



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)

November 4, 2005

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 6

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "The Ethical Humanist Society,"

presented by Thomas Hoepfner

11:30 a.m. Children's RE teacher and substitute orientation; ends at 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 9

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

7:30 p.m. "Minding Our Mind" adult religious education, session 2, led by the Rev. Jody Whelden

Thursday, November 10

*7:00 p.m. Our Religious Paths, Our Religious Futures new member orientation, at Prairie

Sunday, November 13

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "From Vietnam to Iraq," presented by Will Williams

*12:30 p.m. Our Religious Paths, Our Religious Futures new member orientation, at Prairie

Wednesday, November 16

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

7:30 p.m. "Minding Our Mind" adult religious education, session 3, led by the Rev. Jody Whelden

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

Thursday, November 17

6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers Potluck at Mary Somers' house

*7:00 p.m. Our Religious Paths, Our Religious Futures new member orientation, at Prairie

Friday to Sunday, November 18 to 20

Youth Con for ages 14 to 20

Sunday, November 20

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Our Blessings: Apparent or Not" presented by the Rev. Jody Whelden

*11:45 a.m. Fall Business Meeting at Prairie

Wednesday, November 23

Joint Thanksgiving Service, Madison UU churches

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

Sunday, November 27

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Harvest Celebration" intergenerational program led by Mary Mullen, Galen Smith, and Bob Radford

Tuesday, November 29

*2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood West

Wednesday, November 30

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

7:30 p.m. "Minding Our Mind" adult religious education, session 4, led by the Rev. Jody Whelden

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, NOV. 13

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, November 6

The full title of this program is, "The Ethical Humanist Society: A passion for life with a blend of reason, compassion and commitment." The Ethical Humanist Society is part of a humanistic, religious and educational movement inspired by the ideal that the supreme aim of human life is to create a more humane society. Our faith is in the capacity and responsibility of human beings to help create a better world. Our commitment is to the worth and dignity of the individual and to treating each human being so as to bring out the best in her or him.

The speaker, Thomas Hoepfner, is a member of the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago and Associate Professor of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. A father of three children and grandfather of three, Tom enjoys making up new songs to sing and play with them.

Sunday, November 13

Will Williams is a founding member of the Madison chapter of Veterans for Peace. He is a strong advocate for peace and speaks out on the futility of war as a means to resolve disputes. Williams is a veteran of two tours of duty in Vietnam. On his second tour he began to question the motives of the powerful, and has since devoted himself to antiwar work. He is the 2005 recipient of the City of Madison's Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award.

Williams will speak about his personal journey, social consequences of a military that is disproportionately staffed by the poor and minorities, and parallels between Vietnam and Iraq. Together with Dot Williams, he formed the Madison Gospelairens, an *a capella* gospel singing group, who will perform as part of our program.

Sunday, November 20

Thanksgiving and the Holidays fill us with mixed feelings. There are moments of great joy and satisfaction. And, there are often feelings of being alone and without as much love as we need, or enough places to share our love. Today's reflections address how we might hold our hearts and others with compassion and grace, whether our blessings are apparent or not.

Sunday, November 27

Join us in our autumn "Harvest Celebration" intergenerational program, which will be led by retired elementary teacher Mary Mullen, botanist Galen Smith, and our Religious Education Director Bob Radford. Members of all ages in the congregation will participate together in expressing our thankfulness for individual people, groups of people, parts of nature, and anything else we feel thankful for. Kids and adults alike can look forward to making their own small pumpkin globe and putting stickers on it to indicate where maize, potatoes, pumpkins, wheat, cranberries, turkeys, and other traditional harvest-season foods were first domesticated. We will also get a chance to make a toy from cornhusks and feathers.

OUR SOCIETY

AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 20 PARISH MEETING

Prairie's fall business meeting will take place Sunday, **November 20**, at the meeting house, beginning at 11:45 a.m. Here is the agenda for the meeting:

AGENDA

1. Convene (Mike Briggs)
2. Minutes of April 2005 meeting
3. Report on 2006 budget (Norma Briggs, Finance)
4. Reports of officers and committees
 - Treasurer (Dirk Herr-Hoyman)
 - Denominational Affairs (Larry Nahlik)
 - Housing and Property (Ron Hornbeck)
 - Long Range Planning (Ken Skog)
 - Membership (Rick Ruecking)
 - Program (Mary Mullen/Susan Herr-Hoyman)
 - Religious Education (Rachel Long/Paula Pachciarz)
 - Social Action (Sarah Lord)
5. Resolution proposed by Bob Park. *Resolved: That Prairie's growth planning should be guided by a realistic assessment of the financial capability of the adult membership of Prairie.*
6. New business at the call of at least ten members
7. Adjourn

Mike Briggs, President

THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH



Last Wednesday Prairie got a call from a fellow UU. He was visiting Madison to see his son play in the marching band at the UW Homecoming. He had assumed he could get overnight reservations once he got to town. As we all know, that was not working out! So, he was calling UU congregations to see if any of us could help him.

There is a program nationwide called Homecomings, where UU's can offer a bed and breakfast arrangements for traveling UU's. Scott, my partner, and I have used it many times with great results. However, our South Central Wisconsin UU cluster of five congregations does not have such a program. So, he was not having much luck.

I faced all the barriers one might experience in such a conversation. Of course, I felt empathy. I felt a desire to offer to check whether anyone at Prairie could do it for the weekend. But, also, I worried if he was reputable. And, ultimately, I remembered the tradition at the time of the writing of the Hebrew Scriptures. That tradition always made room for a traveling stranger. Partly this was because anyone without protection at night in a nomadic culture could be at risk in the elements and for criminal assault. Partly this was done as it was safer to be sure to know people traveling in your neighborhood, rather than to be estranged from them. And, largely this was done because of the tradition of courtesy and hospitality in that culture.

These days, we know that safe places for housing are available to people with means. Our complex culture demands police officers, firefighters, and laws and rules which control the possibilities of danger on our streets. And, we have developed a highly self-oriented version of values and protocol for such occasions.

So, when you think about it, it is hard to open one's home to a stranger in our day and age. I decided to ask for a reference from his minister. This seemed like a wise step to assure others and myself of his character. I told him I would do what I could and get back to him. I placed the call. I had planned to ask at the Board meeting that night, but decided I needed to hear from the minister first. She called the next morning and gave him high marks. Scott,

and I had decided he could stay with us -- and so, invited him to stay in our spare room.

On Sunday morning he said he would like to make a donation to the congregation in return for having found refuge in his time of need. I gladly accepted a \$150 check from him on behalf of Prairie.

I have pondered this experience since then and feel that there are two lessons which I draw from it: (1) whatever your source of spiritual wisdom for pulling you to higher standards and actions in a complex world, be sure to turn to it in a time of need. Be you a student of the Biblical stories and parables, a Humanist who loves the works of John Dewey, a Buddhist who revels in the beautiful words of Thich Nhat Hahn, or a Pagan who follows the writings of Starhawk, you can each benefit from the wisdom of those who have mapped out the crevices of the heart and soul. And, (2) resources and support will come from the most unlikely places.

*The Rev. Jody Whelden
Consulting Minister*

ORIENTATION SESSIONS: OUR RELIGIOUS PATHS, OUR RELIGIOUS FUTURES

The Membership Committee invites you to an interactive orientation series to Prairie UU Society under the theme "Our Religious Paths, Our Religious Futures." New members, friends, and the curious are invited and welcome to attend any or all sessions.

The Rev. Jody Whelden will kick off our first session with some perspectives on the 'big tent' of Unitarian Universalist beliefs. Then it's our turn to share our religious paths through art and conversation and tell the stories that brought us to Prairie's door. But hang onto your hats 'cause we'll glimpse the long history of our denomination: is this really a religion? Gossip about UU's. And what is that bit about Transylvania anyway? Chalice and hymnals. Mysteries and confabulation abound.

Along the way we'll draw on the symbols and the influences of our spiritual lives. You will pick up the history of Prairie Society from its roots in the century past while the scars we've so richly earned will be bared for your amusement. Old members will want to assure this is not misrepresented. The fun comes in when considering our future religious

adventures. We'll share the religious paths we expect to travel and return to the drawing board to envision the ideals of a Society for our children. Brave souls will grapple with the strange world of by-laws, standing committees, board meetings and some will dare future commitments. Welcome at any session. Help orient our future.

At Prairie on:

- Thursdays, **November 10 and 17**, 7:00 - 8:45 p.m. with light refreshments
- Sunday, **November 13**, 12:30 - 2 p.m. (possible potluck decided in our first meeting)

RSVP to Rick Ruecking 838-8540 or ruecking@hotmail.com. Children are welcome (we'll need to know for childcare), but these discussions are not for the immature nor faint of heart. Rated PG-13, due to violence and innuendo.

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEET NOVEMBER 29

The next Prairie Elders meeting is Tuesday, **November 29**, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Note that this is the fifth Tuesday, a departure from our usual meeting time. Please bring a small snack to pass.

Discussion Topic: *What, in your lifetime, are you most thankful for?* Led by Mona Birong. This promises to be a fascinating discussion given the rich lives of Prairie Elders participants.

Location: Oakwood Village West, Oaks Building, Second Floor Exercise Room. Newcomers, please call contacts listed below for directions or rides.

Program: Typically, three minutes of topic-related comments per person gives us all an opportunity to share and allows time for discussion, snacks, visiting, and the necessary comings and goings of those who must juggle appointments and transportation.

Shuttle: Warren Hagstrom will wait at the entrance to Oaks from 1:30-1:50 p.m. To shuttle anyone who needs it. Look for a tan VW Passat wagon.

For further information please call Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Doleta Chapru 238-4970.

Doleta Chapru

HUMANIST UNION MEETS NOVEMBER 6

“Building an Ethical Society (or Whatever Happened to the Enlightenment)” will be the luncheon discussion topic of the Humanist Union at our Sunday, **November 6** meeting.

The discussion will be led by JoAnn and Thomas Hoepfner, adjunct leaders of the [Ethical Humanist Society of Greater Chicago](#). They will answer questions about their historic society and the Ethical Culture movement, and give their perspective on programs for kids and how much adults can learn when teaching them.

Those coming for lunch are asked to bring a plate of finger food to share. Lunch starts at noon, and the discussion is scheduled to go from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. For more information, call Bob at 273-8775.

Bob Park

WHERE IS THAT FLAG?

Has anyone seen the United Nations flag? We were unable to locate it for our UN program on October 23. If you know where it is tucked away, or if anyone borrowed it, please let Larry Nahlik know.

CRADLE CLUB BABY ITEMS DONATIONS

Don't forget to pick up that new baby item for the Cradle Club when you're out shopping. Check your local Walgreens; your gift need not come from Neiman-Marcus!

Pat Watkins

MODIFICATION OF PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINES AND PUBLICATION DATES

To avoid conflict with holidays, the deadline and publication dates for the Prairie Fire in November and December will be advanced by one week:

<u>Deadline Date</u>	<u>Publication Date</u>
November 13	November 18
November 27	December 2
December 11	December 16

The normal newsletter deadlines of the first and third Sundays will resume in January.

FITCHBURG BUILDING COMMITTEE AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Prairie has succeeded in purchasing 1.6 acres of land for a new building adjacent to Eagle school in Fitchburg Center !! The closing was on Friday, September 16, 2005. The land was purchased using loans from members and friends as well as funds from Prairie reserves held in Certificates of Deposit.

The Fundraising Committee and Fitchburg Building Committee have been working in earnest to jointly plan for (1) a building that will meet our program aspirations and (2) the means to afford the building. To work toward these goals we have (1) had discussions with First Society about possible support; (2) met with Boris Frank, a Madison fundraising consultant; and (3) carefully revised the program for the building (kinds and sizes of rooms needed) to meet our needs but keep costs down.

Mike Briggs and Orange Schroeder met with Alan Knox, President of FUS, and Norma Briggs attended a stewardship meeting of FUS to determine ways we might gain support.

We learned that First Society is currently focused on adding buildings/rooms to their current space and expects to be raising six to seven million dollars. We have been invited to continue to attend the FUS stewardship meetings and we may learn more as their planning continues.

There has been joint discussion affirming that it is desirable to support expansion of UUism in South Central Wisconsin and that congregations should continue to collaborate on projects to help growth, e.g., joint adult RE, joint advertising. So, currently we are not aware that they may help with funding, but we have agreement that it is a joint goal to collaborate in ways to expand UUism in the area.

Boris Frank, a local fundraising consultant, met with the Fundraising and Building committees on October 12 and suggested we need to put together a “patchwork” of ideas for funding. These include:

- Have Prairie members and friends provide “sweat equity” in building/finishing the building.
- Seek a weekday renter such as a day care center – solicit interest through Community Coordinated Child Care, and/or seek a non-profit organization renter.
- Obtain a Mortgage.

- Obtain a Chalice Lighters grant (about \$10,000).
- Use Green design (save money on upkeep) – seek a grant for green features from MG&E or Wisconsin Focus on Energy.
- Seek a major donor.

Other points made concerning fundraising include

- 80% of funds raised are likely to come from 5% to 10% of donors.
- Could get a mortgage for a 20% down payment.
- Capital pledge requests are now for longer periods, e.g., 3, 5, 10 years.
- Take advantage of fundraising consulting advice available from the UUA.
- Prepare an overall strategic plan to guide our broader efforts.

At a joint meeting of the Fundraising Committee and the Fitchburg Building Committee, we carefully reviewed the program needs – for Sunday programs, youth RE, fellowship, offices, and worked out a draft plan for program needs while keeping down the building cost.

One factor in the planning was to take into account that the Eagle School Board decided that it could not make a long-term commitment to let us use some of their parking on Sunday since they did not know their own long-term needs. They are willing to let us use some parking for special events. This means we will need a plan that allows for one parking spot on our land per 5 people seated in our main meeting room.

Here is our current, more detailed thinking about a design. We will ask BWZ architects for design drawings where the main meeting room has fire-rated space for 200 people – 1600 sq. ft. plus a 300 sq. ft. stage. This size space would require 40 parking spaces. Comfortable seating may be about 150. An appealing feature would be a deck outside of the main meeting room. We judged that this space would support a membership of about 250 (one service each Sunday), termed a mid-sized congregation by the UUA, with room for up to 80 students in a nursery and K-12.

The plan would include 6 RE classrooms, some of which could be opened to allow for a larger RE meeting space.

Adjacent to the main meeting room would be a multipurpose room – library, choir practice space, cry room. There would also be a fellowship hall that would include the lobby/entry area. Adjacent to the fellowship hall would be a commercial kitchen. Two offices would have space for a number of staff. Total space may be about 9,500 sq. ft. If there was a modest cost of \$120 per sq. ft., the total cost for the building alone may be \$1,140,000. There would be extra costs for landscaping, parking, and architect fees. This is a very preliminary figure and may change.

In addition to having design drawings prepared, here are other current activities of the committees.

- Request that the Board include \$900 in the 2006 budget for a UUA fundraising Assessment visit in January.
- Arrange a time to visit the UU congregation in Appleton to learn of their growth and building process (possibly Sunday, November 13).
- Look at the smaller churches on Old Sauk Road and report on their features.
- Check on grass pave systems for parking.
- Ask the Long Range Planning Committee to prepare a draft of a strategic plan for the Board and Parish to approve.

Members and recent participants in combined meetings of the Fitchburg Building Committee and Fundraising Committee include Orange Schroeder, Norma Briggs, Ken Skog, Mary Mullen, Larry Nahlik, Barb Park, Judy Skog, Mike Briggs, Anne Urbanski, Barb Chatterton, Rick Ruecking, and Marilyn Ruecking.

Ken Skog, Co-chair of the Fundraising Committee

CIVIL RIGHTS BOOK IS DECEMBER BOOK CLUB SELECTION

“Daddy and Roger and ’em shot ’em a nigger.” Those words were whispered to ten-year-old Tim Tyson by a playmate. The adult Timothy Tyson, son of the white United Methodist minister whose family was driven out of Oxford, North Carolina, for trying to get the town to face its racism after the murder of the 23-year-old Vietnam veteran Henry Marrow, is now a professor of Afro-American studies at the UW–Madison. He says this event and the hell that

broke loose in Oxford because of it during the summer of 1970 marked him “for good and forever.” His biography and history, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story*, is the Prairie Book Club selection for December 4. Interestingly enough, it was required summer reading for all incoming freshmen to the University of North Carolina during the summer of 2004.

The Prairie Book Club is open to all who have read the book or just wish to hear Prairie people discuss the book. Bring food to share. Usually the discussion starts about 11:30 and ends by 1:30.

I highly recommend two Internet resources to check out before reading the book. One is a full-length interview and call-in program with author Timothy Tyson and his father, Vern Tyson, on the North Carolina public radio station WUNC, Chapel Hill, NC. Follow the link from www.ibiblio.org/wunc_archives/sot/index.php?p=101. During the program the author reads a brief section from his book where he tells about his dad taking him and his brother to see a KKK rally. He also tells how his own daughter here in Madison came home from school saying, “I thought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was black.” The brochure she got at school made King look white and just said that he had died, not referring at all to his assassination. The interview ends with the Huddie Ledbetter version of the song, “Blood Done Sign My Name.” A detailed written review by Cynthia Greenlee-Donnell is available at AOL’s Black Voices site: <http://archive.blackvoices.com/reviews/books/bk20040622blood.asp>.

Mary Mullen

MEMBERSHIP

Please note these updates:

Jolien Connor

814 Burbank Pl., Madison, WI 53705

232-0556

joliennconnor (at) yahoo.com

Jack and Betty Jallings

Meriter Terraces, 345 West Main St., Madison, WI 53703

[*Ed. Note: @ is replaced by (at) to keep these addresses from being used by unscrupulous individuals.*]

PROGRAM

RECOMMENDED READING/VIEWING

Resources mentioned in the October 23 program, "The U.N. Millennium Development Goals":

- "Gleaners," video recommended by Galen Smith
- "The Global Cafe," a video on the UN Millennium Goals, recommended by Orange/Dean Schroeder
- *The End of Poverty* by Jeffrey Sachs, a book recommended by Cindy Haq

I DREAM A WORLD

by Langston Hughes

I dream a world where we
No other one will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
and peace its paths adorn.

I dream a world where all
will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.

A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
and everyone is free,

Where wretchedness will hang its head
and joy, like a pearl,
attends the need of humankind--
Of such I dream.

(sung by the Prairie UU choir on October 23)

Singing the Journey songbook supplement

Please buy _____ songbooks at \$15.00 each for Prairie.
I'd like to have the songbook/s dedicated

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

from _____

Please make checks payable to Prairie UU Society and
give them, along with this slip, to Orange Schroeder.
Deadline for this order: November 10.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

BE A FRIEND: BE A TEACHER

What an exciting month October was for the Children's RE program. Our kids are making friends and our activities are making an impact.

And how can we support your family? What do you think can make our classes more fun and valuable? We look forward to our inter-generation service to celebrate Thanksgiving. Give a call and we'll talk!

The Fall Frolic was a fun overnight at Prairie, with over 30 people playing together. The next Sunday, over twenty people raked leaves at four sites, some getting cookies and juice on the job. We completed the first round of family-teacher meetings, giving an opportunity to discuss the year's plan and materials. For me, seeing how those tasks happened and then talking about the RE commitments and future at Jody's Start-Up were exciting and insightful. Thanks to all the adults, teens and kids that participated.

In our program, there are several things we're working on. We continue to talk with Reeb, Sauk City and First Unitarian ministers, youth and advisors. Collaborative projects being considered are adult RE, a Harvest Service the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving, and the District Assembly in April. We'll do a second teacher orientation and substitute preparation session---two hours Sunday, **November 6** after service---to talk with adults interested in teaching or volunteering to help in our RE program. Is there an activity that you've enjoyed doing with Prairie kids; can you help us do it again?

It is important to think about how kids see our church, commitments and community. They come through us. Our sharing can make UU beliefs joyous and helpful. Thank you. See you in church.

Bob Radford, Director of Religious Education

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Society Home Page: prairie.madison.uua.org

News Group: groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/

Views Group: groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/

Social Action: socialaction.madisonwi.us

Humanist Union: <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>

Long Range Planning: www.execpc.com/~prairieu/planning (no space)

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

ART SALE AT FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY

First Unitarian Society is excited to be hosting our Fourth Annual Art Sale on **Sunday, November 6**, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Lower Meeting House.

Artwork includes jewelry, origami, paper boxes and journals, handweaving, decorative gourds, mandalas, photography, needle-felted dolls, clay sculpture, fabric art, talking sticks, batik, pottery, and more!

UUSC EXPERIENCE IN COFFEE LANDS

Travel to Guatemala January 14-22 to witness the impact of our coffee choices on small-scale farmers. While the world price for coffee rose in the last year, small-scale coffee farmers and their families continue struggling to make a viable living. Many coffee farmers in Central America and in the developing world are still at risk of losing their land and many out-of-work coffee pickers and their families go hungry every year. The good news is that to date over 700 UU congregations, organizations and individuals have joined with UUSC, Equal Exchange, and our farmer partners in building a Fair Trade alternative. This winter you have a unique opportunity to visit Guatemala, meet other human rights activists, and learn how to further grow our movement! Join this delegation to experience how Fair Trade promotes human rights. Put a face on human rights in this intergenerational (18 years and up) travel seminar and meet:

- Coffee farmers who participate in fair trade
- Cooperative organizations that unite them
- Guatemalan activists and human rights orgs

Request an application from justworks@uusc.org or call 800-388-3920 by **November 14**. The delegation is open to UUSC Coffee Project supporters 18 years and older. The group size is restricted, so not all applicants are guaranteed a spot on the delegation.

About the UUSC Coffee Project

The UUSC Coffee Project is a way for you to support democratically-organized farmer cooperatives and guarantee they receive fair prices for their products. At the same time, you support UUSC's human rights work in coffee-growing countries.

For details, visit <http://www.uusc.org/coffeeproject>

Raking Leaves at Fall Service Sunday

Photo by Bob Radford



Fall Frolic

Photos by Carl Wacker

