



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 Bond of Union)

July 23, 2004

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

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, July 25

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Same-Sex Marriage: a Unitarian-Universalist Perspective" presented by Mike and Norma Briggs.

11:45 a.m. Book Club meets at Prairie to discuss *A Fine Balance*, by Rohinton Mistry

Tuesday, July 27

☞ 5:00 a.m. Prairie serves breakfast at Men's Drop-In Shelter at Grace Episcopal Church
7:00 p.m. Iraq Discussion at Rose and Galen Smith's, 318 DuRose Terrace, 233-3363.

Friday, July 30-Sunday, August 1

Prairie youth go on a Summer Spree at Friendship Center

Sunday, August 1

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Social Concerns in an Election Year," a four-congregation joint service, Sauk City.

Thursday, August 5

7:00-9:00 p.m. IHN Volunteer Training at Orchard Ridge UCC

Saturday, August 7

Prairie Fundraiser Trip to the Chicago Field Museum exhibit, "Splendors of China."

☞ = Details follow in this issue.

Next Prairie Fire Deadline: August 1

Sunday, August 8

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Looking Outward/Defining Our Strengths," presented by Kathy Converse and Sarah Lord.

Saturday, August 14

1:30 p.m. Prairie Playreaders Organizational Potluck Lunch.

Sunday, August 15

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Peace Like a River, Joy Like a Fountain": a musicale featuring Prairie musicians.
11:45 a.m. The Prairie Book Club meets to discuss *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, by Azar Nafisi.

Wednesday, August 18

7:30 p.m. Prairie Board Meeting

Friday-Sunday, September 17-19

Annual Retreat, at Bethel Horizons

DETAILS OF COMING EVENTS

Sunday, July 25

This program will feature a roundtable discussion with married same-sex couples as guests, talking about the emotional and legalistic aspects of same-sex marriage. The audience will be invited to join the discussion.

Sunday, August 1

The joint congregational meeting at A Free Congregation of Sauk County (in Sauk City), begins at 10 a.m. The theme is "Social Concerns in an Election Year," which will have some information

on separation of church and state, but other current issues as well.

The service will be presented by Prairie, Sauk, James Reeb, and First Society UU churches. Each church will present a theme for 8 minutes, and Andy Somers will speak on behalf of Prairie, with the theme, "Marriage, Medicine and Mandatory Prayer."

A potluck will follow, with beverages and setup provided, but bring some food to share.

Directions: take Hwy 12 to Sauk City across the river to the first stop light. Then turn right north on Water Street, go 3 blocks, left on Polk, go 2 blocks, and it is the big blue building, with the sign: "A Free Congregation of Sauk County, A Unitarian Fellowship."



Park Hall, Home of A Free Congregation of Sauk County

Sunday, August 8

Kathy Converse and Sarah Lord returned to Prairie from General Assembly, loaded with thoughts and ideas on growth for small UU churches and youth programs; speaking out for social justice; and covenant groups. They will speak about these with the theme of looking outward as opposed to looking inward to achieve congregational goals.

Sunday, August 15

The great number of musically adept performers at Prairie have a chance to take the stage at this annual musicale on the theme, "Peace Like a River, Joy Like a Fountain." All ages will participate.

OUR SOCIETY

RETREAT IN ADVANCE

The Fall Retreat is coming up fast (September 17-19 at Bethel Horizons). An important part of what makes this experience so special is the advance work done by the retreat program organizer, but as of yet, this job have not been spoken for. If you would like to contribute to Prairie Society in this way (and win admiration and acclaim), please contact Paula Pachciarz at pachwack@sbcglobal.net or 273-4806. Call soon!

Paula Pachciarz

MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

To follow up on the resolution passed at the Spring Parish meeting to seek a part-time temporary consulting minister, the Board formed a Minister Search Committee in May. The Board also specified that we would look for a person to serve one-quarter time. Members of this Committee are Doleta Chapru, Ken Skog (co-chairs), Aileen Nettleton, Patty Stockdale, and Barbara Chatterton.

The Committee has developed a draft set of purposes and activities for the Minister. (Please see the insert.) The Committee also discussed the need to identify the amount of funds that would be needed and the source of funds and to identify candidates. Ken and Doleta discussed with the Board the need to plan for funding. At its July meeting, the Board decided to arrange for funding by including an amount for a consulting minister in the 2005 budget. The extra amount may be on the order of \$16,000 but may change as the Minister Search Committee collects more information. The Committee will discuss identifying candidates in coming meetings.

Ken Skog

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

UPDATE: TUESDAY NIGHT STUDY SERIES

The classes on challenging corporate power have now been discontinued. The next Tuesday discussion on the Iraq War will be at the home of Rose and Galen Smith (not Prairie), 318 DuRose Terrace, on July 27. For directions, call 233-3363.

HOUSING AND PROPERTY THANK YOU'S

A big thank you goes to Larry Nahlik, Anne Urbanski, Galen Smith, Maya, Barb Park, and Ken Skog for spending Saturday morning (July 17) spiffing up the outside of Prairie. We painted the railings and the RE door and the back door, cleaned two 500-gallon garbage bags of miscellaneous woody and weedy stuff from the prairie and grounds, weeded the garden along the RE sidewalk, and cut back the prairie along the walkways so it doesn't attack the unwary.

A Purple Heart (or is it Leg) goes to Galen for discovering that we have wasps nesting in the ground under one of the bushes. (Please don't worry about accidentally getting into them. Galen was well into the bush trying to get at some volunteer weeds. The bush is prickly, so you're not likely to wander into the nest. We have wasp abatement on the to-do list now.)

Larry also made and mounted some sound-baffling in the corners of the meeting room. **Please let the someone on the Housing and Property or the Program committee know whether this helps acoustics in the meeting room or whether the room is still too "live."**

Judy Skog

BOOK GROUP RESCHEDULES MEETINGS

The Prairie Book Group changed its next meeting from Sunday, July 18, to Sunday, July 25.

The books for July and August have changed from previous *Prairie Fire* announcements:

July 25: *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry

August 15: *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi

RE YOUTH ROCK!

Last June our RE youth went on a soggy but inspiring walk to raise funds for Habitat for Humanity. Thanks to the generous support of Prairie members and friends, they were able to make a sizeable donation to this organization. Would you believe \$908.00? Wow! That's a lot of habitat. Thanks to all of you for your support, and way to go, RE youth.

SUMMER SPREE

No, it's not a new soft drink. Prairie Youth are planning their first annual summer retreat/fun fest for the last weekend in July. We'll be gathering at Friendship Center, a camp near Governor Dodge State Park. Middle and high school youth and parent volunteers are looking forward to a scavenger hunt, outdoor art project, games, crafts, and even a service project. Not to mention great food.

Contact Carl Wacker at 273-4806 if you have suggestions or questions. RE will report back and let you all know how it went.

MEMBERSHIP

Update:

Donna C. Murdoch

260-8551

daylight@inxpress.net

PROGRAM

DUST OFF THAT MUSIC FOR MUSICALE

If you like to sing, toot, screech, ring, plink, or strum, the musical program on August 15 is a great reason to dust off your music and practice. The theme is "Peace Like a River, Joy Like a Fountain."

For help finding ideas or finding someone to perform with, talk with Doleta Chapru (238-4970). Musicians of all ages are encouraged to participate.

LETTERS

MADISON-AREA URBAN MINISTRY WORK CONTINUES



Dear friend of MUM,

It is because of your support that our work is blossoming. The Urban League of Greater Madison recently recognized our restorative justice work. We are preparing the community for successful re-entry of formerly incarcerated persons. Our Returning Prisoner Simulation is so highly regarded that Corrections officials are contracting with us to help train their staff. Please read about our autumn simulations and consider participating in one.

We are successfully convening a broad-based Wellness Center in the Allied Dunn's Marsh Belmar area. The open house for the Wellness Center and for the new Community Parish Nurse will be 12-3 PM on Saturday, July 31 at 2349 Allied Drive #126.

We have received pilot grants for our innovative justice work. However, we still have had to reduce our staffing, just as increasing needs are so apparent.

Do keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Baum, Director of MUM

SOCIAL ACTION

ALLIED DONATIONS ARE DELIVERED, THANK YOU

The word is "Thanks!" Last week a large donation from Prairie was delivered to the Food Pantry at The Boys and Girls Club center at Allied Drive. A good amount of toiletries and stuffed toys were included in that donation. These items went quickly.

According to Allied Partners, a group of congregations (including Prairie) work to help Allied Drive residents. Unfortunately, the number of families and individuals using the food pantry keeps growing. We don't publicize the need for donations regularly, so it is gratifying to see the continual flow of food and other donations from Prairie. Our donations, whether large or small, are always enthusiastically received by Mike and Anne Bodden, the volunteers who manage the pantry.

The pantry donation baskets are in the foyer, once again empty and ready to be filled.

Paula Pachciarz

HOMELESS MEN'S BREAKFAST

Paula Pachciarz, Diana and Jeni Savage, and Judy Wacker cooked a big breakfast in June for the guys at the shelter at Grace Episcopal. They're looking forward to doing it again, but not all of them can make it July 27, so more helpers are welcome. Thanks to them and to Barb Park and Nancy Graham, our reliable shoppers.

Those who can shop or cook for July's breakfast, please contact Paula Pachciarz. ((608) 273-4806 or pachwack@sbcglobal.net)

Paula Pachciarz

KUDOS TO IHN VOLUNTEERS! MORE NEEDED

The following individuals volunteered with the Interfaith Hospitality Network last week: Erin Bosch, Rick Owens, Paula Pachciarz, Judy Wacker, Maggie Whitehead, and Amy Wilcox. Some of our regular volunteers were out of town and couldn't help out this time. Thanks go to all volunteers past and present.

Prairie next assists Midvale Lutheran in hosting homeless families the fourth week in November, Thanksgiving week. This crucial service organized by the IHN depends on the many volunteers who provide food and support. New volunteers from Prairie are frequent. IHN welcomes newcomers but requires all volunteers to take a two-hour training to familiarize themselves with IHN policies and expectations.

The next volunteer training is 7-9 p.m., Thursday, August 5, at Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ. To sign up, call Shannon Hayes (294-7998).

Paula Pachciarz

Since ancient times, the Shinto Grand Purification Ceremony, Oh-harai-taisai, has been held to obtain purification from sins and offences committed during the first half of the year. People walk through a large ring of woven grasses and reeds at the entrance to a shrine as a way of symbolizing inner purification. The observance is July 30 this year.

---Multifaith Calendar 2004

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS EXTENDED FOR REEB RE COORDINATOR

The deadline has been extended to August 15 for receiving applications for Religious Education Coordinator at James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

Position Description:

1. Attend JRUUC on Sundays.
2. Coordinate parent volunteers for classroom.
3. Sunday orientation of RE to new families.
4. Communicate with parents and teachers.
5. Track attendance of the RE program.
6. Convene and attend the RE committee monthly.
7. Problem-solve issues that arise on Sundays.
8. Coordinate work with office/professional staff.

Qualifications:

1. Good organizational skills
2. Good communication skills with adults & kids.
3. Ability to work well with staff.
4. Child Development or Ed background desirable.

Hours and Pay:

Approximately 4 hrs/wk x 3 wks/mo x 10 mo/yr
Stipend: \$120 month for 10 months

How to Apply:

To apply, send a letter of interest by August 15 to Jruuc@terracom.net or to:

James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Attention: RE Committee
2146 E Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53704

PRAIRIE OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR HOURS

Tuesdays 7–9 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon

SHAAREI SHAMAYIM CALENDAR

Saturdays 8:45 – 1:15

Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249–5933

OTHER NEWS

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

[You can find more about these announcements on the information table in the fellowship hall.]

Saturday, July 31. Madison-area Urban Ministry (MUM) open house for the Wellness Center and new Community Parish Nurse, 2349 Allied Drive #126. 12-3 p.m.

Saturday, August 21. Returning Prisoner Simulations, MUM, 2300 South Park St., middle of Villager Mall. Donations asked: \$15 adults/\$8 teens. 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

PRAIRIE FLORA: SUMMER GLORIOUS

[A continuing newsletter tour of Prairie flora by Galen Smith, the fifth in his series.]

On Saturday a dedicated group of Prairie members headed by Judy and Ken Skog and Larry Nahlik worked hard at our church. When I arrived (late), Barb Park was busily weeding the basement-entrance rock garden, which is now especially beautiful with pink-flowered coral bells (*Heuchera sanguinea*) and yellow-, white- and pink-flowered Sedum spp. and other succulents. I dug up many more tree saplings, mostly in the prairie planting, and pulled up lots of leafy spurge.

In mid- to late July the prairie planting at our church is at the height of its summer glory.

The blue-flowered **common spiderwort** is in the last stages of flowering. The common name spiderwort may be derived from the resemblance of the “jointed” stems (i.e., with swollen nodes) to the legs of spiders. The *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes Gerarde (in Herbal, 1597): “The leaves...stand upon the ground and the knees bowing up with long legs like the spiders legs when he creepeth.” Mike Briggs discovered fascinating folklore about spiderworts: on the following Web site: <http://www.killerplants.com/whats-in-a-name/20021206.asp>

This information suggests that at least one species of spiderwort was once considered to be useful for treating poisoning due to spider bites (perhaps because of the fancied resemblance of the stems to the legs of spiders?).



Common Spiderwort

The following native prairie plants that were in flower on 9 July are still making a great show of color:

- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) with large heads with yellow rays and brown centers,
- Wild bergamot or bee-balm (*Monarda fistulosa*) with lavender heads of flowers.

The following plants that came into flower since early July are making a great show of color:

- Purple coneflower (*Echinacea palida* or *E. purpurea*), with large heads with pale purple rays and reddish centers.
- Yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), with large yellow heads with drooping rays.

- Compass-plant (*Silphium laciniatum*), with groups of large yellow heads with horizontal rays and huge, tough, rough, deeply lobed leaves stand spectacularly to 9 feet tall far above the other plants.

The following plants are also in flower but not quite so evident:

- Rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) with its tough yucca-like leaves and bristly, ball-shaped, whitish heads of tiny flowers.
- Nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*), with its nodding heads of pinkish flowers.
- Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) is now obviously dominating the prairie garden. Although native, this grass is behaving like an invasive weed in our garden. It is crowding out other more desirable species and spreading into the rock garden and should be controlled. Perhaps one of the especially aggressive genotypes that have been extensively planted by the DNR for wildlife habitat was planted in our garden.

The other important grasses, especially little bluestem and big bluestem, will be flowering soon.

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Prairie UU: 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>