



Prairie Fire

Newsletter of
Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society
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Volume 19, Number 6, March 23, 1982

CALENDAR

Saturday, March 27

10:00a.m.--Play practice for "Inherit the Wind" at First Church.

Sunday, March 28

10:00a.m.--"Our Religious Roots" Barbara Park

10:00a.m.--Religious Education classes

11:30a.m.--Parish Poll of Members

Friday-Sunday, April 2-4

Annual Spring Conference of the North Central Area Council at First Society.

Friday, April 2

8:30p.m.--Prairie Playreaders: "Inherit the Wind" at N.C.A. Council Meeting at First Society

Sunday, April 4

10:00a.m.--"Tschiakovsky: An All-Music Service"--Warren Hagstrom

10:00a.m.--Religious Education classes

7:30-9:30p.m.--Orientation Meeting for new people at Prairie -- meet at Caldens, 4606 Waukesha St.

Wednesday, April 7

7:15p.m.--Program Committee Meeting at Dorothy Lee's

Friday, April 9

7:30p.m.--Film Festival--Dave Zakem--at Prairie Meeting House--see story.

Sunday, April 11

10:00a.m.--"Are We Religious?" Barbara Park
10:00a.m.--Religious Education classes

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R.E. CORNER

Last Sunday the adults were treated to a Greek play given by the third and fourth graders--the Age of Pericles--which had a message for all: that each person has a special skill. Many thanks to Carol Dopp and her class for arranging such an interesting presentation! We have a group of children who seem very much at ease in front of the adults.

Now that spring is here--or so the calendar says--it is time to start planning for next year. Please--if anyone is interested in teaching, let me know.

Pat Cautley

"PRAIRIE CHOIR"

Come sing this spring! All who'd like to join for choral singing of some traditional Unitarian hymns and shaped note music--come practice and socialize. Friday, March 26, 7:30 at the Nettletons', 645 Sheldon St.. Bring snack to share.

COMING UP SOON! NCAC CONFERENCE, APRIL 2-4

If you haven't met with UU's outside of Prairie Society, a good place to begin is at the annual North Central Area Council Conference, held this year at the First Society in Madison. Four discussion sessions on "The Dimensions of Our Potential", and the play, "Inherit The Wind" presented by the Prairie Playreaders are just two of many interesting events. Registration forms are available on the rear table. Note that the meal registration deadline is March 23.

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE APRIL 4



INTRODUCING BARB PARK....

Barb Park, Prairie's new lay minister, has the distinction of having grown up in one of UU's denominations -- the Universalists. Introduced to Universalism by her best friend and remaining with it after her friend moved away and throughout college, Barb says "Universalism was consistent with my thoughts. There was a pervading positive attitude -- a belief that there were many paths to the ultimate truth." The importance of her religious affiliation as a youth has remained with her, and led her to a continuing interest in U-U youth programs. When she came to Madison, Barb attended First Society, where she sang in the choir. About four years ago she made the move to Prairie ("along with half the alto section".) Barb met her husband, Bob Park, at Upham Woods and the couple was married under Prairie auspices last summer.

Last year Barb attended Common Ground, a meeting at Carlton College, (as one of two adult representatives from the District) in which the nationwide Liberal Religious Youth program was evaluated and re-defined. Barb spoke of the meeting as profoundly moving and inspiring. "The West Coast radicals and the East Coast conservatives were there. Prairie probably falls somewhere left of center". In February she helped organize and chair a regional re-cap of the Common Ground meeting, this time in Deerfield, Illinois. She and three Prairie youth, including her daughter, Casey, returned full of ideas and enthusiasm for a Prairie youth program. Barb

was appointed to the Youth-Adult Committee for the District. "It's been fun, but it's been a lot of work."

Barb's ministry is entitled "The Disagreements that Unite Us." She is particularly suited to treating this topic, an examination of the unity and diversity of ideas and philosophies held by UUs, not only because of her unique religious history, but also because she has had contact with many of the differences that exist among UUs in her service to the North Central Area Council of the Denomination. She has served as secretary of the Council for the past two years and is now on the nominating committee for the Central Midwest District. The ministry is based on materials made available from the UU publishing house, Beacon Press, and some of Barb's own additions. The materials take a historical approach to the differences which have occurred in Unitarians and Universalists during the past two hundred years, including the thirty years since the merger. Are Unitarians Christians? Is religion an emotional or intellectual issue? How do we handle disagreements? These are some of the Beacon Press programs. Barb has added a segment on our religious roots before we came to Prairie, and a program entitled "Is Prairie a Church?" Barb hopes that through discussion of these topics we will gain a sense of the history of our denomination without having a history lesson per se.

Barb works at Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled (formerly Central Colony). She attended Boston University where she prepared for her current profession--physical therapist. She works in the community outreach program, in which profoundly retarded people who remain with their families come in to the Center for a period of time to be trained and then return home. Barb's team follows up with the family and community for some months or even years. "it's very rewarding," she says, "to help such a child." Barb has been involved in the work for ten years. She has seen a change in her work during that time as communities are increasingly able to handle the disabled, and the children she treats are those the communities cannot handle--the most difficult cases.

The Parks live in a home on a hill outside Poynette, where many Prairie members have spent enjoyable weekends during R.E. retreats (She likes country living in spite of the long commute). When not working, Barb likes to ski and garden. Welcome to our newest lay minister--Barb Park.

--Susan Drapkin

POSSIBLE BY-LAW CHANGES: A PLEA TO REVAMP DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

After nearly two years as head of the Denominational Affairs Committee at Prairie, I have concluded that this committee needs a drastic overhaul. At the present time, its head is appointed rather than elected. Usually someone agrees to take the post during the spring parish meeting. As an appointed committee, it is not part of the Executive Board but an isolated post, a committee operating by itself.

This isolation makes for difficulties in a key aspect of the job, the give and take of information. I read the denominational mail and then offer up capsule chunks of it during announcements and in Prairie Fire. Some of it is vital to the president or to committee heads like Social Action or Religious Education. It would be much more effective to give this information to the Executive Board rather than contacting all the people concerned individually. Other times I need help with a Denominational Affairs committee decision, such as, how and when should our Parish Poll be conducted. This is so much easier to accomplish in an Executive Board meeting than on one's own.

Also, I feel the presence of the Denominational Affairs head on the Executive Board would be a needed resource person, especially in our fellowship which has no professional minister cued into denominational aspects. With the purchase of a building and consequent hosting of denominational meetings I have sensed a growing awareness of ourselves as part of a denomination. Making Denominational Affairs part of the Executive Board will insure a more responsible, stronger committee, as well as benefitting the Board.

Prairie By-laws cite only one duty of the Denominational Affairs Committee, that of maintaining "regular relations with existing UU Organization." I am proposing additional duties: keeping the members informed about UU concerns and events, and the purchasing of UU pamphlets and literature. Another proposed duty (to be shared with the Membership Committee) is the planning of orientation meetings for new and prospective members. This is a need which can easily fall through the slats of our present organizational structure. So I have added it to the duties of both committees.

I hope you will take time to read the proposed by-law changes and will give them some thought before the April 25 parish meeting when they will be voted upon. I think all of us would benefit by these

changes, and I know subsequent Denominational Affairs chairpersons would be helped.

Ruth Calden, Denom. Affairs.

(Text of the proposed By-Law Changes)

MAKING THE DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE A STANDING COMMITTEE, THUS AN ELECTED COMMITTEE AND PART OF THE BOARD

1. Delete from ARTICLE VII* STANDING COMMITTEES

B. 4. Denominational Affairs

2. Add to ARTICLE VI OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Denominational Affairs

ADDING DUTIES TO THE DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEES

3. Amend ARTICLE VII* STANDING COMMITTEES to read

A.7. Denominational Affairs

a. This committee shall maintain for Prairie Society regular relations with other Unitarian-Universalist Organizations. It shall inform the Membership as to Unitarian-Universalist concerns and events; conferences, meetings and camps at all denominational levels and display Unitarian-Universalist pamphlets and literature.

b. This committee shall help plan orientation meetings to acquaint new and prospective Members with Prairie Society and Unitarian-Universalism.

4. Amend ARTICLE VII* STANDING COMMITTEES to read

B. 3. Membership Committee

a. (2) maintain a list of prospective members, periodically inviting them to join; and help plan orientation meetings to acquaint new and prospective Members with Prairie Society and Unitarian-Universalism.

*ARTICLE VII is incorrectly listed as ARTICLE VI IN THE 1979-1980 Directory

Submitted by Ruth Calden,
Denominational Affairs,
to the Executive Board on 3-9-82

Remember HospiceCare dinner at Peppino's, Monday, March 29. Call Shirley Czoschke, 238-5073

HIGHLIGHTS OF MARCH 9 BOARD MEETING

Pat Cautley and Dave Zakem will be heading a committee of people interested in producing a show or series of shows for cable TV Channel 4. John Smail is willing to give a talk and lead a discussion on The Nuclear War Hazard; other topics might deal with various aspects of humanism. Anyone interested in helping should see Dave or Pat.

The Board approved a suggestion by Ruth Calden that a by-law change be offered for adoption at the April 25 parish meeting. The change would make the Denominational Affairs committee a standing committee and its chair a member of the Board (see text elsewhere in this issue).

The R.E. Committee is looking for an R.E. Director for next year, so if you know of someone who is interested and qualified, see Alice Bullen or Carol Dopp.

For the April 25 parish meeting the agenda will be as follows:

- 1) Minutes of the Fall meeting
- 2) Financial report
- 3) Committee reports (3 Minutes each)
- 4) By-law change
- 5) Election of officers

The meeting will start at 7:30. Popcorn will be served.

REVIEW OF SOCIAL ACTIVISTS CONFERENCE

If you would like to know more about the ideas presented at the Meadville/Lombard Institute (held here in February) by social activist leaders from, not only our UUA, but several other denominations, come to Pat Cautley's, 4805 Regent St., Sunday, March 28, at 7:30. One tape will be played and the high points of several lectures presented for discussion.

BLACKMAIL ?

Yes, good Prairie people; The cookbook committee is threatening to use one of the following titles if they are not quickly and forthwith inundated with ideas entered in the "Name The Cookbook" contest:

- "Prairie-chicken Feed"
- "Prairie Grub"
- "Prairie Food for Thought and Belly"
- "Prairie Ponderings and Palate Pleasers"
- "Prairie Rules and Ruminations"

Don't make us suffer a fate less than birth! Take action!

The Cookbook Committee

PARISH POLL THIS SUNDAY

Remember, this Sunday, March 28, after the morning service a Parish Poll of Prairie members will be conducted. The Parish Poll is a grass roots involvement of UU Societies in the selection of resolutions appearing on the UU General Assembly agenda.

A full statement of each resolution is contained in your February 15 copy of UU World on a pull out sheet called "Tentative Agenda". Please bring this with you to the Parish Poll. After a brief clarification and discussion of the resolutions, members will cast their votes. The majority vote determines Prairie's one vote (yes or no) per resolution.

To insure a representative vote on these resolutions, all Prairie members are urged to attend the Parish Poll.

Ruth Calden

ARE YOU NEW AT PRAIRIE?

Are you a newcomer among us or perhaps not so new but feel the need of knowing more about Unitarian-Universalism? Would you like to know more about the history and organizational structure of Prairie? Do you have questions about religious education? Would you welcome a chance to meet other new people and also some who have been active in our fellowship?

A new series of orientation meetings is being planned with your needs in mind, using some of the material in "The New U" adult education program. Come to all or any of the three Sunday evenings: April 4, 11, and 18, each starting at 7:30 p.m. and concluding at 9:30. The first meeting will be held at the Calden's 4606 Waukesha St... (off Segoe Road). If you are interested, please put your name on the sign up sheet on the table beneath the bulletin board.

KEEPING THE PRAIRIE FIRE BURNING

Guest publishers of the next issue of Prairie Fire while the Bullens are vacationing in the east will be Marty Drapkin and Pat Cautley. Marty will organize, type, and makeup the newsletter and take it to a printer. Pat Cautley will then pick up the copies from the printer, fold and staple it if necessary, and do the mailing operation. The deadline for that issue will be April 4. Our thanks to Marty and Pat.

Alice and Lee

CLIPBOARD

Kitchen Clean-up

March 28 Marty & Susie Drapkin

Building Clean-up

March 28 Lee & Alice Bullen

RESPONSES TO "A RELIGIOUS ALTERNATIVE"

During an evangelical Christian recruiting effort on campus, three Unitarian ministers spoke at the Memorial Union in Feb. The prime purpose of the program was to introduce Unitarian-Universalism to the questing students. The speakers of the first night represented two poles of Unitarian theology. David Rankin of Atlanta calls himself a Christian and Khoren Arisian is a religious humanist.

Rankin began by discussing the reasons why there are so few of us. "We offer only freedom," he said, and freedom is too uncomfortable for most people. "We do not offer peace of mind." He focussed on the goal of freedom: to become an individual, to act out of one's own center. He said that we have become Unitarians in order to answer the essential questions for ourselves

While taking much exception to any mixing of Christianity with humanism, Arisian agreed about the centrality of freedom. He said that at the heart of liberal religion is the concern for "the sacred worth and freedom of every individual".

Everything both speakers said made very good sense to me. Yet, when the evening was done I was sure that, had I been/questing student, nothing they'd said would have moved me to get up early on Sunday to check out Unitarian-Universalism. It sounded all too bloodless and cerebral. Michael Scott finally asked my question: "You've talked about Freedom and Reason and Ethical Individualism but how about Love and Commitment and Community?" Neither speaker really responded.

The question was answered the next day by Sylvia Falconer. Her theme was the significance of human warmth and caring instead of litany of answers to all of life's inevitable and often painful questions. Her assertion that "In our congregation, we really love each other," provoked one of her Unitarian listeners who responded that he would certainly want nothing to do with such an emotionally-loaded situation.

These speakers prompted me to consider the theme of Barbara Park's upcoming ministry: "The Disagreements That Unite Us." I'm tempted to characterize one of the areas of difference in our denomination as Cool Thinking vs. Warm Feelings, but that's certainly a false dichotomy. Yet I do think that an over-emphasis on rationality can be thin and unsatisfying. If I were concerned only about asserting my own freedom to confront my destiny without the imposition of

any dogma, I'd sleep late on Sunday mornings.

I'm a Unitarian - a Prairie Unitarian - because I need to claim both sides of my being. I need a community in which to celebrate life. In addition to reasoning together, I want to sing and dance and laugh and cry together. I want to share not only our best thinking, but those times when we don't know what to think.

It's very good to have support in my individual quest for meaning in my own life, but it's vital to be part of a religious community "which affirms that we share a common humanity, that we need one another."

Dorothy Lee

Dear David Rankin and Khoren Arisian,

What concerned me was that neither of you dealt with the political-economic character of the new religious right nor with the analogous character of the emerging religious left (e.g. some Christian Marxists or Marxist Christians).

When one of you emphasized the ... idea of "freedom" you didn't discuss the fact that the religious right also embraces "freedom" - the freedom of large corporations and Reaganites to rule our lives in the name of "free enterprise."

When one of you emphasized the idea of "reason" you didn't discuss the fact that the new religious left also embraces "reason" - justifying in its name (albeit reluctantly) strong state/party control over peoples' lives to promote "human rights", especially in the recently "liberated" countries in Latin America and Africa.

It seems to me that if Unitarianism is to grow and offer attractive alternatives it needs to deal forthrightly with such problems which I believe trouble many religious liberals who feel caught between the two contending positions described in a very oversimplified fashion above.

In fellowship, John Ohliger

Dear John:

I did emphasize "freedom," however, because I think it is our strongest theme. Liberals 'unlike the extremes of right and left' have the difficult task of promoting freedom along with justice and economic opportunity. It seems to me that the right wants justice, the left wants economic security, and that only liberalism promotes the necessity of balancing all three.

So as Unitarian Universalists, with a strong tradition of freedom, we stand opposed

(Continued on other side)

BANNED FILM FESTIVAL, APRIL 9

C'mon, take a break from PBS 3-D movies. Enjoy an evening of movies which have horrified people for one reason or another. These movies are done by some of the best musicians and graphics people in the world, but some of the topics have been a little bit terrifying: topics like evolution, values clarification and stereotypical thinking and horror of horrors, even things like DEATH. These movies are refreshing, imaginative and provocative not to mention the outstanding artistic qualities. This is guaranteed to be an evening you won't forget. I saw one of the movies, "The Legacy" written by James Weldon Johnson, a famous American poet, and I could not stop talking about the fantastic art, music and depictions.

There will be five movies of about ten minutes each. The material is generally suitable for children. A few concepts may be a bit sophisticated for young children under nine but the graphics are superb and attention holding. Some of the material is highly recommended for children. Check with me if you need more clarification. Bring a bag of popcorn and be prepared for an exceptional evening on Friday, April 9 at 7:30 P.M. at the Prairie Meeting House. There will be a very small donation requested to cover the postage on the films.

Dave Zakem



UPDATE ON CREATIONISM

The Amery Free Press reported that the Amery High School Principal has eliminated creationism theory instruction from the high school curriculum. The Principal acknowledged that creation "science" had been included in the required high school freshman earth science class last year.

The DPI guidelines on creationism basically recommend that creationism not be addressed in Wisconsin public school science classes.

(Responses to "A Religious Alternative")

to the absence of freedom in the right and left, but also incorporate their agendas for justice and economic opportunity. As you realize, it is easier said than done.

We should be the mediators, the negotiators, the facilitators. We should recognize the legitimate claims of both right and left without entering into the name-calling exchanges. Our agenda should be to balance those claims within the climate of freedom. It has been the historic role of liberals and it can serve the world well in the present.

Cordially, David Rankin

WETLANDS WEEK '82

Many interesting and educational activities are planned for Wetlands Week '82, Monday, March 29 through Saturday, April 3. Below is a sampling:

Monday, March 29, and Tuesday, March 30, 7:30 p.m. at the Memorial Union, student researchers will present wetland research projects and movies will be shown.

Wednesday, March 31, 7:30 p.m., at Union South, Crane Count meeting with film and slide show about sand hill cranes. Crane field trip is on Saturday.

Thursday, April 1, 7:30 p.m., at Union South, Sierra Club meeting with Cal DeWitt and Karen Voss discussing wetland ecology and legislation.

Dunn's Marsh Annual Neighborhood Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, April 24 (rain date May 1). Cleaners get free lunch: soft drinks and beer, chicken. Meet at Marlborough Park (1 block south of Prairie), Britton Belmar Park, at 9:00 a.m.

UU SUMMER CAMPS

Brochures for the Lake Geneva Summer Assembly Camp have arrived and are available in the pamphlet rack. This popular camp fills up quickly so make your reservations for the week of July 4-10 soon if you plan to attend. Note also the brochures for Camp Unistar, Minnesota and Star Island, N.H. in the pamphlet rack in the entry-way.