PRAIRIE CALENDAR

FRI
MAY 28 8:00 PM CONCERT - First of a series of 8 Friday evening concerts at First Society. Contact their office for details.

SAT
MAY 29 8:00 PM PARTY AND AUCTION - The annual Social Action Bash, held at the Miracles', 3980 Plymouth Circle. Described in last issue of Prairie Fire, for those who have not attended one. Those who have attended one need no further description.

SUN
MAY 30 10:00 AM PICNIC - At the Prairie Site, intersection of Gammon and Raymond Roads. Bring lunch, drinks, other necessities for your family such as a blanket. If in need of further information, call Ruth Calden 233-5717. In case of rain, bring your lunch to Portal Foster.

TUES
JUNE 1 5:30 PM WOMENS' NIGHT OUT - and every Tuesday hereafter throughout the summer, Prairie women gather at local parks for an evening together. Persons to contact for details are Lilo Koehl and Rachel Siegfried.

FRI
JUNE 11 7:00 PM PARTY - Christening for George Calden's book, I Count-You Count at the Pratts', 2725 Chamberlain. Please bring something potluck and some wine or beer.

FRI
JUNE 18 PLAYREADERS OUTING - Gather at the Pluims and proceed to fish fry, with playreading at Pluims' afterward. Call Linda Pluim at least a week in advance to be sure of reservations.

SAT-SUN
JUNE 19-20 CANOE TRIP ON WISCONSIN RIVER - People interested in canoeing and camping on the Wisconsin between Sauk City and Lone Rock should contact John Lewis at 266-3479 or 238-8666. Tentative plans are to put in at Sauk City at 10:00 AM Saturday and camp on islands upstream from Spring Green. This is an easy trip, suitable for families and inexperienced canoeists.

SAT
JUNE 24 1:30 PM POETRY READING - Annis Pratt is giving a reading of her Poetry entitled Coming Out of the Marble at the downtown YWCA. All are invited. $1 admission. There will be a choral performance of Annis's Mushroom poem, first read at Prairie. Anyone who would like to participate in the chorus call Annis between June 7 and 23 at 231-2183.
JUNE 27-JULY 4  SINGLES CAMP AT LAKE GENEVA  - Run By Mary Lou Diehl. See below for details.

SUN  JULY 4  Noon  WEDDING  David and Barbara Carson would like to invite Prairie people to their home to celebrate the wedding of their daughter Laurel to Terry Shannon.

SUN  JULY 25  DAVIDSONS’ ANNUAL WATER FETE  - Save the date, details in next Prairie Fire. Always a highlight of the Prairie summer. August 1 rain date.

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Singles Camp  Five or six years ago several people from Chicago, Detroit, and Ann Arbor organized a one-week camp for single adults (Unitarian and other.)

It turned out to be a very warm and caring environment, where people can, if they wish, poke a few holes in the walls that usually keep people from knowing each other. Mornings are spent in discussion groups or encounter groups. Afternoons and evenings are full of whatever the campers want to share - campfires, making their own music, reading their own poetry aloud, dancing and partying, play readings, poking around a resort town, going to a summer theater, hiking in the woods, swimming, sailing, and even golf! And there's time for being alone and watching the sunlight through the leaves/branches.

I've been going to these camps for four years. They've helped me to move a bit towards being more what I want to be; and they've done that for some others too. This year there are two locations for the camp. I'm helping to organize the one at Lake Geneva June 27 to July 4. Phone me if you want more details. (233-4357 or 257-6711)  Mary Lou Diehl

Prairie Fire  This is the last regular issue of Prairie Fire for the church year 1975-76. During the summer there will (probably) be an issue more or less monthly, depending on the perceived need and also on the energy level of the editor. Do not expect a new calendar in two weeks. Information which needs to be disseminated should be conveyed to the editor as it accrues, and we will proceed from there, one way or another. (Carrier pigeon? Smoke Signals? Skywriting? Who knows? I tend to get pretty mellow in the summertime)

Coming Out of the Marble  For Joe Hoffman

When he wanted to carve a statue Michelangelo would take his chisel to a raw chunk of marble and probe for someone he felt was inside it. After a month he might have liberated maybe a knee.
maybe an elbow
sometimes half of a musclebound person
was left holding up
most of the marble.

David, you might say
is at least one exception
eighteen feet tall, and every
succulent
masculine inch of him
out of the marble.
(There are a few who make it
in each generation)

But have you looked at his eyes
and his temple?
With that kind of look
on the face of our heroes
I wonder why anyone
comes out of the marble.

I used to spend hours
at fifteen or sixteen
marvelling at a Hand of God
by Rodin:
'a huge open palm emerging from marble
and holding a raw chunk, all uncarven
except for one smoothly polished corner
containing a coupling man and woman.
But then, I was also, at twenty-one, fascinated
by his caryatid women
all hunched up, bearing
on their musclebound backs
whole Courts of Law
Pope's Tombs, and Cathedrals.

There is nothing in the least aspiring
about Rodin's caryatids
(after Michelangelo)
nor about four lovers
I saw last weekend
circling around an uncut chunk
gracefully but ineffectually reaching
each trying to touch and comfort the other
in a faceless dance around raw marble
in which their chests and their loins were embedded
a pathetic separation of polished buttocks.
As if this were not enough
of a comment
on Life in America, 1920,
their heads were stuck fast
in an uncut overhang
pressing down upon their temples.

Life in the seventies
isn't much better
for women, for lovers, for those
who see
Goliath coming
but, recently, I find
(after a tremendous struggle)
I have gotten one eyebrow
a part of my left foot
and one entire knee joint
out of the marble.

Annis Pratt

(You may remember Annis’s reading of this poem one Sunday morning after the trip to the Chicago Art Institute. Sometimes it's nice to see things again, so you can think them over, slowly.) (Ed.)

Reflections of an ex-lay minister (Ruth and George Calden interview Richard Perry)

Q: Richard, could you tell us a little about what you're up to these days?
A: Right now I'm mainly looking for a job. I'm also finishing the first draft of a book on Wisconsin log houses. I'm also doing a lot of work with the Pickin' and Grinnin' folk music workshops throughout the state. This week I'm giving final exams at MATC and I'm doing my last 2 or 3 weeks of work with DILHR as a computer programmer. I've been teaching three courses at MATC in data processing and business math.

Q: You really sound like a vocational renaissance man. What sort of training have you had?
A: I talk a good argument. In bits and pieces I got my master's degree in educational administration. I took a lot of computer programming courses at the same time. But over the last 2 years I decided I don't like working with computers. I'm getting more and more interested in Arts Management.

Q: You obviously aren't a native Wisconsinite. Where do you hail from?
A: I was born in Birmingham, Alabama, but I grew up in Philadelphia, Mississippi. It's a town infamous to those who remember the civil rights movement of a few years ago.

Q: How did you get into Unitarianism?
A: I drifted into it when I was an undergraduate, working on a philosophy degree. I once visited a Unitarian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, where, after the minister gave his sermon, people were invited to argue back at him. This sounded quite innovative to my Baptist ears. Later on, Beth and I asked this minister to marry us.

Q: As I recall, the theme for your ministry was mysticism, right?
A: No. It was "Binding Together". It was on religion - religious thought, religious awareness and what it means to be Unitarian and religious at the same time.

Q: What were the highlights for you during your ministry?
A: A lot of my work was instigating others or coordinating other people's projects. The one I remember especially was the one in which Vivian Meyer and Dan Willard did most of the talking about how they looked at religion. The Risjord's service was pretty good, I thought, on the history of Universalism. I didn't know much about it at first. But I soon became intensely involved in it. It was a highlight for me. I also enjoyed the one where groups worked on different rituals. I got a lot of fun out of that, watching the creative process of the group.
Q: What does it feel like, being an ex-lay minister? Is there such a thing as the after lay ministry blues?

A: Yes. There is a postpartum blues as you depart from the office. You know, before my ministry I was on the program committee and then I was program chairman for a year. I was going to every service for 2 years and 3 months. By the time I finished the lay ministry I actually wanted to get away from the Sunday morning service. I guess there's a certain amount of intensity you build up while you're lay minister. Then you have to decide whether or not you want to continue being active or get away and breathe for a while. A lot of other former lay ministers seem to have the same feeling when the change occurs. Some of them stop coming around. You don't see them around much. When I got out of it I wanted to head into other areas, doing other things. I got tired of working on program and got interested in doing denominational affairs. But that has been frustrating because there doesn't seem to be much interest in denominational affairs.

Q: Do you think Prairie can make more use of its ex-lay ministers?

A: Probably they can be of use in sharing their experiences with the present lay minister and program chairperson. But I'm afraid it might be hard to motivate some of us to do that. Perhaps they can work best on the ministerial relations committee. But in general, we seem to ask ourselves, "What's our place in Prairie after we've been front and center for three months?"