

# Prairie Fire

newsletter of

PRAIRIE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY  
2010 Whenona Drive Madison, Wisconsin 53711

... As the prairie stretches out to the horizon, 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

Prairie Smoke (Sieversia flora)

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
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Volume 25, Number 10 - May 19, 1987

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE WILL  
BE SUNDAY, MAY 31ST. SUBMIT NOTICES FOR  
THE PERIOD JUNE 5TH - JUNE 18TH.

## CALENDAR

### Sunday, May 24

PRAIRIE CANOE TRIP - No Service at the  
Meeting House.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED MAPS FOR DETAILS

### Friday, May 29

6:00 PM - PRAIRIE PLAYREADERS annual  
fish fry and playreading.  
SEE ARTICLE BELOW--

### Sunday, May 31

9:00 AM - BREAKFAST POTLUCK  
10:00 AM - "Time Marches On" - Inter-  
generational Service.  
11:30 AM - THE PLAN FOR PRAIRIE: by the  
Long Range Planning Committee  
and Architect Ed Solner.  
4:30 PM - Vespers Service, at Prairie.  
Bring a candle & holder.  
Child care provided. Finger  
food meal afterward.

### Monday, June 1

7:30 PM - Prairie Board Meeting  
at Prairie.

## Breakfast Potluck

There will be a breakfast potluck meal  
before the service on Sunday, May 31st.  
Come at 9:00 AM with your favorite dish  
to share.

## Time Marches On

At the intergenerational service on May  
31st, we will look at Prairie's ups and  
downs, recognize the people (including  
the children) who have especially  
contributed to good times at Prairie  
this year, and acknowledge the gifts of  
time and energy of all our volunteers.

## King Holiday Passed!

Recently about 50 Prairie members and  
friends signed a petition to the Madison  
School Board in support of a Martin  
Luther King Holiday for all students,  
staff, and employees. The holiday is  
now a reality!

When the District and the teachers  
couldn't agree on a holiday for employ-  
ees, the Board decided to give the  
students the day off by moving a Teacher  
Inservice Day from February 3rd to  
February 18th, 1988. This means that  
teachers will still go to work. The  
teachers and the Board could not agree  
to add an additional teaching day to the  
school contract year in order to comply  
with the State Law that requires at  
least 180 student/teacher contact days  
each year. THANKS TO ALL WHO SIGNED THE  
PETITION AT PRAIRIE!

## Attention New Board Members

There will be a Board Meeting on June 1  
at 7:30 PM at Prairie. Please remember  
to read our By-laws pertaining to the  
duties of the Board and of your own  
position on the Board.

## Update on Playreaders Fish Fry

All are welcome at the Playreaders' annual fish fry and playreading on Friday, May 29th, at 6 PM. As promised in the last Prairie Fire, we now have the name of the restaurant and a list of the possible plays for that night.

Fish Fry Location - Francie's, 2424 University Ave., across from Lombardino's. They offer cod, broiled, baked, or deep fried, all you can eat.

The Play - As mentioned, we usually try to read a somewhat shorter play when we eat out so that our evening doesn't run too late and there's plenty of time to socialize. Depending on size and preferences of those attending, we'll read either Hare's "A Map of the World"; Feiffer's "The White House Murder Case"; Tolan's "A Weekend Near Madison"; or Norfolk's "The Lights are Warm and Coloured".

Playreading Location - Rosemary Dorney's, 4205 Odana Road. You may attend either the meal or the playreading, or both. Of critical importance, if you are attending the fish fry, is that you CALL ROSEMARY, 238-4382, BY TUESDAY MAY 26TH, SO THAT SHE CAN RESERVE SPACE FOR US AT FRANCIE'S. It's much more fun if we can all be seated together and if we don't have to wait to be seated.

If you plan to attend only the playreading and dessert at Rosemary's, we expect to be back there about 7:45. If you're hesitant (and don't want to risk waiting on the doorstep), just call before you leave home.

-Rosemary Dorney

## Room Wanted for Summer

Sixtyish Federal Civil Servant coming to the South Asia Department at the U. W. for the Summer desires a room/bath, furnished from June 6th to August 16th. Contact Mary Mullen, 271-5192, if you'd like to rent to this Unitarian from Baltimore.

## Remeika Appointed

Fran Remeika was recently appointed to the Fitchburg Recycling Committee. Anyone who knows Fran knows that it would be hard to find another person as committed to recycling as she is.

## R. E. Corner

On May 24 and May 31, there will be no R. E. Classes. On the 24th, Prairie will have its annual canoe trip. On the 31st, Prairie will have recognition Sunday. All of the children are encouraged to attend with their families. On this Sunday, we have a chance to honor all of the people who have helped in the R. E. program during the year. We will also honor the eighth graders who have completed their R. E. classes at Prairie. It will be an exciting morning, so plan to be there for one last R. E. get-together before summer starts.

## Note to Parents

On May 31st, the Long Range Planning Committee will be holding a meeting following the service to present and discuss the architect's plan for remodeling Prairie. Parents wishing to stay for this important meeting may want to pack a lunch for their children. Depending on the number of children staying for the meeting, we may need a parent volunteer to help supervise the children. A picnic at the park may be the perfect way to spend the time if the weather is good.

## Social Action Notes

### Support the Drop In Shelter

There are several ways you can now aide the homeless of Madison. First, you can be a Prairie volunteer at the shelter on the fourth Monday of each month (evening or morning shift). Please call Lance Green, 249-5979, to sign up. We still need people for next Monday, May 25.

Second, the Madison Urban Ministry will soon be operating two "transitional houses" where five men and four families will receive affordable housing while securing employment and a permanent residence. These homes have been purchased, but much furniture is needed, of all types. Also, additional funds are needed to supplement the mortgage loan from the Madison Community Development Block Grant Program. Please call Jillian, 255-2690, in the mornings if you can help these efforts.

## Travellers Guide

The book Homecomings Bed & Breakfast Travel Directory for 1987 is now available. Stay with U.U. hosts waiting to welcome you! The price for new orders is \$9.95 and for renewal orders is \$7.95. Order your copy from: Homecomings, P.O. Box 1545 New Milford, CT 06776

and large flocks of coots are often seen here during the spring and fall migrations.

Pleasant lakeshore homes dominate the scenery along Buffalo Lake. The westerly breezes that prevail across the lake are a real boon to tired paddlers, who may wish there still were steamboats on which to hitch a ride. In the mid 1800's, people recognized that if the Fox could be made navigable along its entire length, the river could become Wisconsin's gateway to the world. An elaborate improvement scheme called for a canal at Portage, dredging on the upper Fox, and a series of locks along the river. When the project finally was completed in 1856, it set off a burst of celebration and commerce. The great expectations never were fully realized, but between 1850 and 1900, steamboats reigned supreme all along the Fox.

The steamers that plied Buffalo Lake in those days weren't known for their size, speed, or looks. Described as "a cross between a mud scow and a pile driver," they averaged between 25 and 40 yards long and drew 3 to 6 feet of water, and their top speed was just a hair over 10 miles an hour. In all, about 250 steamboats served the towns of the Fox River valley until the last one burned in 1922.

Take out at the public boat landing on the left shore at Montello. If continuing downstream, a "pull-over" trolley at the dam makes for an easy portage. Montello has been a quarrying town since 1879, and when red granite was designated Wisconsin's state rock in 1971, residents were particularly proud. The deposit of deep mahogany granite on Montello's main street is the hardest in the world — the 186,000-pound pressure required to crack a 3-inch cube has never been equalled.

### Fox F-3

#### Montello to Marquette (11 miles)

On this trip, the marshy Fox River slowly winds its way eastward through Marquette County. The first 7 miles are river travel; the remaining 4 miles are on extensive Lake Puckaway. The hundreds of acres of wetlands and many sloughs adjoining the river and the shallow, marshy shore of Lake Puckaway make this stretch of the Fox attractive to waterfowl and wading birds of all kinds. The Grand River Wildlife Area just south of the Fox protects important duck and goose habitat in the Grand River Marsh. The river scenery is quite rural and wild, although many cottages and homes are found along the shore of Lake Puckaway. Grand River Dam is not a serious obstacle. It can be lined down with a little care. The trip takes about 5 hours.

Put in at Montello, the county seat of Marquette County. A public boat landing is located just off Water Street, a short distance east of Highway 22. Farm woodlots, pastures, and wetlands make up the riverside scenery for the first few miles.

Grand River Lock and Dam was built as part of the Fox River improvement plan in the 1850's. A portage is not necessary here if you approach the dam carefully, land on the right bank, and line your canoe over the dam. The popular fishing hole just below the dam usually is occupied by hopeful anglers. The Grand River enters on the right bank 1½ miles below the dam. This stream is canoeable for several miles upstream.

Shallow Lake Puckaway has an area of 5,433 acres but a depth of only 5 feet! Though excellent waterfowl habitat today, the upper Fox was teeming with ducks and geese before the turn of the century. Market hunting flourished. Spring as well as fall hunting was legal, live decoys were permitted, and deadly punt guns firing shells loaded with everything from scrap metal to old nails brought down 100 birds at a single shot. Simultaneously, affluent private hunting clubs bought or leased vast tracts of waterfowl habitat and operated exclusive shooting preserves. One of the oldest and most celebrated of these groups was the Caw-Caw Club, whose headquarters were at Marquette on Lake Puckaway. Its members killed 3,000 ducks in 1866, their first year of operation.

The village of Marquette, with a population of only 162, is found 4 miles down the lake along the right shore. Take out here at any of 4 public boat landings. Marquette is the site of a handsome cobblestone house with 3-story columns across the front. Built around 1850 by a former sea captain, the house originally had a circular ship's staircase, and the rooms were arranged like staterooms. Later the building was owned by the Caw-Caw Club. Members could survey their hunting grounds from porches on the second and third stories.

### Fox F-4

#### Marquette to Princeton (15½ miles)

In this stretch, the historic Fox River heads north through Green Lake County. A short portage is necessary at the Princeton dam. Marsh sedges and grasses dominate the scenery, along with an occasional riverside cottage. A large variety of waterfowl and shorebirds can be seen along the marshy banks. In the autumn months, waterfowl hunting is very popular along this stretch of the Fox. Northern pike, walleye, bass, panfish, and catfish await the fisherman's offers. Many privately managed campgrounds are located along this portion of the river, offering facilities for campers. Allow 6-7 hours for the trip.

Put in at Marquette, located on the south shore of Lake Puckaway. No less than 4 boat launching ramps are found within the village. Paddle northeast to the outlet of this natural lake.

The Fox is wide and marshy here, but it gradually narrows as it flows into a giant oxbow bend. The Mecan River, a clean, clear, canoeable stream, empties into the Fox on the left bank at this oxbow.

The Princeton Lock and Dam dates from the 1850's. A public boat landing is found on the left bank, just above the dam. A short portage on the left bank around the old lock is necessary. Some parties take out here rather than complete the portage. Even before river improvements were made, steamboats could travel upstream on the Fox as far as Princeton. The lock and dam here allowed river traffic to proceed further upstream. On weekdays, the steamboats carried such things as coal, cattle, potatoes, and marsh grass for the rug factory at Oshkosh. On weekends, they were scrubbed down for gay excursions.

Highway 73 spans the river at Princeton, an old town with many attractive buildings from the early days. Take

out at the city park on the right bank a short distance downstream from the Highway 73 bridge. Princeton figures in one of the more delightful steamboating tales. Captain Robert Booth was determined to reach town in his *Lone Star* despite darkness and high water. Sensing that the boat had left the channel, Booth cut the engine and heard a farmer angrily shout, "What do you think you're doing in my pasture?"

"Why in hell didn't you keep your gate shut?" Booth yelled back indignantly. But he persuaded the farmer to guide the *Lone Star* back to the Fox, and the steamboat reached Princeton safely.



