

Dear Members and Friends,

October 3, 2007

Ah, early Autumn: A little more water in the basement and a little more color in the leaves. I hope you're spared the former and can continue to enjoy the latter. Perhaps we'll have a slow, gentle turn this month. (As I recall, last year a cold, wet, windy stretch took down all but the oak leaves in a matter of a few days.) Last Sunday's canoe trip, as reported by Eleanor Chiquoine, featured a glorious day and a contrary wind. I used a phrase in last week's newsletter – something about paddling “downriver, of course”. Well, I hear there was a lot of paddling but not a lot of “downriver”! But great fun was had by all – especially after a 180 degree turn and a backwind!

This Sunday's Spiritual Reflection Hour

Mike Irwin will lead the roundtable discussion on the topic of “The Poems Within Us.” Although Mike is an accomplished poet and performer – and well worth a day or two of your time – everyone will have a chance to share the beauty within. Just listening in is fine, too!

Philosophy Class is Gaining Steam

We've had sixteen people express interest so far, but we'd like to hear from more of you regarding Andrew Kerr's offer to convene a series of Philosophy classes at Park Hall within the next few months. We want to keep it affordable, of course, but we also want to make it attractive to Andrew, who will be commuting from near Dodgeville. We have the option of beginning in mid-November or waiting until the New Year, and we're thinking about six or eight or even ten sessions. Interested? Please let Michael know – just hit “Reply” if you're receiving this via email – as soon as possible.

Volunteers Needed for “Operation Clean Sweep” – this Friday and Saturday!

Do you have hazardous wastes piled in the dusty corners of your garage, shed, or basement? Farmers and homeowners who have unused and unwanted chemicals can dispose of them in an environmentally safe manner through the “Clean Sweep” program. But you can not only dispose, you can help out! The word is that the program is short of volunteers to help out with intake and traffic control. The hours are Friday, October 5, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, October 6, from 8:00 a.m. to noon. The location is the Sauk County Landfill, E8795B Evergreen Lane (between Baraboo and Reedsburg off Hwy. 33).

If you can contribute even a couple of hours, please **contact Joe Van Burkel at the Land Conservation Department at 355-3245** as soon as possible. Let them know you're with the Free Congregation of Sauk County – the congregation that not only cares, but does!

Alfred Clas, Park Hall Architect: Free Lecture, October 10th, at Park Hall

One of the great architectural firms to have designed in the Midwest, the firm of Ferry and Clas, will be explored through this slide presentation and lecture by historian John Eastberg. Partner Alfred Clas was a native of Sauk County, having been born in Sauk City in 1859. Rare photographs and color slides of their original architectural renderings will be included. Ferry and Clas designed Park Hall, the Sauk County Courthouse, the Charles Ringling Mansion, the Captain Frederick Pabst Mansion, the State Historical Society Building, the Milwaukee Public Library, and more than 350 other buildings statewide over the course of a 23 year partnership. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. This presentation is sponsored by the Sauk County Arts, Humanities, and Historic Preservation Committee and the Wisconsin Humanities Council Speakers Bureau.

Historian **John Eastberg** earned his MA from Marquette University in nineteenth-century American history with an emphasis in the Gilded Age. Eastberg has been the historian for the Pabst Mansion in Milwaukee for over 12 years.

Special Retreat Offered November 2-4: “Ethics in the Natural Landscape”

Please see the enclosed (or attached) description of this almost two-day retreat offered by Jim and Margaret Drescher of Windhorse Farm (Nova Scotia), a 167-year experiment in land stewardship and a demonstration site for sane alternatives in forestry, agriculture, energy generation, and community development. FCSC members Fred Clark, Gigi La Budde, and Michael Whaley have all participated in retreats led by Jim... and highly recommend them! (But do read the description, as these retreats are not for everybody.) Places are limited, so call now. *(Please see the attachment.)*

New Monthly Feature: Book Recommendations

If you've read a book that you just have to recommend to your fellow Free Congregation friends and members, you can do it in this spot (the newsletter the week before the 1st Sunday). Please send them to Michael and keep your “pitch” as succinct as possible. But do include title, author, and publisher, for those of us who still use libraries!

Sally Ryan recommends:

Doubt: A History by *Jennifer Michael Hecht* (HarperOne, 2004). “This is a history of great doubters from Socrates to Emily Dickinson. It reveals how doubt has been a driving force in the intellectual and religious history of the world.”

Beyond Religion by *David N. Elkins* (Quest Books, Quest Ed Edition, 1998). “The author is a minister who became a humanist psychologist. He presents a personal program for building a spiritual life outside the walls of traditional religion.”

Thanks, Sally!

Upcoming Programs and Events

Wednesday, October 10, 7:00pm – *The Architectural Firm of Ferry and Clas*: a free lecture and slideshow at Park Hall. Alfred Clas was the designer of Park Hall. (*Informational flyer attached.*)

Thursday, October 11, 6:30pm – FCSC Board Meeting at Park Hall.

Sunday, October 14, 10:00am – Unitarian Universalist Service (and RE for Youth, Childcare). We're hoping to hear from several members of the Build Your Own Theology II class that met last winter and spring with Rev. Jody Whelden. Look for details in next week's newsletter.

Sunday, October 21, 10:00am – Special 3rd Sunday Field Trip to the new Aldo Leopold Legacy Center, led by Leopold biographer and FCSC member Curt Meine. Please check the next two newsletters for more information about the logistics of this outing. It's possible that a tour of the Leopold Shack will be available prior to the Legacy Center visit.

Sunday, October 21, 3:00-7:00pm – “**Some Enchanted Evening: From the Farm to the Table**”. FCSC member Curt Meine will be among the panelists at this event, part of the *Re-enchantment of Agriculture* series, the purpose of which is to renew and reinforce the connections between culture and agriculture. Also: performances and potluck. At Park Hall. Stay tuned for more!

Sunday, October 28, 10:00am – **155th Annual Founder's Day (Stiftungsfest) Celebration and Potluck**. Our guest speaker will be Anke Ortlepp, Acting Director of the German Historical Institute in Washington D.C. Dr. Ortlepp is the author, most recently, of *Auf Denn, Ihre Schwestern: Deutschamerikanische Frauenvereine in Milwaukee Wisconsin, 1844-1914*, which examines how German-American women in Milwaukee built their own organizations to move beyond the gender roles that had restricted them, realize their potential as social agents, and make an important contribution to their ethnic community. Free Congregation historical materials have figured prominently in Dr. Ortlepp's scholarly research.