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Permit No. 1604

# Prairie Fire

Newsletter of the  
Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society  
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Volume 17, Number <sup>16</sup>~~15~~, September 24, 1980

## CALENDAR

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

10:00 a.m.—*The Stigma of Mental Illness*—  
William Lunney, former executive director  
of the Mental Health Association of Dane  
County.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

10:00 a.m.—*What's So Funny About Marriage? (Humor in  
the Family)*—George Calden

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10-12

Annual retreat at Upham Woods

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

7:30 p.m.—R.E. Committee meeting at Joyce Crim's

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

7:30 p.m.—Fall Business Meeting at Meeting House.

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### Program Notes

During the early part of the October 5th service we will tell each other funny things that happened in our marriage or family. So try to remember these humorous anecdotes and bring them to the service.

*Children are invited to join the small groups to be formed at the first part of the service and to contribute accounts of funny things that happened in their families.*

On October 12, when George Calden will conduct the Sunday service at Upham Woods, his topic will be *The Thing and I*. Everyone is urged to bring a *thing* related to nature. It could be a flower, a plant, a rock, an inspirational painting, poem or reading, a pet tarantula, or a monster size squash—anything related to our natural environment that has personal meaning and that we can talk about. *Bring the thing with you to Upham Woods* (Picking plants at Upham Woods is forbidden).

## R. E. CORNER

*Church school* is in the same position as the adults upstairs. We are almost running out of chairs! Rugs on the floor are a real asset for the preschoolers and for some activities of K-2 group.

*Plans of the Middle School group*, which consists of seven lively individuals, are to spend each Sunday morning with a different adult from the fellowship, hearing about the kind of work the individual does, the kind of training needed, and most definitely, why it is enjoyed. The first person to meet with the group, along with the teacher, Shirley Grindrod, was Pat Whyte-Lehman this past Sunday. Her enthusiasm about art is contagious. Next Sunday, Fleming Crim and Shirley will go with the group to visit his laser laboratory at the University. Through such personal contacts with various adults, we hope the Middle Schoolers will feel much more at home when they join the group upstairs.

*The third and fourth graders* used all their senses in a walk around the building, to find out how much they could "take in." Bob Nelson explained what a small part of our total environment each one can absorb.

*The R.E. Committee and the Board* have both been brainstorming the question of what constructive activities are or might be made available for the children while the adults remain after the service to drink coffee and talk (sometimes interminably, it seems to the youngsters!). As long as (or if) the weather remains nice, play outdoors is an option for many. But for those who prefer more quiet activities, the Haunting House room will be available, with some materials and books. Other suggestions will be most welcome.

**Next Prairie Fire Deadline, October 7**

## Prairie Retreat at Upham Woods October 10-12

Reservations for the Prairie retreat should be given to Mel Micke (636 Sheldon St., Madison 53711) no later than October 4. Newcomers might note that the dormitories have rooms for four persons each and central heating, while the cabins have 10 to 20 persons per room and are heated by a wood stove. The program will begin with a potluck dinner around 6:30 p.m. Friday evening, followed by a story telling session. You may arrive later Friday evening or Saturday morning.) We plan to have the following activities: Canoeing, nature walks, crafts for children, discussion groups on the family (to follow up Sunday programs this fall), discussions on religion and politics, charades for children and adults, games (from volleyball and capture the flag to new games), and a dance Saturday night (with a special added attraction—Sufi dancing by Mary Lou Diehl and Dorothy Lee).

## Work Party Continued

Prairie's planned outdoor work party, which has been competing unsuccessfully with the weather the past several weeks, has now been rescheduled for the first dry Saturday in September or October, except the Saturday of Upham Woods. As usual, plan to come about 9 a.m. with hoes, shovels, wheelbarrow or anything useful for digging, and plan to stay for lunch (potluck).

## Author! Author!

Pat Cautley's book *New Foster Parents—The First Experience* was just published this September by Human Sciences Press. The book probes the experiences of new foster parents with their foster (school age) child during the first 18 months of placement. It focuses on such questions as: what did these new foster parents actually experience and how can one predict who would make good foster parents?

All friends of Pat are invited to a publishing party for her at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, September 28, at the home of George and Ruth Calden, 4606 Waukesha St.

## Discussion Group

Anyone interested in participating in a monthly Sunday evening discussion group please get in touch with David Lisman, 884-9026.

Please indicate if you would like to be a discussion leader as well as any topics or books you would like to pursue.

## Agenda for Prairie Fall Membership Meeting . .

Agenda items for Prairie's fall business meeting to be held Sunday, October 19, at 7:30 p.m. are as follows:

1. Presentation, discussion, and approval of the 1980-81 budget.
2. Presentation and discussion of proposed plans for grounds around the building.

## 1980-1981 Pledge Information

Here is a summary of Prairie's financial plans for the 1980-1981 Society year. Please take time to read it, consider your concerns and your abilities, and return the enclosed pledge form to the Finance Committee, c/o Julia Bonser, 5213 Milward Drive, Madison 53711; or bring it to Prairie by Sunday, October 5. During the following two weeks a member of the Finance Committee will attempt to contact you if you have not been heard from, by way of reminder. Julia or other members of the Committee will gladly meet with anyone having questions or desiring further information. Call Julia at 274-3248 if you want to know how much you pledged last year.

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The following budget, which has been unanimously endorsed by the Prairie Executive Board, will be presented for the Society's approval at the parish meeting scheduled for Sunday evening, October 19, 1980. Based on your pledges, changes in the proposed budget may be required or permitted at that meeting.

|                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Lay ministry              | \$1,200       |
| Adult program & publicity | 375           |
| Religious education       | 2,613         |
| Housing                   | 8,600         |
| Capital improvements      | 915           |
| Denominational affairs    | 600           |
| Prairie Fire              | 750           |
| Upham Woods Scholarship   | 100           |
| Office                    | 330           |
| Contingencies             | 100           |
| <u>Total</u>              | <u>15,583</u> |

It isn't easy to compare this year's budget with the one for last year, since last year we had unusual expenses for acquiring the Meeting House and making it livable. The \$15,583 is 25% less than the total amount pledged last year by members for the operating budget and the building fund. It is 31% more than the \$11,939 operating budget adopted last winter. But more than one-half of that increase is for items that will not recur in future budgets.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fellowships such as Prairie typically have much lower budgets than churches, because members provide many of the services that would be provided by salaried professionals and other paid staff in churches. Nevertheless, we have many needs that volunteer help cannot provide and many demanding and time-consuming tasks that we cannot expect to provide on a voluntary basis. We also live in inflationary times.

\* \* \* \* \*

Adult programs and lay ministers. The proposed budget provides no changes in lay minister compensation and expenses and a small cut in other program expenses and publicity. There seems to be consensus that the program committee and the lay ministers have been providing and can continue to provide very satisfactory Sunday services. This year, for the first time, Prairie continued to have programs on most Sundays in the summer. This significant increase in program activity required no significant increase in expenditures.

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Religious education. Prairie's most important professional staff position is that of the Religious Education Director, a part-time position. The proposed compensation for this position is \$1,862, an increase of 8.3% from last year. The Director, the Religious Education Committee, our volunteer teachers, and nursery school help paid on an hourly basis work together in developing our religious education program. They use materials from the UUA and those developed here to provide programs for children from nursery school through middle school. Sunday school enrollment this year is significantly greater than last year.

Housing and capital improvements. Now that we have a Meeting House we have to pay for it. The largest part of this budget item is for mortgage payments, \$4,297, which will continue to be in our budget, not forever, but for many years. Other housing expenses will not recur. This year we will have to pay taxes on the building (since it was in private hands on January 1); this amount, estimated at \$1,200, will not be repeated in future budgets. Some improvements on the building and property are essential. We'll need to fence in part of the yard and install a sandbox for the RE program, put in window wells to prevent leakage, add some insulation to pipes and add valves for conservation purposes, and add some other items to make the place more livable. The taxes and capital improvements account for 58% of the increase in this year's operating budget.

Newsletter and office. The Prairie Fire comes out every other week and is our most important means of communicating with members. Increased postal rates require a small increase in the budget for the newsletter. Our office expenses are very small but essential; there have been increases in telephone bills and rental rates for our Post Office box (which, like most other mail boxes, accumulates mostly junk mail).

Denominational affairs. In the past year we have learned how much the Unitarian-Universalist Association can help groups like our own. Without their assistance we could not have acquired our Meeting House --- without their counsel we might not have been able to decide if we could afford a meeting house. In the past Prairie has contributed little to the denomination --- perhaps only about one-half the amount contributed by the average group our size. We recommend a substantial percentage increase to the UUA and to regional groups. It is a small increase in dollars and will lead to a sum that will still be less than that contributed by the average group our size.

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The average income of Unitarian-Universalists is among the highest of that of any religious denomination in North America. Prairie is not an average U-U group, however; while some of our members are above the national U-U average, most are not. In 1979-1980 we had about 85 adult members and 43 pledging units. The total amount pledged for the operating budget and the building fund was \$20,664, for an arithmetic mean of \$481 per pledging unit. The median pledge was \$250, and one-fourth of the pledging units contributed over \$650 each. (Remember that these figures for last year are unusual, since they include pledges for the building fund.)

Our proposed budget would require a mean pledge of \$363 per pledging unit --- about \$7 per week per unit --- if we continue to have 43 pledging units. (Of course, we hope to have more.) In terms of adult members, we need about \$3.60 per member per week. It's cheaper than the movies!

As members and friends we have come to value the Prairie Society as a community which fulfills certain of our needs. We all work together to make Prairie a meaningful experience. It isn't possible to place a monetary value on the most important contributions to Prairie or the meaning of Prairie activities to participants. But as an organization we do have financial needs, and it is necessary that we commit ourselves financially, according to our means, in order that Prairie programs continue. The responsibility for the future of Prairie depends in part upon our willingness to pledge financial support in keeping with the costs incurred in operating the Society.

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1980-1981 PRAIRIE U-U SOCIETY PLEDGE FORM

I/we pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the 1980-1981 operating budget of the Prairie Unitarian-Universalist Society. I/we prefer to pay. . . in one lump sum \_\_\_\_; in two payments \_\_\_\_; in four payments \_\_\_\_; monthly \_\_\_\_; other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_.

Your name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to the Finance Committee, c/o Julia Bonser, 5213 Milward Drive, Madison WI 53711; or give it to a member of the Finance Committee at a Sunday meeting by Sunday, October 5.

[Pledge payments should be sent to Nina Mattarella, Treasurer, 636 Sheldon Street, Madison WI 53711.]

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