

Prairie UU Society, 2010 Whenona Drive, Madison WI 53711-4843

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PRAIRIE FIRE

"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." (from our Bond of Union)

October 10, 2003

Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. The two most recent issues may be seen at <http://www.prairie.madison.uua.org>

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Saturday, October 11

9:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m. The Earth Charter: Growing the World Community, at MATC Downtown Learning Center (2nd floor), 211 N. Carroll St., Madison. Details inside.

Sunday, October 12

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. "Beginning the Journey of Healing," presented by Amy Owen.
11:30 a.m. Prairie Book Club discusses *Welcome to the World Baby Girl* by Fannie Flagg, at Prairie.

Wednesday, October 15

7:00 p.m. Prairie Board Meeting at Prairie.

Saturday, October 18

3:00–5:00 p.m. Religious Education Volunteer Orientation, at Prairie.

Sunday, October 19

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. "When Good Things Happen to Bad People," presented by Jerry Beuer.
11:30 a.m. Committee Fair will follow service. Pizza will be available.

Next Prairie Fire deadline is Sunday, October 19, 2003

Sunday, October 26

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal.
10:00 a.m. "All Souls' Observance," led by Orange Schroeder. Bring a photo or other remembrance of a person no longer living who is important in your life.
11:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m. Pledge Drive Kickoff Brunch. Details inside.

Saturday, November 1

8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Workshop on Prairie Growth at FUS. All committee members urged to attend.

Sunday, November 2

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal.
10:00 a.m. "Our Homeless Children," presented by Jani Koester.
11:30 a.m. Membership Committee at Prairie.

DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, October 11

Because the Prairie Board voted to make a sponsoring contribution to the Madison Earth Charter Community

Summit outlined below, we will have a table there with our framed Bond of Union and brochures. It is an opportunity to tell prospective new members about Prairie.

Rachel Siegfried's daughter, Maggie (who recently joined us from Hawaii, will be singing during the brown bag lunch hour (starting at 12:15). She performs under the stage name of "Maggie Catfish."

The Ethnic Connection (Doleta Chapru, George and Ruth Calden, and Lee Burkholder) will play at 5 pm.

Prairie members and friends are invited to join us at Madison's First Earth Charter Community Summit. For more info, see www.earthchartersummits.org/locations/madisonwi/ or call Bob Park.

Program Schedule:

9:30–10:00 Registration

10:00–11:00 Opening

11:00–12:00 Round-robin check-in with other cities

Noon–1:00 Brown bag lunch (music: Maggie Catfish)

1:00–1:20 Keynote speaker, Rep. Spencer Black

1:20–4:00 Speakers on the topics: Respect and Care for the Community of Life; Wisconsin Sustainable Futures Network: Ecological Integrity; Social and Economic Justice; and Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace

4:00–5:00 Open space conversations (including Prairie UU Society table)

5:00–6:00 Sustainability Stew Supper and Honoring Wisdom ceremony (music: The Ethnic Connection)

6:00–8:00 Celebration dance and continuation of Open space conversations.

8:00–8:15 Closing ceremony

Sunday, October 12

Beginning the Journey of Healing. This will be the first in a series of three worships exploring the process of forgiveness given by Amy Owen.

How can we use forgiveness to heal hurts in our lives? Forgiveness has been linked to benefits in health, happiness, and human relationships through research at the University of Wisconsin, but it can be difficult to know how to start this journey.

This worship will highlight the first few steps to forgiveness, and address some challenges we might face along the way. We will discuss how we protect ourselves emotionally from the hurt (and how those

might not serve us anymore), how we cope with anger, shame, and other emotions that we might feel as a result of being unjustly hurt, and how our thoughts might prevent us from moving on.

Sunday, October 19

In "When Good Things Happen to Bad People," Jerry Beurer blends seriousness and humor to examine how we can best react when good things happen to people whose negative behavior repulses us. Building on the best seller *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, Beurer offers guidelines for finding lessons in the good fortunes of people who more properly deserve a comeuppance.

Dr. Beurer, a semi-retired sociologist, has taught with Lutherans at Luther College and St. Olaf, Catholics at Marquette University, and sun worshippers at the University of Arizona. He divides his year between the Woodruff-Minocqua area, where he is a member of the Northwoods Unitarian Fellowship, and Wausau, where he attends the Universalist-Unitarian church.

Sunday, October 26

In keeping with the tradition established by Ruth Calden with her programs about the Mexican Day of the Dead celebrations, Orange Schroeder will lead an All Souls' Day program. Everyone is invited to remember someone who has passed away recently or long ago. Please bring a photograph or other remembrance for everyone to see. You will be invited to share it silently, or to say a few words. We will celebrate life and enduring love through candle lighting, song and words in this special annual Prairie program.

Sunday after church, October 26

Put this date on your calendar and plan to stay for coffee, tea, juice, and assorted breakfast breads to kick off the seventh annual Pledge Drive. As you munch and drink, we will present our proposed 2004 budget and the needed pledges to help meet this budget. This is a chance for you to learn the current and long-range goals and financial needs of Prairie UU. Most importantly, bring your checkbook and a pen and make your financial contribution, which is vital to meet these goals. Your giving keeps Prairie UU alive and is needed to

help us grow and change within the Madison community. **Child care will be available.**

Saturday, November 1

Dori Davenport of the Central Midwest District of the UUA will hold a workshop to help Prairie committees select action items that will increase the membership at Prairie. The workshop, at First Unitarian Universalist Society, is 8:30 or 9:00 to 3:30 p.m. All members of Prairie committees are urged to attend.

If you would like to attend but are not on a committee, please talk to a committee chair and arrange to join. (You can learn more about the various committees at a committee fair after the Prairie program on Sunday, October 19.)

We are inviting people from the Sauk City UU group and James Reeb to attend the growth workshop. Details on the time and place will be in the next *Prairie Fire* and through PrairieNews.

Sunday, November 2

Who are the homeless children in Madison and what are our schools doing to help them? The Transition Education Program (TEP) is a program that serves homeless families through advocacy, support and educational services in the Madison school district. Jani Koester has been one of the staff members in this program since 1989. She will join us upstairs to share information about Madison homeless families and the TEP program.

OUR SOCIETY

CIRCLE DINNERS—LAST CALL

Although the deadline for signing up for Circle Dinners was Oct. 5, you can still slip in your names on the signup sheet at Prairie next Sunday or by calling Judy Skog (273-4813) or e-mailing her. This activity goes on for months, so don't miss out! The final makeup of the circles will be announced by the end of the month. **New members**—there is no better way to meet Prairie members. Sign up now!

SEMINOLE SUFFERS CONSTRUCTION

The Seminole Hwy bridge is being worked on and will be closed for part of the next two months. Beware, when you make plans to drive to Prairie!

ATTENTION, PRAIRIE MUSICIANS!

Our program on December 14 will be devoted to the life and music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Musicians of all ages should consider Mozart compositions they might wish to perform. If you need an accompanist, or accompanists, or if you want suggestions of things to perform, contact Warren Hagstrom or Doleta Chapru (238-4970 or warrenolaf@aol.com or dchapru@aol.com).

DISCUSSION GROUP FORMING

"Since death alone is certain and the time of death uncertain, what should I do?"

This is a question posed by Stephen Batchelor in his book, *A Year to Live*, which he offers as an opportunity to resolve our denial of death as well as our denial of life and to heal and revitalize our lives.

I would like to bring together a small group of Prairie members who wish to examine their personal relationships to dying and death. The group will focus on our reflections on the above question and how we would change our lives, our fears of living and dying, extending gratitude and forgiveness, writing a memorial service and an epitaph, and saying good-bye to loved ones.

We will meet approximately every four weeks for either one year or until the beginning of summer at my home during the weekend. Meetings will include checking-in, various exercises and meditations, and discussion. Reading Levine's book is strongly suggested. It is 168 pages long and costs \$10.00.

If you are interested in participating in the group, call 273-3895 or email lindasuzannels@aol.com. I would like to begin meeting October 18th or 19th.

Linda Sheehy

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RE NEEDS YOU!

The Oct. 18 orientation session still on! The RE Committee made a serious plea for help at the Ingathering Service on September 7. As we discussed then, this year the RE Committee is asking every church member to volunteer two hours (or more) sometime during the year to ensure that we offer the best R.E. program. Volunteer activities:

- * Call volunteers
- * Transport our child care workers
- * Bake cookies
- * Serve snacks
- * Buy snacks
- * Buy/pick up supplies
- * Lead friendship circle
- * Lead ritual
- * Special events coordinator
- * Special events helper
- * Nifty Gifty (mid-December)
- * Fall Frolic (this year, Saturday, Oct. 25)
- * Wild Wintering (late Jan/early Feb.)
- * Spring Fling (probably the first Sat. in May)
- * Lead OWL class (in years when we offer OWL)
- * Weekly cleanup
- * Major cleanup (once or twice a year)
- * Organize supplies
- * Summer childcare
- * Transport kids to field trips, etc.

To help Prairie members and friends feel more confident about volunteering to help in RE, the committee will conduct a volunteer orientation session on Saturday, October 18, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., at Prairie. The volunteer training session has been carefully designed to help you become more comfortable with the various volunteer activities.

We will have refreshments and provide take-home material. Seven people have already registered (thank you!) and we have room for more. To register, please contact Anne Urbanski (221-4053 or anneu53714@yahoo.com) or Kristi Sprague-Klepzig (bananamoon@charter.net or 278-1975).

Please try to attend this session; consider this your opportunity to show the RE committee, teachers and *our kids* that Prairie members are committed to R.E. as

one of Prairie's most important activities. Let's try to walk the walk as well as talk the talk about R.E.

For the RE Committee,
Anne Urbanski

Shaarei Shamayim Calendar

2nd, 3rd & 4th Sat. 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249-5933
CelestialR@charter.net

Office Hours for the Office Administrator

Mondays 7–9 p.m.
Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon

LETTERS

THE BEGINNING OF A FAREWELL

For some of you, this is an introduction, for others, the beginning of a farewell. My name is Kristi, and I have been the Director of Religious Education at Prairie since August of last year. I was offered this 10 hour-a-week position and felt so honored to be trusted with being a major influence in the religious education of Prairie's youth. I was also excited to use my teaching background again, having left seven years of teaching behind to stay at home with our two young children. It seemed the perfect match for me and for Prairie.

A year later, I still love working with the youth at Prairie and the RE Committee. I also enjoy thinking about and planning lessons around this year's curricular theme of Social Justice. What I am coming to terms with, however, is that I don't have the time required to do my best work at Prairie, be fully present for my two- and five-year old children, have meaningful conversation with my spouse, and squeeze in good, self-care time, too. When I do try to do it all, as many women must, I find myself stressed and eventually physically ill.

So, I have made a difficult and important choice to resign as the Director of Religious Education. You will still see me and my family at Prairie; I'll still support the RE Program. And, I can assure you that the Religious Education program will be wonderful this year. There is a good foundation in place, excellent curricula and some (but we need more!) talented adults to facilitate meaningful learning experiences for your children.

Thanks to the many people who have sent supportive words or have given me kind hugs of support in making this decision. I'll be around in my position through the second Sunday in November, so continue to contact me or others on the RE Committee with questions, concerns or ideas for hiring someone for the DRE position until then!

In Peace,
Kristi Sprague-Klepzig
 Tel: 278-1975 E-mail: bananamoon@charter.net

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

Dear Prairie Church Members,

Thank you for your donation of food to the Allied Food Pantry. The Pantry will remain open during this transition time as we are able to use the side entrance to the building. We are hopeful that the rest of the Community Center will reopen soon under new leadership.

Thank you again,
 Connie Weisse, Allied Partners

<u>Prairie Web Sites</u>
Prairie UU: http://my.execpc.com/~prairieu/
PrairieNews Group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/
PrairieViews Group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/
Social Action: http://socialaction.homestead.com

OTHER NEWS

From the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) E-mail Bulletin:

Action Alert! Help free Aung San Suu Kyi; bring justice to Burma

Burmese opposition leader and Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi underwent major surgery on Sept. 18 in Rangoon. She has just been released from the hospital and now is again under house arrest. The news of her medical treatment was the first report of her whereabouts since May 30 when she and her supporters were attacked by a government-sponsored mob during a tour of northern Burma. Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy have led the movement to restore democracy and human rights against the oppressive military regime.

Details: <http://www.uusc.org/news/alert093003.html>.

Threats, memories of massacres cloud hope for free elections in Guatemala

Allison Kent, program associate for Latin America, recently spent two weeks in Guatemala where she met with UUSC partners. She returned with some riveting stories about the hopes and fears of indigenous Guatemalans as the presidential election draws near.

Details: <http://www.uusc.org/info/article093003.html>.

Action Alert! Preserve family values, 40-hour work week, overtime pay

Pres. Bush and the U.S. Depart. of Labor want to change the standard work week from 40 hours per week to 80 hours over two weeks, allow private employers to offer compensatory time in place of overtime pay, and legally permit those employers to deny use of that compensatory time for a year or more. The UUSC is shocked that this administration would seek the reversal of more than 60 years of labor law in the United States and ignore the human rights of families and workers. The U.S. Senate has voted to halt these rule changes, and it is imperative that the U.S. House of Representatives do the same.

Details: <http://www.uusc.org/news/alert092603.html>

Cuba: Victory for supporters!

In early September, UUSC asked advocates to contact their U.S. representatives to support legislation to end restrictions on traveling to Cuba. Shortly afterwards, a major victory was recorded when three amendments to an appropriations bill that would ease the restrictions were approved by the House of Representatives by respectable margins. However, more work needs to be done because President Bush has promised to veto measures such as these.

Details: <http://www.uusc.org/news/article091403.html>

Photo exhibit highlights struggles of indigenous Guatemalan women

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is inviting Unitarian Universalist congregations to display a photographic exhibit focusing on art and culture of indigenous women in Guatemala and their struggles to protect their human rights. The museum-quality exhibit, "Granddaughters of Corn," is a professionally-produced exhibit that documents the determination and spirit of the Guatemalan people in spite of the suffering they have endured.

Details: http://www.uusc.org/info/article092603_2.html

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee: "Advancing human rights and social justice in the U.S. and throughout the world."

From the Journey Toward Wholeness News (a UUA anti-oppression, anti-racist, multicultural initiative)

VOTER REGISTRATION AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Very shortly, congregations will be receiving a letter from UUA President Bill Sinkford encouraging them to make voter registration, mobilization, and in some areas, poll monitoring, a priority in the upcoming months.

Last June at the General Assembly Ware Lecture, civil rights leader Julian Bond painted a scathing picture of the history and the continuing effects of racism, and indeed its acceleration by governmental policies in the last few years. At the end of his presentation a young woman stood up and asked what is the most important thing anyone can do to combat racism. Without missing a beat he answered, "Search out twenty like-minded persons—and make them ambassadors to ensure that they in turn get twenty like-minded persons—to vote in next year's presidential election." For Julian Bond's complete remarks, see <http://www.uua.org/ga/ga03/4051.html>

Engaging in voter registration and mobilization provides an opportunity for UUs to form anti-racist partnerships with the NAACP (see http://www.naacp.org/work/voter/voter_empowerment.shtml) and community organizations that have voter empowerment projects.

We can do more than register folks and then go away. We can meet people, listen, and become allies in this effort while helping to empower people at the same time. We can learn a lot. (For more about forming anti-racist partnerships see my chapter in the new Skinner House book *Soul Work-Anti-racist Theologies in Dialogue*. You can order it at <http://www.uua.org/bookstore> .

Susan Leslie, Director for UUA Office of Congregational Advocacy and Witness

INTERNALIZED RACIST OPPRESSION INTENSIVE

On July 14–16, 2003, 50 people gathered in Chicago to attend a Crossroads intensive regarding "Internalized Racist Oppression." Those in attendance included representatives from the UUA. The event focused on the issue of internalized racist oppression and internalized racist superiority. We explored how we each in our

individual and collective identity internalizes the subtle societal messages of racism. We came to discover that there is a powerful dance that goes on between the oppressor and the oppressed and that both partners take steps that keep oppression in place. Of all the learnings for me, this was the most difficult and personal.

In one creative exercise, we watched parts of films (*The Matrix*, *Undercover Brother*, and *Rabbit-Proof Fence*) and television programs (Margaret Cho and *X-Men*). We learned that the subtle messages and assumptions of an oppressive reality and worldview are ever present in what we hear and see in the media every day.

The second most important learning for me was coming to understand the role of "race-based caucusing" and the crucial role it plays for transformation teams laying the basis of the work that the team does itself and the future leadership that the teams provides to the congregation in the process of its transformation.

It became clear to me that the successful transformation teams were those teams that used "race-based caucusing" as the organizing and support tool that it was meant to be. It is in the race-based caucusing group that white people struggle with their individual "internalized racist superiority," the issues associated with participating in a group identity, and what it means to be "white" in America.

For "people of color" it is a place to struggle with our individual "internalized racist oppression," to deepen our understanding of our collective identity, and what it means to be a "person of color" in America.

The Reverend W. Chester McCall, Interim Assistant Minister, First Unitarian Church, San Diego

SUGGESTED READING

Who Is Black, One Nation's Definition, by F. James Davis, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 10th ed.

This book has been a popular text for university classes and exhaustively examines the "one drop rule" that undergirded slavery and which continues to reinforce racism in America.

Davis provides an insightful historical framework as the US moves away from black and white stereotypes toward acknowledging the multiracial makeup of millions

of Americans of all complexions. James Davis is a UU and retired professor of sociology.

The Reverend Dr. Ralph Mero
UUA, Director-Office of Church Staff Finances

PRAIRIE BOOK CLUB FALL AND WINTER SELECTIONS

Sun., Oct. 12 —After Prairie service—*Welcome to the World Baby Girl* is a new novel by Fannie Flagg, author of *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* and the prize-winning co-writer of the movie by that name. Suggested by Sarah Lord.

Sun., Nov. 9 —After Prairie service—*The Pianist* by Wladyslaw Szpilman.

Sun., Dec. 7 —After Prairie service—*Journey into the Whirlwind* is a personal account of the first three years of author and professor Eugenia Ginzburg's 18-year ordeal during the Stalin purges of the 1930s.

Sun., Jan. 11 —After Prairie service—*The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell is a non-fiction book that compares commercial successes with the model of epidemics.

This is an open book club. Anyone who has read the book or wants to hear the book discussed may come to any meeting. When we meet at Prairie, participants bring food to share. Books are available at Border's West on University Avenue at a 20% discount if you mention this is a Prairie Book Club selection.

