



# Prairie Fire

Newsletter of

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society  
2010 Whenona Drive  
P.O. Box 5362 Madison, Wis. 53705  
(608) 271-8218

Leland & Alice Bullen, Editors . . . 838-8055  
Martin Drapkin, President . . . . . 257-7056  
Patricia Cautley, R.E. Director . . 238-5373

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## CALENDAR

Sunday, December 19

- 10:00 a.m.--FAMILY CHRISTMAS SERVICE
- 10:00 a.m.--Preschool child care available

Tuesday, December 21

- 7:00 p.m.--SOLSTICE EVENING SERVICE

Sunday, December 26

- 10:00 a.m.--SING OUT THE OLD -  
DANCE IN THE NEW  
Sing along lustily with Mike,  
kick up the sawdust with Dodie and  
thrill to the sublime strains of  
the Ethnic Impurities as we say  
farewell to '82 and welcome '83.
- 10:00 a.m.--Interim activities begin for children  
Preschool child care available

Monday, January 3

- 7:30 p.m.--Long Range Planning committee meeting  
at Dorothy Wetherby's home - 5209  
Tolman Terrace

## SOLSTICE SERVICE

Come celebrate the solstice, on Tuesday, Dec. 21, in pre-christian style.

Bring 1) a candle, 2) a cushion or blanket to sit on, and 3) an open mind and a participatory attitude.

Recommended for adults, young adults and elder adults. No child care has been arranged.

## COME HASTE TO THE WEDDING

Charles Lemons and Megan Christiansen invite us to their wedding on Sat. Dec. 18th. The ceremony will be at the First Society at 5:00, followed by a reception at Prairie at 6:30 p.m.

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A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS AND HANUKKAH AND A NEW YEAR OF PEACE FOR ALL HUMANKIND  
\*\*\*\*\*

## R.E. CORNER

GOOD NEWS! We will have a new R.E. Director in 1983 - Dayle Haglund, who, with her husband Brent and daughter Krin, arrived in Madison last summer from Montana. Dayle has been an R.E. Director in the Unitarian Church in Athens, Georgia, and has taught science at the middle school level. She and I will share the responsibilities during our interim program in January and then she will take over.

A word about interim, starting Dec. 26 and continuing thru Jan. 23rd, designed to give the regular teachers a break. We have special projects during the month. This year we will again focus on making table decorations for the dining room in the Oakwood Nursing Home. The children will take them there and have an opportunity to meet and talk with some of the residents.

The "UU and You" group has been studying all aspects of Prairie. Last Sunday I wish you could have heard their perceptive questions as they interviewed me about the origins and early years of our group.

Julie Bonser has introduced Benjamin Franklin to the "Heroines and Heroes" class. Lee Bullen brought his small printing press to show the group some of the details of printing which Franklin used in his day.

## NEEDED

Christmas cards for our project during January in R.E. Please bring all that you are willing to discard on Dec. 26 and January 2. They will be put to good use!

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF PRAIRIE FIRE  
is December 26, 1982.

SAY HELLO

to our newest Prairie members:

Emily Stember  
Craig Bradley and  
Karen Jackson

GOOD NEWS! SQUEAKY WHEELS DO GET OILED!

As of Jan. 3 I will be working full time for the National Organization for Women in Washington, D.C. as an organizer under the supervision of Kathy Webb, the new National Secretary. Another woman and I will be responsible for chapter training and development for the 800 N.O.W. chapters. We plan to develop a resource library, write a chapter building guide, prepare monthly idea mailings, do conference presentations and visit many chapters. We also hope to expand the use of cable access television and home computers by local chapters.

Needless to say, I'm happy about the opportunity. The biggest joy, however, has been in sharing the news with Kristi, Prairie people and other friends. About the time I come back down to the ground, someone else gets excited about what's happening and we're flying again.

It would have been nearly impossible to be in the position to accept the job without your help and patience. Being associated with Prairie over the past two and a half years has given Kristi and me a sense of family and belongingness that we've never known before. The programs, bond of union, lunches and friendships have been an opportunity to understand myself, others and the world better. Through what I have learned from you, I hope to offer to others a voice of tolerance, concern and action.

If after five months I believe that the job and the environment will suit Kristi's needs, she will join me there. If things don't work out, I'll return to Madison. After all, I know where home is now.

To all of you, I'm grateful. This has become a very memorable holiday season.

Judy Spring

WOWIE Judy! What exciting news! Even though we'll all miss you terribly, we wish you an especially wonderful New Year.

IMPROMPTU DANCING PARTY

After Megan's and Charles' wedding reception on Saturday evening, how about continuing the celebration by proceeding to the New Glarus Hotel for an evening of waltzes and polkas? Dancing starts about 9 and there's no admission charge. And the atmosphere is nice for all ages.

Dorothy Wetherby

HELP WANTED--IN FINDING A JOB

I'll be receiving a B.A. in journalism from the U.W.-Madison in December and would like to stay in the Madison vicinity (within 30-40 or more miles) so I can continue to be part of Prairie. My specialization is news/editorial work, with emphasis on feature writing and magazines. I'm also interested in general assignment reporting. I'd like to work for a daily, weekly, bi- or tri-weekly newspaper or a magazine, but wouldn't be averse to other types of writing jobs. I can provide a resume and clippings on request.

If you know of anyone who you think could help me (i.e. potential employers or their employees) please have them contact me at 257-4492, or else furnish me with their addresses. Thanks to all for your help.

Anne Reardon

A WELCOMING CEREMONY

We are planning a welcoming ceremony for Heidi and Ian during the month of January. As a part of this ceremony we would like to compile a book for each child that includes favorite poems, essays, etc. contributed by any Prairie member who would like to be included. A few things might be read during the ceremony but most will just be saved in the book for the child to read when he/she gets older and we're hoping this might establish a link between Prairie adults and children. You can give each child the same piece of writing if you wish.

Please give the writing to us by January 2. Our addresses are in the Prairie Directory.

Erin Bosch and Barb Park

P.S. Abigail Swetz, who was at Prairie for the first time last Sunday, will also be welcomed in the ceremony.

PRO-SEEDS FIGURE SKATING CLASSES

In effort to raise funds for Prairie I am offering figure skating classes. Tentative fees for the classes are: \$5.00 for individuals, \$7.50 for couples, and \$7.50 plus \$2.50 per child for families. The classes would run for 10 weeks in Jan., Feb., and March (two alternative days would be set up in case of bad weather). Class size up to 15, Thurs. evening is the tentative meeting time, and Tenney Park the tentative meeting place.

Basic skills will be emphasized but figure skate maneuvers would also be taught. Family class would teach parents to teach children. Individuals would learn solo maneuvers and couples would learn pair maneuvers.

If you are interested call me at 262-1276 days. Leave a name and phone number or sign up at Prairie.

Diane Knott

## COMING APART: SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS

The focus of the November 21 service was on the extent to which everyone who knows and cares about them is touched when a couple parts, and on the ways that the community can express love and concern during that transition. The discussion was warm and positive, but so lively that I want to emphasize some points made in passing, and add others for which the panel had no time.

In contrast with other endings, such as moving away, or even death, we lack the customs that help us to know what is appropriate at the time of a couple's separation.

A written announcement of the change is very helpful to the social community, giving people the chance to sort out their own possibly complicated reactions before encountering either of the couple.

Rather than "Oh, what a tragedy," or "I always thought (s)he was crazy anyway," or ~~even~~ "I'm sorry to hear that," the most appropriate verbal response suggested was, "Are you okay?"

The importance of regularly keeping in touch with a friend who is newly alone, and making special efforts to invite him/her to go out or to share a meal or other at-home activities, can't be overemphasized. Depression may make someone who is lonely quite unable to do the reaching out. The partner who has moved out, and is living in an unfamiliar situation, is probably especially in need of your attention.

The role that our Prairie circle dinner groups can play as a vehicle for keeping in close touch and for giving special support to anyone who is in crisis, should be given more emphasis.

The importance of not taking sides, even though one or both partners may seem to want you to, was emphasized. Several people who have been divorced reported that, in the long run, side taking by friends had been a problem.

The point was also made that at times what may be needed is not automatic support and sympathy, but honest confrontation. If a couple's conflicts are being played out, "using Prairie for center stage," or if one partner is being grossly careless or even actively inflicting excessive pain, such acts are apt to cause great discomfort in onlookers. The actor (s) is entitled to be informed of that reaction. Otherwise, discomfort can lead to avoidance and eventually a comfortable place in the community may have been lost by the time the conflicts have subsided.

It is also vital to keep in mind that every separation need not lead to divorce, but may be a time during which a relationship is renegotiated. Friends and relatives need to be

supportive but not take steps that make a reconciliation less likely.

Paying special attention to children whose parents are apart was discussed. They especially need to know that there are many people in their world who are interested in them and available, at a time when the people they most depend on are apt to be caught up in their own concerns.

While recognizing that love does not always last, and parting and divorce are often the only possible choice, it was remarked that we ought to affirm more consciously the values of long term love and commitment. We should celebrate the lives of couples who have made good lives together.

The question of how to achieve joint custody of Prairie was only partially answered, but the options of joining separate circle dinners, possible alternating attendance on Sundays, and other agreements for dealing with the initial discomforts should be kept in mind.

Dorothy Lee Wetherby

## WE ARE CELEBRATING

Dorothy writes of the need to "celebrate the lives of couples who have made good lives together." Well, Prairie did just that in last Sunday's service when we honored the Taliaferros. Odell (Tally) and Hazel have been members of the First Unitarian Society for forty years! But they also have been warm and enthusiastic friends of Prairie.

Congratulations to Tally and Hazel in becoming "Honorary Elder Members" of Prairie.

## CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT VESPERS

We are all invited to attend the Christmas Vespers Service at the First Unitarian Society on Friday afternoon at 4:30 on Dec. 24th. This is a simple service of readings by Max Gaebler and recorded music provided by George Calden.

This is one of the few joint efforts between the Prairie and the First Society. It has been going on for 15 years. There have been a number of people who have been so entranced by these vespers services that they've been coming for all of the 15 years!

Try it - you'll like it.

## TO EACH HIS OWN DEPARTMENT

"If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I have not lived in vain."

Emily Dickenson

"If, through my films, I've made one person miserable, then I've done a good job."

Woody Allen

SOCIAL ACTION - A PROPOSAL FOR A NUCLEAR  
FREE ZONE

A new movement for peace is underway and I hope that Prairie will be part of it.

The nuclear-free zone idea is an adaption of the Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone treaties negotiated under the auspices of the UN whereby nations agree to exclude nuclear weapons from certain territories in order to stem the tide of "horizontal proliferation." Examples include the Antarctic Treaty. Similar zones have been proposed for Central Europe, the Balkans, the Nordic countries, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, but they await negotiation.

Recently, the idea of nuclear free zones has become popular as a way for people, rather than governments, to show their opposition to the arms race. At its simplest, you or I can unilaterally declare our own personal property--a house, an apartment, a car, even a single room--to be off-limits to the nuclear arms race or other aspects of nuclear militarism. Similarly, neighborhoods, schools, clubs, churches, businesses, and eventually municipalities, states and groups of states can register their opposition to the arms race by declaring themselves nuclear-free. There is the novel opportunity of "twinning" your nuclear-free zone with a companion nuclear-free person, club, town, etc., in another country, thereby internationalizing the peace movement.

Nuclear-free zone campaigns have been very successful in Europe, and especially in the U.K., where votes by hundreds of regional and local elected bodies have declared their areas, representing 80% of the total population, to be nuclear-free. All of Wales is a nuclear-free zone, as are the cities of Manchester and London.

Earlier this year, two Maryland communities made themselves nuclear-free zones. Malcolm Shabazz School in Madison voted to be nuclear-free in September, soon after the successful nuclear weapons freeze referendum. Since then, many people have declared their own property to be nuclear-free, and campaigns are underway to create nuclear free zones in the city of Madison and the State of Wisconsin.

A decision to declare Prairie nuclear-free would be, perhaps, one of the most significant religious acts we can make in this time of danger to the very existence of life on earth. We would be saying, openly and plainly, that the Prairie community is not the kind of society that goes to war or seeks war as a solution to political differences. We would be saying that the property we own and control--the Prairie Meeting House and the land it is on, including the grass, the trees, the shrubs, the flowers, the prairie plants, the children's play area--shall not be party to the vileness of nuclear weaponry. We

would be heeding the advice in Deuteronomy: "Choose life so that you and your children will live."

To be sure, designating Prairie as nuclear-free would only be a symbolic act, rather than one that seeks to correct the underlying problem. But such symbolic acts will be powerful and important to us, both individually and collectively, as well as significant for others who will follow our lead.

I offer the following resolution in the hope it will be discussed and voted on before too long.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the nuclear arms race is leading to the devastation of the world; and  
WHEREAS the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons is a crime against life on our planet; and  
WHEREAS tacit approval of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race is inconsistent with the mutual promise in our "Bond of Union to "stand tall in our quest for integrity of life, yet not at others' expense" and  
WHEREAS we are responsible for ensuring that the property owned and controlled by our religious community shall be used for socially constructive purposes;  
THEREFORE be it known that Prairie Unitarian-Universalist Society, 2010 Whenona Drive, Madison, WI: (a) is a NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE, within which no nuclear weapon or any component thereof shall be designed, manufactured, tested, stored, modernized, disposed of, or permitted in any fashion; (b) renounces the right to <sup>be</sup> defended by the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons; and (c) asks to be removed from the target lists of governments that produce or intend to produce nuclear weapons.

Les Lyons

NOTICE

Following the January 16th Sunday service there will be a special business meeting to discuss and vote on the above resolution.

Please plan to attend.

Marty Drapkin

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SYMBOL TREE

Children and adults are urged to bring a symbol to be hung on the SYMBOL TREE during the Family Christmas Service next Sunday. Any object that has personal meaning for you qualifies as a symbol.