



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)

July 21, 2006

Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. The two most recent issues may be seen at www.uuprairie.org.

President: Mike Briggs, (608) 835-0914

Editor: Dan Proud, admin@uuprairie.org; 661-0776

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, July 23

*10:00 a.m. "Renewal"—Joint Service of area UU congregations to be held at Prairie
12:00 noon. Humanist Union potluck lunch followed by "A Humanist's View of Kevin Phillips' American Theocracy," presented by Doleta Chapru

Tuesday, July 25

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

Wednesday, July 26

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, July 30

*10:00 a.m. "Helping Clean Up New Orleans" presented by Tess Miller

Wednesday, August 2

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, August 6

*10:00 a.m. "More Than Words" presented by Mary Mullen

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

Wednesday, August 9

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, August 13

*10:00 a.m. "Summer Reads" presented by Rose Smith

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 6

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, July 23

Join us for a joint UU congregation service and potluck at Prairie on the 23rd. Whereas in previous years this joint UU service and picnic was hosted by the Free Congregation of Sauk City at their historical building and expansive grounds, we may be starting a new tradition of trading this annual event around to each of the area UU's.

This year, speakers from each of the 5 congregations will reflect briefly on the subject of "Renewal" from the point of view of their own congregation. The invited congregations include the Free Congregation of Sauk City, the Unitarian Congregation of Rock County (Janesville), and the 3 Madison UU groups: the James Reeb UU Congregation, First Unitarian Society, and of course, Prairie UU Society. Afterward, get to know our fellow UU's at the potluck. Following the potluck, tours will be offered to Prairie's land in Fitchburg.

Just in case you want to visit the land on your own either Sunday or any other time, here's the way. Right (south) on Seminole Highway. Go about a mile to PD (McKee Road). Left on PD. Go about a mile to Fish Hatchery Road. Left on Fish Hatchery for a very short distance to the first right, Glacial Valley Road. Right on Glacial Valley Road for about half a mile to Gunflint Trail (first left). Left on Gunflint Trail. You'll see Eagle School up on the left. The empty land on the left just before Eagle School is Prairie's land.

Sunday, July 30

College student Tess Miller spent some time in the New Orleans this spring working on hurricane cleanup. She will share her experiences through a Power Point presentation in the program entitled, "Helping Clean Up New Orleans." As a younger person, Tess attended Prairie sometimes with her dad Reid Miller, who is a friend of Prairie. Reid, who grew up in Louisiana, has recently dedicated a fair amount of time doing storytelling programs in the hurricane-affected area.

Sunday, August 6

We've all heard the old saw, "A picture is worth a thousand words," but is it for most of us? Perhaps if the picture is a photo of family or friends or if it was taken by oneself or it's a striking prize-winner of a photo. But what if it's just sort of run-of-the-mill?

Come to the August 6 service, "Beyond Words," to learn how to see much more in a picture than a first glance will give you. The presenter Mary Mullen promises that you will come away surprised and will forever after be able to access far more than before when you look at any picture.

What does a service like this have to do with Unitarian-Universalist principles? Mary invokes the 4th UU principle: "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning." And depending on the subject matter of the photos you will be working with, you may also tap into our "covenant to affirm and promote: The inherent worth and dignity of every person; Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; The goal of world peace, liberty, and justice for all; and Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

Sunday, August 13

It's become a tradition at Prairie for us to share our enthusiasm for books on a seasonal basis. Think over what you've read recently and come prepared to talk for a minute or two about each of your recent favorite reads or perhaps a book you would simply recommend for summer reading no matter how long ago you read it.

We sit in a circle for this service and take turns telling about either fiction or nonfiction books we want to recommend.

OUR SOCIETY

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEET JULY 25

Time: **Tuesday, July 25, 2:00-3:50 p.m.**

Place: Oakwood Village West, Oaks Building, Second Floor Exercise Room.

Discussion Topic: Making the Best of Major Transitions. For young people, obtaining a driver's license is an exciting rite of passage. Somehow the feeling is not the same when older people must relinquish that license, even when it means no longer paying for gas, car installment loans, insurance and antidotes for freeway stress. At the upcoming meeting, we invite people to share personal vignettes about dealing with major life transitions, however you define them. The humor that prevails at Prairie Elders meetings is surely a major factor in coping with such changes.

The Exercise Room will be open at 1:30 for those who wish to come early for casual conversation. Participants are welcome to come and go as necessary for appointments, rides, chair attendants, etc.

Refreshments: Please bring a handful of snacks to pass, if convenient. Beverages are furnished.

About us: Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU members and friends over 65. We also welcome other UUs who live in the facility where we meet. For directions, rides, parking and further information please call Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Doleta Chapru 238-4970.

BOOK CLUB MEETS AUGUST 6

The Prairie Book Club will meet after the Sunday program to discuss *The Desert Queen: The extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: Adventurer, Adviser to Kings, Ally of Lawrence of Arabia*, by Janet Wallach. Gertrude Bell was the British woman who had a major hand in creating the modern state of Iraq. (464 pages)

This book was recommended by Rose Smith. For some background, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gertrude_Bell. A study guide is located at http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/desert_queen1.asp.



THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH

This is my last month as your consulting minister. I leave with great respect for Prairie in my heart, and lots of optimism about what is ahead for you. As a final experiment, I invite you to think about Prairie ten years from now. Your personal needs have changed from what they are today, to what they will be. The people around you have ebbed and flowed. The Prairie Mission Statement has changed, as it should every 3-5 years. (Last one was 1999--time for a new one!)

The Bond of Union has remained the same:

We, the members of Prairie, wish to associate ourselves together in a religious community which affirms that we share a common humanity, that we need one another, and that our futures are inescapably bound together. Together we would expand our intellectual horizons, enrich our sensory experiences, and deepen our emotional sensitivities. We would sharpen our ethical awareness and broaden our sense of social responsibility. We would stand tall in our quest for integrity of life, yet not at others' expense. 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.

What is happening that will embody the best of Prairie now, and the best of how Prairie will be serving its members, the community, the world in 2016? How have things changed? What has stayed the same? What changes do you want for the world? How can you imagine them happening at Prairie, also? How can everyone's needs be met? How can everyone's ideas be heard and included? Together—with as much care for another's vision as for your own—you can build the possible future at Prairie.

Lastly, we must say goodbye. A minister and a congregation must make a clean break when they are done. The UUMA guideline is for a congregation and departing minister to have no contact for 6 months if there is a new minister. Whether you begin the congregational year with a new minister or not, I will be out of touch for a while. We will need time to get used to life without a parish minister/congregation relationship with each other. That is a good thing. We all live in this community and we will have future contact as fellow UU's, I am sure.

As I go, I give you the quote which most resonates with me when I undertake building possible tomorrows:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has." —Margaret Mead, anthropologist

Salaam, Shalom, Namaste, Amen, Blessed Be, Farewell and Ho.

The Rev. Jody Whelden, Minister

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[Since this is the first newsletter issue in July, news from the G.A. may seem somewhat dated. But it is the first report from a Prairie attendee, and perhaps will whet your appetite for the Sunday program coming later this summer. --Ed.]

Greetings from General Assembly: This year's G.A. in St. Louis was exciting, inspiring, a bit tiring, and huge! 2043 delegates plus 2001 non-delegates represented 601 United States and three Canadian congregations. There were also representatives from Transylvania and Great Britain, plus 6 Association Trustees, and 4 Association representatives (UUUNO, UUSC, etc.) Approximately 65-69 people there were from Madison (someone told me that Madison comprised one and a half percent of the total attendees. Three Prairie members were among the 40 people who availed themselves of the FUS chartered bus, which made for a pleasant trip with lots of singing on the trip home.

It was great to run into people we had known in Madison while at G.A. Paul Daniels, formerly the interim minister at James Reeb, is now minister in Las Vegas, and will soon be leaving there for a new church in Rancho Mirage, California. Also ran into Shana Goodwin, also formerly from Reeb, and now the minister at the First UU Church in Washington, DC.

Sandy Ingham was there, and sent her regards to Prairie, and it was lovely having a couple of chances to spend time with Tom and Sheryll Robinson, now living in Carbondale. We adopted the Statement of Conscience on Global Warming, and approved the Study Action Issue for the forthcoming term.

Pat Watkins

CHICAGO MUSEUM TRIP SEPTEMBER 30

Saturday, September 30: Save this date for Prairie's fundraising trip to Chicago's Field Museum for the exhibit "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs." There will be more information in later editions of the newsletter, or contact Pat Watkins.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SUMMER RE

This year's Summer Spree was another success. Ten of our RE students attended the 3-day event held at the Ruecking farm July 14-16. Despite the heat, everyone ventured outdoors to play Ultimate Frisbee, sit by the bonfire and cool off in the river. Thank you to our volunteers: Rick Ruecking, Rachel Long, Carl Wacker, Dirk and Susan Herr-Hoyman. And thank you to our carpoolers Yvonne Hiebert and Steve Vorass.

Each Sunday the RE bulletin board will have updates on current and future activities for our children. Parents and children will be advised on the activities for the day and if they will be upstairs or downstairs. We have two summer day care providers: Isha Shrestha and Erin Birmingham. They are available downstairs to take care of infants and toddlers.

So far this summer there have been age-appropriate activities planned for our RE children such as: craft making, face painting, movies, and playing outside. If you are interested in planning a summer activity for RE please let me know.

The RE committee is in the process of preparing the fall curriculum. Our theme will be UU Heritage and Beliefs. If you're interested in teaching classes, preschool through high school, please let me know or one of our committee members; we still have openings. There will be 2 teachers per classroom with activities divided up so you will be responsible for approximately 12 Sundays a year.

I hope you are all enjoying your summer. Take care and stay cool!

Rebecca Malke (YREC)
youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org

LETTERS

HELP WANTED ON ANTI-RACISM BOOK

Hello!

Three of us, Leon Spencer, the Rev. Chip Roush and myself, are writing a book on anti-racism efforts in the UUA, concentrating mainly between 1992 and 2005. We would like your opinion!

We hope to present as many different perspectives on this effort as possible and to that end have reached out to many groups over the last 18 months. We are making one last effort to get other opinions (and if you have already participated, encourage a friend!).

We seek a range of stories and perspectives: observers who can provide a personal perspective on a particular key event, supporters of the work to say why it was valuable to them, to their congregation and to the UUA; critics to say what harm was done and why they wished things had been otherwise. Only in this way can we use the lessons of history to inform our future.

We also know you are busy, so we have tried to make this easier.

If you have an opinion on the UUA's efforts towards anti-racism, please consider addressing the following two questions:

What one event, occasion, interaction, etc. stands out for you personally around this work and how did it affect you?

A decade from now, what do you think you might tell a young person who asks you about this work and its significance?

Please include full contact information so that we may be in touch with you.

Send your submissions by July 31 to antiracism15@earthlink.net.

And thanks for helping us tell this important story.

Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris
home office/mobile 434-409-2350
<http://JourneyFromCalgary.blogspot.com/>

HELP WANTED ON BOOK FOR JEWISH UUS

Dear Friends and members of the UUA,

While at the 2006 GA, after discovering there weren't any books in the UUA bookstore written by U-U Jews about Judaism or the Jewish experience, I found an interesting book titled *Christian Voices in Unitarian-Universalism* by Kathleen Rolenz. After reading her enlightening book, I felt it was extremely important to have an additional book available called Jewish Voices in Unitarian-Universalism.

I am looking for people who self-identify as Jews to contribute their personal stories to this book. I am looking for a diversity of experience and perspective. If you identify as Jewish or "formerly Jewish" and you are a member of the UUA, I would greatly appreciate it if you could share your story in our book. The Web site for the project is:

<http://www.jewishvoicesinuism.homestead.com/>

I have no journalistic agenda except to share the wide range of diversity of our experience as Unitarian-Universalist Jews (or Jewish UUs, if you prefer), and I promise to honor the spirit of your work, whatever that may be.

I believe this project will be a precious gift to many Jewish UU's who may find their voice in our shared experiences.

Todah Robah (thank-you)! In the spirit of our fourth source: "Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to G-d's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves",

Nancy Cronk

<http://www.jewishvoicesinuism.homestead.com/>

interfaithpeace@aol.com

303-766-3123 (office)

Author of Oranges and Olives: A Modern Interfaith Family Passover Haggadah

MEMBERSHIP

The new directory is available. You can pick your copy up at church, or we will mail it to you.

Please make the following corrections to the new directory:

Barb Park: barpark@gmail.com

Bob Park: loonfoot@gmail.com

Please report any corrections to Dan Proud at 661-0776 or by e-mail to prouds@tds.net.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

ESCAPE TO VERMONT

September 22-24, 2006

Twelfth Annual B&B Weekend offered by the UU Church of Rutland, VT. Enjoy the beauty of Vermont, UU hospitality, and a choice of guided activities: hiking, canoeing, visiting the studios of local artists, touring historic sites and quaint towns, and much more.

Registration by August 1, \$225 (single) and \$425 (double). After August 1, \$275 (single) and \$475 (double). For more information contact uufoliagevermont@yahoo.com or (802) 438-2095.

OTHER NEWS

MIDDLE EAST SERIES OPENS IN SEPTEMBER

The cradle of civilization is now the world's biggest tinderbox. On the fifth anniversary of 9/11, the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters will open its 2006/2007 Academy Evenings season in Madison's Overture Center for the Arts with "Understanding the Middle East," a special five-part weekly series on issues pertaining to the Middle East. Noted theologian Martin E. Marty, Chevron executive Jan Kalicki, sociology professor Joe Elder, and a number of other experts will shed light on problems in the Middle East and examine possible solutions.

Programs will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesdays, September 13–October 11 at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State Street in Madison. All programs are free and open to the public. Free tickets are recommended to ensure seating and will be available beginning August 1 in the Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery at Overture, third floor. Summer hours: Tues./Wed./Thurs. 11–5, Fri./Sat. 11–8, Sun. 1–5, closed Mondays.

The Roots of Conflict—Joe Elder

September 13, Capitol Theater, 7–8:30 p.m.
An overview of the region's history and the root sources of conflict.

Rx for “Oil Addiction”: The Middle East and Energy Security—Jan H. Kalicki

September 20, Capitol Theater, 7–8:30 p.m.
Kalicki proposes ways to remedy our “addiction to oil” through a foreign policy strategy that encompasses both national and energy security.

The Dilemma of Fundamentalism—Martin E. Marty

September 27, Capitol Theater, 7–8:30 p.m.
On the dilemma of fundamentalism as opposed to constructive religious practice, with an emphasis on how this problem pertains to the Middle East.

Beyond the U.S. Veil: Women in the Middle East—Mary Layoun

October 4, Promenade Hall, 7–8:30 p.m.
A discussion of the status and promise of women in the Middle East.

Paths to Peace—Nadav Shelef and Ali Abootalebi

October 11, Overture Lobby, 7–8:30 p.m.
Presenting their views on possible paths to peace in this embattled region.

The "Understanding the Middle East" series is sponsored by the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation. The Wisconsin Academy thanks the foundation for its generous support.

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters
1922 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53726
www.wisconsinacademy.org

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