



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."

February 9, 2007



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

President: Mike Briggs, (608) 835-0914

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

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, February 11

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Valentine's Day Intergenerational Service"

*11:30 a.m. Book group discusses *A Crack in the Edge of the World* by Simon Winchester

*7:00 p.m. "Articulating Your UU Faith" Adult RE

Monday, February 12

7:30 p.m. Committee on Ministry

Wednesday, February 14

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Sunday, February 18

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Honoring Darwin: The Reluctant, Modest, and Humbled Evolutionist," presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

*12:00 noon. Humanist Union potluck lunch and discussion of Darwin and evolution, led by Kathy Converse and Rev. Ralph

*7:00 p.m. "Articulating Your UU Faith" Adult R.E.

Wednesday, February 21

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal

7:30 p.m. Program Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 22

*7:00 p.m. Film Group views *Galaxy Quest* at Prairie

Saturday, February 24

*Trip to the Art Institute in Chicago to see "Cezanne to Picasso."

Sunday, February 25

*10:00 a.m. "Human Rights in Occupied Tibet" led by Students for a Free Tibet

11:30 a.m. Bylaw amendment discussion

*7:00 p.m. "Articulating Your UU Faith" Adult R.E.

Monday, February 26

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

Saturday, March 3

*12:00 p.m. Memorial Service for Pat Cautley at First Unitarian Society

Sunday, March 4

*10:00 a.m. "History, Culture and War Propaganda," presented by Brian Standing

Sunday, March 11-14

IHN Volunteer Week for Prairie

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, February 11

On February 11 an Intergenerational Service with Valentine's Day songs and readings will explore the meaning of this holiday and how it fits into our UU principles. Rose Smith will treat us to snowflake cookies and a story for all ages. The main activity will be to create artistic and meaningful valentines for strangers who could use an emotional lift, as well as for family and friends.

Sunday, February 18

Rev. Ralph presents "Honoring Charles Darwin: The Reluctant, Modest and Humbled Evolutionist." To a German student who inquired about his religious views, Darwin first had a family member respond, "He considers that the theory of Evolution is quite compatible with belief in a God; but that you must remember that different persons have different definitions of what they mean by God."

We will explore some important Unitarian and other religious and cultural influences on Charles Darwin and how they may have shaped his thinking about evolution, science and society. Emphasis will be on Darwin the man and scientist.

Sunday, February 25

Students for a Free Tibet is an international organization that recognizes the legal and historical status of Tibet as an independent country and supports the right of the Tibetan people to determine their own future. The mission of their organization is to educate people about the situation in occupied Tibet and work towards human rights through non-violent political, economic, and social campaigns.

Tom Boman, Hilary Edwards, Annie King, Abi Scott, and Asius Vangio, from the University of Wisconsin, Madison chapter, will speak about the current state of Tibet within China, focusing on the Beijing 2008 Olympics and the recent massacre at Nangpa-la Pass, where Tibetans were shot down by the Chinese Armed Police while traveling to Nepal to escape persecution.

The service will also include Tibetan music and religious readings as well as a Tibetan story for all

ages. Jampa Khedup-la, a professor at the university and former monk, will lead Prairie in musical meditation.

Sunday, March 4

Brian Standing founded Prolefeed Studios in 1997 to provide an independent forum for alternative news coverage, artistic expression and subversive political satire. His credits include the award-winning feature "War is Sell," the widely-seen documentary short, "Pedalphiles," about a renegade gang of bicycling anarchists, and the ongoing documentary series "Scoop Perlman's Guide to Art."

After bouncing around from his hometown in Albany, N.Y., to Minneapolis, Boston, outback Australia, Austin, Tex., and Tomahawk, Wis., Brian has finally settled down in Madison, where he enjoys making Godzilla movies with his son, Shea and his wife, Lisa. Madison radio listeners know him for his work at WORT 89.9 FM, including "In our Backyard," the "Eight O'Clock Buzz" and local election coverage.

Brian will be showing clips from his film "War is Sell" and talking about the history, culture and techniques of war propaganda.

OUR SOCIETY

ADULT RE CLASSES BEGIN FEBRUARY 11

Beginning Sunday, February 11, at 7:00 p.m. in the Prairie Meeting Room, the Rev. Ralph Tyksinski will lead sessions on Articulating Your UU Faith.

Join other Prairie members in a five-part course designed both for those new to UUism and for those who are still seeking ways to better define and clarify their own understanding of what UUism means to them by sharing in an interactive group setting.

"Upon completion of this course you'll be able to tell interested relatives, your boss or coworkers, your kids, and possibly your fundamentalist cousin about Unitarian Universalism in a way that satisfies you. You will be able to speak clearly and concisely—on an elevator, in line at the

supermarket, or from a pulpit—about your chosen faith.” Rev. Daniel O’Connell, lead minister, Eliot Unitarian Chapel, St. Louis, MO

Session One. Participants reflect on and share the experience of talking about Unitarian Universalism, especially using one’s own vocabulary and experience.

Session Two. We begin to look at how we talk about our shared faith—Unitarian Universalism. We are introduced to the concept of using our Seven Principles as pillars to uphold our beliefs.

Session Three. We review our UU history (a quickie 25-minute survey) and develop some practical skills at how one might respond to questions about one’s UU faith.

Session Four. Participants will have opportunities to share and get feedback on their developed “Coffee Hour Chat” statements.

Session Five. Concluding opportunities to develop and review individual statements articulating your version of *What Do I Say After I Say, "I'm a Unitarian Universalist"?*

Handouts will include:

- What Do I Say After I Say, "I'm a Unitarian Universalist"?
- Principles as Pillars
- Articulation Angles
- Principles of a Free Faith
- The Choosers Are Chosen
- A Community for All Souls
- Coffee Hour Chat Worksheet
- Short Statements About Unitarian Universalism
- The Flaming Chalice

To register or receive more information:
Contact Rev. Ralph at: revralph341@yahoo.com
or call 608-873-6041.

WINTER BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

The Prairie Book Club meets monthly after the Sunday service at Prairie, usually every second Sunday. Bring food to share. Anyone who has read the book or simply wants to listen to the discussion is welcome to attend.

Remember that there’s a link to the poster of our book club selections on Prairie’s Web site. See <http://uuprairie.org/NovDecBooks.htm> or find the page through the Prairie calendar entries for book club meeting. Prices are those current at <http://amazon.com> as of November 18, 2006.

Sunday, February 11. *A Crack in the Edge of the World: America and the Great California Earthquake of 1906*, by Simon Winchester. Nonfiction, about the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. 480 pages.

Sunday, March 11. *Until I Find You: A Novel* by John Irving. Fiction, “the story of the actor Jack Burns—his life, loves, celebrity and astonishing search for the truth about his parents.” 848 pages, \$1.00 & up.

HUMANIST UNION MEETS FEBRUARY 18

For our **Sunday, February 18** program we will have an informal Q&A followup to Ralph Tyksinski's morning sermon, “Honoring Darwin,” combined with an early look at Kathy Converse's upcoming three-Sunday series on evolution. Join us to discuss Darwin and evolution with both of them.

We will start with a potluck lunch at noon as usual, discussion from about 12:20 to 1:30 p.m.

Upcoming programs are always posted on the Events page of the Humanist Union Web site at <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>.

PRAIRIE FILM GROUP MEETS FEBRUARY 22

The Prairie Movie Group will meet **Thursday, February 22**, at 7:00 p.m. sharp, to view *Galaxy Quest*, a “funny, thoughtful spoof” from 1999 directed by Dean Perisot and starring Tim Allen and Sigourney Weaver. It is about when happens when a fictional TV series is intercepted by aliens and interpreted as reality. It was the winner of the 2000 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation. Bring snacks or beverages to share and enjoy a comedy in the dead of winter.

PRAIRIE ELDERS HAS NEW MEETING ROOM AND PARKING SPACE

GOOD NEWS! Thanks to the efforts of Gordon Cunningham, Prairie Elders will now be meeting in the Nakoma Room in the Heritage Oaks building at Oakwood West. It has ample indoor parking with a handy elevator.

Directions and details of the February 26 meeting will be in the next *Prairie Fire*.

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.

CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE TRIP

Although the deadline has passed for registering for the Art Institute, there are five unsold seats available on the bus. If anyone would like to spend a day in Chicago on his/her own, the round trip fare is \$43. Phone Pat Watkins at 233-5795 if interested.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER AVAILABLE

EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) is here! No more searching for a pen during the offertory or trying to remember when you paid your pledge and how much.

Your pledge will be automatically paid from your checking or savings account. It takes 1-2 weeks to get this set up. Forms will be available in the lobby or can be sent to you. Please return them to Robin Proud (661-0776), and see Robin with any questions.

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

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

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

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

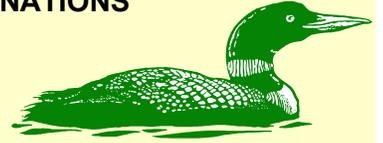
Social Action: <http://socialaction.madisonwi.us>

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

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

During these bitterly cold days (and nights!)

I'm so grateful for that third need that we humans require as it was taught to us in our early schooling years: shelter. The first and second, food and clothing are equally vital, but with wind chills in the -20's it is the comfort of a heated shelter that most of us can fully appreciate.



Our homes are shelters that help us to tolerate these bone chilling days. What about the other "shelters" in our lives? Can you imagine Prairie UU Society as a vital shelter for your life?

Let me explain.

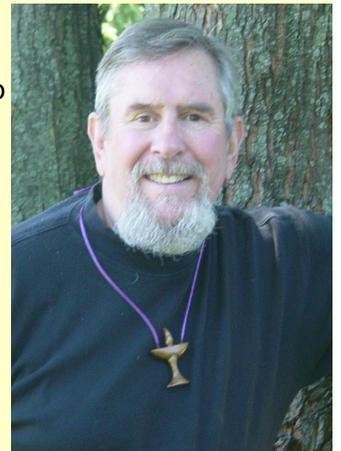
Week after week, as Unitarian Universalists, we can hear how some of us grapple with our beliefs, our uncertainties—the questions that our lives have forced us to consider. We meet people whose faith has been strengthened by adversity and those for whom firm beliefs are no longer of value. Some of us are willingly able to accept ourselves as Unitarian Universalists, with the label as the "uncommon denomination".

We accept it because we can stand the terror of uncertainty—we can accept that, in matters religious, "We just don't know for sure."

Prairie can be a shelter for us by being more than just a place that tolerates each one of us. By truly listening to one another—by creating spaces where we can share one another's stories, hopes and fears—we affirm the right of each other to express ourselves fully and to be heard and accepted for who we are, unique human beings.

In our lifelong religious education—both for children and adults—Prairie can be a shelter for providing a place for personal and group exploration so safe that we are able to challenge one another to think more, to feel more, to relate more, to risk more and yet still feel loved and appreciated.

At our best, Prairie can be a sheltered space where a "creative interchange" takes place between people who are able to express themselves fully, and are daring enough to



listen with open ears and hearts to the experience of others.

In the coming weeks and months ahead we will be tested to practice this kind of hospitality for achieving our congregational mission. As the saying goes: It doesn't matter where you go in life....It's who you have beside you.

So May It Be,

Rev. Ralph

GEORGE CALDEN MEMORIAL SERVICE

George Calden's memorial service at First Unitarian Society on February 3 was attended by many members of Prairie and other friends. Like George's contributions to Prairie over the years, it was rich in music and humor. The University of Wisconsin Russian Folk Orchestra provided much of the music for the memorial service. George was a member of this group for 10 years and one of their original domra players.

Music for the reception that followed the memorial service was provided by a group of mainly Prairie musicians formed for the occasion.

A George Calden Links page on the Prairie Web site at <http://uuprairie.org/aboutus/GeorgeCaldenLinks.htm> now includes a link to photographs taken at FUS during this gathering.

SERVICE AUCTION PLANNED FOR MARCH 18

Sunday, March 18 is the date of this year's Prairie Service Auction. Orange Schroeder will again serve as our auctioneer, and there will undoubtedly be bargains galore.

Please start thinking about what you would like to contribute. Past contributions have included food, entertainment, household services, professional services, artwork, weekend getaways, and more. Contact Robin Proud with the following info:

- item name
- description
- preferred date (for an event)
- number of people who can purchase
- value
- minimum bid (if applicable)

IN MEMORIAM: PAT CAUTLEY

A memorial service for Pat Cautley will be held at 12:00 noon on **Saturday, March 3** at First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison. Pat Cautley, 93, passed away Friday, January 19, at Oakwood Village. We extend our sympathy to her daughter Eleanor, her partner Mike, and her son Dan.

We will remember Pat, a beloved founding member of Prairie, for her commitment to children in the early years of our RE program, for always educating us about local and international social justice issues, and as a "pioneer" in the ecology movement with a deep love of the land. Pat served on the Prairie Board in numerous roles, including president. She was an inspiration and role model for us.

Notes to the family can be sent to: Eleanor Cautley, 114 W. Lakeside St., Madison, WI, 53715.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

R.E. MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our Sunday Service project on January 28 was a huge success. Prairie children made sugar cookies and chocolate chip heart cookies and sold them upstairs. Thanks to their hard work and generous donations from Prairie members and guests, we raised \$41.49 to be given to the Allied Drive Food Pantry. Thank you to all who helped out: Carl Wacker, Yvonne Heibert, Isha Shrestha and Marcia Johnson.

While our younger RE children were baking cookies, the Prairie youth were busy planning our next service project, which will be **Sunday, March 25**. After going over a number of worthy causes, they decided to raise money for the Kiva organization (kiva.org). According to their Web site, "Kiva lets you lend to a specific entrepreneur in a developing world, empowering them to lift themselves out of poverty".

The organization lets you connect with and lend money to small businesses. Throughout the course of the loan, which is usually 6-12 months, Prairie youth can receive email journal updates from the business they sponsored. As the loans are repaid, they would get the money back.

I would like to say many thanks to Marcia Johnson, a participant in the program, for her suggestion. RE kids will periodically make announcements about this program, educating themselves and our congregation.

Sunday, February 11 will be our intergenerational Valentine's Day program. RE will once again take part in the program. As always we will all get a chance to see the talent of our Prairie youth through music and acting.

I am forever amazed by each and every one of the children and young adults in the RE program. So far this year I have seen them work together in the classroom and play together during our overnights. Their talent, intelligence and drive to help our world are truly an inspiration. Like their parents, I am so very proud of them.

Rebecca Malke (YREC)
youthcoordinator (at) uuprairie.org or 695-3435

2007 UUSC HOLIDAY CARD CONTEST

Creative UUs of all ages are invited to submit original designs for 2007 UUSC holiday cards. Each year, UUSC holiday card sales help support our worldwide work for human rights. One of these cards could be designed by you!

Create an original design that reflects the joy of the holidays, and justice, equity, and compassion. Please visit www.uusc.org/ia/holiday_cards/2006/contest2007.html for submission guidelines and to the 2006 award-winning card.

Submissions must be received by April 27, 2007. Mail submissions to UUSC Holiday Card Contest, 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139 or use E-mail: volunteerservices@uusc.org

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?—GREG NETTLETON

Greg, 30-year-old son of Al and Aileen Nettleton, lives on the East Side of Madison with his wife Emily, 3-year-old Jasper, and 7-month-old Violet. His parents are extremely pleased that he has returned to Madison to work and raise a family.



Greg participated in the Prairie RE program from birth through middle school along with the cohort of Dan Stevenson, Peter Matarella-Micke, Nora Bosch, Lili Sandler, and Erin Dopp. Greg's favorite memories of Prairie are the Upham Woods Retreats with key log services around the fire, canoeing, volleyball, and the obstacle course. He also enjoyed Sunday school nature walk outings to the arboretum.

Greg attended Grinnell College, majoring in anthropology with a theater set design emphasis. After designing and building sets for several Madison theater groups, Greg found an area of work in which he can use his building skills and his interest in ecology and energy conservation. He has worked with the non-profit Project Home for four years in the Weatherization Program. The program does home energy audits and weatherization and energy conservation upgrades for low income home and apartment dwellers. Presently Greg is a residential energy appraiser for the program, inspecting homes in Dane and Green counties.

Greg and Emily are devoted parents to Jasper and Violet, and Greg can be found doing his share of child care, cleaning, and cooking when home. He shares his loves of frisbee and music with Jasper, who is already an accomplished "frisbee flinger" and budding musician.

BERNSTEIN PEACE CONCERT BENEFIT

Leonard Bernstein said, "This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before." In keeping with Bernstein's stand for peace, the Friends of the Peace Council are sponsoring an all-Bernstein "Concert for Peace" on **Friday, February 23**, 7:30 p.m., at the Unitarian Meeting House, 900 University Bay Dr., Madison.

The program, with pianists Martha Fisher and Bill Lutes, cellist Parry Karp, and vocalists Paul and Cheryl Rowe, will feature songs by Bernstein from the musicals *West Side Story*, *Candide*, *On the Town* and *Peter Pan*, plus selections from "*Arias and Barcarolles*," one of Bernstein's last works.

Proceeds will benefit the work of the International Committee for the Peace Council, a Madison-based organization committed to finding practical ways to promote peace and to relieve suffering through effective inter-religious collaboration. Tickets are \$25, available at Spruce Tree Music, A Room of One's Own, Orange Tree Imports and online at www.peacecouncil.org.

UU CHURCH HOSTS NIAGARA EXPERIENCE

Hear the roar! Feel the mist! See the mighty Falls! On **July 15-17** come experience the wonder of Niagara Falls. The UU Church of Niagara is hosting a four-day UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every perspective, even from a tethered balloon. Info: <http://www.uunex.net/> or (716) 791-4453

UU B&B DIRECTORY UPDATE

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) provides a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people. You can also become a host and be listed (call 828-281-3253 or see info@uurehome.com). For a copy of the 2007 directory, send a check for \$20 (or \$25 and your e-mail address for a year's access to the Web site as well) to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.

PHONATHON FOR FRIENDS OF THE UUA

Friends of the UUA have engaged Outreach Associates, a telemarketing firm, to conduct a fundraising phonathon of members who are currently active Friends of the UUA. The phonathon begins the week of February 19 and continuing through the third week in March.

All callers must be courteous, respectful, and succinct as they offer identified UUs an opportunity to support our Association directly. You may give feedback about the calls at (617) 948-6525 and leave a message or ask to be placed on the "no call" list.

*Cynthia Salloway, Director
Friends of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

VACATION IDEA: UU B&B IN DC

A B&B experience will be hosted by Cedar Lane UU Church on the Washington DC beltway during the National Cherry Blossom Festival (night of **April 13**—afternoon of **April 15**). Transportation, a city tour, reserved seats at the Annual Cherry Blossom Parade, dinner, and church service on Sunday are included. Out-of-town guests will be paired with church members in their home.

Cost: \$250/single; \$500/couple. Registration form must be received by March 19, 2007, accompanied by a non-refundable deposit of half the total cost. A flier with registration form is at www.cedarlane.org/cbfestival.pdf. After costs, all proceeds will benefit Cedar Lane UU Church.

*Heather Janules
Assistant Minister, Cedar Lane UU Church*

JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS NEWS

In recognition of Black History Month we are featuring stories on the UUA Web site home page about congregational solidarity with African American communities and efforts to dismantle institutional racism.

BELMONT UU RESPONDS TO RACISM

First Church in Belmont Unitarian Universalist, is located in an affluent suburb outside of Boston that is 92% white. Belmont is within 10 miles of Boston but the disparities between suburban Belmont and urban Dorchester (a neighborhood of Boston) in terms of racial composition, and the

inequalities of economic wealth, safety and well being, are abundantly clear.

This everyday fact became a shattering reality for people in Belmont and Dorchester the day that Herman Taylor III was murdered in July 2006. Herman was the thirty-seventh murder victim in Boston in 2006. The year closed with 73 homicides in Boston, most of them young African American men, while the last murder in Belmont was in the 1960s. However, unlike many of the other young murder victims in Boston, Taylor was attending high school in Belmont as part of the School Choice program.

See http://www.uua.org/news/2007/070205_blackhistory.html for the full story.

FROM EMPIRE TO EARTH COMMUNITY: NAVIGATING THE GREAT TURNING

A Leadership Gathering sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) and People Centered Development Forum, featuring David Korten and David Cobb, will take place **March 30, 31 & April 1, 2007** at Columbus State Community College in Columbus, Ohio.

Using the framework presented in David Korten's book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, we will work together to advance our understanding of The Great Turning, strengthen our individual works, foster critical connections and further create Earth Community. To register go to <http://www.greatturninggathering.org/> or call 503-665-3957.

APRIL 14 IS NATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE CHANGE

StepItUp2007.org is asking for people to help organize a nationwide day of rallies on **April 14** in every state, to push Congress to enact immediate cuts in carbon emissions and pledge an 80% reduction by 2050. Individual rallies will be linked electronically via a Web site to create the largest ever demonstration on global climate change.

We UUs just passed a Statement of Conscience about the urgent need to address the issue of global warming/climate change, so please check

out their Web site (www.stepitup2007.org), think of ways that you and your congregation can participate, and keep April 14 on your calendar.

Susan Leslie
Director for Congregational Advocacy and Witness, UUA

OTHER NEWS

SACRED SONG CIRCLE MEETS MONTHLY

Does singing feed your soul?

Song Weavers is an earth-based non-denominational women's sacred song circle in the Kay Gardner tradition. (Chants and rounds, all singing, all abilities welcome.)

We meet the third Monday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Wil-Mar Community Center, 953 Jenifer Street, Madison, WI.

Our intention is to connect to the sacred through heartfelt song, offering our most beautiful singing to Spirit, creating a community of transformation, transcendence, joy, and healing.

Call Madelon at 608.663.7339 or email Gemini at kaori4ever@yahoo.com to be added to our elist.

Sing, because that is the food this starving world needs. —Rumi

If you are troubled by the cruelty and violence and lovelessness you see around you, if you want to live in your time and not in some Hollywood or videogame fantasy, if you've seen people around you pushed around or crushed....

If you love language and see it being betrayed, if you feel a huge gap between what you're told is going on and what you actually see and feel in your nerves—then this is the material of your art, there's no escaping it.

The question then is, how do you make enduring beauty and form out of such materials?

And that will be the question of a lifetime.

—Advice to young poets, from Adrienne Rich