



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)

February 10, 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

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

*10:00 a.m. Mystery Friends letter #1 due

*12:00 noon. Humanist Union lunch and discussion

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.

Sunday, February 19

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "The Choice to Love: The Journey of the Soul," presented by the Rev. Jody Whelden

*10:00 a.m. Mystery Friends letter #2 due

11:30 a.m. Prairie Board meeting

Wednesday, February 22

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

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, February 26

*10:00 a.m. Mystery Friends letter #3 due

11:30 a.m. K-2 and 3-5 classes family-teacher OWL orientation

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

Tuesday, February 28

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

Friday-Sunday, April 21-23

Central Midwest District Assembly 2006 at the Madison Concourse Hotel

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, February 12

This is our Valentine's Day Intergenerational Service, a special time to be together as we think about and make expressions of love. Presented by Yvonne Hiebert and Bob Radford, the program will include great music, a skit adapted by our RE kids, a story, making beautiful tissue art, etc. Come prepared to have fun and fall in love!

Sunday, February 19

The Rev. Jody Whelden presents "The Choice to Love: The Journey of the Soul." In many ways, choosing to love defines the great human journey. February is the month of love, as defined by Valentine's Day. Today we explore the capacity of the human heart to love. When do we take a chance? When do we give up---with partners, with friends, with our children, and with ourselves?

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, FEB. 19

OUR SOCIETY

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

DO GOOD, FEEL GOOD, LIVE LONGER

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, please contact Paula Pachciarz at 273-4806 or pachwack (at) sbcglobal.net.

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETS FEBRUARY 28

Prairie Elders meets Tuesday, February 28, 2:00 p.m., in the Second Floor Activity Room, Oaks Building, Oakwood Village West. Topic: Favorite Aphorisms. Facilitator: Warren Hagstrom. Gatherings officially end at 3:30 p.m. with conversation often continuing until 4:00. Bring a small handful of snacks, if convenient.

At January's meeting eighteen of us shared heartwarming stories of treasured friends who changed our lives. We welcome Prairie newcomers

who wish to join our sixty-five-plus bunch for mutual support and good times. Other UUs at Oakwood West are also invited. Contact Donna Murdoch, Rosemary Dorney or Doleta Chapru for further information.

THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH



My cousin is one of the most interesting people I know. A college-educated businessman, he disappeared when he was about 26. He reappeared when he was about 40. In those intervening years he traveled around the continent, working as a leathersmith in New Orleans, a trapper in the Adirondacks and a woodworker in San Francisco. He had many unique adventures, including finding a gun from the Revolutionary War in a scuba diving excursion in Lake Champlain.

By the time he returned to the family, he had developed a sense of self that was entirely different from the one he had been programmed to by his family. He had gone on a journey to become himself that took him away from us for many years. After his return, he settled down to skilled tradesman work and lived a happy life.

The journey to become who we are is different for each of us. Some of us must travel no further than the next block. Some of us must disappear from sight for long periods of time. Each person's journey is unique and to be honored. We can't know each other's path. Our job is to accompany each other without judgment and with curiosity.

We each travel to the center of who we are for our own needs. We are pulled inward because our essence is waiting for us to discover ourselves. Listening to that inner voice will bring us to ourselves. Then we must bring ourselves to the world. This is the opportunity we have in living a human life. This is the message of the 7 Principles of UU. That is, there is an inward breath to the inherent worth of the individual, followed by an outward breath to living up to our place in the interdependent web.

May the journey you are on go well--both inward to who you are, and back out to joining hands with others...whatever your rhythm may be.

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

HUMANIST UNION DARWIN DAY SPEAKER

On February 12 the Humanist Union will celebrate Charles Darwin's birthday with a special guest, UW Prof. Ronald Numbers, author of *Darwinism Comes to America*, who will speak to us on "Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design: A Historical Perspective." As usual, we will start with a light potluck lunch at noon followed by the presentation and discussion from about 12:20 to 1:30 p.m.

Details of coming programs are always posted on <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>, the Humanist Union Web site.

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

CONDOLENCES

The Prairie community extends its condolences to Dean Schroeder and his family following the death of Dean's father on February 5. A memorial service will be held in North Carolina later in the month.



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

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES ARE DUE

The Guest at Your Table campaign is coming to an end. Please return your boxes or checks to Prairie this month. Checks should be payable to "UUSC." If you return a box, please complete the form on the bottom of the box.

Contributions of \$75 or more will be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.

Thank you for supporting the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, which is 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

Dan Proud

WHAT CAN THE NATURAL STEP DO FOR YOUR CHURCH?

I will be leading a 9-week adult RE class for Sustain Dane in the Natural Step at Prairie starting March 14. The Natural Step was used by eco-municipalities in Sweden to achieve amazing results in only 5-10 years toward reducing their CO2 emissions, becoming more energy efficient, reducing their solid waste, and improving their air and water quality. 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 (and maybe conventional drivers) practice eco-driving, they can reduce their emissions by 20-30%, using the same conventional trucks.

Are you excited by this? Let's think about what we can do in our new church or a remodeled one (in the case of First) as we learn about the Swedish accomplishments. I am very excited to share this information with you.

The class will cost \$30 (\$25 covers the cost of the book). The books are available through the library, and I will look into other ways to make them available.

Application deadline is March 4, so I can be sure to have enough books.

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

Judy Skog
273-4813

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>. For more information, call Dorothy at 271-7532.

BOOK CLUB TO MEET ON MARCH 5

Behind the Scenes at the Museum by Kate Atkinson is a family story that the author claims is almost impossible to describe because of its complex structure. She does say that this first novel "is the story of Ruby Lennox from birth to the age of 40, her family, and the secrets hidden in the family's story." It also contains flashbacks to other members of the family—in the past—and so builds up a story/family tree that spans four generations. It's about history, time, loss, coincidence, self-knowledge.

Atkinson's favorite authors are "Anne Tyler, Jane Austen, Kurt Vonnegut, Alice Hoffman, Margaret Atwood, Henry James, Donald Barthelme, Robert Coover, F. Scott Fitzgerald. Most influential--Jane Austen and Kurt Vonnegut." (333 pages)

An interesting review can be found at the first URL, with discussion questions at the second:

<http://www.geocities.com/kateatkinson14/contemp.htm>

http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides/behind_the_scenes_at_the_museum.asp#discuss

MEMBERSHIP

Please note this update:

Judy Skog: skog51 (at) tds.net

[Ed. Note: Replace (at) above with @.]

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/~prairie/

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

OUR WINTER SERVICE SUNDAY

It is nice to come into Prairie on Sunday morning and be greeted by a smile and, sometimes, a hug. "How are you today?" is being said everywhere. In a welcoming Church, it feels important for all of us to ask carefully, answer honestly and respond openly. Thanks!

I want to tell about what 25 kids & 7 adults did at Sunday morning RE on January 29. It was our chance to work towards making a better and safer world. Three times a year, a morning is planned by asking ourselves and others, "what needs to be done" to make peoples' lives easier and happier?

Adults volunteer to work with the kids and off we go! This Service Sunday, we baked 15 dozen cookies to donate to the Homeless Shelters.

Imagine how good a home-baked cookie will take, especially from a pretty bag. We sewed and decorated 14 tote bags for a church community center of Allied Drive to use to hold papers and books for new residents—about 50 a month. We went around the Prairie building, putting protectors and insulators in electrical sockets and measuring pipes to be insulated—saving energy & guarding against shocks. It was hard not to eat the cookies ourselves and most of us wanted one of the cool tote bags, but what we did was important because it served others. Thanks to everyone who helped. Congratulations!

We have a lot going on in Prairie RE. A list includes Mystery Friends, Wild Wintering, OWL classes, a Valentine's Day intergenerational service on February 12, and the regular YoUUth Circles, RE classes and YRUU CONs.

If any items don't sound familiar (or exciting), give me a call and let's talk! Like Service Sunday, it takes lots of people being together to make these things work well.

The RE Committee continues to meet frequently as we discuss some big questions. Some topics are procedural, like how to get adults and kids to volunteer or what to serve for dinner at Wild Wintering. Other discussions are broader and seem to need input from the congregation, like how to work with problem kid and adult behavior or what makes the best RE program.

Both types need good relationships with lots of respect. Your concerns and ideas are critical to our success. Is there an activity or lesson you can share with the Prairie kids—maybe by facilitating an event?

Thank you. See you in church.

Bob Radford, Director of Religious Education

WILD WINTERING

Kids & volunteers wanted!

Reminder: It's not too late!!

Saturday-Sunday, February 11-12

Starts at 5:00 pm on Saturday, at PRAIRIE
Ends Sunday 10 a.m. (then we go to church)

STAY OVERNIGHT IF YOU WISH

Call Erin Bosch or Bob Radford to volunteer
or for information.

MYSTERY FRIENDS

When: a six-week program that just started. Friends were matched up (a mystery process) and given a ID number on February 5.

Now, one letter is written by each friend per week 2/12, 2/19, 2/26 and 3/5 (give some clues).

Soon we'll have 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—call Pam Vorass or Bob Radford for more information.

What is Mystery Friends?

It 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!

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

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.

**Unitarian Church North
Half-Day Workshop
Saturday, Feb 18th, 2006**

9-9:30 Gathering and Continental Breakfast
9:30-12 Program (free will offering)

Minding the Generational Gap

Dr. Michael Tino— UUA Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry
Daniel Maitland— Young Adult and Campus Ministry Trainer/Consultant
Kimberly Tomczak— Central Midwest District Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

Will help us create a plan for inter-generational wholeness for our congregation (and others).

They will address questions like:
How can this congregation develop a truly inter-generational community, including youth and young adults?
How can this community grow by ministering to and with young people?
What will it take to attract young families to this church?
How do young adults live with their Unitarian Universalist Faith?

Come One and All
for an Educational and Creative Morning.



Unitarian Church North
13800 N Port Washington Road, Mequon
www.ucnorth.org 262-375-3890

OTHER NEWS

SOULFORCE HONORS THE LIFE OF CORETTA SCOTT KING

[From the Soulforce e-mail newsletter]

Soulforce, a national social justice movement, acknowledges Mrs. King's influence on the work of advocacy groups founded on the principles of nonviolence taught by her and her husband, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Some of Coretta Scott King's public statements:

I still hear people say that I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people and I should stick to the issue of racial justice....But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"....I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream to make room at the table of brotherhood and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people.

Gays and lesbians stood up for civil rights in Montgomery, Selma, in Albany, Georgia, and St. Augustine, Florida, and many other campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement. Many of these courageous men and women were fighting for my freedom at a time when they could find few voices for their own, and I salute their contributions.

Homophobia is like racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and personhood. This sets the stage for further repression and violence that spread all too easily to victimize the next minority group.

Gay and lesbian people have families, and their families should have legal protection, whether by marriage or civil union. A constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages is a form of gay bashing, and it would do nothing at all to protect traditional marriages.

[Excerpted from speeches at the Lambda Defense and Education Fund, March 31, 1998; Palmer Hilton Hotel, April 1, 1998; and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, March 24, 2004]