

PRAIRIE FIRE

Newsletter of the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

VOLUME 12, No. 3
June 12, 1975

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

- SUN
JUNE 22 5 PM SOLSTICE PICNIC - fish boil at the home of the Carsons,
4341 Vilas Road (see details below).
- SUN
JUNE 22 PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE date by which we need all your input
for the next issue of Prairie Fire.
- TUES-SUN
JUNE 24-29 UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY annual meeting in Minneapolis. Don't
forget that Theron Caldwell is our official representative
to this meeting. Direct any inquiries, suggestions, etc.
to her regarding issues or your desire to vote for or against
the issues raised.
- SUN
JULY 6 WATER FETE save this day to spend with the Davidsons at their
lakeside home for our annual mid-summer get together. More
specifics later.
- SUN
AUG 3 PRAIRIE-SITE PICNIC save this date for the joint Prairie
Society-First Society picnic. (Aug. 10 is the alternative
date if the 3rd is rained out.) More details will follow
in later issues of the newsletter.

Solstice Picnic

All Prairie members and friends are invited to a fish boil at the home of David and Barbara Carson on Sunday, June 22 at 5 p.m. Their home is located about 2 blocks off Cottage Grove Road at 4341 Vilas Road. It's the gray, 2-story house on the hill where the road bends. The Carsons will provide the fish and potatoes. Those who come should bring a dish to pass (salad, bread, dessert, etc.) Entertainment will be provided by the Chicken Pluckers and the Davidsons, who will lead folk dancing. If you need transportation please call a member of the counseling committee (they are listed in the beginning of the Prairie Directory) for more information. Questions regarding this event should be directed to the Carsons, 221-1244.

Sorry-About-That Department

Your newsletter was late last week due to: 1) Memorial Day weekend, and 2) a mistake at the printers. We received only half our order. We had to go back the next day to get the other half. sigh!

Denominational Affairs

Chairperson Richard Perry is looking for members for his committee on denominational affairs. If you are interested, have ideas, information, etc. please call Richard at 255-6157. He is attempting to enlarge the role of this committee in the overall operation of Prairie Society.

Lay Minister Search Committee

The Lay Minister Search Committee (Roland Parrish, Barbara Carson, Terri Laurence, Steve Friedman, Marv Miracle and Dan Willard, *Chairperson*) would like to know as soon as possible: 1) who would like to volunteer as a lay minister; 2) if you know someone you could recommend as lay minister or; 3) if you would like to suggest a topic of

interest to you to be discussed at Prairie. This last is a new aspect of the Lay Minister system - the idea of a "lay minister coordinator" - one who takes the suggested topics and coordinates programs (e.g. finds speakers, information, liturgy, etc.). In any case they need your suggestions now and your help if your're willing to offer it.

Board Meeting(s)

The Board meeting was held June 12 at Theron Caldwell's house. We will attempt to recapitulate the actions taken at these meetings in future issues in order that we may keep the members and friends informed about important events and actions directed by the Board. For example, at the Board meeting held May 8th there were a significant number of actions which took place.

The old Board held its last meeting and then turned the gavel over to the new Board. (Total time: From 8 p.m. to 10:35 p.m.) Charlie Davidson, Treasurer, reported that as of the end of April 47% of our yearly income has been received and 49% has been spent. Theron Caldwell, R.E. Director, reported that the R.E. Committee, curriculum and teachers are all ready to go for this year. Gene Wilkening, Housing and Property, reported that Portal Foster is in the process of finding a new director to replace Lavonne Rader, who has taken a position in Milwaukee. Nancy McElreath reported that the Prairie Social Action Auction netted \$350. In response to Mark McElreath's initiation of recommendations regarding publicity a meeting was planned for June 2nd, (more on the results of that meeting later).

The new Board re-appointed Theron Caldwell as R.E. Director for 75-76. The major portion of the meeting was devoted to selection of the Executive Secretary and the Newsletter Editor. The results were, as you already know, that Barbara Willard and Viv Meyer were appointed as newsletter editors. Viv Meyer will serve the dual function of co-editor/secretary. Thus, any assistance or questions regarding mailings to Prairie members and friends, secretarial services to committees, lay ministers, etc. should be directed to Viv, 251-7526 or 266-2022 (day).

These are sketchy outlines of the events of that May 8th meeting but hopefully we will be able to be more detailed and more prompt in recapping these meetings in future issues.

Publicity Meeting

On the evening of Monday, June 2, the Board-directed meeting of the publicity committee took place. At that meeting there was some confusion as to the exact goal of the committee. However it was decided that the purpose was to come to some conclusions regarding how much of, what kind of and how important publicity is to the Prairie Society. The issue of whether we really want to press for more publicity or whether we want to retain a low-profile was the center of the discussion. Though this issue was not resolved there were references made to former soul-searching committee and long-range planning committee reports brought before the parrish in the past. There was some discussion as to how we might involve ourselves more in the denominational events of the Unitarian-Universalist Church as a whole. In addition there was some dialogue regarding how Prairie wishes to present itself to the public and what it is exactly we have to offer to new members or curious visitors. No definite actions were taken and the issues raised were to be considered at the next Board meeting and to be taken up individually by the chairpeople of the various committees.

Personal Notes

Rosemarie Lester returns to Madison, after teaching in Ohio for a year. She will arrive June 15th and will be staying with Pat Cautley.

Beth Perry's family - her father, mother and sister - will be visiting her this week.

Fran Remeika's bantam hens had baby chicks. Mother and children are all doing well.

Rebecca French is now out of the hospital after her gall bladder had been removed. She recuperated at Melinda Roznoy's house. Rebecca will be on her way to California with Sarah and Ellen to visit her parents this week.

Barb Willard and Mike Briggs were admitted to the Wisconsin Bar on Monday, June 9th.

Vivian Meyer leaves for a 10-day stay at Camp Unistar in northern Minnesota this week. Unistar is the Midwest Unitarian-Universalist Family Camp. Unitarians from Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota gather there annually.

Diane Remeika broke her foot by falling off her platform shoes.

Anna Faye Nettleton has initiated a rite of passage in her own right - she is now out of diapers and in training pants.

Request For Help

Theron is allergic to Blue, her dog. Therefore, she needs a loving home for Blue - other than her own. Blue is a pedigreed Bassett who is good with kids and bad with burglars. If you have room please call Theron at 255-9974.

Food-For-Thought Department

The following quotation was lifted from the UUA World. It was submitted by the Rev. Clinton Scott of St. Petersburg Beach, Florida.

Now there was a certain man that for many years did frequent the Temple on the Sabbath day. Then did he cease to be found in the Great Congregation. And a neighbor inquireth, "How is it you are no longer seen in the Temple on the Sabbath day?" And the man did make answer, "I like not the words that the Master speaketh. For he putteth not an end to the questions that vex my mind, neither provideth me with a sure salvation for my soul. Verily he leadeth me into deep waters and leaveth me there without means of rescue." Now when this conversation was told to the Master of the Temple he answereth, "Go tell him that remaineth away from the Great Congregation, that the Temple is not a distributor of life preservers but a place wherein one learneth how to swim."

--from "Parish Parables"

Now About Those Deep Waters...

I suggest that it is time that we of Prairie examine our own actions and words in order to determine our intent, our purpose, our goal in calling ourselves Unitarians. Is liberal religion no religion at all? Why do we call ourselves Unitarians at all, why not Prairie Society period? My own belief is that the hereafter is not our concern as we will or will not be there by and by. However the present is of great concern. What are we, Prairie Society, or Prairie Unitarian Society doing to distinguish ourselves as Unitarians, as citizens, as members of a greater community? What is an ethical response to the problems surrounding us? I suggest that a church which serves no other function (or for that matter any community of people) than to provide social contact, to provide succor to its members is not a church and is a mockery of all that makes a church a forum different from all others in our lives. Though those functions are important in our lives, they are not the only needs which need to be fulfilled. We ought to discuss our ethical stances, our moral responsibilities to ourselves, to others and to the world community. And we must act as a community to make our beliefs known and to hone these beliefs through adverse and real experiences. I find these a vital part of life and they are sadly missing in our Prairie approach to Unitarianism. I welcome any response you may have to this outpouring. I hope to raise other issues in future editions of the newsletter, to make the newsletter more than mere announcements.

--Vivian Meyer