



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 20, 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 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

*5:00 a.m. Men's Drop-in Shelter Breakfast volunteers at Grace Episcopal Church
*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
11:30 a.m. OWL family-teacher orientation

Wednesday, February 1

*6:00 p.m. Meditation Group at Prairie
6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Thursday, February 2

*6:00 p.m. WOW potluck at Prairie

Sunday, February 5

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. High school OWL class starts
*10:00 a.m. "God's Shadow: The Archetypes of Antichrist and Apocalypse," the second in a series on Evangelicalism presented by Steve Vorass
11:30 a.m. Mystery Friends names and numbers distribution
*11:45 a.m. Prairie Book Club potluck and discussion

Wednesday, February 8

*6:00 p.m. Meditation Group at Prairie
6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Saturday, February 11

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

Sunday, February 12

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Valentine's Day intergenerational service, presented by the RE program

Wednesday, February 15

*6:00 p.m. Meditation Group at Prairie
6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Thursday, February 16

7:00 p.m. IHN Volunteer training at Orchard Ridge UCC, 5501 Gilbert Rd.

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, FEB. 4

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

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.

Sunday, January 29

This is the second session of Rachel Long's 6-session lay ministry with Rebecca Malke-Eligenti, "World Religions—Know Your Neighbor." Our guest speaker for will be Dr. Frank Morales. His presentation, "Introduction to Hinduism," will include Hindu spiritual songs and a guided meditation.

Dr. Morales has been studying and practicing the ancient tradition of Yoga spirituality for over 30 years. In 1986 he was ordained as a brahmana (a spiritual teacher and priest) after living the life of a celibate monk for six years. He earned a Ph.D. in Languages and Cultures of Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and as a scholar specializes in Philosophy of Religion, Sanskrit, Hindu Studies, and History of Religion.

Dr. Morales is President of the American Hindu Association. He founded the American Institute for Yoga Studies, and the Web site [dharma_central](http://dharma_central.com). Both are dedicated to teaching the world about the benefits of spirituality, meditation, and Yoga.

Sunday, February 5

Steve Vorass will present the second service of Evangelicalism, "God's Shadow: The Archetypes of Antichrist and Apocalypse." The narrative construct of contemporary Evangelicalism has a strong emphasis on the "End Times." The apocalyptic theories of a form of fundamentalist theology called Dispensationalism have moved from the fringe to the mainstream of American culture.

Swiss psychologist Carl Jung developed a system for analyzing the individual and the collective unconscious through symbols called archetypes. This presentation will borrow a bit from Jung to explore the psychological implications of the current prominence of apocalyptic thinking among Evangelicals and others.

OUR SOCIETY

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK WEEK JANUARY 22-29

Greetings,

This is the last call to sign up for service to the homeless through the next Interfaith Hospitality Network shift. As of now, the jobs and dates listed below are open. And please check out the training opportunities also listed below. The 2-hour training is involving, very useful for understanding the mission and philosophy of IHN, and goes by fast. I strongly encourage new volunteers to take this training at some point. This is an excellent opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of homeless families by providing support until they have a home of their own.

SETUP: about 2 hours Sunday morning, January 22

BREAKFAST HOST: 6-7:30 a.m.
Friday, Jan. 27 and Sunday, Jan. 29

FOOD PREP: by 5 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 27 and Saturday, Jan. 28

DINNER HOST: 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Tuesday–Friday, Jan. 24–27

OVERNIGHT HOST: 7 p.m.–6 a.m.

Sunday–Tuesday, Jan. 22–24 and Saturday, Jan. 28

LAUNDRY (flexible)

SHOPPING (flexible)

TRANSPORTATION (flexible)

IHN TRAINING DATES AND LOCATIONS

Thursday, February 16, 7–9 p.m., Orchard Ridge
UCC 5501 Gilbert

Tuesday, March 14, 7–9 p.m., Day Center

Thursday, April 6, 7–9 p.m., Day Center

Tuesday, May 23, 7–9 p.m., Day Center

If you would like to help out or if have questions,
please e-mail or call me at pachwack (at)
sbcglobal.net or 273-4806.

Thanks,

Paula Pachciarz

SHARE YOUR PASSIONS!

It's the New Year, and even though summer seems far away, the Program Committee is thinking ahead to June, July, and August. The Committee cordially invites every single one of you to offer us your ideas for stimulating summer services. You could simply suggest topics or, better yet, consider presenting a program.

If you have a passion about something, a concern, a hobby, or something that relates to our principles and UUism, we would like to hear from you. Please let Mary Mullen (mmullen@chorus.net or 298-0843) or Susan Herr-Hoyman (250-0559 or herrs@danenet.org) know of your interest. By the way, the Program Committee provides considerable assistance if you should want to do a service on your topic of interest.

Susan Herr-Hoyman

WOW POTLUCK

Next WOW Prairie Women's potluck is Thursday, February 2, at Prairie at 6 p.m. All women and their friends are invited. Last month there were ten women who shared food and stories and all had so much fun and lots of laughs that in February we will repeat, just eat and check in with each other.

DO GOOD, FEEL GOOD, LIVE LONGER

Have you ever heard of "Helper's High"? It's a term created by researchers who have found that the satisfaction people get from volunteering can cause a rush of euphoria, followed by a longer period of calm. They believe that this feeling may reduce stress, raise the endorphin level, and strengthen the immune system, all of which could lead to a longer life span. (Carmela Fragomeni, *The Hamilton Spectator*, April 24, 2002, and Marilyn Elias, *USA Today*, November 14, 2002)

A group of Prairie volunteers can certainly vouch for the short-term effects after spending the early morning hours whipping up breakfast and packing lunches for 70 or so men at the Grace Episcopal Homeless Shelter in December. (The data isn't in yet on whether we'll live longer.) Mei-Lien and Randy Converse; Dirk, Rachel, and Susan Herr-Hoyman; and Paula Pachciarz and Judy Wacker came to work (and they did!) and had fun doing it. The lively supervision of night manager Glen Braud played no small part in making the experience a positive one. We kept the good vibe going afterward when we went to a restaurant for our own breakfast. Dave and Marcia Johnson made the very important contribution of buying and delivering the food the day before.

If you'd like to give yourself the chance of experiencing Helper's High through volunteering at the Men's Shelter in the next few months, or through helping with the Interfaith Hospitality Network January 22–29, please contact Paula Pachciarz at 273-4806 or pachwack (at) sbcglobal.net.

COMING HUMANIST UNION DISCUSSIONS

The Humanist Union meets monthly at Prairie, usually on a Sunday, starting with a light potluck lunch at noon, followed by a presentation and discussion 12:20–1:30 pm.

Coming programs:

Jan. 29—"Tom Paine's AGE OF REASON Today," led by Warren Hagstrom (on Tom Paine's birthday)

Feb. 12—"A Darwin Day Celebration with UW Prof. Ronald Numbers" (on Charles Darwin's birthday)

See <http://humanist.madisonwi.us> for more details.

BOOK CLUB SELECTION FOR FEBRUARY

Book Club selection for **Sunday, February 5:** *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad.

The Swedish war correspondent Asne Seierstad 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 MEETS BEFORE MIDWEEK MEAL

Have you always wanted to try meditation, but didn't know how to do it? Would you like an opportunity to reduce your stress in the middle of the week? Would you like to get together with like-minded UUs from other churches?

Here is your chance. Our minister, Jody Whelden, and members of Prairie UU Society have started a meditation group that meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. at Prairie. We welcome your participation in the potluck as well.

Rev. Jody Whelden and Judy Skog

THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH

In the continuing series on growing a congregation, I found some guidelines of things to be sure we are doing if we want to grow. Check this list out and think about which ones you are involved in.

Which ones are you willing to get involved in? What can you do? It can be a small step—like checking out the Web site below and reading more... or bringing up the topic at dinner...or calling the Membership Committee and offering to work.

A congregation's readiness to welcome new members shows in many ways. These characteristics include the following:

- Having knowledge of the various aspects of congregational growth
- Having a clear mission to galvanize members and attract newcomers
- Taking ongoing leadership training for congregational leaders and program staff
- Making a conscious decision to intentionally welcome newcomers
- Wanting to share the "Good News" of Unitarian Universalism with others
- Creating and maintaining visibility in the community
- Learning how welcoming the congregation's culture and practices are
- Having and implementing welcoming, greeter, and membership practices
- Generating accessibility awareness
- Developing skills in working in a diverse community
- Providing opportunities for members' ongoing spiritual development

The congregation can provide a place for new members to experience spiritual growth while the existing members can grow spiritually in the work that must be done to get ready to welcome new people.

www.uua.org/cde/education/MembershipJourney.pdf

*The Rev. Jody Whelden, Consulting Minister
Office: 608-271-8218; Home Office: 608-231-9707*



NEW ADULT CLASS: WHAT CAN THE NATURAL STEP DO FOR YOUR CHURCH?

I will be offering a 10-week adult RE class in the Natural Step at Prairie starting in March (date to be determined). The Natural Step was used by eco-municipalities in Sweden to achieve amazing results in 5-10 years toward reducing their CO2 emissions, becoming more energy efficient and self-sufficient, reducing their solid waste, and improving their air and water quality, among other things. In 12 years Sweden reduced the amount of oil burned by their district heating systems from 85% to 23%. The Eskilstuna CHP Biomass plant (producing electricity and heat) is 90% efficient in contrast to conventional power plants at 35%. If truckers practice eco-driving, they can reduce their emissions by 20-30%, using the same conventional trucks.

Are you excited by this? Let's look at their accomplishments through the lens of a new church, or a remodeled one (in the case of First). I am very excited to share this information with you.

The class will cost \$30 (\$25 covers the cost of the book). I will look into less expensive ways to make the books available.

Please let me know if you are interested in the class.

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.

CONDOLENCES

The Prairie community extends its condolences to Anne Urbanski and her family following the death of Anne's mother, Marie Rose Trager Reardon, on January 15 in New Orleans, following a long illness.



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 during the month of February at Prairie.

Dan Proud

HOUSEMATE NEEDED

Fully furnished (right down to the linens!) 1-2 rooms available to rent in a member's home near Prairie. Includes many amenities... all utilities, cable TV and internet in room, semi-private bath, kitchen privileges, and more.

One room for \$500/month or 2 for \$800. Will also consider 2 people for a total of \$1000/month. Share with one adult and 2 cats. Photo and more info at <http://madison.craigslist.org/roo/124099132.html>

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/

THE CRADLE CLUB INITIATIVE REPORT

A zillion thanks to all of you who contributed to the Cradle Club initiative, which took place from October 23 until November 27. We collected baby items and money to be sent to the The Southwest Indian Relief Council, for distribution to impoverished Native American mothers of newborn infants who have completed a required number of prenatal care and parenting classes. This project was one way in which the UUA-UNO was involving congregations in addressing two of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, namely #4 and #5, which are to "reduce child mortality" and "to improve maternal health." The following items were contributed by Prairie members:

2 packets cotton swabs
1 pair cotton panties
1 Nasal Aspirator
1 teething ring
1 Electric Heating Pad
8 pacifiers
1 bottle brush
1 Russ Teddy Bear
6 baby bottles
3 travel cups
1 Babyview car mirror
1 washcloth set
1 waterproof fitted crib pad
1 thermal crib blanket
7 Carter sleep and play suits
1 container of 140 baby wipes
1 packet of 30 JMK baby wipes
1 bottle of baby oil
\$90 in cash.

Thank you all so much!

Pat Watkins

MEMBERSHIP

Please note these updates:

Mike and Norma Briggs
briggslaw (at) yahoo.com

Rachel Siegfried
Covenant Oaks, 6165 Mineral Point Rd., Madison,
WI 53705

Jerry Simmons
jersim47 (at) yahoo.com

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

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WE LEARN BY BEING TOGETHER

It sure feels like Spring ... but remember that Winter is still here! We just went to the dog park and got very muddy. I hope this isn't global warming. Maybe we need to learn more about that—do our UU beliefs give a responsibility to do something?

We've been talking and thinking about the Story for All Ages in our Sunday morning services. I enjoyed thinking about how a long time (13 billion years) and a long ribbon (100 feet) help us understand when the dinosaurs roamed and roared.

Some kids like some stories and some don't - how do we help our story tellers and listeners do a good job? I think the story is an important part of our Service and our time together. What do you like?

We have a lot going on in Prairie RE. A list includes Mystery Friends, Winter Service Sunday, Wild Wintering overnight, OWL classes, a meditation series (Wednesday evenings ... great for adults and old kids), and a Valentine's Day intergenerational Service on February 12. We need lots of people being together to make these things work well. Sometimes, it isn't easy having fun!

Thank you. See you in church.

Bob Radford, Director of Religious Education

WILD WINTERING

Kids & volunteers wanted!

Saturday-Sunday, February 11-12

Starts at 5:00 pm on Saturday, at PRAIRIE

We eat supper Saturday & breakfast Sun.
We go inside & outside - dress wisely!
We spend the night - those who want.
We celebrate the season changes.

Ends Sunday 10 a.m. Then, we go to church.

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE WINTER

WE DO MANY FUN ACTIVITIES:

Flashlight Tag	Snow Balling
Meditation	Campfire
Crafts	Games

STAYING OVERNIGHT IF YOU WISH

Things to Bring:

FLASHLIGHT
OVERNIGHT GEAR (SLEEP BAG,
TOOTHBRUSH, SOAP, ETC.)
FRUIT TO EAT (2-3 pieces, Some to
eat and some to share)
BE PREPARED FOR COLD WEATHER!!

MYSTERY FRIENDS

When: a six-week program, starting with signup on either **January 22 or 29** at Sunday Service. Then, friends will be matched (a mystery process) and given a ID number on **February 5**. Then, one letter is written by each friend per week 2/12, 2/19, 2/26 and 3/5 (give some clues). Then, a party after Service on **March 5**; can you guess your friend?

Where: signups and mailboxes and the party are at Prairie, downstairs and upstairs.

Who: all Prairie children and adults; sign up to be matched to a mystery friend.

What: Mystery Friends is a chance for kids and adults to get to know each other by sending letters to each other each week for a month. Anyone interested can join and will be matched to another person. Each matched pair gets a number so they don't know each other.

Their mission: figure out who is sending these letters! Each Sunday, we'll have a mailbox up & downstairs. Put your letter in (clearly marked "to kid #4" or "to adult #18). In the letter, tell about yourself ... give clues like what foods you like or what you think about and ask about your mystery friend. Make it hard or easy to be guessed. On the day of the fourth letter, we'll have a party after Service and friends will meet each other PLUS we'll have snacks & music & FUN!

SERVICE SUNDAY

When: **Sunday, January 29**, start at 10:00 a.m.

Where: at Prairie, downstairs

Who: all Prairie children & their guests and adult volunteers, all ages

What: Service Sunday is a Sunday when we'll work on two or three projects that will help our community. It's a chance for kids to do important things. We have snacks and FUN!

How we need help: Adult volunteers are needed to supply the ideas & materials. We may:

- Help doing breakdown for IHN for Prairie week
- Bake cookies for Men's Shelter or IHN
- Make tote bags for Allied Drive's Parish Nurse to distribute to incoming families
- Help beautify Boys & Girls Club at Allied Drive with planting projects; maybe "adopt a seed".

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

A CONCERT OF EARTH AND SPIRIT

Friday, January 27, 7 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church West
13001 W. North Ave., Brookfield, WI

Acclaimed acoustic guitarist Jim Scott will perform an evening of his songs of peace and the environment on January 27, 2006. With insight and more than a little humor, Scott makes his case for harmony in the world with a jazz/world folk music styling and great guitar technique in accompaniment. General admission is \$12 for adults and \$8 for children; doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Scott's most recent project has been compiling "The Earth and Spirit Songbook," an anthology of songs of earth and peace, and he has added many of these songs to his concert repertoire.

He has released several CDs and taught at numerous colleges, including Oberlin College in Ohio, and conducted workshops throughout the country.

"My messages are of ecology and social conscience, but also of optimism," Scott says. "I believe in the power of song and self-expression for change."

For More Information: The Rev. Suzelle Lynch
(262) 782-3535 rev.lynych@uucw.org

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. and return about 6 p.m.

Included are a presentation on freshwater resources, tours of Wild Reef and Amazon exhibits, and the Dolphin Show.

Cost: Adults \$37.00, Children \$27.50 (includes bus fare and entrance to all the exhibits)

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.

CHICAGO GETAWAY WITH UU CHURCH

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**. You'll be hosted by members of Countryside's congregation and will be given 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.

OTHER NEWS

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Did you know that IHN provides Day Center facilities and case management services to families staying at the Salvation Army's warming house? During the coldest months, families who have no place else to stay inside can sleep on mats at the Salvation Army to get out of the cold. IHN welcomes these families during the day, feeds them lunch, and offers them the same assistance as those staying in our Shelter Network.

One incredible success from this extra program was a young woman who stayed at the warming house last winter and really saw the benefit of working with IHN's case manager. She continued to follow up with Birgit, our Shelter Case Manager, for months. Even after the warming shelter ended, and even through some other short-term housing, this young woman continued to work towards permanent housing and other goals with Birgit. This fall, she and her two little girls were accepted into the Second Chance Apartment project!