

PRAIRIE FIRE

Newsletter of the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

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Volume 15, No. 2
February 5th, 1978.
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Editor, Carolyn R. Briggs, 233-4374
Mailing, Preston Miracle, 231-1649
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Feb 12
Sunday
10 am

The Search for Intimacy: An exploration of the impact of advanced capitalism on the nuclear family - for example, the increased segregation of work, child care and family life (of husbands, children, and wives), the public-private split and the sentimentalization of marriage. With the fragmentation of family life, we wish also to look at the search for new forms of "family", for example single parent families, "open marriages", communes, etc.

Feb 12
Sunday
6 pm

See announcement below on Singles Potluck.

Feb 19
Sunday
10 am

Education and the Corporate State: An exploration of changes in educational patterns for young and old - for example, increasing demands for "performance" and education as "vocational training"; extended lengths of time required for such training ("lifelong schooling" vs. lifelong learning); the fragmentation of higher learning into isolated, esoteric specialties; education increasingly defined by technical, bureaucratic and corporate requirements, i.e. the "professionalization" of more and more fields of study; the creation of two distinct, unrelated dimensions of life, "public" and "private".

Later
April
10 am

In April we propose to focus from a similar perspective, on changes in political life and participation, work, and religion, (Editorial note: today's service indicated that the topics to be discussed in April will probably be politics, work, and technology. Not much interest was shown in religion.)

There will be a potluck dinner for Unitarian singles next Sunday evening, at six pm, on the 12th. The potluck will be at Ruth Hersko's home, 3508 Tallyho Lane, Right near the Cuba Club on Universtiy Ave., just inside Shorewood. For more information, please call Ruth at 233-7229. Hope to see you there!

Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) will be holding a conference over the weekend of March 30th to April 2nd at the First Unitarian Society. Any person who would like to attend a workshop of the conference itself (this invitation is extended especially to highschoolers), may contact Kathy Eisner at 233-3179.

"The Board decided that, rather than have another general membership meeting to further debate the issue of by-laws revision, there instead should be a presentation of various sides on disputed points in the pages of Prairiefire and then, later on, a discussion of the issues at a regular Sunday morning service in six to eight weeks." -Henry Pratt

"The issue to be discussed is (1) whether the society wishes to take stands on social/political issues; we further wish (2) to define the means by which such stands could be taken; and (3) we wish to identify the kinds of issues on which the Society may wish to take a stand." -the Board

Should Prairie Society take stands on social/political issues?
What are the means to be followed when taking such stands?
What kinds of issues?

YES, Prairie Society should consider and take stands on social/political issues.

I would maintain that we would have to completely become a secret society, undiscovered by any of the Madison community, to succeed in avoiding taking stands on social/political issues. Regardless of the presence or absence of votes on such issues, we have an image in the community. This is as a consequence of individuals as well as from the program(s) of the society.

It also appears to be impossible to define where social/political and non-social/political issues begin and end (witness the fact that our recent debate was over the purchase of advertising services). Much of the business of the society has social and political overtones: renting space at Portal Foster Center, teaching sex education, purchasing stereo equipment made in Japan, purchasing printing of the newsletter from a non-union (self-employed) printer, etc.

At the present time there is no prohibition on the society's adopting or defeating, social/political resolutions. The present rules of the executive board do require that an effort be made to publicize the vote by which the resolution was adopted, to assure that any minority is given recognition (there is also nothing to prohibit voting to include the text of a minority report in a resolution). However, the issue is clouded by providing autonomy to the social action committee and allowing them to maintain their own funds and issue statements in their own name.

Unless adopted for all actions of the society, I would not like to see a special definition of majority applied to voting on social/political issues. The problem would be in defining what was such an issue.

What kinds of issues? What would we prohibit? Perhaps only the direct endorsement of political candidates (since this is a vary traditional restriction among similar groups). How about abortion rights, J. P. Stevens boycott, Nuclear power plants, Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, Madison's urban sprawl problems, air quality standards, education of the developmentally disabled -- what is on your mind? Some will give us time for clear study, others will be more urgent.

But, we are also not required to take social/political stands. Under the present rules a majority can rightfully say that a resolution is not the business of Prairie.

My recommendation is that we address such issues when they are strongly enough felt to be introduced. I recall clearly David Lisman's statement that collective action may be the only salvation in our increasingly complex society.

-Al Nettleton.

(Discussion of this issue was to be between Al Nettleton and Charlie Davidson. The article has been delayed once, due to lack of preparation. It is being published now even though it is not completed.)
-the Editor

(The printer Al is thinking of was Brian Yocum. The printer now is Econoprint. Notice that no social action committee was asked if a different printer could be used. Editorial ease dictates who gets to print the PF. Econo-print is easiest, so...)

Middle-schoolers meet at 2259 West Lawn Avenue at 10:00 am. Teachers: John Siegfried, Dorothy Lee, and Mike Briggs. Topic: Responsibility and Freedom.

All the teaching slots in our Sunday School are filled. Thanks are extended to Shirley Lake and others involved in this task. Luck is wished to the new teachers and supervisors for the upcoming semester.

Hermine Davidson---a candidate for school board. She has taken a stand in current issues facing Madison taxpayers. Find out what she has to say by calling her at 222-4280.

Board meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7:30 pm. Place to be announced in the PF for those interested in attending. General public welcomed.

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