



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."

October 20, 2006



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

President: Mike Briggs. (608) 835-0914

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

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Saturday-Sunday, October 21-22

*Fall Frolic weekend for kids

Sunday, October 22

9:00 a.m. Prairie Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Ministrone for Healthier Congregations" presented by ministerial candidate Ralph Tyksinski

*11:30 a.m. Congregational Meeting on ministerial candidate and Social Action Committee proposed resolution on death penalty

*12:15 p.m. Book Group discussion of "Speak, Memory" by Vladimir Nabokov

*5:00 p.m. Humanist Union potluck and meeting with guest speaker Prof. Dennis Collins

Tuesday, October 24

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

Wednesday, October 25

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

*7:30 p.m. Deaton-Park Covenant Group meeting

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

Thursday, October 26

7:30 p.m. Social Action Committee meeting

Sunday, October 29

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Day of the Dead/All Souls" led by Dorothy Krause and Ruth Calden

Wednesday, November 1

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, November 5

8:45 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Composing for UU's" presented by Jim Reilly

Wednesday, November 8

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal

7:30 p.m. Program Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 9

*Prairie Film Group views "My Life as a Dog"

Sunday, December 10

*Fundraising Bus Trip to Old Orchard Center, Skokie, Ill. (registration deadline November 19)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, October 22

In the program, "Ministrone for Healthier Congregations," Ralph Tyksinski will explore some of the hallmarks of a healthy congregation as a type of guide that ministers use when they visit congregations. You will be invited to compare your own checklist of elements that mark healthy congregations on the rise with elements that seem to describe congregations struggling to survive.

Ralph will also be sharing a perspective on "Shared Ministry" as Prairie UU Society moves forward with this newer face on its vision for the future.

Ralph is a native of Chicago. He studied philosophy and religion at Knox (Lombard) College and at the University of Chicago Divinity School. He has taught school (Evanston and Chicago); held administrative positions in medical education, FEMA, and National Endowment for the Humanities (Oregon and Maryland); and served as UU minister (Orange, Mass., Marietta, Ohio, and Delafield, Wis.).

Sunday, October 29

Many cultures throughout history have celebrated the turning of the seasons and the circle of life. And in many cultures, the end of the harvest season has not only been the end of growing season, and, for some, the year, but also symbolized the end of life. Of course, we all

know that life does not end as winter pulls her blanket over us. It is a time of rest for the earth, with the promise of renewal and regrowth as the wheel continues to turn.

This time of year is also used to reflect on, and celebrate, the cycle of life that surrounds us. Whatever anyone believes about the where-to-from-here of the end of the cycle of life for a person, I think we can all agree that they live on... in our memories and hearts, as well as in the seed, roots, and branches of our families. Join us on October 29th as we celebrate the turning of the seasons and the interconnected web of life of which we are all part.

Please plan on bringing along memories and

mementos of loved ones, including candles (in holders) and/or seasonal flowers to decorate an altar for people you would like to honor, regardless of when their cycle in this life ended.

Sunday, November 5

Jim Reilly will be speaking to us on composing songs for UU's. He is a former church music director as well as pianist, organist, vocalist, coach and composer who resides in Minneapolis. Two of his compositions are in our hymn book.

Jim was raised in the Universalist Church in Syracuse, New York, and had worked for several UU churches during his career, although most recently he was the music director at a Norwegian Church in Minneapolis.

Over the years, our choir has sung several selections from his "Early Risers Choir Book" which he composed while working with a small UU choir very similar to our own. Jim will be sharing how he came to compose some of his songs. The choir will sing one of his anthems, and we will all sing his hymns from the hymn book.

OUR SOCIETY

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PARISH MEETING OCTOBER 22

Recommendation for our Consulting Minister Position

The Minister Search Committee recommends that Prairie accept Reverend Ralph Tyksinski to be a quarter-time consulting minister for Prairie. Ralph and his wife, Karleen, met many Prairie members and friends at the Bethel Horizons retreat.

Ralph will give a presentation during our program on Sunday, October 22.

After the program on **October 22**, we will have a parish meeting, starting at 11:30, to vote on accepting Ralph for our consulting minister position. This is the official notification of the Parish meeting and the agenda. Please bring finger food to share.

Also at this meeting, we will debate and vote on a resolution to place the Society on record as

opposing passage of the non-binding death penalty resolution that is on the November ballot. Adding this agenda item was done by a petition signed by at least 10 members, as the bylaws require.

MORE ON THE PROPOSED DEATH PENALTY RESOLUTION

On November 7 Wisconsin voters will be voting on an advisory resolution on whether to return the death penalty to Wisconsin, 153 years after it was abolished here. On October 15 the Prairie Social Action Committee obtained the signatures of enough Prairie members to add consideration of a resolution opposing the death penalty to the agenda of the parish meeting scheduled to follow the Rev. Tyksinski's service on October 22.

The resolution that the committee proposes for adoption by the congregation as a whole is as follows:

RESOLVED: That Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society of Madison is opposed to returning the death penalty to Wisconsin. The willful taking of a human life by the state violates our belief in the intrinsic worth of every human being. We believe the state should continue to impose nonviolent penalties for violent crimes to set a positive example aimed at reducing the violence in our society. We believe capital punishment degrades and brutalizes any society which practices it. We find the death penalty particularly abhorrent because it is based on an unjustified assumption of infallibility in the process of determining guilt, with the greatest risk of error being borne by those who are economically disadvantaged. We find the death penalty wholly unacceptable, whether imposed to prevent repetition of a crime by an individual, as a deterrent to others, or as social retribution.

More information on the death penalty in Wisconsin can be found at The Wisconsin Coalition Against the Death Penalty (<http://www.wcadp.org/>) and at No Death Penalty Wisconsin (<http://nodeathpenaltywi.org/>).

HUMANIST UNION SPEAKER OCTOBER 22

Prof. Denis Collins will be speaking to a potluck supper gathering at Prairie on Sunday, **October 22** on his new book, *Behaving Badly: Ethical Lessons from Enron*.

Prof. Collins is an award-winning author and teacher. He is Professor of Business at Edgewood College in Madison, where he is responsible for Social Responsibility and Business Ethics—components in the school's Business Programs. You can read more about his book at <http://business.edgewood.edu/behavingbadly/>.

The meeting is being jointly sponsored by the Humanist Union and the Madison Ethical Discussion Group, and all Prairie members and friends are welcome to attend. The potluck starts at 5 p.m., with Prof. Collins' presentation starting soon after.

PRAIRIE ELDERS OCTOBER 24

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETING: On Tuesday, **October 24**, 2:00-3:50 p.m., Oakwood Village West, Oaks Building, 2nd Floor Exercise Room

TOPIC: Transportation. By request, we will continue sharing personal car stories, then discuss issues related to personal transportation. For example, cost of an automobile versus public transportation. Blessings and limitations of senior transportation options.

At the September meeting thirteen of us shared reasons for coming to Prairie Elders and thoughts about keeping our gatherings meaningful. By far the most common reasons given were seeing people we like and becoming better acquainted in an accepting situation. Some members offered helpful suggestions for issue-oriented topics which will be incorporated in future meetings, alternating with our endless and fascinating reserve of personal stories.

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 contact Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

BOOK GROUP PLANS UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Prairie UU Book Society invites members and friends to the following fall meetings. We welcome anyone who has read the monthly selection as well as those who have not read it but wish to know more about a book by listening to the discussion.

Usually we meet at Prairie after a Sunday service. For Sunday discussions, participants bring food to share. The meeting begins around 11:30 a.m. and continues until 1:00 or 1:30 p.m.

For more information or to be put on the e-mail list, contact Mary Mullen, mmullen (at) chorus.net 298-0843.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21 (after parish meeting)
—"Speak, Memory" by Vladimir Nabokov

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12—PLEASE DON'T COME BACK FROM THE MOON by Dean Bakopoulous, a Madison author. Recommended by Aileen Nettleton. 256 pages. (Available through Amazon for 70 cents and up.)

Synopsis: The summer Michael Smolij turns seventeen, his father disappears. One by one other men also vanish from the blue-collar neighborhood outside Detroit where their fathers before them had lived, raised families, and, in a more promising era, worked. One man props open the door to his shoe store and leaves a note. "I'm going to the moon," it reads. "I took the cash."

The wives drink, brawl, and sleep around, gradually settling down to make new lives and shaking off the belief in an American dream that, like their husbands, has proven to be a thing of the past.

Unable to leave the neighborhood their fathers abandoned, Michael and his friends stumble through their twenties until the restlessness of the fathers blooms in them, threatening to carry them

away.

This is a haunting, unforgettable debut novel for anyone who has ever been left longing.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10—GAVIOTAS: A VILLAGE TO REINVENT THE WORLD by journalist Alan Weisman. Recommended by Doleta Chapru at the "Summer Reads" service as a positive story in these days of nothing but negative news. 231 pages. (Available from \$7.49 and up through Amazon.)

GAVIOTAS is about an experimental community that is thriving in the rain forest of Columbia. The founder of this community, Paolo Lugari, "recruited engineers from universities in Bogota to develop technology for the rural tropics. Their marvels are found all over the village. The Global Citizen writes, "The technical and architectural triumph of Gaviotas is its hospital, cooled by the wind, heated by the sun. The sun also provides hot water, boiled sterilized water, and the heat for six pressure cookers in the kitchen, plus enough electricity for the lights."

PLAYREADERS STARTING

Playreaders will have its first reading of the year on **November 18** at the home of Paula Pachciarz. All members and friends are welcome.

PROGRAM SURVEYS NEEDED

Please return your program surveys at church. Copies are available from the desk in the foyer. Your feedback on the choice and quality of the Sunday programs will be invaluable to the Program Committee as it schedules Sunday programs for next year.

OCTOBER IS ALLIED FOOD PANTRY MONTH

This month it is Prairie's turn as a member of the Allied Partners group of churches and supporting organizations to collect donations of non-perishable foods for the heavily used Allied Food Pantry. The food pantry is housed in the new Boys and Girls Club in the Allied neighborhood.

Please bring in your donations. Bags and lists of recommended foods and other goods are available at Prairie.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBER UPDATES

Gutnecht, Kurt
2284 Ledgemont, Fitchburg, WI 53711
kgutknecht@gmail.com

Reuschlein, Bob
230-6640
4930 Ascot Lane, Madison, WI 53711

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Schultz, Andrew (Drew)
(920) 216-1224
2994 Bosshard Dr., Fitchburg, WI 53711
drewrn@voyager.net

Wacker, Carl (10/06)
273-4806
4709 Sherwood Rd., Madison, WI 53711-1340
pachwack@sbcglobal.net

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Society Home Page: <http://uuprairie.org/>

News Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/>

Views:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/>

Social Action: <http://socialaction.madisonwi.us>

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



Galen and Rose
Smith at the retreat
at Bethel Horizons

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FALL FROLIC

This weekend is Fall Frolic, our annual overnight event. Prairie children and young adults will enjoy the cold autumn air by playing games outside, then warming up inside with some hot pizza. Indoor games will be held for people of all ages then movies shown at night. This will be a perfect time to tell some spooky Halloween stories so if you know any, please share!

Next week will be our service Sunday project. Prairie kids will be raking all those wet leaves outside. If you have a yard that needs raking and you're unable to do it please let me know, as we still have some spots available. Rakes will be provided. If you can chaperone and/or you have a van for carpooling let me know, we'd love to have you help.

Parent/teacher coffee sessions are underway. Parents of high school and middle school students have had a chance to meet their children's RE teachers. Next week parents of students in grades 3-4-5 will have an opportunity to meet Randy Converse and Jori Conca, our volunteer teachers.

We have a great group of teachers at Prairie. Would you like to meet them? A board has been placed upstairs with the names and faces of our RE educators. I encourage you to stop them when you can and thank them for all their hard work; they make our education program possible.

This year's RE program has been moving along quite smoothly with the help of our parents and volunteers. Thank you! We have a lot more activities planned. I am working with the DRE's at First Unitarian Society and James Reeb in getting our youth together. I look forward to any comments and suggestions you may have for our program.

Thank you and I look forward to talking to you at church.

Rebecca Malke
youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY VIDEO NIGHTS AT FUS IN OCTOBER

Prairie members are welcome to enjoy video nights at First Unitarian Society (FUS) on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. The FUS Denominational Affairs Committee will show the following DVDs from the 2006 General Assembly:

Monday, **October 23**, 7 p.m.

Friday, 2006 GA Worship Service: "What Are We Doing Here?" with the Rev. Josh Pawelek of the UU Society of East Manchester, Conn. As silence graces the mountaintop, Elijah steps to the cave entrance. A voice breaks through the silence, asking, "What are you doing here?" In search of right relationship, we will encounter such moments of silence, followed by this very potent question. Our answers will make a difference.

Excerpts from Plenary II

Being Allies to People with Disabilities

Report of the Special Review Commission on 2005 GA Events that Affected Community of Color, Especially Youth

Report of the Commission on Appraisal—Review of Article II, The UU Principles, Sources, Purposes and How Well We Do (Our Community Covenant)

Report of Social Action Commission
How Study Action Issues Work for Congregations and the UUA

Changes to the Study Action Issue Process

Introduction of the Study Action Issue Proposal, Peacemaking

Monday, **October 30**, 7 p.m.

Church of the Larger Fellowship Worship Service by the Rev. Jane Rzepka (daughter of our own Helen Ranney) and the Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt. Lively Unitarian-Universalist worship at its best with wonderful, rocking music.

JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS

There are several opportunities during this electoral season to engage in work to dismantle institutional oppression and to raise congregational and public awareness about how race, class, and sexual orientation are being used to privilege some, oppress others, and keep us divided. We are hearing from UUs who are engaging in these struggles. Our religious voice, our witness, can and is truly making a difference.

* There is a national interfaith movement to support persons displaced by Katrina and to ensure a just recovery in the Gulf. It is focused on addressing issues of race and class. Right now it is at the petition gathering stage (deadline Nov. 1) that will allow national organizers to build a strong coalition. See <http://www.linkedfate.org/> for details. Others are sending teams to the Gulf, raising funds, and engaging in advocacy efforts. See <http://www.uua.org/news/gulfcoastrelief/>.

* There are anti-marriage equality ballot initiatives that need to be opposed. See <http://www.now.org/issues/marriage/state06.html> for updated information. For UUA resources, see <http://www.uua.org/news/freedomtomarry/index.html>.

* There are ballot initiatives for a just minimum wage in six states coming to a vote this November. See the worship resources and information prepared by UUSC, UUA, and Let Justice Roll staff at <http://www.letjusticeroll.org/>.

* On October 11, the Interfaith Alliance and The IRS teamed up for a NATIONAL PHONE SEMINAR explaining the legal and ethical guidance for 501 c-3 organizations (including houses of worship) in an election year. *Listen to the call at <http://www.interfaithalliance.org/site/pp.asp?c=8dJIIWMCE&b=2108771>.

* Please see our excellent electoral resources page at http://www.uua.org/news/2006/061005_voting.html. It includes an important article from UUs for Verified Voting. Ensuring that all people have the opportunity to vote is an important issue in this election as well.

* Using our funds to bring capital to communities of color and low-income folks and hold corporations accountable is another way to dismantle institutional inequities. See <http://www.uua.org/finance/sri/> and below for information on the Socially Responsible Investing teleconference series, including this Saturday's (10/21) at 1 p.m. EST.

* Lastly, a U.S. Social Forum is being held for the first time June 27-July 1 in Atlanta. Its goal is to have 50% people of color, as well as 70% low-income communities, and support from middle-class white allies. (They achieved this in their test run at the Southeast Social Forum last spring which also focused on the brown-black divide). The lead organizer, Alice Lovelace, came to our pre-GA meeting in St. Louis of social justice and anti-racism committee members asking for UU participation and financial support to sponsor buses for the communities they are organizing. You can read more in the current issue of *YES!* magazine and at <http://www.yesmagazine.org/alblog/>.

Susan Leslie
Director for Congregational Advocacy and Witness, Unitarian Universalist Association

FREE 1-HOUR SRI TELECONFERENCES

The UUA Committee on Socially Responsible Investing is proud to present five free one-hour learning teleconference sessions, including a repeat of our three successful sessions from last spring. The theme is "Making a Difference with Ideals, Impact and Involvement." Each session will teach one of the key strategies of the socially responsible investing movement. You'll learn concrete steps to get strategies implemented in your personal life or within your congregation.

Each session is on a Saturday morning for one hour from 12:00 noon to 1:00 Central time.

* Saturday, October 21: Ideals—Investment Screening

* Saturday, October 28: Involvement—Shareholder Activism

* Saturday, November 4: IW Financial—A Screening Tool

Details for all calls are on the flyer posted at <http://www.uua.org/finance/sri/SRI-TeleConference-FlyerFall06.pdf>

Please join us for one or all of these.

Register at least three days before the session by e-mailing Audra Friend with your name, phone number, congregation or other affiliation, and your role/title at: afriend@uua.org. She will reply providing the call in numbers needed to participate.

Susan Leslie, Director for Congregational Advocacy and Witness, UUA

More pictures from Bethel Horizons Retreat...

