

Prairie Fire

newsletter of

PRAIRIE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY

... As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world and with one another.—PRAIRIE'S BOND OF UNION

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Volume 24, Number 5 March 11, 1986

CALENDAR

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

- 10:00 a.m.--EXPERIMENTS IN UU RITUAL, by Elisabeth Jones, A participatory service. The Ethnic Connections will play at the beginning of the service.
- 10:00 a.m.--R.E. Classes, baby and child care.
- 7:30 p.m.--Pledge of Resistance meeting, co-sponsored by Social Action Comm.

MONDAY, MARCH 17

- 6:15-8:30--R.E. Committee meeting at Andrea Torres', 2801 Coventry Trail.
Topic: Curricula 1986-87.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

- 5-7:00 p.m.--Program Committee meeting and potluck, 4337 Milford Rd.
- 7:00 p.m.--Prairie Men's Group will meet with Jim Cook and Steve Sells, 5502 Valley Drive, McFarland. Call 838-4787 or 255-2273 for directions. Topic: BARRIERS TO MALE FRIENDSHIPS.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

- 7:30-9:00 p.m.--Spiritual Discussion Group, at Prairie. PERSONAL IDENTITY. Who, what do you think you are? Absolutely, fundamentally, deep within?

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

- 10:00 a.m.--WHAT DOES LIBERAL RELIGION MEAN? by Elisabeth Jones.

MONDAY, MARCH 24

- 7:30 p.m.--Board Meeting at Prairie. Everyone welcome.

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SUNDAY, APRIL 27

- 7:00 p.m.--REGULAR SPRING BUSINESS MEETING of PRAIRIE SOCIETY. Members wishing to submit agenda items may do so in writing to an Executive Board member.

R.E. CORNER

Although three children have left Prairie because they have moved out of town, 19 new children have joined the R.E. program since September. That means we have 16 additional kids to nurture.

Pre-School Unfortunately, Judy Schultz has decided to leave her job as Pre-School co-ordinator to pursue her career as a cosmetologist. These kids will miss Judy. For the next two weeks, while we are looking for a new Pre-School co-ordinator (see separate notice) the children will build and decorate teddy bear houses and then bring their favorite stuffed animals to play in the houses and have a teddy bear picnic.

K-1-2 On March 16 this class will continue its learning about handicaps with a visit by a man with cerebral palsy. Please be considerate of his difficulty visiting a non-accessible building. On March 23 they will discuss aging as a normal part of life and as a handicapping phenomenon.

3-4-5 On March 16 and 23 this group will discuss the experiences of blacks who came to North America. Among other activities they will be making African-style masks.

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NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE MARCH 23

R.E. CORNER, continued

6-7-8 On March 9 this class visited a Quaker service. On Friday, March 14, they will visit a synagogue as a follow-up to their earlier discussion of Judaism. On March 16, Alice and Lee Bullen will discuss their experiences with the Society of Friends. On March 23, Mary Beth O'Halloran will lead a class on music and art as universal expressions of spirituality.

Elia Golden, son of Barbara Golden, will be assisting in the nursery program. He has had experience with baby sitting, and he also worked as a camp counselor last summer.

A CALL FOR ASPIRING ARCHITECTS

The Long Range Planning and the Building and Grounds committees have been exploring ideas for renovating our meeting house to better serve our needs. Some of our problems concern the safety of the entrance with its numerous steps and different levels, swinging doors near a narrow landing and steps, and lack of access for handicapped people. The religious education program now has 42 children enrolled and has no more room for any new children.

Some possible solutions would be to renovate the downstairs, by making the kitchen into a classroom, at the same time adding a lavatory for R.E. The upstairs lavatories could be restructured to allow a kitchen to be added there. The porch could be enclosed and the floor and roof raised to the level of the auditorium and a ramp for handicapped persons added on the outside.

We would like to invite Prairie members who have had ideas on ways to improve the building to please get in touch with either Jack Jallings or Rachel Siegfried. We have dimensions and drawings available.

SATURDAY CLASSES

A series of introductory classes given by teachers of various spiritual disciplines in the Madison area will be offered at Prairie on Saturday afternoons from 4-5:00 p.m. in April and May.

On Saturday, April 5, Roger Eishens will present an introduction to Hatha Yoga to begin the series. Please bring a mat or blanket and wear loose clothing.

This series is offered to give Prairie members and friends an opportunity to try some of the many different ways available to us for integrating our minds and bodies and spirits--and also just for fun.

BYLAW CHANGES - SPRING PARISH MEETING

Your bylaws committee has been hard at work this year studying the Prairie bylaws with the intent of suggesting any changes necessary to keep our bylaws current with other preparations for growth. The next issue of Prairie Fire will contain the exact wording of change proposals. For now, we are presenting you with the essence of these changes, and we ask that you think about them carefully. We will be asking that you approve three basic changes.

1. The current bylaws state that the minutes of a Parish meeting must be taken by the Secretary. We were sure that it was never Prairie's intent that in case of the secretary's absence, there were to be no minutes taken. We, therefore, propose that the the minutes be taken by the secretary or a substitute appointed by the chair.
2. The bylaws now state that the Board may order a certified audit of the books. We propose that a yearly audit be required, and on the advice of a professional, we propose to strike the word certified, as causing unnecessary complications in the audit process.
3. We propose a change in the way the President is elected and serves on the Board. The President now serves on the Board for two years: one year as President, one as past-President. At a hearing of past presidents, it was acknowledged that the board position of past president was useless and the incumbent seldom attended Board meetings. We propose to abolish this board position. We also propose that the Vice President be the President elect. Thus, the President must still make a two year committment, but one year of that will be prior to the presidency rather than after it.

FAREWELL PARTY FOR GAIL OSTLER

Come say goodbye to Gail Ostler on April 5 at 8 p.m. at the Haglunds. Please bring snacks and beverages.

Gail Ostler needs strong people to help move on March 22. \$20 will be donated to Pro-Seeds for each available. If you can help please call Gail, 241-7105.

Welcome new member Pat Meller who just signed the membership book this month.

February 25, 1986

Dear Prairie:

My family and I would like to express our gratitude for the kindness and friendship of our father's second family in Madison. It was a huge comfort to know that the distance between our father and us was tempered by the many good friends he had in the Unitarian community in Madison.

As you know, our father was an ardent Unitarian and I believe he found in Madison a kindred spirit he knew he would not easily find elsewhere. I gather that one of his last conversations voiced support for the many good Unitarian songs that exist. For the service my brother Tom suggested one of the songs we used to sing in the fellowship in the Soo. The lyrics of another song have kept recurring to me since then, and I'd like to share them with you - both in support of my father's thesis and because I believe they express something of how he felt about living within the Unitarian community in Madison.

Tis a gift to be simple,
Tis a gift to be free,
Tis a gift to come down where you want to be.

And when you find yourself in the place
just right,
It will be in the valley of love and
delight.

(I think this is an old Quaker song. The lyrics of which I may have muddled up during the 20 years since we learned it.)

We thank you all for helping to make our father's life fulfilling and for the many kindnesses shown to us.

With appreciation and kinship,
Ann Lyons for the Lyons family

Dear Rick and Other Prairie Members:

I was very sorry to learn that Les had died. I appreciate your calling me to let me know.

I am enclosing a check - please consider it a donation to Prairie in Les's name.

I'd like to come up for a service. However, I am in the middle of teaching Sunday School (Holidays and Holy Days) at the Unitarian Church here. It's a fun curriculum, although it takes some time and energy.

Perhaps, I'll make it in the summer. I hope all is well at Prairie.

Sincerely, Cathy Cole

R.E. TEACHERS

The R.E. committee is already looking for teachers and youth leaders for the 86-87 school year. Teachers average 2½ Sundays per month with the kids. They work hard but have fun as well. If you would be interested in working with kids, kindergarten through 10th grade, talk with any R.E. committee member: Robbyne Martin, 251-4630; Allison McKee, 273-2307; Aileen Nettleton, 238-6053; Mary Beth O'Halloran, 271-8218 (Prairie phone); Sharon Scrattish, 437-5915; Andrea Torres, 273-8659.

PRE-SCHOOL CO-ORDINATOR

Prairie Society has a paid position for a pre-school coordinator from 9:30 to 11:45 or 12:00 each Sunday, for \$12.00 per Sunday. We are looking for someone who (1) Loves little children, (2) knows and has experience with children's needs and learning style, (3) understands and can share the values on which Prairie's R.E. program is based. If you or someone you know is interested in this position, please contact Mary Beth O'Halloran by leaving a message on the Prairie phone (271-8218) or Robbyne Martin(251-4630).

LETTER WRITING AND POTLUCK

Members of the Social Action committee and others have been making phone calls this week inviting Prairie people to participate in a letter-writing session asking our Congressional representatives to withhold further funding of the Contras in Nicaragua. The session will be held on Friday, March 14, at 7:30 p.m., following a pot at 6:30.

Tentative plans have been made for the Ethnic Connections to play during the evening.

Volunteer Braillists will again be offering a six-month course for the sighted, teaching the transcription of print into Braille. A refresher course is also planned. We urge you to consider this worth-while community service for the blind. If interested, please phone Gail Yu at our VBI office, 231-1966 (9 a.m. to noon), or Dolores Schwenn, 833-8226.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE TO CO-SPONSOR
PLEDGE OF RESISTANCE MEETING

Prairie will be the scene of a meeting of the Pledge of Resistance Sunday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m. The meeting, primarily for signers of the Pledge of Resistance, is open to all who are interested in the movement. John Bernard will speak and give a slide show from his visit to Nicaragua last May as a representative of Witness for Peace. After the slide show, we'll discuss ways we can act to stop Congress from giving money to the Contras.

The Pledge of Resistance is an organization formed to resist invasion of Nicaragua by the United States government. Pledge members are people who have signed a pledge to take some non-violent action in the event of such an invasion, ranging from non-violent civil disobedience, to writing and calling legislators, to participation in ecumenical prayer services.

Within the time since the Pledge's formation over 1½ years ago, we have become aware that the U.S. government is not likely to directly invade Nicaragua, since such a move would be extremely unpopular both at home and abroad. But the administration has developed a policy of continual military, economic, and political harassment, to try to overthrow its government "from within." The Pledge feels a need to respond to this ongoing harassment with ongoing resistance. Both the local and national Pledge steering committees have asked Pledge signers to "settle in for the long haul," and if you join as a new member, the pledge you sign will have a slightly different wording than the original, reflecting the need for a long-term commitment.

Although the official U.S. policy of harassment is not working well in the sense of creating opposition among the Nicaraguan people to their government, it is causing enormous pain to the people there. They are

subject to attacks by an armed force of 15,000 or so mercenaries, known as the Contras. A Wall Street Journal from March 5, 1985 describes how the CIA organized the Contras shortly after the present U.S. administration took office. According to this article, the Contras have been recruited, paid, trained, and led by the CIA in their attacks upon Nicaraguans.

Contra attacks have included destruction of schools, clinics, factories, and grain storage facilities, and the murders of thousands of civilians. Since 1981 the Contras have killed over 200 Nicaraguan children under the age of 12, and have orphaned well over 6,000. (The country's total population is around 3.5 million.) In order to destabilize the country, the Contras have attacked the economic structures--they have attacked thousands of civilians doing their daily work. They have bombed tractors and murdered farmers working in the fields. They have kidnapped and killed doctors, nurses, teachers, and literacy workers.

We will be glad to have you attend the meeting on the 16th if you can make it. Whether or not you attend, please call and write Senators Kasten and Proxmire and Congressman Kastenmeier immediately to object to Contra funding.

The Senate will vote on this issue on March 19; the house not after. Senator Kasten has been a long-time supporter of Contra funding, but has shown signs of wavering because of pressure from constituents, especially those in the Pledge. Your call or letter might be the straw needed to break the back of this coldly calculated policy of support for these terrorist mercenaries. And your Congressional Representative also needs to know of your opposition. It will help him make a decision when the vote comes up.

For more information, call the Pledge Hotline, 241-4912. --Lucy Ebisch