

PRAIRIE FIRE

Newsletter of the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

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EDITORS: Barbara Willard 256-2801
Vivian Meyer 251-7526 or 266-2022

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

- SAT
AUG 2 AFTERNOON PLUCKERS GO PUBLIC at the Madison Public Library on West Mifflin Street; the festivities begin in the afternoon of that day.
- 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. See details below.
- THUR
AUG 14 7:30 PM BOARD MEETING will convene at the Portal-Foster Center, 1806 West Lawn Avenue. Theron will share her experiences at the Annual General Assembly meeting with those who attend this Board meeting.
- SUN
AUG 17 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE for information to go into the August 21 Newsletter.
- THUR
AUG 21 NEWSLETTER will be issued. The newsletter will be issued only once in August as Viv Meyer is going to Unistar for a vacation. This issue will be a large one, containing information on fall activities and, thus, it would be a real help if you get your information to us as soon as possible.
- SUN
SEPT 14 THEATER PARTY sponsored by the Playreading group. See more details below.
- SUN
OCT 12 5:30-7:30 PM FALL PARISH MEETING will be different this year. The business meeting will be preceded by a potluck supper from 4:30-5:30 p.m. The early time is to accommodate those with children and those of us who like to leave a meeting before the wee hours of the morning. The meeting will be held at the Portal-Foster Center, 1806 West Lawn Ave.

Board Meeting Minutes

The July 10 Board Meeting consisted primarily of clearing up old business and preparing for the operation of Prairie Society during the year. The following is a recapitulation of the major decisions and actions taken by the Board.

Prairie has been invited to participate in the Wisconsin Council of Churches' statewide committee on abortion. Melinda Roznoy, Social Action Co-Chairperson, will act as our representative on that committee.

Nancy and Mark McElreath were appointed as representatives on a committee, composed of First Society and Prairie members, charged with welcoming new University students who have designated themselves as Unitarians or Universalists. Primarily the group will be concerned with issuing a letter of welcome to the students in which both Societies will be described and introduced.

It was reported that the Lay Minister Search Committee has sent out three offers to prospective lay ministers. A follow-up report will be given on the results next month at the Board Meeting. (The Newsletter will report on the appointees as soon as possible.) Dan Willard, Program Chairperson, indicated that the committee really could not make definitive moves until the Ministers are chosen.

The Board decided upon the meeting time for the annual fall parish meeting. There was agreement that an earlier meeting time would be desirable. The meeting was set for 5:30-7:30 p.m. on October 12th with the business meeting to be preceded by a potluck dinner at 4:30.

It was agreed that Theron Caldwell should share her ideas and perceptions of the UUA Annual General Assembly meetings held in Minneapolis last month, with Prairie members who are interested. Theron suggested that interested participants come to the next Board Meeting prepared with their latest UUA World which will highlight the results of those meetings. The Board agreed to set time aside for this endeavor at the August 14th Board meeting, to be held at the Portal-Foster Center at 7:30 p.m.

Playreaders Announce Theater Party

Linda Plum, Playreading group coordinator, announced plans for a Theater Party to take place at the Wilson Street East Playhouse on September 14th. The play will be preceded by dinner at the playhouse. The show will be "Butterflies Are Free." If you are interested and/or wish to make arrangements for reservations, please call Linda Plum at 836-5547.

Linda reported that the last Playreading group meeting on July 11th was great fun. Held at Lilo Koehl's, the meeting was attended by six "regulars" and two guests. The group read "The Sky is Falling," a hilarious light comedy from the 1960's about a dominating mother who finally gets straightened out by her family, whose lives she has been trying to run.

All are welcome to attend the Playreading activities, Linda emphasized, and these activities are not limited to playreading alone. As indicated above, the group also sponsors theater parties and, on occasion, dinner parties, etc.

Transactional Analysis Courses Offered

Mary Lou Diehl wishes to invite Prairie friends and members to join her for the two TA classes she will be instructing. Registration for the courses will take place until mid-August. Materials for registering may be picked up at MATC, 211 S. Carroll Street, for these evening courses: TA (beg.), 7-9 p.m., beginning Monday, September 15 and TA (advanced), 7-9 p.m., beginning September 16. Both courses run 10 weeks. For more information regarding the course description, texts and instructional method, please call Mary Lou Diehl at 233-4357.

Heeeeeeeeeelp!

Marcia Ledford writes: "House urgently needed. 2-3 bedrooms on the West side of Madison. Approximately \$200 per month. Please call Marcia Ledford at 274-1350. Needed as of yesterday or as soon as possible, for Marcia and daughter and a possible roommate. House in any condition."

"Gimme That Old Time Religion (?). . . ."

I was rather shocked and very pleased to receive more responses to my last column in the newsletter. These will appear below. I am happy to defer my comments (well...at least limit them) in order to present these two expressions of thought on the matter of religion.

I will mention only in passing that I have been intrigued by the fact that there are more Unitarian-Universalist churches/fellowships in Wisconsin

than I ever imagined. I have sent our newsletter to these Unitarians in the hope of receiving their perspectives and ideas in the pursuit of Unitarian religion.

It is a shame and a true loss on all of our parts, that we have not been in closer contact with one another. I am certain that we would greatly benefit from sharing the mutual concerns, problems, ideas, joys, etc. of being Unitarian. In our own isolated and parochial way we Unitarians, at least Prairie Unitarians, have managed to seal ourselves off from a vibrant and challenging denomination made up of people very much like ourselves with new and inspiring ideas. My experience at Unistar encourages my belief in the richness, diversity and humanity of Unitarianism - it is there that I have seen Unitarians from all over the Midwest get together and share ideas, methods, ceremonies, philosophies, etc., I know it can happen. We need this exchange, I believe, in order to honestly and conscientiously understand our social, philosophical and human goals and methods. Other Unitarians would seem an excellent source to tap in our search. We may be enhanced by their experiences and mistakes as they may be by ours.

I was not aware until recently that there are 18 Societies in Wisconsin, including Prairie and First Society. Of these seven were organized in the 19th century - as far back as 1842 (Racine and Milwaukee). As near as Sauk City we find the Free Congregation-Unitarian Fellowship, founded in 1852. There are Societies all over the state, to name a few: Appleton, LaCrosse, Marshfield, Mequon, Monroe, Mukwonago, and so on, as well as Societies in larger population centers.

Let us consider this valuable resource area in the coming year and discover the depth and breadth of our denomination. We may discover that we can do a lot of positive acting and thinking as Unitarians and as Prairie Unitarians.

--Vivian Meyer

In response to the last installment of "God Talk" I received the following contributions:

"...I'm a 25 year old "working class" woman bred a Lutheran. I became a member of Prairie last Easter because I love the way the charter reads and Prairie seems to demonstrate the family the way mine never was. Also I'm an agnostic. Two older members I approached were either silent or poo-pooed the idea of discussing our religious ideas. I cannot find justice in my traditional God. If he would only take my hand and let me know where for I'm being punished I might try to correct the error. So far I think my friends in the Karmic theory are getting off the hook a little too easy. They seem to blame theirs and mine Karma for everything. I am most heartily struggling for justice with no cop-out excuses. I meet a great deal of resistance and find no divine power to give me strength. And still I struggle to spread a chain reaction of good will from my own self. Hope my own non-academic opinion has made some contribution."

--Barb Dykert

[The following] is a quote from Scripts People Live by Claude Steiner, and to me it has the qualities of a religious statement.

[from page 3] Let me restate, in my own words, this first of the three basic assumptions of transactional analysis: 1) Human beings are, by nature, inclined to and capable of living in harmony with themselves, each other and nature;

If left alone (given adequate nurturing), people have a natural tendency to live, to take care of themselves, to be healthy and happy, to learn to get along with each other, and to respect other forms of life.

If people are unhealthy, unhappy, uninterested in learning, uncooperative, selfish, or disrespectful of life, it is the result of external oppressive influences, which overpower the more basic positive life tendency that is built in to them. Even when overpowered, this tendency remains dormant, so that it is always ready to express itself when oppression lifts. Even if it is not given a chance to be expressed in a person's lifetime this human life tendency is passed on to each succeeding generation of newborns."

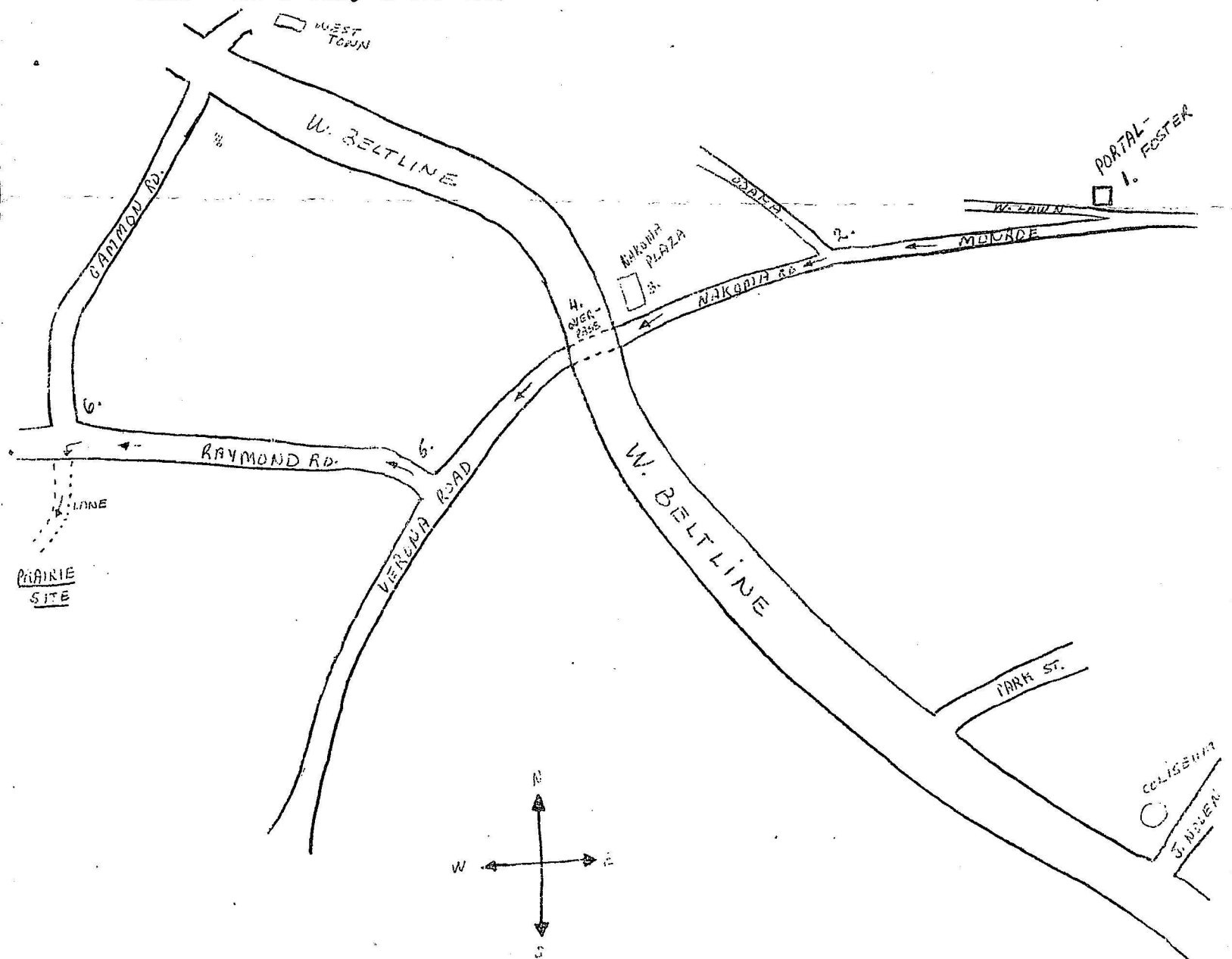
--Mary Lou Diehl

PRAIRIE-FIRST SOCIETY PICNIC INFORMATION

The Prairie-First Society picnic will be held on August 3rd at the Prairie Site. (See unscaled and very crude map attached) It is highly recommended that Prairie members and friends who know members of First Society personally invite such persons. We would like to make First Society people very welcome at this event. The site is beautiful and will provide a special atmosphere for this Unitarian-Universalist gathering. The Prairie Chicken Pluckers will perform and the dress will be come-as-you-are-or-as-you-would-like-to-be. Drinks will be furnished at a small charge. Please bring a dish to pass, adequate for about 4-6 people. Sufficient utensils for your self and family should be brought also. We hope to continue our awareness of other Unitarians and our place among them and to foster even closer ties between Unitarians attending both Prairie and First Society. A hearty welcome to the people of First Society!

MAP AND DIRECTIONS TO THE PRAIRIE SITE

From central Madison the Prairie Site may best be reached in the following manner. From Portal-Foster Center, 1806 West Lawn Ave., (1) travel west on Monroe Street until you come to Nakoma Road (2). Remain on Nakoma Road traveling west until you reach Nakoma Plaza (3) shortly before going under the W. Beltline overpass on Nakoma Road (4). There the road will become Verona Road. Travel on Verona Road until you come to Raymond Road on the right (5). Turn on to Raymond Road and continue on that road until you reach Gammon Road which will enter from the right (6). Here Gammon Road and Raymond Road intersect and Gammon Road ends abruptly. Across the road where Gammon ends there is a dirt lane which leads uphill to a house. Drive up this lane, past the house and you will come upon a wide open area which is the Prairie Site. (PLEASE do not drive up the lane if the ground is wet as the lane gets rutted and adds to the erosion of the soil. Park your car at the bottom and walk - it's only a block.)



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Roland Parrish
302 Glenway
Madison, WI 53705