



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." (Bond of Union)

January 7, 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, January 9

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10 a.m. "Music, What Soothes the Soul,"
presented by Sarah Lord.

☞ 11:30 a.m. Book Club discusses *A Piano Tuner* at
Prairie.

Sunday, January 16

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Is Tolerance Always a Virtue?"
presented by Rev. Sarah Oelberg.

☞ 12:00 p.m. Humanist Discussion Group meets at
Prairie for lunch and discussion of the Humanist
Manifesto III.

Wednesday, January 19

☞ 6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Saturday, January 22

☞ 7:30 p.m. Playreaders at Bob and Barb Park's.

Sunday, January 23

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Death as Part of Life's Journey,"
presented by Linda Sheehy

Sunday, January 23–Sunday, January 30

☞ Prairie helps host Interfaith Hospitality Network
at Midvale Community Lutheran Church

☞ = Details follow in this issue.

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: JANUARY 16

Tuesday, January 25

2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meet in the 2nd floor
exercise room, Oaks Building, Oakwood West

DETAILS OF COMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 9

"Music, What Soothes the Soul" is a program
presented by Sarah Lord. She will be reflecting on
the ways in which music has long been used as a
healing art. Why does music have this power to
soothe the soul? How has music helped groups of
people get beyond difficult times? How does it help
individuals? More specifically, Sarah Lord will be
sharing some examples of music that has helped her
through difficult periods of her life.

You are invited to come prepared to share stories
about specific pieces of music that have been
particularly meaningful to you during challenging
periods in your life.

Sunday, January 16

"Is Tolerance Always a Virtue?" Freedom, Reason,
and Tolerance have long been considered
fundamental to UUism. As we celebrate MLK's
birthday and the civil rights movement, it may be
time to ask whether tolerance is enough.

Sunday, January 23

"Death as Part of Life's Journey." For most of us,
thoughts of death create feelings of fear and
anxiety. We may attempt to segregate death from
our lives as long as possible. (*continued*)

But what if we were to use the certainty of death as an opportunity to heal our lives? This program will explore using forgiveness and gratitude to honor our lives and to deal with unfinished business and will also look at what "death" really is.

OUR SOCIETY

HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP MEETS JANUARY 16

The Prairie Humanist Discussion Group will meet on Sunday, January 16 at the Prairie Meeting House for a simple lunch and a discussion of the Humanist Manifesto III.

Sarah Oelberg will be presenting the regular Prairie program that morning. (Her sermon topic is "Is Tolerance Always a Virtue?") Members of Prairie will want a chance to chat informally with her afterwards, so we will wait until about 10 minutes to noon before setting up for lunch. Then we will arrange 4 tables together in a square that we can all sit around. Barbara will have a large pot of vegetarian soup ready.

Others are asked to bring platters of sandwiches or other finger food that we can pass around the table. This way we can get started more quickly, and cleanup will be simplified because we will only need to use bowls, cups, spoons and napkins. (This time we are only planning lunch for the humanist discussion group, not a potluck for Prairie as a whole.)

We plan to be ready to start lunch at noon. Once we are all seated we can start the discussion while we eat. We are aiming to finish by 1:30 p.m. We expect Sarah and her husband will be able to attend, departing Prairie in time to get to a 2 p.m. event in DeForest.

All are encouraged to invite any friends interested in humanism. For details, you can refer them to Events on our Web site: <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>.

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

BOOK CLUB RESCHEDULED FOR JAN. 9

The Book Club is rescheduling its meeting to Sunday, January 9, to discuss *The Piano Tuner*, by Daniel Mason. The discussion will start at Prairie after the Sunday service, around 11:30 a.m. Bring food to share to the Sunday book club meeting (but come even if you forgot food). This is an open book club— anyone may attend on a drop-in basis.

MINISTERIAL SEARCH PROGRESS

Your Ministerial Search Committee has completed our Prairie UU Congregational Profile, based on general information about Prairie and the responses of the Congregational Survey. This is based on information the UUA recommends we compile to give information to interested ministerial candidates about our congregation and programs. We are currently getting names from Central Midwest District and from Prairie members of potential candidates for the quarter-time consulting minister position. We will review information we receive and send the Congregational Profile to candidates we are interested in.

The search committee will be interviewing individuals and will bring a single candidate to the congregation to consider for our Consulting Minister position. The interviewing process will be completed confidentially by the Search Committee. When the search committee has a candidate we believe would be a good match for Prairie, a "Candidating Weekend" would held so all Prairie members could meet the candidate and hear them present a Sunday program. Sunday afternoon after the program the congregation would vote on whether to accept this candidate.

We appreciate the input members and friends have given through the Congregational Survey and additional information some committee chairs provided to complete the Congregational Profile. A copy of the results of the survey and the Congregational Profile will eventually be available at Prairie for members to review.

If you have a recommendation of a qualified candidate or any questions about the process, please contact one of the Ministerial Search Committee members: Ken Skog, Doleta Chapru, Patty Stockdale, Aileen Nettleton.

LONG RANGE PLANNING RELEASES A DRAFT BUILDING PLAN

In January, BWZ Architects will prepare 2 or more building concept drawings for a building at the 1.6-acre site next to Eagle School in Fitchburg Center.

The Long Range Planning Committee hereby requests that Prairie members who have suggestions about alternate sites to **please develop information about the sites/buildings to share with Prairie members** informally along with information to be shared informally about the concept drawings for the Fitchburg Center site. Please provide Ken Skog information about alternate sites as soon as possible for posting on the LRP Web site but **no later than January 30th**. Please see the list of suggested kinds of information to obtain (see page 8).

Later in January, the Long Range Planning Committee will provide the BWZ concept drawings informally to the congregation at Circle Dinners, on posters at Prairie, on the LRP Web site, and in informal discussions after Prairie Sunday programs to explain the ideas behind the concept drawings.

The Long Range Planning Committee will also provide information submitted on alternate sites/buildings.

On Sunday, February 20, we tentatively plan to hold a congregation meeting so members may provide feedback on concept drawings for a building adjacent to Eagle school to the Fitchburg site committee/LRP committee.

If alternate site/building information has been developed, we propose to hold a meeting for feedback on alternate sites/buildings identified in January and discussed informally in February.

Later in March, the Fitchburg site committee will draft a tentative contract to purchase the land adjacent to Eagle school, subject to the condition that Prairie raise sufficient funds within a specified period of time. A contract would have contingencies about raising needed funds.

At a time yet to be determined, we would hold a congregation meeting to consider approval of the tentative contract to purchase land or to pursue other options.

Ken Skog, Chair, Long Range Planning Committee

MIDWEEK MEAL @ PRAIRIE STARTS JANUARY 19

Having run this by a few PrairieFolk in the last couple of weeks, I'm ready to make an official type announcement of a meal at Prairie on Wednesday evenings. Barb Park came up with a good name: Midweek Meal, and I'm adding the "@ Prairie" so we can claim Internet hipness.

The idea is we have our Wednesday dinner at Prairie. No planning or committees involved, we just all show up with whatever we feel like bringing. Cook something or buy something, same thing that you would have done at home. Clean up afterwards—yes, of course we will do that, too (for those that don't cook or buy). 6:30 seems to be the right time to do this, neither too early nor too late.

The inaugural meal (sorry, pun intended) will be

January 19 at 6:30 p.m.

This week we are all detoxing from the good food from the holidays and January 12 a meeting is already scheduled. Fine, we can wait a couple of weeks and build up some anticipation.

The idea I have is to make this a weekly event/ritual.

Dirk Herr-Hoyman

PRAIRIE RAISES FUNDS FOR TSUNAMI RELIEF

On Sunday, January 2, the Social Action Committee organized a collection for the



UUSC-UUA Tsunami Relief Fund. As a result, Bob Park made an online donation of \$215 on behalf of Prairie to the fund (for more information, see http://www.uusc.org/programs/support_tsunami.html). An additional \$35 in checks collected from the congregation has been put in the mail. Those who would like to contribute can mail checks made out to "UUSC" to:



UUSC-UUA Tsunami Relief Fund
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

IHN BEGINS THE NEW YEAR

During the week of November 21–28, Prairie UU, a "buddy church", assisted Midvale Community Lutheran Church, a "host church", as it once again opened its doors to housing homeless families who are participating in the Madison area Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) program. Over the course of the week, four families found comfortable shelter, delicious food, and kind hospitality within the friendly confines of the church. The guests were very appreciative of all the hospitality they received from the volunteers and the volunteers were enriched by the experience.

Our next opportunity for helping with this worthwhile social ministry is **January 23–30**.

Prairie members and friends can help with unloading families' belongings, setting up the rooms, preparing the meals, serving the meals, playing with the children, staying overnight, doing the laundry, cleaning up after the guests' rooms are cleared, loading the truck with the families' belongings at the end of the week, transportation, and food shopping.

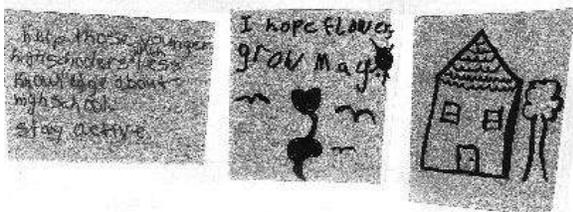
Please contact Paula Pachciarz (273–4806, pachwack (at) sbcglobal.net) if you are interested in volunteering or would like more information.

(To protect our e-mail addresses from unscrupulous etherpeople, we are substituting " at " for "@". Type addresses without spaces, and use the at sign.—Ed.)

CONTRA DANCING COMING TO PRAIRIE

Do you owe somebody a social invitation but never seem to find the time to get it all organized? Look no further! Invite their whole family to be your guests at Beginning Contradances, coming soon to Prairie. Call Jeanie Trigg (301-0289) or send her an e-mail for details: jeanie.trigg (at) sbcglobal.net. Information will be posted in the Sunday bulletins and *Prairie Fire*, as well. See you there!!

Jeanie Trigg



REVISED PRAIRIE PLAYREADERS 2005 SCHEDULE

Please note changes for March and April, which were reported incorrectly in the last PF issue.

Prairie Playreaders meets monthly to read plays. No skill is necessary, just a willingness to read and enjoy. Starting times are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise indicated, at the homes of the following:

January 22—Bob & Barb Park with Donna Murdoch

February 19 (2:00 p.m.)—Bartell Theatre outing: "Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe"

March 19—Paula Pachciarz and Carl Wacker

April 23—Susan Hagstrom

May 14—Nancy Graham

June 17—Fish fry

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Hi Everyone!

We are still awaiting the arrival of many of the forms that we mailed out to Prairie members last month. I know that December is a busy month for many people. Now that the holidays are over, please take a minute to fill out the form and return it to me. It would be of great assistance to our RE program! If you need a new one, let me know.

In our YoUuth Circle on January 2, we discussed why bad things happen. We based our discussion around the tsunami disaster, and the article on the CBS news site about two Buddha statues that remained standing. Many people in the area attributed this to God or "Lord Buddha" being unhappy with the way the people were living. We had a wonderful discussion in which the youth shared their ideas on this, such as, "I think the tsunami just happened, not for any reason," and that if people do good things, then fewer bad things will happen. After reading a story about what to do if bad things happen, we created red cards with our hopes on them for the coming year, shown on this and the following pages. *(continued)*



We are in need of volunteers for these upcoming RE events:

Wild Wintering overnight—Feb. 5/6
Service Sunday—Feb. 20

Please let me know if you can help!

In Peace,

Melissa Gjestvang-Lucky, DRE

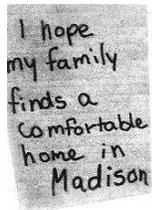
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Friday, January 7, marks the Russian Orthodox celebration of Koliada in the Ukraine. Koliada is the name of a cycle of Ukrainian winter rituals stemming from ancient Greek *kalandai* and the Roman *calendae*. The *koliada* incorporated fall harvest rituals (such as the laying out of harvested produce and the bringing in of the last grain sheaf to the house), livestock-fertility rituals (the feeding of bread, garlic, and rose hips to livestock, feeding chickens in a chain, bringing a lamb into the house), and spring rituals (the sowing of grain, the plowing of furrows, and visiting with the *koza*). It was believed to be a personification capable of influencing the future harvest. Thus arose the customs of "calling *koliada* to partake in the Christmas kutia" and the "shooing away of *koliada*." The *koliada* cycle was a time of general merriment, generous meals, and gift-giving. Many rituals of *koliada* have been incorporated into the celebration of Christmas.  
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DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

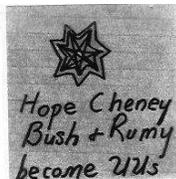
WOMEN'S WINTER CONFERENCE

WomanSpirit 2005 Winter Conference, "Choosing with Purpose—Living with Conscience—Women in Community," will take place on Friday, January 21, through Sunday, January 23, at the Springfield Hilton in Springfield, Illinois. Anna Blythe Lappe, coauthor of *Hope's Edge: the Next Diet for a Small Planet*, is the keynote speaker.

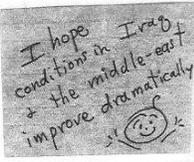
This conference is presented by the Women and Religion Committee, Central Midwest District, and Women of the Central Illinois Planning Committee. Check the Web site: www.womenandreligion.org.



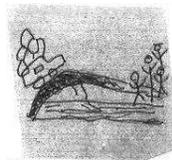
I hope my family finds a comfortable home in Madison



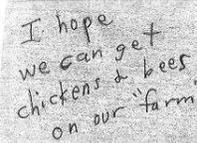
Hope Cheney Bush + Rummy become UUs



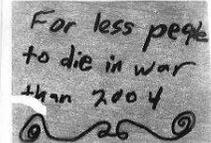
I hope conditions in Iraq & the middle-east improve dramatically



I hope we can get chickens & bees on our "farm"



I hope we can get chickens & bees on our "farm"



For less people to die in war than 2004

MERU HOSPICE, KENYA—HOW TO HELP

It is believed that thirty million people in Africa are living with HIV/AIDS, most of them without knowing it. Every day 6,700 men, women, and children die of HIV/AIDS or opportunistic infections. In all too many cases, the final months of their lives are lived in fear, loneliness, and considerable pain. In addition, millions of children have to care for their dying parents and then have to act as heads of households and provide for their siblings.

In January 2004, HospiceCare, Inc., in Madison formed a partnership with the Meru Hospice in Kenya, Africa. A committee of HospiceCare staff and volunteers has been formed to support and promote this partnership. The committee's primary objectives are fundraising and community education.

Please take this opportunity to meet Mia Morrisette, a HospiceCare social worker and team leader who traveled to Kenya last June and has returned to tell us of her experience and share with us a powerful slide show presentation.

Friday, January 28 at 7:00 p.m.
James Reeb UUC, 2146 E. Johnson St., Madison

Jan Gordon, James Reeb UUC

UNITY TEMPLE LYCEUM SPEECH BY THE REV. FORREST CHURCH ON JANUARY 21

Before the Civil War, Americans of all stripes gathered together in local lyceums, taking part in a compelling experiment in community education. Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 875 Lake Street, Oak Park, Illinois, is reviving this tradition.

On Friday evening, January 21 at 7:30 p.m., the new Unity Temple Lyceum Series begins with a lecture by the Rev. Forrest Church, senior minister of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City. Free child care will be available. There is no admission fee.

UU PLAYGROUP FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

FUS member Julie Shinefield is coordinating a UU playgroup for area congregations. This newly formed group is open to all 3 Madison UU congregations and meets the first Wednesday of each month. Please let Julie Shinefield know if you plan on attending: 834-0680 or jshine@charter.net.

- Weekday UU Playgroup—Meets 1-2x/month for families with children 5 and under. Contact Teresa Nicholas, nicholasteresa@hotmail.com or 833-4652

Weekend UU Playgroup—Meets 1-2x/month.
Contact Erin Chudacoff, erinhchud@hotmail.com or 848-2405

UUSC GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

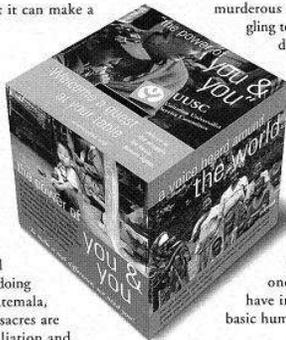
This annual UUSC fundraiser is underway. Share your bounty with a guest at your dinner table by depositing a coin in the Guest at Your Table box.

To Relieve Suffering, Oppression And Injustice, Think Inside The Box

It's only a little box but it can make a world of difference!

With the generosity of thousands of UUs and their congregations, this little box will help fight injustice, promote fair trade, work for peace in regions of conflict and, most of all, offer hope.

The money collected will travel around the world doing good works. From Guatemala, where survivors of massacres are seeking justice, reconciliation and peace, to Burma, where refugees from a

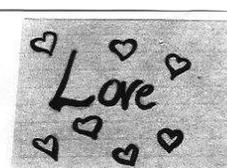
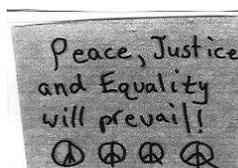
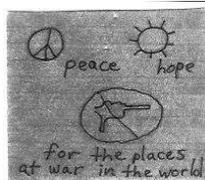
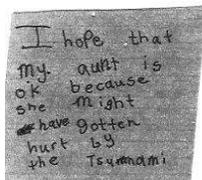


murderous military junta are struggling to keep themselves and the dream of democracy alive, to the United States, where UUSC is engaging people of all ages to pursue electoral activism, defend civil liberties and speak out against injustice.

So, when you see this little box, don't be fooled by its size. It's one of the biggest allies we have in the struggle to protect basic human rights.

Please give it the welcome it deserves.

Please Welcome a "Guest At Your Table" to Your Congregation



PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Prairie UU Society:

prairie.madison.uua.org

Prairie News Group:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/

Prairie Views Group:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/

Social Action:

socialaction.homestead.htm

Long Range Planning Committee (new):

www.execpc.com/~prairieu/planning (no space)

(To keep the above address from becoming a public site, type it directly into the browser. Omit space before "planning" - Ed.)

MEMBERSHIP

Please note this update:

Bob Park

[rwpark \(at\) loonfoot.com](mailto:rwpark@loonfoot.com)

(To protect our e-mail addresses from unscrupulous etherpeople, we are substituting " at " for "@". Type addresses without spaces, and use the at sign.—Ed.)

OTHER NEWS

UUSC NEWS BULLETIN

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

UUSC, UUA join in humanitarian relief for earthquake/tsunami victims

In the wake of the catastrophic disaster caused by the earthquake and tsunamis in South and Southeast Asia and Eastern Africa, UUSC and the Unitarian Universalist Association have joined forces to help bring humanitarian relief to the victims and their families.

The relief funds will be channeled to grassroots organizations in the region that are able to provide assistance in the most appropriate manner as quickly as possible.

Action alert: Voice concerns about nomination of Alberto Gonzales for attorney general

In November 2004, President Bush nominated White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales to the position of United States attorney general. This nomination has raised numerous concerns throughout the international human rights community. These concerns are based on the various legal memoranda authored by Mr. Gonzales during the ongoing war against terror, which advised Mr. Bush that as president and commander in chief of the armed forces, he was not bound by the Geneva Conventions or other humanitarian limitations on the conduct of war.

Act now and contact members of the Senate Judiciary Committee to let them know you oppose the nomination of Alberto Gonzales. For an action alert, visit: www.uusc.org/news/alert120804.html.

Second annual civil rights journey set for historic southern cities

UUSC is excited to announce the second annual civil rights journey that will travel to several southern cities to learn firsthand about the struggles of the 1960s. The Freedom Summer workcamp: A civil rights journey is scheduled for July 9-16, 2005.

The intergenerational trip will bring together youth and adults from around the country to travel by bus to historical sites that were significant during the civil rights movement. The inspirational journey will begin in Atlanta and move to Selma, Montgomery, and Birmingham, Ala.

For more information, visit: <http://www.uusc.org/info/article121004.html>.

Agreement reached in landmark Burmese rights case

On Dec. 13, California-based Unocal Corporation announced that it had reached an out-of-court settlement in a landmark case alleging that the energy company was complicit in human rights abuses committed as part of the construction of a gas pipeline in Burma. The case against Unocal was seen as a key test for human rights activists who want to hold multinationals responsible in U.S. courts for atrocities committed in other countries.

UUSC members and supporters have responded to many action alerts in defense of human rights in Burma and the abuses in which Unocal now agrees it was complicit as part of construction of the gas pipeline. To learn more about this important human rights victory, visit: <http://www.uusc.org/info/article122004.html>.

UUSC partner describes wave of killings in Eastern Congo

The town of Goma, located in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and home to two of UUSC's program partners, has been subject to nightly killings in recent weeks. Since Nov. 1, unidentified armed men in uniform have stormed into homes shooting Goma residents. Residents have also reported several attacks outside Goma.

A UUSC program partner in the Congo has shared their firsthand accounts of these disturbing incidents.

Visit: <http://www.uusc.org/info/article121704.html>.

Shareholder advocacy makes a difference in company policies

UUSC, the UUA and other investors have been working with communications company Alltel for years, encouraging the company to include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy. This year, our efforts paid off and the company amended its non-discrimination policy to include sexual orientation, improving its zero rating on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index.

The Little Rock, Ark.-based company is the last major telecommunications firm in the United States to include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy. UUSC believes the inclusive non-discrimination policies will enhance Alltel's long-term shareholder value by building its reputation as a fair employer.

To learn more about UUSC shareholder advocacy efforts, visit:

<http://www.uusc.org/info/shareholder.html>.

Prominent activist released in Haiti

Thanks to an outcry from people around the world, including many UUSC members and supporters, Father Gerard Jean-Juste was released after 50 days in jail on suspicion of fomenting violent protests after a judge found no evidence to hold him.

Father Jean-Juste is a prominent activist for peace, justice and the rights of immigrants in Haiti and the United States. In October, Haitian police forcibly entered St. Clare's Catholic Church in the nation's capital of Port-au-Prince and arrested the pastor, Rev. Jean-Juste, without a warrant. For more background about this case, visit:

<http://www.uusc.org/news/alert111604.html>.

Possible information to collect about possible alternate sites / buildings for Prairie

(Prepared by Ken Skog Dec. 17, 2004)

Vacant land

1. Location?
2. Zoning?
3. Square feet of lot?
4. Dimensions of lot?
5. Asking price?
6. Is there nearby parking to share?

Land with a building

Questions above, plus:

1. Square feet of floor space in building?
2. Dimensions of auditorium? Will it hold at least 150 people? (50% more than Prairie current main room)
3. If auditorium space will hold no more than 150 people is there space on the lot or option for second floor to build an auditorium for 300?
4. Are there 5 – 6 rooms for RE and 2 rooms for offices or subdividable space for such rooms? Is there space for to add on RE rooms and office space if needed?
5. Is prospective RE space not in a basement?
6. Is there a kitchen or subdividable space for a kitchen?

7. Is the building handicapped accessible?
8. How much parking is available on the lot? How much parking is potentially available to share nearby? Who owns parking area that might be shared?
9. Is the building energy efficient (energy efficient windows, well insulated walls/roof, efficient furnace)
10. Are there any “green” features of the building – e.g., materials used

Questions about surrounding area

Is there greenspace for children to play?

What is the view from the RE space rooms?

Sources of information

Access Dane – searchable database of values of buildings and property in Dane County

(<http://accessdane.co.dane.wi.us/index.asp>)

Multiple Listing Service – Info on business/commercial buildings and lots for sale with zoning code in Dane County

(<http://www.wisconsinhomes.com/search/search.php?step=type&county=DANE>)

Dane County community assessor offices contact information – learn about zoning (please see the LRP Web site for this list)