



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."

November 10, 2006



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

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, November 12

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "A Gratitude by So Many to So Few"
presented by the Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

*11:45 a.m. Prairie Book club

Monday, November 13

7:00 p.m. EnAct Class

Wednesday, November 15

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers potluck and talk at
115 Lakewood Gardens Lane, Madison

7:30 p.m. Board Meeting

Saturday, November 18

*7:00 p.m. Playreaders at the home of Paula
Pachciarz and Carl Wacker, 4709 Sherwood Rd.

Sunday, November 19

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. Thanksgiving Intergenerational
Service led by Susan Herr-Hoyman, Sonya Sidky,

and Dorothy Krause

*12:00 p.m. Humanist Union potluck lunch and
discussion, "Thought and Writing of Sam Harris,"
led by Barbara Park and Randy Converse.

1:00-5:00 p.m. Fair Trade Holiday Sale hosted by
the Human Rights Committee at First Unitarian
Society (FUS), 900 University Bay Drive

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

Wednesday, November 22

6:00 p.m. Combined UU choir rehearsal at First
Unitarian Society

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

7:00 p.m. Joint Thanksgiving Service at First
Unitarian Society

Sunday, November 26

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "The Road Not Taken" led by Mary
Mullen and Barb Park

Tuesday, November 28

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

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Wednesday, November 29

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

7:30 p.m. Covenant Group discusses "The Left Hand of God".

Sunday, December 3

*11:45 a.m. Fall Parish Meeting

Sunday, December 10

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

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, November 12

This morning, as part of a Veteran's Day observance, Rev. Ralph will be exploring the experiences of men and women UU's in the military as part of a larger reflection of how we can value the service of others in our embrace of our UU First Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Sunday, November 19

Our Intergenerational Service will include Thanksgiving-themed songs and readings for all ages. The main activity will be to create a Prairie tree of gratitude. Prairie members of all ages will cut out shapes of their hands and write down what they are grateful for at Prairie. Everyone will be invited to share their words and then, in a symbolic gesture of unity, everyone's "hands of gratitude" will be hung on a tree for all to see.

Sunday, November 26

On a daily basis, we make decisions, some minor, but some with momentous consequences for our lives. The November 26 service, titled after Robert Frost's well-known and beloved poem, "The Road Not Taken," will be a program about decisions and how we make our peace—or don't—with the path we did not take as well as the one we did choose.

To get people thinking about their choices that have "made all the difference," the service will begin with a panel of Prairie people who will talk briefly about some of their decisions. Then the congregation—in small groups—will have an opportunity to share their stories of lives they

might have had and how they feel about not having taken those routes.

Sure to be a part of both discussions are the decisions themselves. Were they spur-of-the-moment and easy to make or hardly even recognized as an important turning point? Were they heart-rending struggles, perhaps even forced by circumstances? What went into the decisions? Was there a spiritual motivation? Did they begin with soul-searching or cause soul-searching? Perhaps they could be characterized as part of "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning," the fourth principle of the UUA.

This is the kind of service that we especially invite newer people in our community to attend since it will offer insights into the lives of the congregation. If things run true to form, "old" members may also be in for some unexpected treats.

OUR SOCIETY

PRAIRIE BOOK CLUB DISCUSSES LOCAL AUTHOR

Please Don't Come Back from the Moon by Dean Bakopoulous, a Madison author, is the Prairie Book Club selection for **November 12**. The book club meets at Prairie after the Sunday service and is open to anyone who wants to hear the discussion of the book although, of course, it's more meaningful if you have read the book. Bring food to share.

If you can't make this meeting, you might want to prepare for the December book, *Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World* by Alan Weisman. We will discuss this book on Sunday, **December 10**. It comes highly recommended from Doleta Chapru, who introduced it to Prairie during the "Summer Reads" service in August. She found it a ray of light in a world of dark and dreary news.

Starting this month, there's a link to the poster of our book club selections. See <http://uuprairie.org/NovDecBooks.htm>, or find the page through the Prairie calendar entries for book club meetings on the two upcoming dates.

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

[*This is the first submission by Ralph for what will be a regular column.*]



A heartfelt "Hello" to members and friends of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. I am delighted that I have been invited to serve as your Consulting Minister. I have met many of you already, at the Retreat, at Sunday Programs, and at Committee Meetings.

But now I hope to meet each and every one in a more personal way than shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries (which I enjoy!).

Now I would like to share in those kinds of exchanges that are so well described in our hymn: "Come, Sing a Song with Me" ("dream with me, walk in the rain with me, share a rose with me, work with me, think creatively with me," etc.) so that I might know your mind.

We have big decisions to make in the coming months and I know that we will be deeply and respectfully engaging in knowing each other's minds. As you have extended your welcome to me and Karleen I would invite you to consider the ways that Prairie UU Society builds its readiness to welcome new members.

These characteristics include the following:

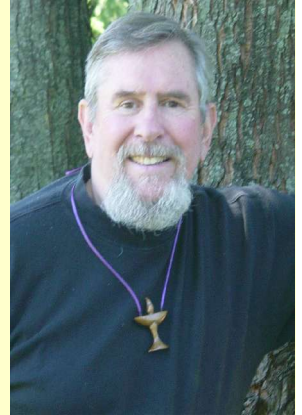
- Having knowledge of the various aspects of church growth.
- Having a clear mission to galvanize members and attract newcomers.
- Making a conscious decision to intentionally welcome newcomers.
- Willingness to share the "Good News" of our Unitarian Universalist movement with others.
- Creating and maintaining visibility in the community.
- Learning how welcoming the congregation's culture and practices are.
- Continuing to improve our welcoming, greeter, and membership practices.
- Providing opportunities for members' ongoing spiritual and moral development.

We also will need to explore further what contributes toward your feeling comfortable here at Prairie UU Society, and to learn, from both those who do not return and those who leave, what contributed to their discomfort.

This is a part of how growth can be achieved. Please feel free to share with me your ideas and concerns as we journey together in the months ahead. I'm glad to be here!

Best wishes,

Rev. Ralph



SPANISH SPEAKERS MEETS NOVEMBER 15

Spanish Speakers will meet for potluck and discussion on Wednesday, **November 15**, 6:30 p.m. at the home of Fernanda Leporace, 115 Lakewood Gardens Lane, Condo #115, Madison. For questions or directions, call Rosemary Dorney, 238-4382.

Rosemary Dorney

PLAYREADERS GATHER NOVEMBER 18

We will be reading the timely selection, "Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?", a play composed of excerpts from the House Unamerican Activities Committee hearings in the 1950's. Everyone is welcome to the home of Paula Pachciarz and Carl Wacker on Saturday, **November 18**, at 7:00 p.m.

Paula Pachciarz

HUMANIST UNION DISCUSSES SAM HARRIS

The Humanist Union will have its monthly meeting at Prairie on **November 19**, with a potluck lunch at noon and a discussion of "The Thought and Writing of Sam Harris" starting about 12:20 p.m. The discussion will be led by Barbara Park and Randy Converse.

Harris is the best-selling author of *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* and *Letter to a Christian Nation*. The Humanist Union Web site has links to examples of Harris' talks, interviews and writing at <http://humanist.madisonwi.us/harris.htm>.

FUNDRAISER: SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP ON DECEMBER 10

Join the fun while supporting Prairie on **December 10**. Visit the 187 stores at Old Orchard, one of Chicagoland's premier shopping centers. Shops include Tiffany's, Crate & Barrel, Restoration Hardware, Elisabeth, Fourth & Towne, Sephora, Sigrid Olson, and Armani Exchange. Enjoy one of the many fine restaurants (including Cheesecake Factory, Maggiano's Little Italy, and California Pizza Kitchen). And "Shop 'til you Drop"!

Pat Watkins has organized charter bus transportation leaving from UW Credit Union, UW Humanities Building, and South Towne Mall. Pickups will be between 8 and 8:30 a.m. and you will return to Madison at approximately 8 p.m.

The transportation cost is \$44.00, payable to Prairie U.U. Society. Payment must be received by Pat no later than **November 19**. Indicate boarding location and your telephone number on your check. Meals are on your own. However, you will receive a goodie bag with discount coupons to many of the mall's stores and restaurants.

Written confirmation and detailed schedule will be sent to you by December 1. For additional information, call Pat at 233-5795.

PRAIRIE ELDERS TO DISCUSS ELECTION

Tuesday, **November 28**, 2:00-3:50 p.m.,
Oakwood Village West, Oaks Building, Second
Floor Exercise Room

Discussion Topic: The November 7 Election

The Exercise Room will be open at 1:30 for those who wish to come early for casual conversation. Please bring a handful of snacks to pass, if convenient. Beverages are furnished.

Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65. We 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.

FALL PARISH MEETING IS ON DECEMBER 3

Our fall parish meeting will take place on Sunday, **December 3**, 11:45 a.m., in the Fellowship Hall.

NEW AND IMPROVED TRAINING FOR IHN

This is a reminder of our next Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) volunteer shift, **January 14-21**. As a Buddy Church, Prairie continues to offer a steady contribution of volunteers to help Midvale Lutheran host homeless families during this scheduled week. Prairie's IHN shifts for all of 2007 are printed below. Thank you to all who have helped in the past year: Erin Bosch, Kathy Converse, Nancy Garst, Dave and Marcia Johnson, Orange Schroeder, Phoenix Wardell, and Paula Pachciarz.

New volunteers are welcome to join us in this vital community ministry. New volunteers are especially encouraged to attend one of IHN's frequent "No Place Like Home" Information Sessions. (See dates below.) You will meet some of the staff and board members and hear about the variety of services IHN provides for families in shelter and housing. After the session, you will receive a training packet to read.

Sessions are at the IHN Day Center at 1121 University Ave. Please RSVP to lsundbergattds.net or call 294-7998, ext. 301. These sessions replace the 2-hour volunteer training sessions which were offered previously.

You may contact me to find out more about how you can help. Also, the IHN Web site is an excellent place to get an overview of this organization and its mission:
www.madison.com/communities/ihn/

IHN Information Sessions:

Wednesday, **November 15** at 5:30

Tuesday, **November 21** at 7:00

Tuesday, **December 12** at 5:30

IHN Weeks in 2007:

1/14-1/21 Midvale Community Lutheran

3/11-3/18 Midvale Community Lutheran

9/16-9/23 Midvale Lutheran

11/11-11/18 Midvale Community Lutheran

Paula Pachciarz

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBER PROFILE—DREW SCHULTZ

Last month Prairie welcomed three new members. Not everyone has had the opportunity to meet them, so we are encouraging our newer members to tell us a little about themselves via the *Prairie Fire*. Drew Schultz was good enough to share the following about himself.

He is "old enough to know better, but too young to resist." He has two children. Carrie Susan Schultz, age 23, is an English teacher at Lewis Palmer High School in Monument, Colorado. Carrie graduated from UW Eau Claire in May, 2006. Kyle Andrew Schultz, age 19, is an assistant manager with American Eagle Outfitters. Kyle marches to the beat of his own drummer, and so far he has tramped out a very interesting life!

Drew lives with "the most interesting woman I have ever known, Terrell Brock (also a new member)." They have a dog (Banshee) and two cats (Indiana Jones and Gracie May).

He has many interests. Where to begin? Acoustic music (he's been playing the guitar for 41 years), gardening, woodworking, home improvement, Lake Superior, model railroading....

As for what brought him to Prairie, he is looking for a community of progressive-minded folks who look out for each other, and help one another grow spiritually, each in their own way. He has been associated with the Prairie Lakes UU Fellowship in Ripon, Wisconsin, for over 10 years.

He is a Registered Nurse with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, assigned to work at Oakhill Correctional Institution. He's been a nurse for about 8.5 years now. In his previous lives, he's been an instructor of Biology at both UW-Oshkosh and Marian College of Fond du Lac; a territory sales manager for a Madison area seed production and marketing company; a real estate broker, specializing in agricultural properties; and a full line sales rep for a large agricultural cooperative in northwestern Wisconsin. He earned his nursing degree at UW Oshkosh in December 1997, and prior to that, an MS in Genetics and a BS in Botany from UW-Eau Claire in 1977 and 1975, respectively.

Drew describes his spiritual journey: "I always considered myself to be an atheist, from about age 7 on. It all started with the first science book I ever read that had a chart of the ages of geological time. THAT created a huge disconnect between the Sunday School content and the rest of reality, for me.

"As I've gotten older, I've begun to look for more spiritual fulfillment. I still don't believe in the traditional "sky god" as personified by a wise old man (or woman) with a beard, seated on a throne, up in heaven. But I do find the day to day stuff that we live to be astonishing: babies growing, flowers blooming, the intricate web of life in the forest, the drama and danger of Lake Superior, the vast time our planet/home has been here evolving, and the truly remarkable things that you can see on the surface of the planet if you just look.

"I consider myself to be very rational, not superstitious. We may not understand all that we observe today, but that does not imbue the observed event with an iota of magic. These are simply things that we haven't learned about yet. Think of the unknown as that upper division class that mankind has yet to enroll in."

When asked how he hopes to be involved in Prairie, Drew said that he would like to help the fellowship grow. He feels that attracting new members requires two things: a place to call a spiritual home, and pathways to spiritual growth for all members (children's RE, High school/young adult, adult) with programs that enhance spiritual growth.

Since Drew promptly joined the Hospitality and Membership Committee the day he became a member of Prairie, there is no doubt that he means what he says. The committee has already benefited from his experience in growing the Prairie Lakes fellowship. We're glad to have you, Drew!

LETTERS



[This letter from Sarah Lord and the Social Action Committee was submitted to Madison newspapers a week before the Nov. 7 elections.]

As co-chair of the Social Action committee at Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society in Madison, I would like to share that on Oct. 22, 2006, our congregation adopted the following resolution at a special parish meeting. The resolution was approved by more than 90% of the members attending the meeting.

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.

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>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

GOODBYE FALL, HELLO WINTER

This October brought the RE program fun and responsibility to our RE children. October 22nd was our annual Fall Frolic. We had 17 Prairie students and their friends join us for our overnight event. I want to express many, many thanks to our chaperones Erin Bosch, Kurt Gutknecht, Kristin Long, Anne Urbanski and John Eligenti.

Erin arranged and led all the games Saturday night. Kurt and Kristin helped during dinnertime, arranging tables and food for everyone. All three also participated in the games and made sure everyone had a good time. Anne not only chaperoned during the evening but also stayed overnight and baked pumpkin seeds for everyone. And John stayed overnight and learned all about the game Wink! Kids also bobbed for apples, carved pumpkins and watched movies. The following morning Patty Stockdale stopped by to provide everyone with breakfast. Thank you!

October 29th was another annual event: Service Sunday. Prairie youth raked leaves at the houses of two of our Prairie elders. Preschool through 2nd grade stayed at the church to rake the leaves.

I couldn't help but laugh when, 45 minutes into the raking, I looked around and saw Carl Wacker, Kristin Long and me raking leaves and the children running around playing in the leaves!

It was at that point that Carl thought the children would enjoy a break playing at the park. Thank you to all who helped clean up our backyard.

Coming up will be our Thanksgiving Intergenerational November 19th. December is approaching and that means we'll have our Nifty Gifty event (always a favorite) and Symbol Tree service. I look forward to spending the upcoming holidays with all of you!

Rebecca Malke
youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY VIDEO NIGHTS AT FUS

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 is showing the following DVDs from the 2006 General Assembly in the next few weeks:

Monday, **November 13**: Plenary II—How Study Action Issues Work for Congregations and the UUA; Introduction and Statements of Support for Proposed Study Action Issue Peace Making; UUA Budget; Breakthrough Congregation: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Eastern Slopes; Plenary Discussion: What are the common traits of our growing congregations? What are the common traits of those with stagnant or declining membership?; Plenary Discussion: What do we need to teach—as best we can—to children, youth and new members?; Introduction of GA Service Project

Monday, **November 20**: “What Are We Doing Here? With Rev. Josh Pawelek of UU Society of East Manchester, CT. As silence graces the mountain-top, 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 answer will make the difference.

Monday, **November 27**: Plenary III—Beacon Press report; Starr King report; presentation of O. Eugene Pickett award; Breakthrough Congregation: Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis; Implementation of past Statements of Conscience; Debate on Statement of Conscience: Threat of Global Warming; Review of potential Actions of Immediate Witness.

Monday, **December 4**: Report on Youth Ministry in Our Association with Beth Dana, Megan McDowdell, Jesse Jaeger (son of Jim and Karen Jaeger) and Julian Sharp. Members of the Task Force will report on the lessons learned so far from widespread UU surveying and congregational dialogues, how the process will move forward in the next year, and the ways to be involved.

OUR CONTINUED ACTION FOR DARFUR IS IMPERATIVE

Escalating violence in the western part of Sudan has put the Darfur conflict in the headlines. The Khartoum government is again arming local militias, known as janjaweed, to help carry out its brutal counterinsurgency campaign. Over the past weekend, the local militia attacks on refugee camps in Darfur killed scores of civilians, including 27 children under the age of 12.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) describes Darfur as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. Since the fighting broke out in April 2003, at least 200,000 people have been killed in Darfur and violence has forced 2.5 million people to flee to poorly protected camps.

The UN peacekeeping mission to Darfur has been stymied since August by Sudan's government.

The international community must not stand by as the killing continues in Darfur. An international peace-keeping presence is essential, and governments must continue to aggressively work to persuade the government of Sudan to accept their deployment.

Take Action

Congress and the Bush Administration must now work with global partners to end the violence, work toward a lasting peace, provide human security, meet humanitarian needs, and sustain high-level political engagement.

Encourage your Congress members to take action on Darfur. Helpful materials are available at http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/lobby_congress.

Another useful source is the Friends Committee on National Legislation at <http://capwiz.com/fconl/issues/alert/?alertid=9100146&type=CO>.

Recommended Readings

Grim New Turn May Harden Darfur Conflict by Lydia Polgreen, New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/23/world/africa/23sudan.html>

Getting the UN Into Darfur by International Crisis Group, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4442&l=1>

Minority Rights, Early Warning and Conflict Prevention: Lessons from Darfur by Minority

Rights Group International,
<http://www.minorityrights.org/admin/Download/pdf/DarfurMicro2006.pdf>

The United Nations at a Crossroads: Debating the Use of Force in an Evolving World by Mark Malloch Brown, UN Deputy Secretary-General,
<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20061012.htm>

How to Support the UU-UNO

Members receive updates of our two-way advocacy work of UUs at the UN. Membership supports achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through the UU-UNO Every Child is Our Child Program.

To contribute, use the online donation form or mail a check to this address:

Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office
777 UN Plaza, Suite 7-G
New York, NY 10017

OTHER NEWS

SOULFORCE COMMENTS ON REV. HAGGARD

In response to the news that Rev. Ted Haggard has been dismissed by New Life Church and resigned as President of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Soulforce Executive Director Jeff Lutes urged the gay community to be compassionate and simultaneously called on the leaders of the NAE to claim responsibility for their role in the crisis.

"Rev. Haggard is just one more tragic example of how lives are destroyed by the lies about gay and lesbian people perpetuated by the NAE, the Religious Right, and both the Protestant and Roman Catholic Church. Taught by the church to hate himself, the only option from his point of view was to lead a psychologically and spiritually

damaging double life marked by denial and self-destructive behavior. Rev. Haggard is a victim of religion-based bigotry that regularly demeans and demoralizes gay and lesbian people and refuses to acknowledge that we are part of the American fabric, and that many of us form loving families and practice a deep faith in God...."

Haggard submitted his resignation as President of the NAE shortly after allegations of homosexual activity were aired on Denver talk radio. On Saturday, Haggard was removed as pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs. In a letter to his congregation, Haggard wrote "there's a part of my life that is so repulsive and dark that I have been warring against it for all my adult life." He also wrote that the church's overseers have required him to "submit to the oversight of Dr. James Dobson, Pastor Jack Hayford, and Pastor Tommy Barnett. Those men will perform a thorough analysis of my mental, spiritual, emotional and physical life. They will guide me through a program with the goal of healing and restoration for my life, my marriage, and my family."

In reaction to the unfolding events, Lutes said "Our community's anger at Rev. Haggard's hypocrisy is completely understandable. However, my hope is that our community will take the high road and extend an olive branch of friendship and support when he is ready to fully come out as a gay man. Dobson and the others will counsel him to bury, deny, and repress his sexuality even deeper than before. They will wound his spirit, and he is going to need our prayers and our compassionate message that God loves him, affirms him, and calls him to live his life openly with honesty and integrity."

[The goal of Soulforce is freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance.—Ed.]