:30 PM SPRING PARISH MEETING

DEDICATION CEREMONY: You are asked to call Theron Caldwell at 255-9974 if you or your children would wish to be dedicated and partake of these sweet ideas. A major part of this dedication will be a sharing of bread. If you would like to help provide bread for this service, please call Richard Perry at 255-6157. Singers are also needed for this service. If you would like to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus," lift up your head and join the other silver voices, contact Linda Plum (836-5547) and plan for a rehearsal immediately following services on March 23rd.

Report from LRPC to Parish

As promised, the Long Range Planning Committee has digested the feedback generated by the Sunday meeting of Jan. 26, 1975. The purpose of that meeting was to examine those services we perform as a group for ourselves, and to ask, "Is what we are doing pleasing us, and if not, how should we change?" An immediate objective of the LRPC was to solicit input from the entire Prairie group before making recommendations regarding Sunday a.m. leadership for 1975-76.

During the Jan. 26 meeting, three discussion groups (the Lay Ministry, Ceremonial Functions and Counseling Functions) responded to "Guideline Questions," which are repeated below, with a summary of the responses.

GROUP I: LAY MINISTRY

1. Does everyone understand how it works (the Lay Ministry, that is)?

No. New people, especially, may not understand the scope or the possibilities of the Lay Ministry. Several suggested that a written statement, a sort of job description, be available. It was also suggested that a clear-cut delineation of the relationship between the Lay Minister and the Program Committee would be helpful.

2. Do we like the way it works?

Most of us are generally satisfied, in fact, pleased, with the way it works. Many mentioned liking the variety in format, topics and personnel. Some would like more outside input and feel we are a bit ingrown.

3. If so, how can we make it attractive so people will continue to do it? What would it take to get me to do it?

- (a) Provide lots of help, e.g., a two-person team or a small committee to assist in planning and/or execution;
- (b) A supportive atmosphere;
- (c) A less demanding time commitment;
- (d) Assign the "ministerial counseling function" to the appropriate committee;
- (e) Structure a lay ministry around a subject with the Lay Minister as non-expert program coordinator who exposes us to the topic in various ways. This widens the talent pool to include people who do not regard themselves as "experts" on any one subject, but enjoy drawing together resources.

GROUP II: CEREMONIES

1. Should the Society do more toward providing resources for marriage ceremonies?

Unanimously yes.

2. Should the Society conduct infant/child/adult dedication ceremonies?

Mixed reaction to this one.

3. Should the Society change its existing ceremony for "graduation" from the Church School?

The responses ranged from "No, I love it," to "What ceremony?"

Report from LRPC to Parish (cont'd.)

4. Should the Society be involved in funerals, memorial services?

Unanimously yes.

5. Can and should we seek ways of welcoming new members?

Many people felt there was an unmet need here, and suggestions ranged from more effort on the part of individuals to be friendly, to the appointment of an official greeter.

6. Are there other events in the lives of members which should be ceremonially shared with other members of the Society?

Farewell ceremonies for persons leaving us for a time or permanently, and some sort of ceremony for persons getting divorced, were mentioned.

Note: The Ceremonies Committee, chaired by Warren Hagstrom, will continue to deal with these issues.

GROUP III: COUNSELING

1. Is it possible for a "family" to counsel its own members?

Most felt that this was not only appropriate, but that, with Prairie people, it happens frequently.

2. How much initiative should members of the Counseling Committee take in seeking out persons with problems?

Something more than an inconspicuous listing in the Directory. However, this is a difficult question, and opinions vary. Confidentiality is very important.

Based on the feedback summarized under Group I: Lay Ministry, the LRPC is making the following recommendations to the Parish. These recommendations will be on the agenda of the Spring Parish Meeting. The basic idea is to allow the Lay Ministry Search Committee more flexibility in planning for next year's Sunday morning leadership, and to make the Lay Ministry attractive to a larger number of people.

1. At least 2/3 of the year consist of three-month ministries.

2. Within this context, lay ministers have the option of (a) serving for at least 3 months; (b) serving as part of a team.

3. One minister, if possible, should come from outside the parish.

4. At least one of the ministries could be of the "program facilitator" type, with a ministry centered on some high-interest topic.

5. A committee (we suggest the already existing Ad Hoc Committee on Outside Resources) research the Society and determine "high interest" topics which are suitable for extended consideration.

6. These selected topics be available for consideration by potential lay ministers.

NOTE: There will be a meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee at Mary Slabaugh's house, 2416 Gregory, March 23, 12 noon. Bring a sack lunch.

TO PRAIRIE: At its February 13th meeting, the Executive Board voted unanimously to extend its deepest thanks to Pat Watkins for her splendid performance in the difficult and important task of editing this Newsletter for the past two years. In discussing scientific publications, I once wrote that "communication precedes community, and community precedes self-conceptions." Under Pat's editorship, the Newsletter has been an important influence in maintaining the solidarity of our community and thereby our conceptions of ourselves. We hope her successors will be able to maintain the high standards she has established. . . . from Warren Hagstrom, Secretary. . . . Thank you very much--the editor.

MUSICIANS: Warren Hagstrom is planning a program on Mozart for 27 April and would like to hear from musicians who would be willing to perform a Mozart piece for the program.

THE COUNSELING COMMITTEE announces that in addition to the members listed in the Prairie Directory, the following have also agreed to serve: Melinda Roznoy, Elizabeth, Harald, Doug McNeill, Dan Willard, and Pat Cautley. All stand ready to "lend a hand" if needed.

* OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY IS *
* EXTENDED TO RON PLUIM *
* WHO LOST HIS FATHER ON *
* FEBRUARY 13th. *
* *

DEADLINES for changes in the by-laws to Prairie members is March 30th; for changes in the Parish meeting agenda is April 6th. If you plan to propose such changes, they must be in to the newsletter editor by the newsletter deadline of 25th March.

* The Prairie Retreat Committee *
* is still waiting for the first *
* reply to the questionnaire *
* which was printed in the *
* December 27th newsletter. *
* What happened??? *

* 32% of Prairie budget has been *
* spent, but only 23% of pledges in. *

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD has endorsed the Long Range Planning Committee's proposal for the Spring Parish meeting: The lay ministry continue in the '75-'76 church year with the following modifications--2/3 of the year to be staffed by lay ministers with 3 month terms, but that the remaining 3 months be staffed by lay ministers with shorter terms of one or two months, and/or programs conducted not by a lay minister but by a program facilitator who would devise a series of programs on a topic or topics to be chosen by the membership under the leadership of the LRPC or the program committee.

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