

Coffeehouse Remembered

A Play by the Senior High Sunday School Class
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh

Friday, June 12, 1987, 7:30 p.m.

Act 1. Civil Rights by Kate Matteson
1967 . . . 1987

Songs of the Sixties Bett Padgett

Act 2. Feminism by Cathi Swanson
1972 . . . 1977 . . . 1987

Songs of the Seventies Bett Padgett

Act 3. Anti-War by Bill Finger
1971 . . .

Oral History of Draft with Chuck Eppinette
Resistance in Raleigh by Senior High Class

Songs from a Coffeehouse Bett Padgett

Coffeehouse Remembered Coffeehouse Patrons

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Coffee, iced tea, and snacks will be served throughout the play, in coffeehouse style. You may help yourself to spirits at the kitchen bar for a small fee -- during singing please.

Cast of Characters

Coffeehouse Master of Ceremonies -- Julie Matteson

Act 1. Civil Rights

1967: Mark -- Carl Weaver Waitress -- Kate Matteson
Anna -- Jennifer Hunt John -- Bill Payne
Woman -- Julie Matteson

1987: Two women -- Jennifer Hunt and Leslie McClintock
Paul -- Carl Weaver Brad -- Bill Payne
George -- Spencer Bruce Waitress -- Kate Matteson

Act 2. Feminism (all three scenes)

Gina -- Cathi Swanson Nancy -- Kate Matteson
Jane -- Julie Matteson Man -- Spencer Bruce

Act 3. Anti-War

Lawyer -- Bill Payne Mother -- Leslie McClintock
Father -- Carl Weaver Jeff -- Spencer Bruce

Special Thanks

Bett Padgett music
Chuck Eppinette. oral history

Will Padgett and Chris Smith lights
Kate Matteson, Grant Jarvela, and Carl Rogers. tickets
Jane Hunt, Diane Hain, and senior highs. refreshments
Junior high sunday school class. waitresses and waiters
Julie Matteson, Kate Matteson, Karen Matteson,
Cathi Swanson, Jennifer Hunt, Leslie McClintock,
and Lisa Godwin decorations
Arlene Wouters and Bill Finger coordinators

Bill's Working Copy

Get Cathy's
Femin

"Coffeehouses Remembered"

by the Senior High Sunday School Class
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh

(When people arrive, they see an obvious symbol of the 1960s on the outside of the front door, maybe a giant peace sign. Someone takes up admission, welcoming them to a Coffeehouse Remembered, gives them a program, and invites them to find a place with friends, and wait for a waitress to come to their table. Songs on tape before the play cover the basics -- Peter, Paul & Mary, Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Arlo Guthrie, Joan Baez, etc. At about 7:25, the waitresses and waiters ask for last order before play begins and the lights begin to dim. At 7:35 -- or when people are quiet and seated, the house goes dark.

(Emcee enters from back with spot light on her/him -- maybe one of the waitresses/waiters -- and mingles with customers as s/he walks slowly to the front. Gets a mike (?) off a podium in the corner and walks across the stage, like a standup talk show host.)

Emcee: Welcome to our Coffeehouse Remembered. As you may know, this is the only coffeehouse in North Carolina that has been in continuous operation since 1960. We've had protest musicians and pop groups come through here, singing the lyrics of everybody from Bob Dylan and Joan Baez to Joe Cocker and Doc Watson. And we've heard people read poetry, talk late into the night about the issues of the day.

Tonight, we plan a special ^{25th} anniversary show for you -- revisiting some of those evenings that you might remember. We hope that you -- our loyal patrons -- will learn as much from the ^{se} memories we trigger as we have learned in our work to recreate a time that came before us.

change wording

(spot light has been following emcee -- no house lights. S/he has been motioning to posters of musicians/campaigns/social protests/etc. scattered about the wall. Spotlight leaves emcee, who exits stage right or left. Spot moves to Cindy, the waitress in next act, at the kitchen. Cindy carries tray with salt, etc. to set the table through the audience, humming or chatting to herself.)

Act One Begins -- Civil Rights

pick up with Kate's script here

There are two round tables surrounded with chairs. Tablecloths and unlit candles sit atop each table. In the rear of the stage is a stool and a guitar. 60's posters hang on the walls. Waitresses in 60's attire begin serving the audience. One waitress (Cindy) walks to stage area, puts salt, pepper, flowers etc. on tables and lights candles. As she is sweeping the floor 3 teenage kids enter stage left; Anna, John and Mark. (note: the characters have southern accents)

Carl
Mark: (as they walk towards a table) I still think you are all wrong about the whole situation. 7

(they all take seats at a table)

Jennifer
Anna: Give it up Mark, you know our school was wrong to be lettin' in them niggers. (Cindy puts up broom and walks towards table)

Kate
Cindy: hey Mark, John, Anna. you kids want something?

Mark: (in an unpleasant tone) No thanks, I'm not hungry.

Cindy: What's the matter?

Bill
John: He's just touchy cause he knows he's wrong.

Mark: I am not! There wasn't anything wrong with them letting those 6 negroes in our schools.

Anna: Nothin' except they have thier own schools, they don't need to spoil ours. Next thing they'll be in our swimming pools and neighborhoods. It'd suit me just as well if they left town.

Mark: You're crazy. Don't you realize they're people too?

John: Don't you realize I'm thirsty and I can't order with you all bickering like that. Cindy, I think I'll have a grape soda.

Cindy: well if no one else wants to order I think I'll be off.

Anna: No, go ahead. (Cindy exits right) Mark I don't know how you can possibly support those niggers coming into our school.

John: She's right., Negroes and whites belong seperate.

Anna: I think my momma's gonna let me stay out of school until this mess rolls over.

Mark: It,s not going to end. this is only the start in a long line of changes. (Cindy enters right with grape soda and walks towards the table.)

John: you turning into some kinda civil rights freak. John
Cindy:(puts drink in front of John) You kids still arguing? Cindy

John: Yeah, Mark is still being impossible.

Cindy: Well I dont know that I should get into this, but Mark they really are right.(Cindy exits stage right)

Mark: I just can't believe you all.(they all quiet dwn, John sips his soda. A moment later a black woman enters stage left and sits down.)

Anna: Oh my god, now they're in here. Pause

Mark:I really can't believe you.(Cindy enters stage right and walks towards woman.)

Cindy: can I help you.....(they discuss her order in muffled voice)

Anna : She's not even gonna kick her out.(Cindy finishes order and walks to Mark's table.)

Cindy : You all need anything else?

Anna: How come you served her?

Cindy: I had to, the Manager has been telling us we have to serve everyone, you know how this civil rights stuff is getting?

John: (digs down in his pocket and pulls out change giving it to Cindy) Here's for the soda.

Cindy:thanks(takes change and exits right)

Anna: I think we should go, John.

Mark: Imagine having to breathe the same air...

John: Oh Shut up Mark. you can stay if you like, but we're leaving.(John and Anna exit stage left)

The lights dim and remaining characters exit the stage. Singer (possibly) enters and sings a song dealing with racial equality. If possible we see a speaker talk about what they remember from that time.The lights once again dim in order to set up for ~~act 2~~ scene 2.

Gettin

Scene 2

Come in
as waitress

The stage is the same as in previous act except the posters are updated .
Two men are sitting at the table to the left. Both have half full drinks on the
table in front of them.

Spencer
#1: It's really amazing, you think the world's really changed but people are
still the same. It's hard to believe that in this day and age a civil rights
march would be so violently raided.

Jennifer
#2: Yeah, I know, but the world really has changed, we can be glad of that.
Most people do accept black people.

#1: Like if someone even utters the word "nigger" nowadays, you know they're
going to hear about it. I'm sure glad that day has come. (waitress in 80's
attire enters stage right and approaches table.)

KATE
Waitress: Will that be all?

#1 : Yes. (Waitress hands him a check, he pays her. Both men exit stage left.
As they leave Three teenage guys enter, Paul, George, and Brad. They sit down
at the table to the right.)

Waitress: (approaching them) Would you like something?

Carl
Paul: A coke
Bill Spencer
George: same here

Spencer Bill
Brad: make it three

Waitress: ok (exits stage right)

George: so, Paul, are you asking anyone to the prom?

Paul: Me and Lisa are going.

Brad: What about you, George? are you going with Ellen.

George: I suppose so, she'd probably be a bit perturbed if I asked someone
else. Why, did you want to ask her (facetiously)

Brad: Of course not. But I don't know who to ask.

George: How about Caroline? or Andrea?

Brad: Are you kidding? they'd never go with me.

Paul: Probably not, they are a bit snobby. But you could ask, say Melanie.

George: Reject from a dog factory.

Brad: Yeah I could do better than that but I don't know who. (as he is speaking the waitress enters right with three drinks and sets them on the table.)

Waitress: That'll be 59 cents each. (they each give her change. she exits right.)

Paul: Hey, I know who's really pretty that you could ask; Lisa.

Brad: don't be stupid, you're going with her.

Paul: Not that Lisa, you know, the one in our History class.

George: Wake up Paul, she's Black.

Paul: So? are you prejudiced or something.

George: No, but, well...

Brad: Well, Blacks are ok but going out with one? thats a lot different.

Paul: What's different, You talk to her during class, she's pretty, smart, nice, and all that jazz right?

Brad: Right, but talking to someone during class and going out with them is not the same, and going out with a black girl, well, that just wouldn't seem right.

Paul: don't be ridic...

George: (Interupting) I've got it, you can ask Anne!

Brad: Yeah! She'd be perfect.

Paul: C'mon, you know she's not as pretty as Lisa.

Brad: She's also not black.

Paul: Suit yourself, but you're missing out.

George: (ignoring Paul) hey, that would be perfect, if we all go we can.....(the lights dim and the talking fades out. a song, like "People are People" by Depeche Mode plays in the backround as the characters exit)

- 4 -

Act 2 - Feminism - Add

(Not here

⊖

10/22

Bill Finger

Act 3

-1-

change to
coffeehouse

~~Scene 3~~ -- Anti-Vietnam War -- spring 1971

(Feminism skit concludes with house lights fading to black stage and house. 20-second silence in black house, let impact of scene sink in. Music starts quietly, growing louder as lights gradually come on. Maybe Janis Joplin, Holly Near, etc. a transition from feminism to war. Waitresses and waiters begin circulating serving coffee -- mood should remain somber. Up front, stage is being altered for anti-Vietnam War scene. Can probably use the same living room scene -- chairs, etc.)

(Might have Bett sing an anti-Vietnam War song next or go straight into the scene after coffee is served. Depends on sequence of entire play.)

While coffee is served, mother, father and son (Jeff) take places in living room scene. Father has on 1971 business suit, wide tie, wing tips. Mother has gray hair, in a bun, dissheveled, as if she's been pulling at it for a while during a long family conversation. Son has on blue jeans, longish hair, is fairly neat looking but has a peace medallion of some sort.

(Lights dim after waitresses/waiters clear the house and return to kitchen. Music fades out. House goes black. Wait for total quiet. Then lights come on bright and dialogue begins immediately.)

FIRST SCENE: JEFF & Rodney at coffee house

Jeff: But Dad, I know that you served your country -- and I want to serve mine. We've been over this a thousand times. (Jeff is losing his patience. Starts to pace the living room floor.)

2
lines
Cas
practice

Father: I know that this war is different. If you had come here with this wild idea two years ^{ago} I wouldn't have even talked about it. But I've changed my mind about this war. It's not just a handful of peaceniks anymore. I know that. But still, turning in your draft card -- that's breaking the law. You can't --

Jeff: But I've got to make some kind of positive statement. Don't you see. I can't just ignore what my friends are going through -- what this country's going through. It's the only way that. . . (Silence falls. Parents look exhausted.) Remember Buck, who played on the basketball team.

Father: Of course I remember Buck. We could never get him to go home. You two would've played one-on-one all night.

Jeff: Buck's number came up and he had to report -- just a couple of months ago. They're shipping him off to Nam next week. He'll end up in the jungles, riding in an open helicopter. . . . You've seen what it's like on the news, haven't you?

Mother: Oh no, not Buck. I always thought he needed someone to give him some direction. Basketball was all that really excited

-10-

FAR
Stage
LEFT

that boy. What happened to him after high school?

Jeff: Oh, he knocked around here in Raleigh, working construction, got on with a good crew. He managed to stay out of the draft for a couple of years, missing a physical, had a fairly high number in the lottery. But no college deferment. More school never really interested him, even to stay out of the war. Now he's going.

Mother: But why can't you just stay in college? Surely, with all those teachers at Amherst, someone can help you figure out a way to stay in school. I don't want you to go too.

Pause

Jeff: Well, the draft card is just part of it. (There's a silence. Jeff takes a deep breath, getting ready to break the news.) I'm not going back for the spring semester. I'm staying here to help start a draft counseling center. And that way, I can . . .

Father: Wait, wait just a minute. Let's go over that again. You haven't told us anything about this. We haven't heard anything from Amherst. What's the - - -

Jeff: I just mailed a letter to Amherst today. They don't even know yet. And I'm telling you now.

Mother: But you're nearly half way through, you . . . this is terrible. (She begins to tear up, rubs her eyes but retains her composure.) No, no it isn't terrible. If this is what you want, I for one am behind you . . . I . . . we need somebody in Raleigh helping out these kids getting out of high school. But Jeff, you're only 20. Whose going to help you? And what about your draft card? There are so many questions. I want to believe in what you're doing, but . . .

Jeff: Thanks, Mom. I really need your support. Frankly, I'm pretty nervous about the whole thing. Yes, I know, there are lots of questions and I don't have all the answers. I just know what I've got to do.

Father: Just slow down a minute here. There's lots of ways you can be true to your principles without going out and getting yourself arrested. (he lets the word hang on Jeff and the audience) That's right -- arrested. You can't just go and turn in your draft card and expect to go down to your draft counseling center and business as usual. There's a law that says . . .

Jeff: Up in Massachusetts, hundreds of guys are turning in their draft cards now. We're trying to get the numbers up high enough to clog up the draft board records. That's one way I can help end this way. Mom, you know what I'm talking about. You went to Washington for the march last year, after Kent State.

Father: But Raleigh isn't Boston, Jeff. We don't have hundreds

of draft card burners on the Capitol steps here like they do on their Boston Commons. The liberal community here is finally coming out strongly against the war -- but with lawful protests, marches, education programs. You can't go around defying the law, you have to take your options. What about being a conscientious objector?

Jeff: I've thought about that a lot, Dad. The draft counseling center in Amherst has all the literature, explaining it all. I've tried to go that route but I just don't feel it in my bones. I object to this war -- not to all wars. That seems to be the difference. And anyway, being a C.O. is cooperating with the system -- the draft system that is rounding up the young men of this country, mostly the poor kids and the black kids who can't afford to find a way to stay in college -- it's rounding them up and sending them off to be slaughtered like cattle. What are we doing this for anyway! I've got to do something to help stop this! Amherst, Boston, Massachusetts -- being against the war is almost fashionable there. We need the grassroots of the country to get behind the peace movement. We need people in Raleigh -- across North Carolina. We need - - -

Mother: But why you Jeff. Your father's right. What if you get arrested. You won't be able to build that kind of support. What if you have to go to jail. That won't help anyone. But we can get you a lawyer I suppose.

Jeff: I don't want a high-priced lawyer. There's a legal support group. . . (Doorbell rings.) That must be Rodney now. He's a lawyer traveling around helping set up draft counseling centers. We've got a meeting over at the Unitarian church. I've got to go

- (Scene could go on to:
- a scene at the draft meeting
 - skip to two months later; the son is being arrested, parents reactions, policeman comes and picks him up
 - to TV recollections of Chuck of when he turned in his draft card and was arrested

BREAK
ADD
LINE/
Interrupt
From
Mother
or
Father

(Jeff exits left. Mother and Father flop into chairs, acting reconciled to the fact that their son is going to pursue his interest in the draft counseling center)

Mother: He sounds pretty serious about this, honey. I think the best thing we can do is to be supportive.

Father: I guess you're right. But I wonder where it will all lead . . .

(lights darken -- father moves over and pulls giant peace sign off the rented TV screen. Tech people begin the oral history with Chuck Eppinette, who led peace marches and handed in draft cards in Raleigh. His stories -- on a VCR tape -- last about 10 minutes. TV goes off and spot light picks up emcee walking from the back again, slowly.)

Emcee: "Maybe some of you at our coffeehouse tonight marched with Chuck Eppinette here in Raleigh or even handed in your draft card. Or maybe some of you remember a conversation about integration like we heard tonight. If you have memories of those years that you want to share, we would love to hear them now. Part of this Coffeehouse Remembered is a chance for all of us to know each other better and to know why we are here. This year, the movie "Platoon" won the Oscar for best movie. And journalists went back to Oxford, Mississippi to recall after 25 years their reporting of the Civil Rights Movement. In this year of remembering, we hope you too will ponder our past -- and if you wish -- share some of your reflections with us now.

"While you're thinking, let's have another song from our own Bett Patgett. And let's give her a big hand.

(after song, emcee takes mike around the coffeehouse, hearing from maybe four to six people, -- with spot on that person -- but let the flow go if it goes longer. emcee will have to sense when to end the play.)

TV
Lee