

PRAIRIE FIRE

Newsletter of the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

Sunday services in the Portal-Foster Center

1806 West Lawn Ave., Madison, WI

VOLUME 12, No. 17
January 22, 1976

"Year of the
ongoing Revolution"

EDITOR: Vivian Meyer
251-7526 or 266-7051

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

- SAT
JAN 24 12 NOON MEETING/RALLY Melinda Roznoy, Social Action Co-Chairperson, wishes to encourage Prairie members to attend a meeting at the Portal-Foster Center to organize for a rally to be held on the same day at 1:00 p.m. The rally will be held at the State Street entrance of the Capitol building. [see story below] The rally is to be organized by anti-abortion forces. We will be there to represent a different position.
- SAT
JAN 24 8 PM PLAYREADING GROUP This month's meeting, for anyone interested in or curious about reading a play, will be at Mona and Jack Birong's home. Their address is 599 Glen Drive. Join us for an enjoyable evening. 233-5995
- SUN
JAN 25 10 AM "CARAVAGGIO: HIS BRUTAL REALISM AND HIS UNPOPULARITY" Program led by layminister Joe Hoffman. 257-9595
- SUN
FEB 1 10 AM "REMBRANDT: FROM RAGS TO RICHES TO RAGS" Program led by layminister Joe Hoffman. 257-9595
- SUN
FEB 1 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Date by which I need your material in order that it may be included in the February 5th issue.
- TUES
FEB 3 6 PM SAUNA, SWIM & SUPPER Once again we will travel to Mt. Horeb and the Karakahl Inn for an enjoyable (and relatively inexpensive) evening. We will meet in the lobby at 6 p.m. If you would like to come but need a ride please call Lilo Koehl, 233-7383 or Vivian Meyer 251-7526.
- SAT
FEB 7 9 AM-9:30 PM FOLK MUSIC WORKSHOP Richard Perry, Denominational Affairs Chairperson, announces that a folk music workshop will be held at St. Paul's University Catholic Center. Admission is \$5.00; if more than 3 persons from a church go together the admission is \$2.50 per person. The focus will be on liturgical music. For additional information contact Richard Perry. 255-6157
- SUN
FEB 8 10 AM "WHERE HAVE ALL THE HEROES GONE?" Are we a nation bereft of heroes and heroines? Do you still have people, past or present, whom you admire or hold as a model? Who? Why? Why not? Does it bother you if your hero turns out to have "feet of clay?" Come and share your thoughts. A Prairie panel followed by discussion. Led by Warren Hagstrom. Not a family service as previously announced. 238-4970
- TUES
FEB 10 8 PM PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING at Theron Caldwell's home 1228 Sherman Ave. Newcomers welcome to help plan Sunday services with layministers Joe Hoffman and Annis Pratt. Annis begins her ministry in March. 255-9974

PRAIRIE CALENDAR (cont'd)

THUR FEB 12 7:30 PM BOARD MEETING at the home of Melinda Roznoy, 2205 West Lawn Ave. Members and friends are welcome. 221-1244

SAT FEB 14 TRIP TO CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE organized by Joe Hoffman. Plans are tentative now but there is hope that those going to Chicago will go by bus. The day will be spent browsing with some assistance from Joe. For more information please contact Joe Hoffman. 257-9595

Opening Caveats

The dates reported in the last newsletter for the programs to be led by Joe Hoffman have been revised. Joe felt that an additional Sunday on Bernini would be apropos and has simply moved the scheduled programs back one week.... Pat Cautley would like to add the name of Dan Willard, 256-2801, to the list of members on her committee of counselors, published in the last newsletter.... Theron Caldwell wishes to correct a misunderstanding in the report of Sunday school activities. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades will be dealing with Health not hearth-oriented curriculum. Specifically, a book entitled Germs Make Me Sick found by Melinda Roznoy, our teacher. Melinda is pleased to add that the book is also non-sexist.

Social Action Committee Supports Freedom of Choice Position at Rally

Melinda Roznoy, Social Action Committee Co-Chairperson, has asked for the support of Prairie Society members in picketing a rally organized by anti-abortion forces on January 24th at the Capitol. She would like to encourage people to come to a meeting at Portal-Foster before the rally at noon. There signs will be completed and an effort will be made to organize those who wish to picket.

Melinda wishes to strongly reiterate that opposing the anti-abortion forces does not warrant the conclusion that abortion is "good" or the only alternative. The Social Action Committee believes it is necessary that the freedom to choose abortion as an option in dealing with problem pregnancies be protected; that the recent Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion as a matter to be decided between a woman and her physician be upheld. Melinda asks that we come not as Prairie members but as people interested in protecting this right to make personal decisions which affect the physical and psychological welfare of the persons involved.

Both David Carson and Melinda are members of an organization, Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, which advocates freedom of choice in this matter. They wish to share with us the following statement by Elizabeth Main, also of the RCAR:

"When talking about abortion one must distinguish between the morality of an action and the morality of a law about that action. The rightness or wrongness of an abortion, per se, is not the same as the rightness or wrongness of a law that would prohibit abortion altogether. One might believe that abortion is wrong, and at the same time maintain that laws prohibiting abortion are also wrong without being morally inconsistent."

Finance Committee Sends Quarterly Reports

A record of contributions has been sent to all of you who made pledges this year. If information on the record is incomplete or inaccurate please let me know. If you have not pledged and would like to, give me a call or fill out a

card on Sunday (they may be found on the membership table). Contributions are always welcome regardless! Checks should be mailed to Charlie Davidson, Treasurer; 2210 Waunona Way; Madison, Wisconsin 53713. Thanks for your cooperation!

--Aileen Nettleton, Chairperson
Finance Committee

Prairie-Site Destiny Discussed

As a participant in the meeting on January 14th, during which the Prairie Site was discussed, I feel a need to report what took place at that time.

First, the participants were Paul Conkin, Art Hove, and Anna Bender from First Unitarian Society and from Prairie UU Society Roland Parrish, Charlie Davidson, and myself. It should be mentioned that some of the participants are also investors in the joint ownership of the Prairie Site and/or members of a co-trustee group organized to represent the investors.

Roland Parrish briefly presented the history and current status of the contractual agreements controlling the use of the property. A discussion ensued as to the exact intent of the agreements binding the investors and the moral/legal commitments of each Unitarian society. The atmosphere was amicable and productive; the results, I thought, satisfying.

Primarily the group felt that the land should be preserved in its natural state for use, whether regularly or only infrequently, by the congregations of both Unitarian societies. The participants felt this conclusion reflected the attitude of the members of the two churches.

The financial and moral commitment to support such a statement as outlined above will have to be discussed in an orderly manner by each congregation and decisions made accordingly. Procedures to realize this goal will be outlined more specifically at a later date.

Because this is an important issue you will be hearing more about it and you may be asked to make suggestions for the use and maintenance of the property. Please consider the issues and direct feedback to any of the Prairie-Site group members above. Thanks.

--Vivian Meyer

Board Pays Tribute to Publicity Chairperson

During the December Board meeting it was decided that a special effort should be made to publicly thank Publicity Chairperson Diane Remeika for her consistently excellent efforts to publicize Prairie activities. Diane has been Publicity Chairperson for a number of years and executes her regular publicity duties responsibly and professionally. Our sincere thanks to Diane.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Meet Joe Hoffman--Prairie Layminister

(from an interview over gyros sandwiches at Zorba's by Ruth and George Calden)

question: Could you tell us about your background--your family...where you were born?

Joe: "Both of my parents are Jewish, born in Baltimore, Maryland. My father was a physician and I was supposed to be a doctor until I got to be a sophomore in college and couldn't stand the sight of blood. Then I went into psychology and from there I zoomed on into art history because I had two good professors who were very exciting, very enthusiastic kinds of lecturers. And the subject matter is so much fun to learn about and even more fun for other people to listen to. It combines story telling and looking at pretty pictures and travelling to Europe. It was immediate oral gratification; fun, very Jewish."

question: Did you have any earlier experiences with art that brought this out?

Joe: "When I was real young I was a very good artist. I was a very precocious child, artistically. I used to draw figures upside down on the side of my crib. When I got old enough my parents sent me to art school. They tried to get me to use colors. I never wanted to use colors. I only wanted to use pencil or pen. I just wanted to draw profiles and draw figures from the past...like Samson and Egyptians and cowboys. I was interested in doing one thing over and over again. They tried to get me to do other things. They took my pen away from me and said, "Now you'll draw with colors. Now you'll paint with oils and water colors." So I just lost interest. Now the only drawings I do is when I write letters. I make little pictographs to my friends. It's a humorous thing."

question: Were you interested in history or in the history of ideas?

Joe: "Yeah--the whole cultural business. I always liked Old Testament stories. It was history--the violence and loving and all that stuff. During my first six years I was raised in an isolated part of Maryland because my father was superintendent of a tuberculosis hospital. There was no Jewish education to be had. So whenever I wandered into someone's apartment and when I looked at the walls and asked, "Who's that?" they would tell me, "It's Jesus." And I asked questions about him. So when we moved to Baltimore, my parents decided it was time to start a Hebrew education. I needed to be tutored to catch up. And I remember the very first question some guy named Barenbaum (I don't know if he was the rabbi or not) asked me to find out about my knowledge of Jewishness. He asked me, "Who was Joseph?" And I said, "He was the father of Jesus." The guy realized he had to start from scratch. I hated learning Hebrew, going to Hebrew School. It was an Orthodox synagogue. But I have a strong Jewish feeling in me."

question: You seem to be drawn to Italian culture. Do you see it as having any link to Jewish culture?

Joe: "Sure. Mediterranean. Mediteranean personality. The dark-haired, swarthy, little people, emotional people, people who cry a lot, and that's where I come from. When I went to Italy for the first time it was in '67. I was a little bit overweight and I looked very American. Soon as I got there I started losing weight and growing my hair long. I just got into the spirit. My friends came to visit me and they said, "Joe, you know, you look as if you're really digging into this culture. You're starting to look Italian." It was as if I had come home. As if I found some sort of place where I belonged. It's been that way ever since. My studies, my profession, the kind of people I like to mess around with."

question: What is your specialty in art history?

Joe: "Italian painting is my specialty, and other things Italian, Italian architecture. My Ph.D. thesis was a monograph on a 16th century artist named Lelio Orsi. He was a fairly minor artist, just thesis fodder, late Renaissance."

question: What is your educational background?

Joe: "I got my Bachelor of Arts from Dickinson College, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. I got my Masters and Ph.D. degree from here--the U. of W. I've been in Madison for six years."

question: What are your future plans?

Joe: "Well, after the ministry I don't know what I'm going to do. I've been thinking of printing a little business card with my name on it

and then the words Art History--Presentations for all occasions. I'll send it around and see if I could make a little money doing free lance presentations...at La Creperie, Hadassah, PTA, the DAR. Wherever I can think of. Get a noon hour circuit of women's clubs. If that doesn't come through I think I'll move to Tucson, Arizona where it is warm."

question: What are some of the future programs you're planning for Prairie services?

Joe: "Caravaggio and the concept of realism. Rembrandt, Frank Lloyd Wright. Picasso and the modern world. Also, one on marriage and art. It'll be a humorous talk that will be appreciated by Prairie people."

question: What do you think of the Prairie Society?

Joe: "Very sympathetic audience. They laugh at all my jokes. Molto sympatico. It's a lot of fun. I got high and excited about doing the services. I've had friends from outside the Prairie come and stick with me while I go through my Sunday exercises."

question: Do you have any last profound things to say?

Joe: "Try to have a good time. It's the only life there is. We only go around once."

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Sauk City Excursion--Pleasant Way to Spend a Sunday

A contingent of Prairie people report that they had a wonderful time at The Firehouse restaurant in Sauk City. Overlooking the Wisconsin River there the diners counted many eagles (or one very active eagle) fishing and sailing through the sky. Then the travelers visited a nearby winery. A good time was had by all.

Open letter to Prairie Society

Dear Prairie People:

I need a ride to Prairie on Sunday mornings and would be happy to pay car fare. Could someone on my side of town help me out?

--Barb Dykert
1202 Pontiac Trail (north
of Nakoma Plaza)
271-5120

Prairie Populist Needs Assistance

Fred Harris' representatives are organizing a campaign on his behalf. Work nights are every Tuesday beginning at 7:30 p.m. at 29 E. Dayton Street. (literature anytime) There will be a state meeting February 8th, 1 p.m. at the above address. The office manager is Sally Washburn. The meeting theme will be The New Populism; the central issue is the need for a redistribution of wealth and power.

Bicentennial Corner

Due to the length of the Newsletter and the desire on my part for input from more Prairie members, the Bicentennial Corner will be postponed until the next issue of the Newsletter. At that time I will attempt to present an overview of the role of women in the Revolution.

Please make an effort to check the bulletin board this week. "A Declaration of Independence" will be available for your examination and comment. This proposed document was submitted by Herb Hoover of Dodgeville for your appraisal.

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