

PRAIRIE FIRE

Newsletter of the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

- FRI
JULY 11 7:30 PM PLAYREADING GROUP meets at Lilo Koehl's home,
3907 Fern Court. Call Lilo for further details.
- SUN
JULY 20 PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE date by which we need all
your input for the next issue of Prairie Fire.
- SAT
AUG 2 PLUCKERS GO PUBLIC at the Madison Public Library
on West Mifflin Street; time to be announced at
a later date.
- SUN
AUG 3 5 PM 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.)
This will be a potluck picnic and we hope to fly
some kites. Additional details will be furnished
later.

General Assembly News

The following is an eyewitness report on the proceedings of the UUA General Assembly, as told by Theron Caldwell:

"In this summer of flame fanning for patriotism, I came away from last week's General Assembly with a burning gladness, pride, which is reality tested--which I'll own anywhere before anyone. It's fine to be a part of this denomination.

Opening day in Minneapolis--Minister's Day, technically. Brilliant minds. Toronto's Leonard Mason intricately developed an attack on human arrogance, praising "excellent normality" which he traced for its respectability to golden Greece--"hubris", it was called then. Humility was a part of this excellence but there was none of it at all in Dr. Mason's conclusion that Christianity is, after all, the logical life style to meet our present and threatened cataclysms. I heard others agree that day; when they differed, he gave good food to nourish dissent.

Then several days of plenary General Assembly. Long meetings, often dull but always meaningful to someone. Incidents. Margaret Hansen, Moderator from California. Perhaps 60. Her stout and deep apology to the Assembly for introducing a secretary as a pretty thing. "There is so much to learn and I DO so want to learn it."

In that assembly we voted to support, for a year and a half, a Boston Office of Gay Concerns--by a clear majority. The arguments were both thoughtful and heated, patronizing and respectful from both sides. It was during this time, I think, that someone reminded from the floor that to listen to those with whom we disagree is basic to us. No, that was in response to one woman's statement against the right to choose abortion. No matter--it applied to both and we heeded it usually.

The Youth Caucus could not vote for the most part; that cost \$40 in registration fees. But they met daily and their spokesperson was articulate and forceful in making their points.

The last sessions concerned General Resolutions--stands we vote to take

on world issues for today and tomorrow. I'll just speak of one now. It was titled "Humanitarianism and Population Control." No aid, it specifies, from our country to those who are not working concretely toward population control. The arguments were well backed on both sides. We chose, in the greater number, to re-affirm our humanitarian values. That is, to reject a lever to coerce the under-fed of the world. And to re-voice our belief in human potential everywhere to determine what is good for themselves with self-respect and dignity.

U.U.'s travel under a wide umbrella indeed. Get rained on some, smashed in the middle too. But last week was good in pouring down on us a knowledge that we are very much in there together whatever the weather."

--Theron Caldwell, Director, Religious Education for Prairie and your Grateful Delegate to the U.U. General Assembly

Another Water Fête Success

Once again the Davidsons have provided Prairie people with a beautiful atmosphere for our midsummer party. There was a great deal of catching up to do, good conversation, good people, good weather and of course sailing. In all the experience was truly delightful--we think we speak for all who attended when we say a sincere thank you to all the Davidsons for this annual treat. Incidentally, July 12th will mark Hermine's 65th birthday--Hermine adds that she will be damned if she breaks her neck on Martha's strange sailing machine at this stage in the game!

Prairie Board Meets

The Prairie Board is busily planning for next year's events. Diane Miracle, Secretary, has been on vacation, thus more details will be added when the Board minutes from the July 10th meeting arrive.

Washington Island Campout News

All participants report that the invitation to the Pratt's cabin in Door County was well appreciated. The island was of course beautiful, however, the company was equally pleasant and all had a great time. A special thanks to the Pratts for inviting us to join them!

Prairie On the Move...

Rosemarie Lester, recently returned from Ohio, joined us at the Davidsons and announces that she will be living at 4805 Regent Street at the home of Pat Cautley....Betty and Jack Jallings are vacationing in Hawaii....Doug McNeill announces that he will be married soon. Doug is marrying Donna Gane, an expert specializing in medical recordkeeping. The couple plans to reside in Vermont, at: RFD #1, Box 90A, Richmond, Vermont 05477....Pat Cautley is vacationing at Camp Unistar this week. The week's topic is "Celebrations, Rites and Ceremonies or The Fire We Can Light" led by Emil Gudmundson, UUA Interdistrict Representative. Pat promises to report on the events of that week and their relationship to Prairie....Martha Willard leaves for King's Point, New York and points East around July 13th, to begin her education at the Merchant Marine Academy. Though Martha leaves behind her devilish sailing device, she has packed her waterwings. ...Elizabeth Harald also is ignoring Horace Greeley's advice and going East....Debbie Doob Park is having a baby soon....Certain of our youth were initiated at the Davidson's in preparation for receiving their chalices. Among the immersed were Nellie Willard, Kim Loucks, Megan Caldwell, Sara French, Lori Pratt, and Carolyn Briggs, who received her chalice without immersion. The initiates were asked questions bearing on their belief in immersion without consent. Robb Davidson, Bill Laurence and Eric Hagstrom officiated at the mass baptism....Hermine announces that all the lost and found items not claimed this summer will be brought to the first Prairie Sunday meeting this Fall....Janet Mannering and Faith Pratt are at Hilltop horseback riding camp for three weeks. This is their first camping experience....Lori Pratt is going wilderness camping in Colorado....The Loucks are going to survive in the Yukon for approximately three weeks beginning July 22nd.

Barbara Willard has hung out her shingle with Ken Herr as an associate in the law firm....Ann Seidl moved to the basement and lost 5 pounds (call Ann for further details)....The Carson's daughter, Laurel, visited for 4 days from Washington D.C. where she is an official with the USDHEW as a health planner.

Our First Ad! - Business Is Picking Up

Mabel Hokin writes:

FOR SALE - Sofa, 100" long, muted aqua and gold \$35; Gold drapes, lined, 69" long - 1 pair triple width, \$10, 3 pairs double width, \$7 each, 1 pair 1 1/2 width, \$5. All very good condition. Call 257-7019 evenings.

The Bicentennial - Lost, Stolen or Sold?

In light of the bloom of plastic Uncle Sam banks and red-white-and-blue-striped bowling balls, we thought that a timely comment about the Bicentennial was in order. We have received information regarding the UUA Bicentennial Committee from the Chairperson, Oren A. Peterson. In part he states: "...do we Unitarian Universalists have a statement to make to our fellow citizens about the basic issues behind the Revolution, issues which influence our hopes and values even today?...It is our task to broadcast the news that the Revolution is unfinished and is continuous. I feel that if our nation is to survive, this message must be heard and understood." Prairie might wish to take to heart the issue of the meaning and symbolism of the Bicentennial as a means of reviewing our progress and the road ahead. At the very heart of the Bicentennial is not which town has the biggest simulated attack on the Boston Commons, but what our ancestors meant America to symbolize and how we have, and more importantly, how we have not completed that Revolution. Inherent in any discussion of the meaning of America is freedom vs. slavery, privilege vs. deprivation, war vs. peace, man vs. woman, urban vs. rural, etc. None of these issues have been resolved nor have we really begun to scratch the surface regarding the responsibilities incumbent upon the richer, freer, more powerful old world in its relationship to the Third World. All are a part of our heritage, more so perhaps than the parades and the Horatio Alger saleathons of memorabilia commemorating the year 1976. What can we do as Unitarians--what are we willing to do as Prairie Unitarians?

"God Talk" (Cont'd)

In lieu of a personal statement at this point I would like to present, gratefully, the opinion of another in our midst. In a short note to me Robert Hoagland poses both a question and an answer: "...There must be someone in the Society with an academic background who has a definition of religion which dates 1975? Such as a pervasive, intelligent mood, which permeates the actions and thoughts of an ethical (what ethics?) individual..."

I welcome reactions to Mr. Hoagland's thoughts and plan to add my own thoughts on the subject, somewhat at length, next week. I truly hope that Mr. Hoagland has started a trend. I believe that it was a Supreme Court Justice who said that one of the most important safeguards of freedom is the protection of the free traffic of ideas in the marketplace. I welcome any and all comments on all subjects and will print whatever comments are forthcoming (within reason, a ten-page limit please).

--Vivian Meyer

Board Provides Update

Attached to this Newsletter you will find a listing of the Prairie Society Committees and the Chairperson or Contact for that committee. PLEASE Clip And Save This List. Paste, bubble gum, staple, sew it to your directory or other relatively safe place for future reference.

Are You Single?

If you are interested in forming a Singles Group contact Theron Caldwell at 255-9974. We may be able to arrange some activities for non-married folks.

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