



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 6, 2006

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 8

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Evangelical Christian Casserole,"
presented by Steve Vorass

*11:45 a.m. Book Club lunch and discussion

Wednesday, January 11

*6:00 p.m. Meditation Group at Prairie

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, January 15

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

9:00 a.m. RE Committee meeting

*10:00 a.m. "Religious Humanism: A UU
Bloodline," presented by the Rev. Jody Whelden

Wednesday, January 18

*6:00 p.m. Meditation Group at Prairie

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

7:30 p.m. Prairie Board meeting at Prairie

Thursday, January 19

*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers potluck and talk at
Dave and Marcia Johnson's residence, 313 Glenway,
Madison

Sunday, January 22

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Christianity from a Lutheran
Perspective," presented by the Rev. Margo Peterson
11:30 a.m. Mystery Friends signup

Sunday, January 22 to Sunday, January 29

*Prairie IHN volunteers work at Midvale Lutheran

Tuesday, January 24

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

Wednesday, January 25

*6:00 p.m. Meditation Group at Prairie

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, January 29

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. RE Service Sunday

*10:00 a.m. "Introduction to Hinduism," presented
by Dr. Frank Morales

11:30 a.m. Mystery Friends signup

11:45 a.m. OWL family-teacher orientation

Sunday, February 5

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m. RE high school class OWL first session

11:30 a.m. Mystery Friends kickoff

*11:45 a.m. Prairie Book Club potluck and
discussion

Saturday, February 11

5:00 p.m. Wild Wintering overnight at Prairie

Friday, April 21 to Sunday, April 23

*Central Midwest District Assembly, at the Madison
Concourse Hotel

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, JAN. 15

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, January 8

Steve Vorass will present the first of two programs, "Evangelical Christian Casserole: What leftovers went into today's strange-looking meal?" The contemporary Evangelical Movement has developed a distinct narrative construct, a story that gives meaning to the lives of millions of Americans.

To those outside the movement, some of the beliefs of Evangelicals can seem rather strange. This presentation will explore the sources for this narrative construct, from Intelligent Design through the Rapture and the Glorious Appearing. Steve will follow with another program February 5, about the archetypes of antichrist and apocalypse.

Sunday, January 15

The Rev. Jody Whelden, Consulting UU Minister, presents "Religious Humanism: A UU Bloodline." Religious Humanism was developed and practiced within Unitarian Universalism, going back many decades. Today's remarks will reflect on that history, the contribution of Humanism to liberal religion, and the much-debated state of things today.

Sunday, January 22

Rachel Long will begin her six-session lay ministry, "World Religions - Know Your Neighbor." New Prairie member Rebecca Malke-Eligenti, who has a Bachelors' degree in world religions, will be assisting with this ministry. They will bring in leaders and practitioners of different religions to educate us about their religion's core beliefs and practices. Most importantly, they will help us understand how their faith enriches them, and what values bridge the differences between us.

Our guest speaker for the first session on January 22 will be Reverend Margo Peterson. She will speak on "Christianity from a Lutheran Perspective." Martin Luther was a well-educated monk who struggled to see love or justice in God as presented by the Catholic Church of his day. Luther's radical life change and subsequent teachings and preachings still affect the Christian faith and challenge its followers to live a life of humble forgiveness and obedience.

Margo identifies herself as a life-long Christian in the Lutheran tradition. She attended Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago as a "second career" student. Margo was ordained as a Lutheran pastor in May 2003 and accepted a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Warren, Illinois, where she presently serves. She grew up in Milwaukee, and now resides in Monroe, Wisconsin with her husband and three sons.

OUR SOCIETY

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTERS

If you write a holiday newsletter for friends and family, we invite you to share it with Prairie members by putting a copy in the decorated folder on the back table of the meeting room.



BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

On **Sunday, January 8**, the Prairie Book club will discuss *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* by Barack Obama, the junior U.S. Senator from Illinois. This personal memoir starts when, Obama, son of a white American mother and black African father, learns of his father's death in an accident. He traces both his mother's and father's ancestry and comes to terms with it. Barack Obama graduated from Harvard Law School in 1991, where he served as the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*. He has worked as a community organizer, civil rights attorney, and law professor. 408 pages.

Book Club selection for **Sunday, February 5**: *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad. This Swedish war correspondent spent 5 months living in the home of the bookseller Shah Mohammad Rais just after the fall of the Taliban. Shah Kahn, as she calls him, was a complex, clever, prosperous, educated, liberal man who sold books "through the regimes of the Afghan kings of the 1970s, the Soviet invasion and the subsequent guerilla war, the Mujahadeen coup, and its overthrow by the Taliban."

He had been imprisoned many times, had his shop destroyed, and twice he took his family to Pakistan for safety's sake. However, Seierstad says he ruled his family like an autocrat and she found it difficult

to deal with how he treated the women. He had discarded his first wife and married a 16-year-old woman.

Interestingly, the bookseller reacted very explosively to her book. He said he told her that everything in the book was true, but that it was too honest.

For information about the book and an interview with the author, see <http://news.bookweb.org/features/1820.html>. Read what the bookseller himself says about this book at <http://www.kabulguide.net/kbl-bookseller.htm>.

Mary Mullen

MEDITATION GROUP FORMING

Please join us for meditation at Prairie on Wednesday evenings, starting **January 11**.

We will start at 6:00 p.m. and meditate for 1/2 hour. Please be prompt, since the time is short. We will sample silent and guided meditation, and possibly toning meditation, on different weeks. We will finish in time to participate in the Midweek Potluck, if you wish.

There may need to be a small fee to join the group. You may join at any time. Hope to see you there!

Jody Whelden and Judy Skog

SPANISH SPEAKERS MEETS JANUARY 19

The Prairie Spanish Speakers group will bring the potluck and conversation to the winter home of Dave and Marcia Johnson, 313 Glenway. The gathering on **Thursday, January 19**, will start at 6:30 p.m. Call for directions: 441-0532.

PRAIRIE ELDERS REPORT

Prairie Elders will meet **Tuesday, January 24, 2006**, at 2:00 p.m. Topic: friends who have been especially important in our lives. There is no December meeting.

At our November meeting, fifteen of us shared heartwarming stories of thankfulness. George Calden also gave a moving recollection of Pat Cautley's service on Martin Luther King. King was assassinated a few days before the scheduled service.

Doleta Chapru

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK WEEK JANUARY 22-29

Prairie next assists Midvale Lutheran in hosting homeless families the fourth week in January. This crucial service organized by the Interfaith Hospitality Network (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.

RIGHT RELATIONS TASK FORCE NOTES

On Thursday, December 15, the Task Force on Right Relations met for the first time. Attending were the Rev. Jody Whelden, Rachel Herr-Hoyman, Larry Nahlik, and Mary Somers. Nancy Schraufnagel will also be participating. Our job is to create a draft document on interpersonal relations within the congregation before the end of May.

We each discussed why we are volunteering for the Right Relations Task Force, and some of the issues we hope to address.

We also outlined some rules to govern ourselves during these group meetings, which will occur twice a month:

- Sharing issues without naming people, gossiping, or making judgments on others.
- Confidentiality
- No cell phones
- Light Chalice at beginning of meeting and have reading
- Ensure everyone has a chance to speak on an issue
- Remember, our job is to create a draft agreement
- Speak from our own experiences
- If we want to share stories back in task force, ask permission and if you can use name
- Develop a process that provides opportunity for input

Please feel free to share your views on Right Relations with any of the members of the task force.

The January meetings will occur on the evenings of January 12 and 26.

Larry Nahlik

CHRISTMAS OBSERVED AT PRAIRIE

Forty merry souls attended our first-ever Christmas evening vesper service. Many participated in the readings that included the story of the birth of Jesus from the book of Luke and numerous selections from *A Child's Christmas in Wales*.



We sang 5 or 6 Christmas carols and Maggie Siegfried and Jeff Costello led us in John Lennon's "Happy Christmas (War is Over)." A simple folk dance led by the Briggses and the lighting of a menorah and blessings by Katrina, Orange and Eric also greatly contributed to the service.

We sang two hymns with only handheld candles and the tiny lights of the Christmas tree and enjoyed the candlelight so much that we transported the candles and our singing voices over to the Fitchburg site after a refreshment break. Two Unitarian snow people added to the group--they haven't "signed the book" yet but seemed to enjoy our continued festivities, as we all did.

Barbara Chatterton

PLAYREADING CANCELED FOR JANUARY

There will be no playreading on **January 7** as was originally scheduled. In February there will also be no playreading. Instead there will be an outing to the Overture Center for UW Arts Night, which showcases student performances in music, dance, and theater. For more information, contact Pat Watkins, 233-5795.

CONDOLENCES

The Prairie community extends its condolences to Robin Carre, Beth Potter, and their family on the recent death of Robin's mother, Barbara Carre.



GUEST AT YOUR TABLE CAMPAIGN IS ON

We passed out boxes on Sunday, January 1, to kick off the Guest at Your Table campaign. This is the 30th year that UU communities nationwide have participated in Guest at Your Table to educate our community about human needs and human rights, and to share our blessings.

This year the program emphasizes the work of UUSC, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, changing the world through these actions:

- strengthening workers' rights
- protecting the right to safe, affordable water
- defending civil liberties and democratic processes
- preserving the rights of vulnerable people after disasters

Place a Guest at Your Table box where you have your meals and keep it there for several weeks. During that time, imagine a different guest at your table with you each week. As often as you can, insert coins or bills into the box. We will collect the boxes next month at Prairie.

Dan Proud

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)

MEMBERSHIP

Updates:

Barbara Chatterton

2148 Allen Blvd. #2, Middleton, WI 53562

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HOW CAN WE MAKE A PATH?

I hope everyone had a good holiday season. We lit our last Chanukah candles yesterday and today we are taking down the tree. We've decided to celebrate the Chinese New Year—as we heard yesterday from the teens, there are several weeks before it starts. Maybe we can link our Guest At Your Table box to that holiday. It is nice our UU beliefs give us these options, and responsibilities.

After the service on Christmas evening, a group of us went to Prairie's new land to play and be part of that special spot. It was nice weather, almost warm, with cold wet snow that was great for making SNOW PEOPLE. The snow was deep—so much that we had trouble walking from the street onto the sidewalk. We had to cross six feet with snow one foot deep. That was hard, especially for short people and anyone using a cane. At first, several folks just walked or jumped across, each meeting their own need. Then, we had an idea to make a path, with some people first tromping down the snow in the same area and then everyone crossing there. No one was especially burdened or bothered—in fact, some folks didn't even know they were part of "the path process." Soon, we had a wide, straight walkway, which was welcoming, safe and easy. We didn't use the same plan for those playing in the snow. We wanted candles and statues and people scattered around with no paths!

You may see pictures of that night. I hope you notice the snow figures, holding their candles in quiet contemplation of the light and dark. I hope you notice the two groups of people, some playing in the snow and some standing on the sidewalk, each participating in their way. I hope you notice the candles in the snow, some randomly placed and some marking a path. And I hope you notice the path, made by the people leading and following as planned by the elders. Our UU faith is like that path—no one needs to get his or her shoes wet unless s/he wants to!

The RE Committee is meeting twice this month as we are figuring out some big questions. The upcoming classes include "Our Whole Lives (OWL)" which is a family-oriented discovery for multiple ages of sexuality and relations. We are defining how this year's Mystery Friends (was also

called Secret Friends) will work—can anyone volunteer to be the adult coordinator of this fun process?

We need your input and your caring support. Is there an activity or lesson that you can share with the Prairie kids—maybe by facilitating one of our activities?

Thank you. See you in church.

Bob Radford, Director of Religious Education

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

FUS SOCIAL JUSTICE FILM SERIES

The Social Justice Council at First Unitarian Society (FUS) will present the documentary, "The Pill", on **Saturday, January 21**, at the Meeting House, starting at 7:00 pm. This is a powerful film about the development of the pill and the impact it had on American society. There will be great food and drink, and lively conversation following the film showing. Please plan to join us. Questions? Call Suzie deBeers at 833-0506.

SHEDD AQUARIUM OUTING PLANNED

An All Ages Bus Trip to Shedd Aquarium is planned from First Unitarian Society (FUS) on **Saturday, February 11**, 2006. A bus will leave FUS at 7 a.m., stopping at the Dutch Mill Park & Ride, and arriving at Shedd at 10 a.m. We leave Shedd at 3 p.m. and return to FUS about 6 p.m.

The Aquarium visit will include a short presentation on freshwater resources, tours of Wild Reef and Amazon exhibits, and the Dolphin Show.

Cost:

- Adults (12+ including Seniors)—\$37.00 each
- Children (3 to 11)—\$27.50 each
- Children under 3 (if a seat is needed on the bus) — \$20.00 each

Cost includes bus fare and entrance to all the exhibits. Wheelchairs, walkers, and collapsible chairs can be accommodated on the bus.

Lunch is on your own. Bring your own brown bag lunch, buy cafeteria meals (\$8.00), or dine at the Soundings Restaurant (\$15.00).

The registration form can be found online at <http://www.fusmadison.org/adult/shedd.shtml>.

Questions? Please contact Liz Wessel at 608-238-9934 or via e-mail at lizwessel@yahoo.com.

Liz Wessel

SAVE THIS DATE FOR THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY: APRIL 21-23

Mark your calendar for April 21-23 for the District Assembly 2006 at the Madison Concourse Hotel. The keynote speaker will be Rabbi Michael Lerner. Rabbi Lerner founded the Tikkun Community, an international interfaith organization dedicated to peace, justice, non-violence, generosity, caring, love, and compassion. He chairs the Tikkun Community with Cornel West. Rabbi Lerner has been the editor of *TIKKUN Magazine* since 1986. *TIKKUN* was created as "the voice of Jewish liberals and progressives" and has become an influential publication in political and progressive circles.

UU CHURCH SPONSORS CHICAGO GETAWAY

The congregation of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist invites you to join us for a weekend getaway to the city of Chicago, **June 2 - 4, 2006**.

For the two nights of your stay, you'll be hosted by members of Countryside's congregation. The highlight of the weekend is a tour of the city's celebrated architecture: the soaring towers of the downtown area, acclaimed landmarks, and the new Millennium Park, which features the work of world-renowned architects, planners, artists, and designers.

For details on this unique opportunity, e-mail ccuu@ccuu.org or call 847-359-8440, extension 1.

JOIN THE UU COACHING NETWORK!

UU Coaching Network is a network of UUs who are professionally trained life coaches anchored in the UU principles of compassion, integrity, and inclusion. UUCN is growing and invites you to join! Please visit www.uucoachingnetwork.org to learn about the UUCN. If you are considering hiring a coach, UUCN is also a resource to find the right coach for you.

Lisa Martelli, UUCN Board Trustee

OTHER NEWS

HELP URGENTLY NEEDED FOR KATRINA APARTMENTS

Some of you may already be aware that I have been asked to empty all the apartments that were not used for the Katrina evacuees, plus the apartments that evacuees moved out of. Four of those apartments were left in very bad shape. Last week I asked for volunteers through e-mail and received 1 adult volunteer and 10 teens. They helped so much, but this Saturday is my last chance to get things done.

It has been a lot of work and I am exhausted. I cannot tell you the chore of emptying storage apartments, basements, and unused apartments.

On Saturday, St. Vincent De Paul is coming with a large truck to take items. I need volunteers who can help out on Saturday morning from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. packing dishes, glasses, bowls, and very small items. I need It would be helpful if volunteers could bring a boxes and newspaper for packing, and tape.

I really need your help. You can reach me at 575-4130 or just show up at 2333 Allied Drive on Saturday. Thank you.

Rita Adair

MUM and MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Monday, January 16, the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day will move to the Overture Center at 6:00 p.m. The annual Humanitarian Award recipient will be Mary Kay Baum, long-time director of the Madison-Area Urban Ministry (MUM) who has announced her retirement.

After the Overture program, interested people are invited to a further celebration with Mary Kay at the Villager, 2300 S. Park Street, where donations will be accepted to support MUM's work for social justice.

MUM also announces Circles of Support (A Group Encircling a Returnee) trainings and orientations from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, January 12 and Thursday, February 16.