



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)

November 12, 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, November 14

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Prairie and Allied Partners," a panel presentation.

☞ 11:30 a.m. Potluck and Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday, November 18

☞ 6:30 p.m. Spanish speakers will meet next at the home of Rosemary Dorney, 4205 Odana Road

Sunday, November 21

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Mental Illness: Stories of Recovery," panel presentation coordinated by Donna Murdoch.

11:30 a.m. Potluck with members of the Free Congregation of Sauk City

12:00 noon. Humanist Discussion Group

Sunday, November 21 to Sunday, November 28

☞ Prairie volunteers at Midvale Lutheran for Interfaith Hospitality Network

Tuesday, November 23

☞ 5:00 a.m. Prairie serves breakfast at Men's Drop-in Shelter

☞ 2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meeting at Oakwood

Wednesday, November 24

☞ 7:30 p.m. Intercongregational Thanksgiving Eve Service, First Unitarian Society

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 21

Sunday, November 28

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Harvest Treasures" intergenerational service

11:45 a.m. Prairie Book Club discusses *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger.

Thursday, December 2

☞ 6:00 p.m. WOW women's group at Prairie.

Sunday, December 5

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. Last in the series on Islam by Bob Lawrence

Sunday, December 12

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. "What Can We Learn from the Jesus Myth?" presented by Warren Hagstrom

☞ = Details follow in this issue.

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Friday, November 12, marks the birth of Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i faith. Baha'is suspend work on this day.  
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DETAILS OF COMING EVENTS

Sunday, November 14

Allied Partners is an organization of neighborhood churches that support the Allied Drive community, in cooperation with others working or living in the area. Barbara Park is Prairie's representative to Allied Partners.

On November 14, three representatives will review the history of Allied Partners, programs supported by member churches, and ways our congregation can further help our Allied Drive neighbors. Panel members include Jackson Tiffany, Madison's Friend's Meeting representative; Eyvonne Crawford-Gray, Allied Neighborhood Center representative; and Susan Carrado, Community Parish Nurse who works through Allied Partners and is developing the new Allied Wellness Center.

At this service we will initiate a collection for the Allied Food Pantry, passing out bags and lists of preferred items to bring back the following week.

Sunday, November 21

For this program, "Mental Illness: Stories of Recovery," we welcome to Prairie a panel of people who have experienced mental illness. This program of hope, understanding, and recovery is coordinated by Donna Murdoch, a long-term advocate for people with mental illness and their families. Also visiting are members of the Free Congregation of Sauk City.

All are invited to a potluck following the service. Those who are interested, including members of the Free Congregation, are invited to join the Humanist Discussion Group meeting following the potluck.

Sunday, November 28

For the "Harvest Treasures" Thanksgiving Intergenerational Service, celebrate the color and bounty of the harvest by bringing a harvest-related item that is a feast for the eyes. Fill our meeting room with interesting items especially meaningful to you. These could include late fall garden produce, fruit, nuts, dried flowers, leaves, artwork, photographs, figurines. Briefly tell why your item is special or simply come and enjoy the visual delights. Children will have first priority in making presentations.

PRAIRIE OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR HOURS

Mondays 8–10 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon

SHAAREI SHAMAYIM CALENDAR

Saturdays 8:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.

Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249–5933

OUR SOCIETY

AGENDA FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The tentative agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, November 14 at 11:30 a.m. is as follows:

1. Convene
2. Minutes of April 2004 Meeting
3. Report of Finance Committee on 2005 Budget
4. Reports of Officers and Committees
 - Ad Hoc Ministerial Search
 - Ad Hoc Fitchburg Site
 - Treasurer
 - Denominational Affairs
 - Housing and Property
 - Long Range Planning
 - Membership
 - Program
 - Religious Education
 - Social Action
5. New Business
6. Adjourn

SPANISH SPEAKER MEETING AND POTLUCK NOVEMBER 18

Spanish speakers will meet next at the home of Rosemary Dorney, 4205 Odana Road, on Thursday, November 18 at 6:30 p.m. Any level of Spanish is welcome (we speak English, too). If you can, bring a dish to pass; if not, come anyway. If you have questions, or need a ride, please call Rosemary at 238-4382.

PRAIRIE ELDERS NOVEMBER MEETING

Prairie Elders will meet Tuesday, November 23, 2:00 p.m., at Oakwood. Prairie Elders provides good times and mutual support for members and friends 65 and over. Monthly meetings alternate between a discussion topic and a fun activity.

The November meeting is in the Second Floor Exercise Room in the OAKS Building. Enter Oakwood from Mineral Point Road. Turn right. Drive through the parking lot. Curve left. You will see a passageway between two buildings. The OAKS entrance is on the right. Go through the double doors. The elevator is on the left. Go to Floor B. Turn left. The exercise room is straight ahead at the end of the hall.

Park in the lot mentioned above or closer if space is available. If the lot is full, wait a while. Typically a spot will open up, except for handicapped parking which is limited. There is a second lot further up the main entrance road for those who can walk that distance. Ride sharing is a good idea.

Contacts: Doleta Chapru, Donna Murdoch, Rosemary Dorney.

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

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 welcome, and children also have the opportunity to participate. Please contact Paula Pachciarz to volunteer or for more information.

MEN'S DROP-IN SHELTER BREAKFAST

We cook and serve up a hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs with green peppers and turkey bacon, cereal, juice, and milk every month at the shelter at Grace Episcopal on the Square. If you'd like to help by buying and delivering groceries, or by working at the shelter early Tuesday morning, November 23, please contact Paula Pachciarz.

BOOK CLUB TO MEET NOVEMBER 28

The Book Club will meet after church on Sunday, November 28. Discussion will be on *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger.

PRAIRIE WOW PLANS FOR DECEMBER 2

The next meeting of the Prairie women's group is Thursday, December 2, at 6:00 p.m. at Prairie. Bring substantial food to share.

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Prairie UU Society:
<http://prairie.madison.uua.org/>

Prairie News Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/>

Prairie Views Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/>

Social Action:
<http://socialaction.homestead.htm>

LETTERS

A THANK YOU TO PRAIRIE MIDDLE-SCHOOLERS



To Prairie members and friends:

Many, many thanks to the middle-schoolers and their supervisors, parents who arrived at Mona Birong's house on Sunday, October 24, 2004 and completely raked the front and back yards. This was especially appreciated because two of the people who live at 599 Glen Drive have arthritis and the St. Bernard dog who visits them needs help to keep up the premises.

Thank you,
Mona Birong

SINGERS INVITED TO JOIN IN FUS THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Dear Friends,

We are again inviting all interested singers to join in a combined choir for our Annual UU Community Thanksgiving Service on Wednesday, November 24, at 7:30 p.m. here at FUS. The choir gathers at 6:30 p.m. to warm up. Interested singers are also welcome to prepare at our regular Wednesday and Thursday evening choir rehearsals. We will be singing a new choral opening composed by Ian Riddell, Music Director at James Reeb UU. We will also be singing the anthems "We Are One" by Brian Tate and "Would You Harbor Me" by Ysaye Barnwell.

Please let me know if you would like to join us and if you need copies of the music.

Dan Broner, Music Director
First Unitarian Society of Madison
233-9774, ext. 21 or danb@fusmadison.org



Did you ever try to ride your bicycle on under-inflated tires? Do you remember how hard that was and how much more work it took to get anywhere? Please check the tire pressure on your car today, now that the weather has turned cold. That's a simple way to improve your gas mileage and reduce global warming.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FROLICSOME YOUTH OVERNIGHT

"Frolic...full of fun and pranks...a lively party or game...merriment; gaiety; fun." This year's Fall Frolic for the Prairie youth succeeded once again in surpassing its definition and all expectation. Light was a recurring theme of the event, manifesting itself in flashlight tag, tin can lantern making, and eating by candlelight. Halloween ghosts and ghouls were also lurking about, showing off in the great costume parade and winning prizes for "costume most in need of ironing," "best Captain Underpants costume," and "best costume from Greek mythology," among others.

The youth also played games, challenged themselves on an indoor obstacle course, bobbed up for apples (which were hanging from trees), watched videos, and managed to wake up and clean up in the morning. Check out the photos posted near the RE bulletin board upstairs and see if you recognize some of the partygoers.

Many thanks to the intrepid adults: K. K. Anderson, Robin Carre, Randy Converse, Kulani's dad, Rob, Susan Herr-Hoyman, Dirk Hoyman, Paula Pachciarz, Barb Park, Dean Schroeder, Anne Urbanski, Carl Wacker, and our DRE, Melissa Gjestvang-Lucky.

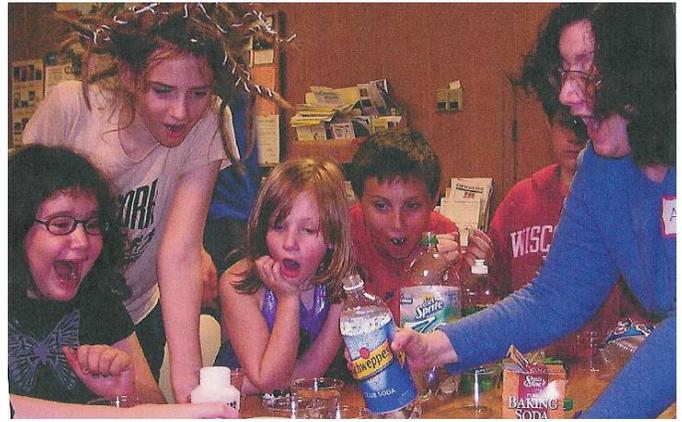
DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

HUMAN RIGHTS FILM SERIES CONTINUES

The documentary *Globalization and Human Rights* will be presented on Friday, November 19, at First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive, starting at 7 p.m. Wine, cheese, fruit, sweets and, of course, popcorn will be served. A discussion will follow the film, which runs 58 minutes. Questions? Call Suzie deBeers at 833-0506.

JOIN FUS FOR THANKSGIVING EVE

You're invited to join UUs from the Madison area in our annual inter-congregational Thanksgiving Eve service, Wednesday, November 24 at 7:30 pm at First Unitarian Society. Our celebration this year will be "With Thanks for One Another," in gratitude for the relationships that sustain us in a season of stress and sales. Attendees are requested to bring a



seasonal treat for after-service fellowship (apple, corn, pumpkin or cranberry bread/muffins, etc.). Cider and other beverages will also be served. Please join us!

(Prairie folks who are interested in helping put on the service should contact Scott Prinster.)

*Rev. Scott Gerard Prinster, Associate Minister
First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin*

THE DESTINY OF OUR DEMOCRACY

The democratic process is an act of faith: not faith that any one point of view will prevail, but faith that the will of the people will point us toward the Beloved Community. And in this national election, "we the people" have spoken, millions more of us than ever before. Unitarian Universalists lived out our faith by registering tens of thousands of new voters. We can rightly be proud of our commitment to this democracy. We stood clearly and proudly on the side of love.

Not only is democracy an act of faith, it is an imperfect process. This national election, like the last, showed us how far we have to go to enfranchise all of our people. But I take great hope from the relationships our congregations developed in this work.

But UUism is liberal religion, not liberal politics.

Today, while so many celebrate and so many grieve, I hope that Unitarian Universalists will hold fast to our calling. Political sound bites cannot contain it. Party designations do not describe it. Few votes were cast without reservations in the heart. Our congregations need to be religious homes where the reality of both joy and grief, certainty and uncertainty, can be present.

In 1964, the Rev. Jack Mendelsohn wrote a book titled "Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age." Today, Jack reminded me that all ages are illiberal.

And, thus, in every age, it is the role of liberal religion to offer a Gospel of openness, of healing and of hope. Our profession of faith is that the arc of the universe is long, but, with our commitment, it bends toward justice.

I extend my personal best wishes to President Bush and pray that his leadership will move this nation toward healing. Unitarian Universalists will do our part. We cannot afford to fuel the stridency and divisiveness of this political campaign. Nor can we afford to withdraw. We are an essential part of this body politic. And we will continue our vigilance and our advocacy for the values we hold dear.

There is only one destiny for this nation and its people. May that destiny be one of growing justice and equity in our policies and growing compassion in our hearts.

The Rev. William G. Sinkford, UUA President

UUSC HOLIDAY CARDS ARE ON SALE

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee cards, all printed on recycled paper, are available from UUSC at:

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139-1845

Or download an order form from our Web site at www.uusc.org/store

WINTER WITH UUs IN SOUTH FLORIDA

S.W.I.M., the Southeast Unitarian Universalist Winter Institute in Miami, is all about having fun in the warm Miami sunshine! S.W.I.M.'s annual intergenerational retreat for UUs and like-minded kids of all ages happens every year from December 26 through January 1.

S.W.I.M. offers south Florida hospitality, outdoor adventures (including tours, hikes, boating, and sailing), workshops (including spirituality and personal growth), special programs for youth, teens, and young adults, fantastic food, and a new community of friends from across the continent.

For more information, see www.swimuu.org
S.W.I.M. is a member in good standing of CU2C2, the Council of Unitarian Universalist Camps & Conferences, an affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

SOCIAL ACTION

MUUYACM TRIP TO SOA IN NOVEMBER

The MUUYACM annual trip to protest at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia is the weekend of November 19. Find out more about the SOA protest at <http://www.soaw.org>.

UUSC NEWS BULLETIN

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC): advancing human rights and social justice in the United States and throughout the world.

Help provide relief to victims of humanitarian crisis in Sudan

UUSC is appalled and saddened at the genocide taking place in Darfur, Sudan, and we are deeply troubled by the humanitarian crisis it has created. UUSC is accepting contributions to provide aid to the victims of the crisis. All donations to the Darfur Relief Fund will be forwarded to nonprofit organizations selected by UUSC staff that are working in Darfur to provide humanitarian relief. Donate now to the Darfur Relief Fund. Visit www.uusc.org/info/article101204.html.

UUSC is accepting donations to aid hurricane victims in Haiti

Floods and winds from Hurricane Jeanne have so far taken the lives of more than 1,500 people in Haiti. Another 900 are missing and are presumed dead. The flooding has wreaked havoc, leaving more than 300,000 people homeless. We are deeply distressed at the death and destruction cause by the hurricane. Although UUSC is not currently working in Haiti, we are accepting donations to be used for humanitarian aid. Donate now to the Haiti Relief Fund. Visit: www.uusc.org/news/alert100404.html.

UUSC rejects funds in protest of 'anti-terrorist' rules

UUSC has decided to withdraw from the Combined Federal Campaign, a workplace-giving program, in protest of new U.S. government "anti-terrorism" regulations. The new policy requires organizations participating in the program to certify they do not work with people or organizations identified on government lists as suspected terrorists. UUSC

joins several organizations including the American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty International USA in withdrawing from the campaign. For more info, visit: www.uusc.org/info/article102904.html.

Activists are heard as Burma tours cancel

Thanks in large part to the efforts of UUSC human rights activists, planned tours to Burma by four major universities have been cancelled. The actions follow similar decisions over the past two months by other major U.S. institutions to scrap plans for group visits to the Asian country. Read more about this victory for Burma, visit:

www.uusc.org/info/article100504.html

Statewide networks continue work of Defending Democracy

Statewide advocacy networks organized before the elections will continue the work of Defending Democracy after Election Day. After their election-related work such as registering voters, get-out-the-vote campaigns and providing issues education, UU advocacy networks in several states will promote participation in current and upcoming public policy debates. Learn more about the statewide networks, visit: www.uusc.org/info/article102904_02.html.

UUSC holiday cards now available

UUSC holiday Cards for 2004 are now available. Sales of the cards will support UUSC's work for social justice and human rights. Three of the four cards feature designs by Holiday Card Contest winners Tom Baillieul of the First UU Church of Columbus, Ohio; Carmon Slater of the Jefferson UU Church in Evergreen, Colo.; and the children of Magic Valley UU Fellowship of Twin Falls, Idaho. The deadline for consignment orders has been extended to November 17! To see this year's beautiful designs and order cards, visit: www.uusc.org/info/holidaycards.html.

Burma's pro-democracy leader is winner of 'living Asian hero' award

In response to an outpouring of support from human rights activists, Burma's pro-democracy leader and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi is the winner of Time magazine's "living Asian hero" award for 2004! Congratulations to UUSC's Human

Rights Defenders and other activists for speaking out on issues that will protect Burmese citizens against the human rights abuses of the brutal ruling military regime. Visit:
www.uusc.org/news/article100804.html.

Escalating costs of Iraq war cause deep concerns

As a human rights organization, UUSC is alarmed about the high civilian death toll and mounting costs of the Iraq war on the United States, Iraq, and the world. Stark figures about the escalation of costs in these most recent three months of "transition" to Iraqi rule are being reported, a period that the Bush administration claimed would be characterized by falling human and economic costs.

War affects everyone, not just those directly involved in the fighting. In a report issued Sept. 30, 2004 by the Institute for Policy Studies and Foreign Policy in Focus the number of Iraqi civilians killed since March 20, 2003 has been between 12,800 and 14,843.

Iraq Body Count, a volunteer group of British and U.S. academics and professional researchers, has compiled statistics on civilian casualties from eyewitness and media reports. The organization says the civilian death toll ranges from 14,800 to 16,300, but acknowledges that ascertaining accurate counts is extremely difficult because the ongoing violence makes it impossible for journalists and other impartial observers to move around safely. For further information, visit Iraq Body Count at www.iraqbodycount.net/.

Congress had mandated U.S. government agencies to assist civilian victims of war in the Iraq supplemental bill signed by President Bush on April 16. They await clearer evidence before they direct an unspecified amount of the \$2.4 billion appropriated for relief and reconstruction

Others in the Iraq peace advocacy movement have developed a measure of the actual financial costs of the war and the impact on a number of areas of domestic human rights policy. Visit The war in Iraq costs the United States at costofwar.com to learn of the one of the more quantifiable effects of war: the financial burden it places on U.S. taxpayers, the increase in the U.S. deficit and the transfer of money from domestic priorities to sustaining the occupation of Iraq are very clear. You also may use our online Legislative Action Center at www.uusc.org/info/capwizinfo.html to send an immediate message expressing your concern to your elected members of Congress.

And last, but definitely not least, American casualties in Iraq continue to mount. More than 1,100 American have lost their lives and 7,782 have been wounded, many suffering severe wounds. Too many families have lost their sons and daughters, husbands and wives. so many dead, so many horribly maimed and wounded. For them the costs of this war are real and not abstract. Every death, every injury should burn like a knife in our hearts, for these are all America's sons and daughters. Visit www.antiwar.com/casualties/.