



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 9, 2007



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

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Saturday, November 10

*5:00 p.m. Fall Frolic begins at Prairie

Sunday, November 11

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Deep Listening, Deep Lessons"
presented by the Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

*11:30 a.m. Prairie Book Club potluck, discussion

Sunday, November 11–Sunday, November 18

*IHN week

Wednesday, November 14

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

*7:30 p.m. Social Action Committee meeting

7:30 p.m. Program Committee meeting

Thursday, November 15

*7:00 p.m. Film Group views *Cinema Paradiso*

Saturday, November 17

*9:30 a.m. "Path To Membership", an orientation program to UUism sponsored by the Hospitality and Membership Committee

Sunday, November 18

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Ways of Seeing" (Part 1 of 2)
presented by Rick Ruecking

*11:30 a.m. "Who Are UU" Q&A session on
UUism led by Rev. Ralph for visitors and friends

11:45 a.m. Prairie Board meeting

Wednesday, November 21

*7:00 p.m. Thanksgiving Eve Joint Service of the
Madison UU congregations

Saturday, November 24

*8:00 a.m. UU Blood Drive at James Reeb UU
Congregation (ends at Noon)

Sunday, November 25

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "We Give Thanks" Thanksgiving
Intergenerational service led by Mary Mullen

Wednesday, November 28

6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal @ Prairie

Thursday, November 29

*6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers at the home of
Fernanda Leporace, 1338 E. Mifflin St.

NEXT INPUT DEADLINE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

Sunday, December 2

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

*10:00 a.m. "Religion's Biology" presented by Russell Gardner

*11:45 a.m. Parish meeting with potluck

(* = *Details follow in this issue.*)

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, November 11

In the program entitled "Deep Listening, Deep Lessons," Rev. Ralph will be exploring some of the ancient traditions that suggest that listening can be a source for deep learning and wholesome living practices. He will also be sharing some contemporary studies that suggest that men and women differ in their listening behaviors. There are lessons to be learned about how we listen to one another.

Sunday, November 18

On November 18 and December 9, Rick Ruecking will present Sunday services under the theme, "Ways of Seeing". The first service will draw on our direct experiences as we explore ideas on human spiritual growth through sight and the visual arts which lead to personal and communal vision. We'll save time for your descriptions of the art of transcending mystery which affects the wonder of our vision. The second program walks us down a weedy garden path to speculate on corruptions to "the vision thing" - propaganda, advertising, and madness - before our personal revelations. You'll share the imaginations you dream to maintain clarity or the nightmares which impede the way of seeing your vision.

A lifelong Universalist, Rick discovered Prairie Society on a Sunday morning when door-knocking the Dunn's Marsh neighborhood on behalf of "Jerry Brown for President". That vision was postponed by the elections of 1980 to 2004 but has been resurrected again by Barack Obama.

Rick was Prairie's president during the Growth Workshop of 1984 when the Society deferred 'the ministerial option and a new building' with interim goals for growth which included hiring a paid administrator, organizing the caring committee,

and becoming handicap accessible with other building improvements. Since he's incapable of organization, Rick left the construction to others while sharing in the future ways of envisioning ourselves.

Wednesday, November 21

The combined choirs, with musicians and speakers from First Unitarian Society, James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society will gather at the Prairie Meeting House to share a Thanksgiving Eve Service, Wednesday, November 21, 2007, 7:00 p.m. The Rev. Michael Schuler, Senior Minister, First Unitarian Society, will be presenting the Reflection.

Sunday, November 25

Thanksgiving is just that, a time for giving thanks. Come to this intergenerational service with your list of things you are thankful for. Bring pictures if that will help you show us what you're thankful for. We'll sing some traditional Thanksgiving hymns, share "graces" we may have learned as children or use today, and find a way to celebrate in an active way as well—a craft and maybe even by making a tasty turkey soup out of left-over Thanksgiving turkey. Oh, yes, there will be a story as well.

Sunday, December 2

Religion seems to involve the non-biological "spirit," but this presentation by Russell Gardner argues that brain biology may explain many religious phenomena: these include "communicational states" shared with other animals (for example, charismatic leadership, submission, audienceship), some attributes shared less with other animals such as story-using and ally-using, and some qualities of the medial temporal lobes that foster awe experience that can cause one to feel religious. Karen Armstrong, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Mother Teresa, Teresa of Avila, and Alice Flaherty will exemplify various points.

Born in rural Wisconsin, our presenter Russell Gardner earned his M.D. at the U. of Chicago with further training and experience in psychiatry, psychoanalysis and sleep-dream research in New York City. After chairing Psychiatry at the U.

North Dakota, he moved to the U. Texas Medical Branch, where he was Harry K. Davis Professor. He functions in Madison as an artist and writes on psychiatry's basic science and the biology of art and religion. He administers Epidemic Peace Imagery.

OUR SOCIETY

FALL PARISH MEETING SET: DECEMBER 2

We will have three items up for a vote at the Parish Meeting **Sunday, December 2**. First, the Board is recommending that we retain Ralph Tyksinski as our consulting minister for another full year. We are further requesting that the parish formally expand the Consulting Minister position to half time, and increase the salary accordingly. Most of you are aware that Ralph has been donating just as much time as we are actually paying him for. The Board feels that he should be compensated appropriately for his service to the congregation. We will ask the parish to authorize the Board to negotiate a new contract with Ralph from June 3, 2008 (when the current contract expires) through May 31, 2009. As part of the negotiation, we would be reviewing his charges with input from the congregation.

We will be suggesting a number of bylaws changes, the most important of which is to make the Communications Committee a standing committee with representation on the Board. We always have several items on our Board agenda that would benefit from input from that committee, or in which we end up requesting their assistance. As a community that wants to grow, Prairie needs vibrant and effective communication within our society and from our society to the wider world. Proposed changes will be posted on prairienews.

The task force on "Good Relations" (formerly known as "Right Relations") will be asking for a vote accepting the latest draft of the document describing the covenant we are making with each other as members of our Prairie community. This document has been revised multiple times, and has been worked on by a couple of Prairie standing committees as well as the task force. Its purpose is to help us be conscious and deliberate

about how we treat one another so as to create the "beloved community" we want Prairie to be. The draft will be made available at Prairie later this month and distributed on the "prairienews" group. Please read it, consider carefully, and give any feedback to members of the task force: Yvonne Hiebert, Nancy Schraufnagel, Mary Somers and Ralph Tyksinski.

Rachel Long, President

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Our Strategic Planning Task Force is up and running. Ken Skog has agreed to serve as chair. Members include KK Anderson, Doleta Chapru, Dirk Herr-Hoyman, Phyllis Long, Rachel Long, Marilyn Ruecking, and Ralph Tyksinski. This group is charged with determining and implementing the process to create our strategic plan. Please feel free to approach any of us with questions, ideas or suggestions. We have decided that our planning process should have four steps. Each step will answer a question about Prairie's present and future. These steps are briefly outlined below.

How can the members of our Prairie community work together harmoniously during this process?

We will develop ground rules within our community on how we will regard each other during the planning process (affirm a covenant for our planning process). The issues we will be working through are close to the heart for many of us, and we need to speak and listen in an environment of caring and respect. We have worked on a document of "Right Relations" that addresses this issue, but we need to be very deliberate and specific so this process can be a joyful opportunity to learn from each other and about ourselves.

What is the reason for Prairie to be here? (the mission)

We will explore and affirm our Mission. A mission is a concise statement of what the congregation wants to be known for, or known as, within the wider world; what the congregation wants to mean to the community.

What do we want to be? (the vision)

We will develop a clear Vision for Prairie. A vision is a carefully defined picture of where the congregation wants to be in five or more years. It is the dream of what the congregation can become. It could describe what life will be like for individual members, for families, and for our relationships in wider communities.

How do we get there? (specific goals & actions)

We will identify ways to make our vision reality. We will be as specific as we can possibly get – identifying goals and actions - looking at who in our congregation will accomplish certain tasks, and when. It is that kind of detail and follow through that will get us where we want to be.

We expect this strategic plan to take 6-12 months to develop, and about 5 years to fully implement (before it's time restart the process again.) We'll be giving you more details at the Fall Parish Meeting December 2.

Ken Skog, Strategic Planning Task Force Chair

Rachel Long, President

MATCHING FUND DRIVE IS A SUCCESS!

Our special fund drive to raise the \$50,000 in promissory notes (plus \$3,522.27 in interest) was a BIG success. Including the amount matched, we raised \$49,275 in cash plus \$4,246.409 in loans (and interest) to Prairie that were forgiven, for a total of \$53,521.40. Since paying back the loans was not part of this year's budget, we had to dip into our savings to \$4,247.27 of our debt, but those forgiven loans mean that's interest we are not accruing in the future.

We are very grateful to all those who contributed, and will be recognizing them at the Fall Parish meeting on December 2.

*Kate Liu
Treasurer*

WOW PLANS NOVEMBER 10 MEETING

The next WOW meeting is **Saturday, November 10** at 9 a.m. at the home of Kathy Converse, 630 Pickford St. We plan to meet at Kathy's each month this year on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

We begin our meetings with a quick sharing during a breakfast potluck. This month we will be making baskets with small gifts for people who are generally housebound. We will have a limited breakfast menu of fruits, breads, and beverages. Please bring some items for the baskets, like small soaps, jams, and cards.

In December we will meet **December 8** and participate in Haiku, Footprints in Snow.

January 12 we will begin our series on what brings us passion, how to find it in our lives and WOW members will begin sharing their stories. All Prairie women are welcome to participate.

Thank you, Kathy, for hosting us each month. Last month was just great. For anyone not able to make last month, we had 12 wows and lots of laughs and sharing. Kathy lives at 630 Pickford, off Monroe Street.

WOW is a group who wants to support the women of prairie while having fun. Any questions call Kathy Converse at 238-1856 or Mary Somers 276-8397.

Mary Somers

BOOK CLUB MEETS NOVEMBER 11

All are welcome to the Book Club discussions. We next meet at Prairie after the Sunday service on **Sunday, November 11** at about 11:30 a.m.

Sunday November 11. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, by Mike Haddon, from \$2.22 at <http://www.amazon.com/Curious-Incident-Night-Time-Today-Show/dp/0385512104>

Another debut novel, this one has a 15-year-old boy with Asperger's Syndrome (a form of autism) as a narrator. Christopher finds his neighbor's poodle dead and is accused of murdering the dog. He spends the night in jail. Against his father's and the neighbor's wishes, but upon the encouragement of his school social worker, Christopher resolves to find out who-did-it and writes a book about his investigations: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Called "bitterly funny" and an "eye-opening work." 240 pages (Suggested by Robin Proud)

Please bring food to share. For more information or to be put on the e-mail list, contact Mary Mullen, mmullen (at) chorus.net, 608-298-0843.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH THE INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

Prairie's next shift to help Midvale Lutheran host homeless families begins **Sunday, November 11**. If you can spare a few hours to help with this crucial community service, please go to Midvale Lutheran's website (www.midvalelutheran.org) and click on "IHN" on the lower left. You may do your own scheduling, but if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

Thanks,

Paula Pachciarz

273-4806; pachwack(at)sbcglobal.net

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE! TRY OUT THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The PUU Social Action Committee will meet at PUU on **Wednesday, November 14** at 7:30 after the 6:30 community meal. Everyone is welcome!

If you cannot attend or have ideas or suggestions as to how you would either like to see PUU become involved in Social Action or change how we are currently involved, then please e-mail that information to Kathy Converse also.

If there are any questions about this meeting or committee please contact Kathy Converse.

The Program Committee will be meeting the same evening so be sure you get the right meeting!

Kathy Converse

conversekrtn (at) msn.com

PRAIRIE MOVIE GROUP VIEWS CINEMA PARADISO ON NOVEMBER 15

The Movie Group will meet at Prairie at 7:00 p.m., **Thursday, November 15**, to view *Cinema Paradiso*. This 1988 film directed by Giuseppe Tornatore. This film celebrates films by telling the story of a boy addicted to movies and his friendship with the projectionist at the local theater. It won the foreign film Oscar and the Cannes Special Jury Prize in 1989.

The film starts at 7:00. Bring snacks to share and a hunger for a good film.

The next meeting after this will be **December 13**.

WALK THE PATH TO MEMBERSHIP

What does it mean to be a member of Prairie? What does the Prairie community have to offer as we continue our spiritual journeys, and what can we give back to that community? If you are a returning visitor and have found a kinship with Prairie that you would like to strengthen, you are warmly invited to attend our Path to Membership orientation from 9 a.m. to noon on **Saturday, November 17**. We will together walk the path by which you may join this community, this church.

The Path to Membership orientation will be presented by the Hospitality and Membership Committee and Reverend Ralph Tyksinski. We will learn about Prairie's particular history, share something of our spiritual quests, discuss the time, treasure and talents that both individuals and the society have to share with each other, and end by welcoming new members into the church.

If you would like to participate in the Path to Membership in November, please contact Paula Pachciarz or Rev. Tyksinski. Registration is necessary. Brunch will be served and child care will be provided!

Paula Pachciarz

WHO ARE UU SESSIONS PLANNED

Who wrote the Seven Principles? Are UUs theists? Where does UUism fit into history? Can one be a Buddhist and a UU too? If you are new to Unitarian Universalism, you may have such questions as these and more.

Following the service on **Sundays, November 18** and **December 16**, Rev. Ralph will be on hand to supply answers and give an overview of the rich heritage of Unitarian Universalism. Gatherings will be in the couch room downstairs at Prairie.

BLOOD DRIVE MOVES TO JAMES REEB

The Red Cross Blood Drive for **Saturday, November 24** will be held at James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 2146 East Johnson St, Madison, rather than at Prairie. All are welcome to participate between 8:00 a.m. and noon. For further information, contact Gordon Cunningham, 230-3367.

NEXT PRAIRIE ELDERS ON NOVEMBER 27

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEETING: **Tuesday November 27**, 2:00-3:50 PM, NAKOMA ROOM, Heritage Oaks Building, Oakwood Village West.

Topic: How can individuals help meet the immediate needs of Iraqi people? Share your knowledge, bring clippings, print information from a Web site, consult an expert—or just come, listen and toss around ideas.

A July 2007 Oxfam report estimates that four million Iraqis regularly cannot buy enough to eat. Seventy percent are without adequate water supplies. Twenty-eight percent of children are malnourished, compared to 19% before the 2003 invasion. Ninety-two percent of Iraqi children suffer learning problems, mostly due to the climate of fear. More than two million people—mostly women and children—have been displaced inside Iraq, have no regular income and are running out of coping mechanisms. A further two million Iraqis have become refugees, mainly in Syria and Jordan. A comprehensive report is available at http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp105_humanitarian_challenge_in_iraq_0707.pdf/download

Our monthly topics alternate between a current issue and a “show and tell” topic. Last month’s topic about becoming UUs engendered fascinating stories of our searches for truth and meaning. Curiosity was a common theme.

Typically, we begin and end our gathering with casual conversation. The Nakoma Room is open at 1:30 for those who wish to come early to visit. Participants are welcome to come and go as necessary for appointments, rides, chair attendants, etc.

REFRESHMENTS: If convenient, please bring a small handful of snacks to pass and your own beverage cup.

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.

SPANISH SPEAKERS ANNOUNCES MEETING

Spanish Speakers will meet for potluck and conversation, **Thursday, November 29**, 6:30 p.m. at the home of Fernanda Leporace, 1338 E. Mifflin St. For directions or information, call Fernanda at 772-0931 or Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

SHELTER BREAKFAST UPDATE

Thank you, Jim and Margaret Carpenter and Meggan and Chyna for doing the shopping for the men’s shelter breakfast **Saturday, October 6**. It was great to arrive at the shelter and have the food supplies already there. Recognition should also be given to Barb Park, who has been our steady shopper for most of the past two years.

Steve Blank and Paula Pachciarz teamed up to make the breakfast this month, and enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other better. Steve and his family have recently moved to Middleton from the Chicago area, where he spent a lot of time volunteering at homeless shelters.

If you have never helped with the shelter breakfast, please consider trying it. Getting up early and getting to the shelter by 4:30 is difficult, but once you arrive the time goes quickly because you are busy preparing a delicious meal. And now that we have changed our long-standing commitment from the third Tuesday to the first Saturday, it should be easier to give up some time for this community service. The men always appreciate Prairie's breakfast.

REV. RALPH'S RUMINATIONS

Ralph will resume his column in the next issue.



LETTERS



I JUST RAN THE NEW YORK MARATHON!

Hi, friends and family,

My friend Jay Martin and I just ran the New York Marathon...great fun! We didn't quite make our goal of 3:46, but were only 7 minutes off: 3:53:24. We keep asking ourselves what if...there were not so many runners to try to pass all day, we might have done it. Dodging people is hard on the legs! We ran over the line hand in hand...a thrilling finish to our 4 months of rigorous training. We finished ahead of 30,349 runners.

Running over the Verrazano Narrows bridge was spectacular, then through all boroughs' streets lined with cheering spectators and the occasional live band.

The weather was perfect...what a weekend!

*Thanks and love,
Dean*

MEDITATION AT PRAIRIE

I am feeling around to see if there is interest in restarting weekly meditations at Prairie. I am considering Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. Some meditations could be led by an individual; some could be silent, and some could be "led" by cassette tape. (There are some very good ones available.) I'm thinking that they would last in the vicinity of 45 minutes.

Let me know if you are interested in participating, and also if you are willing to lead a meditation. Thanks,

Paula
273-4806; [pachwack\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:pachwack(at)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>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FALLING INTO FALL

It's cold outside and cozy in our RE space. Students were treated to hot apple cider Sunday morning before classes started. I hope to bring in more "treats" as the weather gets colder. There's nothing like hot apple cider, warm cookies and good friends.



Last Sunday students in grades 4-12 went to the Islamic Center of Madison on N. 21 Orchard Street in continuation of their study of Islam. Students had a tour of the center and had the opportunity to ask questions from the tour guide as well as a group of students during their RE class.

Saturday-Sunday, November 10-11, will be our first overnight event: Fall Frolic! We will be celebrating the Indian holiday, Deepavali (Festival of Lights), with food, games, and fireworks. This event is for children of all ages. Students will have the chance to stay overnight, if they wish, for movies and a game of Wink. Breakfast will be served the next morning.

If you would like to volunteer for this event please let me know. It's a great time to talk to other parents and get to know the children in the RE program.

Parent/Teacher sessions have finished. If you need to reschedule, please let me or your child's teacher know. Questions, comments and concerns are always welcomed. Please feel free to make an appointment with either me or your child's teacher at any time throughout the year.

And finally, I would like to announce two new members to our RE Committee: Heidi Hughes, mother of James and Rachel Hughes, and our first ever youth member Toby Wacker. We are very happy to have you both on our committee and we look forward to your comments and suggestions for our RE program.

Rebecca Malke (YREC)
[youthcoordinator\(at\)uuprairie.org](mailto:youthcoordinator(at)uuprairie.org)

NOVEMBER RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

- 12 —Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
- 15 —Nativity Fast begins (Orthodox Christian)
- 22 —Thanksgiving (Interfaith)
- 24 —Guru Tegh Bahadur martyrdom (Sikh)
- 24 —Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib (Sikh)
- 25 —Christ the King (Christian)

MEMBERSHIP AND HOSPITALITY

PRAIRIE DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS

The new Prairie directory is being mailed to those who have not picked up a copy the last two weeks. Several corrections have been reported, and we will continue to print corrections in upcoming *Prairie Fire* issues.

Corrections:

Officers:

Rachel Long 328-4899

Kate Liu Kgliu311(at)gmail.com

KK Anderson 279-3596

Reuben Long Arnold M

Ruth Calden georu2(at)tds.net

Kate Liu Kgliu311(at)gmail.com

Karleen Tyksinski mkt214(at)gmail.com

Updates:

Cindy Haq

P.O. Box 25, Belleville, WI 53508

608-206-3527

clhaq (at) wisc.edu

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWS

UUSC HOLIDAY CARDS

To purchase UUSC holiday cards. Visit <http://www.uusc.org/holidaycards> today.

Three beautiful new UUSC holiday cards are now available. Proceeds from the sale of holiday cards help UUSC advance justice and work for basic human rights in the name of UU principles. Order your holiday cards today!

SAUK COUNTY CONGREGATION SEEKS MINISTER/SPEAKER

The Free Congregation of Sauk County—A Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is seeking a part-time Minister/Speaker*. The congregation is looking to fill a part-time position of approximately 12 hours per week. A half-time Minister/Speaker position is feasible within the next three years.

The position will include:

Presenting 1 or 2 Sunday programs per month

Helping to plan and develop Sunday programming

Helping to conduct congregational workshops as needed and at least one Adult RE class per year

Presiding over the marking of special events, such as marriages, child dedications, and funerals

Providing advice and support for any group designated by the Board to attend to the special or emergency needs of members

HOW TO APPLY

By December 7, 2007, applicants should send:

- A letter of interest. Please include any salary requirements.

- A resumé or curriculum vitae.

- Three professional references. Please include current contact information.

- And, if possible (but not required): An example of original work (article, lecture, sermon, etc.) that expresses, even if in a general way, the applicant's guiding philosophy as it pertains to a Minister/Speaker position.

To the following postal address:

Free Congregation of Sauk County
307 Polk Street
Sauk City, WI 53583

Attention: Search Committee

Or, via email, to: free_congregation@verizon.net

Please put "minister position" in the subject line.

For questions or more information, please use this email address; or call Michael Whaley at 588-2048

[Editor's note: This is excerpted information received by the Free Congregation of Sauk County]